Social Services and the Politics of Recognition in Canadian Urban Centres

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International migration introduces the cultures of the world to local cultures (Burayidi, 2015), transforming the built and natural environment, consumer choices, and the institutions and exchanges that define Canada’s urban centres. Municipal governments, as policy-makers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services, are part of those local cultures, but the impact of demographic change on their operations is not always apparent. This paper examines whether and how immigration and cultural diversity have influenced how municipal governments plan and deliver social services in six of Canada’s most culturally diverse municipalities—Vancouver, Abbotsford, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Peel Region.

Municipal governments in Canada do not possess formal constitutional or statutory responsibility for the settlement and integration of international migrants and their families, but they deliver essential social services that have an enormous impact on residents who have distinct problems, service needs and experiences. On average, newcomers and/or members of racialized minorities have higher than average unemployment and poverty rates, lower incomes, language barriers that impede their awareness and understanding of municipal facilities, programs and their legal rights, and difficulties finding affordable and culturally suitable accommodation and services, among other issues. At the turn of the millennium, Sandercock lamented the gap between the multicultural rhetoric of Canadian national politics and legal frameworks and the responses of most municipalities to the multicultural realities of their neighbourhoods (2003). Since then, planning departments in North American cities have been accommodating cultural diversity on a case-by-case basis, spurred by market initiatives and lobbying from ethno-racial communities for their citizenship rights (Qadeer, 2009; Qadeer and Agrawal, 2011).

This paper makes an original contribution to the comparative urban politics literature in Canada in three ways. First, it focusses on municipal responses to immigration and diversity in the policy domain of social services, which encompasses income and employment supports, housing, neighbourhood or community services, and children’s, youth and seniors services. Most research to-date has focussed on corporate policies. Second, it develops a unique typology describing each municipality’s normative and empirical responses, inspired by philosophical literature on the recognition of difference in public institutions and by benchmarks that have been developed to measure the local governance of immigration and diversity in European cities. Third, it will situate those responses within broader normative debates in urban planning about inter-ethnic relations and recognition, redistribution and encounter in the public institutions and spaces of culturally diverse cities (Burayidi, 2000; Fincher and Iveson, 2008). This paper is part of a larger project that tracks and accounts for similarities and variations in responses across cities. Due to space limitations, this paper will focus on the descriptive objective.

Normative debates in urban planning

Until the 1960s, American urban planning practises were based on a monistic philosophy grounded in universalist values, reflecting the assimilationist paradigm of ethnic relations. Critics inside and outside the field challenged assumptions that ignored the needs of minority groups whose value systems differed from the middle class professionals who occupied planning posts (Burayidi, 2000). The emergence of pluralist planning practises against the backdrop of the Civil Rights and feminist movements broadened the scope of planning from a concern for the city’s physical environment to advocacy planning on behalf of disadvantaged groups, and to
incorporating alternative views into public policy (42-43). While the central aim was to advocate for the rights and needs of African Americans, later waves of immigrants to the United States and Canada began demanding equity and recognition of their rights to the city and its services (Qadeer, 2015).

By the late 1980s and 1990s, an emerging post-modern paradigm envisioned the United States as a fusion of disparate cultures, prompting new thinking about planning. Post-colonial and post-modern discourse emphasized the legitimacy of different forms of knowledge based on the demographic and experiential characteristics of a society. A new holistic planning approach would treat different groups differently and adopt more inclusive planning practices (Burayidi, 2000; Sandercock, 2003). The “communicative turn” in planning theory, a feature of early theoretical discourse on multicultural planning, sought to bring diverse voices into the policy planning process (Qadeer, 2015). Critics of this turn worried that a preoccupation with process would overlook the substance of planning decisions, and that planning processes often failed to live up to ideals of procedural fairness (Fainstein, 2005). By the early 2000s, the discursive framework of multicultural planning shifted to regarding diversity as an “important quality of a good city and creating common institutions” (Qadeer, 2009). As large numbers of increasingly diverse immigrants landed in North American cities, diversity was extolled as an asset in the global economy and a source of local creativity (Florida, 2002).

Multicultural planning thought has “raised consciousness about the rights of ethnic groups, racial minorities and immigrants to the city” (Fainstein, 2005). Fincher and Iveson have proposed that planning for various forms of diversity, including cultural diversity, should be guided by three “social logics”: recognition, which identifies the forms of diversity that merit recognition and the political and institutional mechanisms through which recognition can be achieved; redistribution, through which attempts are made to redress economic inequality; and encounter, which allows for the planned interaction of strangers in diverse cities (2008).

Municipal Social Service Responses: case selection and benchmarking

The cases represent a sample of some of the most culturally diverse cities in Canada and in their respective provinces. Between 26-28 percent of the populations of Calgary, Edmonton and Abbotsford, and between 44-51 percent of the populations of Vancouver, Toronto and Peel Region were born abroad. British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta have the highest shares of visible minority populations in Canada. Approximately 30 percent of the populations in Calgary, Edmonton and Abbotsford are from a visible minority group; in Toronto and Vancouver, visible minorities constitute about half of the resident population, and in Peel they account for about 57 percent (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Official documents and selected semi-structured interviews with municipal officials provided information on each city’s response. The benchmarks used to track responses in the area of social services were inspired by a research and evaluation project that assembled twelve European cities to assess four dimensions of immigrant integration policy. The benchmarks adopted for this study focus on three analytical areas that most closely affect the lives of city residents—general governance, individual migrant empowerment, and partnerships with civil society and immigrant associations (Eurocities and the Migration Policy Group, 2008). These areas align with Fincher and Iveson’s social logics of recognition, redistribution and encounter,
and incorporate urban theorists’ concerns about the process and outcomes of planning for
diversity. Multiple indicators were used to measure responses in each area, for a total of 13
indicators:

