RECIPROCAL INTEGRATION:
CREATING SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE SETTLEMENT AND HEALTH OF CANADA'S IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

Great social, economic, and health disparities exist between immigrants and non-immigrants. One approach to eliminating these disparities is reciprocal integration whereby the responsibility for settlement is shared among immigrants and communities. I have developed the Reciprocal Integration Model to detail the responsibilities of governments, individuals, and communities in bridging immigrant and non-immigrant populations. Kelowna, British Columbia and Moncton, New Brunswick were examined as case studies of reciprocal integration in action. While both communities addressed key components of the Reciprocal Integration Model, their motivations for improving immigrant settlement influenced the activities conducted and the degree to which reciprocal integration was created. Moncton was driven by economics leading to active immigrant recruitment efforts. Kelowna, however, sought to address racism leading to greater attention on improving the social environment. The Reciprocal Integration Model can serve as a guide for policymakers and community planners on how to create community connectedness and improve immigrant settlement.

Keywords: Immigrant; Health; Settlement; Integration; Social Capital; Welcoming Community

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GLOSSARY

Community   Community is both a physical structure and a social space. As a physical structure, community refers to the boundary overseen by the municipality. As a social space, community is comprised of the individuals living and interacting within the physical boundaries but is more than just the sum of these individuals.

Community Capacity   Factors and resources, such as the availability and accessibility of mediating structures, inter-organizational relationships and power distribution that enable communities to mobilize and address societal problems (Norton, McLeory, Burdine, Felix, & Dorsey, 2002).

Discrimination   To distinguish individuals or groups from other individuals or groups through adverse judgement s or actions (Krieger, 1999).

Human Capital   One's value, contribution, or worth in the form of knowledge, experience, and expertise.

Marginalization   A social process whereby those seeking to belong and be a part of the community are forced to the margins of society. This process creates isolation, vulnerability, the sense of being overlooked, categorized, or misrepresented (Lynman & Cowley, 2007).

Multiculturalism   When two or more racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious groups live within the same area. Multiculturalism can be a passive occurrence or an active process through policy initiatives.

Racism   Ignorant beliefs, prejudices, and discriminatory actions towards persons with a particular skin colour (Bonilla-Silva, 1996).

Racism, Structural   "A combination of prejudice and power that allows the dominant race [white] to institutionalize its dominance at all levels in a society" (Bonilla-Silva, 1996, p. 466).

Social Capital	The availability and accessibility of social connections and relationships and the resources and benefits these relations create. The premise that "who you know" matters (Woolock & Narayan, 2000) and that social connections can be the difference between "getting by and getting ahead" in life (PRI, 2005a, p.1).
Social Cohesion	Cooperation and solidarity created within the community through processes of trust and reciprocation.
Social Exclusion	Prevention of individuals' and groups' full participation in social, economic and political life by the majority.

INTRODUCTION

"…the way we organise our society, the extent to which we encourage interaction among the citizenry and the degree to which we trust and associate with each other in caring communities is probably the most important determinant of our health" (Lomas, 1999, p.1181).

Over 245,000 immigrants come to Canada every year looking for a better future for themselves and their families (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). In turn, Canada looks to immigrants to rejuvenate the country's aging population and reinforce both the skilled and unskilled workforce (Beiser, 2003). Under ideal circumstances, immigration can be a mutually beneficial exchange between immigrants and Canada as a host country (Kunz, 2005; Dowding & Razi, 2006). In reality, however, many immigrants never experience the prosperity and future for which they came to Canada for, and great social, economic and health disparities exist between the immigrant and non-immigrant populations.

The immigrant screening process is designed to ensure that newcomers to Canada are healthy (Beiser, et. al., 2002; Kunz, 2005; Newbold & Danforth, 2003). In fact, upon arrival immigrants are typically healthier than the general public, an occurrence known as the "healthy immigrant effect" (Dunn & Dyck, 2000; Newbold & Danforth, 2003; Ng, Wilkins, Gendron & Berthelot, 2005). After years of living in Canada, however, the health of immigrants deteriorates to levels similar or worse than those of the general population. After 10 years in

this country, when compared to non-immigrants, immigrants report higher rates of poor self-rated health, poor mental health and chronic disease, a greater number of doctor's visits, greater levels of physical inactivity, and higher levels of overall health deterioration (Newbold & Danforth, 2003; Ng, et. al., 2005).

Major sources of this health deterioration and immigrant health disparities are the difficulties and stresses experienced while attempting to settle in Canada (Beiser, 2003). Leaving behind one country and a way of life and adopting another can be full of hardships and disappointments. When immigrants move to their respected host communities, they are often starting a new life from scratch. Immediate concerns such as securing employment and housing and accessing social and health services must be addressed. During this time, pressure is also on immigrants to align their dress, language, habits, and values with those of the general public and integrate into the dominant culture (Beiser, 2003).

Presently, integration is a one-way process whereby immigrants are expected to adopt "Canadian" values, norms and behaviours (Dowding & Razi, 2006). This approach is problematic and challenging for immigrants and the communities in which they reside. With this one-way integration process, the pressure is on the immigrant to adapt and fit in, yet barriers such as language, racism, discrimination, marginalization, and social exclusion impede this process. Reciprocal integration (or what Dowding and Razi (2006) call true integration) is more desirable and can help overcome social barriers so that diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups can live peacefully together. This form of integration allows immigrants to settle into the host country without having to melt into and

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conform to the dominant culture (Manaï, 2009). Reciprocal integration places the onus for adaptation and settlement on not only the immigrant but also the non-immigrant population and community. Mutual relationships and shared responsibilities between immigrants and the general public are central to reciprocal integration. This approach ensures that immigrants coming to this country are recognized as equal, valued, and contributing members of the community.

The concept of social capital can enhance understanding of how social cohesion and community capacity facilitate reciprocal integration and immigrant settlement. Presently, differential access to social connections and the resources and opportunities these connections provide are considered major differences between the immigrant and non-immigrant populations and sources of immigrant disparities (Lomas, 1999; Policy Research Institute [PRI], 2005a). Understanding how to create communities where diverse social connections can be made will help facilitate reciprocal integration and improve immigrant settlement and health.

