

Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership
Toronto CMA Team Update, June 2015

Emily Paradis and Alan Walks

1. Working Groups

- 1.1. **Collective Efficacy in Neighbourhoods.** Coordinator: Rob Howarth, Canadian Association of Neighbourhood Services. This working group is defining and examining the influence of community-based organizations on the “collective efficacy” of the neighbourhoods they serve. In early 2015, Rob Howarth and PhD candidate Jessica Carrière conducted key informant interviews and focus groups with organizations in three Toronto neighbourhoods. A preliminary report was presented at the June meeting of the Toronto Neighbourhood Centres network. In late 2015: a final report; a review of the literature; and a proposed toolkit for organizations and researchers to use in documenting neighbourhood efficacy initiatives.
- 1.2. **Urban Youth, Schooling and Crime.** Coordinators: Scot Wortley, Criminology, UofT, and Kathleen Gallagher, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/UT. This interdisciplinary group of academics (criminology, education, social work, and kinesiology) with community partners has met four times between December and June. The focus is on differential opportunities and risks in neighbourhoods for youth and how to research these. A set of summaries of policies and programs affecting youth in neighbourhoods will be published soon covering five domains: schooling, policing, employment, recreation, and child welfare.
- 1.3. **Toronto’s 905 Region.** Coordinators: Alan Walks, Geography, and Shalini Sharma, Economics, UofT Mississauga (UTM). This working group met at UTM in December and April. It serves as a venue for identifying research priorities and sharing updates on activities and resources. The NCRP’s new Rental Housing Disadvantage Index was presented at the April meeting. A recent initiative: working group members Nathalie Hui (York Regional Municipality) and Shalini Sharma (UTM) are developing a partnership to acquire and analyze data on the time it takes York Region immigrants to “catch up” to their Canadian-born counterparts in terms of wages.

2. Data Analysis & Mapping

- 2.1. **Update of Income Trends to 2012.** NCRP Data Analyst Richard Maaranen has updated income maps and charts to 2012 using CRA taxfiler data.
- 2.2. **Rental Housing Disadvantage Index (RHDI).** Researchers have begun using the RHDI analysis of census tracts with “high rental disadvantaged” in order to determine how to study these areas in greater detail.

- 2.3. **Analysis of Older Adult Population.** Richard also produced various Toronto maps, graphs and tables for the population over age 65 in collaboration with Sheila Neysmith (UofT), using a newly purchased custom census dataset. Data analysis was focused on cross-tabulations of gender, living arrangements, housing tenure, visible minority status, income, and disability status of the population over 65 years of age.
- 2.4. **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. Team members planning to undertake RDC research can contact Emily Paradis for more details.

3. Networks & Partnerships

- 3.1. **United Way Toronto’s Building Opportunities Initiative.** NCRP team members have been working with United Way Toronto on research and reports examining income inequality, within UWT’s program, “Building Opportunity.” United Way Toronto released a major report on this work in February 2015, *The opportunity equation: Building opportunity in the face of growing income inequality*. It is available at <http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/document.doc?id=286>.

An NCRP Research Paper from this joint project is also now available on the front page of the NCRP website: *Understanding income inequality in Canada*, by Stephanie Procyk (UWT). A third report, *Income inequality, income polarization, and poverty: How are they different? How are they measured?* by Alan Walks (UofT) and Mihaela Dinca-Panaiteanu (UWT), will be released soon. Alan and Mihaela have also been working 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. **Working Poor in Toronto.** NCRP data analyst Richard Maaranen helped produced maps and graphs for the new report, *The working poor in the Toronto region: Mapping working poverty in Canada’s richest city*, by John Stapleton. Published by our partner the Metcalf Foundation in April 2015, available at : <http://metcalfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WorkingPoorToronto2015Final.pdf>
- 3.3. **Toronto Neighbourhoods Research Network.** This network of neighbourhood-focused researchers from universities, government, social agencies and community organizations met February 3 and June 2, 2015. February’s meeting was hosted by WoodGreen Community Services and included a presentation by NCRP partner Diane Dyson (WoodGreen) on the project, “Our home East York: Age-friendly societies in our time” (see below for more information on this project). In June, the network met at The Housing Help Centre (formerly Scarborough Housing Help Centre) and heard a presentation by Regini David from West Scarborough Community Legal Services on the Scarborough rooming house consultations. 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.

- 3.4. **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 several times to conduct key informant interviews, resident interviews, and meetings with researchers, policy actors and community organizations in Jane and Finch, the project's case-study neighbourhood, and will return in fall 2015. The NCRP Toronto team has organized meetings and provided contacts in support of this initiative. See: <http://www.urbandivercities.eu/publications>
- 3.5. **Informal Economy in West-Central Toronto.** Toronto partner West Neighbourhood House (formerly St. Christopher House) has received funding from the Metcalf Foundation to examine issues facing informal workers in Toronto's West End. Emily Paradis represents the NCRP on the project's Technical Advisory Committee.
- 3.6. **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?* Is available at <http://www.woodgreen.org/Portals/0/PDFs/Age%20Friendly%20Societies%20-%20Literature%20Review.pdf> NCRP co-investigator Sheila Neysmith is on the Advisory Board of the project.