General governance:

- The municipality’s strategic plan(s) for social or community services recognize the
  presence or impact of immigrants and racialized populations
- The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of
  immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of income and
  employment supports*
- The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of
  immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of housing*
- The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of
  immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of neighbourhood and
  community services*
- The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of
  immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of youth and children’s
  services*
- The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of
  immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of seniors services*
- The municipality conducts immigrant and/or racial minority-focussed research in the
  area of social services*

Individual immigrant empowerment

- The municipality’s plan for social services is prepared in consultation with immigrants
  and immigrant associations, and their views are reflected in the document.
- Social services staff are diverse and reflect the composition of the city’s population
- The municipality publishes multilingual information about social service programs*
- Immigrants can express themselves in their own language through an interpreter when
  accessing social services delivered by the municipality and/or its partners*

Working Partnerships

- The municipality has established partnerships with private sector and civil society
  organizations, interest groups, immigrant and ethnocultural associations
- All partnerships between the municipality and external organisations are subject to a
  regular evaluation by the municipality and/or independent organizations.

The findings were then used to develop a multi-dimensional typology of the
municipalities’ normative and empirical approaches to immigration and cultural diversity. The
first dimension situates them on a normative continuum ranging from the assimilationist model
of immigrant integration to the pluralist model (Poirier, 2004; Tossutti, 2012). Assimilationist
models emphasize individual equality, the recognition of individual rights and the right to
protection from discrimination. Public spaces are expected to remain “culturally neutral” and
the expression of cultural distinctiveness is confined to the private sphere. Policies, programs and services do not recognize differences based on a resident’s immigrant or visible minority status. Pluralist models acknowledge that the diversity that is found in the private sphere should be reflected in public policies, programs and services. For this study, municipalities that adopted at least a majority (7) of the 13 indicators above were classified as pluralist. Cities that implemented fewer than seven indicators were classified as assimilationist.

Pluralist cities were further distinguished based on their adoption of the multicultural or intercultural variant of pluralism (Poirier, 2004). The former recognizes individual and group-based citizenship identities and rights in policy, programming and service responses. These group-based identities and rights are founded on the idea that the needs and experiences of native-born, immigrant and racialized populations may be different, and require targeted initiatives. The intercultural variant emphasizes individual citizenship identities and rights, and places the rhetorical and policy emphasis on creating pan-ethnic structures, policies, programs and services. The nuanced distinction between whether a city had adopted a multicultural or intercultural normative position was assessed according to a city’s adoption of the sub-set of eight indicators indicated with an asterisk above. Cities were classified as multicultural if they adopted five or more (60 percent or more) of these indicators. If a pluralist municipality exhibited fewer than five of these characteristics, it was classified as intercultural.

Normative positions tell us whether and how cities recognize diversity, but say little about their levels of activism. To address this question, the typology further classified cities based on the number of responses they had implemented in each of the three analytical areas. In the areas of general governance and individual migrant empowerment, cities were classified as comprehensive if they had adopted initiatives on 60 percent or more of the indicators, as selective if they had adopted initiatives for 30-59 percent of the indicators, and limited if they have adopted fewer than 30 percent of the relevant indicators. In the area of working partnerships, cities were classified as comprehensive if they had adopted initiatives on both indicators; as selective if they had adopted one initiative, and as limited if they had adopted none.

**Municipal Responses in the Social Services Policy Domain**

**General Governance**

*The municipality’s strategic plan(s) for social or community services recognize the presence or impact of immigrants and racialized populations*

In keeping with the social logic of recognition, every municipality recognizes immigrants or racialized minorities in their strategic plans to address poverty, unemployment, housing, neighbourhood, seniors or children/youth issues. The federally-funded Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative has been an important vehicle for this recognition. Every municipality convenes, co-leads or belongs to a LIP—a municipal or regional coalition of public institutions, profit and non-profit agencies and residents that develop plans to improve the social, economic, political and civic integration outcomes for newcomers, transfer community-based knowledge, and improve the coordination of the settlement and integration service system. Outside the LIPs initiative, the city units that are responsible for various aspects of social services have also crafted strategic plans that recognize these groups.
In Abbotsford, social planners have recommended that council support expanding English as a Second Language and employment services geared to immigrant residents (City of Abbotsford Community Planning Division, 2006), support housing projects for immigrants and seasonal and foreign workers who live in cramped, substandard and inappropriate housing, explore policies for multi-generational housing (City of Abbotsford Economic Development and Planning Services, 2011), and offer more multicultural programs for new moms, children, youth and families (Honey-Ray and Enns, 2009). Edmonton’s 2007 Immigration and Settlement Policy commits the city to acting in the areas of economic integration and service access and equity, among other issue areas (City of Edmonton, 2007). The Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports: 2011-2015 identified international newcomers as one of ten populations vulnerable to core housing or homelessness and recommended the creation of supporting units that can accommodate the cultural needs of older refugees and immigrants (Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing, 2011).

