

Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership
Toronto CMA Team Update, November 2014

Emily Paradis and Alan Walks

1. Working Groups

- 1.1. **Collective Efficacy in Neighbourhoods.** (Coordinator: Rob Howarth, Canadian Association of Neighbourhood Services.) This very active working group, led by community partners, has met seven times since last year: Oct. 8 2013, and Jan. 31, March 27, June 10, July 10, Aug. 14 and Sept. 23, 2014. PhD student Jessica Carrière has completed a scoping review of literature on the concept and measurement of collective efficacy. The group has also developed a proposal to study the influence of community-based organizations (CBOs) on collective efficacy in the neighbourhoods they serve. In fall 2014, Rob Howarth and Jessica Carrière will conduct interviews and neighbourhood research to develop a typology of CBO activities that may enhance or inhibit neighbourhood efficacy, as well as an instrument to assess collective efficacy in neighbourhoods.
- 1.2. **Urban Youth, Schooling and Crime.** (Coordinators: Scot Wortley, Criminology, U of T, and Kathleen Gallagher, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/UT). This working group met June 23 and Aug. 7 2014. It is developing a proposal to map data on policing and schooling, and analyze these maps in collaboration with youth. With the assistance of Diane Dyson (Woodgreen Community Services, and People for Education), the group is undertaking an environmental scan to identify research and data sources on these topics in Toronto.
- 1.3. **Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods.** (Coordinator: Sheila Neysmith, Social Work, U of T). This working group has not met this year; however, Sheila Neysmith has been involved in a partnership with WoodGreen Community Services' large study with older adults in East York. Also, Sheila Neysmith and Richard Maaranen have ordered custom cross-tabulations of Census 1981 and 2006 data on older adults, and basic data on persons with disabilities, for all NCRP CMAs.
- 1.4. **905 Regions & Hamilton.** (Coordinators: Alan Walks, Geography, and Shalini Sharma, Economics, U of T). This working group met at University of Toronto Mississauga on November 20 2013 and January 24 2014. United Way York Region also convened a discussion on March 18 2014 to introduce a broader network of York Region partners to the NCRP. Participants reviewed NCRP maps and data on Peel and York Regions, and discussed neighbourhood trends of concern in Peel and York, including labour market changes, issues with rental housing, and racialized poverty. A meeting is planned for early December, 2014.

2. Data Analysis & Mapping

- 2.1. **National Household Survey Analysis.** Richard Maaranen and David Hulchanski have analyzed NHS non-response rates, differences between NHS income data and CRA tax-filer data for 2010, and differences between NHS and the 2006 census on a number of variables for Toronto neighbourhoods. The results show that the NHS is not reliable at the neighbourhood level. Several NCRP team wrote an op-ed published in the Globe and Mail in October 2013 reviewing problems with the NHS. David Hulchanski presented results of the more detailed recent analyses at a public forum in September 2014, *Imposed Ignorance: On What Evidence Does Ottawa Base Its Policies?* The forum can be viewed at <https://hosting2.desire2learncapture.com/MUNK/1/Watch/571.aspx>. David's extended presentation from that forum is now available and posted on our home page: <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/2014/11/07/nhs/>
- 2.2. **Statistics Canada Research Data Centres Program of Research.** NCRP has been approved under the SSHRC-RDC "Program of Research" designation. The NCRP RDC Program of Research spans five years and multiple Statistics Canada Research Data Centres, and will allow for an expedited RDC access procedure for NCRP projects. The Program of Research lists CMA coordinators and some community partners as co-investigators, enabling them to act as principal investigators on project applications for RDC access under the NCRP. Team members planning to undertake RDC research can contact Emily Paradis for more details.
- 2.3. **Rental Housing Disadvantage Index.** Richard Maaranen has developed the Rental Housing Disadvantage Index, which uses census data to map neighbourhood level housing disadvantage (based on the neighbourhood's rate of low income, and housing that is unaffordable, overcrowded, or in poor condition). A description of the RHDI and maps of the City of Toronto, Toronto CMA, and other NCRP cities, can be found at <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/> in "Rental Housing Research Documents" under the About tab. The RHDI will inform the NCRP's first cross-city comparative study, which is currently being developed by a working group with representatives from all six cities.