The aim of this paper is to examine the components that play a role in facilitating reciprocal integration between immigrant and non-immigrant populations. First, key features of the social capital literature are presented detailing the importance of social connections. My Reciprocal Integration Model will then detail the components of the community that influence the creation of social connections between immigrants and non-immigrants and encourage reciprocal integration. The concept of welcoming communities, as an example of

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reciprocal integration in action, will be presented, with Kelowna, British Columbia and Moncton, New Brunswick as case studies. Finally, the Reciprocal Integration Model will be used to analyze these case studies and their efforts to improve immigrant settlement and health.

BACKGROUND

The Diversity and Health of Canada's Immigrant Population

There are numerous reasons why newcomers immigrate to Canada including social or environmental factors, political climate or war, or academic, economic, and familial advancement (Gushulak & MacPherson, 2006). Immigrants differ not only in their reasons for coming to Canada, but also in their pre-migration experiences, as well as their home country, length of stay in Canada, age, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, knowledge of either English or French, health status, and health behaviour (Vissandjee, Desmeules, Cao, Abdool, & Kazanjian, 2004; Mulvihill, Mailloux, & Atkin 2001). One important difference to highlight is gender and how it creates unique experiences and challenges for females immigrating to Canada. While immigration is typically considered a voluntary process, it may be less so for females, who are often classified as dependents of the male immigrant applicant (Mulvihill et. al., 2001). During settlement, in comparison to their male immigrant counterparts, female immigrants are also at greater risk for isolation and poverty, for reporting poorer health and for having greater unmet social and health needs (Mulvihill et. al., 2001).

The social determinants of health perspective provides a basic understanding of how individual characteristics, cultural and economic factors, and social and physical environments interact and influence health. While many

of the determinants are similar for immigrant and non-immigrant populations, some determinants are unique or differentially experienced. In fact, many believe that immigration or immigrant status should itself be considered a determinant of health for immigrants (Beiser, 2003). Immigration is an extremely stressful process and the stress from unemployment, poverty, and the inability to access services can all lead to poor health outcomes (Beiser, 2003). A general lack of knowledge and language barriers also create challenges for immigrants in locating and receiving necessary social and health supports. Finally, even when services are used, race, ethnicity, and culture can affect the quality of care received (Beiser, 2003).

Immigrant Settlement

Many immigrants in Canada are merely getting by in life and just covering their basic needs. Immigrants experience great economic disparities, and the gap in earnings between immigrants and non-immigrants is widening and appears to be more difficult to eliminate with each cohort of newcomers (Picot, 2004; Drummond & Fong, 2010). Immigrants that arrived in the 1970's earned about 85 cents for every dollar non-immigrants earned within the first five years of arrival; this gap had all but eliminated by the early 2000's. In comparison, immigrants that arrived in the 1990's earned only 59 cents to every dollar non-immigrants earned within the first five years of their arrival. After fifteen years in Canada, this gap had only decreased to 79 cents (Drummond & Fong, 2010).

The earning gap between immigrants and non-immigrants has increased despite newer cohorts being more educated (Drummond & Fong, 2010) with

roughly 42 percent of new immigrants having a university degree in 2001 (Picot, 2004). Evidently, despite being educated and skilled, many immigrants are unable to obtain relevant job opportunities and achieve economic success. This underutilization of immigrants' potential or "brain waste" (Reitz, 2001) occurs for a variety of reasons including: non-recognition of foreign credentials by government, licensing bodies and trades, refusal of parallel licenses for specific professions and trades, and the requirement of "Canadian experience" by employers despite immigrants having a recognized or parallel license (Hum & Simpson, 2004; Reitz, 2001). Employment discrimination based on race or culture is also a reality as immigrants of non-European descent experience greater economic disparities then immigrants from European countries (Hum & Simpson, 2004; Reitz, 2001).

Racism, discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion are more widely reported among immigrants today than in the past (Khan, 2006). The rise in racism and discrimination experienced by immigrants in Canada corresponds with the dramatic shift in immigrant demographics. Prior to the 1960s, most immigrants came from European countries; today however, the majority of immigrants are from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East (Gushulak & Williams, 2004; Donaldson, 2006). While the immigrants that came from European countries such as Poland and Ukraine were once considered "visible minorities", they have been "whitened" over the past few decades in Canada (Hiebert, Daniel, Brown Bag Lunch Seminar, Metropolis, Ottawa, June 15, 2009). Today, however, approximately 73 percent of Canada's immigrant population

belongs to a "visible minority" category that has yet to be, and may never be, "whitened". These visible racial and cultural differences are proving to be a greater challenge when it comes to reciprocal integration and the settlement of immigrants (Donaldson, 2006).

Social Capital

Many definitions and understandings of social capital are used in research and practice. The simple premise of these definitions is that social connections and relationships are assets that can be used for a variety of purposes and benefits. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) nicely sum up the concept of social capital with the saying, "it's not what you know but who you know" (p. 225). The Policy Research Institute elaborates on the importance of social connections and relationships by stating that "knowing people to turn to for resources and support may make a difference both for getting by and getting ahead" (2005a p. 1).

The literature describes three distinct types of social capital: bonding, bridging and linking (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 1998; Cheong et.al., 2007). Bonding social capital refers to supports and resources created through localized and informal social connections among individuals and groups. These connections are created more naturally as the individuals and groups involved often have similar norms and values (McMichael & Manderson, 2004; Putnam, 1995; Macinko & Starfield, 2001). It is these connections and this bonding capital that immigrants rely most heavily on when they first arrive in Canada. While these connections are a great source of friendship and social support for immigrants, they typically are less able to generate reciprocal integration and

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needed employment and economic resources (McMichael & Manderson, 2004).