Calgary’s Community & Neighbourhood Services’ business plan recognizes immigrants as a vulnerable sub-population (City of Calgary, 2015a). The Enough for All poverty reduction strategy proposes establishing community hubs that would provide a variety of programs, including immigration services, in priority neighbourhoods (City of Calgary and the United Way of Calgary and Area, 2013). The Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy and Implementation Plan 2015-2018 prescribes initiatives to improve immigrant seniors’ awareness and usage of city services (City of Calgary, 2015b).

Issues relevant to immigrant seniors and neighbourhoods are the focus of social service planning in Vancouver. The Age-Friendly Action Plan 2013-2015 recommends making community kitchens available for intergenerational and multicultural food preparation programs; partnering with organizations to offer more dementia-friendly, caregiver-inclusive adult programs, including multilingual and multicultural programs; hosting a public dialogue on dementia and vulnerable seniors, including multicultural seniors (City of Vancouver, 2013). The Local Area Plan for the Downtown Eastside recommends providing sensitivity training to staff working in the area of multiculturalism (City of Vancouver, 2014). A mayoral task force on housing affordability proposed working with immigrant communities to explore ways to direct a portion of overseas investment toward creating affordable housing (City of Vancouver, 2012).

The Region of Peel’s Human Services Plan recommends additional language programs, settlement, employment and interpretation services, and family counselling to help newcomers cope with unemployment, adjusting to new country and generational conflicts (Region of Peel, 2008). Its Diversity and Inclusion Strategy recommends improving the cultural competency of the regional workforce, engaging with diverse groups in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services, applying a corporate diversity/inclusion lens to programs and services, and advocating on behalf of marginalized communities (Peel Region, 2010). The Housing and Homeless Plan: a Community Strategy 2014-2024 recommends housing for immigrants and removing barriers of discrimination (Peel Region, 2014) and the Best Start Integrated Implementation Plan for children’s services recognizes that cultural, religious and ethnic diversity has tremendous implications for service provision and providers (2007).

Recognition of the unique needs of immigrants or racialized populations infuses the strategic plans of the City of Toronto divisions that are responsible for social services. Toronto’s Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA) Division is responsible for the social inclusion and community safety agenda, fostering safe and strong neighbourhoods and communities, promoting community engagement and advancing life skill opportunities for
youth. The **TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy** (City of Toronto, 2015a) recognizes the high poverty rates of newcomers (46 percent) and racialized groups (33 percent). **The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020** recommends supporting foreign-trained newcomers to access professional jobs and engaging newcomers in neighbourhood beautification projects (City of Toronto, 2014a). The **Toronto Youth Equity Strategy** calls on the city to review its plan to combat racism and discrimination and to reinstate the Family Separation and Reunification program for immigrant children who are experiencing severe mental and social trauma from being separated from their parents during the immigration process (City of Toronto, 2014b). **The Toronto Seniors Strategy** recommends improving the access of diverse older adults to social and cultural programming, involving them in the design and development of programming, and making them aware of the range of city programs (City of Toronto, 2012).

Toronto’s Employment and Social Services (TESS) Division finds jobs or training for unemployed and under-employed residents, provides financial benefits and supports available through Ontario Works to more than 75,000 individuals and families each month, and services to people who are not receiving Ontario Works. **Working as One: a Workforce Development Strategy** advocates addressing labour shortages and skills mismatches by opening up employment opportunities for underrepresented populations (e.g. Aboriginals, racialized communities and youth), as well as better integrating skilled newcomers (City of Toronto, 2012a). It also recommends providing training and education for jobseekers who do not qualify for income support programs, a gap that is increasingly disadvantaging population sub-groups such as newcomers and laid-off workers. **Talent Blueprint 2014-2018** recognizes that the city must create a more diverse public service that anticipates the needs of all city residents and businesses (City of Toronto, 2014c).

The Children’s Services Division plans, manages and funds early learning and child care, and works with the provincial government, school boards and community partners to provide services that promote healthy child development and family well-being. The **Before and After School Early Learning and Care Assessment for Quality Improvement** advocates integrating content reflective of the communities, culture and celebrations at least monthly (City of Toronto, 2016a). The **Toronto Middle Childhood Strategy** reported that the children of immigrant parents are less likely to be in after-school programs and that immigrant parents were more likely to feel that after school programs were not accessible in terms of language or cultural content (City of Toronto, 2012).

Under the Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA), the city is responsible for administering and funding a system providing over 95,000 units of social housing including approximately 70,000 rent-g geared-to-income units. The **Housing Opportunities Toronto: An Affordable Housing Action Plan, 2010-2020 (HOT Plan)** identified immigrants and refugees as vulnerable groups that require help to find suitable housing (City of Toronto, 2009). An external review of emergency shelters recommended that design guidelines at locations for the new homeless service model should consider the needs of recent immigrants, youth, seniors, people with pets, people with disabilities, and those who identify as LGBTQ2S (City of Toronto, 30 March, 2017). The Long Term Care Homes and Services Division provides long-term health care services for residents in municipal long-term care homes and for vulnerable individuals. **The Long Term Home Care and Services 2016-2020 Service Plan** called for the expansion of culturally relevant programming, cultural and religious meal options, and complementary care therapies (2015b).
The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of income and employment supports.*

Edmonton, Vancouver and Toronto currently incorporate the social logic of redistribution to immigrant or racialized minorities through targeted income or employment supports initiatives. These initiatives can take the form of mentorships and internships, networking forums, credential assessments, education bursaries, or corporate-wide employment and procurement policies that advance equity goals.