3. Networks & Partnerships

- 3.1. **United Way Toronto Building Opportunity Project.** NCRP team members have been working with United Way Toronto on research and reports examining income inequality, within UWT's program, "Building Opportunity." Two reports from this joint project are soon to be released: *Understanding income inequality in Canada* by Stephanie Procyk (UWT); and *Income inequality, income polarization, and poverty: How are they different? How are they measured?* by Alan Walks (UofT) and Mihaela Dinca-Panaitescu (UWT). Alan and Mihaela have also been working this summer in the Toronto RDC with the assistance of a graduate student, Dylan Simone. They are using the raw census data to calculate Gini coefficients and other measures of inequality for Toronto and other NCRP cities.

- 3.2. **Toronto Neighbourhoods Research Network.** This network of neighbourhood-focused researchers from universities, government, social agencies and community organizations met January 7, 2014 and October 7, 2014. January's meeting was held at Metro Hall. The featured presentation was *Inadequate housing and risk of homelessness among families in Toronto's aging rental buildings*, by Emily Paradis. In October, the network met at OISE/UT and the meeting included a presentation by NCRP RA Jessica Carrière and NCRP partner Maureen Fair (West Neighbourhood House) called *The influence of community-based organizations on neighbourhood collective efficacy*. Upcoming meetings are planned for February 3 2015 and June 2 2015. The aim of TNRN meetings is to connect individuals and agencies actively engaged in policy- and program-relevant research on neighbourhoods, to share and disseminate data, research methods, and findings.
- 3.3. **EU DiverCities Project in the Jane/Finch Area.** NCRP co-investigator Ronald van Kempen (Utrecht) is leading EU DiverCities, a large project funded by the EU Commission to examine how cities benefit from diversity. The study includes teams examining 13 cities, including Toronto as its only non-EU example. David Hulchanski is a member of the project's advisory board. EU DiverCities investigators Tuna Tasan-Kok and Donya Ahmadi (TU Delft) have visited Toronto in October 2013 and March 2014 to conduct key informant interviews, resident interviews, and meetings with researchers, policy actors and community organizations. A report on these meetings was released in April 2014. Donya Ahmadi returned to Toronto in fall 2014 to conduct interviews in Jane and Finch, the project's case-study neighbourhood. The NCRP Toronto team has organized meetings and provided contacts in support of this initiative. See: <http://www.urbandivercities.eu/publications>
- 3.4. **Informal Economy in West-Central Toronto.** Toronto partner West Neighbourhood House (formerly St. Christopher House) conducted a pilot project on the informal economy in West Central Toronto, and has received funding from the Metcalf Foundation to extend the project this year. Emily Paradis represents the NCRP on the project's Technical Advisory Committee.
- 3.5. **Our Home, East York: Older Adults and Housing in Toronto Neighbourhoods.** This project of NCRP partner WoodGreen Community Services is mid-way through its work. Researchers conducted 360 randomized, structured interviews with community members across a range of topics including housing need, social networks, and connection to community. Data analysis is currently underway. In cooperation with the Third Sector Research Centre at the University of Birmingham (U.K.), a thorough literature review, *Our Home East York: Age Friendly Societies In Our Time?* has already been published and can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/1sTQjRR>. NCRP co-investigator Sheila Neysmith is on the Advisory Board of the project.