Bridging social capital, however, is created through connections across diverse

social, economic, and ethnic groups. Bridging social capital is more valuable

than bonding social capital for the creation of reciprocal integration since it leads

to a greater network of information sharing among community members thereby

promoting greater inclusion, social cohesion and community capacity (Putnam,

1995; Cheong, et. al., 2007). Finally, linking social capital refers to the vertical

connections among individuals, groups, and institutions. Linking social capital is

important for generating reciprocal integration since it highlights the role of

government, institutions, and organizations in creating connections,

opportunities, and resources for immigrants (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000;

Cheong et al., 2007).

Social Capital, Health, and Immigrant Settlement

There is a great amount of literature describing how social connections

and relationships affect health. Durkheim's research on suicide in the late 1900s,

for example, demonstrated how social connections could be a protective factor

against suicide (Kawachi, Kennedy & Glass, 1999). Since then, supportive and

resourceful social networks have also been shown to facilitate resiliency, positive

self-esteem, a stronger sense of identity, a greater sense of control and power

and improved self-rated physical and mental health (Cattell, 2001; McMichael &

Manderson, 2004; Shortt, 2004). During times of stress and sickness,

connections and relationships can also provide social, emotional and financial

support (Cattell, 2001). On the flip side, individuals who lack strong social

connections have been shown to experience two to three times greater risk of dying compared to those who are well connected (Kawachi, et.al., 1999).

Another way in which social capital and social connections are shown to affect health is through their influence on employment and income inequalities (Hawe & Shiell, 2001, Macinko & Starfield, 2001). Studies have demonstrated that areas with high rates of income inequality also have high levels of social mistrust, poorer health and increased mortality (Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, & Prothrow-Stith, 1997; Lomas, 1999; Macinko & Starfield, 2001; Cattell, 2001). The linkage between social connections, income generation, and health is particularly revealing among immigrant populations (Dunn & Dyck, 2000) with the employment, income, and health disparities immigrants experience directly linked to their social exclusion and limited ability to make diverse social connections.

THE USE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THIS PAPER: THE RECIPROCAL INTEGRATION MODEL

Despite social capital's appeal and widespread use, it is not a universally accepted concept. Critics of social capital argue that it is too ambiguous and has become a "catch all" for all social phenomena such as social cohesion and community capacity (Shortt, 2004; Fine, 1999). Woolcock, a proponent of social capital, even acknowledged that social capital "risks trying to explain too much with too little" (1998, p.195).

Much of the literature focuses on social capital at the individual level, and the responsibility of individuals to procure their own social capital. Another criticism of the social capital literature is that it tends to romanticize social connections and the community by portraying them as homogenous and conflict free (Muntaner, Lynch & Smith 2001, p.213). Also, the literature often neglects to highlight how some social connections and social groups, such as gangs and "old boys clubs", actually fuel social conflicts such as the racism, discrimination, and marginalization immigrants experience (Kunz, 2005).

I acknowledge these criticisms and the limits of social capital and its application. The potential for social capital to frame immigrant disparities and guide the creation of reciprocal integration, however, override these criticisms. The premise that "who you know" matters (Woolock & Narayan, 2000) and that

social connections can be the difference between "getting by and getting ahead" in life (PRI, 2005a, p.1) is the foundation for my "Reciprocal Integration Model".

The Reciprocal Integration Model incorporates the criticisms of social capital by acknowledging and addressing community conflicts such as racism and discrimination and by seeking to create connections across diverse social groups. The Reciprocal Integration Model is also based on the community conceptualization of social capital. The model emphasizes the community and its power to facilitate social connections and eliminate the systematic and social barriers that discriminate against immigrants. Building on this community emphasis, the Reciprocal Integration Model focuses on creating an environment that more naturally facilitates bonding, bridging, and linking social connections so that both immigrant and non-immigrant populations have equal access to the resources and opportunities needed to get ahead here in Canada. While this model was designed to improve social cohesion for the sake of immigrant settlement, reciprocal integration can benefit many populations groups within the community as difference, diversity and marginalization takes many forms.

The Reciprocal Integration Model details governments, individual community members, and the community as a whole as key players in facilitating social connections between immigrant and non-immigrant populations (See Figure 1). The model further details key aspects within each component that can be modified to improve the physical and social environments found within the community. Each player and component can directly improve community cohesion and immigrant settlement. Any individual, community or government

action that fosters inclusion by increasing social connections across diverse groups is therefore beneficial. The greatest impact, however, comes from addressing the components in the model in a unified and intentional manner. Reciprocal integration should therefore be considered a continuum with the ideal outcome stemming from communities touching upon all the components of the model and making lasting changes to each.

Social Services

Before launching into the Reciprocal Integration Model, the importance of social services must be highlighted since social services are a precondition for reciprocal integration. While social connections are important and can provide great resources and opportunities, they do not take away the need for social services and government's responsibility to provide them. Governments must provide social services in communities to meet the basic needs of both immigrant and non-immigrant populations so they can engage and participate in reciprocal integration. Social services addressing skills upgrades, employment, welfare, language training, safe affordable housing, transportation, education, recreation, and health must be available (Belkhodja, 2007; Kunz, 2005). While the majority of immigrants tend to settle in Canada's largest cities (Kunz, 2005), it is important that these services also exist in small to medium-sized cities so that immigrants located in these areas of the country are equally supported.

