The Suburbanization of the “Non-Gentry”: Toronto’s Inner Suburbs

J. David Hulchanski, April 2006

Neighbourhood Change & Building Inclusive Communities from Within

A research and policy initiative with a five-year grant from the

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Inner Suburbs: Neither fully urban nor completely suburban

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Research Questions: #1

As gentrification continues in Toronto, where do the non-middle class, "non-gentry" live?

People who are mainly:
- low-income with low-status jobs
- non-white
- life-long renters

Short answer: Toronto’s least desirable urban landscapes
- post-war inner suburbs
- large post-war public housing estates

Research Questions: #2

Is Toronto becoming more segregated by
- income and social status,
- housing tenure (owners/renters), and
- skin colour (ethno-racial origins)?

Short answer:
based on 1971 to 2001 trends, YES
Research Questions: #3

What is the public policy response?

Short answer: Containment Strategy
- target resources better (“priority neighbourhoods”)
- $$ on crime prevention, recreation, family services
- task forces, studies
- increased public and private spending on security in the rest of the city
- ignore the causal trends: the problem is localized (local gangs, “black-on-black” crime, etc.)
Answering the Questions

Method

1. detailed analysis of 30 year residential trends
   -- Census of Canada data, 1971 to 2001
   -- mapping changes in “who lives where” 1971 to 2001
   -- location of rental housing (market & non-market)
   -- gentrification trends
   -- socio-economic and ethno-racial trends

2. a review of policy and program initiatives

Research Question #1

Gentrification Trends: Where do the non-gentry live?

Summary of gentrification analysis by Alan Walks & Richard Maaranen, University of Toronto; Mapping decade by decade neighbourhood change

- from below average income to above
- rising social status (job category & education)
- change in arts and related employment of the residents

With comparisons to the Priority Neighbourhoods in the inner suburbs
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Research Question #2

Is Toronto becoming more segregated?

- Mapping Change by Neighbourhood
  - poverty concentrations
  - income: persistent increase / decrease
  - income gap: owners / renters
  - rental housing stock: gain / loss
  - skin colour: white folks
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Economic Family Poverty Rates

City of Toronto

1981

2001

North York

1981

2001

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Toronto Neighbourhoods with a Persistent Increase in Average Individual Income, 1971 to 2001
Average Income of Individuals in the Labour Force: 15 Years and Over

Toronto Neighbourhoods with a Persistent Decrease in Average Individual Income, 1971 to 2001
Average Income of Individuals in the Labour Force: 15 Years and Over
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Change in Percentage of Dwellings that are Rented, City of Toronto, 1971 to 2001

The Growing Income Gap Between Owner and Renter Households
Toronto CMA 1971 to 2001
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Renter Households Paying 30% or More of Income on Rent
City of Toronto and Priority Neighbourhoods, 1991 to 2001

Household Income Distribution of Owners and Renters
City of Toronto, 2003

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Social Economic Status Change
Toronto’s Priestly Neighbourhoods Combined, 1971 to 2001

Renters Households Paying 30% or More of Income on Rent
City of Toronto and Priority Neighbourhoods, 1991 to 2001

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Some of Toronto’s Inner Suburbs:
The non-gentry, non-white, service class

- home of the non-middle class, non-gentry
- home for gentrification’s displaced persons
- the homeland for impoverished immigrants and refugees
- home of the largest families, in the smallest housing with the fewest community services
- home for mainly non-white people
- home of people without other residential choices

→ The opposite of gentrification

Research Question #3

What is the Policy Response?
A Tale of Two Reports: 25 years apart

Metro’s Suburbs in Transition

Part I: Evolution and Overview

Background report/April 1979

2005

POVERTY BY POSTAL CODE


A Report Prepared Jointly by the United Way of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development

1979

... and one Task Force

The Task Force will work to strengthen neighbourhoods and keep Toronto a healthy, vibrant place to live.

2005

Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force Membership

Co-Chairs
Eric Gam, Commissioner, Community & Neighbourhood Services, City of Toronto
Robert Harding, Chairman, Branson Corporation
Frances Larkin, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toronto

Members
Derek Bellantoni, CEO, Toronto Community Housing Corporation
Harold Brathwaite, Senior Advisor to the President, Seneca College
John Compey, Executive Director, Community Social Planning Council
Rohan Cardozo, CEO, The Ontario Trillium Foundation
Gordon Floyd, Executive Director & CEO, Children’s Mental Health Ontario
Scott Haldane, CEO, YMCA of Greater Toronto
Malatia Manaharoa, Executive Director, Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre
Margaret Mendez, Executive Director, Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre
David Pocaut, Chair, Toronto City Summit Alliance
Susan Pigott, CEO, St. Christopher House
David Reid, Director of Education, Toronto District School Board
Marilaya Renwick, Regional Director, Ministry of Community and Social Services
Ron Black, Executive Director, East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club
Shahzad Sayani, Executive Director, Po’Youth Initiative
Francesca Shaw, Senior Vice-President, CBDC, Project Office & Retail Markets
Janice Stein, Director, Annex Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto
Tresh Stovel, Executive Director, Labour Community Services of Toronto
Pat Wallcott, Director General, Service Delivery, Human Resources Skills Development
Kitty Yeung, General Manager, Workforce

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“The era of suburban and metropolitan innocence in Toronto is over.

Stable post-war images of urban life in Metro, with clear social distinctions between the City and the suburbs, ... no longer correspond to the social realities of what exists today or to the conditions which will have to be faced in the coming decade.”

– Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto, April 1979 (v1, p.233)

In 2005, similar observations and confirmation of trends identified in the 1979 study

“Now poverty has moved outwards, to the inner suburbs, to places once seen as havens from inner-city problems.

Our social services simply have not kept up and this means that – more than ever – people are disadvantaged by the neighbourhood where they live.”

– United Way of Greater Toronto, June 2005
“The suburbs now contain

- 50% of all inner city students in Metro's schools,
- most of Metro's families with both parents in the labour force,
- high numbers of single parent families,
- significant groups of unemployed and alienated youth, and
- a multitude of cultures and races.”

In 1979 the trends were clear; the inner suburbs were in transition.

“The absence of urgently needed help for the diverse needs of suburban families is a deep source of concern.”

- pre-school day care,
- school programs for children with special needs,
- multi-service centres to help families,
- neighbourhood agencies for outreach to isolated groups,
- counseling for immigrant families,
- community services for troubled youth,
- child-parent centres,
- after-hours and crisis support, and
- affordable recreation programs.

1979 many recommendations ignored

2006 same needs & issues discussed again