As a corporate partner of the Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council, Edmonton participates in the Career Mentorship Program for internationally-trained professionals. The city’s Human Resources Branch also offers internships for immigrants (City of Edmonton, 2017a). Vancouver has partnered with the Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia and immigrant service providers to run a mentorship program that pairs city staff with newly-immigrated professionals (City of Vancouver, 2017a). Vancouver’s Equal Employment Opportunity program helps departments recruit and retain a diverse workforce, partners with community agencies to assist with pre-employment programs, mock interviews and work placements; develops training modules targeted at frontline managers, focuses on recruiting and retaining new immigrants/new Canadians, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and women in non-traditional work areas, and delivers presentations to employment and diversity counselors in the community about the application and hiring process.

Toronto has created work placements through the province’s Career Bridging program, which provides work experience for internationally-trained persons. The city’s Profession to Profession mentoring program is part of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council’s (TRIEC) Mentoring Partnership for internationally-trained individuals. For a period of 4-6 months, staff provide job search advice and support to help ease newcomers’ transition into the local job market. More than 1,175 skilled immigrants have been mentored by staff since the program began in 2004 (City of Toronto, 2017b). In 2011, the Partnership to Advance Youth Employment, a joint initiative between private sector employers and the city, partnered with TRIEC to connect close to 300 youth and skilled immigrants to 30 entry and mid-level positions offered by ten large employers The City also holds an annual conference that provides networking and educational opportunities for internationally-educated professionals.

Toronto’s Employment Essentials program includes programs that help newcomers and other groups address long-term unemployment and other challenges (City of Toronto, 2017c). TESS caseworkers and the city’s Employment and Social Services Centres provide Ontario Works recipients, 61 percent of whom are foreign-born, with information about how they can receive help to pay the application costs for credential assessments. TESS has partnered with the University of Toronto and the Daniels Corporation to address the chronic unemployment and underemployment of internationally trained professionals in Regent Park, to provide academic guidance, referrals, mentoring opportunities, international credential assessments, and bursaries for continuing education (Regent Park Employment Services). Through the province’s Ontario Works program and contributions from Daniels Corporation, eligible residents receive financial support to attend continuing education or bridging programs (City of Toronto, 2012a).

Toronto has also adopted corporate-wide policies that address the social and economic needs of racialized minorities, among other groups. Its Employment Equity Policy (City of Toronto, 2000) commits the city to representing women, racial minorities, people with disabilities, Aboriginals and other groups in the municipal workforce. Through the Social
Procurement Program, three city divisions and community agencies work together to “increase the number of employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities available for people experiencing economic disadvantage, with a corresponding increase in the diversity of the supply chain.” (City of Toronto, 2016).

The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of housing*

Toronto is the only city that has implemented a redistributive initiative in the area of housing. The Streets to Homes outreach program, which helps people living outdoors or who are street involved and homeless move into permanent housing, delivers specialized programs for newcomers, Aboriginals and individuals being released from custody (Government of Canada, 2014).

The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of neighbourhood and community services*

Edmonton, Vancouver, Peel Region, Toronto and Calgary support neighbourhood or community service needs of immigrant and/or racialized populations through community grants or mobile early parenting and learning units. These initiatives fulfill the social logic of recognition, redistribution and encounter.

Edmonton has developed a suite of grant programs and resources that support the city’s Multiculturalism Initiative. These grants help emerging immigrant and refugee groups rent space, host community events, strengthen their cultural identity and pride, and collaborate with other not-for-profit organizations to address gaps in existing programs and services (City of Edmonton). The city has also developed a guide to help non-profit multicultural groups find space for offering activities, programs, services or events (City of Edmonton, 2010). Vancouver provides community grants to the Neighbourhood Houses that offer settlement services for new Vancouverites. Social grants support the work of the Vancouver LIP to enhance newcomer integration by funding programs that provide services to refugees, isolated immigrant seniors, at-risk immigrant youth and immigrant women preparing for employment. The Social Policy Division’s six community grant streams do not include a dedicated stream for ethno-cultural organizations, but funding under one stream was increased in 2017 to target key priorities, including a significant increase in refugees needing support (City of Vancouver, 2017).

Toronto’s Identify “N Impact Investment Funding program encourages youth leadership in the city’s 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. Project proposals that involve work with racialized youth, particularly African youth, are among those given priority. Peel’s LION program brings mobile early learning and parenting programs to families in Brampton and Mississauga neighbourhoods with high growth, high concentrations of immigrants and low

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1 The Multiculturalism Initiative, sponsored by the Mayor and a city councillor, has three focus areas: Multicultural Centres; developing the Edmonton LIP; Social Inclusion Initiatives that brings together groups that experience discrimination, marginalization and other forms of prejudice towards creating a common platform for shared advocacy, education and collective action.
income. In 2016, the Calgary Police Service began providing educational workshops to recent immigrant tenants of the Calgary Housing Company, covering topics such as the legal system, the role of police officers, and how to report emergencies (City of Calgary, 2016).

