

**Immigrants' Sense of Belonging in
Diverse Neighbourhoods and Everyday Spaces**

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Abstract

In this thesis, I examine issues of immigrant belonging, such as feelings of being accepted, recognized, and trusted, as well as having a sense of community and support. The focus is on the context of the neighbourhood in shaping immigrant sense of belonging. Neighbourhoods in Canadian cities are the locus of multiple structural forces – among these the provision of housing, services, infrastructure, and community that contribute to meeting everyday needs and feeling included, but also of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion through processes of enclosure, neoliberal urban policies, gentrification, and revanchism. In my thesis, I use spaces of encounter as the theoretical framework to examine immigrants' sense of belonging. Through narratives of belonging and not belonging, I aim to capture the full complexity of immigrants' sense of belonging. To do so, I adopted a collaborative qualitative approach combining multiple methods, including critical ethnography, descriptive Census data analysis, media analysis, and photovoice interviews with 13 immigrant men and women from diverse countries of origin.

The neighbourhood selected for this study is Ledbury-Heron Gate, a low-income, immigrant neighbourhood in Ottawa. Subject to stigmatization and mass evictions, Ledbury-Heron Gate is a contentious space and the site of struggles between residents, mainstream media, developers, and city officials. Yet, many participants have found amenities, mutual support, and solidarity in the neighbourhood that they have come to appreciate and value. I present a narrative of Ledbury-Heron Gate that is not portrayed elsewhere, a complex and sometimes contradictory story of belonging and not belonging. My findings reveal that sense of belonging is not simple, and there can be simultaneous feelings of comfort and recognition combined with resentment and fear. I emphasize the participants' accounts of agency and knowledge among the residents of

Ledbury-Heron Gate and their ability to create spaces where they can build community and solidarity. Yet, they encounter challenges such as (in)accessibility, discrimination, and disinvestment. Based on the narratives that I will recount in this thesis, it will become clear that the participants are keenly aware of the barriers that they face; yet they refuse to let these determine their sense of belonging and support for one another. Their efforts, with proper structural support from various levels of government, local institutions, and NGOs, hold the potential to transform spaces of encounter into spaces of empowerment and connection. Their complex and at times contradicting narratives of sense of belonging and experiences of exclusion show the nuances that come from being an immigrant trying to belong to a place that is not always inclusive.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

(Im)migration complicates notions of belonging; the movement and settlement of people ruptures traditional notions of belonging that takes for granted homogenous communities and identities (Panelli & Welch, 2005; Antonsich, 2016). Personally, my experience of immigrating to Canada at the age of six has led me to ask myself many questions of where I belong that do not have easy or simple answers. I often found myself justifying my identity to strangers because I grew up as a racialized immigrant who cannot claim Canada as her place of birth but who does claim Canada as the context that shaped her character. The interplay of how I see myself and how others see me complicated my identity and sense of belonging. For this reason, the topic of belonging fascinates me. I am curious about both how immigrants describe their sense of belonging and how the context of where they live shapes their sense of belonging.

In this thesis, I examine issues of immigrant belonging, such as feelings of being accepted, recognized, and trusted, as well as having a sense of community and support. In particular, the focus is on the context of the neighbourhood in shaping immigrant sense of belonging. The context of the neighbourhood is important because it represents a space of everyday interaction. Neighbourhoods in Canadian cities are the locus of multiple structural forces – among these the provision of housing, services, infrastructure, and community that contribute to meeting everyday needs and of feeling included, but also of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion through processes of enclosure, neoliberal urban policies, gentrification, and revanchism. These varied structural forces come together at the neighbourhood level to shape immigrants' everyday experiences. As immigrants travel the spaces of the neighbourhood, these structures and their impact on neighbourhood spaces enable and/or constrain our individual interactions (i.e., accessibility, community, or stigmatization and

criminalization). The neighbourhood is the interface where structural forces and individual experiences can be examined together and in interaction.

In my thesis, I use spaces of encounter as the theoretical framework to examine immigrants' sense of belonging. Through narratives of belonging and not belonging, I aim to capture the full complexity of their sense of belonging. For my methodology, I adopted a collaborative qualitative approach combining multiple methods, including critical ethnography, photovoice interviews with immigrants, and media analysis. This project was conducted as part of a larger SSHRC-funded Partnership Grant – Building Migrant Resilience in Urban Canada (BMRC) – under the supervision of Dr. Luisa Veronis.

The focus of my study is on a neighbourhood that I will call Ledbury-Heron Gate (LHG), an inner suburb of the City of Ottawa, located just south of the city centre, an area designated as South Ottawa. LHG is a neighbourhood characterized by a variety of housing types and uses, with affordable high-rise apartments beside expensive single detached homes as well as large swatches of public housing (rowhouses). LHG is neither a high density central neighbourhood, nor a sprawling low-density suburban greenfield development. The mix of low-density townhouses, single family homes, high rises and busy streets suggest an inner city neighbourhood; however, the wide thoroughfares of Walkley Rd., Bank St., and Heron Rd. are more reminiscent of suburbia. More importantly, Ledbury Heron-Gate stands out because of its significant share of immigrant population and high proportion of low-income residents. According to my research participants, local residents in LHG have built a sense of belonging and community, providing each other with support and solidarity in spite of challenges such as (in)accessibility, discrimination, and disinvestment. Based on the narratives that I will recount in this thesis, it will become clear that the participants are keenly aware of

the barriers that they face; yet they refuse to let these determine their sense of belonging and support for one another. Their complex and at times contradicting narratives of sense of belonging and experiences of exclusion show the nuances that come from being an immigrant trying to belong to a space that is not always inclusive.

1.1 Why Study Immigrants' Sense of Belonging

The study of immigrants' sense of belonging is a common research topic across the social sciences, including in disciplines ranging from geography (Antonsich, 2010b; Veronis, 2007; Valentine, Sporton, & Nielsen, 2009; Wood & Waite, 2011; Jackson, 2014) to sociology (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Gidley, 2013; Sadeghi, 2016) and cultural studies (Morley, 2001). Most studies commonly use sense of belonging as a factor or indicator of other theoretical concepts and tend to show that sense of belonging is positively correlated with a broader set of desirable social outcomes (Valle Painter, 2013; Berry & Hou, 2016). For example, a strong sense of belonging has been positively linked to greater civic engagement (Barber, 1984), feelings of well-being (Plane & Klodawsky, 2013; Burton & Phipps, 2010), sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), social cohesion (Jenson, 1998; van der Maesen et al., 2005), and cooperation across groups (Wu, Hou, & Schimmele, 2011). This conceptualization of sense of belonging does not fully capture the importance of developing a sense of belonging for immigrants in the first place. The abrupt movement and (partial) abandonment of their country of origin that characterizes most immigrants' experiences ruptures traditional conceptualizations of belonging. For immigrants, the answer to the question of to where they belong is not as simple as a country or a place, but rather is made up of stacked reasons, histories, and caveats that create complicated and often unexplainable sense of belonging to a variety of places and at a variety of scales.

In the contemporary age of migration and globalization, several scholars have lamented the decline of sense of belonging, social capital, and community cohesion (Tonnies, 2001 [1887]; Putnam, 2000; Putnam, 2007). Following these arguments, to be different is to diminish social capital and weaken community cohesion. At issue with such perspectives is that they tend to essentialize identities and to provide homogenous and singular views of ethnic immigrant groups that do not take into consideration the complexities of immigrants' "multi-layered" and "multi-scalar" sense of belonging. Over the past three decades, scholars have shown that social groups do not and actually have probably never possessed singular and homogeneous identities (Massey, 1994; Gidley, 2013; Jackson, 2014). With regard to immigrant-receiving countries, a homogenous society does not exist (and even less so in settler societies such as Canada). People, groups, and places are composed of multiple, dynamic, and constantly contested identities that are marked by internal conflicts (Massey, 1994). Understanding immigrants' sense of belonging in all its dimensions fosters recognition of an individual's complexities, hypocrisies, and multitudes. A nuanced understanding of one another is necessary to dispel myths of incompatible cultures and rigid stereotypes. As such, the study of immigrants' sense of belonging per se and separately from other concepts is also important.

1.2 Objectives and Questions

In my thesis, I seek to contribute to understanding the complexity of immigrants' sense of belonging as socially and spatially constructed from a social geographical perspective. My research project responds to calls for thick descriptions of immigrants' personal and emotional sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010a; Wood & Waite, 2011). Marco Antonsich (2010a) advocates for studies that consider personal and intimate sense of belonging, stating that the cultural turn of the 1990s has created an emphasis

on identity politics that overlooks the individual in favour of the collective. Wood and Waite (2011) argue that the power of belonging is in its emotional dimension, a dimension that requires further study. In my research, I follow their calls for consideration of personal and emotional dimensions of sense of belonging.

My focus on personal and emotional sense of belonging is not to detract from the importance of examining and understanding the structural processes that shape belonging for immigrants. Individual immigrants' personal and emotional sense of belonging is multi-layered and influenced by a range of structural forces determined by local geographic, historic, economic, social and political context. In short, they are socially and spatially constructed. Migration and housing policies that determine population composition and individuals' access to services are powerful forces in determining an individual's sense of belonging (Fincher et al., 2019). The neighbourhood where immigrants live influences who they meet on a daily basis, where they can go, and how they live their lives. The spaces in which they interact plays a role in determining whether they feel comfortable or uncomfortable, included or excluded. These factors must be considered when studying thick accounts of sense of belonging.

For my thesis, I decided to focus on immigrants' sense of belonging at the neighbourhood scale, because neighbourhoods act as the material, local interface between the structures at upper levels (e.g., urban, regional, national policies regarding housing and immigration) that shape individuals' sense of belonging and the everyday articulation of sense of belonging. When it comes to determining what type of neighbourhood to study, I considered the context of Canada as a settler-colonial society with high levels of immigration, where living with difference is a necessary component to everyday life. Given this context, it is important to find "politics which reaches for

equality between people but which does so by recognizing their differences” (Hall, 2009, pg. 13). Gidley (2013) recognizes the diversity of sense of belonging that can exist within the same neighbourhood and calls for research that can bring together the multiple presents and perspectives that exist within the same space. Studying a diverse immigrant neighbourhood, rather than an ethnic enclave with a high concentration of one ethnic group, can contribute to better understanding how we are to live together and belong in difference, an essential issue in urban Canada today.

The three main objectives driving this research are to:

- 1) Examine how immigrants perceive the material and social spaces of their neighbourhood and how that impacts their sense of belonging;
- 2) Provide a situated understanding of immigrants' multi-layered sense of belonging by examining everyday practices in their neighbourhood; and
- 3) Uncover the structural forces that shape everyday neighbourhood spaces, and in turn how they shape immigrants' perceptions and lived experiences.

When trying to understand immigrants' sense of belonging, it is important to include immigrant voices and knowledge as part of the discussion. Their narratives of everyday life and encounters in Ledbury Heron-Gate, coupled with their own descriptions and analysis of their sense of belonging are vital to the authentic presentation and nuanced analysis of the research findings. By asking participating immigrants to describe their everyday encounters, complex emotions and experiences, this research project aims for a grounded understanding of how various structural forces have material consequences on immigrants' lived experiences and sense of belonging. My research questions then are as follows:

- 1) How do immigrants define their sense of belonging in relation to their local diverse neighbourhood?
 - 1a) How do they identify themselves? How are immigrants able to form a sense of belonging to a diverse neighbourhood?

2) How do immigrants perceive the material and social forms of a diverse neighbourhood?

2a) How do encounters with difference in the material and social spaces of a diverse neighbourhood shape immigrants' sense of belonging?

2b) And how does their sense of belonging shape these encounters?

In answering these research questions, my aim is to better understand how immigrants perceive the material and social spaces of their neighbourhood and how that impacts their sense of belonging. The research focus is on immigrants' personal narratives of their sense of belonging, with an emphasis on internal criteria as opposed to external ones. The material and social dimensions of their neighbourhood spaces are important components of their identity formation, definitions of themselves, and sense of belonging. By examining the everyday spaces, practices, and performances in a local diverse neighbourhood, I aim to contribute to a situated understanding of immigrants' sense of belonging.

1.3 Research Context

Most research on immigration in Canada centers on the three immigrant gateway cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal (e.g., Creese, 2005; Bauder & Sharpe, 2002; Walks & Bourne, 2006; Veronis, 2007; Chow, 2007; Hsu, 2014). Together, these three Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) contain 61.4% of Canada's immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2017). But high numbers of immigrants are also settling outside of these gateway cities, especially in second-tier cities (Walton-Roberts, 2011; Thomas, 2013). Research conducted on immigration and belonging in Canada's gateway cities are not easily scaled down to second-tier cities. The gateway cities are large, metropolitan agglomerations that are more similar to other metropolises such as New York, London, or Tokyo (Sassen, 1991), than they are to other, mid-sized and smaller Canadian cities, especially in terms of multicultural immigration (Qadeer 2016; Li & Teixeira, 2007).

Nevertheless, second-tier cities are the sites of increased immigrant settlement and they also are where a large portion of Canada's population resides. In 2016, 56% of recent immigrants chose to settle in a gateway city, a large decrease from the 68.9% of recent immigrants in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006; Chui, Tran, & Maheux, 2007). On the other hand, six second-tier census metropolitan areas (Ottawa-Gatineau, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, and London) increased their recent immigrant intake from 14.3% to 24% in the same period (Statistics Canada, 2017; Chui et al., 2007). As such, more research is needed to understand immigrants' settlement, integration and belonging in second-tier cities. Ottawa is a second-tier city with an increasingly large and diverse immigrant population. In 2016, 216 505 immigrants lived in Ottawa, representing 23.6% of its total population (Statistics Canada, 2016). But so far, only a small number of studies conducted on immigrants focuses on Ottawa (Blanchet 2018; Ahmed & Veronis, 2017; Blanchet, 2017; Veronis, 2015; Tang & MacDougall, 2015; Veronis, 2013; Edwards, 1994). Among these, studies those considering immigrants' own personal sense of belonging are even rarer (Veronis, 2015). Thus, my research project contributes to further understanding immigrants' sense of belonging in increasingly diverse second-tier cities, with an empirical focus on Ottawa as an understudied immigrant destination.

1.4 Organization of Thesis

This first chapter serves as an introduction to my thesis with an overview of my research objectives, research questions, research context, methodology and case study. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature on immigrants' experiences in relation to neighbourhood spaces and their sense of belonging. I also discuss my decision to employ "spaces of encounter" as a conceptual framework to examine immigrants' sense of belonging. Next, in Chapter 3, I describe my methodology and justify my critical ethnographic approach, data collection process, and analysis. I detail the

neighbourhood selection, photovoice interview process, and critically reflect upon my own positionality in relation to my research. Chapter 4 consists of a description of the neighbourhood, using compiled 2016 census data from Statistics Canada, ethnographic data, a media analysis, and data from participant observation and photovoice interviews. In addition to providing essential context to situate the perspectives and factors shaping participants' sense of belonging, I explain how events such as the Timbercreek evictions (in 2016 and 2018) have influenced the participants' sense of belonging.

In Chapter 5, I examine the (in)accessibility of neighborhood spaces through the lens of enclosure of the commons. I begin by defining the commons as freely physically and socially accessible spaces that allow residents to get together and build community. In my definition, commons are not defined in terms of ownership (public vs. private), but by their use. The neglect and loss of accessibility to neighbourhood commons such as parks, community centres, and swimming pools fosters fraught and accusatory feelings among participants, leaving them to feel persecuted by those in power, neglected by those who should care for them, and excluded from spaces that are supposed to be theirs. In contrast, in Chapter 6 I detail how the participants find trust, support, and solidarity in the neighbourhood to confront the structural forces of neoliberal urbanism and revanchism. Ultimately, the dependency on voluntary work of community leaders to fulfill basic needs is both exploitative and unsustainable without greater structural support. In closing, Chapter 7 provides a summary of the key findings and concludes on the main insights into how neighbourhood spaces influence immigrants' sense of belonging. In addition to the limitations of this study, I discuss future research directions and critically examine what it means to belong for immigrants in Canadian cities and neighbourhoods.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Traditionally, studies on immigrants, sense of belonging and space at the neighbourhood scale have historically adhered to the idea of homogenous and fixed ethnic identities (Wirth, 1938; Schwirian, 1983; Guest, Cover, Matsueda, Kubrin, 2006). This abstracted and authoritative approach to immigrants' sense of belonging was the result of over-simplistic conceptions of belonging, identity, and community as rooted in the local. Also, these studies did not capture the broader social and material contexts that shape sense of belonging; rather, they provided mostly extrapolative and quantitative descriptions of belonging that rang untrue to the lived experiences of immigrants themselves (Kazemipur & Halli, 2000; Myles & Hou, 2004; Magee, Fong, & Wilkes, 2008). Nevertheless, studying immigrants' sense of belonging through neighbourhood spaces and local everyday experiences presents an opportunity to achieve a situated understanding of complex, fluid, and multi-layered sense of belonging that emphasizes immigrants' perspectives.

In this chapter, I provide a review of the literature and I make the case for a grounded study of sense of belonging investigating immigrants' everyday encounters in neighbourhood spaces. I argue that such an approach allows for an examination of immigrants' situated and complex sense of belonging that takes into consideration the physical, social, and emotional contexts. My argument is presented in three parts: first, I provide as background a systematic literature review of past research (from 2000 to 2018) about immigrants and neighbourhoods in Canadian cities; then, I discuss the conceptualization of sense of belonging as complex, fluid, and multi-layered; and third, I explain the importance of everyday neighbourhood spaces in producing, recognizing, and negotiating sense of belonging.

In the first section, I review the academic literature on immigrants and neighbourhoods in Canadian cities in order to situate my research. I summarize the most common methodologies and theoretical frameworks. I then single out the importance of including analysis of complex sense of belonging in this area of research. Next, I review existing literature on immigrants' sense of belonging, including both research conducted in Canada as well as internationally. For internationally-based studies, I focus in more depth on immigrant-receiving countries in North America and Europe. In particular, I discuss conceptualizations of sense of belonging as personal and emotional, as socially and spatially constructed, and as multi-layered. In the third and last section, I develop my theoretical framework. I outline how sense of belonging shapes and is shaped by everyday spaces and experiences, delving into the literature on spaces of encounter with difference. I show that micro-level encounters in everyday neighbourhood spaces produce sense of belonging and put an emphasis on the role of these everyday spaces' material and social context in producing sense of belonging.

2.1 Research on Immigrants and Neighbourhoods in Canada

To situate my research project within the existing research landscape, I conducted a systematic literature review of studies focusing on immigrants and neighbourhoods in Canada. In total, I identified 50 articles that examine issues relating to immigrants and neighbourhoods in Canada published between 2000-2018. As a whole, this literature tends to fall under one of three categories: settlement, spatial assimilation, and segregation; housing experiences; and immigrants' everyday experiences in neighbourhoods. I will discuss each in turn.

2.1.1 Settlement Patterns

Out of the total, 20 papers (40.0%) examine the settlement patterns of immigrants in Canadian cities and their spatial concentration in ethnic enclaves, often discussing the spatial assimilation model of immigrant integration. According to the spatial assimilation model of immigrant integration, immigrants are expected to move out of low-income, immigrant dense neighbourhoods after several years in Canada, and those that do not do so are often seen as cause for concern. For the purposes of this review, I further sub-divided these papers in three categories: historical and/or literature reviews, quantitative methods, and qualitative methods. All three subcategories of this section of research focus on the spatial concentration of co-ethnic immigrants; taken together, they explain such spatial concentration as influenced by a mix of structural factors and individual agency that leads to a variety of outcomes for immigrant groups and that is impossible to generalize.

I identified 10 articles in this category that are historical and/or literature reviews discussing past and present conceptions of immigrant settlement, enclave formation, and movement (Hiebert, 2000; Ley & Murphy, 2001; Buzzelli, 2001; Murdie & Teixeira, 2003; Siemiatycki, Rees, Ng, & Rahi, 2003; Mendez, 2009; Li & Li, 2011; Germain, 2013; Germain, 2016; Kataure & Walton-Roberts, 2014). Among these, many articles question the spatial assimilation theory, arguing that spatial assimilation is not necessarily the pathway all immigrants follow, and also that spatial non-assimilation does not necessarily lead to negative outcomes. Not only do structures that constrain choice limit where immigrants can first settle, but also there are instances when immigrants stay in co-ethnic neighbourhoods or settle in socially mixed neighbourhoods (Hiebert, 2000; Mendez, 2009; Germain, 2013; Germain, 2016).

Of the remaining 10 articles that discuss the settlement pattern of immigrants in Canadian cities, five articles adopt quantitative approaches to examine the effect of spatial (non-)assimilation and segregation on immigrants (Kazemipur & Halli, 2000; Myles & Hou, 2004; Preston & Murnaghan, 2005; Magee, Fong, & Wilkes, 2008; Darden & Fong, 2012). These papers tend to follow the spatial assimilation model and focus on the negative experiences of immigrants in 'ghettos'. A number of these papers also analyzes the income outcomes of visible minority immigrants and how they are negatively influenced by the spatial exclusion and segregation of ethnically identified neighbourhoods (Kazemipur & Halli, 2000; Preston & Murnaghan, 2005; Myles & Hou, 2004).

The last subcategory of articles features qualitative methodologies that provide more descriptive and nuanced portraits of immigrants and their neighbourhoods (Carter & Vitiello, 2012; Veronis, 2007; Smith & Ley, 2008; Murdie & Ghosh, 2010; Ashutosh, 2015). These articles describe the everyday experiences of immigrants as they interact with their neighbourhood spaces, taking into consideration the positive attributes of immigrant enclaves and how immigrants may find support in these spaces that they cannot find otherwise. In contrast to the quantitative articles, these authors find that some immigrants find it easier to live in co-ethnic enclaves because they have access to greater support for employment, housing, and social services.

As a whole, these papers show that there is no consensus on how the settlement neighbourhood of immigrants and their spatial (non-)assimilation impact their everyday lives. Shaped by geographic context, community resilience, and personal agency, immigrants' experiences of settlement in Canada cannot be neatly summarized by spatial segregation and deprivation followed by assimilation and integration. Furthermore, most of the articles do not explicitly discuss sense of belonging, even though some do connect settlement and integration with sense of belonging

(Siemiatycki, Rees, Ng, & Rahi, 2003; Murdie & Ghosh, 2010). The spatial assimilation theory presents a linear pathway to belonging through moving to more 'integrated' neighbourhoods not identified as 'ethnic'. These 'integrated' neighbourhoods are often composed of a majority of white 'Canadian' residents and few racialized immigrants. Immigrants' pathway to belonging in Canada cannot be viewed as a simplified process of first settling in an ethnically identified neighbourhood followed by moving to an 'integrated' neighbourhood. Ultimately, research about immigrant settlement and the role of ethnic enclaves needs to be more situated and contextualized.

2.1.2 Housing Experiences

The second main area of research (17 or 34.0% of articles) relates to immigrants' housing experiences in Canada. There is a degree of overlap with the first theme, given that both types of studies are concerned with understanding where immigrants settle, why, and the impacts of the neighbourhood of settlement on their integration success. Adhering to mixed methods approaches, this second group of articles investigates primarily immigrants' experiences with the housing search, including experiences with their initial settlement and housing experience (Rose & Ray, 2001; Hiebert et. al., 2006; Ghosh, 2007; Teixeira, 2008; Teixeira, 2009; Carter & Osborne, 2009; Carter, Polevychok & Osbourne, 2009; Teixeira, 2014; Logan & Murdie, 2016; Brown, 2017; Teixeira & Drolet, 2018), longitudinal housing career trajectories (Murdie, 2002; Wayland, 2007; Ghosh, 2015; Haan & Yu, 2015; Kuuire et. al., 2016), and displacement (Murdie & Teixeira, 2015).

The empirical focus of these studies on immigrants' housing experiences is mostly on Toronto (e.g., Murdie, 2002; Ghosh, 2007; Teixeira, 2008; Logan & Murdie, 2016), with some exceptions being Winnipeg, Manitoba (Carter & Osborne, 2009; Carter, Polevychok, & Osbourne, 2009), Kelowna (Teixeira, 2009; Teixeira & Drolet, 2018) and

Kamloops, British Columbia (Teixeira & Drolet, 2018), and North Bay, Ontario (Brown, 2017). In these studies, quantitative approaches are adopted such as numerical surveys that ask residents if they find their neighbourhoods satisfactory or unsatisfactory (Murdie, 2002; Teixeira, 2008; Teixeira, 2009; Carter & Osborne, 2009; Carter, Polevychok & Osbourne, 2009; Teixeira, 2014; Teixeira & Drolet, 2018). A small number of articles focus on the experiences of one or two neighbourhoods, using a more qualitative approach, and giving more insight into immigrants' perspectives on their experiences (Murdie & Teixeira, 2015; Logan & Murdie, 2016). In particular, in these articles, the neighbourhood is seen as an important place of identity formation and community support.

Again, sense of belonging is not usually explicitly considered in these studies. Although participants determined their neighbourhood as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory in the quantitative articles, they do not describe their personal emotions towards their neighbourhoods. The qualitative articles provide more insight into the participants' emotional connection to their neighbourhood and often portray a more positive relationship. Focusing on the participants' experiences after finding housing also raises issues relating to feeling at 'home' and sense of belonging (Logan & Murdie, 2016). While sense of belonging is not the main frame of analysis, the participants appear to feel a stronger emotional connection than what is portrayed in the aforementioned quantitative studies.

2.1.3 Everyday Experiences

The third theme addresses immigrants' everyday experiences in neighbourhoods, and encompasses 13 articles (27.7%). Among these, six articles feature quantitative approaches in order to compare neighbourhood characteristics and immigrant outcomes (Ray & Preston, 2009; Newbold, Gallina, & Wilson, 2015; Daoud, Haque, Gao,

Williams, Kitchen, Randall, Muhajarine, Nisenbaum, Muntaner, & O'Campo, 2016; Simone & Walks, 2017; Young & Montazer, 2018; Zuberi, Ivernark, & Ptashnick, 2018).

In this third theme, a more significant body of work exists that aims to examine immigrants' experiences with settlement, housing, and integration in relation to the neighbourhood context. Nevertheless, there is little concern with understanding immigrants' everyday experiences from their own perspective, and few studies pay attention to the more concrete, everyday experiences of immigrants within real, material neighbourhood spaces.

The seven remaining articles adopt qualitative methodologies to provide thick descriptions of immigrants' lived experiences (Rose, 2001; Poppe & Yong, 2015; Ghosh, 2014; Hsu, 2014; Zaami, 2015; Agyekum, 2016; van der Poorten & Miller, 2017). The empirical focus is (again) on Toronto, Canada's largest and most diverse metropolitan area. Methodologically, the authors rely mostly on qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews with immigrants residing in specific neighbourhoods. As such, these studies give voice to immigrants and shed light on their perspectives regarding the neighbourhoods in which they reside and their experiences of settlement and integration – in contrast to previously mentioned studies that evaluate the outcomes of these experiences based on extrapolation from statistical data. Moreover, the neighbourhood itself is accounted for as an active factor at play in these processes, rather than as mere context or background.

It is notable that most of the existing literature on immigrant concentration and spatial assimilation tends to draw broad generalizations regarding immigrants' integration by extrapolating based on data relating to their movement, or lack of movement, to higher-income and more diverse neighbourhoods with lower concentrations of co-ethnics. The literature on housing is primarily concerned with immigrants' experiences within the

housing market and its impacts on where immigrants settle, rather than immigrants' experiences within the neighbourhood spaces where they have settled. Even when discussing how neighbourhood spaces influence immigrants' outcomes, most studies take an extrapolative and reductive perspective. In contrast, the qualitatively focused studies under the third theme presented above tend to focus more specifically on immigrants' own narratives of their experiences within the neighbourhoods they call home (Rose, 2001; Ghosh, 2014; Hsu, 2014; Zaami, 2015; Poppe & Young, 2015). Yet, this group of articles, like the other articles, does not explicitly describe participants' sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the thick descriptions and nuanced narratives allude to a complex sense of belonging that needs to be further examined.

2.2 Sense of Belonging

Belonging is a frequently used term in social science research that is deceptively self-evident, ambiguous, and difficult to articulate. Yuval-Davis (2006) breaks down the concept of belonging into two separate dimensions: sense of belonging and the politics of belonging. This separation allows for a distinction between the emotional and personal sense of belonging on the one hand, from the more formal politics of belonging on the other. The politics of belonging describe the political projects and power dynamics that construct belonging and identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Although most research on the topic of belonging has focused on the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Martin-Perez & Moreno-Fuentes, 2012; Carrillo, 2015), Marco Antonsich (2010a; 2010b) has championed the importance of also researching immigrants' more personal sense of belonging. He defines sense of belonging as intimately tied to sense of self, created through time and place, and aimed at answering the existential question of 'who am I' (Antonsich, 2010a, p. 646). Antonsich states that the cultural turn of the 1990s and its emphasis on social identity categories have overlooked the personal,

emotional, and subjective dimension of sense of belonging. Nevertheless, individuals build up their identity and attachment to place over time in intimate and personal manners, and these processes cannot be ignored in the study of sense of belonging (Antonsich, 2010a).

When studying the personal and emotional dimensions of sense of belonging, there is the risk of equalizing differences and sanctioning liberal individualism. To avoid this pitfall, sense of belonging needs to be understood as socially constructed. Sense of belonging is shaped by the social structures that are a part of our everyday lives, such as capitalism, democracy, racism, and colonialism among others. Our individual experiences of sense of belonging are constructed through our reactions and resistances to these structural forces. In order to fully understand sense of belonging, we must study not only individual experiences, but also the structural forces that enable and/or constrain us.

Furthermore, a number of geographers have contributed to novel conceptualizations by demonstrating that sense of belonging is produced and negotiated through complex practices and performances in everyday spaces (Amin, 2002; Valentine et al., 2009; Wood & Waite, 2011; Leitner, 2012; Jackson, 2014; Kobayashi & Preston, 2014). In other words, sense of belonging is not just socially constructed, but also spatially contextualized. Development of a sense of belonging is practice-led; repetitive, banal, everyday actions are the building blocks on which safety and trust are constructed (Jackson, 2014). Personal memories, past experiences, and everyday practices cumulatively shape individuals' sense of belonging. These personal, lived experiences shape and are shaped by everyday geographies and social contexts. This conceptualization of sense of belonging draws on Lefebvre's (1991) ideas and theories on the production of space based on a trialectical notion of space as perceived,

conceived and lived. To illustrate, everyday spaces of the home and the neighbourhood are governed by a variety of social norms and laws. Immigrants' perception of space interacts with abstract conceptions of space and everyday, lived spaces to construct their sense of belonging. Feelings of home, claiming of identity, social norms, and everyday spaces interact and interweave with each other in the production of sense of belonging. These complex auto-biographical, social, and geographical elements form a complex sense of belonging that cannot be easily understood or articulated. In the following section, I discuss how scholars have conceptualized and studied sense of belonging over time, especially in the case of immigrants.

Sense of belonging has frequently been associated with identity and community, and the terms are often used in relation to one another (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Morley, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Researchers' use of the three terms together, often interchangeably, demonstrates the strong links between the concepts of belonging, identity, and community (Antonsich, 2010b; Ehrkamp, 2005; Veronis, 2007; Valentine et al., 2009). Community is a form of belonging, an emotional responsibility and solidarity. Through caring for and being cared for by others, recognition, inclusion, and belonging is formed in everyday encounters. The same drive to search for a sense of belonging often translates to a search for community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Ehrkamp, 2005; Jackson, 2014). The traditional notions of belonging, identity, and community treat them as ontological conditions and homogeneous entities (Panelli & Welch, 2005; Antonsich, 2016). The image of a rural, homogeneous community created by individuals with essentialized identities has historically been the idealized conception of belonging (Gidley, 2013). The traditional concept of community involves processes of exclusion and boundary formation between groups, whether based on ethnicity, race, or other identity markers (Walton & Hardebeck, 2016), and cannot withstand the multiple and contradictory sense of belonging that exists in diverse experiences of immigrants.

Groups such as (im)migrants have challenged the seemingly 'natural' existence of a neatly outlined identity, and exposed the fragmented, multiple, and fluid nature of belonging (Morley, 2001). Immigrant mobility has been viewed as a force that "unsettles associations between people and place" (Butcher, 2009, p. 1353). Immigrants' presence in receiving countries and their sense of belonging challenge the presumption of a 'natural' sense of belonging that is (naturally) rooted in place through history, ancestry, and memory, revealing the oversimplified and artificial presumption of 'nativity'.

In the past, research and policy tried to combat the anxiety produced by (im)migration and the presence of (im)migrants through notions and theories of assimilation where immigrants eventually "integrate" into host societies (Gordon, 1964; Lee, 1966; Portes, 1984). Accordingly, the ideal immigrant group would assimilate spatially and culturally into the practices and performances of the nationally dominant ethnic group. The advent of multicultural policies in the second half of the 20th century encouraged cultural differences, but did so by overlooking unequal relations of power and by essentializing notions of culture (Bannerji, 1996; Delanty, 2006, Thobani, 2007). In Canada, multiculturalism is established policy and takes form through the state's promotion of cultural tolerance and co-existence, encouraging individuals to get along with one another (Brosseau & Dewing, 2009; Hall, 2009; Government of Canada, 2019). Some scholars criticize Canadian multiculturalism for being merely skin deep, arguing that diverse immigrant groups are presented as pretty additions to the cultural mosaic while the inequalities and injustices that these groups may face are unaddressed (Nathan, 2010; Day, 2000). Multiculturalism is seen as a strategic response to increased labour needs, carefully negotiating newcomer groups so that they enter and not disrupt the Canadian mosaic (Thobani, 2007; Frost, 2011; Winter, 2011). The Canadian state and state-funded organizations divide immigrants into officially recognized groups that were not necessarily representative of their individuality and diversity (Bannerji, 1996).

Using these constructed identities, the state then encourages these groups to socially “integrate,” which is a key component of Canada’s model of managed migration (Thobani, 2007, IRCC, 2018; Valle Painter, 2013). The process begins at the immigrant selection process, whereby only those immigrants “who are most likely to contribute to the Canadian economy and integrate into Canadian society” (IRCC, 2018) are selected to come to Canada, and continues throughout their residency. Thobani refers to the type of immigrant integration that Canadian multiculturalism policy promotes as, “the integration of people of colour into Canadian society under white supervision” (2007, p. 173). She argues that Canadian policies are still aiming to develop and differentiate the Canadian identity, one that is cosmopolitan, liberal, and above all, white. Through the essentialization of cultures, multiculturalism associates whiteness with tolerance and progress, in contrast to immigrant groups who then become intolerant and backwards (Thobani, 2007).

Although Canadian immigration policy has recently become a more two-way process where government provides support and newcomers adapt to Canadian life, the idea of integration still depends on the notion that there is a homogenous host population into which the “ideal” immigrant will integrate, identify, and socialize, an ideal that racialized migrants often cannot achieve (Hansen, 2014; Cui, 2015). Yet a homogeneous host group does not really exist, and the onus of “integration” put upon the immigrant ignores racist structures of power and inequality (Thobani, 2007; Schinkel, 2018). By celebrating diversity while not acknowledging cultural and racial inequalities, multiculturalism does not actually make “foreign” cultures equal to the “host” culture, and so the “foreigner” remains a subset and forever an outsider in the receiving country. Moreover, in the case of racialized immigrants, they are always identified as outside the Canadian norm of whiteness, and can never be fully imagined as Canadian (Bannerji, 1996). Yet, many immigrants form a strong sense of belonging to their

receiving country despite never fully “integrating” as per national policies and public imagination (Hsu, 2014; Logan & Murdie, 2016; Hoekstra, 2019). These immigrants’ claims to a nation in which they were not born and in which they may not “integrate” reveal the fiction of a homogenous national identity.

A number of scholars have considered the rise of liberal individualism to bring the downfall of sense of belonging and cohesive communities (Putnam, 2000; Delanty, 2006; England, 2011). Studies that describe the conflicts and contentions that exist in diversity appear to foreshadow the inevitable downfall of community caused directly by increasingly diverse and complex personal identities (Blumer, 1958; Putnam, 2007). The perception that individuality is in direct contradiction to collective sense of belonging, however, is only valid if belonging is conceptualized in terms of a traditional, cohesive community built on similarities. Stuart Hall calls the idea of social cohesion “a polite form of assimilation of ‘the other’” (2007, pg 152). An alternate view of belonging does not require cohesion, but rather a willingness to come together despite differences (Delanty, 2006). The belonging that is formed in difference is a form of conviviality. Conviviality, or *convivencia* as the original Spanish term, emphasizes the practice of sharing spaces and experiences, where positive encounters may not only be “happy togetherness” (Nowicka & Vertovec, 2014, pg. 350), but also friction and conflict. It is such conflict that acknowledges structural inequalities and that also allows for community belonging without assimilation.

For immigrants in diverse neighbourhoods, living-with-difference is not a theoretical framework, but a matter of everyday life. Everyday lived experiences are important components in the production of sense of belonging in and through space (Lefebvre, 1991). Immigrants living in diverse neighbourhoods produce, negotiate, and contest their sense of belonging in everyday spaces where differences are exposed and

confronted. Research on immigrants living in diverse neighbourhoods requires recognition of a more comprehensive sense of belonging and community that does not take identity for granted. An awareness that sense of belonging is fluid, negotiated, and socially and spatially constructed recognizes the complex autobiographical, social, and geographical dimensions of sense of belonging. In Kobayashi and Preston's (2014) study on the identity and belonging of Canadian-born children of Chinese immigrants, participants described how different local, everyday spatial contexts changed their sense of belonging and their performance of identities. The Canadian-born Chinese (CBC) explained that Chinese cultural spaces and practices allowed them to feel more "Chinese" and strengthened their sense of belonging to a Chinese heritage. But when they were outside of Chinese cultural spaces, the participants described how they purposefully presented themselves as Canadian. Some participants noted that they avoided stereotypical Chinese fashion, cars, and cell phones. Many participants emphasized how they used their non-accented English to reinforce and justify their public identity as Canadians. The CBC are aware of how broader social context and everyday spaces shape their everyday practices and performances, and thus of the fluidity of their sense of belonging. Here, sense of belonging is created through a combination of structural forces (i.e., Chinese-Canadian stereotypes, accents identified as foreign, cultural spaces and practices) and the CBCs' participation in identity formation through various different kinds of spaces.

The social and spatial constructions that produce a complex sense of belonging can also be seen when examining everyday practices and performances at multiple scales. Valentine, Sporton, and Nielsen (2009) deconstruct the socially and spatially constructed sense of belonging of young Somali refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and Denmark. Their study reveals how the political and social pressure to assimilate within the national Danish identity in Aarhus resulted in the distancing of young

Somali refugees and asylum seekers from their Somali and Muslim identities. The research participants explained that they used Danish at home and were ambivalent and flexible in their everyday religious practices of praying, wearing the hijab, and reading the Quran. Meanwhile, a narrow prescription of what it means to be Danish prevented the formation of a strong Danish sense of belonging. On the other hand, the large, densely concentrated Somali community in Sheffield, England resulted in a stronger Muslim and Somali sense of belonging, a stronger local sense of belonging to Sheffield, and a weaker national British sense of belonging. The participants did not identify as British, emphasized the importance of speaking Somali at home, and followed stricter religious practices. Nevertheless, they felt comfortable and a strong sense of belonging to their local Sheffield community. The different social and spatial contexts of Denmark and England resulted in vastly different everyday practices and complex sense of belonging at multiple scales for these young Somalis.