Figure 1: The Reciprocal Integration Model
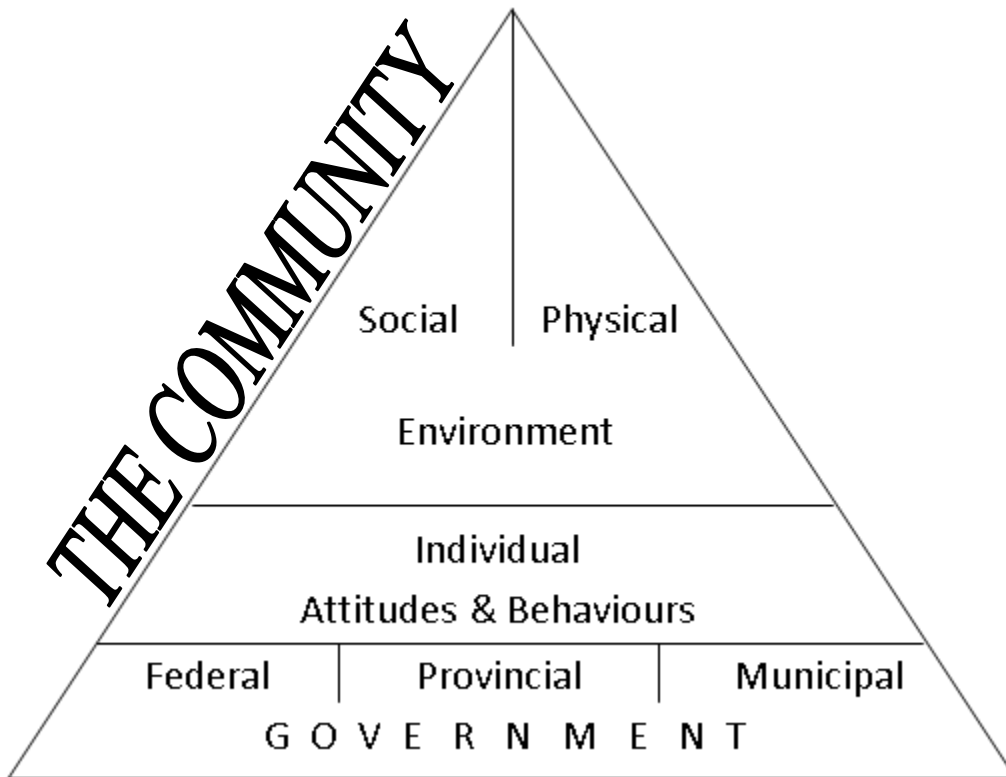
COMPONENTS OF THE RECIPROCAL INTEGRATION MODEL

Government

Government provides the foundation of the Reciprocal Integration Model and refers to federal, provincial and municipal levels since all three have a role in shaping communities and ensuring structural barriers are addressed so immigrant and non-immigrant populations have equal opportunities to get ahead in Canada. The federal government provides the context for immigrant settlement by setting national immigration policies. The provinces, through the Provincial Nomination Program and the funding and delivery of social services, are also involved in immigrant policy and settlement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, n.d.). Finally, the municipal government is often responsible for addressing barriers to settlement that exist within a community and improving social cohesion and community capacity.

The three levels of government can also influence community social cohesion and the settlement of immigrants through other types of policies (Macinko & Starfield, 2001). The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, for example, describes the federal government's commitment, in principle, to preserving and promoting immigrant culture and heritage within the country. This Act provides the foundation for creating a more reciprocal integration process as it highlights

the country's dedication to multiculturalism, diversity and equal opportunities for all (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1985).

Provincial and municipal governments, compared to the federal government, more directly influence the physical and social environment of communities and the creation of diverse social connections though decisions on community planning, social housing, education, transportation, recreation, and health. Prioritizing social connections in policy and program planning can help ensure that provincial and municipal governments promote community cohesion rather than social exclusion that leads to immigrant disparities (PRI, 2005b; Wakefield & Poland, 2005). Provincial and municipal governments can also promote the creation of diverse social connections by supporting community organizations and services that focus on building partnerships and exchange opportunities between immigrant and non-immigrant populations (Shortt, 2004). Finally, to promote community cohesion and immigrant settlement, all three levels of government should be directly involved in addressing the structural racism and economic, employment, and social discrimination experienced in Canada (Beiser, 2003; Shortt, 2004). All three levels of government need to work with institutions and professional bodies to ensure the barriers to full community participation are eliminated.

The Community

For this paper and the Reciprocal Integration Model, the community refers to the boundary overseen by the municipality and is both a physical structure and a social space. The community is comprised of the individuals living within the

physical boundaries and interacting within the social space but is more than just the sum of these individuals. The community is the central focus of the Reciprocal Integration Model as it is at this level where great change is possible to improve immigrant settlement and health (Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan, 2008). Through the social capital literature, I have identified the key components of the community that can be addressed and modified to better facilitate social connections between immigrant and non-immigrant populations: individual attitudes and behaviours, and the social and the physical environment.

Individuals within the Community

The Reciprocal Integration Model highlights the role individual immigrants and non-immigrants have in creating social connections and community cohesion. Connections and relationships are formed when two or more individuals come together and are open and receptive towards one another. A positive attitude towards diversity and a willingness to adapt are important as these can influence individual behaviour and a person's drive to create diverse connections across social, class, and ethnic groups. Addressing the individual attitudes and behaviours of community members is therefore essential for facilitating reciprocal integration and improving the reception of immigrants and their diversity within a community.

Individual community members play an important role in eliminating racism, discrimination, marginalization and social exclusion and in bridging the social divides between immigrants and non-immigrants. Raising awareness and educating community members about the widespread benefits of social cohesion

is of primary importance. Individual community members must be educated on

how racism and discrimination negatively influence individuals and the

community as a whole, and come to understand that difference and diversity can

be positive community attributes that foster social and economic growth.

Through educational campaigns in both schools and across the community,

individuals will hopefully become more open and respectful of diversity and

inspired to do their part in creating a more inclusive and connected society

(Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan, 2008).

Community as More than the Sum of Individuals

The Social Environment

The social environment in the Reciprocal Integration Model refers to the

community's social climate and atmosphere. A positive social environment is

one that is respectful of difference and values diversity within the community. By

hosting events and festivals that celebrate immigrant groups and their cultures as

equals, communities can showcase the diversity that exists and fuel cultural

learning and sharing (Frideres, 2006; Preugger & Cook, 2009). A positive social

environment is an attractive feature for immigrants and a deciding factor in where

they choose to live within Canada (Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan,

2008).

Racist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours promote social

exclusion and create an unwelcoming social atmosphere for immigrants. To

create a more positive social environment and develop a more cohesive

community, communities must make a commitment to eliminating these

destructive attitudes and behaviours (Khan, 2006; Belkhodja, 2006). The community needs to raise awareness amongst community members about the detrimental effects racism, discrimination and marginalization have on immigrant populations as well as social cohesion, community capacity and growth. The three levels of government can support these efforts through policies that promote equal opportunity for all community members. Individuals can also play an important role by reflecting on their own attitudes and behaviours and understanding how they influence the overall community's social climate.