The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of youth and children’s services*

Edmonton, Peel Region and Toronto have developed responses in the area of youth and children’s services that advance the social logics of redistribution or recognition. In 2017, Edmonton assigned priority to partnerships focused on children, youth and families as part of a grant program supporting partnerships between established service providers and organizations from emerging immigrant or refugee communities (City of Edmonton, 2017b). Peel Region’s Best Start Network, which is co-chaired by a regional official, develops programs for Aboriginal, Francophone and other diverse communities with young children and connects them to appropriate supports. Peel’s Parenting and Literacy Resources programming offers workshops in English, Mandarin, Punjabi and French, that help parents support their child’s literacy development (Region of Peel, 2017a). Toronto Early Learning & Child Care Services operates 50 sites for children from birth to 12 years of age, which provide access to racially sensitive and culturally appropriate services.

The municipality has implemented targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in the area of seniors services*

Calgary, Peel Region, and Toronto have recognized the distinctive needs of older immigrant and diverse adults through initiatives that enhance the cultural competency of staff and offer culturally compatible programs and services. Calgary’s Community & Neighbourhood Services collaborated with immigrant agencies and other partners to develop a guide, funded through contributions from the province and municipality, to increase the cultural competency of service providers who work with immigrant seniors. Peel Long Term Care owns and operates five centres and provides Adult Day Services programs. The centres offer multi-faith spiritual services and some ethnic meal options, use cultural and language interpretive services to communicate with residents and their families, and provide education and resources on diversity (Peel Region, 2017b). Toronto’s Long Term Care Home Services operates homes with a specific language and/or cultural partnership. This entails providing special meals and activities for residents, spiritual and cultural programs, and volunteers with the requisite cultural and linguistic knowledge (City of Toronto, 2017d).

Municipality conducts immigrant and/or racial minority-focussed research in the area of social services*

Every municipality has conducted research on their immigrant or racialized populations, on their own or in partnership with external organizations, advancing the social logic of recognition. The City of Abbotsford has partnered with social service, education or ethnocultural organizations to
identify incidences of increased social isolation and tension between diverse groups and the mainstream population (Abbotsford Building Connections, 2014), and the barriers that IndoCanadian seniors have faced in accessing municipal and community services (Centre for Indo Canadian Studies and the University of the Fraser Valley, 2017). Housing and poverty issues have been the subject of immigrant and minority-focussed research in Edmonton. Newcomers and immigrants face distinctive financial barriers in accessing housing: a high debt ratio due to refugee loans and settlement costs; labour market entry challenges; gender issues; and the financial burden of supporting family back home. Immigrant professionals experience difficulties finding a job commensurate with their educational and work experience, and recent immigrants from Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East report particularly low median incomes (Kolkman and Escoto, 2015).

Calgary’s social planners and research partnerships with non-profit agencies and senior governments have examined the labour market, poverty and housing challenges experienced by newcomers, and the service needs of sub-populations of immigrants. Immigrants experience high rates of unemployment and under-employment, discrimination in the workplace (Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, 2015) and housing insecurity (Tanasescu et al., 2009). *Inequality in Calgary: The Racialization of Poverty* tracked the geographic concentration of racialized poverty in the city (Pruegger, Cook & Richter-Salomons, 2009). *Diversity in Calgary: Looking Forward to 2020* reported key demographics and recommended how the city could address the economic and social marginalization of newcomers (City of Calgary, 2011). Language and a lack of translation services pose major barriers to accessing services for immigrant children and youth (Hurlock, McCullagh & Schissel, 2004). City-organized community forums have found that immigrant and refugee seniors services suffer from a lack of sustainable funding, ineffective implementation and a lack of accountability from the larger systems (Luhtanen, 2009).

Collaborative research in Vancouver has noted the decline in government-assisted refugees settling in the city due to a lack of affordable housing, high child poverty rates in the 2001-2006 arrival cohort, low newcomer awareness about support systems or resources, a lack of culturally appropriate and multilingual information about services and programs, and the need for the city’s social services and programs to recognize the diverse needs of immigrants and refugees (Vancouver Immigration Partnership, 2017). The *Seniors in Vancouver* report noted a number of challenges facing diverse older adults: recent immigrant seniors were more likely to be low income than other seniors; ethnocultural minority seniors faced language, literacy and cultural barriers to accessing government services; an absence of culturally appropriate care and translation services in acute and residential care; shortages of bilingual staff in Neighbourhood Houses and seniors’ centres (City of Vancouver, 2010). Community forums with immigrant seniors revealed a sense of social isolation stemming from intergenerational conflicts, burdensome family responsibilities, limited access to culturally sensitive home supports and respite care, and elder abuse (SPARC BC, City of Vancouver & UBCM, 2013).

The *Children, Youth and Families in Vancouver* report addressed the persistence of economic disadvantage experienced by recent immigrant and racial minority youth. Young newcomers from Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean had the highest unemployment rates, while visible minority immigrant youths had lower median and average incomes than Caucasian immigrant youths. These gaps persisted for 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants. Recent immigrant status was identified as one characteristic that placed youth at risk of gang involvement (City of Vancouver, 2011).
Peel Region has partnered with university researchers to produce a provincially-funded report on the labour market integration of immigrants in the region. The survey found they are not faring well in terms of employment rates, income and career satisfaction, and were not utilizing government-funded employment services and programs that could help them (Region of Peel and the Diversity Institute, 2009). A discussion paper prepared for the Peel Housing Strategy noted that immigrants were more likely to face a housing affordability (44.4 percent) problem than all households (32 percent). For most immigrants, core housing need improved with the length of time spent in Canada, but refugees reported the greatest difficulties finding housing (SHS Consulting, 2009).

