3.3 Spatial concentration/segregation of immigrants

3.3.1 Toronto

Although some immigrant groups are still concentrated in the central City, the older suburbs of the City of Toronto and new suburbs in the Greater Toronto Area have become the main areas of settlement for new immigrants.

Many recent African immigrants and refugees are located in Toronto’s older suburbs in Etobicoke, North York and York, as such public housing provided by the City of Toronto. Pockets of concentration of Caribbean immigrants are evident in the older parts of the city, often occupying relatively inexpensive private rental apartments.

The settlement patterns of new immigrant groups is different from the immigrant groups who arrived before the 1960’s, such as the Italians and Portuguese. The older immigrant groups built institutionally complete communities in the inner city and later moved to the suburbs in search of single-family dwellings. Home ownership was a major goal and the move to the suburbs was an expression of upward social mobility. The new groups have bypassed Toronto’s traditional immigrant reception area in the centre of the city. Their residential location is determined by both economic and cultural factors. Many Chinese people from Hong Kong have settled in upper middle-class neighbourhoods while the Vietnamese people as well as people from African and Caribbean origins settle in areas of large public housing. There is concern that the situation is contributing to the concentration of poverty in impoverished segregated areas in the city.

3.3.2 Vancouver

What is interesting to note from anecdotal observation is that immigrant and refugee communities disperse to the outlying areas of Vancouver over time. This is probably reflective of the influence of “economics” in the decision on the place of residence, and the individual’s level of integration in Canadian society.

4. Local integration policy

4.1 Toronto

Although municipalities do not have jurisdiction in immigration and settlement as the federal and provincial governments, Toronto provides a wide range of municipal services for all residents, including immigrants and refugees. These services are essential to their settlement and integration. In general, the role of municipalities in making and implementing urban policy is increasing as provincial governments are reducing their role and giving more administrative and financial responsibility to municipalities for the provision of local services.

4.1.1 Public policy

The City has responded to immigrants and refugees through a strong public policy framework to create a welcoming and supportive environment and facilitate their settlement and integration.

The City’s motto is “Diversity Our Strength”. The goal of the City of Toronto is to engage all residents including immigrants and refugees in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the City, and pursue the best possible quality of life for all residents.

a. Council’s Strategic Plan includes goals such as:

   - "Individuals and groups have a collective sense of belonging and contributing to the city and have the capacity to participate in the city’s social, economic and cultural life;"
   - "Individuals have access to an adequate standard of living, including income, health, nutritious food, housing and clothing;"
   - "Resources and opportunities are available to respond to the unique needs of different communities;" and
   - "Toronto’s workforce has the skills, education and knowledge demanded in an evolving and competitive economy”

b. The City has in place policies on anti-discrimination, human rights and harassment, elimination of hate, employment equity and an action plan on access, equity and human rights.

c. The City’s Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework outlines strategic directions addressing economic integration, service access and equity, advocacy, public education, building community capacity and civic participation.

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23 Information on spatial distribution of immigrant population in Toronto is taken from Robert A. Murdie, et al., Housing issues facing immigrants and refugees in greater Toronto. 1996 in M. Konul (ed). Housing of the “Others” and David Firing, Spatial Distribution of Immigrant Population in Toronto: Causes, Effects and Implications, 2002
d. The Social Development Strategy promotes a cohesive community that benefits everyone because people who feel a part of a larger community have an investment in the public good.

e. The Toronto Public Health determinants of health include safe environments, adequate income, education, shelter, equity and social justice.

f. The City’s Economic Development Strategy identifies Toronto’s linguistic and socio-economic diversity as “key competitive strengths upon which the City must build.”

g. Urban Planning provides a context for investment and reinvestment to ensure a vibrant city with healthy, diverse and supportive communities. This includes responding to the housing, employment and community needs of newcomers.

h. The Multilingual Services Policy recognizes that providing multilingual services is an effective way to reach individuals, groups and organizations of diverse communities to allow them to access City services and programs, and directs the City to deliver multilingual services that meet the diverse needs of its many audiences, in the most timely and cost effective manner.

4.1.2 Service access and equity framework
Public policies are the basis for service planning and delivery. City services, such as housing, public health, childcare, recreation, public transit, community and economic development support the integration of immigrants and refugees.

To make services accessible and equitable, the City has an Access Action Plan, which contains 97 recommendations from the Task Force on Community Access and Equity adopted by City Council. The Chief Administrative Officer has provided a status report on the implementation of the recommendations.

The following are examples of the implementation of the action plan:

a. Departmental access action plan – Toronto Public Health has developed comprehensive Access and Equity Strategic Plan and Access and Equity Operation Plans to integrate access and equity in all programs. These plans address immigration, diversity, faith/religion along with many other issues.

b. Maintaining and enhancing the multi-lingual capacity of the City in serving a diverse population.
   - The City uses the Language Line Services (LLS), in-house interpreters and community liaison staff. In 2000, information was provided in 52 languages through the LLS. The summaries of City documents, which are of interest to the public, are routinely translated into ten languages.
   - During the 2000 municipal election, City Clerk’s provided information in twelve languages, Braille, audiotape and large print.

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