In these examples, sense of belonging is shown to be socially and spatially constructed through common practices and performances that are enacted in everyday spaces, through contact and conflict with differences and expectations. These studies shed light on the importance of understanding how structural forces manifest in the everyday experiences of individuals and the concrete repercussions that they may have on personal and emotional sense of belonging at a range of scales. Based on this review, I argue that it is important to study immigrants' practices and performances in everyday spaces and that these influence and are influenced by their sense of belonging. I also argue that researchers need to interrogate the spatial and social context behind immigrants' actions and emotions. The context of banal, everyday settings is especially important to understand, as they are the shared material and social spaces where spontaneous encounters occur and sense of belonging forms.

2.3 Conceptual Framework: Spaces of Encounter

So far, the discussion on complex, multi-layered sense of belonging has mostly remained theoretical (Morley, 2001; Sandercock, 2003; Vertovec, 2009). Although a number of studies exists on the everyday production of a multi-layered sense of belonging, often neglected is a consideration of the material and social qualities of the spaces where encounter and contact take place. The material and social context of spaces of encounter can create uncertain results for sense of belonging. Allport's optimistic "contact theory" (1954) suggests that everyday contact can create open-minded tolerance and conviviality. Although Allport's theory has proven to be true under certain circumstances (e.g., Wessel, 2009), there are also cases of failed contact and halo effects (e.g., Blumer, 1958; Putnam, 2007). Allport's contact theory is predicated on the condition that the people in contact be of equal status, share common goals, and are not in competition (1954; Fincher et al., 2019). These conditions are not likely to occur in real life, and critics of contact theory argue that contact cannot on its own reduce prejudice (Valentine, 2008; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; Harris & Valentine, 2016). Where Allport and his critics are likely to agree are that the social and material contexts of encounters are important determinants to whether encounters and contact can enact positive change. The material and social context of everyday spaces can produce exclusionary spaces where privileged members of the neighbourhood control inclusion and exclusion through design, law, and representation (Ruddick, 1996; Mitchell, 1997; McCann, 1999; Valverde, 2009). Some spaces may only produce "illusory contact," where contact is superficial, and boundaries are constructed at intimate scales of the home (Valentine, 2008; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; Wessel, 2009, p. 9). There are also purposeful attempts to fragment and exclude through design of spaces by those who believe that cultural incompatibility and community solidarity require groups to remain spatially segregated (Anderson, 1987; McCann, 1999). These kinds of spaces are

especially damaging for immigrants' sense of belonging, because they create areas where they are excluded and marginalized. Attention to the role of material environments, spatial designs, and regulatory laws and representations can reveal fragmented and exclusionary landscapes that negatively affect immigrants' sense of belonging.

Others argue that there is too much focus on contact theory (Neal and Vincent, 2013). Contact theory is ultimately oriented around how those of an in-group can reduce prejudice and stereotype through contact with the Other. The question of what happens when there are multiple Others, and how conditions can be produced to enable positive contact are not often addressed. Ultimately, the focus of research on encounter needs to be on producing the conditions under which encounters of difference can become equal (Fincher et al., 2019). Positive spaces of contact and encounter allow for the recognition and articulation of multiple and conflicting senses of belonging. These spaces create messy and confrontational interactions between individuals that are also reflexive of existing social hierarchies. They are material and social areas where differences are revealed and accepted. But studies about immigration have tended to not make links between material space and complex and multi-layered sense of belonging. Studies that do so, such as Helga Leitner's "Spaces of Encounters" (2012), focus on the interaction between immigrants and local-born populations. Rarely do these studies take place in the broader context of diverse neighbourhoods, where it is recognized that there are constant encounters and interactions between many complex individuals who cannot be reduced to homogenous group identities. In Canada, within settler-colonial cities where differences are inevitable, it is important to investigate how diverse people interact in diverse environments.

Positive spaces of encounter and contact create engagement, debate, and awareness, and allow individuals to better situate themselves and realize where they are situated by others. Shared spaces are where social and cultural connections are forged and where identity and belonging are produced, negotiated, and articulated (Amin, 2002). Contact and encounter create new attachments and understandings of self, allowing individuals to transcend classic conceptions of belonging and community (Amin, 2002). Open and accessible public sites are frequent spaces of encounter and contact, which makes them important sites of study for the formation of sense of belonging and community. There are many different definitions of public spaces (Young, 1990). The common definition of public space is an area open to public use and owned by the state (Mitchell, 1997). However, the state-owned lands are also often considered private state property, used to justify enacting bylaws and requesting permits (Valverde, 2009). Others have bypassed the idea of private versus public space all together. Amin (2002) uses the idea of micropublics, compulsory sites of contact with ethnic diversity such as schools, workplaces, and recreational clubs. Amin considers the necessary and banal nature of micropublics essential to its potential as a space for coming together in difference and conviviality. Ray Oldenburg (1989, p. 16) uses the term “third places” to describe ‘public’ spaces that put emphasis on public access rather than ownership or management. This notion is useful to this study insofar as spaces of encounter require public access, but not necessarily public ownership or management. Other researchers have shown that residential neighbourhoods and work locations are everyday locations that are important as sites of encounter and contact (Bayat, 2010; Ellis, Wright, & Parks, 2004). Whether called public spaces, micropublics, third places, or else, there seems to be consensus that openly accessible sites of encounter are contested sites of contact, where diversity is materially recognized; sites where identities are produced and differences recognized (Berman, 1989; Ruddick, 1996).

In his work "Life as Politics," Asef Bayat (2010) argues that a neighbourhood could be the space for community formation and collective action. The space of the neighbourhood creates common struggles in access and consumption, especially for individuals with lower mobility such as children, the elderly, and those who care for them. Neighbourhood spaces, such as local parks and community centres, are also everyday spaces of encounter and contact. As such, neighbourhood spaces are important areas of identity formation, and need to be examined in relation to immigrants' sense of belonging. Ehrkamp's research (2005; 2006) on Turkish immigrants in Duisburg-Marxloh, Germany, shows the importance of neighbourhood spaces in immigrants' experiences. The Turkish immigrants visibly transformed their surroundings, creating spaces where they belong. Ehrkamp (2006) highlights the tension between self-understanding, social categorization, and performance of identities. In everyday encounters with difference, both overarching inequalities and the potential for "being together in difference as equals" (Fincher et al., 2019, pg. 33) emerge and become visible. To effectively study encounters in this way, the overarching contexts in which encounters occur and the connections between individuals and place are important elements to consider (Fincher et. al, 2019). The "moment of contact" is shaped by past experiences of contact, political rationalities, and geographic context and scale (Ahmed, 2004; Fincher et al., 2019). To expand, everyday encounters occur in spaces that are produced and governed by structural forces, such as neoliberal urban policies, discrimination, and revanchism. Yet, studies on spaces of encounter often overlook the economic and political structures that produce these spaces. Material space and social context are mutually reinforcing, engaged in a cycle of production and reproduction. It is not only social context that produces material space, but also material space that produces social context (Ruddick, 1996). Encounters take place within material space, social context, and the relation between the two must be closely examined when studying everyday contact. As Wessel states, "contact research should

shift its emphasis from a highly abstracted conception of contact to one that is firmly rooted in 'real-work' situation" (2009, p. 8).

To effectively study and ground the complex, fluid, and multi-layered nature of immigrants' sense of belonging, the material and social context of everyday, neighbourhood spaces of encounter and contact need to be analyzed. As such, the neighbourhood is an important space for researching sense of belonging. The development of a sense of belonging and community formation are negotiated through everyday communication and practices. Local neighbourhoods are the spaces where the multiple scales of belonging are articulated and played out in everyday life (Amin, 2002; Bayat, 2010). By studying encounters in neighbourhood spaces, researchers can provide macro-level structural context while also focusing on the micro-level material form, local context, and everyday encounters. Focusing solely on micro-level encounters ignores important broader social contexts (Valentine, 2008), while ignoring it in favour of macro-level context presents an oversimplification that robs immigrants of their own agency (Jackson, 2014). Studying the neighbourhood allows for a study of the everyday spaces of contact and thus to examine in detail the communicative process of creating a sense of belonging and community by focusing on both local, everyday spaces and how they are shaped by the broader historical, political, and geographic context.

2.4 Conclusion

After a review of existing research on neighbourhoods, assimilation, housing, and sense of belonging, I argue for the need to recognize and understand the complex, fluid and multi-layered sense of belonging that is grounded in everyday spaces. This research project responds to the IRCC's (Valle Painter, 2013) call for qualitative research on sense of belonging situated in local contexts. Moreover, the project responds to scholarly calls for studying situated personal and emotional sense of belonging that can contribute to

understanding complex and multiple belongings. I identified the material context of sense of belonging and sense of belonging in diverse neighbourhoods as potential areas of further research. I opted for a conceptual framework based on spaces of encounters insofar as spaces of encounter are everyday spaces where belonging is formed. Building on existing literature on spaces of encounter, I argue that the study of a multi-layered sense of belonging needs to stress space in both its social and material dimensions (Ehrkamp, 2006; Valentine et al., 2009; Visser, 2017). In addition, I emphasized that the neighbourhood stands as the interface where both micro scale practices and performances and macro scale structures can be studied.

My research project follows a qualitative methodological approach that relies on a combination of multiple methods, including critical ethnography, descriptive Census data analysis, media analysis, and photovoice interviews. Multiple data sources and data analysis through triangulation enabled me to verify and cross-reference data, remove biases, and approach immigrants' complex sense of belonging from a variety of viewpoints. Throughout the research process, I paid careful attention to ethical considerations and positionality, and I was mindful of the difficulty in conceptualizing, understanding, and articulating sense of belonging in diversity. My research findings do not necessarily lead to broad generalizations, nor do they reveal clear patterns in immigrants' sense of belonging. Rather, they provide a more comprehensive and holistic thick understanding of immigrants' sense of belonging and how it is formed in diverse material, social, and spatial contexts. More specifically, I contribute to advancing understanding of how immigrants' sense of belonging form in Ottawa, a second-tier city and popular immigrant destination in Canada.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This thesis was conducted as a part of a larger collaborative Neighbourhood Study project led by Luisa Veronis and Brian Ray from the University of Ottawa, Anyck Dauphin from the Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO), and a team of research assistants, including myself. The Neighbourhood Study was conducted as a part of a larger SSHRC-funded Partnership Grant, Building Migrant Resilience in Urban Canada (BMRC). The project compares immigrants' experiences of resilience across three neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau (two in Ottawa and one in Gatineau). The two Ottawa neighbourhoods are Ledbury-Heron Gate and Overbrook-Cummings, while the Gatineau neighbourhood is called Mont-Bleu. We used a collaborative approach, working together and partnering with community organizations, with a combination of qualitative methods – including census data profile, media analysis, critical ethnography, and photovoice interviews – which allows for recognition and understanding of the diverse meanings and viewpoints associated with immigrants' sense of belonging (Findlay & Li, 1999). For my thesis, I followed the same methodology as the larger project, but with a focus on immigrants' sense of belonging in the neighbourhood LHG. I used the census data profile, media analysis, and literature review on immigration and housing to complement my own analysis.

In this chapter, I describe the steps taken by both myself and the larger collaborative study in order to produce this thesis. I begin with a brief overview, before going into more details on each specific stage of the project, explaining the justifications behind our decisions and the results of our actions. This project's central focus, critical ethnography and photovoice interviews, reflected our focus in grasping a thick description of participants' lived experiences. I finish by explaining how we analyzed the gathered data as well as critically reflect on my own position as a researcher.

3.1 Overview of Research Methods and Timeline

The research process took place in four stages: 1. Neighbourhood selection and literature review; 2. Ethnography, census analysis, and media analysis; 3. Photovoice interviews; and 4. Analysis and community meetings. In the process of the project, I worked as a research assistant on the larger Neighbourhood Study and I was able to participate at all stages of the project, starting with the design of methodology, community meetings to select the neighbourhoods, data collection and analysis.

In May 2018, the research team undertook the first stage, neighbourhood selection and literature review. We selected the neighbourhoods in consultation with community partners while also conducting a literature review of studies pertaining to immigrants, neighbourhoods, and resilience. The community partners in Ottawa included: the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP), the *Conseil Economique et Social d'Ottawa Carleton* (CESOC, a settlement organization providing services in French), the Somerset West Community Health Centre, the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre, the Britannia Woods Community House, the Centretown Community Health Centre, the Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre, Crime Prevention Ottawa, and the City of Ottawa. At the second stage (ethnography, census data analysis, and media analysis), I helped compile census data from Statistics Canada (2016 Census).

Concomitantly, we began to collect news articles and social media coverage of the neighbourhood, which I continued to do until June 2019. Following the census profile and media analysis, we began the participant observation portion of the critical ethnographic approach for all three neighbourhoods. For my thesis, I focused on LHG, spending roughly ten hours a week in the neighbourhood attending various drop-in and social events. I continued my ethnographic observation until June 2019, at which point I stopped collecting data.

In the third stage (photovoice interviews), I began recruitment for photovoice interviews in October 2018 for the two Ottawa neighbourhoods, and I interviewed participants in English for all three neighbourhoods. The interview process continued until April 2019. The fourth and last stage (analysis and community meetings) is when we analyzed the qualitative data previously gathered from photovoice interviews, critical ethnography, census profile, and media analysis. On June 12, 2019, the research team held a community town hall meeting in LHG to relay our analysis to community members and participants for their input. We then proceeded to further analyze the data based on the feedback gained at the community meeting.

I followed this methodology for my thesis research as well as the larger project because studying immigrants' complex, fluid, and multilayered sense of belonging requires multiple and collaborative research methods (Gidley, 2013). The photovoice interviews allow me to visually understand how the participants perceive the material and social spaces of their neighbourhood. The interview process prompts the participants to describe their everyday practices and interactions, providing a situated understanding of their sense of belonging. Moreover, the media analysis, census data profile, and critical ethnography offered me the opportunity for me to uncover the structural forces that shape neighbourhood spaces. Connecting the three methods together provides a complete and complex narrative of belonging from the participants' perspective that considers not only individual agency but also structural context.

3.2 Neighbourhood Selection

In spring and summer 2018, the research team met twice with the community partners to select the two case study neighbourhoods in Ottawa for the BMRC project. The first meeting was held on May 23rd, 2018, at which time we presented the project, study objectives, and methodology to the community partners, before engaging in facilitated

discussions mostly targeted towards neighbourhood selection. At this meeting, the community members identified two potential neighbourhoods, Overbrook-Cummings-McArthur in east Ottawa and Ledbury-Heron Gate-Ridgemont-Elmwood in southeast Ottawa (see Figure 1), which were of particular interest because they were known to be diverse neighbourhoods where many newcomers settle upon arrival.

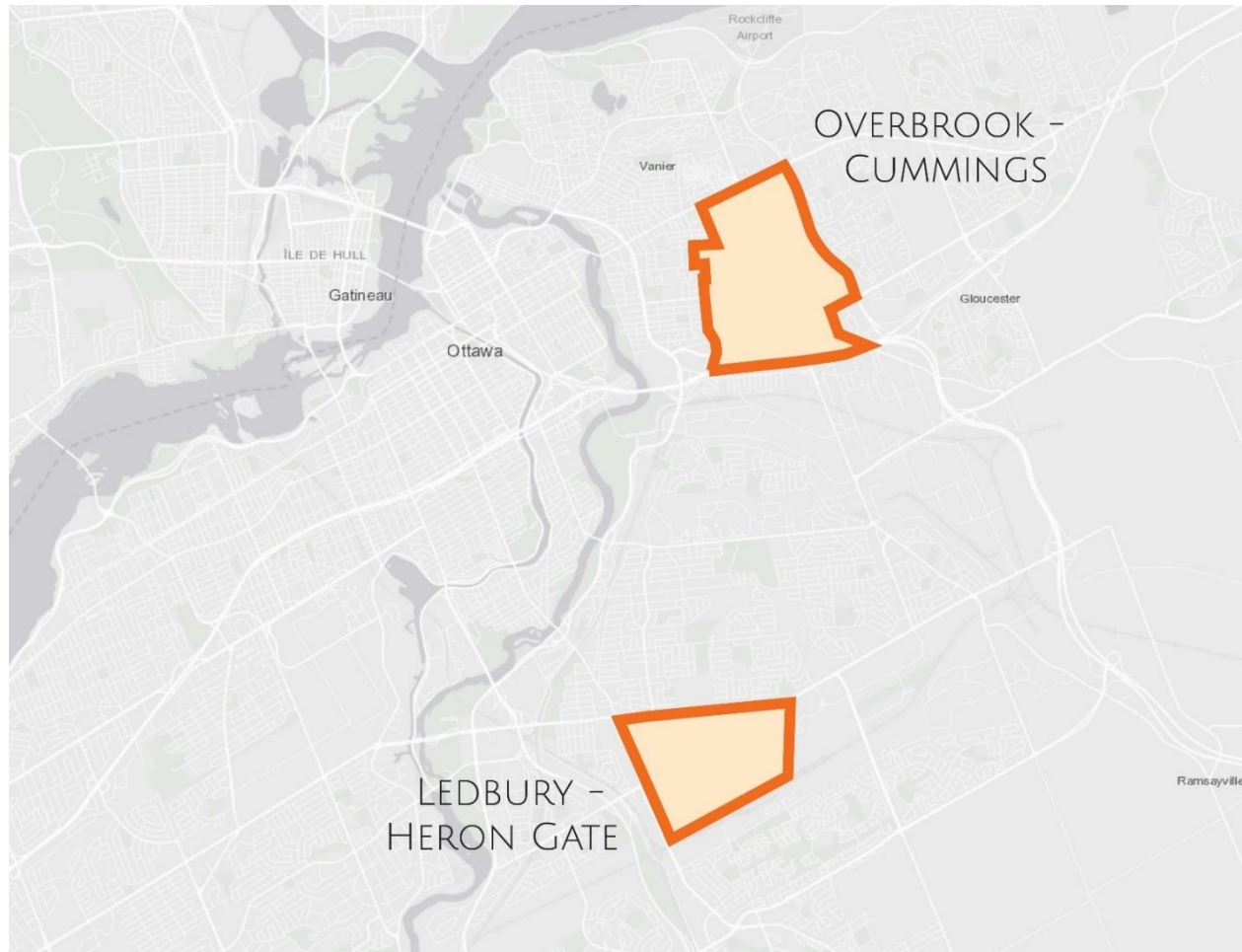


Figure 1: Ottawa Neighbourhoods; Source: Scholars Geoportal, 2020

Following this first meeting, the research team gathered data from the Canadian Census of 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016) on the two neighbourhoods, which we analyzed and presented at the second meeting on August 15, 2018. At the latter, we discussed various factors in favor or against selecting these two neighbourhoods, and finally agreed to

settle on Ledbury-Heron Gate (LHG) and Overbrook-Cummings (OC), mainly because they have a higher density of residents who are foreign-born compared to Ottawa, and they feature a diverse housing stock, which allows for comparisons across housing types for a diverse population in an increasingly diverse city. For my MA research, I decided to focus on LHG primarily because the interviews were to be conducted in English, in contrast to OC where interviews were to be conducted in both English and French. I unfortunately lacked the proficiency to be able to interview participants in French.

3.2.1 Census Data Neighbourhood Profile

Once the neighbourhoods were selected, our goal was to understand their material and social context. We undertook a more detailed analysis of data from the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, 2016) to develop a statistical description of the neighbourhood. We also situated this profile within the broader context of Ottawa, comparing average statistical data and identifying important similarities and differences. The census data statistics that were the most important to my research project were: immigrant status, housing tenure, visible minority status, and household income. Other significant statistical data include: low-income cut-off rates, housing suitability, household types, and housing types. These data are discussed in Chapter 4 where I provide a more detailed profile of the socio-demographic characteristics of LHG.

3.3 Media Analysis

To complement the sociodemographic profile of the neighbourhood, we also examined the media representation of LHG. Geographers have been sensitive to the interactive relationship between spaces/places and their representations, including media representations (Lefebvre, 1991; Ruddick, 1996): not only are media representations of

spaces/places produced by material and social spaces, but they also produce them (Ruddick, 1996). Representations of space (and the media) are one component of Lefebvre's (1991) spatial trialectic – i.e., conceived space – and play a key role in the production of space. As such, for this project, we wanted to have a sense of the neighbourhood's representation in the media to better understand its production and inform our understanding of the participants' experiences of its social and built spaces. Mainstream media, such as the Ottawa Citizen, CBC Ottawa, and other online news media sites, were analyzed for an understanding of the media representation of the neighbourhood. In addition, social media and other web-based media were consulted to understand how the neighbourhood is perceived by individuals both inside and outside the LHG.

To search for articles, I used key words I picked up from my ethnographic research. I searched for major streets associated with the neighbourhood (Walkley; Heatherington; Cedarwood; etc.), neighbourhood names (Ledbury-Banff; Heron Gate; etc.), and local sites (the schools; Sandalwood Park; etc.). I conducted a search for mainstream media articles, such as Ottawa Citizen, CBC Ottawa, etc., and another one for social media posts, such as those on Twitter, Reddit, and Facebook. I searched only for articles up to 10 years before the start of my research, more specifically the period from June 2008 to June 2019. I found a total of 355 mainstream media news articles and selected 60 social media posts. The sheer amount of social media posts due to the mass eviction process in the neighbourhood and the community response to it was simply too large to effectively collect and analyze. I then coded the mainstream articles according to themes and subthemes. The articles are organized in 10 main themes: Crime, Timbercreek, Schools, Neighbourhood Problems, Community, Development/Planning, Housing, Politics, Disinvestment, and TransGlobe (see Table 1). I further expand on the main themes in Section 4.5 – Media Analysis.

Table 1 – Media themes and subthemes

Category	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)
Crime	136	40.60%
<i>Crime: Instances</i>	114	83.82%
<i>Crime: Problem</i>	22	16.18%
Timbercreek	72	21.49%
<i>Timbercreek: Evictions - Negative</i>	35	48.61%
<i>Timbercreek: Resistance</i>	28	38.89%
<i>Timbercreek: Development - Positive</i>	8	11.11%
<i>Timbercreek: Evictions - Positive</i>	1	1.39%
Schools	43	12.84%
<i>Schools: Problem</i>	39	90.70%
<i>Schools: Event</i>	4	9.30%
Neighbourhood Problems	18	5.37%
Community	18	5.37%
Development /Planning	17	5.07%
Housing	16	4.78%
Politics	9	2.69%
Disinvestment	4	1.19%
Transglobe	2	0.60%
Total	335	100.00%

3.4 Critical Ethnography and Participant Observation

Simultaneously, we began a critical ethnographic study to provide a situated and embodied understanding of the neighbourhood’s material and social forms. This step was important for a more holistic approach to help me understand immigrants’ sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. The researcher needs to physically enter the material and social spaces with their body and mind (Pink, 2009). Gaining familiarity with the

neighbourhood's material and social forms and spaces through multiple sources of contextual information helped me better grasp what participants would say during the subsequent semi-structured photovoice interviews. Critiques of ethnographic approaches discuss their history of homogenizing communities and essentializing identities. The idea of an ethnographer's unbiased view elevates colonial academic knowledge above the lived experiences and knowledge of residents and community members. In response, a *critical* ethnographic approach recognizes social inequalities and power relations (Carspecken, 1996). Carspecken's guide to critical ethnography states that consideration of system relations and macrosociological theories paired with a push for action are necessary for ethnographic research to be socially relevant.

Critical ethnography provides the opportunity for an elevation of participants' lived experiences and knowledge. Collaborative ethnographic methods and detailed attention to subjective experiences are valuable to help understand complex, fluid, and multi-layered thick descriptions of immigrants' sense of belonging. When done properly, with attention to local and non-local contexts and positionality, critical ethnography can describe multiple and complex perspectives in a single space, "and open up a space of translation between diverse residents' incommensurate worlds" (Gidley, 2013, p. 374).

Through visits to the neighbourhood and participant observations at both public and community events, I was able to gain an embodied understanding of the neighbourhood. From August 2018 to July 2019, I spent approximately ten hours a week in LHG in order to understand the spaces of the neighbourhood, where residents go to buy food, congregate, and feel comfortable. I attended neighbourhood Tea/Dinner and Chats, English Conversation Groups at the nearby libraries, community dinners, political protests, city budget meetings, community development consultations, and

other events that either took place in the neighbourhood or were about the neighbourhood. As a part of my critical ethnography, I took detailed notes using a participant observation table at the various drop-in events and programs that I attended. I recorded detailed notes in a participant observation table (see Appendix G – Participant Observation) that captured not only the basic details such as date, time, and location, but also details such as general atmosphere, physical interactions, verbal interactions, themes discussed, and overall social dynamics. It is from these events and notes that I pulled my preliminary analysis and also where I learned about the neighbourhood in order to conduct better photovoice interviews. My note taking also contributed to thinking about positionality and reflexivity, as I also examined my own feelings and interactions with other participants and activities.

Moreover, I tried to understand the various events and programs that exist for residents who live there. The greatest difficulty I faced was a lack of information. At first, I tried to go through more formal channels to find community events I could attend. I emailed immigrant services organizations, nearby libraries, and city community centres. Most organizations, however, were unable to direct me to people who lived in the neighbourhood, and I did not make much headway. I eventually found out through word of mouth that a number of community events run out of the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre. There was no official advertising of these community events, not online through social media, nor with physical posters or flyers at other locations around the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, as I became more of a presence around the neighbourhood, I began to hear of more community events while I was cautiously but warmly welcomed. These events were often informal and casual, attendance was always welcome but never expected, and regulars showed up consistently week after week and asked after one another. These events not only gave me the base knowledge from which I built my understanding of the neighbourhood, its

spaces, and its residents, but they also were the spaces where I recruited many of my participants.

My critical ethnographic approach strived to be collaborative and participatory, aware of the partial, limited, and biased nature of personal observations and narratives. I shared my analysis with the participants and invited them to contradict and correct me. I engaged myself with the social and political issues in which they were invested, and made clear my own positionality while so doing. As I asked the participants and residents in the neighbourhood about their lives, I also shared mine, as a way to allow them to enter my world as they have allowed me to enter theirs. As a researcher, I strived to echo the demands of residents and situated their voices in broader social and political contexts.

3.5 Photovoice Interviews

In order to capture immigrants' complex and contradictory lived experiences, it is important to put research participants' narratives at the forefront (Findlay & Li, 1999). Photovoice interviews allow for bottom-up, grounded discussions with individuals that reveal the complexities and intimate, personal encounters that shape their identities (Jackson, 2014). Photovoice was originally conceptualized by Wang and Burris (1997) for their research on rural Chinese women's everyday lived experiences. They sought a method that enables individuals to be part of the research process, and to create a participatory means of sharing expertise and knowledge. Photovoice gives the power of creation and voice to research participants, even those who are illiterate (Wang & Burris, 1997). Moreover, photovoice adds a visual component to understanding sense of belonging and speaks to unconscious thoughts and emotions. As mentioned, complex, fluid, and multi-layered sense of belonging is difficult to imagine and even more difficult to articulate. Providing a visual expression of sense of belonging opens a new

dimension of understanding, and helps participants form a more comprehensive narrative of their sense of belonging (Chapman, Wu, & Zhu, 2016). Paulo Freire believed that photographs revealed the social and political structures that shape everyday lives, and that individuals are better able to engage with the abstract by discussing images (Freire, 1972; Liebenberg, 2018). Moreover, my project is ultimately a study about place and sense of belonging, and photographs provide valuable visual context for the material and social forms of the neighbourhood.

The central component of my data collection was semi-structured photovoice interviews. This technique consisted of two one-on-one personal interviews with each participant, which allowed for complex and diverse investigations into sense of belonging. I conducted the two-part semi-structured photovoice interviews with the 13 participants who live in the neighbourhood and who self-identify as immigrants. The first meeting (lasting approximately 45-60 minutes) was a shorter introductory interview with the participants in order to introduce the project and to get to know one another (see Appendix H – Introductory Interview Guide). The focus of the introductory interview was on discussing the participants' immigration history and settlement, reasons for coming to Canada, experiences in the early stages of settlement, and choice of neighbourhood. I outlined the goals and objectives of the project and shared with the participants my research questions and methodology. In this first meeting, I obtained written informed consent for their participation in my research, as well as for their interviews to be used in my thesis and other publications (see Appendix B – Introductory Interview Consent Form). I explained that their participation was voluntary, their right to refrain from answering questions, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

After I requested that they sign the consent form, participants were asked to fill a short survey to collect basic sociodemographic data (gender, age, country of origin, time of arrival, etc.) (See Appendix E – Demographic Survey), and to discuss their immigration experiences to Canada. The participants' sociodemographic data are then examined in relation to the neighbourhood census profile to determine how they compare relative to the other residents. These data helped me ask more relevant questions in my interviews, as I better understood the potential factors shaping participants' everyday lived experiences. I also used the demographic data to analyze the narratives of my participants, pulling apart differences in lived experiences as they relate to my participants' intersectional identities. I then proceeded to ask participants questions about their immigration experience to Canada, where they settled, how they found living in Canada. After the introductory interview, I asked the participants to take pictures of their neighbourhood spaces and we scheduled a second photovoice interview. I asked participants to take photographs with a focus on material and social spaces where they experience strong or weak sense of belonging. Photographs are revealing of personal experiences and lives and may convey more than what a participant may want to say to the interviewer (Chapman et al., 2016). An essential part of the interview and photovoice process is participant confidentiality. Participants were consulted on whether they feel comfortable sharing the photographs and their thoughts and analysis publicly. Any personally identifiable data and private details have been anonymized, and pseudonyms were given to all participants.

The time lapse between interviews was typically one week, but ranged from three days to three months depending on the schedule of the participants. The second interview (lasting approximately 90 minutes) centered on participants' sense of belonging to their local diverse neighbourhood (Appendix I – Photovoice Interview Guide). I requested participants sign a second consent form, where they permitted us to audio-record the

interview, as well as use their photos in publications (Appendix C – Photovoice Interview Consent Form). In the second interview, we discussed how the participants feel in their neighbourhood spaces, particularly the ones where they had taken photographs, and what they like and dislike. These interviews were more focused on immigrants' description of their sense of belonging. Interview questions strived to be open-ended to allow for active narration and reflection. The interview guide shows the progression of interview questions. To complement and add to the interview, the participant's photographs were also analyzed. The photographs not only served as a visual supplement for the discussion, but they also provided an entrance into the participants' perception of the material and social dimensions of the neighbourhood. Participants were asked to choose between five to ten pictures that they took throughout the week as those they considered most representative of their sense of belonging. The pictures that they shared, however, varied greatly in quantity and quality. Regardless, the photographs were helpful starting points in the discussion and showed what the participants viewed as important neighbourhood spaces. In addition, I asked the participants to indicate on a printed map the area they considered to be their neighbourhood and the locations where they took their photographs. They were then thoroughly consulted on their photographs, why they took them, why they chose them, and what they meant to them.

Both interviews were recorded on an audio-recording device (with consent) and later transcribed verbatim. As sense of belonging is a personal topic that is difficult to articulate, the interviews took place in a space of the participant's choosing to provide them with the highest level of comfort. Many of the interviews took place at the participants' homes, while a few took place in nearby public spaces, such as community centres, fast food restaurants, and libraries.

3.5.1 Recruitment and Selection Criteria

The selection criteria for the research study included individuals who identified as immigrants and/or refugees, who were over 18 years old, and who had dependents and/or individuals to support. We looked for residents with dependents in order to find participants who spend more time in neighbourhood spaces, as opposed to single working individuals who may not spend a lot of time in LHG. These dependents ranged from children, elderly parents, and occasionally younger siblings.

Unfortunately, recruitment in LHG was a long and tedious process, despite the \$30 incentive. The on-going Timbercreek evictions and the political turmoil in the neighbourhood created cautiousness and distrust among neighbourhood residents (whether long-established immigrants or more recent newcomers). I had to be very careful to avoid being too closely associated with various contentious organizations in the area. In the end, recruitment took a long time and required a buildup of trust and commitment that was difficult to attain. Furthermore, as a Chinese-Canadian who does not speak Arabic or Nepali, a large number of the neighbourhood's residents were inaccessible to me. There was also the issue of lack of knowledge of the neighbourhood. Although the community partners identified the neighbourhood as an area of interest, there was no one who lived in the neighbourhood or who was close with anyone who lived there. Most of the community organizations that work within the neighbourhood remained relatively detached. The neighbourhood events mostly ran via word of mouth and it was difficult to come by concrete plans, making it difficult to find times and places where residents would gather. As such, the recruitment process lasted from September 2018 until March 2019. Most of the participants I recruited personally at community events where I approached individuals I knew in order to invite them to participate in the project. Other forms of recruitment, such as handing out flyers and posters at nearby community centres, were ineffective. One participant I managed to

recruit through a poster at the nearby library, and another through a series of connections starting from a community partner who was at the neighbourhood selection meetings. In the end, the number of male participants was low, and therefore the research team sought the help of another graduate student and research assistant (who speaks Arabic and is male) at the University of Ottawa, and he was able to help recruit three men from the mosque in the neighbourhood. In total we were able to recruit 13 participants (see Table 2).

Table 2 – List of participants

Name	Description
Abdul	25-34 year old father of three from Syria, came to Canada with his wife and children as a refugee in February 2016
Adel	26 year old woman from Somalia, moved to Canada as a refugee in 1996, lived in Heron Gate for 10-11 years, takes care of her mother
Dawoud	35-54 father of one who moved to Canada from Lebanon in 1986 as a student
Faiza	25-34 year old married woman from Sudan, sponsored by her husband to move to Canada in 2013, lived in Heatherington for one year, has two young sons
Hani	25-34 year old single mother of two, came to Ottawa from Somalia as a refugee in 1995, has lived in Heatherington for three years
Jarome	25-34 year old Syrian father of three who moved to Heron Gate with his wife and children as a refugee in August 2016
Kinley	Young man in his early 20s from Nepal, moved to Canada as a refugee in 2011 with his parents and three siblings (both older and younger), his parents do not speak English
Leila	36 year old mother of two, moved to Heatherington from Iran with her husband and children in August, 2018
Nacira	35-54 mother of three who was sponsored by family to move to Canada from Afghanistan in 2010, lives in Ledbury-Banff
Nadia	53 year old mother of six who moved from Kuwait to Canada as a refugee in 2000, has lived in Fairlea for four/five years
Nour	25-34 year old single mother of four, moved from Sudan to Eritrea and finally to Canada with her husband in 2005, lived in Heatherington for six years
Sakina	55-64 year old mother and grandmother who moved to Canada from an unnamed country as a refugee in 1991, she has lived in Ledbury-Banff for 10 years
Samira	35-54 single mother of four who has lived in Heatherington for four/five years, moved to Canada as a refugee in 2001

3.5.2 Participants' Demographic Profile

My participants, like most residents in the neighbourhood, were racialized immigrants. In terms of age, one participant was 18-24 years old, six were 25-34, five were 35-54, and one was 55-64. I interviewed nine women and four men from a variety of countries of origin, including Somalia (3), Syria (2), Sudan (2), and one each from Nepal, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iran and Afghanistan. As such, they spoke a variety of languages at home, including Persian, Somali, Nepali, Farsi, Dari, Arabic, and Kurdish. Many participants also had an intermediary or transit country to which they moved prior to coming to Canada, such as Kenya, Eritrea, India, and Turkey. Most moved directly to Ottawa upon arrival (n=9). Others had settled in various Canadian cities and regions – e.g., Winnipeg, Quebec City, Toronto, and Welland (ON) – before moving to Ottawa.

With regard to immigration status, among the 13 participants, nine came as refugees; two came under family reunification but were also fleeing conflict situations in Somalia and Sudan (see Figure 2). Only one participant came as an economic immigrant.

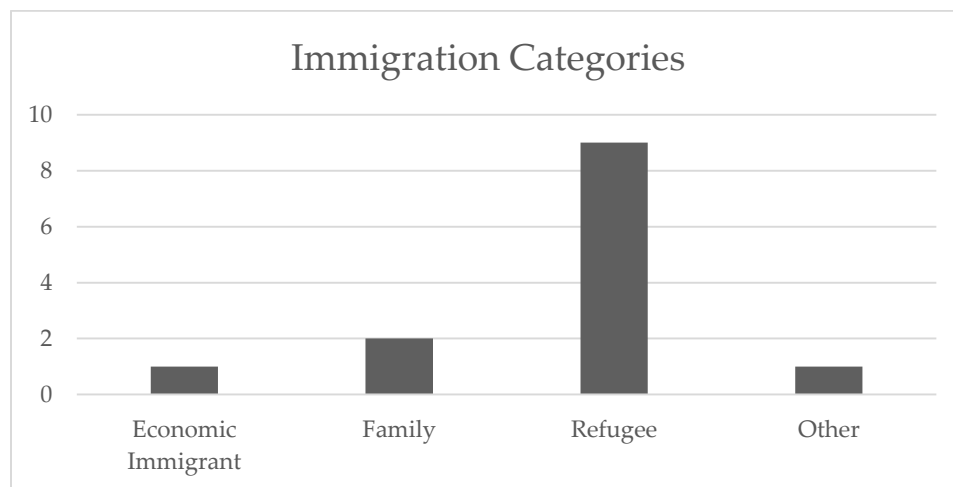


Figure 2: Participants by Immigration Category

All but one participant arrived in Canada with family members, often a combination of siblings, significant others, parents, and/or children. Participants' arrival in Canada ranged from three months to 28 years prior; in terms of number of years they had lived in Canada at the time of the interview, three out of thirteen participants had been in Canada for less than 5 years, three for 6 to 10 years, and seven for more than 10 years. All participants self-identified as immigrants, partly due to their racialized identities and often accented English.

Currently, seven participants are Canadian citizens and six are not. Those who had been in Canada for many years were fluent in English, albeit typically not without accents. However, a couple of participants were disparaging of their English skills, answering that they had elementary or basic levels of English when they were more than capable of answering all interview questions in depth and with nuance.

Participants had a range of different levels of education. Some of them, due to the crisis in their country of origin, did not have access to education beyond eighth grade. Nevertheless, three participants had professional degrees, one had a graduate degree and one was in the process of attending graduate school. Similarly, employment status varied greatly, with one participant unable to work, one participant looking for work, one unemployed but not looking, two self-employed, three homemakers, and three students. Out of the three students, two were also alternatively employed, making a total of four participants who were employed for salary. All my participants who answered the question on their household income (n=12) indicated that they made less than \$40,000 per year, and four participants made less than \$10,000 per year (see Figure 3). Most participants (n=9) drove cars as their primary mode of commuting. Public transit was a close second, with four participants.

All but one participant were renters. In terms of housing type, most participants (n=8) lived in row houses and three lived in apartments in buildings with five or more

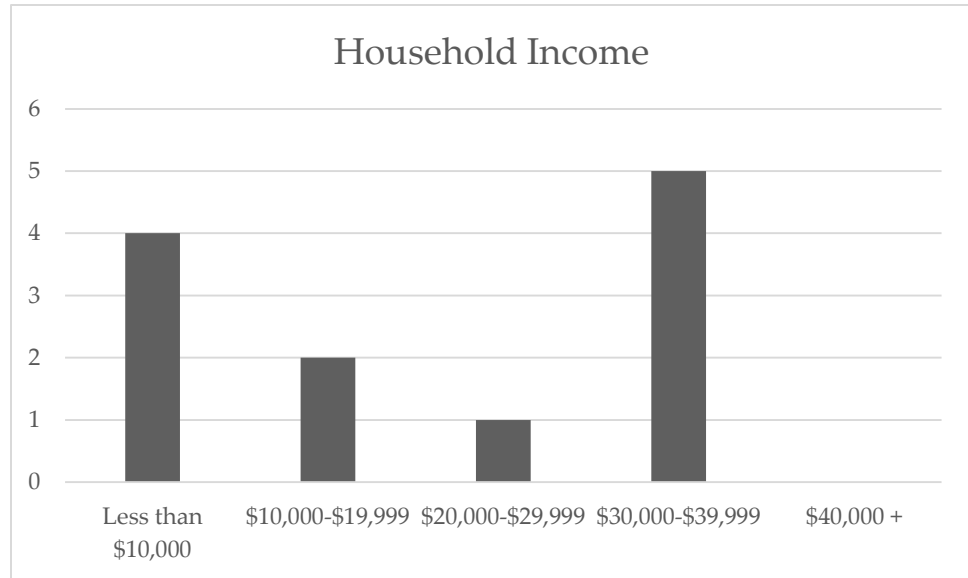


Figure 3: Participants by Household Income

storeys. All participants lived in houses with fewer than five rooms, typically a two- or three-bedroom apartment/rowhouse with a living room and sometimes kitchen counted separately. Yet, seven out of thirteen participants had household sizes of five or more people (see Figure 4). Seven out of thirteen participants were married/common-law, while three were single, two were separated, and one was divorced. Eleven participants had children, and the number of children the participants had ranged from 2 to 6. Those who did not have children had to care for either elderly parents and/or younger siblings.

