

Settling the Unsettled:

Migrants, Municipalities and Multilevel Governance in British Columbia

by

Serena Kataoka and Warren Magnusson  
Department of Political Science  
University of Victoria  
P.O. Box 3050  
Victoria BC Canada V8W 3P5

[skataoka@uvic.ca](mailto:skataoka@uvic.ca) or [wmagnus@uvic.ca](mailto:wmagnus@uvic.ca)

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## ABSTRACT:

In Canada, there have been efforts to devolve responsibility for immigrant and refugee settlement onto the provinces and thence onto civic agencies, mostly in the non-profit sector. The municipalities *per se* have often been left out of the policy loop, by their own choice or otherwise. The effects of this have not been assessed. The present study focuses on four municipalities in British Columbia, including the largest (the City of Vancouver), one of the most diverse (Surrey), an old, relatively white community (Victoria), and a rural area (Alberni-Clayoquot). We have been interviewing officials with the immigrant and refugee settlement agencies, municipalities, school boards, health authorities, economic development commissions, and senior government agencies in these four areas in order to develop a portrait of immigrant-settlement policy-making at the local level for purposes of comparison with three other provinces (Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia) and five other policy domains. This is in the context of the largest-ever study of multilevel governance in Canada. Our results to date reveal the confusions implicit in the concept of immigrant settlement policy (who counts as an immigrant? what's involved in settling? what are the objectives of policy?), the unreality of gestures at decentralization (off-loading responsibilities while disempowering local agencies), the perverse effects of the new public management (setting agencies in competition with one another and discouraging horizontal collaboration), and the abstraction of high-level policy from on-the-ground problems (such as unemployment, racism, and spousal violence). If multilevel governance is to be effective, it has to be based on different principles.

Immigrant settlement has become a vexed issue throughout the Western world, not least because recent patterns of migration have put old categories into question.<sup>1</sup> On this continent, the word “settler” has long been used to refer to people who moved into lands taken from the Indians and who then established European-style farms there. The ‘49ers were not settlers in the proper sense, but they established the conditions necessary for the agricultural settlement of California. Once the settlers there and elsewhere had re-formed the land on a Euro-American model, the way was clear for the full-blown development of Euro-American civilization. Within that context, “immigrants” were understood as coming to *settle* in this re-formed or “new” land that had superseded the land once inhabited by Indians. The latter were confined to their reservations, which were conceived as lands apart, akin to the wilderness reservations set aside in the National Parks system. Once the land had been largely settled in the Euro-American style, the image of the immigrant shifted so that it focused on the workers off the boats from Europe flooding into the industrializing cities. The contrast was between immigrants and natives: the latter identified not with the aboriginal population, but with the descendants of earlier settlers. There was not much doubt amongst the settler population about who was a “real American” in this context: in the standard calculus Indians, Chinese labourers and freed African slaves did not count. In Canada, the thinking was not much different,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (Mercer, 1995) Roy proposes that visible minority immigrants whose populations became more significant after changes in legislation in the 1960s, be referred to as the “Fifth Force,” following upon the First and Second forces of the English and the French, the Third Force of Continental European immigrants (whose demand for recognition was the impetus for the multicultural policy), and the Fourth Force of Aboriginal activism. She argues that the multicultural mosaic needs to be reinvented in order to accommodate the fifth force. (Roy, Mar 1995) The question remains as to how Canada might engage with the fourth force, which is explicitly excluded from multiculturalism policy, as will be explored further below. Against the suggestion that even the third force has been successfully integrated into a multicultural mosaic, Wood and Gilbert highlight how multiculturalism was a politically expedient measure that happened to fit with immigration at the time, and so should be examined in the context of “historical evidence” of Canadian “governments and ordinary citizens actively fighting diversity at every turn” (Wood & Gilbert, 2005). On issues relating to global migration see for example (Joly, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that Canadian Pacific Rail, which was the first to take on the responsibility for attracting immigrants to settle Western Canada, established the “Department of Colonization and Development” in 1916. This department established a

although there was some confusion about whether a person who had moved from Britain to one of the British Dominions had actually emigrated anywhere.<sup>3</sup>

Things have moved on no doubt, but discussions are still bedevilled by the old distinctions. To talk of immigration is to imply that there is an established or “settled” population in the land to which the immigrant is immigrating. But, who counts as a member of the settled population? Why are white Americans or Canadians not labelled as immigrants, to distinguish them from the actual indigenous people? The answer is obvious, of course: the very notions of “immigration” and “settlement” come out of European and Euro-American colonialism. The discourse of “immigrant settlement” is bound up with colonialism, imperialism, and racism, and it cannot easily be detached from its origins. There is a statist inflection to this discourse, in that a key (and increasingly important) distinction is made between immigrants proper and “illegal migrants”.<sup>4</sup> The latter lack state sanction for settling, and so the more successfully they settle the more problematic they appear from the vantage of the state.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, legal

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comprehensive settlement policy, and in under ten years settled 55,000 families on 30 million prairie acres in colonial style. Even after this boom passed, and settlers had to be recruited from “non-preferred” countries (i.e. not British), the rail companies only looked as far as eastern Europe. (Knowles, 1997)

<sup>3</sup> Lipset notes the slow process by which Canada became separate from Britain. Canadians were British subjects until 1947 when Canadian citizenship was established, and British citizens had automatic right to enter Canada until 1978 when the *Immigration Act* was passed. (Lipset, 1989) p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Immigrants are either admitted under the “Economic Class” or the “Family Class.” (Canada, 2003) Those who are not sanctioned as immigrants may work illegally, and/or they may apply for refugee status.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps most prominent of such challenges were the 2006 uprisings of hundreds of thousands of people in cities across America in response to *The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005* (H.R. 4437), which would have deepened the criminalization of those associated with illegal immigration. Since the American economy relies on undocumented workers in many industries, such as agriculture in California, it cannot simply deport them. See for example (We Are America Coalition - Today we Act. Tomorrow We Vote., 23 March 2007). Such mobilization of the latino population was anticipated by Davis in (Davis, 2000). Recently, there has been a congressional shift towards the legalization of these workers as part of an overhaul of immigration legislation, in the Gutierrez-Flake Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy (STRIVE) Act of 2007. (Demirjian, 23 Mar 2007)

immigrants who fail to settle appear as a problem for the opposite reasons.<sup>6</sup> And then, of course, there are the refugees who are not really immigrants, but who may be treated as such if they can prove that their need for sanctuary is sufficiently pressing.<sup>7</sup> The state reserves to itself the right to decide who counts as a legal immigrant, and thus who can benefit from what the state has been established to protect. On this continent, the lands stolen from the Indians, as well as the Euro-American civilization erected upon it, are evidently the things to be protected. So, indigenous Americans from Mexico and the countries further south are kept out of the northern part of the continent, or are classified as illegal migrants, when they manage to settle in lands that their ancestors occupied thousands of years ago.

In the Canadian context, northward migration is not much of an issue, since the government of Canada relies on the U.S. government to police its southern border.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, immigrant settlement in the broader sense poses a problem for a country that feeds mightily on its self-ascribed status as a more benign and liberal alternative to the United States. Since the 1960s, Canadian immigration policy has been nominally

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<sup>6</sup> When the Canadian government offered to evacuate Canadians living in Lebanon when fighting between Hezbollah and Israel broke out in August 2006, it learned that up to 50,000 Canadians were living there. Suddenly, the problem of how to deal with the Canadian diaspora, much of which consists of immigrants, came to the fore. (Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 26 Jul 2006) Whereas illegal immigrants contribute to the national economy, the diaspora was perceived as a drain.