4. Research Projects

- 4.1. **Family Homelessness in Toronto's Inner Suburbs.** This project, funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnership Strategy, completed its first phase in summer 2013: an analysis of data from families with children participating in the United Way Toronto's 2009-2010 Vertical Poverty survey. In fall 2013, the research team led by Emily Paradis collaborated with partners in Jane-Finch, Parkdale, Weston-Mount Dennis, Thorncliffe-Flemingdon Park, and Scarborough to conduct focus groups with more than 100 service providers in these neighbourhoods, followed by focus groups with more than 30 families facing inadequate housing and homelessness. A research bulletin summarizing the quantitative findings was released in November 2013, and the full project report was published in March 2014 (see below). A multi-lingual flyer summarizing the findings was launched October 17 for distribution to residents and front-line workers via the project's partner organizations.
- 4.2. **Neighbourhood Change and the Spatial Distribution of Violent Crime.** This NCRP-funded project is led by Rosemary Gartner at University of Toronto's Centre of Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies. It examines changes in the spatial distribution of violent crime in Toronto between 1998 and 2009 to determine whether violent crime has become concentrated in certain areas as the city has become more economically segregated, socially polarized, and ethnically and culturally diverse. The data show that while calls to the Toronto Police Service for violent crimes have decreased slightly over this 12-year period – from over 80,000 calls annually in the late 1990s and early 2000s to approximately 75,000 per year in 2008 and 2009 -- these calls are disproportionately concentrated in certain areas of the city. The team is geo-coding data on calls for service to the census dissemination area and conducting time series analyses to determine whether the spatial patterning of violent crimes has shifted over time.
- 4.3. **The Temporary Neighbourhoods of Homeless Youth in Shelters and Implications of Socio-Spatial Polarization.** Kathleen Gallagher from OISE/UT leads this NCRP-funded project. The research team has conducted performance-based workshops and interviews with fourteen youth in partnership with Youth Without Shelter, a youth shelter in Rexdale, and Project : Humanity, a theatre collective. Preliminary analysis was presented at the NCRP October 2014 Team Meeting.
- 4.4. **Rental Housing Consultations.** NCRP partner Social Planning Toronto has conducted a series of consultations on private sector rental housing stock and its tenants in five areas of the Toronto CMA: Jane-Finch/Rexdale, Weston-Mount Dennis, Scarborough, Peel Region and York Region. The findings will contribute to the development of a comparative project on rental housing across multiple NCRP cities. A draft report from the consultations was completed in mid-October.

5. Publications & Events

- 5.1. **Forum on Racism.** A public forum, *Toronto's Growing Socio-Spatial Divide: What's Racism Got to Do with It?* was held October 17, 2013 at Innis Town Hall. Featuring panelists Sheila Block (Wellesley Institute), Gopi Krishna (Scarborough Housing Help Centre), Avvy Go (Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic), and discussants Sharon Douglas (United Way of Peel Region) and Tuna Tasan-Kok (Technical University of Delftm NL & EU DiverCities Project), the forum presented evidence on the role of racism and discrimination in Toronto's growing divide, and examined the reasons that racism is rarely discussed in policy debates. About 200 people attended.
- 5.2. **New NCRP Brochure.** A 4-page brochure describing the NCRP is now available in print and on our website. Contact Emily Paradis for printed copies.
- 5.3. **Neighbourhood Change in Chicago.** A team led by NCRP co-investigator Janet Smith (University of Chicago, Illinois) is applying the "Three Cities" methodology to analyzing neighbourhood change in Chicago, using data from the US Census. Smith presented the findings in Toronto on January 7 2013, at a forum titled "A tale of two cities, and possibly three: Neighbourhood change in Chicago 1970-2010." Richard Maaranen has been working with the Chicago team to develop a series of maps comparing neighbourhood trends in Toronto and Chicago. A report is planned for early 2015.
- 5.4. **Lessons on Family-Friendly Housing.** NCRP, in collaboration with the Wellesley Institute, presented a seminar by Carolyn Whitzman (University of Melbourne) titled, "Overcoming barriers to family-friendly housing in central Melbourne, Australia: Lessons for Toronto's neighbourhoods." About 30 participants attended the January 21 seminar.
- 5.5. **Nowhere else to go: Inadequate housing and homelessness among families in Toronto's aging rental buildings.** This report from the NCRP project Family Homelessness in Toronto's Inner Suburbs was released March 12 and received broad media attention. Since the report's release, community forums have been held in Jane-Finch and Parkdale, and lead author Emily Paradis and members of the project's Community Advisory Board have been invited to present the findings to various scholarly and policy audiences. A flyer summarizing the report's findings has been launched on Homeless Hub homelesshub.ca and will be translated into multiple languages. The full report, executive summary, and links to media coverage can be found on the website.