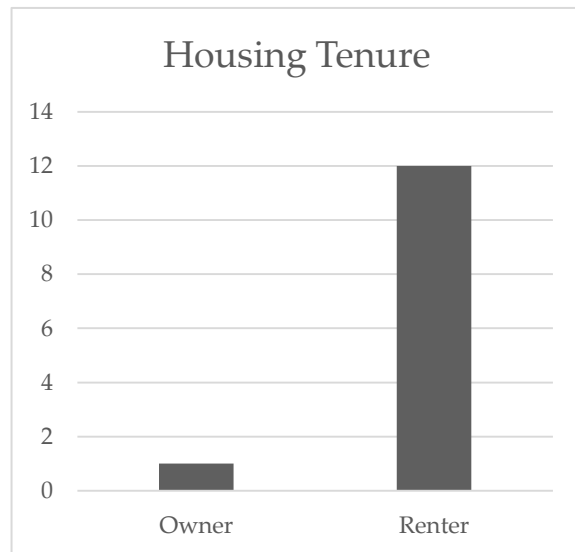


Figure 4: Housing Tenure

3.6 Data Analysis

I transcribed all the interviews verbatim, and then coded and analyzed them. The coding process evolved in four stages. First, I read all the transcripts in their entirety in order to grasp content and meaning. Next, I proceeded with a first round of coding using pre-established codes based on the interview guide, such as neighbourhood belonging and ethnic community. Then, I undertook a second round of coding taking note of new, emerging themes which I added as new codes, including accessibility, discrimination, affordability, solidarity, etc. Following this, I completed comparative coding between interviews in an iterative process until the coding tree was finalized (see Appendix K - Coding).

Once the interviews were all coded, I used triangulation to analyze the participants' sense of belonging from multiple data sources that were collected through various methods and from multiple perspectives. Data gained from participant observation and photovoice interviews were cross-referenced and checked against each other to extrapolate trends and pinpoint relevant themes. I reviewed ethnographic notes with information I heard from interviews and from casual conversations in the neighbourhood. As I analyzed my photovoice interviews, I identified similar themes in my ethnographic notes and included various events and knowledge I gained from my critical ethnography into the narratives of the neighbourhood that my thesis captures. The various data collected through different methods were triangulated to compose narratives of complex, fluid, and multi-layered sense of belonging. These narratives were then examined in relation to the neighbourhood census profile and media representations.

3.6.1 Community Meeting

The research team closed out the project with a community meeting to share and validate our data analysis and interpretation with research participants and other residents. In LHG, the community meeting took place on June 12, 2019, from 6 pm to 8 pm, at the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre, a hub in the neighbourhood that often hosted events. The community meeting allowed local residents to be involved in the analysis of the research project. There were ten adult attendees, a mix of both research participants and other interested residents, six of whom actively contributed to the discussion. Three participants who were interviewed for the study were there, and another stopped by for a little while shortly after the meeting started. A few children of the neighbourhood were also in attendance. It was a relatively informal meeting, beginning with a short presentation of our preliminary analysis and interpretation, followed by a discussion about the findings together as a group. We provided dinner for participants (including a meal that was catered by a local resident, beverages, and cookies), and residents could wander in and out of the meeting at will. During the meeting, we took notes on the various topics and perspectives that the participants discussed or shared that were later edited collectively by the members of the research team to ensure we had captured all or most important ideas and diverse viewpoints. Following this process, I re-evaluated my analysis with the participants' comments in mind.

3.7 Critical Reflexivity

For a critical analysis of my data, I need to be aware of my biases and make explicit my positionality in relation to the research project. Given its characteristics and current events, LHG is an area that required great sensitivity and care on my part. The ethical and representational issues in the area are more fraught than elsewhere, considering the

neighbourhood was in the midst of a contentious legal battle over evictions, affordable housing, and the right to remain. It is important to note that I am an outsider to the Ottawa region and to the neighbourhood. Although I am familiar with the broader Canadian context, I am new to Ottawa, and thus unfamiliar with the material and social context of the region. Idiosyncrasies with which a long-term Ottawa resident may be familiar were foreign to me. I was also unfamiliar with the immigrant communities in Ottawa. Their material and social experiences in Ottawa are different from my experiences as an immigrant in Toronto and the GTA. As such, I began this research project in the position of outsider and learner.

I am not a resident of the neighbourhood, nor do I have a similar background to those who live there. I am not a Black or Arab Muslim Canadian, and am not subject to anti-blackness or Islamophobia. Although I am a 1.5 generation immigrant who came to Canada at the age of six in 2001, and as an ethnically Han Chinese, is situated as a racialized outsider, I cannot say I have experienced similar levels of discrimination and marginalization. Moreover, I came with my family as economic immigrants, which differs greatly from the experiences of most of my participants who came to Canada as refugees. I can say that I am familiar with the struggles of understanding and articulating sense of belonging. My strong sense of belonging to Canada and fluent English language skills, however, place me as an immigrant who has a degree of integration, acceptance, and privilege. Although I lived on the fringes of poverty in my early childhood, this was not the case in my later teen years, when I was privileged with a middle-class lifestyle. As such, while I may know of the struggles faced by those in LHG, I do not currently experience these same circumstances. I have lived in a number of diverse neighbourhoods in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), but none of them were as stigmatized as LHG. Moreover, I have rarely engaged in co-ethnic spaces, interactions, and community events. These experiences may colour my understanding

and analysis of immigrants' sense of belonging in a diverse neighbourhood. However, I have to recognize the differences between my experiences and those of my participants, and try not to generalize or project my experiences onto the research participants' sense of belonging.

The political and social circumstances in LHG were often tense and confrontational. As such, in my research, I sought to add my voice to the participants' voices. Wherever possible, I let the voices of the participants ring through, situated in context and unchanged in dialogue. While observing, I also took into consideration structural forces that shape the inequality of experiences in both observations and interviews. It is my hope that the participants will find something useful, whether politically or emotionally, in the presentation of their voices through an academic lens. By publishing, whether in the form of a peer-reviewed journal article and/or a newspaper article, my writing can be added to the list of tools the residents can use to support their demands. I am also engaged with social activism in the neighbourhood, and apply my knowledge and skills to help create social services and programming that residents want and need. In the end, my role as a researcher is as a facilitator of the participants' articulations of their complex sense of belonging, presenting their voices and knowledge in a research format that may then be useful for their political activism and solidarity.

Chapter 4 – Ledbury-Heron Gate: What makes a neighbourhood?

In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the Ledbury-Heron Gate (LHG) neighbourhood as background and context for the more in-depth analysis in the chapters that follow. Neighbourhood boundaries are often imagined and blurry; therefore, I begin by outlining the boundaries of LHG, why I chose them, and what exists within those boundaries. I then describe in detail the sociodemographic characteristics of residents in LHG and how they compare and contrast from the average demographic makeup in Ottawa more broadly. Moreover, I describe the physical and social attributes of LHG, using participants' quotes to illustrate their experiences of living in the neighbourhood. Drawing on participants' narratives of why they moved into the neighbourhood, I show that for many residents, settlement in LHG was more out of necessity than choice. Nevertheless, in the neighbourhood, many participants have found convenient amenities and social support that they find helpful in their settlement experiences and everyday lives. Nearby ethnic grocery stores, settlement agencies, and other amenities that would be hard to find in other neighbourhoods are abundant in LHG. On the other hand, public perception of the neighbourhood is exceedingly negative, which some participants claimed was over-exaggerated. They argued that the stigmatization of LHG as violent and dangerous does not capture the full story of the neighbourhood, overlooking the strong community and sense of belonging that exists.

To understand participants' complicated sense of belonging, it is essential to examine the Timbercreek evictions. Timbercreek's mass evictions of hundreds of tenants from Heron Gate in 2016 and 2018 reshaped not only the physical space of the neighbourhood, but also the social dynamics and personal identity of many participants. As such, I expand on the context and background of the Timbercreek

evictions in LHG in order to better understand how these events have influenced participants' sense of belonging. I present the participants' connection to the evictions and to Timbercreek, as well as their perspectives on how the evictions have changed their neighbourhood.

4.1 Description of Ledbury-Heron Gate and its boundaries

The boundaries of LHG were determined based on the work of the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS) (2019), which divides Ottawa into neighbourhoods that are meant to reflect residents' experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of the area. Rather than following administrative boundaries such as municipal wards or individual census tracts, the ONS used both social and physical characteristics such as demographic similarities, physical barriers (main roads, railways, etc.), and community consultations. The ONS termed the neighbourhood LHG-Ridgemont-Elmwood, then shortened to LHG-Ridgemont; the composite name reflects perceptions of the neighbourhood as fragmented. In this case, the neighbourhood boundaries include Heron Road to the north, Capital Rail O-Train to the south, Glenhaven Private to the west, and just past Holly Lane to the east (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Ledbury-Heron Gate; Source: Scholars Geoportal, 2020

In the neighbourhood there are three different municipal wards: Ward 16 - River, Ward 10 - Gloucester-Southgate and Ward 18 - Alta Vista (see Figure 6). For the purposes of this study, the research team also took into consideration census boundaries, which in this case include a combination of two census tracts (5050001.01 and 5050007.02) and three dissemination areas (35061700, 35061701, 35061702) that are a part of census tract 5050005.00. Despite many similarities between the various resident-defined neighbourhood boundaries in LHG, the neighbourhood is not cohesive; rather, it is perceived to encompass four distinct areas due to political boundaries, imagined social boundaries, and material physical boundaries.

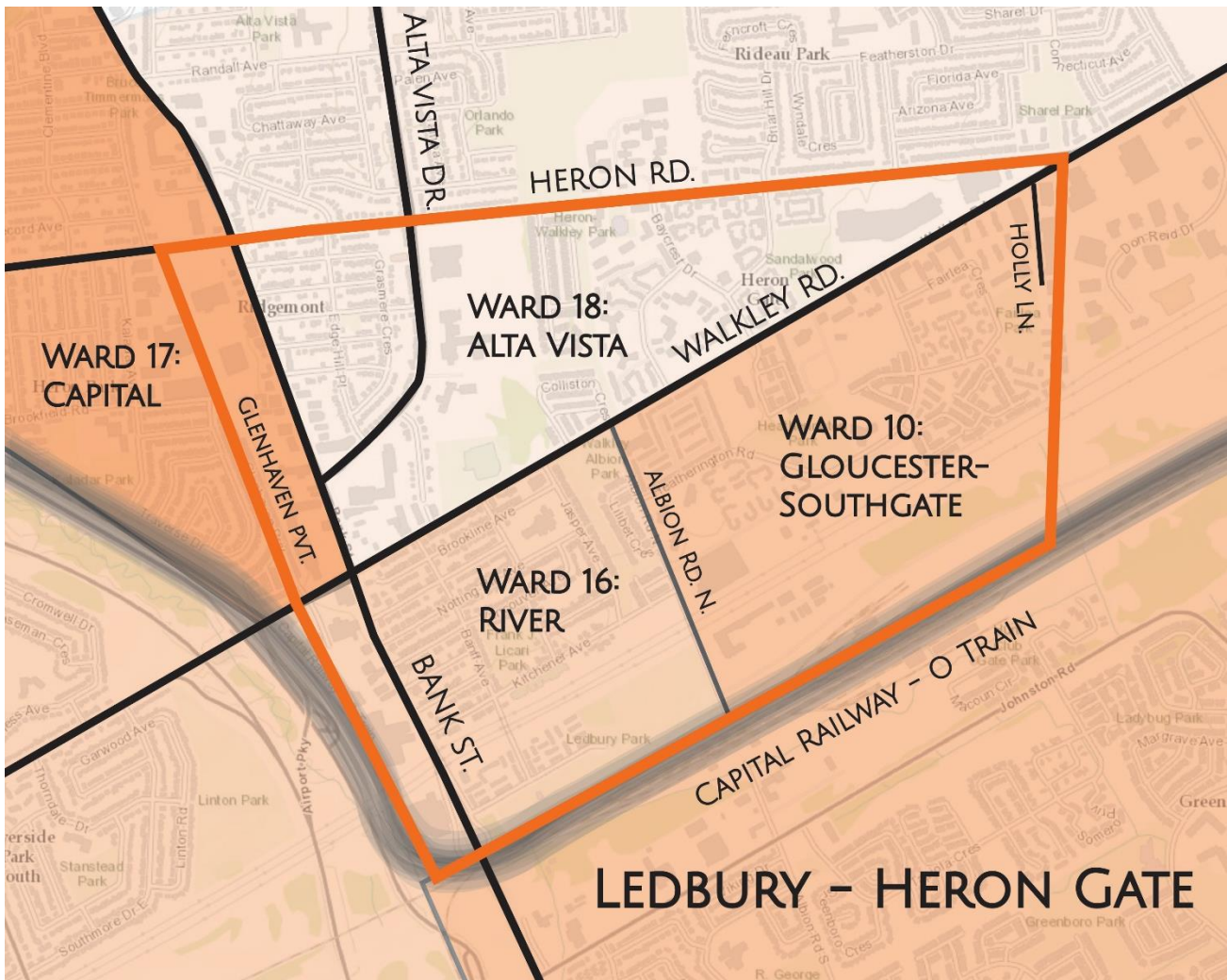


Figure 6: Municipal Wards; Source: Scholars Geoportail, 2020

These four areas are as follows: Ledbury-Banff, Heron Gate, Heatherington, and Alta Vista) (see Figure 7). First, Ledbury-Banff is located to the southwest end of the neighbourhood. It is a public social housing neighbourhood that consists mostly of row houses owned by Ottawa Community Housing (OCH). As the only part of the neighbourhood that is a part of the River Ward municipal district, it is the most physically, socially, and politically isolated area of the larger neighbourhood. The councillor for River Ward is Riley Brockington, who was first elected in 2014 and reelected in 2018 (“About Riley”, n.d.).

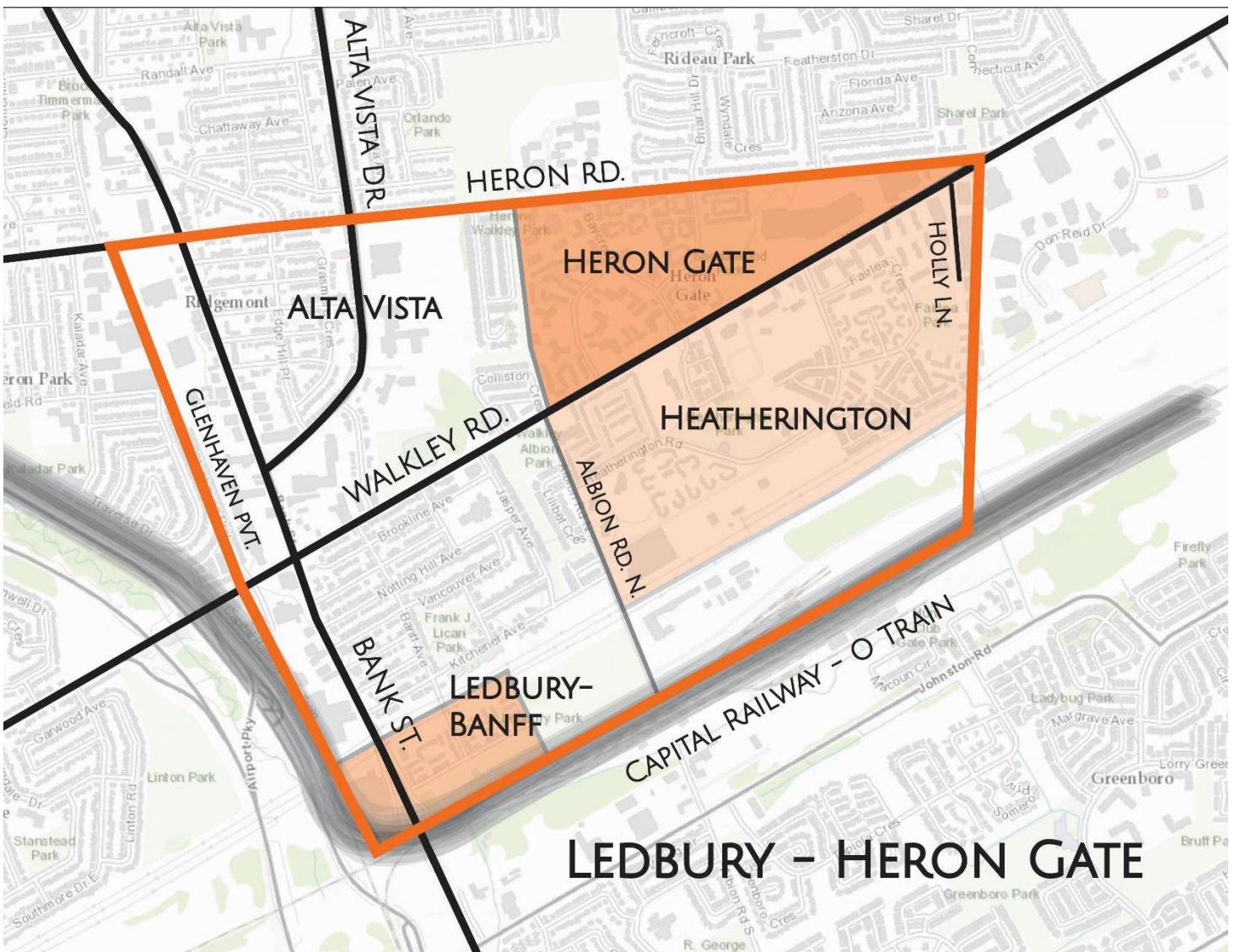


Figure 7: Areas of LHG; Source: Scholars Geoportal, 2020

Heron Gate, located to the northeast end of the neighbourhood, is another area characterized by the presence of affordable housing. The majority of housing in Heron Gate is owned by Timbercreek Asset Management, a large investment firm. In 2016 and 2018, Timbercreek undertook mass evictions of large numbers of residents who rented townhouses (more details will be provided later in section 4.4 Timbercreek Evictions). Heron Gate is a part of the municipal ward of Alta Vista under city councillor Jean Cloutier, who has come under fire for his ties to developers, especially Timbercreek (Osman and Chianello, 2018; Willing, 2018).

Heatherington is just south of Heron Gate and is also mostly owned by OCH. This area is the subject of increasing development focus because it is part of Ottawa's Building Better Revitalized Neighbourhoods Project (BBRN). The BBRN is a Strategic Initiative by the City of Ottawa "to improve the health, vibrancy and liveability of priority neighbourhoods in Ottawa" (City of Ottawa, 2018). Heatherington, along with Vanier-South Overbrook were identified as the priority neighbourhoods in 2016 and an action plan was developed for Heatherington in January, 2018. The city councillor for this area, Diane Deans, is also the Chair of the Ottawa Police Services Board and Crime Prevention Ottawa ("About Diane", n.d.). A subsection of this area is the Fairlea Housing Co-op to the very east of the neighbourhood (see Figure 8). This section, along with the rest of the neighbourhood located south of Walkley Street, is part of the Gloucester-Southgate Ward, and tends to be associated with areas to the south of LHG.

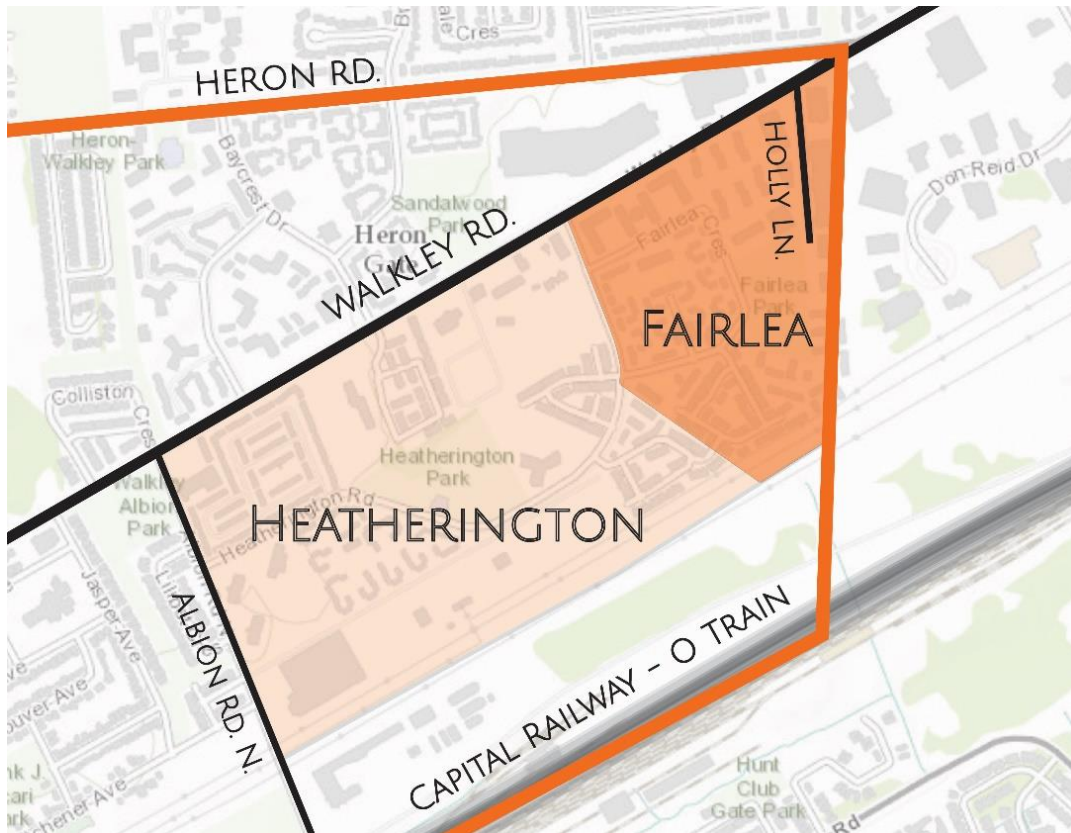


Figure 8: Heatherington - Fairlea; Source: Scholars Geoportal, 2020

The rest of LHG (towards the North-West), colloquially known as Alta Vista, is considered a middle class neighbourhood and tends to be more associated with areas further to the north of the neighbourhood than with the parts that are the focus of this research project. Most of the dwellings in Alta Vista are single detached homes, in contrast to rowhouses and high-rise apartment buildings that make up the majority of other areas in LHG. One participant, Adel, a 26 year old woman born in Somalia who grew up in Heron Gate, called this area of LHG the “*Rich Houses,*” and described how the wealth of these residents “*taunted*” the residents of nearby Heron Gate, Heatherington, and Ledbury-Banff.

As a neighbourhood, LHG can be defined as part of the “in-between city” (Boudreau, Keil, & Young, 2009), which refers to areas that are between the traditional inner city neighbourhood and the idyllic suburban neighbourhood. These areas are categorized

by a mix of high-rise apartments, wide roads, shopping plazas, and low-income immigrant residents (Boudreau, Keil, & Young, 2009). These neighbourhoods are often stigmatized and seen as problem areas that are undesirable to live in. LHG fits this description given that it contains a variety of housing types – a mix of high-rise apartments, row houses, and single-detached homes. The majority of residents in the neighbourhood is comprised of renters. OCH owns large swatches of land and large private corporations – including Timbercreek Asset Management and Osgoode Properties – own many private rental housing units, with relatively small sections of the neighbourhood featuring owner households with single-detached homes. A large share of the residents in the neighbourhood are part of marginalized communities, mostly low-income, racialized immigrants. LHG also has a reputation for harbouring danger and gang activity and is seen as a dilapidated and desolate space where those more fortunate would not wander (expanded on in Section 4.5 – Media Analysis).

4.2 Census Profile – Identity, Income, and Housing

Overall, LHG is known in Ottawa for being a low-income, immigrant dense neighbourhood. The census data paint a complex portrait of the neighbourhood that is very different from Ottawa. Ottawa as a city has one of the highest median after-tax household incomes in Canada (\$73,745.00) (Statistics Canada, 2016). Comparatively, the median after-tax household income in LHG is only \$54,716.40 (Statistics Canada, 2016). In order to compile the neighbourhood's census profile, I extracted data from the most recent Statistics Canada census in 2016. I compared the data for LHG with the data for the City of Ottawa (a census subdivision) to examine how the neighbourhood differs from the city average. The main variables that I compared are immigration status, visible minority status, mother tongue, household income, housing type and tenure, and housing affordability.

4.2.1 Identity: Immigration status, visible minorities, and language

The proportion of immigrants who live in LHG is much higher than in Ottawa (47.2% vs. 23.6%). Furthermore, a majority of the immigrants in LHG (50.6%) came to Canada as refugees (see Figure 9), in contrast to Ottawa where only 23.8% of immigrants came as refugees.

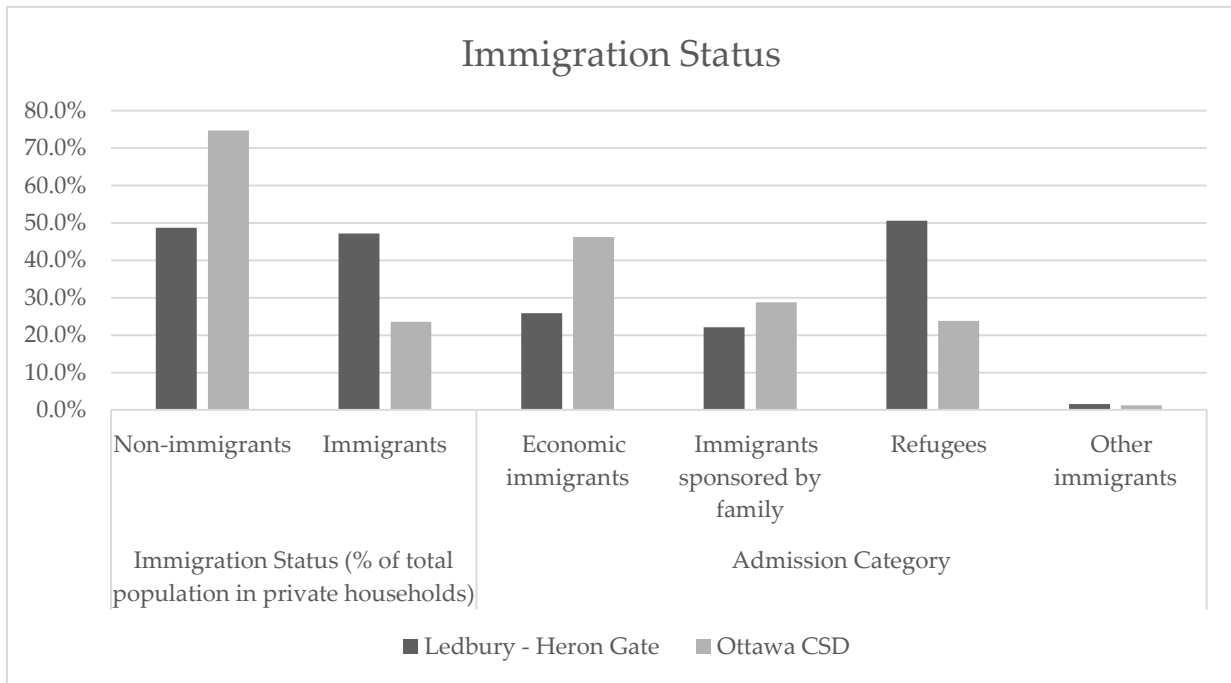


Figure 9: Immigration Status; Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

Ledbury-Heron Gate has a significantly higher proportion of visible minorities compared to Ottawa (63.6% vs. 26.3%). Most of these individuals identify as Black (40.8%) or Arab (23.0%), whereas the neighbourhood has a much smaller proportion of individuals who identified as East Asian (5.1% vs. 19.2%) (see Figure 10).

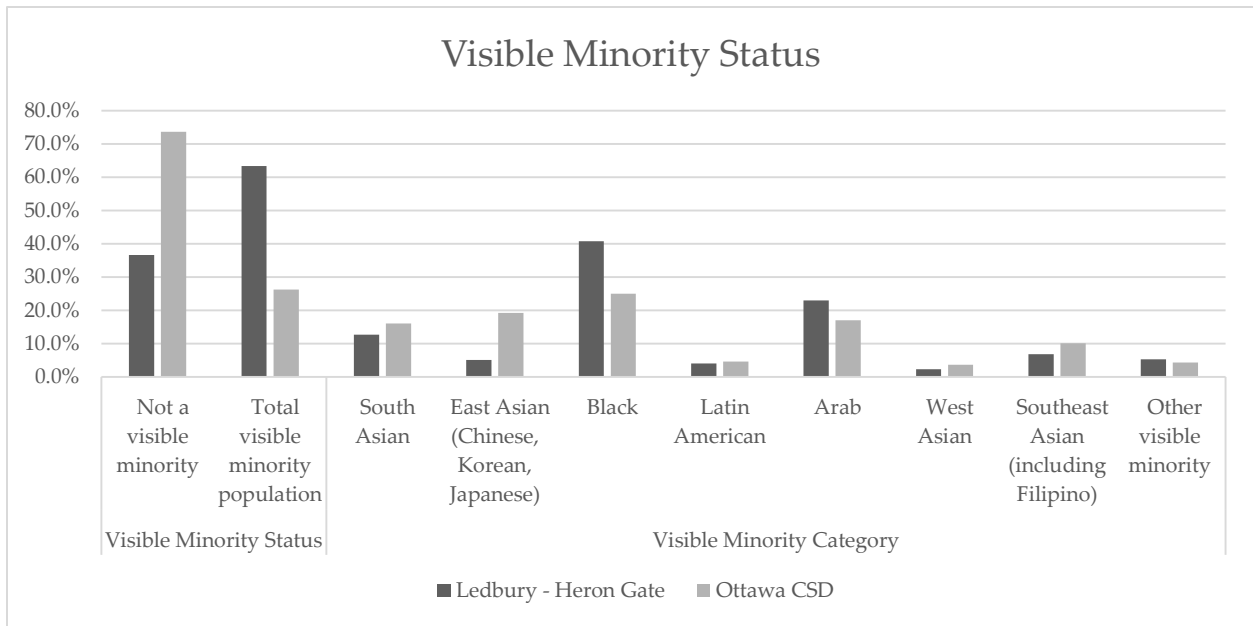


Figure 10: Visible Minority Status; Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

In terms of language, almost half of the population in LHG has a language other than French or English as their mother tongue (44.8%). This is more than twice the proportion of non-official mother tongue speakers in Ottawa (21.7%) (see Figure 11). These data may be explained due to a much lower proportion of residents who have English as their mother tongue in LHG (38.7% vs. 60.9%).

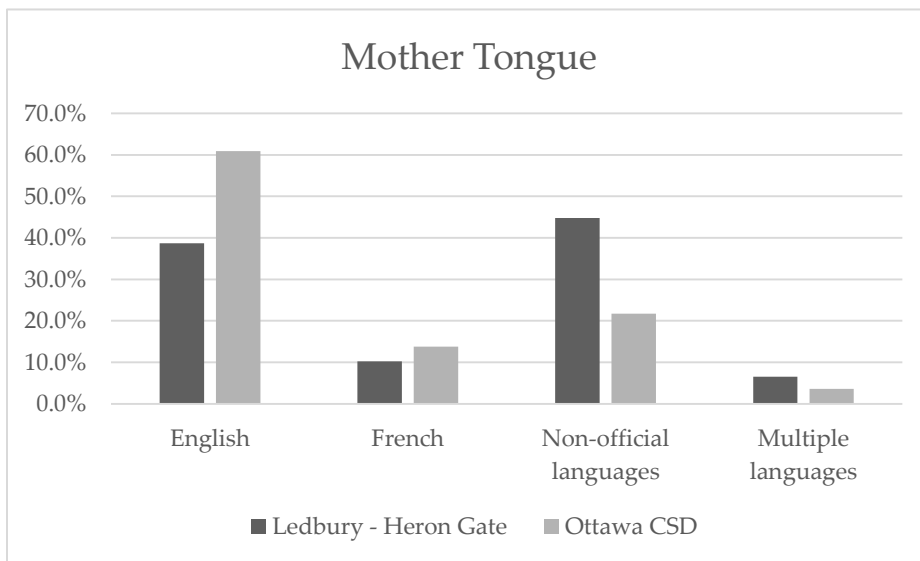


Figure 11: Mother Tongue; Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

4.2.2 Housing

LHG also differs significantly from the rest of the City of Ottawa with regard to housing types and tenure. For one, because OCH and large corporate property managers such as Timbercreek own large areas of the neighbourhood, most residents are renters (72.0%), compared to a smaller share of Ottawa residents (34.3%).

Moreover, LHG has a higher proportion of apartments, specifically apartments in buildings of 5 or more storeys (40.4% vs. 18.4%), compared to a much lower proportion of single-detached homes (11.5% vs. 42.3%). In addition, there are significantly more semi-detached and row houses in LHG than in Ottawa (34.9% vs. 26.6%) (see Figure 12).

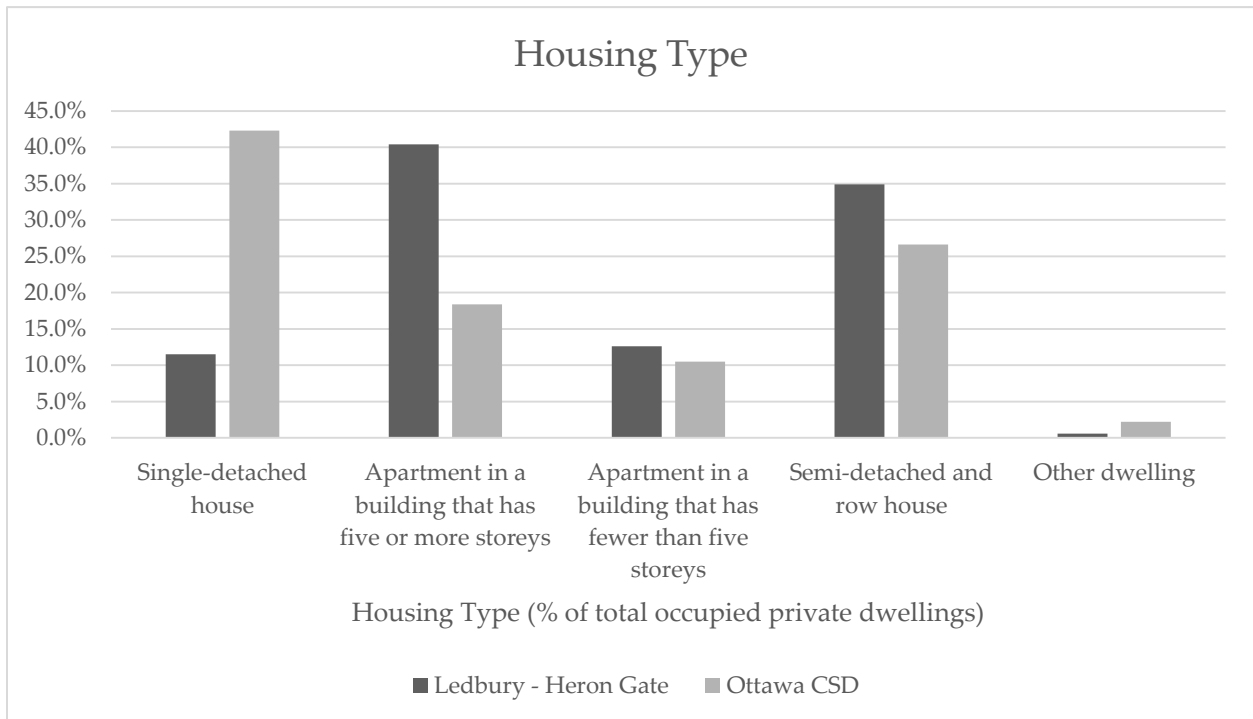


Figure 12: Housing Type; Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

These homes tend to be smaller than those in other parts of Ottawa, with 50.4% having only 1 to 4 rooms (vs. 26.5%) and only 10.5% with 8 or more rooms compared to 31.7% for Ottawa (see Figure 13).

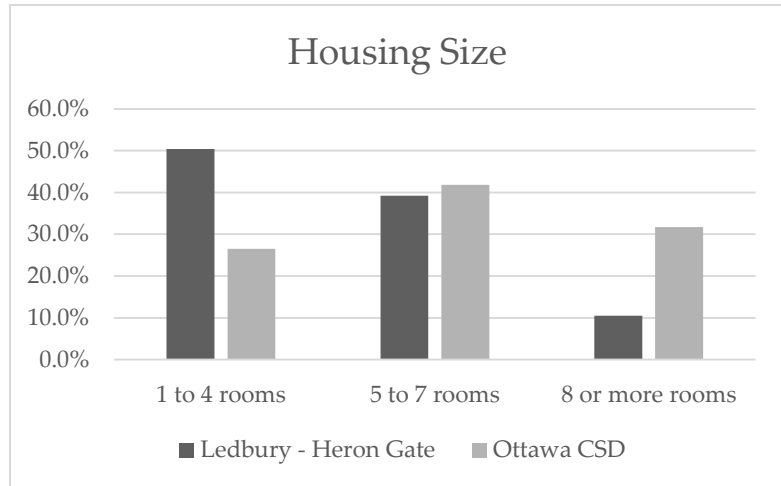


Figure 13: Housing Size; Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

They also tend to be less “suitable” for occupants, with 17.3% of housing that is not “suitable” in LHG vs. 4.6% in Ottawa. A dwelling is determined to be “suitable” if there are an “appropriate” number of people occupying the unit to live comfortably together as determined by the National Occupancy Standard (NOS). The NOS states that there should be no more than 2 people per bedroom, children of opposite sexes 5 years or older should have separate bedrooms, and all single household members 18 years or older should have their own bedrooms (Statistics Canada, 2016).

For these smaller and sometimes unsuitable dwellings, 41.0% of households in LHG are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, compared to 23.8% of households in Ottawa. Most of this difference is made up of the higher proportion of owner households spending more than 30% of their income on housing (32.0% vs. 14.1%), which is expected given the high proportion of Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) households that are subsidized/Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) in the neighbourhood.

4.2.3 Income

A potential justification for the greater proportion of households in LHG spending more than 30% of their income on housing despite similar median monthly shelter costs is the higher proportion of individuals with incomes below the low-income cut-off rates after tax (33.0% vs. 10.6% in Ottawa). 59.5% of households in LHG make less than \$50,000, compared to 30.9% of households in Ottawa. Only 12.1% make more than \$90,000, compared to 38.4% in Ottawa (see Figure 14). 59.5% of households in LHG make less than \$50,000, compared to 30.9% of households in Ottawa. Only 12.1% make more than \$90,000, compared to 38.4% in Ottawa (see Figure 14).