<sup>7</sup> In Canada there is an institutional preference for refugees pre-selected by UNHCR from refugee camps, so-called “convention refugees.” Those who claim refugee status upon or after their arrival in Canada have to go through very arduous and lengthy bureaucratic processes in order to demonstrate that they are “persons in need of protection” and may be recognized as convention refugees. Failing that, some refugee applicants may get temporary protection under a “Pre-Removal Risk Assessment.” (Canada, 2003; Garcia y Griego, Manuel, 1994)

<sup>8</sup> In the Safe Third Country Agreement, Canada and the U.S. agreed that they are both safe countries, so refugee claimants are expected to apply in the first of these countries that they arrive in. Since many international flights coming to Canada pass through the U.S., and very few refugee claimants come through Canada while heading for the U.S. (which is perceived to be harsher on refugees), the Agreement functions to allow Canada to rely on America to police various of its international borders. In the year following the Act’s implementation, in Canada there were only: about two thirds of the average number of refugee applications per year since 1989; half the number of applications at the land border; and only about a third of the number of applications from Columbians as compared with the previous year. (Canadian Council for Refugees, Dec 2005)

colour-blind,<sup>9</sup> and the country has presented itself to itself and the world as a place where immigrants from anywhere can come and become Canadians without giving up everything about their own cultures: hence, the policy of multiculturalism, which has been enshrined in law since 1971.<sup>10</sup> Canada prides itself in being more open and welcoming to immigrants than the United States.<sup>11</sup> Whether there is truth in that claim or not, it colours immigrant settlement policy, in that there is an expectation that the government should be responsive to the needs of those who have been welcomed into the country. There is more than one government at issue, however, since Canada is a federal state with a third order of government at the local level.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the agencies that have appeared to deal with immigrant settlement are non-governmental organizations heavily reliant on volunteer labour as well as public funding. This is a field in which the term “multilevel collaborative governance” would seem to apply. If so, is it a system that mobilizes a sensibility that is genuinely post-colonialist, post-imperialist, and post-racist? Or, is it a system that maintains the old protection racket in a new guise?

We can only touch on such issues here, but they haunt our analysis throughout. To take the field of immigrant settlement policy as given is to accept the perverse assumptions that enable it. The right of the Canadian or U.S. government to be the arbiter of immigration or settlement is extremely dubious. Services to immigrants and refugees are the benign counterpart to security policies that are intended to keep most of the

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<sup>9</sup> In 1962 and 1966 amendments were made to the Immigration Act of 1952 that introduced a “points system” that rated immigration applicants according to their skills as opposed to nationality. The previously “preferred” British immigrant class lost its status, allowing those from “non-traditional sources such as Asia, Latin America and Africa to be admitted. (Canada, 1987; Hawkins, 1972)

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the most famous attempt to sell multiculturalism to Canadians, with the support of the Canadian government, is (Kymlicka, 1998). For critiques of Kymlicka’s approach, see for example (Walker, 1997; Young, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Whitaker notes how this appearance has been maintained despite an immigration policy that functionally excluded refugees with socialist political dispositions (e.g. Argentina in the 1970s). (Whitaker, 1987)

<sup>12</sup> An example of the complexity governmental relations can be drawn from the Depression, when immigrants who were out of work would appeal to the municipality for relief. If the municipality refused, the immigrant might move on to another place, but if they reported the immigrant to the federal government, deportation would be forced. Thus, deportation was leveraged by municipalities to relieve themselves and employers of unwanted foreign workers. (Knowles, 1997)

people who would like to immigrate out of the countries concerned.<sup>13</sup> In no area of public policy is there a more noxious combination of nastiness and self-righteousness. Both elements of the combination should be acknowledged.

That said our purpose here is narrower. Our focus is on the front-line agencies that mobilize fellow-feeling on behalf of new immigrants.<sup>14</sup> Many of the people who staff these agencies are recent immigrants or refugees themselves, and so the fellow-feeling the agencies mobilize comes to a large extent from amongst those who have experienced the problem of settlement in particularly acute forms. That problem is understood, not in the old terms in which the settler is conceived as an empowered agent remaking the land into something new, but in the new terms in which the existing society is conceived as an already settled entity and the newcomer is figured as someone who has to adjust to that society in order to become settled.<sup>15</sup> Ideas about multiculturalism, respect

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<sup>13</sup> Foster provides an analysis of the difficulties associated with the pairing of heavy securitization of the state border, and the following difficulties of deporting those admitted, because they have been deemed worthy and capable of integrating into Canadian society (with a bit of support in the initial phases of settling). As an alternative to this recruitment-focused approach to immigration, he proposes greater emphasis on settlement as a process of lifelong learning, which could be paired with greater ease in deportation. (Foster, 1998) In either case the point is to keep those who cannot become good citizens out of the country.

<sup>14</sup> We use “front-line agencies” to refer specifically to agencies that receive funding through the British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program for providing “Information and Support Services (Stream 1),” or a combination including these services (Stream 1/3). We choose this focus because “Community Bridging Services (Stream 2)” is a volunteer host program of sorts, the “English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) (Stream 3)” is provided by a wider range of organizations that may not take immigrant settlement as their mandate (such as private colleges), and “Sectoral Support and Delivery Assistance (stream 4)” supports provincial level organizations that are tasked with linking associations and settlement workers with one another, and with the various levels of government in an “information sharing” and “consultative” capacity. See (BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, 19 Apr 2007) Many other agencies do settlement work as part of their broader mandate, such as churches and neighbourhood houses, but they are not included in the current examination.

<sup>15</sup> Responses that newcomers have to the settled society are categorized as: “(1) assimilation – to give up one’s heritage culture in order to move into the host culture, (2) integration – to both retain one’s heritage culture and to take on the host culture, (3) separation – to retain only one’s heritage culture and remain apart from the host culture, and (4) marginalization – to remain apart from both one’s heritage and host cultures...”

for difference, and the possibilities for social change play at the edges of this model, but there is still a clear sense, both amongst the responsible authorities and amongst the broader population to which those authorities must account, that the main responsibility for adjustment rests with the newcomer rather than with the receiving society.<sup>16</sup> Within this frame, one can see that the newcomer is faced with a series of difficult problems: to learn the language, figure out the customs, work out her or his rights and responsibilities, get access to remunerative employment, take advantage of public services and facilities, and gain acceptance as a fellow citizen. The agencies concerned are expected to facilitate these processes. On the other hand, they are at least somewhat sensitive to the idea that the adjustments expected might be of a different order.

Settlement is an odd term to describe the condition of modern life. One might well argue that to be modern is to be mobile, fluid, and multi-dimensional.<sup>17</sup> The most modern people are able to make themselves at home anywhere, and actually thrive on the diversity and multi-dimensionality of modern life. They are not of one community, but of many, and for them settling is not so much a matter of fixing themselves to a particular place as it is of placing themselves within a space of flows.<sup>18</sup> Call this sensibility modern or post-modern, cosmopolitan or simply urban, the fact is that it expresses a certain way of relating to the world that appears, to many of us, as both an ideal and a necessity. It may be argued that immigrants have to deal with this in a way that others may be able to avoid. On the other hand, many immigrants and all refugees are displaced persons, and

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integration is the preferred outcome of Canada's multicultural and immigration policies." (Immigrant Services Society of BC, 1993) p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> "Newcomers must reconcile their identification with and behavior towards both the culture in their country of origin and their new host culture." (Immigrant Services Society of BC, 1993) p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Some take this argument to the extreme, suggesting that Aboriginal people were the first migrants to North America, in much the same manner as the Europeans and others that followed. See for example (Thompson & Weinfeld, Mar 1995). But regardless of whether or not one considers Aboriginal people to be modern, the particular colonial approach is not

<sup>18</sup> c.f. Sandercock's analysis of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) as highly effective in the work of immigrant settlement (among other things), because it takes "building community" as its primary aim. Rooted in a particular place, CNH responds to the perceived needs of their intercultural resident population, immigrants included amongst those serviced by and contributing to the functioning of CNH (Sandercock, 2003) pp. 143-145.

many of them would like to settle in a more familiar way. For some, unfortunately, the form of settlement that they seek is inconsistent with both the patterns of settlement in the new country and the requirements of an increasingly fluid modern life. The challenge for immigrants is in fact one form – not necessarily the most acute, although arguably quite distinctive – of the challenge that all people face: namely, to make a home in a world that undermines possibilities of settlement.<sup>19</sup> What this suggests is that the maladjustments to which immigrant settlement agencies respond are actually symptomatic of more widely shared problems, for which knowing the language, learning the customs, clarifying one's rights and responsibilities, getting a job, accessing public services, and becoming accepted as a citizen are not necessarily solutions.<sup>20</sup> Who is actually at home in this world, and why would anyone suppose that becoming a Canadian or an American would resolve a person's existential problems? Why, in any case, would we want to enforce a strong national identity on any one?

