

**Encouraging the development and mobilization of quality housing research**

**Settlement and Housing Experiences of Recent Immigrants in Small and Mid-Sized Cities in the Interior of BC**

*Carlos Teixeira (UBC) and Julie Drolet (U of C)*

While scholars in Canada have examined the settlement experiences and barriers/challenges that immigrants face in the housing market or the different factors that help or hinder immigrant groups in achieving homeownership, these studies have either been national in scope or have focused on the major gateway Canadian cities in which most immigrants live in Canada.

The successful integration of immigrants and refugees into a new society is based on their attainment of several basic needs in various areas, including (1) access to settlement/community services in their new community; (2) access to affordable, suitable and adequate housing in a welcoming community; (3) employment opportunities providing adequate income; (4) access to the education system; and (5) an adequate level of social knowledge and engagement with the new society (Teixeira and Li 2009; Murdie and Teixeira 2003). Policymakers and immigration researchers are increasingly seeking to understand the relationship between immigrants' attainment of these needs and their successful integration into Canadian society. Among the most important of these needs, particularly in the initial stages of settlement in a new community, are access to reliable/efficient settlement/community services (preferably in their own language) in a hospitable community as well as access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing. These have been identified as some of the primary routes for immigrants' social, cultural and economic integration into the host society.

While this has long been a concern in Canada's major metropolitan areas, it is also increasingly an issue in growing mid-sized cities in the interior of British Columbia such as Kelowna and Kamloops. These cities face unique challenges in attracting/retaining new immigrants due, in part, to a less developed network of settlement/community services that are culturally oriented to new immigrants and expensive/deficient housing markets that do not accommodate the needs of newcomers.

*...continued on page 6*

**In This Issue**

<b>Settlement and Housing in the BC Interior</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Message from Our Co-chair</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Partner News</b>	<b>2-4</b>
<b>Student News</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Housing Central Conference</b>	<b>5</b>

**The Pacific Housing Research Network facilitates multi-sectoral research focused on housing affordability and sustainability, and fosters dialogue and collaboration among housing stakeholders across B.C. to encourage the effective application of research results to housing solutions.**

## Message from Our Co-Chair

The Pacific Housing Research Network unites researchers (both inside and outside of post-secondary institutions) across BC working tirelessly to address affordable and sustainable housing. In this issue of our bi-annual newsletter, it is abundantly clear that BC based researchers are working on a number of fronts at once. From research on housing new immigrants in small and medium sized cities to media portrayals of homelessness, BC has much to contribute to deliberations across Canada on how to address housing and homelessness. At PHRN we are buoyed by the degree of partnership between universities and community (non-profit and policy) housing partners. We note with particular interest the opportunities for graduate students interested in pursuing housing related careers that are available through research partnerships and internships at housing partner sites. These hands on learning opportunities help prepare the next generation of housing researchers. One new opportunity for student engagement is the CMHC Innovation fund student challenge for affordable rental housing – also described in this issue.

We hope to see many of you at the PHRN Symposium 2017 co-located with the Housing Central conference in November.

PHRN Co-Chair Dr. Bruce Wallace (UVic)



### Who is PHRN?

#### Our Steering Committee:

Penny Gurstein (UBC), Co-Chair  
Bruce Wallace (UVic), Co-Chair  
Deborah Kraus (BC Housing)  
Elizabeth Tang (CMHC)  
Jill Atkey (BCNPHA)  
Nolan Beise (MITACS)  
Bernie Pauly (UVic)  
Carlos Teixeira (UBC Okanagan)  
Cecile Lacombe (UVic)  
Nathan Lauster (UBC)  
Virginia Holden (Housing Policy Branch)  
Tricia Roche (PHRN Co-ordinator)

#### Want to receive E-News updates from PHRN?

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<https://phrncb.com/subscribe-to-our-e-news/>

## Partner News

### CMHC

#### Innovation Fund — Student Challenge for Affordable Rental Housing

The Innovation Fund Student Challenge for Affordable Rental Housing is an exciting opportunity for any student registered in an accredited post-secondary educational institution in Canada who has a new and fresh approach to creating affordable rental housing.

Students can work individually or create a team, the goal is to rethink and revolutionize the affordable rental housing sector. Cash prizes of \$10,000 will be awarded to winning submissions. In addition, winners may be eligible for funding to help transform their innovative concept into a tangible project.



### PHRN Objectives:

1. To encourage the **sharing of findings** across researchers, knowledge users, and stakeholders.
2. To **support each other** in developing and conducting research.
3. To **leverage capacity** to find funding solutions for housing research and dissemination.
4. To **encourage students** to consider housing as an area of choice for their career.

### CMHC continued...

- The goal of the Affordable Rental Innovation Fund is to encourage new funding models and innovative building techniques in the rental housing sector.
- This Student Challenge is seeking affordable rental housing solutions that are new to Canada, with innovative building techniques and business or financing models that lower the costs and risks associated with rental housing.
- Projects submitted must also meet criteria related to: affordability, financial viability, energy efficiency and accessible features.
- All applications must be submitted to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) by 11:59 p.m. EST on April 30, 2018 in order to be eligible.