Toronto’s Social Policy Analysis and Research Unit provides statistical information on the city’s population, human services and demography at the city-wide, ward, community council and neighbourhood levels. Wellbeing Toronto uses visualization mapping tools that create a forum to share information about neighbourhood issues, including indicators including immigration, language, visible minority data. Unemployment, income, housing, seniors and children’s issues have been the subject of research in Toronto. In 2010 and 2011, the federally-funded Toronto Newcomer Initiative implemented six pilot projects aimed at understanding issues affecting the well-being of newcomers, including employment (City of Toronto, 2012a). Working as One: a Workforce Development Strategy noted that unemployment rates for newcomers and youths were at least double the overall unemployment rate of 9 percent (2012a). The Toronto Homelessness Research Symposium: Connecting Research to Practise highlighted the need for effective service interventions for newcomers and other groups (Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, City of Toronto, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2015). The Older Adult Income and Housing Profile noted that the economic integration of older immigrants is an important equity issue (City of Toronto, 2016c). The Licensed Child Care Demand and Affordability Study found that newcomer families are often unable to access the fee subsidy system due to language barriers, a lack of knowledge about the service, and difficulties navigating the system (Cleveland, Krashinsky, Colley and Avery-Nunez, 2016).

**Individual migrant empowerment**

The municipality’s plan for social services is prepared in consultation with immigrants and immigrant associations, and their views are reflected in the document.

In their capacity as LIPs convenors, co-leaders or members, every municipality consults with the immigrant or ethnocultural associations that are members of the LIPs councils. These multisectoral councils, as with other community consultation processes that municipalities organize on their own or in partnership with external organizations, advance the social logics of recognition and encounter. Abbotsford has consulted with immigrant associations to obtain input on housing, seniors and community safety issues. Edmonton’s corporate The Way We Live: Edmonton’s People Plan was based on consultations with multicultural communities, Aboriginal people, seniors and youth, businesses, council, staff (City of Edmonton, 2010). The Edmonton Community and Area Housing and Supports Plan: 2011-2015 solicited the input of newcomers and faith groups, among other stakeholders. Calgary’s CARE Strategy recommended that immigrant youths and their families be involved in planning for a continuum of quality services
for this demographic (Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, 2003). The Poverty Reduction Initiative, and Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy were prepared following consultations with community members and the non-profit sector, including migrant or ethnic associations. Calgary has organized forums for immigrant and refugee seniors.

In Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside Plan was developed in consultation with ethnocultural organizations and other stakeholders. Vancouver’s Age-friendly Action Plan was developed through consultations with diverse seniors, caregivers, and seniors’ organizations. The Peel Region Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was developed through consultations with staff and the Regional Diversity Roundtable, a coalition of 26 organizations and institutions, including ethnic and multicultural agencies. The Peel Region Housing and Homelessness Plan solicited the input of the Peel Newcomer Services Group, which serves as the region’s LIP, and the Diversity of Housing Needs discussion paper was informed by input from new immigrants.

Many social service strategic initiatives in Toronto have been formulated in consultation with immigrant associations, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Rooming House Review (Public Interest Strategy and Communications, 2015), the Toronto Middle Childhood Strategy, and the Toronto Seniors’ Strategy. The Toronto Seniors’ Forum (TSF) meets monthly to examine, discuss and advise on issues affecting Toronto residents aged 60 years and over. Forum membership is based on identity and place-based characteristics. Two members represent each of the following identity/heritage groups: Aboriginal/First Nations; African (Black); Asian; Latin American/Hispanic; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or two-spirited; South Asian; Disabilities. In addition, three seniors represent each of the four city quadrants. Immigrant settlement agencies were asked for input on the City of Toronto’s. Toronto’s Immigrant and Refugee Housing Committee is comprised of representatives from community-based organizations working with immigrants and refugees, academics, community members, and city staff (City of Toronto, 30 March 2017).

City staff involved with the delivery of social and community services reflect the composition of the city’s population

Toronto, Edmonton and Peel have conducted workforce censuses, but do not release data on the composition of their social and community services staff. These surveys found that visible minorities are underrepresented in their respective municipal workforces (Tossutti, 2012; Region of Peel, 2009). No other municipality has published corporate-wide or department-level data on their workforces.

The municipality publishes multilingual information about social service programs*

Recognition can also be conferred when a municipality communicates in the languages spoken by its residents. Five cities publish online or offline information in non-Official languages, but only a limited number of publications are devoted to social service-specific information. Toronto is the only municipality that has adopted a multilingual corporate communications policy (Tossutti, 2012). This policy is based on the principle that residents are entitled to municipal services and programs which are “racially sensitive, culturally and linguistically appropriate” (City of Toronto, 2002). Home language census data, the language needs of a
particular community or neighbourhood, and the nature of the information determine the priorities for multilingual translation or interpretation. Public information on citywide issues that is translated into a non-official language is automatically translated into French. Decisions about the language of communication are made at the program level (MacDonell, 2007). For example, the report on public consultations about rooming houses was published in seven non-Official languages. Toronto’s corporate website can be browsed in 52 languages using Google auto-translation, although certain areas and features are not available in translation. The Newcomer Welcome Brochure is available in English and Arabic, but will be translated into additional languages. The Toronto Newcomer Office coordinates the Refugee Resettlement program, which offers English and Arabic information resources for refugees and their sponsors.