The people involved in immigrant settlement tend to see these issues in terms of a reversal: society must adjust to the immigrants, as well as the immigrants adjusting to society.<sup>21</sup> One dimension of the former is the idea of a multi-cultural society, one that no longer privileges a particular culture or religion at the expense of others. The idea is expressed in terms of a set of trans-cultural or inter-cultural norms that would supposedly

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<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of making home in the city as the challenge of modern life, see (Sennett, 1994).

<sup>20</sup> For example, in her study of the settlement of immigrant women of Vancouver, Creese highlights the difficulties that people of colour who are born in Canada (and so are familiar with its culture) have in integrating in Canada, as compared with 'white' immigrants. (Creese, Jan 2005) This suggests that racism is among the challenges that extend beyond the immediate demands of immigrant settlement.

<sup>21</sup> As noted by the Canadian Council of Refugees, the UN Economic and Social Council was operating with a definition of integration as a mutual process of meaning making as early as 1952. They argue that this is the operative definition of settlement in the field, as seen in the *Immigration Settlement Counselling: A Training Guide* (OCASI, 1991: 8): "a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities". Importantly, the long-term process of integration is distinct from the short-term process of adaptation that most settlement services are focused upon (Canadian Council for Refugees, Feb 1998) Recently, a national organization for settlement as separate from refugee issues has been established, but they are just now establishing their role in the policy field (Jafarpour, 2006).

enable people of different cultures to live amicably together and learn from one another. This idea points towards a constitutional patriotism of the sort that Habermas has described: one that would actually bind people locally and nationally into a cosmopolitan order that enabled and protected cultural differences.<sup>22</sup> How such an order might consort with the fluidity implicit in modernity is a difficult question, but one can see how a vision of this sort can ground activities of mutual adjustment (on the part of immigrants and the receiving society) fostered by the immigrant settlement agencies. In a country like Canada, the ideal at issue has considerable resonance, even amongst the state authorities, since it expresses a certain understanding of what Canada is supposed to be: a post-national (and, of course, post-colonial, post-imperialist, and post-racist) nation-state, one that actually deconstructs the category by its very existence.<sup>23</sup> This gives the spokespeople for the agencies some purchase on state authorities that might otherwise be resistant to the idea that society has to adjust to immigrants, rather than the other way around.

On the ground, however, it is difficult for anyone to advance any particular ideal. In their mediating role, the immigrant settlement agencies have to adapt to the policies of their funders, the dispositions and enthusiasms of their staff (both professional and volunteer), and the needs of their clients. Client needs are extremely various. Most immigrants to Canada come from non-European countries. Only a minority of them are Christian. They speak many different languages, and their cultural traditions are equally varied. Educational and occupational experiences conform to no norms.<sup>24</sup> Thus, to reach out from within a society that is still predominantly white, Christian, and anglophone is to be confronted immediately with a world of differences. The needs and concerns of those to be assisted are not only various, but also often obscure to those who are offering the assistance. To say in advance what is required is presumptuous. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>22</sup> (Habermas, 1996)

<sup>23</sup> On post-nationalism see for example (Frye, 1982; Habermas, 2001).

<sup>24</sup> While there is an emphasis on skills-based admissions, there remains a near-balance with family-based admissions. The latter can be thought of as an immigrant settlement initiative insofar as it is understood to keep skilled people in the country. This logic is reflected in the new “group processing” of refugees (CIC, 4 Nov 2003). One way of explaining the shift is that an aunt may provide more sustained (and less costly) counselling than formalized services.

agencies concerned are under great pressure from within and without to fix their purposes to particular goals and adopt definitive policies.<sup>25</sup> To settle the policy for immigrant settlement seems sensible to anyone who wants to advance a particular ideal or to control agency activity for other purposes.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, there is a countervailing tendency, especially amongst the street-level staff, to over-ride policies in order to meet the actual needs of clients.<sup>27</sup> Such need fulfilment is the purpose of immigrant settlement, but it does not go in accordance with any particular plan, nor could it ever do so. The fluidity of response demanded of the front-line workers is in line with what modern life demands of us generally. Rather than conforming to policies, these people try to go with the flows, and in so doing enable their clients to negotiate the flows themselves. Efforts on both sides transcend any model of immigrant settlement.

The implication is that the call to policy – the demand that we should have sensible, rational policies attuned to our ultimate values – may be at odds with the requirements of immigrant settlement. If the aim of such a policy would be to help people with particular problems find a better home in the world, then it is not clear that

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<sup>25</sup> Internally, such pressure can be seen in agencies' individual and collective efforts to professionalize the field of immigrant settlement. Interviewees within agencies felt that professionalization was a way to legitimize their work to funders. Settlement workers generally work more hours than they are paid for, and so agencies repeatedly noted the difficulty of keeping staff. For example, one agency recently lost one of its most experienced workers because she was in search of better pay with fewer hours, so she took a position as a janitor at a local hotel. It is thought that if settlement work were recognized as involving a particular skill set, as opposed to being glorified volunteer work, settlement workers would be more adequately remunerated. Professionalization is also supported by the BC government, through the fourth stream of BCSAP funding allocated to agencies such as the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA).

<sup>26</sup> For example, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' efforts to raise the profile of immigrant settlement can be interpreted as motivated by a desire to raise the profile of municipalities in Canada. If municipalities can be shown as responsible for immigrant settlement (or more pointedly the fallout from unsuccessful settlement), then it becomes another example of cases in which municipalities are in need of political independence and finance raising capacities commensurate with their responsibilities. (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2005) See also (McIsaac, 2003)

<sup>27</sup> An extreme example of this is skimming funds allocated for sanctioned immigrants in order to provide basic services for refugee claimants as well. In order to meet the needs of newcomers regardless of their governmental status, some agencies make extensive use of volunteers (e.g. as de facto settlement workers for refugee claimants).

much can be said in advance about what the policy should be. Certainly, an effective immigrant settlement policy clearly would have to be highly differentiated, sensitive, and flexible. In fact, it would be less a policy than a *disposition* to be of assistance in whatever way required by individuals whose needs could not be known in advance. The particularities of need and the diversity of situations are such that general rules or even general statements of objectives are not much help. In the field, agency workers feel the call not to a policy or even to an ideal, but rather to a responsibility to others. To fulfill this responsibility, one needs a disposition that allows one to attune oneself to others without pre-judgement: this is a different disposition from the one that pursues policy objectives. The governmental policies to which the front-line staffers have to adapt are rarely ones that make their work easier. Funding is available for some services but not others, and the rules exclude clients who would otherwise be served. This is a source of enormous frustration. On the other hand, the ideals of the agency workers may also be at odds with the expressed needs of their clients. Setting oneself free to serve in these circumstances is not easy, since the struggle is not only with the authorities but also with oneself.