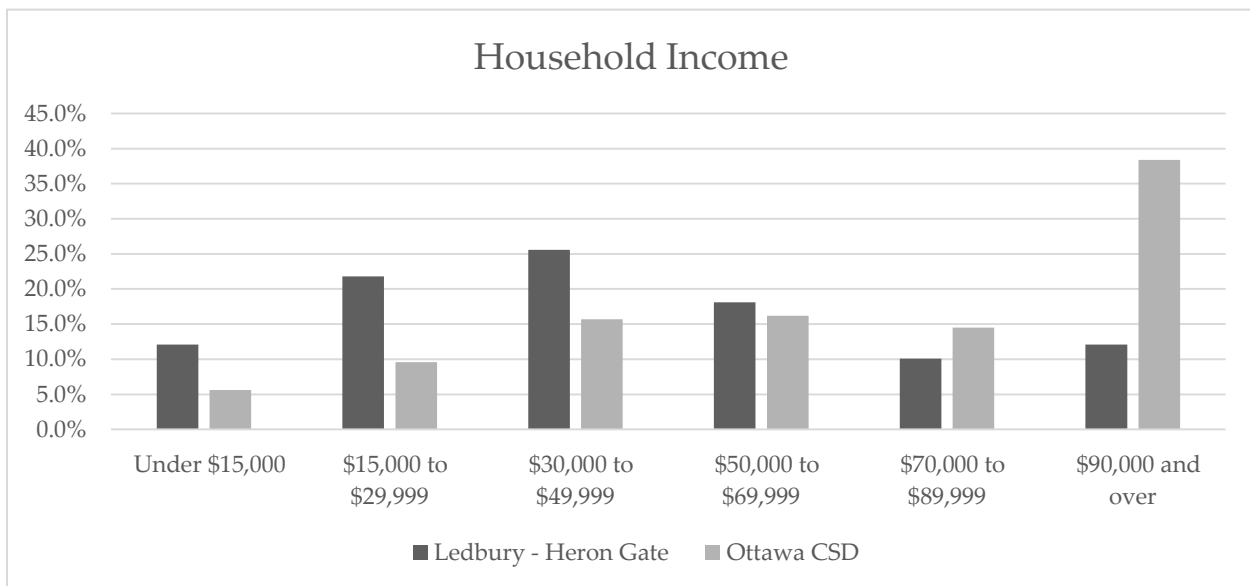


Figure 14: Household Income; Source: Statistics Canada, 2016

The lower income may be explained by the lower proportion of individuals in LHG that are in the labour force (59.0% vs. 67.5%), and the higher proportion of labour force participants who are unemployed (13.7% vs. 7.2%). Put together, there is a greater share of individuals in LHG who are not working, unable to find work, or unable to work.

4.2.4 Summary

As shown in the census profile of LHG, the residents of this neighbourhood are more likely to be immigrants, visible minorities, and low income than in Ottawa as a whole. Many residents are of Black or Arab Muslim descent. As a neighbourhood, LHG is distinctly different from most other neighbourhoods in Ottawa. Having discussed the unique sociodemographic characteristics of LHG, I will now describe the physical spaces of the neighbourhood and major events of the recent past that have shaped it to paint a more detailed description of everyday life in the area.

4.3 Convenience and Community in Ledbury-Heron Gate

In this section, I describe LHG by drawing heavily upon participants' narratives. I wish to note that I occasionally edit quotes for clarity and coherence, but I decided to not alter the participants' grammar or word choice, and wherever possible have kept their original voice as they expressed themselves. Often, English is the second or third language for participants, and that is not a skill for which they should be ashamed, but one for which they deserve to be proud. In the colourful descriptors of words about which they are unsure, the verbal tics that are the imprints of their mother tongue, and the interchanging verb tenses, I hear the struggles they have overcome to survive and thrive in an unfamiliar country. Although some of the participants are disparaging of their English language skills, it is my intention to show the nuance and complexity that exists not despite of, but because of their verbal English expression.

4.3.1 Moving In

Ottawa's rental market is one of rising rents and declining vacancy rates, with apartment rents increasing by 7.8% from 2016 to 2018 (Prism Economics and Analysis, 2019). The realities of housing (un)affordability and (un)availability result in a lack of

accessible housing options for many newcomers to Ottawa. LHG is one of the few areas in Ottawa with affordable housing. The house prices in the neighbourhood are lower than most other areas in Ottawa, and the neighbourhood contains many three-bedroom townhouses. Given the limited financial resources of most newcomers, LHG is one of the few neighbourhoods where they can afford to live, especially for larger families. Moreover, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) operates subsidized housing units (mostly 3-bedroom townhouses) in the neighbourhood that are Rent-Geared-to-Income. These affordable public housing options are vital to providing adequate housing for the low-income families in Ottawa.

Adel states that “*nobody has a choice*” when moving into a neighbourhood like Heron Gate,

“Like when you come to the country, and you don’t have like and education, you don’t have a degree, you don’t have anything. You go to the government. The government tells you we have all these programs to help you. We’re gonna put you on a list and we’re gonna get you a house. So you sit there and you wait and you wait and you wait. And then they put you in these areas, so none of these people had a choice, nobody choose to live in Heron Gate. Nobody choose to live -- which is sad. Nobody has that choice to say I live here, I live there, they didn’t. They completely didn’t. It was chosen for them.”

This is partly due to numerous units that OCH manages in the neighbourhood, where housing is assigned instead of chosen. The process to access subsidized housing begins with an application to OCH, after which the applicant is put on a waiting list that can be up to 10 years long depending on their priority level as determined by OCH. Once an applicant is at the top of the waiting list, OCH offers them an available dwelling. The applicant then can say if they would like to live there. If they refuse the first offer, the applicant still has the option to accept or reject two additional offers. If the applicant refuses the third offer, they are then removed from the waiting list and can no longer access subsidized housing. At no point in this process are the applicants able to choose

the housing type, housing size, or neighbourhood location. Nour, as an OCH tenant states that *“we don’t have option. It’s the same thing, we do application, we be in the waiting list (...) I have four kids, so (...) you wait, and then, whatever you select, all the apartment they have, and I was wishing to have place in South end.”* Although Nour wanted to move into Heatherington, oftentimes, this neighbourhood is chosen as the 3rd and final option. This was the case for Sakina. Others decide to move into Heatherington as the first choice because they can no longer wait for other options, which was the case for Hani. This lack of choice does not only apply to those on the OCH list, but also to other newcomers who are looking for their first residence in Ottawa. Leila is a 36 year old woman who moved to Ottawa with her husband and 2 children in August 2018 as an economic immigrant from Iran. She looked for housing across the city, but the only appropriate housing she could find given her lack of rental history was in Heatherington. Moreover, for many newly arrived government assisted refugees (GARs), such as Kinley, Jarome, and Abdul, their residences are found by their caseworkers, and they often have little to no information or choice on where they can live. Abdul, a GAR from Syria who came to Canada in February 2016 with his wife and three children, states that he *“didn’t chose this neighbourhood, they chose this neighbourhood. (...) We didn’t chose the place, they brought us here and they said this is your home.”* His friend, Jarome, also from Syria, arrived in Canada in August 2016 with his wife and three children, makes a similar statement,

“I did not chose this neighbourhood. They chose it for us. They just came to us and I said, ‘Here’s your apartment. You’re gonna be living here.’ And we didn’t know any other neighbourhoods. We were not familiar with Ottawa. So, when they came to us at the hotel and they said, ‘We have some good news, we have found a place for you,’ we just right away accepted the offer and we went there, we didn’t know anything about Ottawa. We couldn’t choose. (...) It’s not me who chose the place.”

These quotes illustrate how LHG's demographic characteristics as a low-income, immigrant neighbourhood is not a function of choice on the part of the participants, but because of a lack of choice to move elsewhere. The concentration of minority, ethnic groups in LHG is not a case of ethnic self-segregation. Rather, due to the availability, affordability, and suitability of housing, newcomers, especially those with large families, are effectively funneled into LHG.

4.3.2 Convenience

One of the main qualities of LHG that the participants described as an important asset to their daily lives is the convenience to amenities within the neighbourhood.

Participants express how useful it is to have everything close by, mentioning stores and services such as the Food Basics, Rexall, DriveTest Centre, etc. (see Figure 15). Adel says that the neighbourhood is a good place for newcomers to settle because of the easy access to important amenities within walking distance. She describes her childhood as follows,

"I remember growing up, walking to high school, like every morning. I would wake up by like 8:30, and school would be at 9, right? (...) We never felt this need for having a vehicle, cause everything was in close distance. (...) Our high school was a 4 minute walk, our mall, or strip plaza, you would say, shopping centre, was about a 5/10 minute walk. All of the food centres were like a 5 minute -- like everything was pretty close."



Figure 15: Amenities; Source: Scholars Geoportal, 2020

Food Basics – a lower price grocery store located east of Heron Gate – is a frequently mentioned and photographed location for many participants, including Faiza, Samira, Kinley, Jerome, Abdul, and Dawoud (see Figures 16 and 17).



Figure 16: Kinley – Food Basics



Figure 17: Jarome – Food Basics

When asked about the Food Basics, Dawoud said that he frequents it because it is “Convenient, close to us. And have good prices. Good specials.” Because of more affordable prices, the Food Basics is an important and central amenity for the residents of the area. Participants also described the halal meat store and other Arabic and Muslim amenities, such as the nearby mosque, as important amenities in the neighbourhood that they use frequently (see Figures 18 and 19).



Figure 18: Abdul - Halal Meat Store



Figure 19: Leila, Mosque

Abdul said that *“the neighbourhood somehow is good because we have a lot of Arabic grocery stores,”* and Dawoud echoed, *“You just take the plaza next door, you know, they have halal meat. The Middle Eastern stuff you can buy. And the bakery next door, same thing, Middle Eastern bakery.”* Moreover, Geeland International Grocery opened right across the street from Food Basics in October, 2018. This grocery store sells mainly international food products, such as oxtail, goat meat, and paans, which are not commonly found in mainstream grocery stores. The proximity of cultural products further roots the participants to this neighbourhood, where they can access goods that remind them of their country and culture of origin, and in turn making LHG home.

The participants also found LHG’s proximity to other areas of Ottawa to be an important attribute that fostered their sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Hani, if she were to move out of the neighbourhood, said that she would miss the convenience of getting around by public transportation.

“I will miss everywhere that you want to go, like, it’s close by. Even if you want to go downtown, there’s (...) one bus that takes you from your front of your home and takes you all the way to downtown. The transportation is good. (...) So yeah, it’s more convenient, you don’t have to drive.”

Dawoud also stated that Ledbury-Heron is *“close to downtown, close to the airport. Close to the train (...) there’s hospital close by. I like this area, that’s why I live here.”* LHG’s central location within Ottawa and its walkability make living in the neighbourhood one of convenience, where a car is not necessarily needed to meet daily needs. This quality fosters agency and independence among the participants, many of who do not have their own personal vehicles.

4.3.3 Community and Support

Given LHG's mostly low-income, immigrant population, there are many organizations in the area that provide spaces, services, and programs to assist newcomers, especially those who are low-income, to find their footing in Canada (see Figure 20). Two immigrant settlement agencies have their offices in LHG: the Somali Centre for Family Services is located at Bank Street and Alta Vista Drive in the west, and the Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency (LASSA) is in the east on Holly Lane. They began as ethnically oriented settlement agencies, but have since expanded and now provide services to other groups as well. The relatively new Canadian Bhutanese Association is located in Fairlea, south of LASSA. OCISO is another immigrant settlement agency, whose main office is west of downtown Ottawa but which also has a smaller office south of the Somali Centre for Family Services on Bank Street. They operate a Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) program as well as their Youth branch (YOCISO) out of the neighbourhood. The Ottawa Catholic School Board also runs an English as a Second Language (ESL) program for newcomers in the neighbourhood at Queen of the Angels School on Heron Road.

Moreover, there are three City-run community centres in the area (see Figure 21): Albion-Heatherington Community Centre (see Figure 22), Heron Road Community Centre (see Figure 23), and Banff-Ledbury Pavilion (see Figure 24).

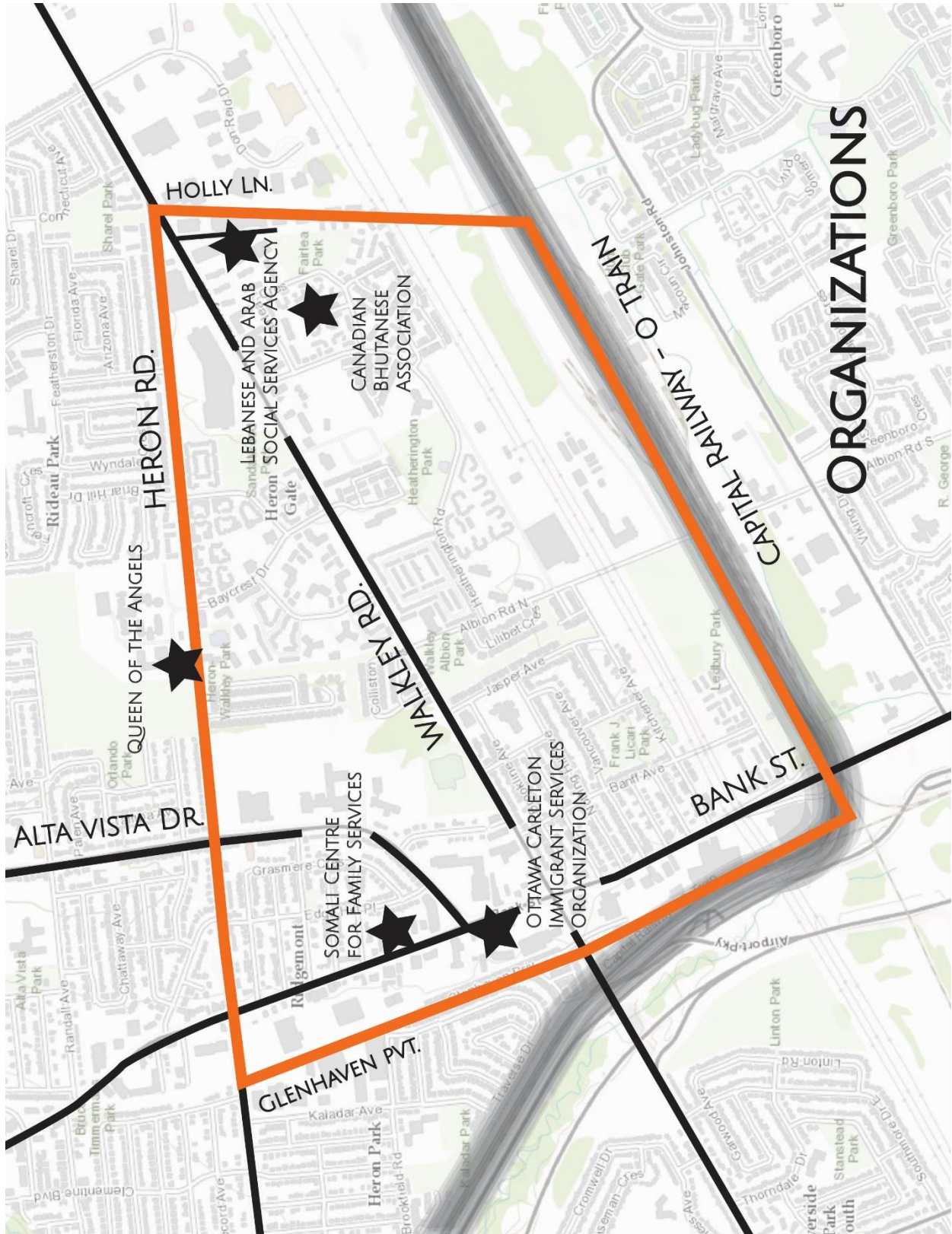


Figure 20: Organization; Source: Scholars Geoportal, 2020

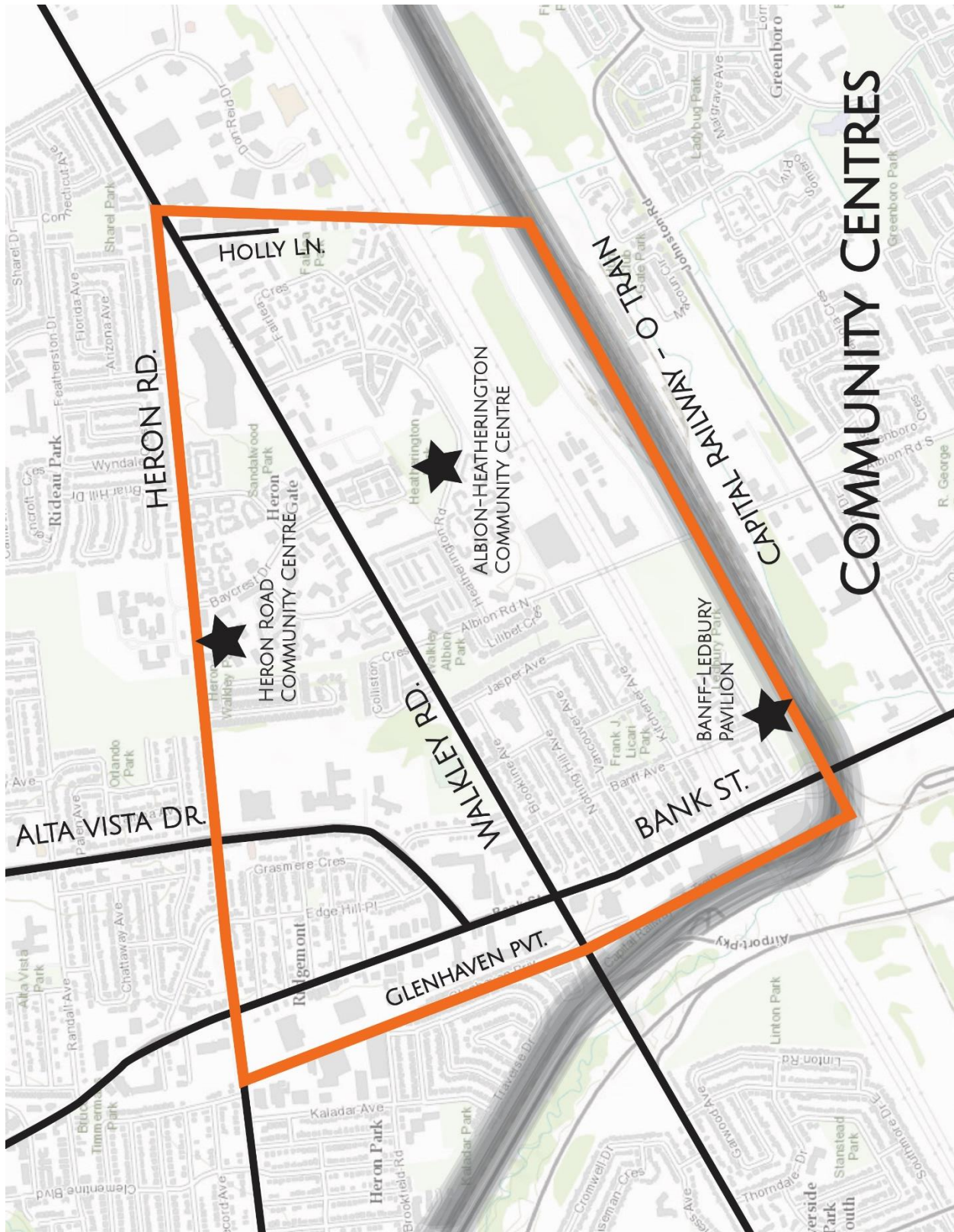


Figure 21: Community Centres; Source: Scholars Geoportail, 2020



Figure 22: Samira - Albion-Heatherington Community Centre



Figure 23: Kinley - Heron Road Community Centre



Figure 24: Sakina - Ledbury-Banff Pavilion

During my research, the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre stood out in the way the participants frequently referred to it as a source of support and community. Located in the Heatherington neighbourhood, the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre is a place where I was able to find participants and got to know the neighbourhood. Kinley and the Canadian Bhutanese Association rent the gym for events throughout the year. Nour, Faiza, and Samira frequently participate in the planning and the organization of events and festivals that are happening in the community centre, such as the Winter Carnival, the community dinner organized by the Ba’Hai group, bicycle give aways, Ottawa Hoopstar tournaments, and back to school celebrations. The Winter Carnival in February 2019 was especially well attended with a large turnout. The women living in OCH homes worked with OCH staff, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre to provide face painting, haircuts, and food for the children and youth in the neighbourhood. The part-time front desk workers are generally familiar with the community members, often having worked there for many years, if not many decades. They have been able to build trust with community members that was not seen in the other two community centres in the area. Many of them either live or used to live in LHG, reinforcing their commitment to this community. They know the children and adults that come to the community centre by name, always seeking to help out by organizing free community events and allowing residents to use the space when there are no programs. There is a warmth to entering the community centre that reassures newcomers, and the presence of many children that are constantly using the centre shows that trust has been built within the neighbourhood. Also in Heatherington, the Boys and Girls Club runs Playgroups and Homework Clubs. Samira, a Somali woman raising four children, expressed appreciation for the programs that the Boys and Girls Club run in the neighbourhood:

“Like the positives is the -- like we have the Boys and Girls Club, for little kids. (...) And we have good neighbours. And it’s a sense of family, a sense of community. It’s something that -- the kids, they’ll know each other, grow up together.”

These free programs and welcoming atmosphere make Heatherington a neighbourhood that the participants value and appreciate. Nour states about the neighbourhood, *“It’s beautiful, we love it here. It’s really nice to raise your family, everything, you know?”*



Figure 25: Sakina - Banff Community House

Banff Community House (see Figure 25), operated in the Ledbury-Banff neighbourhood to the southwest, is another centre that is highly praised by the participants. Sakina frequents the programs there. The centre provides *“fruit and vegetable every Tuesday, at 6 o’clock (...) just the tenant. (...) For people who need it, they bring and taking free.”* They also have programs such as homework clubs, *“after school for 2 hours something. From 3:30 to 5:30,”* as well as daycare, *“for people who’s working or going to school? Their kids -- one lady working there and for -- she receives salary or money for that, and she took care of children (...) Yeah, it’s free.”* There is Bingo or cards once a week,

and a food bank once a month. There is also a Thursday Dinner and Chat that serves to build community and trust in Ledbury-Banff. Sakina says that,

“Every Thursday there is dinner and chat at 6 o’clock for 1 hour. (...) I volunteer there, for 45 minutes, every Thursday. (...) 1 person cook, every Thursday, for 10 to 15 people. And the community give them \$60 and they supposed to bring receipt for \$30, to spend \$30? (...) Buy food and cook and you bring the receipt. Then they give them \$60 cash or gift card. And they have fun. They try different food, you know? Different community, like Arabs, Afghan, Pakistani, Indian. Very nice, Somalian. (...) And we have a daycare upstairs, the kids going to watch by one lady. She’s working there.”

The Thursday Dinner and Chat brings together immigrants from a variety of countries, helping them to adjust to Canada and the neighbourhood. The chats are not only valued for the community connection they build, but also for immigrants to advance their English skills. Nacira finds the Thursday chats to be invaluable to her improvement in English, stating that,

“English very hard. But I am very happy because understand English good, I am very happy. I like speak English, yeah, I like. Every day I am going to community, I listening for Gwendy, what talking, what is speaking. Yeah before I coming, no understand for this area. Coming? This place I am coming before, I am going community, not understand. But now, better.”

Because it can be a significant struggle for newcomers to acquire advanced language skills in English, the chats allow residents such as Nour to practice in a low pressure setting with others who are also learning English with the help of community members who are fluent and can translate like Sakina. These programs not only support the participants’ financial, social, and material needs, but also lead Sakina and Nacira to appreciate and feel connected in the neighbourhood. As Sakina states, *“it’s very nice, we are happy with the community,”*

What resonates across LHG is that the participants value the variety of services and amenities available in the area. They see Ledbury Heron-Gate as a space of community and connection. Yet, they also face structural neglect, discrimination, and stigmatization that complicates their sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, an issue that I will discuss further in Chapters 5 and 6. Moreover, the Timbercreek evictions, described in the following section, raised participants’ awareness of their precarious housing situation, which reinforced their feeling of insecurity as they considered the potential of losing their home, and possibly also their community and neighbourhood.

4.4 Timbercreek Evictions

As mentioned, the Heron Gate portion of the neighbourhood recently was the site of a mass eviction by Timbercreek Asset Management that was met with fierce resistance on the part of the local residents. Prior to the evictions, Heron Gate was subject to many years of neglect. In 2016 and 2018, Timbercreek sent out eviction letters to hundreds of tenants who lived in Heron Gate in Timbercreek rowhouses. The tenants were pressured and intimidated to move out (Crosby, 2018; The Leveller, 2018; Rockwell, 2018). In the summer of 2018, the property manager, Paul Boutros, went door-to-door to tell tenants that Timbercreek will change the locks on houses and throw out belongings if they did not move by September 2018. After the last tenants moved out, Timbercreek quickly demolished the townhouses and the company was in the process of a massive redevelopment project at the time of writing this thesis, hoping to build numerous 25+ storey apartment buildings where once stood affordable rental family townhouses (Porter, 2019). At the time, the residents of the neighbourhood, who were mostly large, low-income, racialized families of 6+ members, responded by strongly opposing Timbercreek's plans (Herongate Tenant Coalition, 2018). The Timbercreek evictions also influenced surrounding residents and spaces. Three of my research participants were indirectly affected by these evictions, having family and/or friends who had to move out of their homes (Adel, Kinley, and Nour). One of these participants was renting a Timbercreek apartment at the time of writing (Kinley). Two other participants also lived in Timbercreek owned apartments, still dealing with above-guideline increases of rents, poor maintenance, and neglect (Jarome and Abdul). The evictions unsettled many participants' sense of belonging to the neighbourhood as they wrestled with the expulsion of their friends and families. The contentious fight for what the neighbourhood will look like, who will live there, and who has the right to shape the

neighbourhood left many participants uncertain of their future and complicated their sense of belonging to LHG.

4.4.1 Neglect

The neglect of housing in Heron Gate began with TransGlobe, the company that owned most of the neighbourhood's rental properties from 2007 to 2012 (Hawley, 2018).

TransGlobe was reported to have neglected maintenance of the properties while raising rents and squeezing revenue from the low-income tenants of Heron Gate (CBC News, 2010; CBC News, 2011; August & Walks, 2018). The properties were sold to Timbercreek in 2012 (Hawley, 2018). Timbercreek Asset Management is a large investment firm and a key player in the financialization landscape of Ontario, holding over 2100 suites in Toronto and many more throughout the country (August & Walks, 2018). Timbercreek continued to neglect the properties in the neighbourhood. Kinley talked about the many broken parking meters on Timbercreek properties that result in frequent parking tickets.

“So, for example, I park my car there and then machine's not working, and I leave my car there and after 5 minutes, I get ticket...Timbercreek is really bad at, you know, maintenance, they are really slow.”

The indoor pool and gym that Timbercreek owns are also neglected. Kinley states that, *“the gym's supplies are always lacking...They have three running machines, and one of them works, two of them don't work.”*

Jarome described one of those experiences of neglect in more depth, whereby the door of a closet in his home fell on his daughter.

“[O]ne day, my daughter was sleeping and the door of the closet fell down on her, and you would imagine how risky that would be. And I went to them, they give me this form, the work order, I fill it out and give it to them, they never got back to me. Few

days later, I went to them, and I said hey, the closet door is falling down and can someone come fix it? And they said oh, sorry, we forgot about it, can you please fill out this form again. I did it once again and they never got back to me. But they were able to do it like more than a month. Because I was emphasizing, going to them, going to them."

With regard to the cleanliness of the building, Jarome shared that there are "three elevators. Every one is worse than the other. They're very dirty. Even the hallways, they have only one person who clean the building and it's a huge building. It's completely dirty. Yeah, you smell bad stuff, they don't clean it." When Jarome went to complain to the management staff, he felt disrespected and ignored,

"When I go to them to complain about something and I try my best to explain it in English, and if they don't understand me, I would ask an interpreter. And they have in their staff some people who are from Arabic backgrounds and I know they speak Arabic. They say we don't have anyone to translate, to (...) and if we have one it's not gonna be today. Come another day. Or another day. Sometimes it's an emergency, it's things we have to deal with right away. And even when they bring someone who can speak Arabic, they come -- they're not happy to translate. And I could tell that they don't translate literally what I say. They say few words. I say a lot of things, and when they translate, they say few words. So, it's a bad treatment, and it's a bad thing, I'm not able to communicate with them. We pay for the rent, we're not there for free, we should have good service. All they care about is the monthly payment. They complain about it, they increase it, and they don't offer any services for the residents."

In the case of Abdul, he needed a representative from an outside organization to go with him to Timbercreek before they would help him:

"It was a terrible interaction and communication with them because I talked with them, they didn't do anything. Until I contacted an organization, I can't remember the name, but a friend of mine gave me their contact info and he said contact this organization, they would come with you, talk to the administration and they would gonna give you another place in the basement. So I called that organization and a representative from that organization came and talked to the administration, then they give me a nother place. They didn't wanna help me."

Timbercreek's inadequate response to these situations caused a lot of stress for Jarome and Abdul, and made them feel powerless and unable to make their homes safe for their children. As such, Jarome and Abdul have very weak sense of belonging to LHG, wishing to move to a neighbourhood where they perceive they will be treated with more respect.

4.4.2 Evictions 2016

In September of 2015, Timbercreek started an eviction procedure. The eviction date was set for February 2016 and went relatively quietly. The residents signed the eviction notices and left, even though it often meant leaving valuables behind as most did not have the cash to move properly (Finnamore, 2019). Participants described the inconvenience and obstacles with which many residents in LHG struggled, especially the stress of housing instability and the burden of finding appropriate affordable housing. Nour eloquently described the difficulties that evicted tenants faced:

"The tenants, they have no reason, they just bribe them for 3 months free rent, and they say, "Okay, they're out." That's nothing! Where you gonna live for rest of your life? Where you gonna? Everything's expensive here. 3 bedroom is \$1400+. Where you gonna afford this? That before a couple years. Now it's everything \$1600+. And you have a lot of kids. It's not easy for you to find a house. You know that they go to us, say, "How many the family?" "Oh yeah, we'll call you if we have spots available." Oh you're gonna call us back but they send it another office. (...) You have to be waiting list, like a lot of people in the shelters. More than 10 000 people in the shelters, they're waiting for housing. And those people already asking the housing and they kick them out. Where are they gonna go? Where is this? That's not fine."

The new apartments that Timbercreek has since built are not affordable units for low-income families, but instead luxury apartments aimed at single adults, couples without children, or small families (Shaw, 2017). Even if residents were able to afford the new

apartments, some doubt whether they would be accepted into the new vision of the neighbourhood that Timbercreek has planned, as suggested by Nour's comments:

"And they think they gonna rent it for you? No! They gonna bring all the history. Oh, the background check. (...) They just not to give you the place. And after they gonna say, "Oh, sorry, not approval." No, they didn't do nothing, they just want to kick you out. They just make you go away (...) they just look at you and -- they didn't -- she didn't even do nothing on the computer, she just -- she's not even from -- and so she said, "Oh, you didn't get approved, sorry." Then go get a co-signer. Who's gonna be your co-signer? Nobody gonna be your co-signer. Excuse me? Why? First and last payment. That's the thing, they have it too. Like they get a kick out for me. Who are they gonna have first and last payment?"

In this quote, Nour questions whether the new apartments Timbercreek will build will allow families like hers, a single mother with four children, to move in. She doubts that the rental companies will want to rent to her, and will instead just "look at you" and say "Oh, you didn't get approved, sorry." Moreover, she believes that the company will enforce more restrictions on who can rent the new luxury apartments as an excuse to exclude families like hers, implementing co-signers and upfront first and last months' rent payment, which many of the families in the neighbourhood would not be able to attain.

The participants' accounts suggest that the evictions reinforced a feeling of housing precarity of many residents in LGH. Participants became concerned that they might be the next ones evicted, making it difficult for them to nurture their roots to the neighbourhood and weakening their sense of belonging. Moreover, the evictions made residents such as Nour feel as though Timbercreek wants to replace them with more profitable tenants, further reinforcing that no matter how much they felt a sense of belonging to LHG, they are not able to claim the neighbourhood as their own.

4.4.3 Evictions 2018 and Community Resistance

On May 7, 2018, Timbercreek announced that they were going to evict the residents of 105 townhouses (Delamont, 2019). This time, residents in LHG who opposed the evictions, demolitions, and reconstruction formed the Herongate Tenant Coalition (HTC) in May 2018 to combat the evictions and fight for the residents who did not want to move. The eviction process quickly became contentious. Timbercreek hired Dialog, a multi-disciplinary design firm, to create concept renderings and hold community consultations that show expected further evictions (“The Team”, 2018). Many participants did not hear about the community consultations and the first consultation conducted on February 24, 2018 was held outside of the neighbourhood. Despite the efforts of HTC and protests to stop the evictions, the tenants all moved out by November 2018. Demolition of the townhouses quickly began, and the community consultations continued. On December 6, 2018, I attended the third community consultation organized by Timbercreek in partnership with city councilor Jean Cloutier and Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre (SOCHC) to discuss the redevelopment of Heron Gate. Members of the HTC and Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) came to the consultation to protest, and the resulting confrontations were tense and emotional. The heated confrontations led many participants to become wary of Timbercreek and associated actors such as Jean Cloutier and Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre (SOCHC).

Publicly, Timbercreek has proclaimed its desire to develop Heron Gate into an “adult-oriented” neighbourhood, and has advertised its first redevelopment high-rises as “resort-style living” (Shaw, 2017, para. 7). This vision of the neighbourhood does not include the current tenants of Heron Gate, making participants feel as if their community and their opinions are not valued. Participants expressed that the

neighbourhood has changed and the feeling of community and comfortable belonging that used to exist has weakened. As for the evicted tenants, participants reported that some of them ended up homeless while others were paying much higher rent than before. They expressed that many of the evicted residents had trouble finding affordable housing locations close by. Participants watched as their family and friends were forced to move far away from the close-knit community that existed LHG, reducing their social networks and sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. Kinley stated that,

“[A] lot of Nepali families, they moved to like Guelph, Kitchener, near Toronto. They moved there because they couldn’t find house here. They find it better to go there and then move there. So, a lot of them moved and it’s been tough. Our neighbourhood is kind of decreasing, the number of people. The community is decreasing, and there’s something, you know, huge problem, huge issue, you know? For mostly low-income families living there, and because of Timbercreek, they already sent a flyer saying they are building luxurious house, you know? So, it’s challenge for us whether we can – we’ll be able to afford their housing. Whether we will be able to move there or not. And yeah, it’s been tough.”

According to the participants, Timbercreek has inhibited the residents’ struggle for stable housing, community, and sense of belonging. The evictions and redevelopment of Heron Gate and the removal of affordable housing units disconnected the neighbourhood’s material spaces from the low-income tenants who need them to live their lives (Aalbers, 2016; Wyly et al., 2006; Wyly & Ponder, 2011). Nevertheless, HTC has not given up the battle for LHG and it continues to fight against Timbercreek’s proposed future eviction and redevelopment plans. They have filed three lawsuits against Timbercreek while also organizing and educating tenants on how to resist the next round of evictions.

4.4.4 Outcome

The neighbourhood residents I interviewed recognized and verbalized this process of neglect, displacement, and replacement. They were aware of the various ways they have been exploited, and their frustrations at their lack of power resonates across the interviews. The participants were mainly concerned about being evicted, being able to afford rent and to live in proximity of family and community members. Kinley is concerned about the future of his family, stating that,

“We are still living in the same apartment, because we cannot afford to move. Once we move right now, the utility bill, everything will be separate. Right now, it’s all included, because in 2011, it was all included. Now they changed the policy. And yeah, so, as a family, I don’t have the specific plan yet, but if the rent goes up, if the apartment they are building is really expensive, then we cannot move.”

When asked if he was concerned by the evictions, Jarome states that, *“of course, they would [do it] to me and to many other people.”*

The evictions also damaged what previously was a vibrant neighbourhood. According to Adel,

“Heron Gate will never, in my opinion, will never be what it used to be, it will never be what it was intended to be, and moving forward, I don’t think it’s going to ever get back that community, that sense of community, togetherness, or connection. I think moving forward it’s more gonna be for market, right? It’s more about changing the idea of what Heron Gate was. Heron Gate, when people think of it, people think of immigrants, refugees, minorities, a lot of Arabs, a lot of Somalis, like, that’s what you think of. And then more so now I would say, not as much Somalis and Arabs but more Nepal, the people of Nepal, and Syrians, right? But I feel like, I can’t speak for Timbercreek, but I would say that their vision, what it seems to be, considering what they’re doing, is to change that look and make it more of a marketable, profitable land, right? And then to get a different kind of demographic coming in. That’s what I think is the intention.”

On a more personal level, the evictions separated Adel's family from one another, and her cousins were forced to move outside of the neighbourhood.

"Yeah, my cousin that live in the Heron Gate, some of them have moved. Like a lot of them have moved because of the Heron Gate situation, as you can tell. So some of them, like, I know one of my cousins, she moved from Sandalwood all the way to now Fisher, so she's completely out of the area. But my other cousins, they were forced to -- now they just moved to Fairlea, which is like just across the street from Heron Gate. And then, my cousins who live on Sandalwood, like the houses that haven't been touched in Cedarwood, they are still there. (...) All of my cousins who lived [in the first evicted parcel], some of them moved, like immediately just from the area. Some of them who had moved from [the first evicted parcel] to just the [second evicted parcel], like within that neighbourhood, now have moved. So I don't have as much family as I used to, no. It kinda sucks, but (...) you know."

Kinley says that since the evictions the community feeling had decreased, permanently changing the neighbourhood,

"I still miss a lot of family who moved from the community and then the area, after the construction, everything is closed now. The area, I miss the area because if you just walked by in the summer, you would see a lot of people just having chat in that community. Now you cannot pass that because they are constructing it. The community has decreased, simultaneously it's really small now, small amount. And you don't see that people engaging walking by."

Currently, the future of the neighbourhood remains in limbo. Timbercreek's proposed redevelopment has not yet been approved and HTC is committed to fighting future evictions. Based on the participants' accounts, it appears as though many residents of LHG have to manage their anxiety regarding their precarious housing situation, unsure when they might be evicted or where they might have to go. At the same time, their community support has been quickly dissipating, as more tenants are either evicted, or move away in anticipation of being evicted. What remains is the desire for community and belonging that they hope to maintain despite the obstacles they face.

4.5 Media Analysis

Although many participants are fond of their neighbourhood and value the convenience and amenities in LHG, outsiders often have a more negative perspective of the area. In this section, I provide an analysis of media coverage about the neighbourhood in order to show how outsiders perceive Ledbury Heron-Gate. In particular, I show that the positive qualities of LHG described above through immigrants' voices are not accurately portrayed in mainstream or social media.

As explained in Chapter 3 - Methodology, I conducted an analysis of mainstream media coverage of LHG for the period between June 5, 2008 to June 7, 2019, including news articles, press releases, editorials, op-eds, letters to the editor, features, reviews, and court bulletins. A total of 335 articles were selected and categorized into 10 main themes. I tallied up the articles by theme and by year to show changes in media coverage over time. I also expanded my analysis into social media, examining what individuals on Reddit, Twitter, and other social media websites said about LHG.

Overall, media coverage of the LHG neighbourhood was mostly centered on two topics: crime and the Timbercreek evictions. Out of a total of 335 mainstream media articles analyzed, 136 (40.06%) were about crime, and 72 (21.49%) concerned the Timbercreek evictions – covering the unfolding of events from the early stages in 2016 to the still ongoing conflict. When looking at which topics were the focus of mainstream media, it can be seen that the theme of crime dominated early mainstream media representation of LHG (see Figure 26).