The Physical Environment

The physical environment refers to the physical design and structure of the community. The physical environment can influence when and how immigrant and non-immigrant community members come together. Currently, physical segregation of these two groups within communities exacerbates their social distance and perpetuates immigrant exclusion and disparities (Wakefield & Poland, 2005). To improve the physical environment bridging diverse populations must be prioritized when making decisions on community planning and housing developments (PRI, 2005a). Creating diverse neighbourhoods, through cooperative housing and social housing initiatives with a mix of both immigrants and non-immigrants, for example, can help generate natural opportunities for these diverse populations to interact and socialize.

To develop diverse social connections, multiple physical spaces in the community must be created. Diverse neighbourhoods, community parks, playgrounds, green spaces, and downtown areas can all lend themselves to the

development of an interactive and connected physical environment (Lomas, 1999; Manaï, 2009). Public buildings such as libraries, museums, and recreation centres are other venues that can bring immigrants and non-immigrants together in an informal yet social manner. Recreation centres and sporting facilities are particularly effective in bringing people of all ages and backgrounds together for a common purpose and passion (Manaï, 2009).

To create a positive physical environment that facilitates social connections and community cohesion, the public spaces and buildings mentioned above must be open and accessible to all community members (Lomas, 1999; Manaï, 2009). The location of these spaces within the community is therefore important. To cater to all community members, regardless of income or wealth, these spaces should be accessible by public transportation so that immigrants and non-immigrants alike have equal opportunity to use and enjoy these public spaces (Manaï, 2009).

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES: AN EXAMPLE OF RECIPROCAL INTEGRATION

The creation of "Welcoming Communities" is a recent policy initiative that has the potential to facilitate reciprocal integration. The development of welcoming communities was a key initiative identified in Canada's Action Plan Against Racism. This plan describes the responsibility of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to work with provinces, municipalities and community organizations to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for immigrants and other diverse populations (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2005). While municipalities have no legislative authority over immigration, municipal governments are considered essential partners in creating a positive settlement experience (Carter, Morrish & Amoya, 2008).

While there is no standard definition of what constitutes a welcoming community, the general purpose is to be more open about the challenges immigrants face and actively work to improve the settlement process. For immigrants, this welcoming effort increases the attractiveness of the community and the likelihood of a positive settlement experience. In return, welcoming community efforts benefit the community by facilitating reciprocal integration and increasing the ability of immigrants to settle and positively contribute to the area's cultural, social and economic growth (Bahbahani, 2008).

Any community can aim to become more welcoming and many provincial immigration websites offer tool kits and resources on this process. Each community can determine the activities they want to address based on the dynamics, strengths and challenges of their specific area. Presently, it appears as though any formal effort to improve the settlement and integration process is enough for a city to claim the title of a welcoming community. Different communities, however, appear to be at various points along the continuum of becoming a welcoming community depending on their motivations, resources, specific activities, and available reports and evaluations of their efforts. Canada's welcoming communities are located in a variety of community sizes, in rural and urban locations and in almost every province (see Appendix B for a list of all known welcoming communities).

The welcoming communities of Kelowna, British Columbia and Moncton, New Brunswick were chosen as the case studies for this paper. These two communities, out of all known welcoming communities, offered the most information about their rationale for becoming a welcoming community and had documentation of their efforts and activities. The demographic, social and economic characteristics of these two cities are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic, Social and Economic Characteristics of Kelowna and Moncton

	Kelowna, British Columbia	Moncton City, New Brunswick
Population in 2006	106,707	64,128
Population change, 2001 to 2006	+10. 8 %	+5.0 %
Median age of the population (in years)	42.8	39.1
Mother tongue: English only (%)	82.5	63.9
Mother tongue: French only (%)	1.5	33.5
Immigrant population (%)	14.8	3.7
Visible minority population (% of entire population)	6.2	2.8
Largest visible minority population (population group and % of visible minority population)	South Asian 28.8	Black 40.3
Average value of owned dwelling	$375,151	$145,324
Median family income (2005)	$59,260	$56,292
Unemployment rate (%)	4.8	6.5

*Table composed of multiple sources. References provided in the text.

Kelowna and Moncton are quite different from each other, representing the geographic, economic, and social diversity of Canada. While both Kelowna and Moncton are middle-sized cities, Moncton has a noticeably smaller population and roughly half the population growth of Kelowna (Statistics Canada, 2006a; Statistics Canada, 2006b). Another notable difference between the two cities is their language use. Roughly, 82 percent of Kelowna's population considers English their mother tongue compared to only 64 percent in Moncton. French on the other hand, is much more prevalent in Moncton with around 34 percent of the population listing the language as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2006a; Statistics Canada, 2006b). In fact, Moncton was the first Canadian city to become officially bilingual (Belkhodja, 2006). Immigrants comprise roughly 15 percent of Kelowna's population, whereas in Moncton, immigrants are less than 4 percent of the total population. The makeup of the visible minority population (which does not equate to the immigrant population)

also differs greatly between the two cities. In Kelowna, the largest visible minority group is "South Asian", while in Moncton, "Blacks" comprise the largest visible minority population.

With respect to economic indicators, the median family income in the two cities is quite similar. The housing market, however, is much more expensive in Kelowna with the average home costing almost two and a half times more than that in Moncton. Despite these price differences, home ownership is more common in Kelowna. Another noticeable difference between the two cities is their unemployment rate, with Moncton experiencing 1.7 percentage points greater unemployment compared to Kelowna (Statistics Canada, 2006a; Statistics Canada, 2006b).

Kelowna's Welcoming Efforts

I was unable to discern when exactly the city of Kelowna began the process of becoming a welcoming community. The earliest information about their efforts began in 2008, with the release of the Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan report titled "The changing face of Kelowna: Are we ready?" This report stemmed from the city's recognition that racism was a great barrier to the integration of their immigrant and visible minority populations. This report served as the framework for Kelowna's welcoming community efforts, highlighting current challenges and barriers to integration and key activities that could improve settlement and social cohesion (See Table 2).