4. Funded Research

- 4.1. **Neighbourhood Change and the Spatial Distribution of Violent Crime.** Rosemary Gartner, UofT, Criminology. This project 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.
- 4.2. **Rental Housing Consultations.** Israt Ahmed and Beth Wilson, Social Planning Toronto. In fall 2014, with funding from NCRP, partner Social Planning Toronto conducted a series of

community consultations on private sector rental housing in five areas of the Toronto CMA with high rental housing disadvantage: Jane-Finch/Rexdale, Weston-Mount Dennis, Scarborough, Peel Region and York Region. The study found that while some issues, such as problems with affordability, affect tenants across the CMA, others are specific to each neighbourhood. A report on the consultations will be published by NCRP.

- 4.3. **The New Blockbusting? Global Capital, Tenant Resistance, and the Corporate Gentrification of Affordable Rental Apartment Towers in Toronto.** Alan Walks, UofT Mississauga, with Martine August, University of Toronto, and partners including Parkdale Community Legal Services. Funded November 2014. This project, led by recent U of T PhD Martine August, is examining changes occurring in multi-family buildings in a number of Toronto's neighbourhoods. Using an empirical case study of buildings owned by local and global real estate investment firms, the study will explore the processes contributing to neighbourhood change and gentrification, the consequences for tenants and for neighbourhood inequality, and policy options to address gentrification and any potential resulting displacement. The investigators are conducting interviews, surveys, and ethnographic participant observation, and collaborating with a tenant association on the development of a mini-documentary on this phenomenon.
- 4.4. **Comparative Rental Housing Trends and Policy Contexts in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver Since the 1970s.** Greg Suttor, NCRP. Funded November 2014. This project, led by NCRP researcher and recent UofT PhD Greg Suttor, examines rental housing market trends and policy contexts in three NCRP CMAs, drawing upon data, existing documents, and key informant interviews. Preliminary findings were presented at the May 2015 NCRP Research Day, and a report will be published through the NCRP Research Paper series.
- 4.5. **Rental in Toronto's South Parkdale: Recent Trends in Rents, Affordability, and Up-Scaling.** Greg Suttor, NCRP, with Scott Leon and partners West Neighbourhood House. Funded November 2014. This study examines rents, affordability, and up-scaling in private rental buildings in South Parkdale. The study was undertaken at the request of West Neighbourhood House. Findings were presented at the May 2015 NCRP Research Day and a report will be available soon.
- 4.6. **Residential Satisfaction and Neighbouring in Toronto's Inner Suburbs: Exploring the Interconnections in Rexdale-Kipling.** Sutama Ghosh, Ryerson, with Federation of Metro Tenants Associations. Funded March 2015. This research explores the interconnections between residential satisfaction and neighbouring among residents of Rexdale-Kipling in north-west Etobicoke. It asks whether and how residential satisfaction and neighbouring practices might vary by household characteristics such as "race" and immigration status, as well as by housing form (single-detached houses vs. high-rise rental buildings) and tenure (ownership, private rental, and social rental). The team is currently completing a literature review and developing interview protocols, and will go into the field in the coming weeks.
- 4.7. **Neighbourhood-based Local Economic Development Activities in Toronto: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities.** (Katharine Rankin, UofT, Geography, with Action for Neighbourhood Change – Mount Dennis. Funded April 2015.) This research project co-led

by researcher Kuni Kamizaki is conducting an environmental scan of local economic development practices in Toronto with a focus on neighbourhood-based initiatives. Based on the environmental scan, the research intends to develop a typology of LED approaches in Toronto while also conducting 3-5 in-depth case studies to probe enabling and constraining conditions. The environmental scan, resulting typology, and in-depth case studies will allow the research to identify effective LED practices, main challenges, enabling conditions for key achievements, and lessons that can inform policy and program options. The project also takes a community-based research approach to promote cross-neighbourhood learning and dialogues among diverse stakeholders.

5. Publications & Events

- 5.1. **Toronto Star Divided City Series.** In November 2014, the Toronto Star launched an ongoing series of articles examining inequalities in Toronto's neighbourhoods. The series has used NCRP maps and data, and has featured interviews with David Hulchanski and other NCRP co-investigators and partners. The series was launched with an online, interactive version of the NCRP map where visitors could view neighbourhood-level income changes over time. The map can be found at <http://www.thestar.com/projects/toronto-s-three-cities--40-years-of-growing-income-inequality.html>
- 5.2. **NCRP Research Days.** On 16 October 2014 and 7 May 2015, we hosted NCRP Research Days at University of Toronto in conjunction with meetings of the NCRP national team. At each Research Day, an invited group of about 60 NCRP team members and other Toronto-area partners had the opportunity to hear presentations on NCRP-funded research from Halifax, Montréal, Hamilton, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver, and to discuss future research directions for the NCRP. Presentations from both days can be viewed on the website.
- 5.3. **Rental Housing: Can We Do Better?** This public forum was held 6 May 2015 at U of T's George Ignatieff Theatre in conjunction with the NCRP national team meeting. Presenters David Hulchanski, Duncan MacLennan (U. of St. Andrew's, Scotland), and Israt Ahmed (Social Planning Toronto) examined trends in private rental housing in Canada and Europe, and issues facing private market tenants in Toronto, while discussants Leanne Holt (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) and Effie Vlachoyannacos (Federation of Metro Tenants Associations) linked the presentations to their organizations' advocacy work. Approximately 70 attendees engaged in the lively discussion moderated by Christopher Hume of the *Toronto Star*.

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