So, we are looking here at a venue in which people are called to a form of service that is often at odds with established policies and that might not be amenable to policy rationality. Moreover, the ultimate aim of the service is to achieve an objective – helping people find their place in the world – that none of us find easy and that may well be at odds with the notion of settling immigrants into a settled society. We moderns are not settled, nor is it clear that we should aim to be. We are all migrants of one sort or another, if only because the world we inhabit today is so different from the one into which we were born or the one that we will inhabit in the future. Problems of adjustment are the norm rather than the exception. So, this whole business of settling the unsettled through “immigrant settlement policy” is fraught with contradictions.

## THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

We can and should be more particular, however. Our focus is on particular communities in south-western British Columbia, the most populous part of Canada’s

third largest province.<sup>28</sup> Like ancient Gaul, all of British Columbia is divided into three parts: the Lower Mainland, the Island, and the Interior. The Lower Mainland is an euphemism for Greater Vancouver, at least in its extended sense. The Island is Vancouver Island (and by extension the smaller islands near it). The Interior is all the rest of a province that is bigger than California, Washington, and Oregon combined. More than half the population of the province is in the Lower Mainland, and that concentration extends across the strait into the lower half of the Island. Much of rural British Columbia is in economic decline, because employment in forestry, fishing, and agriculture has been falling. On the other hand, Vancouver (and, to a lesser extent, a few smaller urban centres) has been expanding mightily both within the city itself and in the surrounding suburbs and satellite towns. After Toronto, Vancouver is Canada's prime magnet for foreign immigration. Immigration from Asia (especially China) has been especially noticeable, and so the face of the city has changed dramatically in the last forty years or so. By almost any measure, Vancouver is one of the most diverse cities on the continent, although the pattern of diversity is different from what one sees in most American cities: the proportion of people of Hispanic, African, or African-American descent is much lower; the proportion of Asian descent much higher. Outside Vancouver and its suburbs, British Columbia remains overwhelmingly white. This is true even of Victoria, the province's second largest city. Nevertheless, the aboriginal presence is everywhere noticeable in the province, especially in the rural areas. No treaties were signed between the British or Canadian authorities and the great majority of aboriginal groups in BC: so, the sovereignty of the Canadian state is not undisputed, and there is a shadow of aboriginal title on all property in the province. This puts questions of immigrant settlement into a context that reveals some of its internal contradictions.

Vancouver and its immediate suburbs – of which Surrey is the largest and most diverse – stand out in most people's minds as the places to which immigrants go. The

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<sup>28</sup> We engaged in qualitative interviews in Vancouver, Alberni-Clayoquot, Victoria, and Surrey. The people that we spoke with are: Those responsible for coordinating and delivering settlement services in front-line agencies, provincial sectoral organizations, and the provincial and federal governments; Those whose positions would suggest that they might be doing or supporting settlement work as part of their job in school boards, health districts, municipalities, and economic development organizations; And some immigrants who have a high profile in the community as advocates for settlement work.

data bear this out, but the folks who are labelled as immigrants in Vancouver are not necessarily the ones who are most marginalized. Vancouver attracts the alienated young from the suburbs, the rural areas of the province, and the rest of the country. Its Downtown Eastside is legendary for its injection drugs, alcoholism, homelessness, poverty, beggary, petty thievery, and sex for sale on the streets. The reality is more complex, but a case can nonetheless be made that this is the most abject neighbourhood in the country: an abjection made more poignant by the fact that the area is within sight of Vancouver's financial district, to say nothing of various high-end commercial areas and some of the plushest condominium developments anywhere on this continent. If the Downtown Eastside is coloured in the public imagination, aboriginal people are the ones who come most immediately to mind. Proportionately, aboriginal migrants to the city have experienced greater problems of adjustment than any identifiable immigrant group. If an immigrant group seems to be doing as badly as aboriginal Canadians, this is a cause for great alarm. ? Outside Vancouver, where the proportion of "immigrants" is comparatively low, the authorities are most concerned about rates of unemployment, suicide, alcoholism, drug abuse, epidemic disease, and sexual violence amongst the aboriginal population, in both cities and rural areas. Thus, the perception is that aboriginals are the most "unsettled" group in the country. One of the aims of immigrant settlement policy is to forestall any drift in this direction amongst "visible minorities," who may be marginalized because of their skin colour or non-European origins, and who thus may need particular help in getting settled into "normal" middle-class Canadian life.

As might be expected, there is a relatively high density of immigrant settlement agencies in the City of Vancouver. Some of them are "multis" that provide a variety of services to different immigrant groups. Others are organized by and for a particular immigrant group. Agencies are able to specialize, not only in terms of their clientele – one orienting itself to the Chinese community and another to South Asians, for instance – but also in terms of their relationship to the state. Some are cosier with the government's agenda than others. Some offer only government-funded services to the people whom the government defines as immigrants. Others blur the lines, and do a wider variety of things for a more extensive clientele. Beyond the government-funded agencies are a variety of other organizations that provide services to immigrants and refugees on their own remit.

The most radical of these bodies – like “No One is Illegal” – challenge the state’s right to regulate migration. The groups without government funding are able to do things that the government-funded agencies have to avoid. By mobilizing people politically around immigrant and refugee issues, the radical groups help to create the political climate that enables the mainstream government-funded agencies to exercise influence within the state. The big Vancouver settlement agencies are plugged into the policy networks that provide feedback to the senior governments and ensure some measure of on the ground influence over policy decisions at higher levels. Thus, there is a certain complementarity between the mainstream and radical organizations. One effect is that policy-thinking at the higher levels tends to be Vancouver-centred, since most of the influential agencies (as well as the most visible problems) are in Vancouver. This is offset in some degree by the thought that the problems could be eased by dispersing immigrants more widely – particularly to communities that need immigrants in a way that Vancouver does not.<sup>29</sup>

Port Alberni was one place that stepped forward in the context of a federal-provincial effort to encourage smaller communities to develop immigrant settlement strategies that would entice immigrants to the “regions” rather than Vancouver itself.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Thus far regionalization initiatives have consisted largely of promotional packages developed by a federally organized task force, which were distributed to municipalities throughout the country. (National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2005; Voluntary Sector Initiative, 2003) The idea is to give municipalities an understanding of the benefits of immigration, and the ways that they could work to welcome immigrants into their communities. However, support for municipal efforts to facilitate immigrant attraction and retention, as for example by distributing immigrant settlement services throughout smaller centres in advance of significant immigration to these areas has not been undertaken because funding is perceived to be conditional upon need. Even if the availability of such services were effective in attracting immigrants to areas outside urban centres, there would be a window of time in which such services would be operating without a significant client base. In Vancouver’s settlement sector there is a perception that there are not ever enough programs to service the lower mainland, and so any draw away from these centres that seems to be unnecessary is difficult to justify from a provincial standpoint. (AMSSA, 20 July 2006)

<sup>30</sup> The City of Port Alberni successfully became one of the communities involved in the federal-provincial *Initiative on Regional Immigration*, to develop a strategy that would help smaller communities attract and retain immigrants (City of Port Alberni, 12 Jan 2004). RMA Consulting and the Community Futures Development Corporation of Alberni-Clayoquot undertook the application and contract for the “Alberni-Clayoquot Regional Immigration Initiative” in Spring 2005.