As mentioned above, social services are necessary to support community members and are a precondition for reciprocal integration. The Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan (2008) explicitly described the importance of providing language training, economic and employment services, safe and affordable housing, transportation systems and accessible health care to both immigrant and non-immigrant community members. As part of their welcoming initiatives, Kelowna also increased their funding for these social and settlement services.

In line with the government component of the Reciprocal Integration Model, the Changing Face of Kelowna report described political support and commitment as vital to the welcoming community process. For Kelowna, political support was demonstrated at the provincial level, with the WelcomeBC initiative (See Table 2). This initiative, led by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, oversaw settlement, immigration and labour market services in the province of British Columbia (The Government of British Columbia, n.d.). At the municipal level, political support was demonstrated through the creation of the Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan, the conducting of community asset mapping, and the allocation of increased funds for immigrant social and settlement services (Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan, 2008; The Government of British Columbia, n.d.).

In line with the individual component of the Reciprocal Integration Model, The Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan grounded their welcoming community initiatives in the perspectives and opinions of diverse community

members. Consultations through forums and discussions with both immigrant and non-immigrant community members, local businesses, and community leaders were held to gain insight into dominant attitudes and behaviours. Changing the attitudes and behaviours of individual community members to eliminate racism was a key initiative identified in the report and pursued by the city of Kelowna (Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan, 2008; Bahbahani, 2008).

At the greater community level, the development of strategic partnerships between community organizations and businesses to better support immigrant populations were essential in improving Kelowna's physical and social environment (Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan, 2008). To address the social environment, the city of Kelowna created a volunteer anti-racism committee charged with raising awareness and educating the public. In addition to addressing racism, Kelowna actively promoted the city's cultural diversity. The Intercultural Society of Central Okanagan (n.d.) detailed various community activities that celebrated diversity and showcased different cultures including citizenship ceremonies, global citizen week, multicultural days, an international Christmas, summer potlucks in the park and diversity health fairs.

At the physical environment level, Kelowna described creating a central meeting space where immigrants could obtain the resources and supports they need while interacting and socializing with other immigrant and non-immigrant community members (The Government of British Columbia, n.d.). To date, it is unclear whether this space has been created. Overall, it is difficult to ascertain

what activities have been done and which action items are still in progress.

Kelowna, however, is considered a success story by the WelcomeBC initiative

and the province of British Columbia for their welcoming efforts and

accomplishments thus far (The Government of British Columbia, n.d.).

Table 2: Welcoming Community Initiatives

Model Components	Kelowna	Moncton
The Government		
Federal	*Information not found*	*Information not found*
Provincial	Welcome BC Initiative	New Brunswick Government increasing immigration numbers through the Provincial Nominee Program Specific recruitment activities in Korea and China to promote the province as a immigrant destination Efforts to retain international students after their studies
Municipal	Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan Commitment to increase funding for ESL and immigrant settlement programs The Changing Face of Kelowna: Area we Ready? Report Community asset mapping	Greater Moncton Immigration Board and Greater Moncton Immigration Strategy The Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area Enterprise Greater Moncton: Exploratory trip to China to develop business partners
The Community:		
Individuals	Community forums to create dialogue with all community members (immigrant and non-immigrant) Involvement of immigrants and "visible minorities" in planning and programming Focus groups and interviews to assess cultural readiness. Inclusion of academics, business representatives	MAGMA conversation circles with immigrants Increasing connectivity by linking immigrants to key community members and businesses
Social Environment	Development of an anti-racism committee Activities to promote and celebrate diversity: Citizenship Ceremonies, Global Citizen Week. Multicultural Day, An International Christmas, Potlucks in the park, Diversity Health Fair	Celebrate International Day against Racism Officially Bilingual World Cup Soccer celebration- brought together international students, 200 newcomers through soccer tournaments and activities Chedly Belkhodja's film: Au bout du fil [Hanging On]. Highlighted the employment challenges immigrants face in Moncton
Physical Environment	Creating a central meeting place for all cultures with a paid staff and immigrant volunteers	The Centre d'accueil pour les immigrants et immigrantes du Moncton métropolitain (CAIIMM) [Greater Moncton immigrant reception centre]

*Table composed of multiple sources. References provided in the text.

Moncton's Welcoming Efforts

As with Kelowna, it is unclear when exactly Moncton started its welcoming community initiatives. However, with the community's aging population, low birth rate, and loss of youth to other areas, immigration is considered vital for the city's future development and growth (Enterprise Greater Moncton, 2006-2007). The city's economic profile has driven Moncton's welcoming efforts and their goal of attracting more immigrants, international students, and foreign business to the area (Belkhodja, 2006; See Table 2).

Settlement and social services were in place in Moncton to support the immigrant and non-immigrant populations and their basic needs. There were services to address employment, language, childcare, technology training and public awareness (MAGMA, n.d.a). The city also offered immigration brochures and information packages in numerous languages and employment counselors to assist new immigrants find work in the area (MAGMA, n.d.b).

With both provincial and municipal government support and the involvement of local businesses and organizations, Moncton is actively seeking immigrants and international students to settle in the area. In line with the Government section of the Reciprocal Integration Model, the provincial government is looking to increase the total number of immigrants coming to New Brunswick through the Provincial Nominee Program. Efforts are specifically being made to recruit immigrants from countries such as Korea and China and to retain international students after graduation (Belkhodja, 2006). In 2006, members of Greater Enterprise Moncton and delegates from the city of Moncton

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travelled to China to develop business partnerships and investment opportunities (Greater Enterprise Moncton, 2006-2007). At the municipal level, the city of Moncton created the Greater Moncton Immigration Board and the Greater Moncton Immigration Strategy to oversee immigrant affairs. Responsibilities of this board include ensuring all sectors of the community are represented in dialogue on immigration and settlement and conducting research on the immigration and settlement process in Moncton.

The Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area (MAGMA) was created as an umbrella organization to foster greater respect and inclusion for people of all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This organization and its activities seek to assist immigrants in their settlement and promote cultural awareness and sharing (MAGMA, n.d.a). Corresponding with the individual level of the Reciprocal Integration Model, MAGMA encouraged immigrants to participate in conversation circles and to be involved in community planning and decision-making (Greater Enterprise Moncton, 2006-2007). MAGMA also sought to link the immigrant population to key community members and businesses to increase community connectivity and generate resources and opportunities for both immigrant and non-immigrant populations.

To address the social environment component of the Reciprocal Integration Model, the city of Moncton and MAGMA hosted activities that brought community members together to celebrate cultural diversity. Events included citizenship ceremonies, cultural events, celebrating International Day Against Racism and organizing multicultural sporting activities. The World Cup Soccer

Tournament particularly stands out in the literature on Moncton's welcoming community efforts. This tournament was considered a great success for the city as it brought the community together with soccer teams composed of both immigrant and non-immigrant community members (Belkhodja, 2006). To draw attention to immigrant disparities in Moncton a documentary film was also created. *Au bout du fil* [Hanging On] highlighted immigrant employment disparities in Moncton and was a part of the *Work for All* project which sought to combat racism in the workplace (National Film Board of Canada, 2009).

Moncton's welcoming efforts briefly touched upon the physical environment. Under MAGMA's direction, Moncton established the Centre d'accueil pour les immigrants et immigrantes du Moncton métropolitain (CAIIMM) [The Greater Moncton immigrant reception centre]. This centre is conveniently located downtown and provides services while serving as a space for cultural sharing between immigrants and non-immigrant populations (Belkhodja, 2006).

Cross-Welcoming Community Comparison

For both communities, the municipal government took the lead in facilitating welcoming community efforts. Both Kelowna and Moncton created specific boards and committees to oversee immigrant settlement and to combat racism. Provincial support was demonstrated through the Welcome BC Initiative and the Provincial Nominee Program. The province of New Brunswick was particularly active in recruiting immigrants and establishing economic and trade partnerships overseas. The direct role of the federal government in Kelowna's

and Moncton's welcoming community process was not detailed in the available reports.

At the individual level, both communities sought the involvement of immigrants and non-immigrants through their participation in public forums and focus groups. These public activities were held to assess both communities' openness to becoming more welcoming and to ensure that all community members had a voice in the process. Individual opinions and perspectives were important for determining the welcoming community efforts that would be conducted and prioritized.

Addressing the physical environment did not seem to be a top priority for either Kelowna or Moncton beyond having a central community immigration facility. There was no mention of greater community planning and the need to create an overall more inclusive physical space. In contrast to the physical environment, both communities were particularly invested in improving the social environment and making it more open and respectful of diversity. In addition to creating an anti-racism committee, Kelowna hosted numerous activities such as citizenship ceremonies and multicultural activities, while in Moncton, the World Cup Soccer tournament was showcased as a successful event.

DISCUSSION

The Reciprocal Integration Model, which examines the roles of government, individuals and community, highlights details of welcoming communities that foster social cohesion and improves the ability of immigrants to settle in the area. An interesting finding of the case studies was the important role motivation had on steering welcoming community initiatives. The motivation for becoming a welcoming community appeared to influence the priorities and specific activities the communities conducted which then affected where along the reciprocal integration continuum the community fell. Kelowna's intention for becoming more welcoming was to address the racism and discrimination within the city. This then motivated Kelowna to focus on improving the social environment by hosting numerous cultural events to foster respect and value for immigrants and the diversity they bring to the area. Moncton, on the other hand, appeared to be motivated to become more welcoming to improve the city's economic profile as demonstrated by their focus on recruiting immigrants from countries such as Korea and China. While Moncton still touched upon the social environment, activities overall appeared to be less about improving the community for immigrants and more about attracting immigrants to the community. As stated earlier, reciprocal integration is an ideal outcome for communities. Being driven by economics, therefore, does not nullify Moncton's other activities and efforts that aim to improve social connections and social

cohesion. This motivation does however place Moncton lower on the reciprocal integration continuum than Kelowna.

There are limitations to the welcoming community case studies that need to be addressed. The information on Kelowna and Moncton's welcoming efforts was dependent on the reports and evaluations available. As such, it is possible that other activities and efforts took place that were not incorporated into this analysis. On the same topic, the information available was not always up to date, so differentiating which activities were conducted as opposed to which were being planned was difficult for both cities. To address these limitations, future research on welcoming communities should incorporate interviews with community leaders and both immigrant and non-immigrant community members. These interviews would provide greater insight into what efforts and initiatives have taken place as well as community responses to these efforts and their effectiveness in facilitating reciprocal integration.

The Reciprocal Integration Model is a valuable contribution to the dialogue on social capital and its role in improving immigrant settlement and health. Primarily, this model can help address some of the limitations and criticism of social capital. The Reciprocal Integration Model can serve as an example of how to use the concept of social capital without romanticizing social connections and the sense of community. In fact, this model demonstrates how social capital can address societal conflicts such as racism, discrimination and marginalization while still promoting difference and diversity within the community. The model can also improve the concept of social capital by serving as the start of a

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measurement and evaluation tool. Measuring how social connections improve settlement and health will give social capital greater merit and weight as an intervention. Finally, the Reciprocal Integration Model highlights the importance of discussing social capital at the community level instead of the individual level. Just as reciprocal integration looks to take the onus off the immigrant, social capital should take the onus off the individual and individual responsibility for creating social connections. Instead, the power structures that influence how and when social connections are formed should be examined to ensure equal access to social capital and the resources and opportunities it creates.

The creation of welcoming communities is a positive step towards fostering reciprocal integration and improving the settlement and health of Canada's immigrant populations. The ability of communities to use this term loosely without meeting specific requirements, however, is problematic. There needs to be guidelines on what constitutes a welcoming community for the label to be meaningful and have merit. If implemented, the Reciprocal Integration Model can help evaluate welcoming community initiatives across Canada. Community planners and leaders can use this model as a guide for where changes and improvements can be made to connect diverse community members and facilitate reciprocal integration.