To learn more, visit [www.cmhc.ca/studentchallenge](http://www.cmhc.ca/studentchallenge). You can also contact the Student Challenge for Affordable Rental Housing team at [student\\_innovation\\_challenge@cmhc.ca](mailto:student_innovation_challenge@cmhc.ca)

### BCNPHA

BCNPHA has been involved in various research initiatives aimed at strengthening the understanding of affordable housing and homelessness issues across communities in British Columbia.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 BCNPHA led the implementation of the tri-annual Metro Vancouver Homeless Count. The purpose of the count is to estimate the number of people who are homeless in the region over a 24-hour period, obtain a demographic profile of this population, and identify trends compared to previous counts. The preliminary report found that homelessness had increased in all Metro Vancouver municipalities (excluding the North Shore) over the last 3 years, with an overall increase across the region of 30 percent. The final report provides a detailed breakdown of the data and was released on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.



In the context of rising homelessness and growing unaffordability of rental housing across communities in BC, BCNPHA released *An Affordable Housing Plan for BC* in conjunction with Housing Central and the BC Rental Housing Coalition in April of 2017. The Plan provides a 10-year roadmap to significantly reduce affordable rental housing and homelessness issues across the province through quantifying current and future rental housing demand, costing out investments needed to meet this demand, and providing recommendations to meet these targets. In the context of new federal and provincial funding for housing and homelessness, the Plan provides a benchmark with which to measure progress. The report can be found at <http://housingcentral.ca/>.

In October of 2017, housing, Aboriginal, and immigration data will be released for the 2016 census. Over the course of 2018, BCNPHA will develop an update to the Canadian Rental Housing Index ([rentalhousingindex.ca](http://rentalhousingindex.ca)) that will layer in 2016 census data, create new analysis and comparison tools, and the develop the capacity to generate reports and share them on social media platforms. The next phase of the Canadian Rental Housing Index will ensure that housing planners, policy analysts, academics, developers, and the general public have access to the most comprehensive and up-to-date data on Canada's rental stock.

### BC Housing

#### **Skillsets and Core Competencies to Facilitate Business Transformation in the Non-Profit Housing Sector**

BC Housing is supporting research commissioned by Housing Partnership Canada (HPC) to increase understanding of the skillsets and core competencies required in the non-profit housing sector. The study will examine factors that drive business sustainability with a focus on strategic planning, governance, internal culture, skills and core competencies that could affect organizational development, resilience and growth. Results should be available by year-end 2017.



#### **BC Energy Step Code Metrics Research**

The BC Energy Step Code 2017 Metrics Research Summary Report and the BC Energy Step Code 2017 Metrics Research Full Report present perhaps the most extensive analysis ever undertaken in Canada on energy efficiency of buildings. The study found that meeting the requirements of the Lower Steps of the BC Energy Step Code involve only very modest construction premiums. In most situations, builders can achieve the Lower Steps for less than a 2% construction cost premium above that of a home built to the requirements of the BC Building Code. The construction cost premiums associated with Step 1 compliance is even smaller—just a small fraction of a percent. These reports were prepared for BC Housing and the Energy Step Code Council by the Integral Group, E3 Eco Group and Morrison Hershfield with the support of Natural Resources Canada and Remi Charron.

#### **BC Residential Building Statistics and Trends Report**

A BC Housing and Bank of Canada study found that new home registration data can be used as a leading indicator of economic activity in BC. Study results found quarterly increases in new registrations for single-detached homes provides statistically significant predictive content for growth in real GDP over the next one to three quarters. To find out the latest market information and insights on new construction activities for current and prospective home owners see BC Housing's 2016 Report.

#### **Social Return on Investment for Affordable and Supportive Housing**

In 2016, BC Housing released the report, Social Return on Investment (SROI) of Affordable Housing Development Supported through the BC Housing Community Partnership Initiative. This report found that for every dollar invested in supporting affordable rental housing through the Community Partnership Initiative, between two and three dollars in social and economic value is created for individuals, governments and communities. BC Housing recognizes that investing in supportive housing can also create significant social value and has engaged the same consultant, Constellation Consulting Group, to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study on supportive housing. This study should be available Spring 2018.