From Port Alberni's perspective, foreign immigration – or any immigration at all – looks desirable as a means for reversing the community's relative economic decline.<sup>31</sup> Much effort went into thinking of how the city might position itself for this purpose. Contacts were made with one of the settlement agencies in Vancouver, as well as the relevant federal and provincial ministries.<sup>32</sup> Little came of these efforts, however, because senior government funding for implementation was never forthcoming. Meanwhile, the city was negotiating its relations with the neighbouring Indian Reserves, and more generally with the challenges of an ever larger aboriginal population.<sup>33</sup> Further west, in the sister villages of Ucluluet and Tofino, there were more economic opportunities, thanks to the development of eco-tourism. This area has continued to draw immigrants from other parts of Canada and the United States (and, to a lesser extent, Europe), but its aboriginal population has not benefited greatly from the transformation of the region into a retirement/resort area. Socially displaced aboriginal people continue to drift toward the nearby urban centres: Nanaimo, Victoria, and Vancouver. Victoria's Rock Bay, like Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, offers a home for the homeless that puts the idyll of immigrant settlement into sharp relief.

The main aim of Canadian immigration policy in the multicultural era has been to attract the best and the brightest from abroad, in order to build up the country economically. The presumption is that Canada can pick the immigrants it wants on the basis of skills, education, entrepreneurial talent, business connections, and fungible

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<sup>31</sup> Specifically, the city is interested in business investment (City of Port Alberni, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> At one of the Initiative's meetings RMA consulting made a connection with SUCCESS in Vancouver, which runs the welcome kiosk at the airport. It was hoped that Port Alberni could be among the places Chinese business investors could be referred to, but SUCCESS did not reply to follow-up contact from RMA consulting. Thus, even the informal mechanisms of networking made possible by limited-term government funding have not been effective for Port Alberni in its attempts to attract immigrants to the area.

<sup>33</sup> On one hand, aboriginal communities are regarded as potential partners in economic development, with potential for establishing businesses to attract tourists (City of Port Alberni, 2005). On the other hand, the growing dominance of aboriginal populations in the community are being encountered by those providing educational services for instance. The development and implementation of an English Skills Development program (an adaption of English as a second language programs, geared towards Aboriginal students, who can speak english, but who need assistance in reading and writing. (Pinkerton, Fall 2006)

investment capital. Thus, class rather than race is the primary basis of selection. The ideal immigrant, from a Canadian point of view, is one who does not need any immigrant-settlement services: for instance, the sort of person who might deliver a paper at a conference like this (or, better yet, at a conference on software engineering or biotechnology). Immigrants want to bring their families, however, and this means that many people are let in who would not otherwise have been selected. Moreover, Canada is at least nominally committed to meeting its obligations to accept refugees; so, again, some people are admitted who would not otherwise qualify. Immigrant settlement services provide support for the unhappy spouses, confused adolescent children, and displaced elderly relatives of the immigrants Canada really wants. They also respond to the needs of those the country has felt obliged to accept although they are not really wanted. The presumption is that a certain proportion of the immigrant and refugee population will be in a state of abjection, in dire need of multiple social services. Paired with this is the hope that the second generation will be able to more completely integrate their ethnic and cultural traditions with mainstream Canadian values, and the fear that they might not. Thus, from a general societal perspective, immigrant settlement services are motivated by some combination of pity, hope and fear. The fact that the actual services are provided by those who feel solidarity rather than just pity, sets up a tension that is apparent in all forms of social work.

One of the notable complaints about immigration policy in recent years is that it fails to take account of the obstacles that high-end immigrants face in getting their professional qualifications accepted by Canadian employers. Some employers complain that they cannot get the workers they really need – skilled trades-people, construction workers, agricultural labourers, domestic servants – because the barriers to entry to Canada are set so high, whereas the professionals who can get over those barriers cannot easily be employed without extensive re-training. In a place like Victoria, the contradictions involved are especially apparent, because the area is a magnet for retirees from the rest of Canada. This means that there are particular pressures on the health service, pressures that could in principle be relieved by importing health professionals and low-skilled care-workers from abroad. How the Vancouver Island Health Authority (which encompasses both Victoria and Alberni-Clayoquot) deals with these pressures

will be one indicator of the way that hypocrisies of Canadian immigration policy will play out. The general tendency is to suck what is needed from developing countries, dress things up under the flag of multiculturalism, and back-fill with immigrant settlement services to deal with the problems that result from importing wanted workers.

The Victoria settlement agencies mirror their Vancouver counterparts, but the scale of their operations, the relative size of their clientele, is less. In both Vancouver and Victoria one of the two “multi” agencies has an ED who is highly involved in policy networks involving the upper levels of government.<sup>34</sup> In a city where the immigrant population is less noticeable, the settlement agencies get profile through multicultural events rather than in relation to the immigration issues.<sup>35</sup> There is not much evidence that the municipalities, the school boards, or the health authority have brought questions of immigration and immigration settlement into focus as they deal with broader policy issues. By contrast, worries about the aboriginal population – and, to some extent, services in response to aboriginal needs – come into play with respect to policies on education, health, housing, social services, and policing.<sup>36</sup> The general policy context is one in which white, middle-class concerns predominate at the municipal level and more generally. Multiculturalism is celebrated, and there is ritual deference to the First Nations, but the key policy issues are framed in terms that assume white, middle-class experience is the norm (in every sense of that term).

Surrey offers a useful contrast to Victoria, because it is more racially mixed and less confidently middle-class in tone and disposition. The South Asian community is relatively large, and actively involved in politics at both the municipal and provincial

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<sup>34</sup> Here we are referring to Jean McRae at the Intercultural Association in Victoria, who is past president of AMSSA, and Chris Friesen at ISS, who is representing AMSSA as the secretary for the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA). It is also worth noting that the other “multi” agencies in both these cities – VIRCS and MOSAIC – are less involved in policy development, and share a similarly creative approach to program development and implementation.

<sup>35</sup> In Victoria, the Intercultural Association hosts *Folkfest*, and the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Society hosts the *Latin Caribbean Music Festival* every summer.

<sup>36</sup> Interviewees noted that there are federal dollars available for working with Aboriginal people, whereas funds are not readily available to service immigrant people in a similar fashion. So whereas there tend to be stand-alone Aboriginal liaisons, immigrant issues are taken up either in an ad hoc fashion, or in combination with other services – most commonly ESL and special education are paired in boards of education.

level.<sup>37</sup> Despite a relatively unsympathetic municipal council, the Parks and Recreation service reaches out to immigrant communities in an active way. Two of the ethnic-specific immigrant settlement agencies are connected with ones in the City of Vancouver, and the “multis” are not as engaged outside their communities as those in Vancouver and Victoria, and as such they play a secondary role in policy discussions that involve the federal or provincial government.<sup>38</sup> As a suburb of Vancouver, Surrey is an inherently unsettled place: diffuse, de-centred, and in some ways detached from its own locale. It lacks the cohesion of historically centred communities like Victoria, and appears to itself as an ungainly and relatively recent extension of the city of Vancouver proper. While the aboriginal presence is marked in municipal services similar to those of Victoria, it is obscured by the boom in immigration, which will soon make Surrey ‘bigger’ than Vancouver. There is a good deal of service activity related to immigrants, but there is less political consciousness around the issues than there is Vancouver. If it is true that a certain policy-sensitivity with regard to immigrant issues has developed in the City of Vancouver proper, that sensitivity weakens as one moves outward to a suburb like Surrey. Whether that means that immigrants are less well served is not so clear, because the City proper tends to draw people with problems towards itself, and so the potential clientele for immigrant settlement agencies within the City is more complex and more difficult to serve effectively. Thus, the need for political engagement at the centre is more pronounced. May need to open up a bit on innovation: argument could be made that the settlement sector in Surrey is the most innovative, with its travelling settlement worker model, developed to accommodate the particular configuration of Surrey as geographically dispersed, and serving specific ethnic communities.

## THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

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<sup>37</sup> An example of such involvement is MLA Jagrup Brar, a South Asian who began working in a settlement agency, and shifted to facilitating an employment program for the population more broadly before running for office in response to the right wing shift in provincial politics.

<sup>38</sup> ISS the most significant “multi” agency in Surrey and the are independent, but the do not have the institutional support that agencies in Vancouver such as MOSAIC have. There was mention in the field that as opposed to distance from Vancouver, the lack of support for ISS may be a result of the ED’s ineffectiveness as a networker.

One of the remarkable features of immigrant settlement policy is that it tends to by-pass the municipalities in favour of special-purpose non-profit societies. Immigration is one of the concurrent powers of the federal and provincial governments in Canada. The provinces may enact legislation with respect to immigration, but so too may the federal government.<sup>39</sup> In case of conflict, federal legislation takes precedence. That said, the powers of the federal and provincial governments with respect to immigration are only indirectly relevant to questions of settlement. The municipalities are very much in the business of settlement, since they deal with land-use and (by extension) housing. They are also involved in community planning, community services, and community development. In their self-understanding, they are in the business of making their communities work. Among other things, this means resolving inter-cultural tensions, integrating alienated young people, and providing services and facilities that enable people to be part of the community. One might expect that this would entail “immigrant settlement”. Perhaps it does, but rarely explicitly. From a municipal perspective, the fact that the federal and provincial governments are responsible for bringing immigrants into Canada means that they are also responsible for paying for the services necessary to get those immigrants settled.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the municipalities have reason to conceive of immigrant settlement as a matter beyond their own remit, except in so far as the senior governments offer funding for the activities concerned. The exception to this is in the City of Vancouver, where a task force on immigration has been struck. This may be akin to the City of Toronto trying to throw its weight around with the upper levels of government.<sup>41</sup> At the other end of the scale, the senior governments have reason to demarcate the field of immigrant settlement restrictively, so as to limit their fiscal obligations.

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<sup>39</sup> For example, while the BC government regulates language programs for newcomers, the federal government regulates employment programs for newcomers.

<sup>40</sup> Outside Vancouver, social planners had received the *Small Centres Strategy* package, but they were clear that without financial commitment they would not be doing anything with it. They are already overwhelmed with needs that seem more immediate.

<sup>41</sup> The Vancouver immigrant task force is now into second phase and with a final report pending. In conversation with social planners involved in this task force, it was suggested that it was struck in response to suggestions from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (Wong, 21 Sept 2005)

Had the provinces been more explicitly involved in immigrant settlement from the beginning, the municipalities might have played a larger role as well. Instead, the federal government took the original initiative, in response to complaints that it was not doing its bit to help the immigrants that it admitted into Canada.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the original funding programs for immigrant settlement established a direct relationship between the relevant federal ministry and non-governmental organizations that were willing to provide the desired services at the local level. It would have been awkward for the federal government to fund municipalities for this purpose, since municipal government is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces. By funding non-governmental agencies to provide federal services to immigrants, Ottawa could avoid many difficulties. This was the pattern in the 1970s and 1980s, but by the early 1990s the federal government was looking for ways of divesting itself of some of its activities. In this context, it sought agreements with the individual provinces that would enable it to pass the responsibility for funding local settlement agencies on to the provinces. Under the new arrangements, the feds would provide bloc funding, and the provinces would set up their own systems for contracting out services to local agencies. One of the presumptions was that the provinces were better able to identify and supervise appropriate local agencies, as well as to coordinate immigrant settlement services with other services for which the provinces were ultimately responsible. National settlement conferences since\_\_

In British Columbia funding for the immigrant settlement agencies comes from the Settlement and Multiculturalism Division of the Multiculturalism and Immigrant Branch of the Attorney General's Department under the BC Settlement and Adaptation Program (BCSAP). The original federal-provincial immigrant settlement agreement was negotiated when the centre-left NDP was in power provincially, in the 1990s. When the right-of-centre BC Liberals took power in 2001, they decided to apply the principle of competitive tendering to the immigrant settlement program. This was part of an across-the-board shift in the way the government interacted with non-profit agencies. Critics suspected that it had something to do with the new government's suspicion that social

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<sup>42</sup> Canada's approach to immigration has largely been one of economic development, in contrast to the American approach of social integration. (Boyd, Feb 1976; Green & Green, 1999) For example see (Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission, Settlement Branch, Apr 1986)

welfare agencies were too closely aligned with their NDP opponents. In any case, the effect of the new policy was to put immigrant settlement agencies in competition with one another to get the available funding. This put relations amongst the agencies and between the agencies and the government under some strain. The previous government had favoured familiar agencies with experience in providing services. The new government encouraged agencies to work together to develop programs, but it also insisted on open competition. The bid process was difficult for agencies with limited administrative capacity. Ironically, some of the smaller agencies seem to have taken it more seriously than the big ones: in the first competition, the biggest agency in each of the larger municipalities we are studying (Vancouver, Victoria, and Surrey) lost out to smaller rivals. This was such a shock to the system that the government was forced to restore funding to the key agency in Vancouver. In Victoria the agency won the contract in a second tendering process, and in Surrey the key agency was replaced by three smaller ones who put in a “collaborative” application. There may have been some benefits from the shake-up, but the effect was clearly to divert attention from the services themselves (and the associated needs of clients) towards the tendering process itself, with its many arcane requirements.<sup>43</sup> One effect was to force agencies to think of themselves as non-profit *businesses*, rather than as social service providers or social movement organizations.

Ironically, the policy development process under the NDP government allowed provincial settlement sector organizations to include “advocacy” as part of their mandate (e.g. AMSSA crafted strong responses to provincial policy proposals), and under the Liberals advocacy is no longer tolerated. Across both governments there has been consultation (based on the recognition that service providers know what is going on), but only under the Liberals is it called “collaborative” policy development. So competition within the settlement sector has shifted from that between the government and the agencies in regards to policy, which allowed for an unusually high degree of collaborative feeling amongst agencies, to competition between agencies in regards to

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<sup>43</sup> In interviews with settlement service coordinators across municipalities it was suggested that putting together a proposal took about one month for a worker to develop.

limited funding, which requires that agencies try to establish collaborative relationships with the government.

The emergent business culture in the immigrant settlement industry is reflected in various ways. In the first place, white folks tend to be the executive directors of the bigger agencies: they interact with the white folks who control the funding, at the bureaucratic level, in the provincial and federal governments. Thus, the racial hierarchy implicit in Canada's "vertical mosaic" remains in place, because the shared culture of the whites (or honorary whites) facilitates decisions about the services "real Canadians" should be offering to others.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, there are signs that the immigrant settlement industry offers career opportunities to people who want to become professionals in the area, and to those who want Canadian work experience.<sup>45</sup> This can and does include immigrants whose particular experience actually has a positive value in this employment sector. Thirdly, there is a divide between the mainstream settlement agencies, which had become comfortable with Canadian bureaucratic culture, and the more radical, immigrant-oriented organizations that are not invested in a bureaucratic order and so may be more willing to take up an entrepreneurial spirit in order to meet their clients' needs.<sup>46</sup> The most radical of the latter put the aims of the Canadian state into question: for instance, by involving themselves in support of illegals[or: and refugees]. Fourthly, some of the agencies oriented toward particular immigrant groups (especially the Chinese and South Asians) are able to legitimize a business-orientation of their own: that is, to focus on the needs of immigrant business-people rather than on those at the other end of the social

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<sup>44</sup> This hierarchy was noted repeatedly by front-line settlement workers, while on occasion being denied by Executive Directors and others in positions of greater authority. On vertical mosaic see (Porter, 1965).