While there are no measures of success at this point, reciprocal integration is a worthwhile investment for policymakers. Greater efforts must be made to ensure immigrants coming to Canada are supported and able to get ahead in this country. The majority of immigrants coming to Canada are healthy,

educated and skilled yet lack the opportunity to utilize their human capital. As a result, many immigrants find themselves working low paying jobs and living in poverty. These stresses and hardships lead to the health disparities seen between the immigrant and Canadian-born population. Reciprocal integration can help guide policymakers to address structural inequities facing immigrants and prioritize social connections and the creation of connected and supportive communities to improve immigrant settlement and health.

Around the world, Canada has a positive image for welcoming immigrants, respecting diversity, and promoting multiculturalism yet the lived experience of many immigrants does not correspond with this reputation. Despite the country's wealth and resources, immigrants still experience great social, economic and health disparities. These disparities are unacceptable and with the large number of immigrants arriving every year, it is crucial that Canada takes greater responsibility for the welfare of immigrant populations. The country needs to ensure that immigration becomes a mutually beneficial process and that the resources and opportunities that come with living in Canada are equally distributed across population groups. By creating welcoming communities and fostering reciprocal integration, immigrants will have greater opportunities to develop diverse social connections and access needed resources and opportunities. Facilitating reciprocal integration will help ensure that Canada lives up to its multicultural reputation by truly valuing diversity and supporting immigrants in their new lives as Canadians.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Methodology

The interest for this paper came from my reading of *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam (2000). After reading this book, I was interested in exploring what social capital looks like at the community level, how it affects the settlement and health of Canada's immigrant population, and finally how it ties in with welcoming community initiatives. To investigate these themes, a search of peer reviewed literature and a general Internet search were conducted. With this literature I created the Reciprocal Integration Model.

Before starting my data search I consulted with the health sciences librarian. Data were then collected from peer-reviewed articles and grey literature. For the peer reviewed articles I conducted a search of PubMed, Medline, Web of Science, and Sociological Abstracts using the key words (either in isolation or combination) social capital, social capital theory, immigrant*, immigrat*, health, Canada, and welcoming communi*[1]. Grey literature was obtained through a general Internet search and a search of Metropolis[2] reports using the key words, "immigrant health" and "welcoming communities" (both in

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[1] The asterix allows for the search of the term with multiple endings. For example a search of immigra* will collect the terms immigrant, immigration, immigrate, immigrates etc.

[2] Metropolis is a Canadian organization that serves as an international network for comparative research and public policy development relating to migration, diversity, and immigrant integration in cities in Canada and around the world (http://canada.metropolis.net/index_e.html).

isolation and in combination). Through Metropolis' reports, Kelowna, British

Columbia and Moncton, New Brunswick were identified as case studies of

Canadian welcoming communities.

I used mind-mapping techniques to develop the Reciprocal Integration

Model. I wrote down the key concepts of social capital and how they influence

immigrant settlement and health. From the literature, I also identified the key

components of community and played around with how they all fit together.

Many versions of the model were created and altered until the one in this paper

finally stood out.

Appendix B: Canadian Welcoming Communities

Province	Community	Information Source
Alberta	Red Deer Rocky Mountain Horse Trochu Wetaskiwin	Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria http://www.icavictoria.org/community/partnership/local-government-resources Central Alberta: The Natural Choice http://www.centralalberta.ab.ca/index.cfm?page=CurrentProjects
British Columbia	Kelowna Revelstoke Victoria	Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria http://www.icavictoria.org/community/partnership/local-government-resources
Manitoba	Brandon	Brandon University http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/wel_comm_forum2009.asp
New Brunswick	Moncton	Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria http://www.icavictoria.org/community/partnership/local-government-resources Metropolis
Newfoundland	*Specific communities not found*	
Nova Scotia	Halifax	Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria http://www.icavictoria.org/community/partnership/local-government-resources
Ontario	Brantford Barrie Durham Guelph Hamilton Kingston London Middlesex North Bay Ottawa Peterborough St. Catherine's Sudbury Thunder Bay Waterloo Windsor	Welcoming Communities Initiative http://www.welcomingcommunities.ca/
Prince Edward Isand	*Specific communities not found*	
Quebec	Gatineau	Our Diverse Cities. Metropolis www.canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/ODC_vol7_spring2010_e.pdf - 2010-04-12
Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	Government of Saskatchewan http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca/saskatchewan-immigration-strategy

Appendix C: Personal Reflection

Writing this capstone was a challenging yet ultimately rewarding process. I had to continually remind myself what was within or outside the scope of my paper and not let the subject matter overwhelm me. Additionally, I had to learn how to respect and value my own voice and opinions and place myself within the paper. Overall, I am extremely grateful for the mentored experience this project called for as I feel I have developed and grown as a writer from the process. Having a supportive and involved supervisor allowed me to express my opinions, work through difficult thought experiments and ultimately create a more comprehensive and solid piece of work.

The topic of immigrant settlement and health is important to me and I wanted to accurately portray the challenges immigrants experience here in Canada. As Canadians, I feel we promote our diversity and multiculturalism without acknowledging and addressing societal problems such racism and discrimination. I think it is important to be honest about the structural and interpersonal racism and discrimination that exists in Canada and about how these lead to differential resources and opportunities for immigrants and visible minorities.

For future research, I would like to conduct interviews and focus groups on the topic of welcoming communities. The perspectives of those involved in the planning and execution of welcoming community efforts and the opinions of community members affected by these efforts would be a great contribution. I feel these interviews would provide a more personal experience of immigrant

settlement and could serve as an additional evaluation of welcoming community efforts. Overall, however, I am encouraged by the welcoming community initiative and feel the Reciprocal Integration Model can serve as a guide for communities looking to improve immigrant settlement.

I am passionate about immigrant settlement and health and I believe public health practitioners should be vocal and active in changing the structures that reinforce social, economic, and health inequities. I hope to live up to this responsibility by working directly with immigrant populations to help address the concerns most relevant to them. As Canada becomes increasingly diverse I feel it is my responsibility as a public health practitioner to respond to the country's changing social and health needs and ensure that all population groups have equal opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

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