Vancouver’s website has a Google function that allows visitors to translate content into 50 languages. The Intercultural & Race Relations Policy requires that staff ensure that civic services are provided, in appropriate and adequate measure, to all Vancouver residents, including those for whom English is a second language (City of Vancouver, 1988). The city has published information about important city-wide policies in Chinese, Filipino, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Spanish (Mackenzie, 2007). For example, online information about community gardening, the city’s response to sex workers, and the recently-introduced Empty Homes Tax has been published in Chinese. However, the Newcomer’s Guide to Services and Resources and the Newcomer’s Guide on the History and Culture of First Nations, are both published in English.

Edmonton’s Newcomer’s Guide is available in English on the city website, but translations in Amharic, Arabic, Mandarin, French, Punjabi and Somali are expected by spring 2017. The city hires external translators and then returns translated materials back to the community for review (Fowler, 2017). Calgary’s Newcomers Guide is published in English and Arabic. Calgary does not translate documents, but will issue a multilingual postcard with important notices and a message translated into 12 languages asking the recipient to ask someone to translate the notice for them.

Peel Region offers Google translation services on its website. It also translates the Long Term Care Facts pamphlet and Adult Day Service Facts pamphlets into Italian, Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi, French and Urdu. In Abbotsford, the costs of translation and concerns about meeting demands for translations from other language groups have limited the translations in non-official languages (Pizzutto, 2008). The City keeps a roster of employees who may be able to translate service complaints relayed by residents from non-English speaking backgrounds (City of Abbotsford, 2012). The Abbotsford edition of Welcome BC’s Newcomers’ Guide is published in English, using a benchmark level to meet the needs of non-English speaking newcomers. Multilingual welcome signs have been placed in all city facilities, and units that deliver emergency or frontline services translate some materials into other languages.

Migrants can express themselves in their own language through an interpreter when accessing social services delivered by the municipality and/or its partners*

No municipality publishes information about the linguistic competencies of its social service staff. The 311 services that provide information about non-emergency municipal government programs and services in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Peel Region offer multilingual interpretation services. Toronto’s 311 service answers requests for information via telephone, email, online and mobile channels in more than 180 languages. Settlement workers
are available at City Hall to assist newcomers with accessing interpretation or translation assistance, help finding training and career building opportunities, information and referral to other community services, schools and health care. The Toronto immigration portal contains information and resources about the immigration process, and links to the city’s multilingual 311 service.

Edmonton’s 311 service provides telephone interpretive services in more than 150 languages. Agents at the Citizen and New Arrival Information Centre in City Hall offer in-person support in more than 150 languages. Vancouver’s 311 service offers telephone interpretation services in 180 languages. Calgary offers Language Line telephone interpretation services in more than 200 languages. Front line city staff can use also use this service when customers require in person language support. Abbotsford does not have a 311 telephone service and relies on city staff with knowledge of other languages to provide interpretation at city hall.

**Working Partnerships**

_The municipality has established partnerships with private sector and civil society organizations, interest groups and immigrant association_

All LIPs include immigrant service providers, representatives of ethnocultural associations or immigrants in their membership councils. Beyond the LIPs, this paper has provided many examples of the research, program and funding partnerships that municipalities have forged with these and other civil society actors. These mechanisms have advanced the social logics of recognition and encounter.

_Partnerships between the municipality and external organisations are subject to a regular evaluation by the municipality and/or independent organizations._

In every municipality, funded partnerships are evaluated, but no evidence could be found that all partnerships are subject to a regular evaluation.

**A Typology of Municipal Social Service Responses to Immigration and Diversity**

In the absence of direction from senior governments, five municipal governments have adopted a pluralist normative approach to immigration and cultural diversity in the social services policy domain (Table 2). This is based on their adoption of at least a majority (7) of the 13 indicators of pluralism (Table 1). Abbotsford’s normative approach conforms most closely to the civic universalist variant of the assimilationist model (Poirier, 2004), as it adopted five pluralist responses (Table 1). The municipality has acknowledged and responded to diversity in the public realm, but does not adopt the stance of the monistic variant of the assimilationist model, which officially discourages the expression of diversity in the public and private realms.

The dominance of the pluralist approach in this sample of cities can be partly attributed to the long history of pluralism in the urban planning profession and to the rise of theoretical
discourse on multicultural planning (Qadeer, 2015). Pluralist thought influences almost every aspect of Toronto’s social services operations (11/13 indicators). Peel, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary have adopted 8-9 indicators each (Table 1). Toronto was the only city to have adopted targeted redistributive measures across all five areas of social services, and the only one to have implemented such a measure in the area of housing. Edmonton, Vancouver and Peel have each implemented three redistributive measures, with the focus area varying across cities. In general, neighbourhood or community service redistributive measures were the most commonly-adopted measures in the sample, followed by seniors services. Income and employment supports and children’s and youth measures received comparatively less attention (Table 1).