#### **Upcoming Workshops: Building Knowledge and Capacity for Affordable Housing in BC Small Communities**

While almost all communities in BC have policies in their Official Community Plans (OCPs) supporting the development of affordable housing, implementation of these policies and actually getting homes built remains a challenge. A recent study by the Columbia Basin Trust identified a pervasive gap in affordable housing in 25 municipalities. This fall, BC Housing has partnered with the Whistler Centre for Sustainability to host workshops in three BC communities, Castlegar, Cranbrook and Courtenay to address the affordable challenge in small communities. Workshops qualify for 6 CPL learning credits for Planning Institute of BC members and 5 CPD points through BC Housing. To register, or find out more, go to the Centre for Sustainability Whistler website or email: [info@whistlercentre.ca](mailto:info@whistlercentre.ca)

### Super InTent City: Media Portrayals of Homelessness

*Morgan McCarthy, BSN & Bernadette Pauly, RN, PhD*

Media reflects and contributes to public opinions and influences policy responses to homelessness often reproducing stigma and stereotypes. The purpose of this discourse analysis research project was to analyze print media representations portraying Super InTent City, a homeless encampment in Victoria, British Columbia in 2015/16. The project was awarded a Jamie Cassel's Research Award, an award given to undergraduate students at the University of Victoria to pursue research with mentorship from a professor.

We sought to answer the following questions: What are media representations of people experiencing homelessness? Who holds these representations and how do they change over time? What are the implications for public health and the role of public health in challenging stigma and influencing more accurate understandings of homelessness? Data collected from September 1st, 2015 to September 30th, 2016 from 18 regional and national newspapers was reduced to 289 primary newspaper articles and then analyzed using discourse analysis.

Four discourses were identified: 1) the need for healthy living spaces, 2) public safety issues, 3) criminalization and surveillance of poverty, and 4) community/belonging.

Residents of Super Intent City were key voices in raising issues related to the structural and systemic factors that produce homelessness including the need for healthy living spaces, community well-being and belonging. However, stereotypes that criminalize homelessness obscured the focus on the need for healthy living spaces, home and belonging as solutions. This is a major issue in terms of public health and demonstrates that the social determinates of health are not being addressed among those in Super InTent City. Portrayals of homelessness from people with lived experience are critical to counter stereotypes and identify real solutions to homelessness.

### 2017 Housing Central Conference

There are few things more important than having a safe, secure and affordable home. That's why PHRN is pleased to support the 2017 Housing Central Conference, taking place November 19 to 21 in Richmond, BC.



As western Canada's largest affordable housing conference, more than 1,100 delegates will be gathering to hear from inspiring keynote speakers, connect with sector colleagues and learn from top housing professionals in more than 100 education sessions. We hope you'll join us for three days of engaging dialogue to strengthen the affordable housing sector and celebrate the successes of the past year!

Register now: [www.conference.housingcentral.ca](http://www.conference.housingcentral.ca)

For more about the PHRN symposium at this year's Housing Central Conference, go to [www.phrNBC.com](http://www.phrNBC.com)

These difficulties have become, with regard to the latter, more acute since the mid-1990s, given low levels of new social housing construction, relatively high rents in the private housing market, and funding cuts affecting social assistance and non-governmental organizations that normally assist new immigrants and refugees. These constraints determine new immigrants' choices with regard to whether or not to move to small- and mid-sized cities in the interior of B.C.

PHRN Steering Committee member Carlos Teixeira (UBC) along with Julie Drolet (University of Calgary), have completed a study that investigated immigrants' settlement experiences, including their access to local services and their housing experiences and outcomes in the cities of Kelowna and Kamloops. The study also assessed the state of community services and the role of the latter in attracting and retaining immigrants to these areas. It also presented recommendations for improving immigrants' integration in the interior of B.C. There is very little published data/literature on the settlement and housing experiences of immigrants in this region of British Columbia, and much less on the settlement and housing barriers/challenges that they face in the local communities. Thus, this study addressed an existing gap in the scholarly literature by focusing attention on a study population, and a unique geographical region of British Columbia, that have been largely "off the radar" of scholars and public policy debate.

Key questions addressed in this study included:

- *What are the socio-demographic profiles of immigrants living in Kelowna and Kamloops?*
- *What is the state of local services supporting immigrant communities?*
- *What role do services play in the successful integration – attraction and retention – of immigrants to these cities?*
- *Do available settlement/community services and housing matter in their decision to locate in Kelowna and Kamloops?*
- *What housing services exist to support immigrant settlement in Kelowna and Kamloops?*
- *What were the major barriers/challenges that immigrants encountered in settling in Kelowna and Kamloops?*
- *What is their current housing situation, and what barriers (e.g., ethnic background/race, language, income, source of income) have they faced in locating and obtaining affordable housing?*
- *What strategies are immigrants using to cope?*
- *Do the housing conditions of this group change, or improve, over time? If not, who becomes homeless and why?*
- *What integrative role, if any, does a welcoming community play in the successful inclusion of new immigrants in Kelowna and Kamloops' society?*
- *What policy changes are recommended to remedy issues identified in this study?*

The data collected in this study will expand the empirical base of knowledge on the settlement and housing experiences of immigrants, and will promote a better understanding of the importance of the regionalization of immigration into small- and mid-sized cities in the interior of B.C. For further information on this study please see:

Carlos Teixeira and Julie Drolet (2016). *Settlement and Housing Experiences of Recent Immigrants in Small and Mid-Sized Cities in the Interior of British Columbia*. Pathways to Prosperity.