<sup>45</sup> The sector is perceived as being more open to hiring immigrants than other sectors. But the route to employment tends to wind through volunteer positions (e.g. from volunteer to volunteer coordinator). So there is a sense in which it is a sector that is only open to those who are willing to work for free, which further requires that they have time to work for free, meaning financial security or support of some sort.

<sup>46</sup> For example, one settlement agency runs an English language program for international students, immigrants and refugees. The more affluent pay more for the program in order to subsidize the affluent accordingly. This gives the agency the flexibility to provide training beyond the basic levels funded by the government, and to assure that the program funding will not be lost in the coming year.

scale.<sup>47</sup> This coheres with the underlying aims of a business-oriented state, but may intensify other difficulties. Finally, the spread of the business culture puts many settlement workers (as well as immigrants themselves) under serious pressure, since their own aims may not cohere with that culture. For instance, some settlement workers and many of their clients are political refugees who are seeking things that are very much at odds with capitalist liberalism.<sup>48</sup>

Immigrant settlement is one of those activities that touch on almost every aspect of public business, from health and education to economic development and public security. As such, it cuts across the policy silos. It involves governments and agencies at all levels, as well as a variety of non-profits and profit-making businesses. One can imagine policy-making that would not privilege the senior governments or indeed any other institutional actors, and instead would begin from the articulated needs of those who were seeking to settle.<sup>49</sup> There certainly are policy-networks that purport to connect the front-line immigrant settlement workers (and to a lesser extent the immigrants themselves) with the senior government departments that fund immigrant settlement agencies. These networks privilege the leaders of the big agencies in Vancouver, along

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<sup>47</sup> In interviews with people who have worked at ethnic-specific agencies, suggestions were made that the field needs to be re-oriented in order to address the needs of a class of immigrants who arrive with English language proficiency, but who are unfamiliar with Canadian business culture. One example of an agency reorienting itself, is an entrepreneurial program that began as part of a South Asian immigrant settlement agency, which became increasingly formalized, and is now a stand-alone organization dedicated to assisting not only immigrants, but anyone interested in starting a business.

<sup>48</sup> Despite Whitaker's point that the Canadian state has a history of effectively avoiding admitting many refugees with socialist tendencies, such people number among those who have effectively remained in Canada. We spoke with a couple of political refugees from Argentina working in the settlement sector, who suggested that their political dispositions are not reconcilable with capitalist liberalism, but their children had the possibility of becoming "real" Canadians. For a discussion of the specifically white, liberal, and middle-class values implicit in *Canadian* Canadian identity, see (Mackey, 1999).

<sup>49</sup> This might look something like the "people-centred approach" recommended in relation to the "hard to house." This "supportive housing" approach was at first articulated as counter "policy" – i.e. fixed rules that apply to everyone and every situation regardless of their appropriateness (Gurstein & Small, 2005). But in the provincial government's 2007 Budget, there is a shift "from social to supportive housing," which signals the formalization of this approach as a 'non-policy policy' if you will (BC Ministry of Finance, 20 Feb 2007).

with their interlocutors in the federal and provincial departments that fund them.<sup>50</sup> There are outward connections to the academy, ethnic organizations, and (to a lesser extent) other public agencies. Nevertheless, the network is hierarchically governed within a silo labelled “immigrant settlement”. The funding arrangements, established by federal-provincial agreement and then modulated by the provincial policy on competitive tendering, set the conditions under which the immigrant settlement agencies can work.<sup>51</sup> The agencies themselves have limited capacity to raise their own revenue. Moreover, they are set apart from other local agencies: most especially the municipalities, school boards, and health authorities, but also the various non-governmental organizations that are potentially or actually interested in immigrant issues.<sup>52</sup> There is scant evidence that questions of immigration or settlement have provided a ground on which policy-makers could come together as equals and re-think what they are doing in a serious way.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> These networks are formalized in the agencies that receive Stream 4 BCSAP funding. It is important to note that BC is the only province with a network of language service providers, and so the ELSA net staff person ends up being the de facto representative of the entire field of language providers at the national settlement conferences for instance.

<sup>51</sup> (BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, 19 Apr 2007; Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), 5 Apr 2004)

<sup>52</sup> The relationship that these agencies have with municipalities tends to be in seeking community development grants for cultural events and initiatives, which is better understood in terms of multiculturalism than immigrant settlement. Vancouver aside, school boards and health authorities do not have ready access to funding substantial enough to engage in stand-alone immigrant settlement functions. So often when there is recognition of the particular needs of immigrants, settlement agencies are called upon to provide services – most notably translation services in the health sector. Particular schools sometimes establish relationships with immigrant settlement agencies to provide social services for youth – as in after school programs, homework clubs and the like, which largely run on volunteer efforts. In terms of relationships with other NGOs, immigrant settlement agencies are bound to remain secular and non-partisan in order to receive funding, and so the extent to which they can work with religious organizations for instance, is limited.

<sup>53</sup> One might think that the National Settlement Conferences hosted by the federal government would have been an opportunity to try to establish such ground. (Voluntary Sector Initiative, Dec 2001; VSI Working Group 1, 2003) But a couple participants suggested that the conferences seemed to have been more effective as a way for the federal government to make the provincial governments accountable for their differential involvement in the field, without having to address the provinces directly. By providing service providers with a venue, they enabled the settlement sector to do a review of the provinces’ performances in the field. For example, whereas BC skims its funding to

Questions around settlement could structure public discourse in interesting and productive ways. Do people want to settle, and if so how? How should we negotiate the tension between our desire for home and our need to be free? How can we resolve the differences between different modes of settlement and freedom? To pose questions in this way would be to unsettle the whole project of immigrant settlement, however. The presumption would be that the Canadian-born had their own issues of settlement to deal with, and, further, that they had no right to dominate the wider conversation about settlement or to arbitrate its results. One might argue that aboriginal people had the right to take the lead, and that new Canadians needed to enter into dialogue with them on the problem of refiguring the old, Euro-Canadian project of settlement in new terms.<sup>54</sup> At the very least, one might say that issues of settlement should be put into relation with other conversations about health, education, opportunities for youth, violence in the home and on the street, gender and sexuality, racism and anti-racism, the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol, housing and homelessness, technological change, business organization, environmental regulation, and much else. This all suggests a political conversation that would open up definitions of the problem in ways that could be quite threatening to the immigrant settlement industry.<sup>55</sup> Do we know that the agencies concerned have the right project or projects? How do we position those projects in relation to other worthy public projects? Do we know that distinct agencies are required for immigrant settlement, or is the presence of these agencies simply the effect of senior government funding decisions? To pose such questions is to remind ourselves that there are other ways of

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settlement agencies in order to provide additional support to colleges, Manitoba topped up its funding to settlement agencies, as reflected in the different levels of english language training that the provinces supported. See (BC Coalition for Immigrant Integration, Mar 2002).

<sup>54</sup> One might take the [Mexica Movement](#) members' signs during the 2006 immigrant uprisings in America stating "All Europeans Are Illegal On This Continent Since 1492" and "We are the ONLY owners of this continent!" as demands for such conversations.

<sup>55</sup> One of the many problems opened up when the settlement industry becomes vulnerable to a wider frame of analysis is that the industry provides one of the very few industries (menial labour aside) in which immigrants are taken seriously as applicants. Thus, responsibility must be taken (or forced) in advance by other sectors such as business if proper reflections on settlement and the government's role in settlement is to be undertaken.

conceptualizing the field for public action, ones that would not necessarily involve a distinct policy silo and administrative apparatus for immigrant settlement.