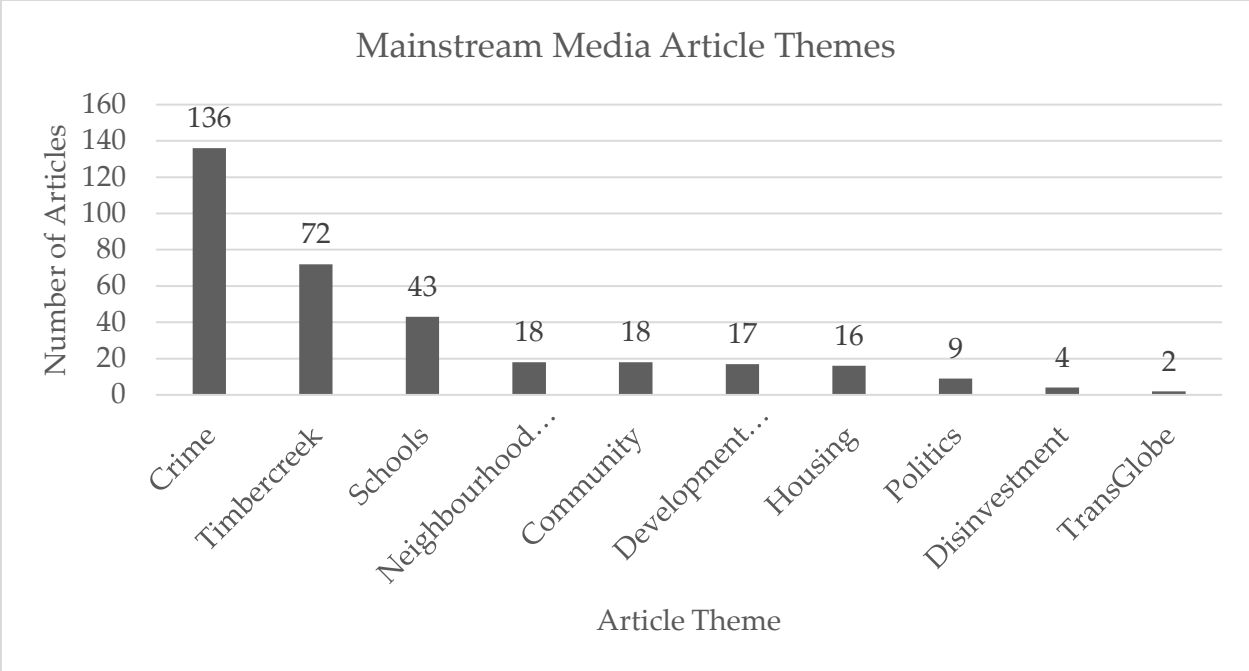


Figure 26: Mainstream Media Article Themes

Until 2017, crime was consistently the most covered topic, representing on average more than 30% of all news coverage about LHG. Starting in 2017, a shift can be noted with growing coverage of the Timbercreek evictions. The latter rapidly monopolized media coverage, concomitantly leading to a significant decrease in the proportion of news articles that centered on crime (see Figure 27). Nevertheless, this decrease in the proportion of crime-related news did not signify a decrease in the media coverage of crime in the neighbourhood. As Figure 28 shows, there was in fact a significant increase in the number of news articles discussing crime in the neighbourhood from 14 articles in 2016 to 41 articles in 2018 (an increase of 293%). In other words, we witnessed an explosion of news coverage on LHG starting in 2017, including a growing number of articles centered on both crime and the Timbercreek evictions.

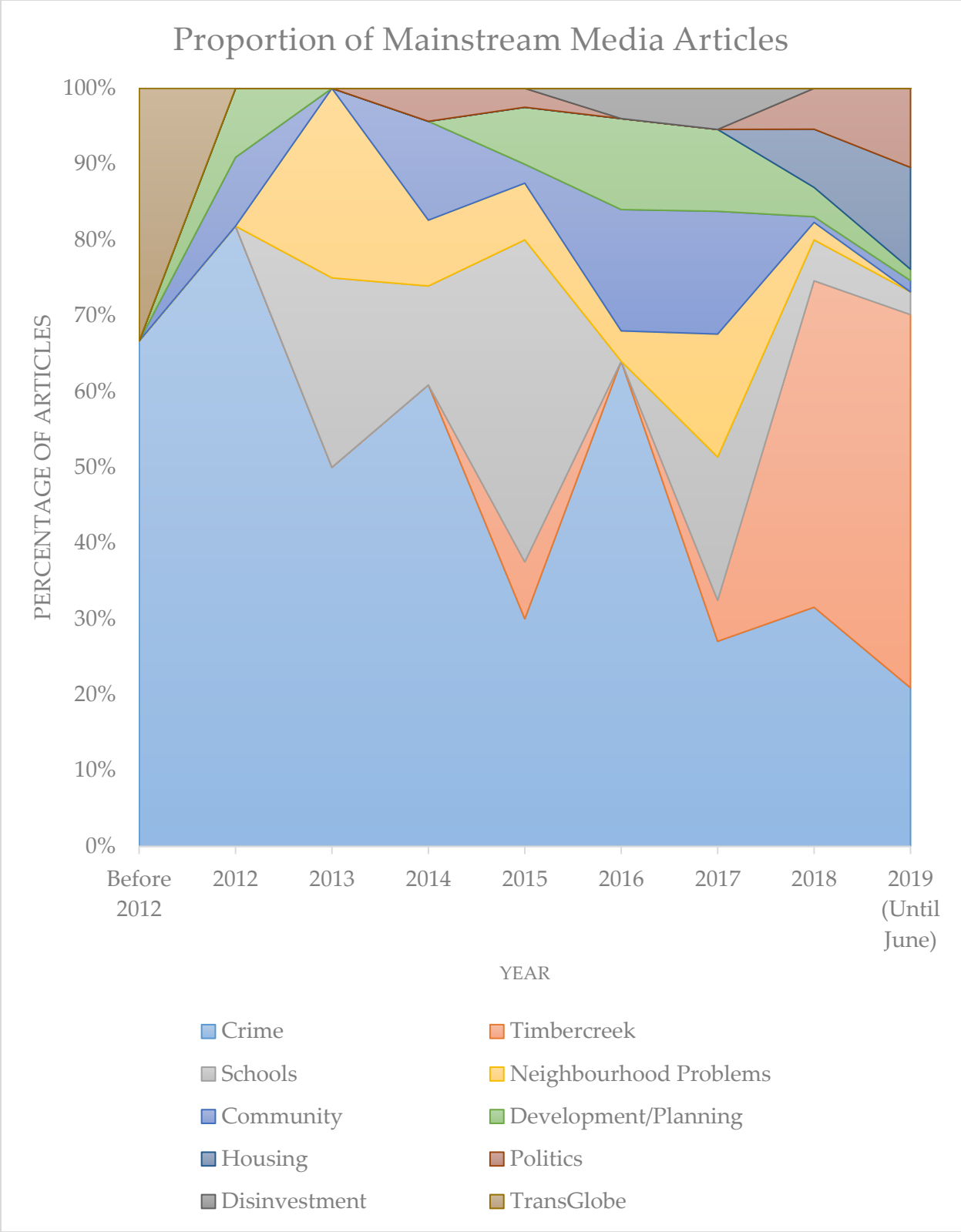


Figure 27: Proportion of Mainstream Media Articles

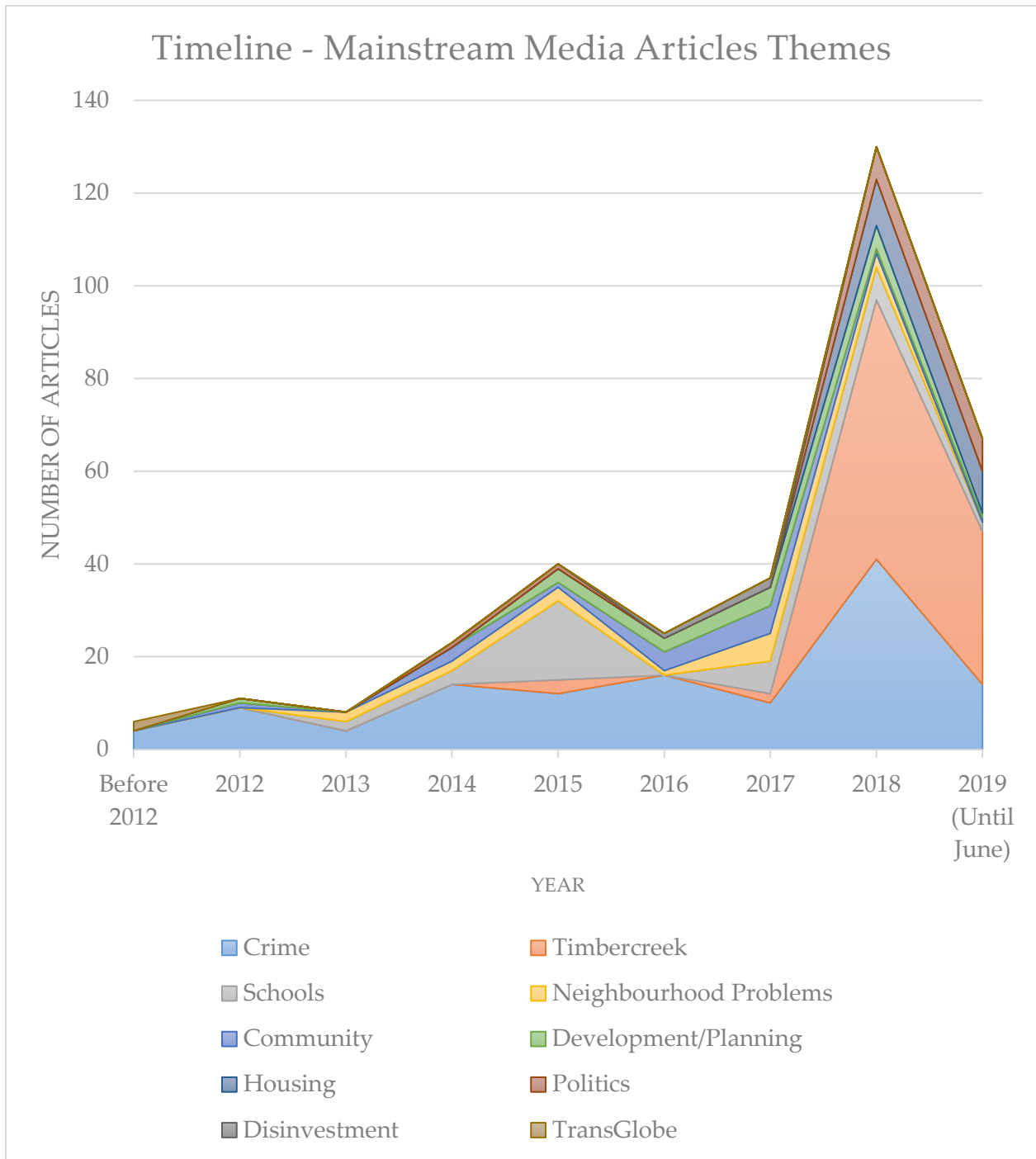


Figure 28: Timeline - Mainstream Media Article Themes

In the following section, I examine more closely the LHG media coverage that focused on Crime and Timbercreek/TransGlobe, before delving into an analysis of social media comments involving the neighbourhood.

4.5.1 Crime

Even when excluding the articles on Timbercreek from the analysis, 51.71% of all remaining articles on Ledbury Heron Gate were about crime. 22 out of 136 articles were about the neighbourhood's reported crime problem in general. These articles focused on the "guns and gangs" violence in the neighbourhood, with many articles discussing how to "clean up" the neighbourhood (e.g., Kupfer, 2018; Pringle, 2018). A few older articles describe how Ledbury-Banff was cleaned up in 2012, transforming from a crime-ridden area into a "respectable" neighbourhood (Bell, 2012; Leung, 2012; Brownlee & Thompson, 2012). More recent articles that mention Ledbury-Banff are still crime-oriented (CBC News, 2015; Yogaretnam, 2015).

114 articles, or 83.8% of all crime-oriented articles, discussed individual instances of crime, often with repeated coverage of the same crime. Many of the articles about individual instances of crime are shorter news snippets that give brief synopsis of the events and requests to call Crimestoppers (e.g., Pringle, 2018; Gillis, 2018; CBC News, 2018; Piliéci, 2017; Yogaretnam, 2016). The highest number of articles about the same case was 7 regarding the shootings of both Omar-Rashid Ghader in 2016 and Mouhamed Serhan in 2019, respectively. The coverage of Serhan's murder occurred within the span of four days and was the incident reported by seven different journalists and six different outlets, including the Ottawa Citizen, Ottawa Matters, and CBC New Ottawa (Williston, 2019; CBC, 2019; CTV Ottawa, 2019; Vlasveld, 2019; Whan, 2019; Yogaretnam & Gillis, 2019; Trinh, 2019). Participants identified the media coverage of crime in LGH to be over-exaggerated. Hani stated that, "*It's a propaganda. Cause I feel like they targeting a community.*" Although no one denied that crime happens in the neighbourhood, many were of the opinion that there is a focus on crime in LHG that does not exist in other neighbourhoods in Ottawa.

4.5.2 Timbercreek and Transglobe

The second most significant topic covered in mainstream media was the Timbercreek evictions (72 articles or 21.49%). The evictions began in 2016, and in the short three-year timeframe, many long-form articles were written about the evictions (Subramaniam, 2018; Rockwell, 2018; Kestler-D'Amours, 2018). Most coverage of the evictions occurred between May 2018 and November 2018, during the second round of evictions and at the height of protests and resistance efforts. Out of 72 mainstream media articles about Timbercreek, 70.83% were reported during this time period. Most articles described the evictions and the difficulties faced by the individuals and families who were or would be evicted. The majority of articles (63 or 87.5%) described Timbercreek in a negative light. This was partly because HTC was a major force in grabbing media attention and drove the intensity and the approach of much of the news articles. HTC reached out to VICE to pitch an article on the evictions (Subramaniam, 2018), organized many of the events written about in the Ottawa Citizen (McGinn, 2018; Crawford, 2018; Crosby, 2018; Vlasveld, 2018), and facilitated many interviews with news organizations (Kestler-D'Amours, 2018; Trinh, 2019a; Blewett, 2018). Members and associates of HTC also wrote, investigated, and provided insight for many of the Timbercreek news articles (Hawley, 2018; Crosby, 2018; Rockwell, 2018; Egal, 2018). 35 or 48.61% of articles about Timbercreek discussed the families who were forcibly evicted and the lack of affordable housing options in Ottawa for evicted tenants. The VICE News article provided a long and comprehensive summary of the situation, and tenant advocate Mumina Egal described it as “the largest urban eviction campaign in Canada” (as cited in Subramaniam, 2018, para. 9). Many articles presented in-depth reports investigating how and why housing in Heron Gate became neglected and dilapidated, exposing the documented neglect of work orders, hidden Property Standards and License Appeals Committee, and broken by-law system (Heaton, 2018; Kestler-D'Amours, 2018; Hawley,

2018; Crosby, 2018; Rockwell, 2018). 28 articles (38.89%) described residents resisting the evictions, mostly centered on the efforts of HTC. Three articles (McLeod, 2018; CTV Ottawa, 2018; Radio Canada, 2018) mentioned the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and their efforts advocating for affordable housing options and inclusionary zoning in Ottawa, using Heron Gate as an example of the current crisis in affordable housing.

In a small number of articles about Timbercreek's evictions are portrayed in a positive light. Among these, 8 articles presented the redevelopment plans as neighborhood revitalization and a scheme that would mitigate crime and disorder. These articles describe Timbercreek's proposal to replace currently existing families and appear unaware or uninterested in how the evictions impact families in the neighbourhood. They are mostly focused on the economic justifications for the development and present the eviction and replacement as a natural process. One editorial piece by the Ottawa Citizen Editorial Board argued that people were not giving enough credit to Timbercreek for taking "a necessary step in upgrading this neighbourhood" and that "This is a rational economic decision" (Ottawa Citizen Editorial Board, 2018, para. 8; para. 3). The editorial argued that it is only logical for Timbercreek to evict families and that we should not criticize Timbercreek "for wanting to make a profit" (Ottawa Citizen Editorial Board, 2018, para. 10). The editorial also mentioned that everyone will have received an offer of alternative accommodations, but does not give any statistics or evidence to back up their claims. It also does not indicate the quality of these alternative accommodations and whether they are suitable for the evicted families.

Overall, the mainstream media coverage of the evictions has condemned Timbercreek for its actions while not addressing broader structural problems such as the lack of a national housing policy and the reliance on private developers to provide affordable housing. The articles mostly focus on the evicted tenants' emotional narratives of loss of

community and sense of belonging and their desire to remain in Heron Gate. Nevertheless, some articles do point out the broader structural processes that enable Timbercreek's plan to displace and replace, especially those that HTC members and associates have written (Hawley, 2018; Crosby, 2018; Rockwell, 2018).

4.5.3 Social Media

In terms of social media, the discourse often centered around Heron Gate and the Timbercreek evictions, and there were differences between distinct social media platforms. Facebook, Yelp, and other social media sites did not extensively discuss LHG. Comments on Reddit, a discussion forum with a large young white male user base, focused on the negative qualities of the neighbourhood and blamed most of the issues in the neighbourhood on residents. On the other hand, Twitter was the main forum for the activities of the HTC.

On Reddit, many commenters on the subreddit r/ottawa presented the neighbourhood as dangerous, dilapidated, and poorly planned (enrodude, 2018; LankyKong69, 2018; crazymoon, 2016; TotoroTheCat, 2015; absolutkaos, 2011; funkme1ster, 2011). Some of these comments were either implicitly or explicitly racially coded. For example, the user moot9000 posted, "Heron Gate = Little Mogadishu" (2018) in reference to reported gunshots in the area. Other users stated that they thought these descriptions and the reputation was exaggerated (KingAmI 2018; corxz, 2018; DeoFayte, 2017; da_whip_snip, 2017). The discussion only became more polarizing as the Timbercreek evictions received more media coverage, with many commentators unsympathetic to the plight of the various residents and blaming them for the disorder and mismanagement of the neighbourhood. These commentators portrayed residents as lazy, ungrateful immigrants who are unwilling to learn English, unable to work hard, and the source of their own misfortune. Commentators also took issue with residents having too many

children and often stated that the evicted residents should be grateful they could no longer “live in a complete shit hole” (SoccerModsRWank, 2018). Again, racially coded posts such as, “Knock the ghettos to the ground and scatter the rats. It’s time to integrate. Those communities where absolute hell holes. This one might as well have been called lil Somalia” (CountRockula85, 2018). Comments such as these were not unusual. Some commentators presented Timbercreek’s actions as rational, using economic logic and stating that “Its unfortunate for the tenants, but [they] can see why Timbercreek would do this. A lot of these buildings just aren't salvageable or the cost of doing so is not economical” (suks2bthatguy, 2018). These comments are not only driven by prejudice against low-income, racialized immigrants, but also by the perception of LHG as a neighbourhood that is rife with violence and despair. But there were some commentators who described the activities of Timbercreek and previous rental property management companies that operated in the neighbourhood in a negative light (captjamestkink, 2018; enrodude, 2018; stingerott, 2016; inkathebadger, 2016). These commentators tried to note the roles Timbercreek, the City of Ottawa, and other structural forces and actors played in making the neighbourhood what it is today. These perspectives were often drowned out by those with opposing views.

When it comes to Twitter, it was mostly HTC that drove the discussions about Heron Gate. For example, on October 7th, they posted the following tweet that is very characteristic of a typical social media post:

“On Oct 4th, after walking through the community @TimbercreekAM destroyed and witnessing how they clustered asbestos warning signs around remaining tenants as a tool of intimidation, we went to their offices and told them to stop the evictions. #defendHerongate” (Herongate Tenant Coalition, 2018).

The use of Twitter is an example of HTC’s savvy use of media avenues for their advocacy. Other discussions around the evictions on Twitter also tended to be

sympathetic to the evicted residents and many commentators condemned both Timbercreek and the City of Ottawa for their roles in the events. In these narratives of LHG, the commentators are aware of how actors such as Timbercreek have shaped the spaces within LHG.

Overall, both mainstream and social media coverage of LHG was divided, contentious, and portrayed the neighbourhood in negative terms. A number of articles focused on individual instances of crime, often repeated coverage of the same crime. These repeat articles, while short, crowd the results pages when searching key words about the neighbourhood, supporting participants' perspective that there is an over-exaggerated media coverage of crime in LHG. The participants indicated that the media coverage was a major factor in the negative perception of the neighbourhood as a dangerous and violent space. Since the summer of 2018, the story around the Timbercreek evictions has driven news coverage. These articles tended to focus on tensions between developer-driven development and resident resistance. As such, these articles capture the conflict and trauma that occurs in LHG, as opposed to the participants' narratives of convenience, support, and community. What these media narratives have in common is the presentation of the neighbourhood as a downtrodden, violent space where little is positive and residents struggle against forces outside their control.

4.6 Discussion

What resonates in the participants' recounting of their appreciation for LHG is the request for recognition, choice, and their rights as residents. In their arguments against the displacement of their family and friends, they are not focused on contesting ownership and property. Rather, they focus on how they cannot stay in this place that they call home. Kinley argues that, *"for example, if I feel like Sandalwood is where I belong, I've been living there for 10 years, I feel sense of belonging. And then Timbercreek just*

demolishes the housing, you can't do anything, so how do you, you know? How do you belong to that area? It's not you, you're always outsider." Kinley's emotional description of his inability to belong to the neighbourhood shows how the Timbercreek evictions have corroded the residents' sense of belonging by making them exceedingly aware of their lack of control over their housing situation. The evictions created a sense of insecurity among residents such as my participants who felt that because they are low-income renters, they are at the mercy of developers' ambitions that may displace them at any moment. In the book *Displacement: How to Fight it* (Hartman, Keating, & LeGates, 1982), forced displacement is described as "characteristically a case of people without the economic and political power to resist being pushed out by people with greater resources and power, people who think they have a 'better' use for a certain building, piece of land, or neighbourhood" (pg. 4-5). My findings suggest that the low-income residents of LHG are struggling to stay in the neighbourhood against the billion dollar company Timbercreek. Some participants perceive Timbercreek's actions as an attempt to replace the neighbourhood residents with wealthier tenants. Moreover, many participants (tenants of Timbercreek as well as tenants of OCH) live in conditions of neglect and lack choice in and control over their housing situations. The neglect, evictions, and replacements announce to the participants that low-income tenants are not valuable enough to respect and treat well. The class disparity between my participants and other residents, the decision-makers at Timbercreek, and the replacement tenants is a fundamental characteristic of forced displacement (Hartman, Keating, & LeGates, 1982). Residents such as my participants do not have the resources and power to determine where they live and what their housing will look like. The Timbercreek evictions were in part facilitated by income and social inequality, whereby low-income, racialized immigrant/refugee residents' right to housing, right to community, and right to remain are dismissed by those with more wealth and power.

What happens next in the neighbourhood remains to be seen. The participants described how some of the evicted tenants ended up in precarious housing situations where they were unsure if they could find housing at all due to the lack of affordable housing and high cost of living in Ottawa, leaving tenants worrying about potential homelessness as well as loss of community and tenuous sense of belonging. Although the National Housing Strategy Act recognizes that “the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law” (Legislative Services Branch, 2019), housing is not recognized as enshrined in Canadian law. The right to stay put is all the more unrecognized in Canadian courts. There have been attempts to use Section 7 and 15 of the Canadian Charter to argue that housing should be recognized as a fundamental right, but they have not been successful thus far (e.g., *Tanudjaja v. Canada*, 2015). My research findings show that housing precarity, lack of choice and control over their dwellings, and conditions of neglect weaken sense of belonging among low-income immigrant families, while housing security would allow them to feel at home and build personal and emotional narratives of sense of belonging that tie them to their neighbourhood. Adequate housing as a fundamental human right would result in more housing security and thus increased sense of belonging, thus taking away the feelings of being at risk of becoming homeless that results in stress and detachment.

4.7 Conclusion

In this background chapter, the description of LHG illustrates the diversity of the neighbourhood’s population, including a high share of immigrants and visible minorities that distinguish it from other neighbourhoods in Ottawa. Participants did not typically move to the neighbourhood by choice, but they have come to appreciate and value the neighbourhood’s community and amenities. In contrast, the stigmatized perceptions of LHG and the Timbercreek evictions undermine participants’ sense of

belonging and thus their connection to the neighbourhood. Participants' accounts of their experiences in LHG provide a nuanced narrative of the neighbourhood as a space of convenience and support, as well as neglect, discrimination, and stigmatization. These qualities exist simultaneously and alongside one another, invoking for many participants conflicting emotions of comfort and fear that creates a complicated sense of belonging. I further examine these themes in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively focusing on participants' struggles to access neighbourhood spaces and their hard-fought yet fragile community solidarity.

Chapter 5 – (In)accessibility of Neighbourhood Commons

In this chapter, I discuss the participants' perspectives on the (in)accessibility of neighbourhood spaces in Ledbury-Heron Gate through the lens of the "commons." Common spaces, or commons, in Ledbury-Heron Gate are constantly undercut with tensions between the mechanisms of enclosure and participants' claims to belonging. Commons are spaces of "non-capitalist forms of self-management, collective property ownership and the co-production of social goods and spaces" (Chatterton & Pusey, 2019 p. 5). Similarly to the discussion on what defines "public" space summarized in the literature review (Chapter 2), I do not define commons based on legal ownership and property rights, because such definitions do not always reflect how the space is perceived and used. Rather, I define commons as a space that is accessible, free, and used collectively. Because of their collective nature, historically as well as in the contemporary context, commons are often at risk of being enclosed based on the principles of private property (Blomley, 2008). The privatization of common spaces has taken many forms (from historical enclosure of common lands, the exploitation of natural resources, to privatization of public assets today), becoming spaces where only those with financial capital can access them. In the case of Ledbury-Heron Gate, examples of the commons are public spaces such as parks as well as private spaces such as malls where residents spend their time. Commons are spaces of encounter where residents can come together, gather, and form a sense of belonging. Many of these spaces have come under attack, are being dismantled and/or neglected, and then privatized and commodified. Increasingly, Ledbury-Heron Gate is becoming a neighbourhood where previously accessible common spaces are becoming inaccessible, scarce, and even disappearing. These commons spaces are being replaced by commoditized spaces that are not easily accessible to all residents, which will serve to further displace and destroy collective experiences and community life.

In what follows, I begin by defining the concepts of 'commons' and 'enclosure' and explain why these notions are important to understanding the everyday lives of residents in Ledbury-Heron Gate. The local commons in the neighbourhood are valued as important spaces of socialization and community bonding. Yet residents' access to these spaces is challenged due to issues of neglect, occupation by outsiders, financial barriers, isolation, and discrimination. By depicting how the participants perceive the enclosure of their neighbourhood commons, I show how they are aware of the logics of privatization and commodification driving processes of enclosure, are jaded at its inevitability, and recognize that they are not the target audiences for these enclosed spaces. What remains for the participants is a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood that is marred by messages that they are not wanted here and that they do not belong.

5.1 Enclosure of common spaces

Traditionally, the term 'commons' was used to refer to resources that were collectively used by a community (Caffentzis, 2016). The notion of commons is also used to refer to a set of non-capitalist relations that strive to build community and solidarity (Caffentzis, 2016). Most definitions allude to the idea that commons are collectively produced, and this process of 'commoning' is often attacked by forces of capitalism and enclosure that seek to exploit collective labour for profit (Harvey, 2012). In my thesis, I use the notion of 'commons' to describe the common spaces of Ledbury-Heron Gate that are freely accessible and where residents can gather and interact outside of monetary relations. In these common spaces, the exchange of capital is not a prerequisite to exist. These commons are not only public spaces (as opposed to private property claims), but also those the residents claim as their own, a counterposed collective property claim based on use instead of exchange value (Blomley, 2008). For the residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate, who are often low-income immigrants from

marginalized communities, commons are “the organizational form of everyday reproduction” (Caffentzis, 2016, pg. 100). Commons are the everyday spaces of encounter, where they build mutual support, solidarity, and sense of belonging. The residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate produce commons out of necessity and a recognition of mutual struggle, all the while forces of privatization seek to enclose these spaces.

Accessibility to commons is vital for encounters with difference and developing a sense of belonging. By accessibility, I mean both physical accessibility – that is the ability to enter and remain in a space – as well as social accessibility – the ability to feel comfortable and not excluded from a space. Accessibility for everyone means the “full participation and inclusion of everyone in society’s major institutions, and the socially supported substantive opportunity for all to develop and exercise their capacities and realize their choices” (Young, 1990, pg. 173). This accessibility allows for spaces of encounter, the ability to rub along, co-exist, and confront the hierarchies of power that exist around us to create a space where individuals can be together in difference as equals (Fincher et al., 2019). Any space that is publicly and freely accessible is potentially at risk of enclosure, where use value is destroyed, accessibility is restricted, space is “purified,” and monetary and capitalist relations are established. As such, understanding spaces of encounter and how individuals can belong together in difference as equals needs to begin with an examination on the process of enclosure.

Enclosure has been described as one of capitalism’s “universal territorial equivalents,” where common spaces are privatized and sold for profit (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2015). Space is key to enclosure; the disappearance of common spaces leaves only commoditized, ordered, and exclusive spaces where everyday life is increasingly regulated and capitalism is reproduced. Hodkinson describes enclosure as the “modus operandi of neoliberal urbanism, the essential accomplice” (2012, pg. 505). To enclose a space is the encroachment of consumer-oriented goals on non-commodified and collectively owned

common spaces (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2015). What was previously commons becomes space accessible only to those with financial capital or those seen as possessing financial capital. The process of enclosure heavily impacts neighbourhoods like Ledbury-Heron Gate because low-income communities have little capital to engage with enclosed spaces. Many participants see the financial requirements to access common spaces in the neighbourhood to be a failing of the state and state-funded organizations to properly engage and provide for the children and youth in a low-income neighbourhood such as Ledbury-Heron Gate. The notion of accessible and inaccessible space is key to the concepts of enclosure and commons, as spatial dispossession drives the enclosure of commons (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2015). The expulsion and exclusion of non-consumer goals and poor people transform common space into private and profit-oriented enclosures (Blomley, 2008; Sevilla-Buitrago, 2015). In the following sections, I examine the enclosure of both publicly and privately-owned common spaces, beginning with parks and transitioning into meeting areas such as neighbourhood malls, community centres, and pools in rental apartment buildings. Moreover, I examine how commons are eroded not only by incidents of crime that promote fear of common spaces, but also by stigmatization and criminalization that obstruct racialized and marginalized youths from accessing these commons.

5.2 (In)accessibility of Parks

Parks are examples of commons where encounters with difference can occur and sense of belonging can develop. In Ledbury-Heron Gate there are nine parks (both public and private), five of which are discussed in the thesis. Orlando Park, just to the north of LHG, is also discussed as it is frequently used by youth in the neighbourhood (see

Figure 29). Although participants speak about the many parks as valued amenities, they also recognize them as spaces of targeted neglect and inaccessibility.



Figure 29: Parks; Source: Scholars Geoportail, 2020

The participants often identified the reason for the poor maintenance of parks to be because of the neighbourhood's lack of financial capital that would motivate the owners to properly maintain their amenities. In their perspectives, the City of Ottawa and Timbercreek do not value these spaces because of the free, non-monetary relations that are predominant in the interactions within and around these parks. In this section, I will first describe the important role the parks play as neighbourhood commons and spaces of encounter, thereby contributing to creating a sense of belonging for participants in the neighbourhood. I then provide the participants' narratives of targeted neglect of these neighbourhood commons and subsequent barriers to accessing them.

5.2.1 Parks as Commons

In the photovoice interviews I conducted, parks were frequently mentioned as a space of community building and enjoyment. The parks in the area play important roles in the development of community and belonging. Heatherington Park is one such park and was frequently described as a gathering space, especially for immigrant mothers in the neighbourhood. Hani, a Somali-Canadian mother stated that *"it's a good space, you could sit down. You see there's a little bit like a top of a shade that you could sit as a parent and then your kid is gone and play."* Faiza, who is from South Sudan, also described the park as *"very very very good. The kid and the adult, enjoy there, because we have water here, water park. And we have here hockey in winter. We have hockey here, the kid play hockey there, in winter time. And summer time, also, we have fun. The kid play here and me and neighbour, we stay there and watch the kid and we know, yeah, friend, new friend, and like this."* Many events are also organized at the park, such as the previously described Winter Carnival (Chapter 4) and basketball tournaments. Sometimes, the parents in Heatherington took their children to the nearby Fairlea Park. Nour showed me a video of an event the

Heatherington parents organized for young children in the neighbourhood, saying, *“Yeah, dancing, we take our mics, we have a speaker, disco too. We go and we have the party thing. And we do some face painting.”* As these quotes show, Heatherington Park is a well-used, much appreciated space where parents can easily watch over their children and get to know one another. Many of the participants shared photos of the park in their photovoice interviews (see Figures, 30, 31, and 32).



Figure 30: Faiza - Heatherington Park



Figure 31: Hani - Heatherington Park



Figure 32: Samira - Heatherington Park

The five participants who lived within a five minutes' walk from the park (Leila, Hani, Nour, Samira, and Faiza) spoke of taking their children to it regularly, especially during the summer. In my time spent in the neighbourhood, I saw first-hand that Heatherington Park was frequently busy. Often, there were more than ten children playing on the basketball courts, splash pads, and swings, while the parents sat at the sheltered picnic table or the various benches around the park. Sometimes, the parents also sat inside the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre (see Figure 33), since the kitchen has large windows that look directly into the park. This method of watching over the children was especially popular on Thursday afternoons, when there is free food provided in the community centre.



Figure 33: Faiza: Albion-Heatherington Community Centre

According to local residents and participants, Sandalwood Park also used to be a hub in Ledbury-Heron Gate. According to Adel, Sandalwood Park *“was like the main place, that’s when everybody came together.”* This role has changed since the evictions in 2016 and the demolition of the townhouses directly north of the Sandalwood Park. The

construction made the park feel isolated and uncomfortable, leaving Sandalwood Park often devoid of people. In my time spent walking around the neighbourhood, I rarely, if ever, saw anyone using the park, despite its baseball diamond and soccer field.

In addition, Orlando Park (see Figure 34) was often referred to as a neighbourhood commons and space of encounter where many residents were gathering. This is a large park located beside Queen of the Angels, a crowded English as a Second Language School for newcomers.



Figure 34: Kinley - Orlando Park

Many Nepali-Bhutanese refugee youths, especially young men, frequent Orlando Park during the summer to play soccer in the only adult sized soccer field within walking distance of those who live in Heron Gate and Heatherington. Kinley explains,

“[Orlando] Park is the hub for a lot of youths, you know? There’s a lot of soccer field and we can go there every summer, like almost every day, we spend a lot of time there (...) it is really important for us”

Similarly, Ledbury Park (see Figure 35 and 36) is a key neighbourhood commons that many participants frequented because it has a soccer field, a basketball court, a large open space, and a covered pavilion. Sakina says that *“in the summer it’s all kids there afternoon. It’s very enjoyable, summer, spring, it’s very good, yeah. Even adults, going there, sitting.”* Nacira, another participant who lives in the Ledbury-Banff area states that *“I like the park in the summer. Nice.”* Nour, Hani, and Samira also occasionally drive their children from Heatherington to this park because it is larger, with a soccer field that Heatherington Park does not have.

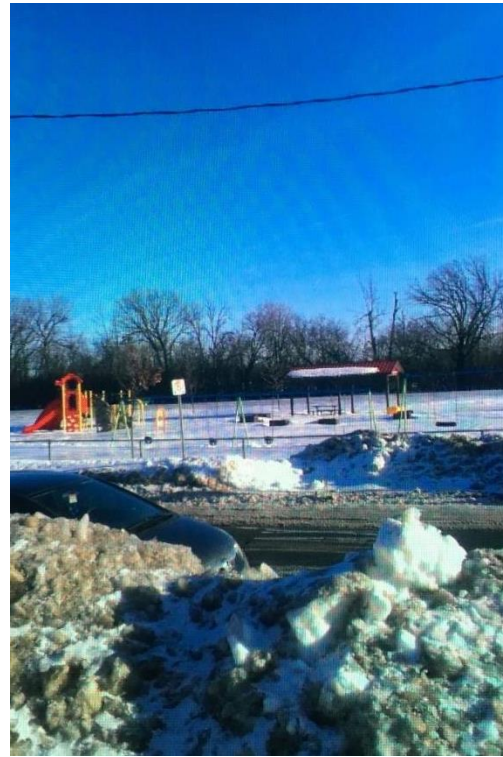


Figure 35: Nacira - Ledbury Park Figure 36: Sakina - Ledbury Park

All these parks provide the residents important spaces for playing and gathering. They are free to use and convenient to reach on foot. Nour and Faiza meet at Heatherington Park and formed a strong friendship that they describe as a sisterhood. Many other encounters in the parks, both spontaneous and planned, have forged a sense of belonging and community. Nevertheless, these spaces are troubled by issues regarding access, to which I now turn. In the following section, I will expand further upon the ways the parks are not always accessible to those who most need them.

5.2.2 Targeted Neglect and Barriers to Access

Although parks in Ledbury-Heron Gate play an important community space and residents use them frequently and enjoy meeting there, many participants complained about the poor maintenance of garbage and lights in the parks. In the case of Heatherington Park, although it is much used and loved, it is often neglected. Hani, who previously described her enjoyment of the park, later mentioned that:

"[I]t's overcrowded, to be honest with you. It's overcrowded (...) Heatherington, it's a bit dirty. They don't pick up the garbage on time, once a week, that's the time they pick up the garbage. And all over the area, there's garbage bags. And Monday to Monday, when the bin is full, everywhere is the garbage. And health hazard. (...) Yeah, so during the summer, it's stinking, filthy, smelly."

Samira also said of the park, *"They don't pick up the garbage. The park they don't pick it up. You can see the same garbage there for like, I don't know how many days. And it's full, because imagine, how many people with diapers, with garbage and food and stuff. Unless you -- how many time, I think even Nour I think has called."* Participants often spoke about the importance of parks for gathering and relaxing while simultaneously describing the parks as dirty and not well-maintained.

Nour is another who espouses the virtue of Heatherington Park, but she often has to clean the park herself, gathering children and teenagers from the neighbourhood to help her. She reasons,

"[H]ow I'm gonna leave it like that when I'm sitting there? I can't. So I come with garbage bag, I have to go around with the kids. The kids they like that (...) we clean, we change the garbage, we put the clean, everything. But still, sometimes three/four weeks, [the City] never comes [to pick up the garbage]. And how can you imagine, when three/four weeks, the garbage is there. People walking with the dog, everything is there. Why?"

In addition, Nour brought up the fact that the lights in the basketball court were often off in the summer. At the time of the interview, the lights had started turning on again, to which Nour questions, *"but why? It's winter?!"* She is not alone in her questions, as during the interview she quotes a youth from the neighbourhood, Ibrahim, who occasionally organizes basketball tournaments, *"Ibrahim, they were saying too, 'How come the lights are on now?' And it's winter."* The veiled implication in the questions is that the City, who maintains the lights, does not want the space to be used by neighbourhood youth. The lights are turned off in the summer so that the basketball court cannot be used as a neighbourhood common space and a space of encounter.