Amongst the five pluralist municipalities, the multicultural normative approach was the most favoured; each municipality had adopted at least five of the eight indicators of multiculturalism identified earlier in this paper (Tables 1 and 2). The dominance of multicultural normative premises in the social services domain could be attributed to nationwide contextual factors and to the professional norms of the city managers, staff and civil society actors who plan and deliver social services at the local level. Canada’s constitutional heritage of recognizing individual rights as well as minority and cultural rights, a policy of Official Multiculturalism and the Multiculturalism Act, have created a philosophical, legislative and policy framework that rejects a unilateral model of integration and which assigns public institutions the responsibility for helping newcomers overcome barriers to participating in Canadian society. Furthermore, the last two decades have seen a growing recognition of the importance of taking cultural diversity into account when designing and implementing programs and services on an international, national and sub-national scale (Marc, 2010). This trend may be particularly acute amongst professionals involved in the social service domain, as a previous study found that the intercultural approach dominated normative outlooks in the municipal corporate policy domain (Tossutti, 2012). The foundations of differences in normative outlooks within municipal bureaucracies will be explored in future papers.

When examining the breadth of pluralist responses in each analytical area, there is evidence of some inter-municipal divergence in the areas of general governance and convergence in the areas of immigrant empowerment and working partnerships. Table 1 shows that in the analytical area of General Governance, Toronto (7), Peel (5), Edmonton (5) and Vancouver (5) had adopted at least 60 percent of the indicators (5/7), earning them a classification as comprehensive (Table 2). General governance responses were selective in Calgary (4) and limited in Abbotsford (2). In the area of Immigrant Empowerment, Toronto, Peel, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver had each implemented three of four responses (Table 1), earning them a classification of comprehensive (Table 2). Abbotsford’s response was selective as it had adopted 2 indicators in this area. None of the cities examined had released data on the composition of their staff working in the area of social services. In the area of Working Partnerships, every municipality was classified as selective (Table 2) as they have forged partnerships with civil society actors, including immigrant associations, but did not report that they regularly evaluated all partnerships, including those which are not funded (Tables 1).
Municipalities, Diversity and Urban Planning Theory

Within the context of broader debates about how urban governments might plan for diversity, including cultural diversity, most municipalities have implemented the social logics of recognition and encounter in their research, program and public consultation initiatives, but redistributive measures are limited in number and confined to certain issue areas in most municipalities. The objective of communicative planning theory to incorporate diverse voices in planning decisions has been achieved, but given the magnitude of the social and economic challenges facing newcomers and racialized populations, the connection between voice and planning outcomes is not strong.

In the area of general governance, every municipality has recognized the presence of international immigration and its impact on the planning and delivery of social services in one or more strategic plans related to social services, and in their research activities. That recognition extends to the area of individual migrant empowerment, where every city provides interpretive services, either in person or through telephone and other channels, to multilingual populations. Some municipalities, such as Peel and Toronto, ensure that long term care staff and volunteers have the requisite cultural and linguistic skills to serve diverse residents and their families. Yet on some indicators of individual immigrant empowerment, recognition was weak; no city has published census data on the composition of its social services workforce, and multilingual translations of social service specific information are limited in number and content. Google translations of corporate websites that provide general information about city-wide services, including social services, are the practise in four of the five cities that provide multilingual translations.

Recognition and opportunities for encounters with people from other communities are offered in every municipality in the areas of migrant empowerment and working partnerships, specifically through the permanent representation of immigrant and/or ethnic associations on the LIPs councils, through government consultations with immigrant and cultural groups about social service strategic plans and issues, and through the numerous permanent and periodic partnerships that municipalities establish with immigrant and/or ethnic organizations. With respect to the social logic of redistribution, Toronto was the only city that had adopted targeted measures in every issue area. Other cities were more selective in terms of their choices. Neighbourhood and seniors services were the focus of initiatives in Vancouver, Edmonton, Peel and Calgary. Seniors issues may receive more attention than youth and children’s issues due to the strong presence of immigrant and diverse seniors in these cities; 73 percent of Toronto’s seniors are immigrants, and in Metro Vancouver, 26 percent of seniors identified as belonging to a visible minority (City of Vancouver, 2010). A large body of research has documented the employment, income and poverty gaps between native-born and immigrant, Caucasian and racialized populations, yet relatively few targeted measures have been implemented to address these issues.

Finally, similarities in municipal normative premises and empirical responses across provincial borders suggests that policy-learning is taking place, while differences in approaches and responses between cities in the same province underscores the relevance of local agency outside of provincial effects. Determining which factors that are endogenous and exogenous to the municipal government, account for these patterns, will be the focus of a follow-up study.
### Table 1-Municipal Social Services and Responses to Immigration and Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Governance</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Peel</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic plans recognizes potential impact of migrants and racialized populations on social services</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in area of income and employment supports*</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in area of housing*</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in area of neighbourhood and community services*</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted initiatives to address the needs of immigrants or members of racialized populations in area of youth and children’s services*</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality conducts immigrant and/or minority-focussed research in the area of social services*</td>
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<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Individual Migrant Empowerment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipality’s plan for social services is prepared in consultation with migrants and migrant associations, and their views are reflected in the document.</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social services staff are diverse and reflect the composition of the city’s population</td>
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<tr>
<td>The municipality publishes multilingual information about social service programs*</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants can express themselves in their own language through an interpreter when accessing social services delivered by the municipality and/or its partners*</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Working Partnerships</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The municipality has established partnerships with private sector and civil society organizations, interest groups and migrant associations</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<td>All partnerships between the municipality and external organisations are subject to a regular evaluation by the municipality and/or independent organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Total** 5 9 8 9 9 11
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<th>A</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Normative</strong></td>
<td>Civic</td>
<td>Universalist</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Governance</strong></td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migrant Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Selective</td>
<td>Selective</td>
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