Immigrant settlement workers might well be alarmed by this possibility. No doubt they should be, for the problems and concerns of recent immigrants get little enough attention as it is. Nevertheless, the present system does not necessarily foreground the concerns of settlement workers and their clients. Nor does it connect those concerns effectively with the activities of the schools, hospitals, planning agencies, economic development commissions and other bodies that do most of the public business. The present system puts immigrant settlement into a silo at the margins of the main business of government at all levels, and then organizes that silo in a top-down fashion. It does not foreground the problems and concerns of recent immigrants in a way that obliges key policy-makers to take those concerns seriously. Significantly, immigration is paired with multiculturalism at the provincial level. Multiculturalism funding – which is geared to anti-racism, according to the provincial ministry – comes within its own silo, connected to a different federal ministry.<sup>56</sup> Anti-racism, multiculturalism, and immigrant settlement are all supposed to work in tandem. They are set apart from aboriginal issues. In turn, they are set apart from the main public business: add-ons to activities that are conceptualized in other ways. The effect is that most of the issues come too late to the table to have much effect on program planning.

The ideal of multilevel collaborative governance is that it puts the old hierarchies and the old policy silos aside, in favour of an approach that enables all relevant actors to be there from the beginning in a conversation that defines the problems and generates the agencies and programs necessary to tackle those problems. If that is how multilevel collaborative governance is supposed to work, there is not much evidence of it in the field of immigrant settlement. We think it is significant that the municipalities, school boards, and health authorities generally stand to one side of this policy field – looking in from the outside, as it were – even though they bear primary responsibility for most of the services

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<sup>56</sup> In multiculturalism programming, there has been a shift away from funding ethnic-specific cultural activities, towards community-wide initiatives such as “Building Safe Communities” – community-driven responses to racism that aim to connect non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people in particular. See (BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Division, 4 Apr 2007).

that might be of interest to immigrants.<sup>57</sup> What might have been a device to draw different bodies into a productive conversation has not worked that way (except occasionally in the City of Vancouver).<sup>58</sup> Instead, hierarchical silo-thinking has been reproduced once again.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the big issues about ongoing racism, colonialism, and imperialism have not been effectively connected with the problems of settlement and freedom that are inherent in the modern condition. No one understands that better than the front-line immigrant settlement workers who have to deal with the suffering produced or exacerbated by current public policies.

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<sup>57</sup> The exception to this being the Vancouver School Board, which has a stand-alone reception centre for newcomers. But rather than assuming that the reception function of this centre is valued by the Board, it would seem more accurate to suggest that the Board recognizes the need to distribute newcomers to schools and programs. The reception function is an innovative approach to settlement that is enabled by the director's dynamism and commitment.

<sup>58</sup> As for example in the Mayor's task force on immigration referred to above. It is too early to tell how productive these conversations will be, but that they are into a second round suggests that participants found the first round productive.

<sup>59</sup> At a minimum, if integration is conceived of as a two-way process, then there ought to be combined provision of settlement and anti-racist services. For instance, one can imagine employment training that pairs industry and immigrants, in a process of mutual education.

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## Settling the Unsettled

**TABLE 1: Population - Census Data 1996 and 2001**

Region	Population <sup>1</sup>		Immigrant <sup>2</sup>		Visible Minority		Chinese		South Asian		Aboriginal	
	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001	1996	2001
British Columbia	3,689,755	3,907,738 4.9%+	903,190 24.48%	1,009,815 25.84%	660,545 17.9%	836,445 21.4%	299,860 8.13%	365,490 9.35%	158,435 4.29%	210,295 5.38%	139,655 3.78%	170,025 4.35%
Greater Vancouver		1,986,965 8.5%+		738,550 37.17%		725,655 36.52%		342,665 17.24%		164,360		36,860 1.85%
Vancouver	514,008	545,671 6.2%+	228,230 44.4%	247,635 45.4%	227,430 44.2%	264,495 48.5%	139,860 27.2%	161,110 29.5%	26,040 5.07%	30,655 5.62%	10,960 2.13%	10,440 1.91%
Surrey	304,477	347,825 14.2%+	89,975 29.6%	114,725 32.9%	87,150 28.6%	127,015 36.5%	12,815 4.21%	16,480 4.73%	49,805 16.36%	75,680 21.84%	5,070 1.67%	6,895 1.98%
Greater Victoria		325,754 2.4%+		60,890 18.69%		27,585 8.47%		11,415 3.51%		12,120 3.72%		9,100 2.79%
Victoria	73,504	74,125 0.8%+	15,010 20.42%	14,840 20.02%	6,040 8.22%	6,985 9.42%	2,285 3.12%	2,645 3.57%	810 1.10%	975 1.32%	1,925 2.62%	2,180 2.94%
Alberni-Clayoquot		30,345 -4.1%		3,425 11.28%		1,090 3.59%		200 0.66%		975 1.32%		3,340 11.01%
Port Alberni	18,468	17,743 -5.5%	2,585 13.99%	2,230 12.57%	1,610 8.72%	890 5.01%	265 1.43%	150 0.85%	1,165 6.31%	590 3.33%	1,410 7.63%	2,320 13.08%
Ucluelet	1,658	1,559 -6.0%	160 9.65%	160 10.26%	105 6.74%	50 3.21%	20 1.21%	20 1.28%	0	0	180 10.86%	190 12.19%
Tofino	1,170	1,466 25.3%+	110 9.4%	150 10.23%	30 2.05%	60 4.09%	0	10 0.68%	10 0.85%	20 1.36%	50 4.27%	120 8.19%

<sup>1</sup> Total from census

<sup>2</sup> foreign-born

**TABLE 2: Immigrant Settlement Agencies (Stream 1, 1/3)**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Clientele</b>	<b>Services</b>
Vancouver	Multi-Lingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)	“multi” New immigrants and refugees	information and support services; community outreach; para-legal advocacy project; peer lending program; separated children intervention
	Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS)	“multi”- Convention refugees and new immigrants	Multilingual counselling; information and referral; resettlement assistance support; pre-settlement support
		Government-assisted refugees	Welcome House (CIC funded) – 12 apartment suites available on a fee for service basis
	SUCCESS	Chinese	Information and support service; public education programs; online info centre; volunteer support groups; free legal clinics
		Newcomers arriving at the Vancouver airport	Community Airport Newcomers Network (CIC funded) – welcome kiosk, reception and referral in 23 languages
	Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS)	Primarily South Asians	Information and referral officers; group programs (e.g. agricultural workers); community development; training programs
	Multicultural Helping House Society	Filipino (primarily), Bangladeshi, and South Asian	Information and referral; Family services and referrals; Crisis prevention, intervention and advocacy
	Centre D’Integration Pour Immigrants Africains- Centre Of Integration For Afrincan Immigrants	African Immigrants	information and referral; counseling; translation; computer training, and language training
Surrey	Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society	“multi”	**no longer funded, but this was <i>the</i> agency until the new tendering process.
	OPTIONS: Services to Communities Society	“multi” – with Korean and Latin American emphasis	OPTIONS is the “lead agency” in a collaborative settlement service contract with PICS and SUCCESS. The idea was that the settlement workers from each agency would travel to all the others, so that services across cultures would be available at each location.
	PICS (see Vancouver)	South Asian	
	SUCCESS (see Vancouver)	Chinese	
Victoria	Inter-Cultural Association (ICA)	“multi” – new immigrant focus	Settlement counselors; Information and referral; support groups for women, seniors and youths
	Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS)	“multi” – refugee focus	settlement and adjustment support; group workshops on family class sponsorship; community kitchen; advanced adjustment support services; Project ENABLE (students)
Alberni-Clq.	none		
Provincial (Stream 4)	Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)	85 Member settlement service and multicultural agencies	Information sharing; consult with senior levels of government; build capacity in the field; research and development; Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee
	ELSA Net	Member ELSA providers	Communication and coordination among members; represent ELSA at senior levels of government; research and development; professional development