Other parks that are better maintained and larger also have their own accessibility problems. Earlier, Kinley was describing Orlando Park as a hub where many Nepali-Bhutanese youth gather to play soccer. Despite the youths' understanding of Orlando Park as their hub, the park is not always freely accessible to them. Kinley explains,

"[Orlando Park] is booked like seven days a week by City. Mostly, we as a community member, it's a walkable distance but we get to access this park like at night time. Like after nine, or after eight, or the daytime. Because after three it's always booked, and you can't access because people who booked will kick you out. Yeah, it's a huge issue that having a park near you but you cannot access to it, you know? You cannot -- you are not able to book it too. And you cannot access to it."

Kinley does not say why Orlando Park cannot be booked, but it is the reality for the Nepali-Bhutanese youths that, at times, they can only watch other people who do not live in the neighbourhood use the park that they consider to be theirs. He goes on to discuss how the youths are then stuck hanging around the parking lot instead, which in turn leads to issues of maintenance and neglect:

“-- if the soccer field is booked, they cannot play, they just ended up in the parking lot. Recently I've seen the parking lot has been really dirty, cause everybody throw everything there. They drink and throws, there's no garbage, anything. The City runs the soccer field but there isn't a lot of garbage bins over here. So you can blame the youth who are making trash, but there has to be some accessible, so you can direct, let me throw it over there.”

The issue of Orlando Park's frequent occupation by outside sports teams is not one of possessiveness or dislike of outsiders, but rather an unequal access to space. It is also not only Orlando Park that is often occupied by people who do not live in the neighbourhood. Hani also mentions that Ledbury Park is frequently rented out to outsider teams: *“[t]he soccer, I think they rent (...) I've seen the teams that always playing.”* Sakina corroborates this observation, stating that *“soccer field coming from outside. Yeah, always in the summer, 6 o'clock, 5 o'clock, lots of people, but not from community. Adult, playing soccer outside.”*

Many youths in the neighbourhood cannot afford to join the sports teams that regularly book up parks in the neighbourhood. They often cannot access any other locations for sports and physical activities with their friends and family. When these parks are frequently occupied by outsiders, the neighbourhood youth who rely on the parks are unable to use them. These public parks, although meant to be accessible to all, are not so in practice. The neglect and lack of maintenance renders the parks unpleasant to visit, and the continuous rental of the soccer fields push the neighbourhood youths to parking lots and off-hours. What this situation relays to the residents is that the City

does not care about them. Above, I recounted Nour's questions: Why does the city not have more frequent garbage pick-ups? Why are the basketball court lights on in the winter and off in the summer? Later in our interview, she answered these questions by inferring that poor maintenance of the parks is deemed acceptable because those who live in the neighbourhood are not considered important to those who are in charge given their lack of financial capital. She states that *"The city take the sweet time, because which neighbourhood?"* Nour's feelings of marginalization and neglect are not solely created by this one issue of poor park maintenance, but the result of numerous and compounding experiences of discrimination, including police discrimination and mass evictions, upon which I will further expand later. Comparing her experiences and her friends' experiences with those of others in Ottawa, she concludes that,

"They don't do that to Kanata. You go and see people in Kanata, nobody do that to them. (...) That's what happening here. That's -- as you know, when you living low-income, you know? To live a different, it's dependent on the neighbourhood, when they say, 'Oh, Heatherington, ah, forget about them, they don't know nothing, just let them be there', you know? They always forget us, forget us. They focusing in the big -- people have mansions, houses. They focusing on the people rich, the people who pay tax, you know? They fight for it."

When the participants visit other parts of the city, they are left to wonder why their neighbourhood is not well-maintained with the same care and attention as other areas such as Kanata, Orleans, and Barrhaven. Jarome and Abdul, two fathers from Syria, mentioned their intention to move to Orleans or Barrhaven, explicitly because they believe that the treatment of tenants and maintenance of spaces in these neighbourhoods greatly surpasses Heron Gate.

Despite the fact that they value the convenience of the halal meat store and other amenities in the neighbourhood, both Jarome and Abdul want to move out as soon as possible. Jarome states that:

*“Yes, of course, I would miss the fact that it’s a diverse place and all that, but there are -
- you cannot have it all. The health of my children and being in a clean place is more
important than being surrounded with people from your culture. You cannot have it all,
so yes, I would miss that, but I would do it. I don’t have any other choices.”*

The neglect of neighbourhood commons in Ledbury-Heron Gate has sent the message to some participants that they are worth little to the actors that are responsible and in control of the common spaces. Jarome and Abdul have concluded that in Orleans or Barrhaven, landlords would not be able get away with providing such poor maintenance. Their main conclusion is that Ledbury-Heron Gate’s low-income, immigrant status means that the neighbourhood does not provide much revenue for Timbercreek and City of Ottawa, which leads to a neglect of local residents’ needs and poor maintenance of neighbourhood spaces. Without any other outreach from those in charge, this is the narrative that fits uncomfortably within the participants’ and possibly also residents’ hearts more generally. To the neighbourhood residents, financial capital equals power and access, and their lack of financial capital and resulting inability to meaningfully participate in enclosed spaces produces a purposeful and targeted neglect of the neighbourhood commons that they often rely upon.

It is not just the City that is viewed as neglectful of the neighbourhood; the (in)actions of private corporations such as Timbercreek also contribute to rendering the parks inaccessible. As mentioned earlier, Sandalwood Park was a ghost town when I saw it for the first time in the summer of 2018. Through the years of neglect and the demolition of townhouses in 2016, Sandalwood Park, which was previously viewed as a vibrant hub, is no longer seen as welcoming nor used as a neighbourhood commons by the residents. The construction fences and broken-down homes prevented anyone from accessing the park from the north, and the loud and busy Walkley Road to the South felt as it was encroaching onto the park. Moreover, those who live in Timbercreek

buildings criticize the local Timbercreek owned park, Yousef Salim (see Figure 37), for its poor maintenance and lack of amenities.



Figure 37: Jarome – Yousef Salim Park

Kinley, Jarome, and Abdul, the three participants who live in the Timbercreek high rise apartments, were unimpressed by the quality of Yousef Salim Park. Kinley states that *“it looks like they’re building a park and at the middle of their construction they left. So there’s no lights (...) one play structure and one garbage bin, that’s it.”* Jarome wants the park to be better suited for his wife and children, saying that *“if they would fix this and make it very convenient for children and women to go to, it would have been amazing.”* But currently, *“it’s pretty small, there’s pretty much nothing. Two things to play with, for the children. The slides, only two (...) so this is the place next to their building, but it’s dirty, it’s small.”*

Unfortunately, the lack of maintenance and quality of these neighbourhood commons render them inaccessible.

Even parks owned by neither public nor private institutions have accessibility problems. Fairlea Park, owned by the housing co-op to the southeast of the neighbourhood, is described as closed off and alienating. Many participants stated that

they are not familiar with what and where it is (Leila, Sakina, Nacira). Hani believes, *“It’s inside their -- I think inside, it’s not like open to the public, I don’t know? It just has to be the community there who’s living there?”* According to Kinley who does frequent Fairlea Park, although it is well maintained with a water structure, small soccer field for children, and a baseball field, the latter is always booked, just like Orlando Park. I corroborated this account with other residents of Fairlea, who also state that many baseball and Ultimate Frisbee teams frequent the park, often making it inaccessible to residents who live in the area.

Overall, despite the important role parks throughout the neighbourhood play(ed) in immigrants’ development of familiarity, community, and mutual support, there are many issues with their accessibility. They are neighbourhood commons that the residents, especially immigrants and newcomers, rely upon as spaces of encounter, bonding, and support; however, because these spaces are commons and do not generate revenue, the parks are often neglected. According to my research participants, the reason for the neglect of these common spaces is the neighbourhood residents’ lack of financial resources and they question whether this type of neglect would occur if they were a middle-class neighbourhood instead.

5.3 (In)accessibility of Indoor Spaces

It is not only the parks that are important spaces of encounter, but also indoor common spaces such as pools, indoor malls, and community centres. Indoor spaces are especially important in Canada, given the long and cold winter seasons. In Ledbury-Heron Gate, these spaces are often also rendered inaccessible due to poor maintenance and high costs. In the following sections, I will discuss Timbercreek’s role in the inaccessibility of indoor gyms and pools in their rental buildings, as well as the demolition of Heron Gate Mall. Then, I will examine the evolution and gradual enclosure of the Heron Road

Community Centre. Lastly, I explain how the various paid recreational programs, despite subsidies and attempts at providing equal access, are inaccessible to the many low-income residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate.

5.3.1 Neglect and Demolition of Private Community Spaces

Earlier, I discussed the fact that Timbercreek neglected their responsibility to maintain Yousef Salim Park and how the evictions and demolitions deteriorated Sandalwood Park as a meeting space. In addition, Timbercreek has neglected to maintain the much advertised gym and pool in the rental buildings, and the company was a main actor in the demolition of the Heron Gate Mall.

The gym and pool advertised for Timbercreek's apartment rentals in Heron Gate (see Figure 38 and 39) had been neglected and unusable for

more than a year at the time of my data collection. One of the participants provided pictures of the pool located in the Timbercreek high rise apartment buildings that he



Figure 38: Kinley - Timbercreek Gym



Figure 39: Jarome - Timbercreek Pool

used to frequent with his daughter. In the previous year, Timbercreek had allowed the pool to deteriorate to the point of complete inaccessibility. Jarome used to take his daughter to the swimming pool regularly. Since the previous winter, he had not been able to do so because it had not been maintained. Jarome says,

“I go from work around 4:30 to 5pm, and this place was the only place where I can take my daughter to have some fun after I finish work because it’s in the building. I don’t have time, I complete work, I finish work at 5pm and I go home, and the daughter said, let’s go out. I said, you want to swim? Let’s go to the swimming pool, so that’s what I would do. If the swimming pool is clean and ready to be used. But you can see, it’s disaster, and now the daughter cannot go and swim. If you google our building, and if you’re looking for a rent, you will see a beautiful picture of the gym, of the swimming pool. Another beautiful picture of the gym. And they would write, it’s amazing place, we have a swimming pool, we have a gym. So to attract you. But in fact, it’s complete disaster.”

Kinley also described how he used to frequent the gym advertised by Timbercreek and he noticed how gradually, the equipment became lost, broken down, and was never replaced. As such, many of his friends now purchase Goodlife memberships instead. Timbercreek advertises the pool and gym as neighbourhood commons, free and accessible spaces for apartment tenants. Yet these amenities are in poor shape and are often unusable, rendering these ostensibly free resources inaccessible. Residents discussed how this visible neglect shows Timbercreek’s disregard for them, stating that they are looked down on because of their low-income and immigrant backgrounds.

On a broader scale, Timbercreek enclosed the former Heron Gate Mall, located in the northeast corner of the neighbourhood. The Heron Gate Mall used to be a major indoor gathering space for local residents, especially during the winter. After Timbercreek bought Heron Gate Mall in 2012, they quickly tore it down in 2013 to make the mall into a plaza. Here is Adel describing the mall:

“[Heron Gate Mall] was a hangout place (...) Like we’d go there, and we’d like just hang out. (...) We didn’t have money, we didn’t have anywhere to go, right? So then we just like, ‘Let’s go to Heron Gate Mall.’ And then we just go, like window shop, look around, and then they would have like these little benches in the middle so we’d just sit down, talk, people watch, I would like to say, you know?”

With the transformation of the mall into a plaza (see Figure 40), Timbercreek ended the existence of an important indoor space where neighbourhood residents can relax out of the winter cold. As such, there no longer is an indoor space where youths and other residents can wander in the winter. As



Figure 40: Jarome – Heron Gate Plaza

Nour says, residents *“used to go inside, (...) inside you go around, all the way. Food Basic and can go in, just chill there, come back. Now you have even nowhere to go and sit.”*

A number of residents consider the demolition of Heron Gate Mall as the start of Timbercreek’s eviction, demolition, and gentrification process. As described in Chapter 4, the participants saw the mass evictions and demolition of homes in Heron Gate as a thinly concealed method for replacing the existing low-income tenants of the neighbourhood with wealthier and often whiter renters. On Timbercreek’s Vista Local webpage advertising the newly built luxury apartments, the renderings portray young adults, mostly white, middle class, and none with hijabs (Timbercreek, 2019). Arguably, this process of displacement and gentrification as it occurs in Ledbury-Heron Gate can be interpreted as a form of enclosure (Blomley, 2008). The current process of

gentrification in Ledbury-Heron Gate has created “zones of exclusion” for current residents of the neighbourhood (Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council Action Committee, 2011). Current residents, often low-income racialized immigrants, are excluded from existing in Vista Local because they lack the economic resources to access privatized, commoditized spaces. New Heron Gate, or Vista Local, will be accessible only to those who are wealthier (and probably whiter).

5.3.2 Community Centres

The Heron Road Community Centre is another indoor space that was seen as enclosed. Adel, a young Somali woman who grew up in the neighbourhood, narrates how the Heron Road Community Centre used to be a neighbourhood commons.

“[Heron Road Community Centre] is the community centre that’s right beside my house. And this is the community centre that I got my first job at. This is the community centre that I volunteered at, and this is the community centre that I first played basketball in. So this was the first area that I’ve -- when we moved here in 2006 that I was welcomed to (...) this [community centre] holds a big place in my heart. Specifically because it was a place of opportunity, a place of growth, and a place of community involvement and engagement, right? I learned a lot, had a lot of mentors, I was able to mentor kids myself (...) Everybody would just come, it was like a place for kids to like feel safe, feel like they belonged, connect, make jokes.

Every Wednesday and Saturday from 6pm to 11pm, the Heron Road Community Centre offered popular free basketball programs for youth (see Figure 41). As Adel describes, the community centre used to be a “hub for all minorities and all immigrants who lived in this whole entire area of Ottawa South.” In the past ten years, the Heron Road Community Centre transformed from a welcoming and inclusive hub to a cold and isolated space. The supervisor that Adel describes as the “mother” of the hub left, as did other youth program leaders like Adel. The new centre directors cut the basketball hours from 6pm-11pm to 7pm-9pm and changed the day from Wednesday and



Figure 41: Adel - Basketball nights

new centre directors increasingly turned their attention to offering revenue generating programs at the expense of free, community building programs such as the basketball nights.

Saturdays to Fridays. Due to these changes, the number of players has significantly decreased. Now, Adel expresses, the centre is “not a hub anymore, it’s just you’re in and out. You’re not there for basketball, get out. You can’t be sitting there at the front desk, you can’t be talking to the CSR, you can’t be doing any of that stuff, it’s in and out.” She believes that the reason behind the change is because the basketball program was not generating revenue for the community centre. The

Kinley also brought up problems with the Heron Road Community Centre, stating that

“[T]hey’re really isolated. Living there 6, 7 years, I have never seen or heard any program they do for free. And they have never communicated with the community. (...) the Heron Road Community Centre does not feel like community centre, you know? Community centre’s usually -- like I work in community centre in different communities, and it’s like a hub for the community. They just show up, they can just walk in. They have connection, they know each other, they access the service, and Heron Road Community Centre, I don’t know who works there, you know? I don’t know what program they do. And I used to go for the food bank they provide before, and I stopped, but there’s the only thing that I knew.”

Over the years, the Heron Road Community Centre underwent drastic changes in leadership and programming that reoriented its place in residents’ everyday lives. The community centre became an enclosed space, accessible only to those who can

pay. My time spent in this community centre felt similarly isolating and quiet. I found it hard to engage the employees in conversations, and they did not live in the neighbourhood and are not known to neighbourhood residents. In the two years



Figure 42: Nour - Tea and Chat



Figure 43: Nadia - Community Dinner

that I have been going to Ledbury-Heron Gate for various drop-in events, I have yet to hear about a regularly programmed free community activity offered by the Heron Road Community Centre other than Friday basketball. In contrast, the Albion-Heatherington Community Centre and the Banff Community House each organize weekly Tea and Chats (see Figure 42), free photography programs for children, Community Dinners (see Figure 43), and large community events with free food and entertainment. Residents pop in and out of the centre to chat with the front desk employees who have worked there for many decades. These community centres remain as neighbourhood commons, spaces of encounter that are freely accessible and occupied with community building for all local residents. Heron Road Community Centre, on the other hand, has become an exclusive and enclosed space, where only

those with financial capital can access. Weekly classes such as ballet, cooking, and visual arts all require registration and payment (JOINOttawa, 2019).

5.3.3 Inaccessible Community Programming

As mentioned, the basketball program is the only free activity that runs regularly in the Heron Road Community Centre. The rest of the programs require payment, which effectively means a lack of accessible programming for many low-income residents who live in the neighbourhood. Kinley speaks to the inaccessibility of the centre,

“[The Heron Road] Community Centre, I think, they’re really isolated. Living there 6, 7 years, I have never seen or heard any program they do for free. And they have never communicated with the community. And we tried to go there, but lot of things are paid. Let’s say they have a gym, they have soccer something paid. They have working -- gym for work outs, paid. If you have to book hall, the space, paid.”

This is also the case for many other amenities and services in the neighbourhood, which are inaccessible to the many low-income residents. With increasing gentrification and rising cost of living, more and more spaces are enclosed. Indoor gathering spaces in the neighbourhood are frequently expensive and thus inaccessible. Sakina once tried to host a family party for the ladies in her family:

“I call City of Ottawa, they said \$40 per hour. I say, “For 5 hours or 6 hours, I need this. I have to spend \$300?” They said, ‘Yes.’ I said, ‘I’m living here.’ They said, ‘No. If even you’re living in Ledbury.’ But I said, ‘This is my neighbourhood, it’s supposed to be cheap.’ Then I rent another place, for \$200, another place. That’s what -- I don’t know why. This very expensive, for us. Supposed to be cheaper for us. Because it’s our park.”

At City of Ottawa facilities, room rentals prices are standardized across the city. For a private activity, the rental price is \$42.20/hour (City of Ottawa, 2019), which is inaccessible for most residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate, 61.3% of whom make under \$30

000 a year. The existence of these inaccessible enclosed spaces and the deficit of substitute neighbourhood commons result in a lack of accessible indoor gathering spaces for local residents.

Even subsidized programs do not render these spaces accessible for the residents. Nour offers an example,

“When you have four kids/five kids? How you gonna pay for all of them for the sport? Like from where? They tell you subsidy, yeah, you go for subsidy to pay this like a -- for [Faiza’s] son, they can pay, they gonna tell you, okay, you’re paying 13%, but you pay half of the money for the food (...) -- okay, how about if you have your only 1, you pay for 1 child, and then you have it for one year, you cannot apply next time. You have to wait another 1 year to get that funding, like it’s called Hand in Hand. You have \$160 every year in your account, so it’s gone.”

Swimming pools are another space that participants frequently describe as inaccessible.

Deborah Ann Kirwan is the only public swimming pool in the neighbourhood. Nour describes how it is often difficult for local residents to access the pool:

“[T]o just walk in, it’s \$2 to go in. For one teenager. Okay, how about the kids want to go after school. The pool in the evenings, so that mean I have to provide \$10 for each child, every week. How about if I have 8 kids? Where am I gonna get \$80 every week? But just give it to them to go in the evening here. And I need for the bus. You have the pool, big pool, it’s sitting right here, we can’t even have access to it.”

The Banff Community House used to organize an hour of free swimming at the Deborah Ann Kirwan Pool for OCH residents in Ledbury-Banff. Sakina tried the program, but did not find the program effective. As Sakina describes,

“[The Banff Community House would] empty the swimming pool for 1 hour. 9 o’clock in the 9pm until 10 for women. I went twice, and it’s not worth it. Because until you change, it’s 15 minutes is going, finished. Then you have to put on your clothes before you go out. Then half an hour or 20 minutes, it’s nothing. I didn’t go anymore. But my neighbours, sometimes they going. But I -- no I go to the, another gym. Big, pay money.”

Unfortunately, despite the well-meaning intent of the organizers, the reality of the program made it inaccessible for many of those who would find it most useful. The only other swimming option in the neighbourhood is the poorly maintained and unusable pool owned by Timbercreek. In such a way, nearby amenities such as swimming pools are rendered inaccessible to many local residents. For a low-income neighbourhood such as Ledbury-Heron Gate, the existence of free and accessible spaces is vital for pursuing activities. Many local residents do not have the financial capital to participate in enclosed spaces and paid programs. Without the existence of free and well-organized community programming, residents are often excluded from neighbourhood spaces and amenities.

5.4 Crime and Criminalization

Another dimension of inaccessibility is social deterrence and the surveillance and control of common spaces. Crime and criminalization both play a role in the erosion of neighbourhood commons and the enclosure of common spaces. As described in Chapter 4, Ledbury-Heron Gate is a neighbourhood with a reputation of crime. This reputation creates in participants a fear of neighbourhood spaces where crime might occur. This fear results in some participants' reluctance to access neighbourhood commons. The participants' fear and reluctance promote the logic of enclosure. Enclosed spaces are fundamentally exclusive and are spaces where those who are seen 'troublemakers' can be expelled. In Ledbury-Heron Gate, the practice of expelling 'troublemakers' have taken on the form of criminalization. Participants describe instances of discriminatory policing and surveillance of Black youth, where they are criminalized for their very existence in neighbourhood commons. Black and racialized youth in the neighbourhood fear that the police and other authoritative actors will discriminate against them, resulting in criminalization, arrest, and imprisonment. The

stigmatization of crime in Ledbury Heron-Gate renders the neighbourhood common spaces inaccessible for residents who fear that they may be the victims of crime and/or criminalization.

5.4.1 Concern with Crime

Most participants are concerned with crime in the neighbourhood, and it was a major fear for Sakina, Jarome, Abdul, and Dawoud. Sakina worries about shootings in Ledbury-Banff (see Figure 44), concerned that a stray shot would enter her house. Her first experience with shootings was four or five years after she moved to the neighbourhood, in approximately 2013. Here, Sakina recounts her experiences with crime:



Figure 44: Dawoud - Ledbury-Banff

"[A]t the sunset time, my daughter-in-law came with my daughter from South Keys shopping centre. And lots of police outside and they told my daughter, 'This is your house?' She said, 'Yes.' She said, 'The police said go inside and don't come outside.' And told my daughter-in-law, 'If you go there, stay tonight here. Don't come back outside.' Then my daughter-in-law said, 'You should leave now.' Then she said, 'I'm sorry, I have to leave because the police was looking for somebody outside.' Nobody allows from their houses to go out. Like three/four years ago. Just that time, the police was here because somebody called them. There's somebody with a gun, wanna shoot somebody. The police were all around Ledbury, was police. But after that was okay. Then last three years start shooting again. Even door-to-door. Three-four doors from this side, my neighbour? Somebody shooting their door. Seven times. So scary, you know? Next day we wake up, we -- it was summer. We went outside, last summer. Oh, lots of police and police line. Then they say what happened, and they say, 'The neighbours was -- somebody shoot the house.' But the house is empty, thank god. Nobody was there. Yeah."

Many of these shootings occur in Ledbury Park, just down the street from Sakina's home. The fear created by these shootings and other violent acts prevents residents from hanging out in parks, makes them uncomfortable in their own homes, and creates apprehension and discomfort. Sakina states that,

"when shooting happens, nobody come out. We just going shopping or sometimes straight come home. And we leave the park too, even in the summer. All the women going, they bring tea and snack in the very breeze is very nice. But when shooting happens, nobody goes to the park. Because it's safety is more important, you know?"

Ledbury Park, the park Sakina refers, is typically a major hub and neighbourhood commons. Whenever a shooting occurs, the park becomes a space of fear instead, promoting discourse around further surveillance and policing that only serves to enclose the common space.

Many participants also discussed how the media contribute to perceptions of the neighbourhood as violent. As stated in Chapter 4, participants believe that the media purposefully target the neighbourhood for coverage of crimes. Adel indicated that media headlines will often reference LHG if anyone involved in a violent incident has even the slightest connection to the neighbourhood. Kinley stated that the stigmatization is difficult, given that shootings do take place, but there are also parts he loves about the neighbourhood that the media do not cover and outsiders do not know. Samira argued that crimes happen everywhere, but other neighbourhoods are not perceived in the same way, and good events in LHG are not covered by the media. The fear of common spaces in the neighbourhood is not entirely caused by instances of crime, but fostered by the perception of Ledbury-Heron Gate as a violent area.

The stigmatization of the neighbourhood plays a role in local residents' discomfort in their neighbourhood commons, cultivating distrust and fear between neighbours.

Jarome states:

"We have heard of it, but we haven't -- I have heard of these crimes, but I have never experienced or witnessed something. The basement, sometimes when a car getting in the basement and the door is open, some young guys, teenagers, they go into the basement and they start to do drugs inside the basement."

Jarome may not have directly experienced or witnessed any crime, but his knowledge of the neighbourhood's reputation and fear of crime severely limit his ability to access neighbourhood spaces and get to know his neighbours. His fear of crime also leads him to pursue further enclosure of the neighbourhood commons, desiring policing and surveillance of the parking garage and removal of anyone who looks like they are dangerous and do not belong. If Jarome were to go to the police, these young men may be criminalized simply for existing in this neighbourhood. In the following section, I present participants' accounts of criminalization and show how the discriminatory policing and surveillance in Ledbury-Heron Gate have made the neighbourhood commons inaccessible to racialized neighbourhood youth.

5.4.2 Criminalization

The perception of the neighbourhood as inhabited by criminals and other unwanted individuals has resulted in experiences of discrimination for local residents. In the following participant narratives, it becomes clear that racialized young men are at risk of criminalization when accessing neighbourhood commons. Adel discussed an experience when she was 16 year old where she and a friend were walking around the "Rich Houses." They sat down on a curb after school to chat and the police arrived shortly after, stating that someone had reported them for trespassing. The police told them they cannot be there because it is private property and asked where they lived. When Adel's friend said, "I live in Cedar," the cop said "Oh the Cedarwood gang Crips." Adel states that she "thought was like very like uncalled for and like, somewhat low-key racist, right? Because what's the difference between living in Heron Gate and living in like (...) the

nice areas (...) That to me was just unfair and then those are the kind of things I say that makes people feel bad because then you're just kind of like reminding the person that they're inadequate or they're less." As Black Somali youth, Adel and her friend were subject to racial profiling and police discrimination. As a result of common police discrimination, Adel says that there was a large shift in the neighbourhood as she grew up.

"There used to be a lot of people who just like frequent and hang out, and then they started making it like illegal to like hang out in your own neighbourhood. They were like, "Oh loitering." Like the guys would be standing right here, cops would come. Just like harassed them, beat them up, like search their pockets. Put some of them in jail. Like for no reason, for no reason! These are like 13 year olds, 14 year olds, 15 year olds. Little kids, so then kids were like, "Kay we're just not gonna go outside." Like, "We're just gonna get in trouble," you know? (...) They made it seem like you can't just hang out. They call that loitering."

When residents of a neighbourhood constantly feel watched and judged, they cannot be comfortable accessing common spaces. Neighbourhood commons such as parks and streets are made off limits for those who do not fit the mold of what is acceptable, determined by skin colour, accent, and income level. Adel's experience is not the only story of discrimination I heard from the participants. Nour spoke of an instance where she and a few teenagers from the neighbourhood were followed around by a store employee:

"And they stop the persons, because I've been following, I make myself like a little recording and I see the person following from here. Like 5 minutes, you walking and the guy going (...) just following us, and then I stop, I say, "Excuse me? Why you following us?" They say, "I'm not following you." I say, "Listen, I have everything be recorded here, you've been following us 5 minutes. We go this side, you always come this side, make yourself you fixing stuff." (...) So went around, and he come to other side, you go there, he come the other side. And they just stop. I say, "What is this? Why?" And I say, "Because we're black?" He tell me, "Oh, no no no, no racism here." I say, "Well, that how it look like!" I say, "You can say, but I can just tell from you." So, I say, "You gonna back up or I gonna be check for your money, your --" He told me, "Oh no no no, I'm just working, doing my job." You know? How he's fixing his stuff."

He start fixing everything. But it's a lie, he just wanna see what the boys gonna take something in their pocket."

Many participants would also characterize the media representation of crime in the neighbourhood as purposefully overblown. Hani, when asked if she thought the media representation of crime in the neighbourhood was exaggerated, answered:

"Definitely. It's a propaganda. Cause I feel like they targeting a community. And Heatherington, most of the people who lives, I would say that 70% is Somalis. And I'm not saying that, you know, there's a gang related, and gang, it could be any different nationality. Could be anyone, but yes, Ledbury and Heatherington, most of the communities were Somalis. And it was, yes, it was a target. So yeah, like right away, when you tell them, 'Oh I live Heatherington,' they look at you and say, 'Wow, what are you doing there?' Yeah, so...you feel less, but you know what? I'm proud of myself that I'm living there and I'm managing my life. The stigma is still there, but you know, who cares? (laughs). You live your life."

Hani has a young son who will soon be entering his teenage years. Ideally, Hani would like to move out of the neighbourhood before he is a teenager, as she worries that he will not be able stay out of trouble. This worry is reiterated by many other participants who have young sons, including Samira, Nour, and Faiza. Part of this worry is racially motivated; all of these women and their sons are Black. The participants believe that as Black residents, they are subject to different rules compared to White residents. Hani has a neighbour who she claims sells drugs. She and her other neighbours have complained to OCH multiple times to no avail. She believes that, *"they're not doing anything because she's white. If she was a different race, she would have been out of here, a long time ago. To be honest with you."* The participants recognize that policing is often discriminatory, and they worry about their sons being criminalized for existing in neighbourhood commons. They fear that for their sons, there are many neighbourhood spaces that are inaccessible, not due to physical ability, but due to social inequality.

5.4.3 Complicated Sense of Belonging

Ultimately, crime and criminalization in Ledbury-Heron Gate serve to further enclose the neighbourhood common spaces. The omnipresent media coverage of crime in the neighbourhood promote fear of participating in the neighbourhood commons and reinforces the logics of enclosure. Sakina identifies hearing about shootings in the media and seeing police cars around as a source of anxiety and fear. Jarome and Abdul, despite never witnessing instances of crime, speak seriously and fearfully about the teenagers in the neighbourhood, complaining about teenagers who utilize the basement garage in the buildings to hang out away from the cold. Abdul describes sense of belonging as *“when you feel comfortable, you feel safe, you feel calm. In this neighbourhood, the police comes and goes every few hours. There’s always police, there’s always issues, so we’re not comfortable. How can we feel sense of belonging in a place where always there’s the police sirens on all the time?”* It is not necessarily the acts of violence that creates the perception of fear, but also the constant coverage, discussion, and representation of violence. This fear leads some residents of the neighbourhood to advocate for further enclosure of neighbourhood commons in the hopes that ‘troublemakers’ will be excluded.

There is also recognition that the criminalization of racialized, especially Black, youth is a problem in the neighbourhood. The accounts of Adel, Nour, and Hani establish that discriminatory policing and surveillance are seen as barriers to accessing neighbourhood commons for Black youth. Adel has an extremely pessimistic view of the police and institutions’ abilities to do right by this marginalized and stigmatized community. As discussed in Chapter 4, media coverage of the neighbourhood often centres on the problem of gang violence, to which Adel asks, *“what gang? I’ve lived in that neighbourhood for 10+ years, I’ve never seen a gang?”* She once confronted a police officer about the issue, asking him, *“Sir, like you guys keep claiming this like Cedarwood*

gang Cripes and these Ledbury-Banff Cripes and all this stuff. But there is no gangs, we live in this neighbourhood, we grow up here. The people that you are labelling this are people that we go to school with. They're people that we know. They're people who are like family friends or whatever the case may be. And they're not in no gang." He then answered, "The definition -- how we define gang is a group of people who do organized crime (...) If you and your friend do a crime together, and say, you guys live in Heron, you guys would fall under the classification of a gang." The way he answered her question greatly troubled her, leaving her only with further questions, such as "just because I live in an area and I happen to like sell drugs or something and then I live in that same area and then I happen to like steal cars or whatever, right? And we happen to know each other, we're just gangs?" His answer made her feel as if "they shaped their own definition to make people seem worse than they actually are." In reality, Adel argues, these "gang members" are not monsters,

"[They're] people who did bad things because they couldn't get jobs or they couldn't -- like nobody would hire them or nobody would give them an opportunity and they want some kind of income. At the end of the day, they're a human being, they can't live off their mom's social assistance forever. And if they're not getting hired by anybody because of the colour of your skin or the language that they speak, they end up doing negative things to get means of living, right? And then, it just proves more to these people who have this perspective of like 'oh gangs', that these people are negative people. But it's just like, had they been given the opportunity as other people, had they been -- I guarantee you 90% of those people would not do the things that they do."

Yet, both Adel and Hani also advocate for more policing and surveillance in Ledbury-Heron Gate. This cognitive dissonance comes from the co-existing truths of crime and criminalization in the neighbourhood. Both problems need to be addressed, but what is seen as the solution to crime (policing), only leads to the escalation of the other. Some participants, such as Nour, argue that the solution to both of these problems lies in social support such as free youth programming. This idea is also supported by researchers and activists, who question also the effect of policing on reducing crime (e.g. Moody, Childs, & Sepples, 2003; Stephens, 2010; Purnell & Stahly-Butts, 2019;

Bergen & Geary, 2019). Research has shown that immigrant youth often face numerous personal and interpersonal difficulties and need “family-based, school-based and community-based programs” to support them through challenges without resorting to violence (Ngo, Calhoun, Worthington, Pynch, & Este, 2015, p. 78). Currently in Ledbury-Heron Gate, free youth programming remains rare and limited. Youth in the neighbourhood often are unable to access paid programming, leaving them with few spaces to occupy. The issues of crime and criminalization only serves to further enclose the neighbourhood commons and cultivate an environment of fear and discomfort. In order to reproduce the neighbourhood commons, both the issues of crime and criminalization need to be addressed in a way that centres accessibility for all residents.

5.5 Discussion

In many of these LHG stories, encounters have occurred in spaces that are enclosed and policed, spaces where the structural difference between people are not exposed, confronted, and equalized, but reinforced through power. These encounters do not encourage residents to live together in difference as equals, but rather foster suspicion, discomfort, and alienation. One of the stories recounted by participants is a story of loss of accessibility to their neighbourhood commons. Key publicly accessible and welcoming spaces, such as Sandalwood Park and the Heron Gate Mall, have been rendered inaccessible by the actions of both state and private actors. The enclosure of neighbourhood commons have formed “zones of exclusion,” and the inaccessibility of these common spaces creates a complex and contradictory sense of belonging where participants feel excluded from their own neighbourhood. In the course of this process, “low-income residents become alienated from their own community. It is the experience of internal displacement – the feeling of being out of place in one’s own neighbourhood” (Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council Action Committee, 2011

pg. 3). The internal displacement felt by the residents is especially prevalent in Nour's quote,

"Just that's it, yep, every time it's going up and up, like what is this, what happening here. Where is the low-income people here? Like where are they. They don't even exist? No more. Cause there's nothing for us. We just living here, as we breathing and going, yeah. Go to Food Basic, everything become expensive. You want to buy healthy stuff, it's very expensive. Yeah, it's not easy."

This feeling of inadequacy and marginalization is repeated in Adel's narratives, in her descriptions of school, of home, and of everyday life. She feels uncomfortable walking around the "Rich Houses," feeling almost as if they were taunting the low-income residents by their proximity. She feels as if "they," those who are in charge, want to split up the neighbourhood *"they didn't want one big neighbourhood, right? Cause then in would, in their belief system (...) like segregation is better, right? Breaking it up into little little little pieces kind of thing, little fragments kind of thing. Then you're minimizing and you're able to control the residents, right?"*

To local residents, these issues of inaccessibility exist because Ledbury-Heron Gate is a low-income neighbourhood with a large proportion of black and brown immigrants and refugees. Participants see the inaccessibility of many of the neighbourhood common spaces to be purposeful and targeted, facilitated by the fact that many of the neighbourhood residents do not have the financial power to influence a seemingly incorporeal "they" that participants often discussed. The ever present but incorporeal "they" haunts the narratives of the participants. "They" who do not want to see the neighbourhood thrive, who purposefully neglect and separate. The local residents feel neglected and disregarded by "them," as suggested in Nour's statement, *"just walking around like they're saying in Canada, no family left behind, no community left behind. But that not exist, we're all left behind."* "They" are seen as actors with authority, such as city councilors, the mayor, urban planners, developers, and other city staff. These

individuals and groups are seen to hold the power to determine the services and funding the neighbourhood receives. These actors are often seen as profit-oriented, in pursuit of financial gains that residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate cannot offer. To the participants, communities such as Orleans and Kanata are not treated the same because they have financial capital, and financial capital equals power and access.

5.6 Conclusion

Spaces of encounter, when accessible, are valued as common spaces where community can be formed. In Ledbury-Heron Gate, the neighbourhood commons that are the spaces of encounter have been enclosed from those who live in the area. The parks are often neglected, the Heron Gate Mall was torn down, and many programs are too expensive for the local residents to afford. The enclosure of neighbourhood commons only continues, as Heron Road Community Centre attempted to remove its last free program on October 25, 2019. The free two-hour youth basketball program that Adel described as a major hub in her youth was almost replaced by a paid program before intense online backlash forced the supervisor to retract the change. Moreover, through discrimination, surveillance, and criminalization, the neighbourhood commons are often inaccessible for racialized immigrant youth in this neighbourhood. In the enclosure of Ledbury-Heron Gate's commons spaces, the structural forces of privatization, socio-economic inequality, and discrimination compound, leaving low-income, racialized immigrant residents such as my participants to feel left behind and neglected. Ultimately, neighbourhood commons need to remain accessible to all local residents, and especially to low-income immigrant families in order to meet their needs, rather than prioritizing or privileging wealthier residents and outsiders who do not live in the community. These commons can then act as spaces of encounter where structural differences can be equalized and residents can live together in difference as equals.

Chapter 6 - Community and Solidarity in a Diverse Immigrant Neighbourhood

In the participants' descriptions, Ledbury-Heron Gate is imagined as a diverse, working class, immigrant neighbourhood where many residents actively include, trust, and support one another. Some participants and perhaps other residents recognize their mutual struggles against structures such as enclosure, privatization of urban space, and gentrification. In this chapter, I will examine how participants and other residents work together and organize in the face of neoliberal urbanism and revanchism and strive to create spaces of encounter. Nevertheless, these spaces of encounter and empowerment are often precarious and unsustainable, and residents are forced to shoulder the responsibility of supporting one another due to the many gaps in services. The participants are often aware that they are being left behind, and are constantly searching for ways to support themselves and one another. It is important to understand the spaces of encounter in Ledbury-Heron Gate through a lens of class inequality that aims to shed light on how the residents' agency is constrained by the pressures of structural forces such as neoliberal urbanism and revanchism.

In this chapter, I will examine the structural forces of neoliberal urbanism and revanchism, focusing on how they shape spaces of encounter in Ledbury-Heron Gate. In order to contextualize the participants' experiences, I first provide some theoretical background with a review of the literature on revanchism and neoliberal urbanism, processes that are currently transforming Canadian cities in general, including this neighbourhood. Then, I describe how local residents develop a sense of belonging that is complicated by structural changes that are transforming the neighbourhood and that are outside of their sphere of power and influence. My findings suggest that local residents recognize their shared differences and struggles, and they usually come together in mutual support and solidarity. The focus of the discussion is on how in spite

of their efforts, residents still find it difficult to overcome systematic exclusion and marginalization. I conclude by examining the outcomes of their organizing, showing how residents' lack of resources constrain their efforts despite their capabilities.

6.1 Neoliberal Urbanism and the Revanchist City

Ledbury-Heron Gate is undergoing significant changes that are part of broader struggles in the production of urban space and the generation of profit through strategies of neoliberal urbanism and revanchism. To understand the full context of the neighbourhood, attention must be paid to the structural forces that drive individual action, practices, and experiences in the neighbourhood. Geographers have examined the conditions of space production and governance, especially in cities. In this chapter, I turn to this literature to help me link the study of spaces of encounter with the conditions and contexts that produce these spaces. As explained in Chapter 2, research into spaces of encounter does not typically account for broader economic and political structures that produce these spaces. Yet, everyday encounters occur in spaces that are produced and governed by these structures. I found two articles (Wilton & Evans, 2015; Ince, 2015) that more explicitly situate spaces of encounter within the broader structures of normative behaviour and statist-capitalist territory respectively. Anthony Ince examines how statist-capitalist systems can undermine interpersonal encounters and how anarchist ideas can propel analysis of encounters that shifts focus onto "power asymmetries and inequalities of hierarchical institutions and economic relations" (2015, pg. 837). This way, Ince suggests that we can develop spaces of encounter that "prioritize collaborative self-mediation over coercive choreography" (2015, pg. 837). Robert Wilton and Joshua Evans examine encounters between social enterprise employees with mental health difficulties and customers, considering how mental health stigma coloured the interactions within the space of the social enterprise. The

expectation placed on the employees to perform normative behavior as workers results in limiting the social enterprises' capacity to enable positive encounters between them and the customers. It is thus important to examine the structural forces that shape spaces of encounters to gain a deeper understanding of motivation, meaning, and outcomes of encounters themselves.

6.1.1 Neoliberal Policies and Canadian Cities

In order to understand Canadian cities today it is necessary to take into account the broader political and economic conjuncture. Neoliberalism is a political economic ideology according to which the free market holds the power to self-regulate and balance itself for the betterment of society as a whole. Neoliberal policies aim to absolve states of their social responsibilities and offload social service provision onto private corporations and individual citizens (Hall & O'shea, 2013). As ideology, neoliberalism does not address inequalities; rather, it encourages individuals and communities to become self-sufficient subjects. In Canadian history, neoliberalism took hold under Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative federal government, which governed from 1984 to 1993 (Leone & Carroll, 2010; Zhu, 2016; Johnstone, Lee, & Connelly, 2017). Mike Harris, premier of Ontario elected in 1995, promoted his "Common Sense Revolution," which furthered the neoliberal framework began by the Progressive Conservative federal government, prioritizing the liberalization of markets through deregulation, privatization, and cutbacks (Keil, 2002). Neoliberal ideas prevailed in the 1990s, and competitive, market-driven and commodity based logic became "common sense" (Hall & O'shea, 2013). The "Common Sense Revolution" resulted in the downloading of provincial responsibilities, such as providing affordable housing, onto municipalities (Leone & Carrol, 2010; Zhu, 2016; Kalman-Lamb, 2017). Ultimately, municipalities do not have the resources to fulfill these downloaded responsibilities. As such, many

important services, community spaces, and programs are either discontinued and closed or privatized, leaving them inaccessible to many low-income individuals. The cuts to social services have had a significant impact on many vulnerable groups, including immigrants and newcomers whose settlement experiences often depend on the information and resources provided in order to become comfortable and feel a sense of belonging to Canada (Shields, Valenzuela, & Drolet, 2016; Veronis, 2013; Trudeau and Veronis, 2009; Richmond & Shields, 2005).

6.1.2 The Revanchist City

In the late 1980s – early 1990s, Neil Smith coined the notion of the ‘revanchist’ city to refer to a more aggressive, hostile, and targeted form of gentrification. The revanchist city is one where “public policy and private market are conspiring against minorities, working people, the poor and homeless people as never before” (Smith, 1996, pg. i). Revanchism has existed before the proliferation of neoliberalism, as the rich violently evicted and/or eradicated the poor and dispossessed from urban spaces as far back as late 1800’s France (Smith, 1996). Nevertheless, under the logics of neoliberalism, the revanchist city has new tools, such as speculative and financialized housing, private-public partnerships, to perpetuate the continued disenfranchisement of the urban poor. Neil Smith (1996) described the “archetypal neoliberal revanchism [as] a residue of sympathy activated by thinly disguised hatred and abhorrence” (pg. 221). The wealthy blame the urban dispossessed for not only their own struggles, but also broader difficulties such as violence and pollution, and so seek revenge. Smith (1996, pg. i) states that “in the emerging revanchist city, gentrification has become part of this policy of revenge.” The revanchist city is motivated by class conflict, where those with resources try to eradicate those without resources, so as to pretend they do not exist. In Chapter 5, I described the process of enclosure and how neighbourhood commons were enclosed

for the purposes of privatization (and commodification). Revanchist ideology is one of the drivers of enclosure, as the wealthy and powerful seek to reduce support for those most marginalized, while not providing any alternative means of survival or space to exist.

6.1.3 Neoliberalism and Revanchism in Ledbury-Heron Gate

As a low-income, immigrant neighbourhood where the majority of individuals are visible minorities, Ledbury-Heron Gate is especially vulnerable to the effects of neoliberal and revanchist policies. In Chapter 5, I described the enclosure of many neighbourhood commons in Ledbury-Heron Gate, which arguably was motivated by neoliberal and revanchist ideology promoting social service cuts and reduced support for “minorities, working people, the poor and homeless people” (Smith, 1996). The neighbourhood commons are enclosed due to a lack of funding from social service cuts. Neoliberal policies also contribute to the reduction and reconfiguration of local government, and the downloading of expensive responsibilities such as housing, social welfare, and transit onto the already reduced municipalities (Keil, 2002). As a result, many municipalities such as the City of Ottawa are unable to keep up with local demands, leaving them scrabbling to stretch the budget and cut ‘unnecessary’ expenses. What follows is a description of what the City of Ottawa has deemed ‘unnecessary’.

In my conversations with people who live in the neighbourhood, there were many discussions about how the neighbourhood has changed over the last 20 years. Residents brought up disappearing or reduced City operated and/or funded services such as Christmas dinners and drop-in basketball nights and the privatization of parking. In addition, another rumoured change in the neighbourhood is the closing of Ridgemont High School, where youths can find a sense of belonging and familiarity. Based on casual conversations with residents in Ledbury-Heron Gate, Ridgemont High School

was placed under review many years ago. The shuttering of Ridgemont would be in line with previous school closures in Ottawa, such as the closing of Rideau High School in 2016 (McIntosh, 2016). Rideau High School was located in east Ottawa – in the other neighbourhood our research team is studying for the BMRC project (Overbrook-Cummings) that has a reputation similar to Ledbury Heron-Gate. In the community town hall held on June 12, 2019, many participants discussed the importance of Rideau High School as a space of encounter and community building, especially for low-income immigrants in the area. Nevertheless, Rideau High School was closed partially because of its low academic ranking and reputation for violence, which is also part of the reason Ridgemont High School is under review. Unfortunately, the potential closing of Ridgemont High School will signify the removal of a valued resource, especially for local youth who will have to travel outside Ledbury-Heron Gate to attend public high school.

As for the revanchist targeting and blaming of the poor and dispossessed for personal and societal troubles, the previously presented social media commentary in Chapter 4 provides an unfiltered representation. Comments about Ledbury-Heron Gate on the subreddit r/Ottawa showed how many Ottawa locals believed that crime in the neighbourhood was solely the shortcoming of the racialized and marginalized low-income immigrants. The reputation of Ledbury-Heron Gate as crime troubled has promoted gentrification and a revanchist “redevelopment” of the neighbourhood. Moreover, the mainstream media article by the editorial team of the *Ottawa Citizen* in *The Province* (2018), argues that mass eviction and replacement of Timbercreek tenants was justified not only because it will ‘clean up’ the neighbourhood and reduce crime, but also because it is economically rational. This discourse on the gentrification of Ledbury-Heron Gate show that the motivation behind the mass evictions was primarily neoliberal revanchism, showing “a residue of sympathy activated by thinly disguised

hatred and abhorrence” (Smith, 1996, pg. 221). Low-income, racialized, vulnerable communities are those targeted by revanchism in ways that decimate reliance upon state funded services as well as publicly owned and accessible spaces. Arguably, Timbercreek uses the tools of neoliberal revanchism to ‘reclaim’ Heron Gate and evict poor tenants. Yet, the qualities that leave Ledbury-Heron Gate vulnerable to neoliberalism and revanchism also create a strong sense of belonging for participants and other local residents. In the following sections, I discuss how residents have strived to belong together in difference as equals in Ledbury-Heron Gate in spite of many structural obstacles.

6.2. Belonging Together in Difference

Many scholars have characterized the current age of migration as creating spaces of super-diversity (e.g., Vertovec, 2007; Guo, 2010; Leone, 2012; Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011). They define superdiversity as the unprecedented commonality and complexity of migration that leads neighbours to frequently possess different and complicated identities given their complex immigration pathways and variety of origin countries (Vertovec, 2007, Hüwelmeier, 2011; Baycan & Nijkamp, 2012). Not only is there superdiversity, there is also *hyperdiversity*, where urban populations are increasingly different in their lifestyles, with socio-economic, cultural, and immigration differences (Tasan-Kok, van Kempen, Raco, & Bolt, 2013; Peterson, 2017). Ledbury-Heron Gate is a neighbourhood with a high percentage of immigrants from a variety of origin countries. This is reflected in the demographics of our participants, and also in the realities of everyday life in the neighbourhood. Walking into the spaces of the neighbourhood, immediately noticeable is the diverse composition of the population compared to other parts of Ottawa. As described in Chapter 3, 47.2% of residents in Ledbury-Heron Gate are immigrants, and 63.6% are visible minorities, much higher

than the average share of 23.6% immigrants and 26.3% visible minorities in Ottawa (Statistics Canada, 2016). Among the visible minorities in Ledbury-Heron Gate, 40.8% identify as Black and 23% identify as Arab (Statistics Canada, 2016). Moreover 44.8% of Ledbury-Heron Gate residents have a non-official language as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2016). If any neighbourhood is to be classified as superdiverse and hyperdiverse in all its traits, it is Ledbury-Heron Gate, where if belonging is to be formed, it has to be formed together in difference.

In the age of superdiversity and hyperdiversity, it is urgently important to understand belonging in difference. How do we live among difference? Can we belong with people who are not like us? Putnam's (2000; 2007) theory of social capital and cohesion argues otherwise. According to him, diversity and social mixing weaken social cohesion, causing the decline of social and civic life (2007). Putnam's theory has since then been heavily criticized (Navarro, 2002; Hall, 2007; Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Stuart Hall condemns social cohesion as just "a polite form of assimilation of 'the other'" (2007, pg. 152). Instead, he believes that "it's possible to have a politics which reaches for equality between people but which does so by recognizing their differences" (Hall, 2009, pg. 13). Scholars who study superdiversity call for a methodological reassessment of popular rhetoric such as social cohesion and cultural integration (Leone, 2012; Colic-Peisker & Farquharson, 2011; Gou, 2010; Vertovec, 2017). They argue that the emergence of superdiversity and/or hyperdiversity reconfigures social forms, requiring a focus beyond ethnicity to bring into light new and other complexities (Dahinden, 2009; Vertovec, 2017).

More recent research endeavours to shed light on the possibility of belonging in difference. Wessendorf's (2016) study on the settlement of newcomers in a superdiverse London neighbourhood illustrates how the commonality of difference allows newcomers to be recognized but not excluded. The newcomers are able to interact with

long-term residents in a “microspace of conviviality,” where encounters can go beyond the temporary and fleeting to build lasting relationships in recognition of difference (2016, p. 456). Wise and Nobel (2016) eschew the term conviviality for the original Spanish term, *convivencia*, which they describe as more active and less jovial. To Wise and Nobel, *convivencia* describes a shared life and emphasizes the practice of belonging together, bringing into light the effort, negotiation, friction, and conflict that exists when creating belonging. When achieved, *convivencia* is the result of hard labour, not passive, casual existence.

This notion of belonging as labour is also described by other scholars. Neal and Vincent (2013) state that avoiding withdrawal from difference needs competence, dedication, and skill. Wise calls individuals who possess these skills to be “transversal enablers” (2009, pg. 24), because they are able to translate differences and knowledges. They are at once exceedingly aware of their own position and perspectives while also able to place themselves in the position and perspective of others. This is an emotional labour that very few can perform; however, when enacted, it can bring about the possibility of belonging in difference. Sparks describes this work as not to “gently invite their interlocutors to a pleasant, turn-taking conversation; rather, coerce and compel their quarreling partners to acknowledge them as equals” (2016, pg. 425). The end result of this belonging together in difference is what Young described as “social differentiation without exclusion,” where groups “overlap and intermingle without becoming homogenous” (1990, pg. 239).

6.2.1 Shared Experiences

In Ledbury-Heron Gate, many participants describe a sense of belonging and comfort. This sense of belonging is created partly due to family and/or ethnic ties. There are large proportions of Somali, Nepali-Bhutanese, and Syrian immigrants in the neighbourhood,

as well as smaller proportions of immigrants from other African and Arab-speaking countries. Kinley, who is very active in the Nepali-Bhutanese refugee community, says that being in a setting where there is familiarity and shared history played a vital role in making him feel more comfortable in the neighbourhood.

“[Y]ou already [know] what the other family’s cooking, you know? So that way, you don’t feel different because you may have similar kind of smell from your house, you know? That flavour. That way you feel like okay, a lot of people who relates to my culture, my food, lives here. If you have any problem, you can just go to another house. You feel safe within the community, and I think that also created a really strong bond with a lot of individuals in the community, and living together in the same space plays a vital role I think. (...) and connection to the community and other families.”

Adel has a large family in Ledbury-Heron Gate and she states that for her, having family close by has been really helpful,

“And we’re lucky because where we live -- like we live in one three storey-building, and then, across the street, which is another three storey-building, my brother lives there, right? And his wife, and then my cousins live there, so it’s like we still have a little bit of like that family connection there, so...and the proximity is really good. I’m not gonna lie to you, yeah.”

She talks about how having family close by meant that there was a built-in community for her in Heron Gate. Her cousins would frequently visit her home and vice-versa.

Hani also states that she is friends with a few Somali people who live in the neighbourhood, one of whom stopped by during our interview. Another Somali neighbour later stopped by as well to give Hani her misplaced mail. Hani mentions that another Somali woman she knows in the neighbourhood treats her like a daughter and runs a home daycare where Hani sends her two children. These close community connections allow Hani to feel recognized and supported in the neighbourhood. In a space like Ledbury-Heron Gate, residents do not have to be identified as the Somali woman, or the Nepali-Bhutanese man. Rather, they are individualized and recognized

for who they are in all their complexities. As Adel states when asked how she would describe sense of belonging,

“A place where you feel welcomed. A place where you don’t -- you’re identified as who you are as an individual as opposed to being like grouped together with one label, right? Like Muslim, minority, black, woman. Like these little tags, I felt like when you go into a space like Heron, I was Adel Hussein, the individual. I wasn’t another Somali girl. I wasn’t another minority, I wasn’t another black person, I wasn’t another Muslim, you know? I was who I was, right? So sense of belonging to me is to be in a place where you feel welcomed, you’re an individual, and you connect with other people. It’s -- nobody’s segregated.”

The participants’ sense of belonging through shared identity is not solely based on shared ethnicity, but a common difference. As explained, Ledbury-Heron Gate is home to many different ethnic groups. The research participants reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood, insofar as they come from a variety of different countries of origin and entered Canada under various immigration categories; nonetheless, their experiences and sense of belonging are similar and strong. For many participants, belonging to the neighbourhood has been partially achieved based on the fact that it is an “immigrant neighbourhood.” By immigrant neighbourhood, I mean a neighbourhood where it is more likely than not to run into other racialized immigrants in casual, everyday encounters, and where multiple languages can be heard daily. In an immigrant neighbourhood, there is seldom a time when one is the only racialized immigrant among white and/or Canadian-born individuals. Many participants express that Ledbury-Heron Gate is one neighbourhood where their differences are not differences, but similarities. The participants emphasized how living in an immigrant neighbourhood helped them feel a stronger sense of belonging. This mutual difference and shared experience of coming to Canada was sufficient for many participants to help them develop a strong sense of belonging. What has been built in Ledbury-Heron Gate

is a case of belonging together in difference, where the differences between individuals are acknowledged but not used as a marker for exclusion.

Kinley – who lives among a large ethnic community of Nepali-Bhutanese refugees in the neighbourhood – says that the diversity of the neighbourhood is one of the reasons he quickly and easily became comfortable in Canada.

“Having other families with same experiences, living in the community, it was good. Like, I used to go every family house, you know, if I’m free, and get to know each other. And we felt like all the people who came from refugee camps as a family. Cause we all have same experiences (...) I used to feel sense of belonging there, I belong in this community, you know? And I would see people who can relate to my experience. A lot of people of colour, and a lot of immigrants and low-income families used to live there and that way I didn’t feel I’m different than other. So, it was like, everybody same, I’m the same. (...) Living in this community helped me to integrate, quickly I would say.”

Leila, who is from Iran, does not have access to a large Iranian community around her. In fact, she finds it difficult to communicate with the many Arabic-speaking residents in the neighbourhood because she speaks Persian. Yet, she feels a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood because the people around her are also immigrants. In a space where everyone is different, no one then is different. Leila explains,

“Actually, I like this neighbourhood because you know, I think most of them are immigrant and somehow we have common feeling about different situation (...) Most of them are like us, they are not very strange for me, (...) because I feel this area it’s very common because most of them are immigrant and I feel we have something in common, something shared. Maybe I don’t talk with them, but I feel we have something in common”

Hani also explains that the shared experience of immigrating, especially as refugees fleeing conflicts, creates a recognition and bond in the community where residents encourage one another to make it through the days.

[M]ost of this area, who lives is immigrant (...), whether you come from East Africa or West Africa or anywhere in Africa and Middle East. (...) I understand someone who

immigrated here, (...) I could feel the other immigrant -- other families who's struggling, their pain (...) it's different cause if you're a Canadian and you don't -- you never go through the hard time like if you coming from countries who already had a war and all that, it will affect you. You don't see yourself that like 100%. You kind of like, you have to work hard, 100%, than other Canadian who were born here. You have to start your life from scratch. So it's different. So we encourage each other. And even the days that you're down, you have elderly neighbours say that, "You're doing good job! You know what? Try, be patient, try, you will get up, don't give up." So yeah, it's different when you have that, someone who like encouraging you. (...) So we all understand the struggle that we went through.

Other participants (Adel, Hani, Nadia, Nour, Sakina, and Jarome) express similar appreciation for the diversity of the neighbourhood. Sakina states that *"Belonging to neighbourhood? Yeah, we love it, yeah, we belong to (...) because different cultures here. Yeah. Everybody get along together very good, very well with each other. Know everybody. Just some people, just came new, we don't know them, otherwise you know all the neighbours."* In a space where everyone is different from the Canadian 'norm', no one is identified as an outsider. When everyone is speaking a different language, nobody is bothered that no one is speaking English, or speaks with an accent. There is no need to fit into a dominant culture; instead there is a recognition that everyone has come to Canada to be Canadian. The fact that the neighbourhood residents are Canadian is taken for granted.

These spaces of difference have the potential to be spaces of empowerment.

Unfortunately, these spaces also tend to be stigmatized and marginalized, targets of neoliberal urbanism and revanchist forces. What is happening here resembles the case of Regent Park in Toronto to the extent that both neighbourhoods are diverse, low-income neighbourhoods that were subject to eviction, demolition, and redevelopment rationalized by revanchism. Regent Park is a social housing project in Toronto where many residents found valuable community support that helped them persevere despite challenges (August, 2014). According to August (2014), the tenants have strong social networks, value the local amenities, and possess a strong sense of belonging. These

qualities helped Regent Park residents combat structural problems of racism, criminalization, and poverty. Similarly, the participants described how residents of LHG feel a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood that is built from the recognition of difference. They support and trust one another, and their shared experiences and struggles reassure them that they are not alone, which I will further discuss later in the chapter. Nevertheless, Regent Park is also stigmatized for being an area of concentrated poverty, violence, and disorder (August, 2014). In 2002, the City of Toronto began a decade-long redevelopment of Regent Park into a mixed use, mixed income, New Urbanism style neighbourhood (James, 2010). James (2010) argues that this redevelopment was motivated by a desire for moral regulation of the urban poor and a belief that this moral regulation can be provided by private-public housing redevelopment. The poor housing conditions were used as one of the justifications for the redevelopment, overlooking the historical systematic neglect of dwellings in Regent Park. In the same way, Timbercreek has also neglected the dwellings in LHG and used the poor housing conditions to justify the current evictions and redevelopment. Unfortunately, these low-income, immigrant neighbourhoods where residents can build a sense of belonging in difference are often not valued for their merits and are subject to neglect and replacement.

6.2.2 Interactions with White “Canadians”

The participants and other residents of the neighbourhood do not want these spaces of encounter, difference and empowerment to be eradicated. They find comfort and a sense of belonging in these spaces, given that many participants have had negative experiences with white “Canadians,” leaving them wary of moving to a neighbourhood where there may be less difference and diversity. Adel says that, *“If I was speaking to other ethnic groups, I would probably refer to myself as Somali. If I’m speaking with Caucasian*

Canadians I would probably refer to myself as Somali Canadian.” This quote illustrates the need to reiterate and reassure white Canadians that “yes, I am Canadian too,” a need that does not exist when communicating with other ethnic groups because there is an understanding that everyone is Canadian here.

Kinley says that he would not want to move to a neighbourhood in the eastern or western parts of Ottawa, where he would be “surrounded by white white white families.” He gives an example of how he imagines life outside of Ledbury-Heron Gate:

“[F]or example, if I had lived in Orleans or Kanata, and I would go to school, high school, mostly those schools other than this community tend to have less immigrant students. Or less immigrant families. So being in a new country, having culture shock and you’re now living where you feel different. You don’t have people who looks like you around you. That also create a huge impact, right? And I went to school where everybody’s immigrant. So if I went to school where I was the only one, then I would -- that would create more problems integration. Living here, certainly, has helped me, in lot of ways. And lot of things that I did was in my community, through my community, and I can’t imagine somebody who’s living in other community and feeling different, you know? So, that could have changed a lot if I had done that, yeah.”

This life that Kinley describes is lonelier, plagued by struggles to belong and feel at home. The additional stress of being one of the only outsiders to an area would have not only hindered Kinley’s ability to feel a sense of belonging to Canada, but also could have caused difficulties in other areas of his life, such as academic success. Although there are immigrant populations that live in these neighbourhoods, they symbolize the white Canadian suburban dream to local residents in Ledbury-Heron Gate. A large number of Chinese-Canadian economic immigrants live in Kanata (Statistics Canada, 2016). Yet, the neighbourhood itself is a traditional middle class Canadian suburb, with residents owning single-detached houses. Participants do not view these neighbourhoods as being as diverse as LHG; rather, they see neighbourhoods such as Kanata, Orleans and Barrhaven as white neighbourhoods where they do not belong.

More overt instances of discrimination also reinforce the idea that for immigrant residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate, moving to a neighbourhood with a smaller share of immigrants would lead to more hostility and challenges to belong. Dawoud recalled two instances of discrimination in which the perceived offense was wearing a hijab, one in which his daughter was shoved by a neighbour when she was delivering papers and another when his wife had the door slammed in her face and told to *“Go back to your country.”* His wife then proceeded to talk to the woman who later said that, *“Oh, I’m sorry, forgive me. I thought you Somalian.”* For which Dawoud has the response, *“What do you mean you thought--? Cause she wear a hijab you thought you Somali? Even though Somalia -- why you slam the door?”*

In a less direct manner, Nadia, a participant who runs her own catering business, is also wary of venturing to areas perceived as comprising of a majority of white individuals. Nadia frequently attends craft fairs to sell her jams, spices, and other offerings. One recent craft fair she attended was in Carleton Place, a small town just outside of Ottawa. Her experience of the craft fair was very negative, and she explained by saying,

“People looking at me as different than people here. Cause you know that Carleton Place is all -- like it’s a white, you know, area. Yeah? So here, it’s different. People are used to you, used to me, used to the hijab, used to people, you know? But there, they were surprised to see me, you know, hijab (...) I find the atmosphere wasn’t really comfortable. Yesterday I wasn’t comfortable... it was different (...) the area is really white. I found like people couldn’t like (...) when you talk to people, people will talk to you, or open up conversation, you know? Yesterday, it wasn’t like that. At all. (...) Even when they pass your table, they just like, even they don’t look at your stuff. Yeah, some of them were like that.”

I also noticed a difference in interactions between racialized immigrants and white Canadians in casual encounters within the neighbourhood. One white senior Canadian who often attended events in the neighbourhood, Alex, would frequently make provocative comments about cultural differences and immigration while interacting

with the Somali, Arab, and Muslim women. His comments were inflammatory and purposefully rude, but when confronted, he would always claim that he did not mean any offense but was just stating facts. His remarks angered many of the women; nevertheless, they refrained from further discussions with him, preferring to let him chatter to himself as they tried to ignore his comments. Nevertheless, the women would often look at one another, roll their eyes, and question why he came to hang out with people he appeared to dislike. Their recognition and understanding of one another allowed them to brush off Alex's comments as irrelevant, because everyone else in the neighbourhood was on their side. When this sort of behavior takes place within a space where racialized immigrants are the majority and can find support and solidarity, Alex's remarks are uncomfortable but not necessarily harmful. In a different space, where there is not the recognition, support, and solidarity, the potential for harm is much greater.

6.3 Support and Solidarity

In the previous section, I discussed instances whereby spaces of encounter in Ledbury-Heron Gate are understood as spaces of coming together in difference. As stated in Chapter 2, it is rare for studies on spaces of encounter to investigate the support and solidarity that forms from mutual struggle and shared experiences among racialized, working class immigrant communities. In the following section, I focus on advancing understanding of how spaces of encounter can be spaces of trust, mutual support, and empowerment, especially in the face of broader structural forces such as neoliberal urbanism and revanchism. I describe the ways that deep, banal, everyday encounters foster inclusion, trust, and mutual support that builds more active community participation and solidarity. Furthermore, I analyze how these encounters and spaces are situated in a context of neoliberalism and revanchism. The participants' efforts in

building these spaces of empowerment must be understood in relation to the struggles they face due to evictions, privatization, and urban development for profit, and their continued and exhaustive efforts cannot be valorized without critic of their necessity.

6.3.1 Inclusivity and Trust

Inclusion and trust are the basis from which stronger and more stable forms of social connection can be created. Inclusive spaces are where community bonds can form and are the basis for building support and solidarity among residents (Fincher et al., 2019). One such space is the Banff Community House, especially on Thursday evenings. Every Thursday, the Banff Community House organizes, funds, and hosts a Dinner and Chat that many residents of the OCH townhouses attend. These events are for OCH tenants in the neighbourhood and they are widely known in the area through word of mouth. Neighbours tell one another and new tenants about the events and the consistency of the Dinner and Chats fosters opportunity for community building. Sakina describes the dinners as a space that is very fun and friendly, where she and her neighbours *“go and then became friends, all of us. Yeah, no worry, nice, friendly neighbourhood. The people is good. All we know each other.”* Nacira, who also goes to the Thursday Dinner and Chats, states that after her neighbour brought her to the event, she kept going there for the past 4 years because *“Alls women come and talking with Gwendy. Sometimes Bingo, and the Bingo good. Talking, laughing, yeah.”*

Kinley compares the experiences in Ledbury-Heron Gate to his experiences in a Nepali refugee camp. In the 1990s, persecution of ethnically Nepali individuals in Bhutan led many Nepali people to flee the country, only to be relegated to refugee camps in Nepal. Kinley’s parents and older siblings were one such family. Kinley was born and raised in a refugee camp for 16 years. In the following quote, Kinley described how the closeness

and sense of community he feels in Ledbury-Heron Gate is reminiscent of how he felt in the refugee camp:

“Cause, yeah, it’s kind of similar to my refugee camp (...) you don’t feel like, ‘Oh I have to go now.’ It’s similar here, I can go other houses, because everybody is living together (...) there is a sense of belonging that I may not feel in other community that I feel here. Same like living in refugee camp. People asking me, ‘Oh you live in refugee camp?’ And I say, ‘Yeah.’ They start feeling pity, ‘Ahh, refugee camps.’ And the types of questions they ask are different, but they will not understand that we’re living in a refugee camp, the connection, the feelings, the joy that we have.”

Many participants feel accepted and a sense of belonging in Ledbury-Heron Gate, seeing it as a place where they can be themselves and where they and their families do not feel unwanted.

Similarly, Nour emphasizes the trust that exists in the neighbourhood, built from the inclusivity and acceptance that is present in everyday casual encounters,

“That’s the most important thing we know. So we all depend on each other. Like before calling the police, we call each other first. Before calling someone...because we don’t know what they’re gonna do to us because we don’t trust them. Yeah, so we trust each other. Like I can call her, she can call me, I could call you. And then we discuss. Like, something happens, we call, and you know, maybe she can get ya, I can get ya”

Samira explains that the local residents trust one another to take care of each other’s children when necessary:

“[W]e’ve known each other for a long time, you know? And the thing is we’re neighbours. We’re basically just separated by like 2 doors. Yeah, so you know, ‘Can you pick up the kids for me? Can you do this for me?’ That’s what I’m saying, sense of community. There’s nothing important like having a sense of community, you know? It reminds me of like -- that’s why I said, that’s a lot of people love this area because they know anything can happen. You know, what they say, it takes a village to raise a kid, right? So like neighbours trust each other and everything. Like if I see something happening to a kid that I know, right? I’ll help the kid, you know, or something.”

Faiza corroborates this mutual trust:

“Yeah, sometime, I busy at home, my kids ask me, ‘Mommy, let’s go, gonna play at park!’ I say, ‘Oh, no, I’m busy now. I tell you’ -- I call my friend Nour, I say, ‘You can come take my kids to park?’ She says ‘Okay.’ She come, she take the park, she take the kids play the park.”

The sense of belonging that is formed among the residents of the neighbourhood is not only based on banal everyday encounters with strangers, but built from mutual trust and comfort that forms sustained, deep connections. Many participants contrasted the inclusive atmosphere within this neighbourhood with the isolation they experienced in their previous neighbourhoods. Samira, for one, did not like her previous neighbourhood at all, seeing it as a stressful environment. Many people around the neighbourhood had problems with children playing and would approach her to tell her to keep her children quiet. Similarly, when Faiza lived in an OCH apartment building in Caldwell, she states, *“I don’t know where the community. I don’t know the neighbour too, I don’t know. Just I go to school, I come back home. Go to school, I come back home, I went shopping, I come back home. Be like this.”* However, here in Heatherington, Faiza says that, *“The neighbourhood is good. Yeah, I like the area because it’s safe for kids to grow there, in this area. Yeah, I like it. I feel comfortable in this area. I’m very very happy (...) I like this area. When I move here, I feel very very happy. Because my kid is happy, I’m happy.”*

Both inclusion and trust are vital for developing spaces of encounter that are also empowering, spaces where mutual support and solidarity can develop. In Ledbury-Heron Gate, inclusion and trust are fostered by shared experiences of trauma, struggle, and need. As in the refugee camp Kinley described, there is a strong sense of belonging; however, this sense of belonging is built from a shared struggle. Kinley recognizes both where the sense of belonging comes from and also the ineffectiveness of strong sense of belonging in the face of more powerful negative forces. He states that,

“Yeah, refugee camp living is disaster. It’s not good, (...) hope nobody live in refugee camp, but (...) the real experience of me living in refugee camp. How I felt belonging. (...) So I still miss refugee camp, but do I want to go back live there? Absolutely not, you know? So it’s same like that.”

Despite his strong sense of belonging in Ledbury-Heron Gate, his experiences with the mass evictions, the stigmatization, and the neglect makes it so he wishes to move out of the neighbourhood. Yet, many residents cannot move out of the neighbourhood, including Kinley; therefore, they strive to turn the inclusion and trust in the neighbourhood into mutual support and solidarity.

6.3.2 Mutual Support

In Ledbury-Heron Gate, a network of mutual support has developed that has become a vital resource for the participants as well as other local residents. A common theme throughout the interviews was the idea that in Ledbury-Heron Gate, people helped one another. The mutual support that the participants both offer and receive from other local residents is a key component of why they feel like they belong in this neighbourhood. Hani appreciates her neighbours’ support, especially in areas related to childcare; she explains that when her daughter was sick, she trusts the other parents to watch over her son for her so that she can care for her daughter at home.

“And even the days that my daughter is sick, I could ask them, “Hey, I won’t be here, can you watch my son to take the bus?” And they would do that (...) I have a couple of them, their phone number and say, ‘Hey, I’m coming but I’m gonna send him, just keep eye on him’. They will do that. I don’t have to worry about him, you know, maybe he will get kidnapped, or you know. He has that supervision, someone’s looking after him. So it’s a close-knit community

Participants also share food as a form of support. Nour explains that the community often comes together to share food and eat together.

“We share the food, whatever I have, it’s have it for everybody (...) I make something, we don’t have it, you know the neighbour, she don’t have anything? So we just surprise here, you know? She make something, I make something, we just come knock the door, say, ‘Oh, we come to eat together.’ (...) What we have, we provide to eat together. She make the tea, I make the bread, and this one, Samira make the salad. She makes fries, you know? It’s a big meal. We all eat together. You know sometimes I have fries, and I don’t have stuff to cook, maybe she have chicken. Well she’s gonna make the chicken. And sometime maybe okay, I don’t have salt. I go knock my neighbour and ask for salt. And then have eggs, I gonna get one eggs from here. I got onions from there. You know sometimes, we just shop around in our neighbourhood (...) us we feel like we’re in back home. Yeah, because we see each other, we’re all immigrants.”

This experience of sharing food when there is little food to go around was also discussed by Kinley and Nadia. When neighbours undergo similar challenges and struggles, they recognize that they need to help each other to live through everyday struggles. For residents, this mutual support is necessary to survive, and in Ledbury-Heron Gate, mutual support is provided not only in cases of childcare and food sharing, but also in the form of legal support, everyday assistance such as transportation, household maintenance, etc. Nour especially is often out in the neighbourhood, trying to help out as much as she can:

“I’m outreach worker everyday. I’m around the neighbourhood. You see, I go, nobody pay me, I do my own. I go when they have appointment. I look for the family doctor for them. I research for the kid doctors. They need counselling, they’re down, I always look around and see where’s the free counselling. Where’s the walk-in clinic. I always do that. Sometimes I call 211 to ask the places. I don’t ask for nothing (...) I get people calling me, so my phone’s become like I call it my office. I used to be at the summer here sitting there (...) See I have circle of people come, everyone have to talk. So I do whatever I want, I talk to them, I help them right where they need help. Sometime I used to call Ottawa U. They used to have a clinic there, and I used to call there and they have a free clinic to go the vaccine for the kids. They have a doctor to working, and they have legal aid there, like lawyers to come and go talk to them, the students, yes, it’s really good (...) For me, the people describe me, they call me the mayor of the neighbourhood. I told them, ‘No, I’m the poor mayor here,’ (...) I don’t get pay, but I get paid by love.”

In my time around the neighbourhood, I witnessed her driving people to pick up groceries, taking youths to play basketball, calling the ambulance for a teenager who broke his leg (and then calling his mother), buying dish soap for the community centre, and organizing events and carnivals for the neighbourhood. Whenever there is an event happening, I frequently hear the question, "Where is Nour?" Through the efforts of Nour and others like her, there is support in Ledbury-Heron Gate for newcomers who need more help than what the current services and programs currently offer. Mutual support contributes to making the participants feel less isolated and alone in facing their daily struggles, by strengthening their local social networks and their sense of belonging.

Dawoud runs a mosque in the neighbourhood that tries to provide a space for youth to gather and hang out. He believes that it should be the responsibility of the City to provide social support and programming for local youth, stating that "*the City, they have to do something.*" Nevertheless, since as Dawoud says, "*the City is doing nothing,*" he views it as his responsibility and role to encourage neighbourhood youth to stay away from crime and offer them spaces and opportunities to do so. He explains:

"We gather youth every Saturday, boys, youth, different ages. From 7 in the evening until midnight. And the girls, they're -- they gather them here Friday. And every Sunday we have scouts. Canadian scouts? Boys and Girls, all ages. So the reason I take this picture. This is the place where we gather all these youth. And give them lectures about how to become -- how to be a good citizen. And study, go to school, respect others, family, elderly. Respect their mother actually, obey the laws. So we talk about too many different subjects. And we also talk about -- a little bit, you know, our Islamic stuff, you know, with the prophet and his family and God et cetera. So, it's mixture. And the reason I did this years back now because I see too much crime in the South. I decide to do this. I establish Canadian Middle Youth organization. Before I started this mosque. And then that was the idea, that -- to gather youth and keep them away from the street."

Oftentimes, participants' efforts to fill in the needed service and support gaps such as social and civic training and educating youth, translate into community organizing. The

lack of funding for programming in Ledbury-Heron Gate drives some participants to take on the responsibility of organizing their neighbourhood and to provide and advocate for their needs on their own time and money. Although these efforts serve to fill some of the gaps, the commitment needed in terms of time and capital to continue these endeavours means that they are often not sustainable without great loss to the individual who organizes. In the following section I describe both the participants' organization of local events/programs as well as the obstacles that they face in doing so.

6.3.3 Community Organizing

Some participants and local community leaders have tried to help the residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate advocate for and provide services and programs to one another. They have cleaned up the parks themselves, organized events, and created space of comfort and community. Although they have little to no support and funding, the local residents provide what they can. Nevertheless, as mostly low-income racialized immigrants with multiple children under 18, the participants do not have large sums of financial capital to provide these services out of pocket. As Nour says, *"we need the funding, we can do it but they just gonna call them, you sit down here, looking at each other? You smile, I smile? We need something to do. (...) If you have \$200 it's enough for us. Doesn't need more than that."* In this quote, Nour is saying that she has the ability to organize and bring people to events, but she does not have the money to provide them with something to do. Often, the residents are not asking for a large budget, but a small stipend to cover the costs of buying supplies. Neighbourhood residents need access to outside funding to provide engaging events and programs. Many funding opportunities only allow verified charity organizations or those partnered with verified charity organizations to apply. This constraint makes it so that individuals like Nour or fledging NGOs like the Canadian Bhutanese Association cannot access many funding

opportunities. In the end, residents sometimes end up partnering with NGOs and charity organizations in order to access funding. These partnerships are not always equal or useful for the residents. Nour frequently partners with organizations to access funding opportunities, but,

“[W]e apply through the kitchen program. We never see a dime dollar. I sign the paper, I have to sign, everything I apply for it. But it’s come where? (...) It doesn’t come to us. But I apply for it, I sign it, before they give the funding, they say they need the community leaders to sign. I have to put my signature, everything I sign as I’m receiving the money. But no, I didn’t see nothing. I don’t even know how much is left in the account now. I have no idea. How much they spend a day? Every month? I don’t know how much they spending. All I see, we apply for money, for 1 year.”

Although Nour is an important community leader that the grant acknowledges is necessary, she does not get paid or even have access to the funding. Instead, she must go through registered charity organizations to gain access to supplies. These organizations are not accountable to any community member in how they spend their funding and the balance of power is heavily skewed to the organization and away from the local residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate.

Relatedly, Kinley mentions that the Nepali-Bhutanese community in Ledbury-Heron Gate is often invited to attend or speak at events, yet the lack of financial compensation, even travel compensation, makes it difficult for any of them to attend.

“[T]hey want somebody to go there to be in the consultation, and no compensation were provided. Even the bus ticket were not provided and they reached out to me, I went there and I met with them, I spent one hour and they said this is the program that we do, and we want to include -- we want you to come, your community members to come and share your ideas, share your stories, your refugee life, and that’s it. And who wants to go to downtown, spent your money, and share your life story and come back, and get nothing.”

The extraction of their life experiences for pity and/or funding often leaves the residents feeling used by more established organizations. The residents of the neighbourhood

end up feeling distrustful and exploited due to the power imbalance that exists in these consultations. Kinley states that,

“Yeah, it seems easy for somebody who get paid for meeting to say, ‘Ahh, you guys are not coming to the meeting and then you go that’s why your voice is not counting.’ No, it’s easy but it’s hard at the same way. Like, they spend three hours, they get a lot of money. We spend three hour, we ended up losing money that we could have earned, you know, by working.”

Kinley describes these experiences as the attempts by certain organizations to “tokenize. (...) They just want to involve Bhutanese community in their funding grants, applications saying we’re involved with Bhutanese.” In his experiences, the organizations use his community as symbolic and unpaid tokens while not providing any real opportunities or funding. After going to the consultations and indulging the organizations, Kinley states that there still is not “a lot of opportunity provided to us. Usually it’s us begging them.”

The lack of adequately funded social services leaves organizations and individuals who are trying to provide support not only stretched thin, but also competing with one another. Local community organizers such as Kinley and Nour are wary of outsider service providers coming into the neighbourhood, who are perceived as taking funding opportunities away from residents in the neighbourhood whereas the latter are thought to be able to provide these services more effectively. Kinley argues,

“[U]sually, it’s the outsider coming to our community, they get funding, and they did this program, who’s English, and they want an interpreter. We did interpretation, we got zero money. So, you know, you can see the way. So in an ideal world, we can do this programming. How? There has to be avenue for us to do this programming. There has to be for workshops, training available, so we can do employment, post-secondary (...) Bhutanese, I think, are really low on post-secondary right now. Only few people are going to post-secondary, and employment training that works out and there’s lots of things that we can cover and I know we can do it. And people are willing to do it. But, there’s opportunities. There’s a way, it’s really hard.”

Moreover, they often see the programs that outsiders run as poorly managed. Kinley relayed to me a flyer that was supposed to be translated to Nepali.

"[I]t was not Nepali. They tried to write in Nepali, but they did mistake. So they did mistake that the words were not Nepali. It's supposed to be Nepali, I think they did some mistake in their software or typing. So those flyers were sent to house. So I read my flyer and I didn't understand any of this Nepali. But I understand the English. So that, you are already creating barrier for people who cannot read English, and the Nepali, because Nepali is not written there, to come to the consultation."

Kinley described many of the programs as "failures" because the outreach and the community consultations are not there. He argues,

"What's the point of somebody lives in Orleans come to Cedarwood and saying, "This could be better for the community," you know? (laughs). It's ridiculous (...) there's not compensation, there's not any appreciation, and we don't know whether your voice will be counted. So it's a huge challenge."

Nevertheless, partnering with established organizations is often their only route to access funding for the various programs that they run, such as the Nepali traditional dance program and the Winter Carnival in the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, these programs can only run for as long as Kinley and Nour are able to continue investing time and money without receiving any financial compensation. The lack of funding from needed social services for the urban poor and dispossessed results in the individualized responsibility of social support, which is often precarious and unsustainable. Nour, despite her efforts to support the youth and families in the neighbourhood is aware that her efforts and those of her fellow residents are not enough. She says that she often encourages teenagers to come by:

"Come, come by." They say, "What do you guys having for us?" I can't say I have this for you guys, and then, I can't promise them something. I can help to a degree. I can't provide food for 85 kids by myself, it's not easy, you know? (...) you know my house is going in and out, some of them, you see and they're in and out, in and out. You know, I

just let them. To sit down and chill, you know? And have it, they use the Wi-Fi, they turn on the music. They can just keep them off from the -- stay here with them."

The participants feel a strong sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, built through a recognition of difference, inclusion, trust, and mutual support. Many residents organize to fill in the gaps in services. Nevertheless, the precarity this form of individualized organizing and service provision is neither sustainable nor enough for the local residents' needs.

6.4 Discussion

In this chapter, I discussed the omnipresent "they" that haunts the participants narratives. "They" who build and support the obstacles that the residents face and are trying to overcome, such as neoliberal and revanchist ideologies that result in neglect, exploitation, and oppression. Due to these structural obstacles, low-income immigrant residents such as my participants have had to learn the skills to support one another because there was nowhere else they could turn. They support one another and do what they can to make each other's lives a little less difficult despite all the challenges. Asef Bayat describes these actions as a form of solidarity "forged primarily in public spaces - in neighbourhood, or street corners, in mosques, in workplaces, at bus stops, or in rationing lines, or in detention centers, migrant camps, public parks, colleges and athletic stadiums" (2010, pg. 22). The coming together of low-income immigrant families residing in Ledbury-Heron Gate corresponds to what Asef Bayat calls the "non-movements of the urban dispossessed," a "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" that form "passive networks" of solidarity (2010, pg. 22). It is discreet, it is continued; it is quiet, because it cannot be loud, it cannot be visible lest it is dismantled by the rich, the powerful, and the revanchist state. In Ledbury-Heron Gate, the solidarity between residents such as my participants stands for, as Bayat described, an attempt to "enhance their lives in a lifelong collective effort that bears few elements of pivotal leadership,

ideology, or structured organization” (2010, pg. 22). These acts of solidarity depend on the individual capacity of low-income immigrant families, the ability for them to withstand almost inconceivable pressures. But these efforts are not sustainable; too much responsibility is placed on individuals who will inevitably burn out.

In order to enable encounters with difference and belonging together, institutions, NGOs, and multiple levels of government must also play a role (Fincher & Iverson, 2008; Matjeskova & Leitner, 2011; Amin, 2012). The problem of belonging together in difference is not a responsibility of either the state or civil society; rather it is the responsibility of both. Both are needed to sustain and consistently develop diverse communities where differences are brought together, rather than divided, separated or excluded. The gap between need and provision lead low-income immigrant families residing in the neighbourhood to perceive these actors as neglectful and malicious. Adel states,

“[Ledbury-Heron Gate] was a neighbourhood created for whatever reason, to group people together. I feel like the residents there found something positive out of it and made it a community hub where they can all rely on each other. And they tried to, as much as they could, take away the negative connotation that was with it, but I feel like slowly, when they couldn't break the spirit of the people, they started to physically break the barriers.”

What Adel is referring to when she states, “They start to physically break the barriers” are the political wards that fragment the neighbourhood. She expands further on the incomprehensibility of these political boundaries.

Yeah, yeah. Like I don't know why they would...I don't know much about geography, but I don't know why even the city's built in this way, where it's like (...) Even like look how it's built, right? It's like everything is connected, and like everything is connected, and then as soon as you get into this area [Heron and Walkley], they split it, right? It's like look how the lines are drawn. Split, split, split, and then at the end, it joins together. And all these other areas St. Laurent's called, right? Are all together. But how come this area's so like, divided?”

In my interview with Nour, she presents the political fragmentation of the neighbourhood as something that should not exist:

“Yeah, and this here, this is, this only thing, it’s not supposed to be like this, it’s supposed to be from here all the way here [down south past the railroads]. You see? Because this our shopping centre [South Keys shopping centre], we go there, we have Albion here, we come to Johnson, we have a lot of kids there, they come from there, you know we have a lot of -- we supposed to be all together, like this section [Bank/Walkley/Conroy/Hunt Club]? Supposed to be like all together.”

Nour believes that Ledbury-Heron Gate should be a part of Diane Deans’ Gloucester-Southgate Ward. Both Adel and Nour speculate that the reason why political wards fragment the neighbourhood is because “they” do not want residents of Ledbury-Heron Gate to have a unified and powerful voice. As discussed in Chapter 5, “they” are actors with resources and power, actors who do not see Ledbury-Heron Gate as a space worth investment. Fragmented this way, the various groups of low-income residents (including both immigrant and non-immigrant families) cannot come together to advocate for their needs politically and oppose these actors.

6.5 Conclusion

In Ledbury-Heron Gate, the provision of social services is inadequate, while revanchist actions lead to the displacement and replacement of marginalized residents. The various social service cuts and disinvestment in the neighbourhood discourage my research participants, who have come together and organized in an attempt to fill these gaps. In their narratives of encounters, the participants describe attempts to organize that are troubled by structural inequalities that remain unaddressed. The participants are frustrated by community organizations that appear unwilling to learn how to properly assist members of the neighbourhood, by state actors that seem unwilling to provide resources, and by well-meaning outsiders seeking to help neighbourhood

residents who nonetheless exploit and extract their experiences. Although my research participants and other local residents display agency, striving to fill the gaps of support and stability, it needs to be acknowledged that their efforts confront much broader political and economic structural forces that are beyond their control.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

In the participants' narratives, Ledbury-Heron Gate is understood to be a neighbourhood that is inclusive and supportive, where differences are not ostracized but recognized and appreciated. This quality of the neighbourhood is not widely recognized and valued. Instead, participants express that crime is over-represented in media coverage of the neighbourhood and LGH is stigmatized as a dangerous place. Moreover, social media comments paint the neighbourhood as a desolate, violent space populated by racialized 'criminals'. In the negative perceptions of the neighbourhood and the frequent discussions of crime, criminalization, and other problems by both residents and non-residents, Ledbury-Heron Gate has not been conceived as a place where people want to stay. Yet, the participants expressed a strong desire to remain in a community where they felt recognized and supported by others in the neighbourhood. The communities that the participants and other residents of LHG formed empowered and enabled them to find a sense of trust, solidarity, and belonging.

Many participants combine expressions of appreciation for the neighbourhood with proclamations that they wish to move out if they could afford to. The participants love this neighbourhood and their community, and the more they love it, the more upset they are about the neglect that prevails. They feel like these neighbourhood spaces are theirs and the community's shared immigrant identity and mutual support of one another creates a welcoming and comforting environment for most participants. Yet, they are also aware of systemic neglect and discrimination, and most of the participants wish to move to a neighbourhood where they do not feel neglected, unsafe, and discriminated against. The structural forces of enclosure, neoliberal urbanism, and revanchism serve to deprive local residents of neighbourhood commons and much needed social services.

Ultimately, due to the negative and stigmatized perceptions of the neighbourhood, the encroaching enclosure of formerly accessible commons, and the failure of social services to address their needs, residents of this neighbourhood have developed a sense of belonging to LHG that is tenuous and challenged. As such, their sense of belonging is also a localized sense of belonging, and they have not developed a similar sense of belonging to Ottawa or to Canadian society. Despite the challenges of neglect and forced displacement, some participants have resolved to stay in the neighbourhood no matter what happens. Both Samira and Nour know about the difficulties that trouble their neighbourhood, but concomitantly, Samira said, when speaking of the neighbourhood, *“I wouldn’t trade it for the world,”* and Nour said *“From here to our graveyard, right?”* It is clear in the numerous participant quotes given in this thesis that sense of belonging is filled with complicated emotions of love, anger, fear, and comfort. Sense of belonging is shaped not only by the structural forces that restrict an individual’s access to everyday neighbourhood spaces and services, but also by community members who come together to resist these structural forces. Even though sense of belonging is multi-scalar (Valentine et al., 2009; Yuval-Davis, 2006), sense of belonging at one scale (e.g., the local scale) may be stronger than sense of belonging across other scales. In the case of my participants in LHG, the structural constraints that they face at the local scale limit their ability to develop stronger sense of belonging to other scales, as they become disillusioned and distrustful of government actors and other process at urban/municipal, provincial, and national scales.

7.1 Contributions

This thesis makes theoretical and empirical contributions to understanding how spaces of encounter impact immigrants’ sense of belonging. Theoretically, I strive to tie together research on immigrants’ everyday experiences and encounters with

examination of the broader structural forces that shape spaces of encounter (Fincher et al., 2019). Most literature on spaces of encounter often neglects to consider instances of encounter in relation to the factors that shape the spaces themselves, such as processes of enclosure, accessibility, and gentrification (e.g. Putnam, 2007; Blumer, 1958; Leitner, 2012; Wise, 2005). The study of spaces of encounter cannot be divorced from the broader context of where, how, and why these spaces exist or do not exist (Fincher et al., 2019). Moreover, the residents themselves, through their everyday interactions with one another in these spaces of encounter, become aware of the structural forces that shape their lives, such as the on-going gentrification of their neighbourhood and the neglect of their neighbourhood spaces. In the case of LHG, this awareness of neglect and disinvestment in the neighbourhood 'common' spaces plays a significant role in shaping my participants' sense of belonging.

Empirically, I present a narrative of Ledbury-Heron Gate that is not portrayed elsewhere, a complex and sometimes contradictory story of belonging and not belonging. My findings reveal that sense of belonging is not simple, and there can be simultaneous feelings of comfort and recognition together with resentment and fear. The emotional dimensions of sense of belonging ought not to be overlooked, as my findings reveal the significance of the participants' feelings of love, fear, and anger in shaping their sense of belonging and everyday lives. As such, I wish to emphasize that low-income immigrant families residing in Ledbury-Heron Gate such as my participants possess both agency and knowledge to create spaces where they can build community and solidarity. Yet, they encounter structural barriers at every turn that are too powerful to overcome individually. Nevertheless, they refuse to be passive actors in their own spaces, and use what resources are available as best they can. Their efforts, with proper structural support from various levels of government, local institutions, and NGOs, hold the potential to transform spaces of encounter into spaces of

empowerment and connection. Given accessible resources, my participants would have the ability to develop a stronger sense of belonging to not only the local scale, but also broader scales of Ottawa and Canadian society. Reducing current barriers and challenges would strengthen the participants' feelings of comfort and recognition, while easing their fear and anger. Moreover, the ability to create activities for their own community would enable further inclusion and strengthen belonging not only for the participants, but also for other newcomers and immigrants in the neighbourhood.

7.2 Study Limitations

One limitation of this study was the lack of ability to interview more recent newcomers in their mother tongues. Unfortunately, due to my own lack of language skills, I was only able to interview participants in English, which greatly limited the narratives I was able to encounter. The two interviews conducted in Arabic with the Syrian newcomers contributed a lot to my study; however, I was unable to interview any Somali or Nepali newcomers who did not speak English. Moreover, I was an outsider coming into the neighbourhood right after the traumatic events of the mass evictions, asking for stories of residents' personal emotions and everyday lives. As an outsider coming into the neighbourhood to conduct 'research', the residents had no reason to trust that I would properly represent their voices. Although I am also a person of colour, I am not Muslim or a refugee, which distanced my own experiences from theirs. It can be seen as problematic to have an outsider 'come in' to a neighbourhood to tell the stories of those who actually live there. Ultimately, I tried to properly present the participants' narratives, not hiding any of their contradictions or complexities while also analyzing their encounters in the greater context of broader structural forces. I am thankful to have been given this opportunity to hear the stories of my participants and I hope that I have properly represented their opinions and held their stories with care.

7.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Further research into the complexity of immigrants' sense of belonging is needed to challenge the idea of identity as an ontological and homogenous process, revealing the struggle that is belonging together in difference as equals. In settler and immigrant societies such as Canada, researchers need to capture immigrants' sense of belonging that fleshes out their experiences as multifaceted individuals, not hiding their often contradictory natures and nuanced perspectives. Moreover, the spaces of encounter where immigrants develop their sense of belonging need to be further examined to understand why, how, and to what extent these spaces evoke feelings of belonging. Research into immigrants' sense of belonging and spaces of encounter needs to consider the whole range of structure and agency factors that shape personal interactions. The context that conditions spaces of encounter creates reactionary actions and emotions and cannot be overlooked when examining the full complexity of what forms immigrants' sense of belonging. Research that considers not only structural context, but also personal agency and the emotional dimensions of sense of belonging can bring into focus the everyday experiences of immigrants in ways that avoid homogenization, and instead represent and recognize their complexity as individuals.

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APPENDIX A – Ethics Approval

13/07/2018

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number

S-05-18-677

Titre du projet / Project Title

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Type de projet / Project Type

Recherche de professeur / Professor's research project

Statut du projet / Project Status

Approuvé / Approved

Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

13/07/2018

Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

12/07/2019

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

**Chercheur /
Researcher**

Affiliation

Role

Luisa VERONIS

Département de géographie / Department of Geography

Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator

Brian RAY

Co-chercheur principal / Co-principal investigator

Lily XIA

Département de géographie / Department of Geography

Étudiant-chercheur / Student-researcher

Jennifer RIDGLEY

Carleton University

Co-chercheur / Co-investigator

Anyck DAUPHIN

Université du Québec en Outatouais

Co-chercheur / Co-investigator

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

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APPENDIX B – Introductory Interview Consent Form

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Personal Introductory Interview Consent Form

Title of project : The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

The Researchers:

Dr. Luisa Veronis Associate Professor Department of Geography University of Ottawa Ottawa ON K1N 5N6 (613) 562-5800 x 1046 lveronis@uottawa.ca	Dr. Brian Ray Associate Professor Department of Geography University of Ottawa Ottawa ON K1N 5N6 (613) 562-5972 bray@uottawa.ca	Dr. Jennifer Ridgley Assistant Professor Department of Geography Carleton University Ottawa ON K1S 5B6 (613) 520-2600 x 2576 jennifer.ridgley@ carleton.ca	Dr. Anyck Dauphin BLANK Professor Department of Social Sciences Université du Québec en Outaouais Gatineau QC J8X 3X7 (819) 595-3900 x 2354 anyck.dauphin@ uqo.ca
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Invitation to participate: I, _____ am invited to participate in this research project led by Drs. Luisa Veronis and Brian Ray of the Department of Geography at the University of Ottawa, in collaboration with Dr. Jen Ridgley (Geography, Carleton U) and Dr. Anyck Dauphin (Social Sciences, UQO), with funding from a SSHRC Partnership Grant – Migration and Resilience in Urban Canada. This project is conducted independently from the organizations and agencies from which participants may be recruited.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the purpose of the study is to gather information about the role of neighbourhoods in shaping migrants' resilience, to understand how the social and spatial environment at the neighbourhood level (services/amenities, demographics, housing, transportation, employment opportunities, community organisations/associations, etc.) influences the settlement and integration experiences of migrant groups.

Participation: My participation will consist of filling a short demographic questionnaire and a introductory personal interview to discuss the questions asked from the researcher. The introductory interview will last approximately 45-60min, during which time we will discuss my migration, settlement, and integration experiences in Canada. These audio-recorded discussions are designed to help the researcher gather information about the potential role of the neighbourhood in shaping migrants' resilience. As the end of the interview, I will be lent a digital camera and asked to take pictures of spaces in my neighbourhood that are meaningful to me in the following week. This interview will take place at _____ on _____.

Benefits: My participation will help the researchers to understand how the social and spatial environment at the neighbourhood level influences settlement and integration experiences of migrant groups. We will co-produce knowledge on the role of neighbourhoods in shaping migrant resilience and provide empirical evidence on how and which characteristics of neighbourhoods contribute to enhancing or hindering immigrants' resilience. This information will help the researchers to advance conceptualizations of migrant resilience and resilient neighbourhoods, as well as provide concrete recommendations for policy and practice.

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Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. I can keep the compensation even if I choose to withdraw from the study. Any information gathered up to the time of my withdrawal may be used in the research project, unless I request otherwise.

Inconveniences and Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this personal interview.

Recording and Storage of Data: I have been informed that the interviews will be audio recorded. The notes, audio recordings and any written transcripts resulting from this discussion will be retained by the investigator for the sole purpose of research in this study. They will retain these notes in their personal research office in a locked file cabinet until 2028, at which time the notes, recordings and transcripts will be destroyed. I may request a copy of the audio recording of the interview and/or any written transcripts.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: Information provided during the interview will remain confidential and anonymous. Only information that has been pooled with results from other interviews and stripped of personal identifiers may be used for public communication of research results. It is possible the researcher(s) may wish to use anonymous/unattributed quotations from this interview in scholarly journal articles stemming from this project, to illustrate important findings. Such quotations, should they occur, will be referenced using pseudonyms or codes and will not contain any information that might conceivably be used to identify the source or the participant.

Questions, comments or requests for withdrawal: For any questions or concerns about this project or consent document, or to withdraw from the project, the principal investigators can be contacted at the following phone (613) 562-5800 ext.1046, or e-mail address: lveronis@uottawa.ca

Should I have any ethical concerns regarding this project or my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387, or ethics@uottawa.ca.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C – Photovoice Interview Consent Form

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

Personal Photovoice Interview Consent Form

Title of project: The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

The Researchers:

Dr. Luisa Veronis
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Invitation to participate: I, _____ am invited to participate in this research project led by Drs. Luisa Veronis and Brian Ray of the Department of Geography at the University of Ottawa, in collaboration with Dr. Jen Ridgley (Geography, Carleton U) and Dr. Anyck Dauphin (Social Sciences, UQO), with funding from a SSHRC Partnership Grant – Migration and Resilience in Urban Canada. This project is conducted independently from the organizations and agencies from which participants may be recruited.

Purpose of the Study: I understand that the purpose of the study is to gather information about the role of neighbourhoods in shaping migrants' resilience, to understand how the social and spatial environment at the neighbourhood level (services/amenities, demographics, housing, transportation, employment opportunities, community organisations/associations, etc.) influences the settlement and integration experiences of migrant groups.

Participation: My participation will consist of discussing 5-10 photographs that I have taken in the previous week. At the beginning of the interview, I will return the digital camera, and receive a compensation of \$30. The photovoice interview will last approximately 90min, during which time we will discuss my experiences in and knowledge of the Ottawa/Gatineau neighbourhood where I live. These audio-recorded discussions are designed to help the researcher gather information about the potential role of the neighbourhood in shaping migrants' resilience. I understand that these photos will be used for the research project on migration and resilience and for a masters' thesis; I also give consent for the public use of these photographs for any future publications that may result from the research study. This interview will take place at _____ on _____.

Benefits: My participation will help the researchers to understand how the social and spatial environment at the neighbourhood level influences settlement and integration experiences of migrant groups. We will co-produce knowledge on the role of neighbourhoods in shaping migrant resilience and provide empirical evidence on how and which characteristics of neighbourhoods contribute to enhancing or hindering immigrants' resilience. This information will help the researchers to advance conceptualizations of migrant resilience and resilient neighbourhoods, as well as provide concrete recommendations for policy and practice.

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Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. I can keep the compensation even if I choose to withdraw from the study. Any information gathered up to the time of my withdrawal may be used in the research project, unless I request otherwise.

Inconveniences and Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this personal interview.

Recording and Storage of Data: I have been informed that the interviews will be audio recorded. The notes, audio recordings and any written transcripts resulting from this discussion will be retained by the investigator for the sole purpose of research in this study. They will retain these notes in their personal research office in a locked file cabinet until 2028, at which time the notes, recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed. I may request a copy of the audio recording of the interview and/or any written transcripts.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: Information provided during the interview will remain confidential and anonymous. Only information that has been pooled with results from other interviews and stripped of personal identifiers may be used for public communication of research results. It is possible the researcher(s) may wish to use anonymous/unattributed quotations from this interview in scholarly journal articles stemming from this project, to illustrate important findings. Such quotations, should they occur, will be referenced using pseudonyms or codes and will not contain any information that might conceivably be used to identify the source or the participant.

Questions, comments or requests for withdrawal: For any questions or concerns about this project or consent document, or to withdraw from the project, the principal investigators can be contacted at the following phone (613) 562-5800 ext.1046, or e-mail address: lveronis@uottawa.ca

Should I have any ethical concerns regarding this project or my participation in this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, (613) 562-5387, or ethics@uottawa.ca.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study. I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D – Project Objectives and Photovoice Guidelines

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Project Objectives and Photovoice Guidelines

Project Objectives

- Co-produce knowledge on the role of the neighbourhoods in shaping migrants' resilience
- Understand how social and material environments at the neighbourhood level influence the settlement and integration experiences of migrant groups
- Provide empirical evidence on how and which characteristics of neighbourhoods contribute to enhancing or hindering immigrants' resilience
- Provide new insights into the role of factors at multiple scales and improve understanding of how institutional context shapes migrant resilience at more micro-scales

Photovoice Guidelines

Research Instructions

- Take pictures of spaces in your neighbourhood that are meaningful to you
 - What spaces do you use often?
 - Where do you feel comfortable? Where do you feel uncomfortable?
 - What spaces do you seek out? What spaces do you purposefully avoid?
- Both indoor and outdoor spaces are relevant to this study
- We will ask you to choose the 5-10 most relevant pictures, but we would recommend taking more in order to determine your most meaningful spaces
- Try to capture multiple sites and/or varied types of sites
- Feel free to take multiple pictures of one site, including at different times, to capture different dynamics, and using different angles or perspectives to add context and/or to give focus
- Feel free to be creative and try to play with light, colours, movement and angles

Ethics and Consent

- Please avoid taking photographs of people where individuals can be identified
- Please do not photograph minors or persons with significant mental disabilities

Technical Skills

- Hold camera button steady for at least 5 seconds before releasing to prevent blurry photos, hold the camera button steady for longer in dark spaces
- Try to capture as much of the relevant spaces as possible, always include a little more than what you think you need
- Do not be afraid to take multiple pictures of one site in order to capture a picture that you like and is not blurry

Use of Photographs

- 5-10 photographs of your choosing will be used in the second interview to discuss your settlement and integration experiences in your neighbourhood
- If participants would like to/agree, we may organize a small photo exhibit

APPENDIX E – Demographic Survey

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Department of Geography, University of Ottawa

Demographic Survey

To help us to better understand who we are speaking with, please complete the following demographic survey. Please note that your participation is voluntary and you can choose to answer only to those questions you feel comfortable with. All information gathered will be kept confidential.

Name: _____

1. Age (circle one): 18-24 25-34 35-54 55-64 65+

2. Gender: _____

3. What is your marital status?

- a. Single b. Married/ Common-law relationship
c. Separated d. Divorced
e. Widowed f. Other, please specify: _____

4. Do you have children?

- a. Yes. How many? () b. No

5. What is your level of education?

- a. Less than 8th grade
b. Some high school
c. High school graduate
d. Some college/ vocational training/post-secondary/ university
e. College/vocational training/ post-secondary/ university
f. Some graduate school
g. Graduate degree
h. Professional degree
i. Other, please specify: _____

6. Please specify your employment status:

- a. Homemaker (Stay at home dad/mom)
b. Student
c. Employed for salary
Please specify occupation: _____
d. Self-employed
Please specify: _____
e. Out of work and looking for work
f. Out of work but not currently looking for work
g. Retired
h. Unable to work
i. Other, please specify: _____

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of
four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Department of Geography, University of Ottawa

7. Please specify your main mode of commuting:
- a. Car, truck, van (as a driver)
 - b. Car, truck, van (as a passenger)
 - c. Public transit
 - d. Walked
 - e. Bicycle
 - f. Other
- Please specify: _____
8. Please indicate your average commute time:
- a. Less than 15 min
 - b. 15 to 29 min
 - c. 30 to 44 min
 - d. 45 to 59 min
 - e. 60 min and over
9. What time do you usually leave for work?:
- a. Between 5 a.m and 5:59 a.m.
 - b. Between 6 a.m and 6:59 a.m.
 - c. Between 7 a.m and 7:59 a.m.
 - d. Between 8 a.m and 8:59 a.m.
 - e. Between 9 a.m and 9:59 a.m.
 - f. Between 10 a.m and 10:59 a.m.
 - g. Between 11 a.m and 11:59 a.m.
 - h. Between 12 p.m and 4:59 a.m.
10. Please indicate your yearly household income:
- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | d. <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$39,999 | g. <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-\$69,999 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000-\$19,999 | e. <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-\$49,999 | h. <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000-\$79,999 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$29,999 | f. <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$59,999 | i. <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 or more |
11. Please specify your housing tenure:
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Owner | b. <input type="checkbox"/> Renter | c. <input type="checkbox"/> Band housing |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
12. Please indicate your dwelling structure type:
- a. Single-detached house
 - b. Semi-detached house
 - c. Row house
 - d. Apartment or flat in a duplex
 - e. Apartment in a building that has 5 or more storeys
 - f. Apartment in a building that has fewer than 5 storeys
 - g. Movable dwelling
 - h. Other single-attached house
- Please specify: _____

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of
four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Department of Geography, University of Ottawa

13. How many rooms are in your dwelling?
- a. 1-4 rooms
 - b. 5 rooms
 - c. 6 rooms
 - d. 7 rooms
 - e. 8 or more rooms
14. What is your household size?
- a. 1 person
 - b. 2 persons
 - c. 3 persons
 - d. 4 persons
 - e. 5 or more persons
15. What is your country/place of birth? _____
16. What was your last country of residence before Canada?

17. What was your last city and province of residence before Ottawa, Ontario?

18. What language do you speak most commonly?
At home: _____ At work: _____ With friends: _____
19. What is your level of English?
- a. Little or no knowledge of English
 - b. Elementary or basic level of English
 - c. Intermediate level of English
 - d. Advanced level of English
 - e. Fluent level of English
20. What is your level of French?
- a. Little or no knowledge of French
 - b. Elementary or basic level of French
 - c. Intermediate level of French
 - d. Advanced level of French
 - e. Fluent level of French
21. For those not born in Canada, what is the date of your arrival in Canada?
_____/_____/_____
(Year) (Month) (Day)

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of
four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

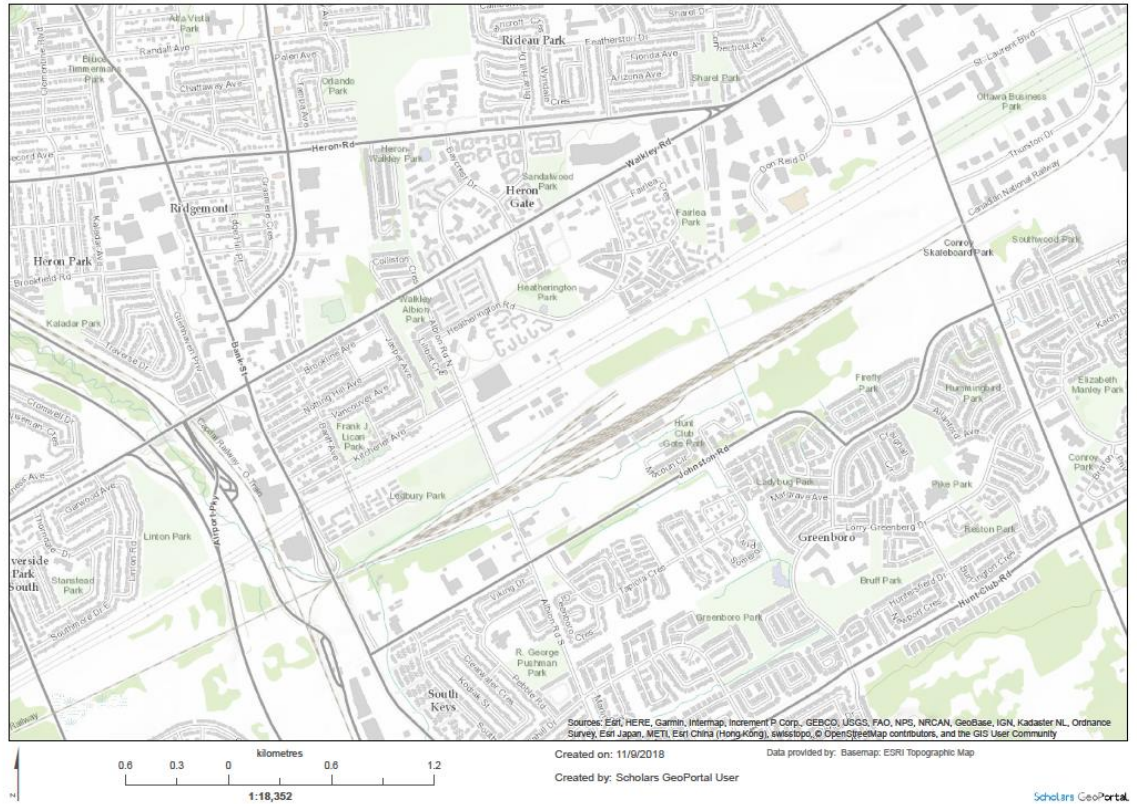
Department of Geography, University of Ottawa

22. Under which category did you immigrate to Canada?
- a. Economic Immigrant
 - b. Family
 - c. Refugee
 - d. Other
23. Did you arrive in Canada alone or with your family?
- a. Alone
 - b. With family members, please specify: _____
24. Are you a Canadian citizen?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

APPENDIX F – Map of Ledbury-Heron Gate

L-HG-R-E

Legend



APPENDIX G – Participant Observation Guide

Project Title: The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Participant Observation Guide

(stage 2)

This participant observation guide will be used during events or activities organized in the targeted neighbourhood by local or external organizations, community groups, residents and other members or stakeholders based in the neighbourhood. We will consult with the participating organizations and/or local stakeholders to identify relevant events and activities, and we will ask for their permission to attend and conduct the observations. The observations will be passive to minimize the influence of our presence during the activities and allow for natural interactions between participants.

Information Type	Context and Description (provide context descriptions, or 'context notes', and comments, or 'thick description')	Field notes (based on memory after the event)
Date	DD/MM/YYYY	
Location	Name of the organization/location and address	
Time of Observation	Start: End:	
Organization(s) involved and their roles	Organization(s): Roles:	
Description of location (provide as detailed a description as possible of the location/space)	For Example: Community space Outdoor or indoor Public space School Organization Size of location (e.g. size of the room, park, etc.) Atmosphere of location (formal, informal; used often or rarely; etc.) Etc.	

Project Title: The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

<p>Simple map or sketch of the location (organization of the space, room, activities)</p>		
<p>Type of activity (Describe in as much detail as possible; include official description of the activity if applicable; context)</p>	<p>For example: One-time event or reoccurring Conference Workshop Service Program Social, informative, educational, religious, etc. activities Training Etc.</p>	
<p>Target audience / for whom is the activity is designed (according to the official description)</p>	<p>For example :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrants Newcomers Families Age groups (children, youths, adults, elderly) Skilled workers Job seekers Students Women / men / other Ethnocultural communities <p>Etc.</p>	
<p>Participants (Describe in as much detail as possible; emphasize any differences and/or similarities between participants)</p>	<p>Number of participants</p> <p>Type of audience / participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrants Newcomers Families Age groups (children, youths, adults, elderly) Skilled workers 	

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	<p>Job seekers Students Women / men / other Ethnocultural communities Etc.</p>	
General atmosphere	<p>Atmosphere (formal, informal; festive; tense; political; argumentative; etc.)</p>	
Physical interactions and social dynamics	<p>Describe what is being done, by whom, why, how: - What are the participants doing? - What are their attitudes? - How do the participants interact with each other?</p> <p>Interactions and dynamics between participants : - formal, informal; - the participants intermingle or not, formation of cliques; - movement or traffic; - the people are sitting, not moving; - arguments or conflicts; etc.</p> <p>Identify hierarchies : - vertical or horizontal relationships</p>	
Verbal interactions and social dynamics (conversations)	<p>Describe who is speaking, how, why: - Who is speaking? Who is not speaking? - What are the participants saying? - What types of exchanges are happening? - What is the nature of the verbal interactions between participants?</p> <p>Verbal interactions and dynamics: -Nature of the exchanges</p>	

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	-Who are interacting with each other?	
Languages spoken and/or used		
Themes, subjects, issues, questions addressed during the activity (if applicable)	<p>During the activity, what are the subjects, themes, issues, questions raised or discussed</p> <p>What are the participants talking about?</p> <p>Take note or make a list of key words used by the participants</p>	
Other observations		
Logbook (notes, comments, reflection of the researchers, or 'journal entry', after the observation)		

APPENDIX H – Introductory Interview Guide

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Personal Interview Guide – Introductory Interview (stage 3a)

Participants to personal interviews will be men and women who are over 18 years of age and who self-identify as immigrants to Canada

Theme: Introductions	
Description of participant's past experiences of migration and settlement	<p>Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your experience with migration and settlement in Canada.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me a little about yourself? • Can you tell us a little bit about your immigration experience? (E.g. time of arrival, country of origin, legal status, family circumstances, etc.) • Can you tell us a little bit about your settlement experience in Canada? (E.g. getting settled, orientation, accessing services, looking for employment, social networks, moving) • How would you define yourself? Or how do you identify?
	<p>Before moving on, are there any additional thoughts or information you want to share about these experiences?</p>
Theme: Current Experiences	
Description of participant's current experiences of settlement and integration	<p>We are now interested in discussing your current experiences in your neighbourhood/Ottawa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you define/describe your neighbourhood? • Can you tell us a little bit about your settlement and integration experience in Ottawa/Gatineau and in your neighbourhood? • Why have you chosen to settle in this neighbourhood? How long have you lived here? Why? • Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of living in Ottawa/Gatineau and in your neighbourhood so far?
	<p>Before closing, are there any additional thoughts you wish to share around these issues?</p>

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Theme: Introduction to project and photovoice activity	
Explain project goals and prepare participant for photovoice interview	At this point, we will describe the project objectives and provide the participant with guidelines for the photovoice activity. Among other things, we will share a few basic photography skills and give clear instructions regarding how to take photographs.
We thank you for your time and for your interest in participating in this study. We look forward to seeing you again next week!	

APPENDIX I – Photovoice Interview Guide

The role of neighbourhood context in shaping migrant resilience: a comparative study of four neighbourhoods in Ottawa-Gatineau

Personal Interview Guide – Photovoice Interview (stage 3b)

Participants to personal interviews will be men and women who are over 18 years of age and who self-identify as immigrants to Canada

Theme: Introduction	
Description of the photographs	<p>Please describe the photographs you have taken and chosen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is in this picture? • What is really happening here? • How does this space influence your experiences in the neighbourhood? • Why has it impacted your experiences in such a way? • Is there something you would change about this space? If so, why and how? • Why have you chosen to share this photograph with us? What does it show that you wish to convey?
Theme: Social and Material Neighbourhood Spaces	
Description of the overall neighbourhood	<p>We are now interested in hearing about your experiences of settlement and integration in your neighbourhood (photographs will be used as prompts as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your overall impression of the neighbourhood and of its spaces? (E.g. positive/negative attributes, perception of material form, connection with neighbourhood spaces) • Do you participate in neighbourhood community events/activities? Why or why not? • What services and amenities do you use? How often do you use them? Are these services and amenities accessible/inclusive? (Focus on any services/amenities they have photographed) • What services and amenities are missing? What are the impacts of missing services/amenities? How do you meet your needs? • Are there any amenities/services that have been especially useful to you when you first moved into this neighbourhood (or on the contrary, where there any that you needed but that were missing)? Please, explain.
	<p>Before closing, are there any additional thoughts you wish to share around these issues?</p>

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Theme: Comfort	
Description of participant's level of comfort within the neighbourhood	<p>We would like to discuss your experiences of comfort, belonging, and safety to your neighbourhood (photographs will be used as prompts as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What neighbourhood spaces are you comfortable in? Are there any spaces where you feel unsafe or that you avoid? Why? How do you act in these spaces? Can you tell me a little about your reasonings? • What do you like/dislike about your neighbourhood? What are some opportunities/challenges in your neighbourhood? • How close are you to individuals in your neighbourhood? What kind of social networks have you developed? What do you think of these social networks? (E.g. strong/weak ties, easy/difficult connections, etc.) • Do you feel a sense of belonging to the local neighbourhood? Why or why not? How do you define sense of belonging to your neighbourhood? • Are there any particular spaces within the neighbourhood where you feel a strong sense of belonging? Where do you feel a weak sense of belonging? Please, explain. • Do you plan on staying in your neighbourhood/current housing situation? If so, why? Would you rather move/leave? If so, why and where would you go? Do you have plans to move/leave? Please, discuss.
	Before closing, are there any additional thoughts you wish to share around these issues?
Theme: Recommendations for change	
Analysis of neighbourhood spaces and desired change	<p>Please describe what kind of changes you would like to see in the neighbourhood (photographs will be used as prompts as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What characteristics do you think support or hinder your settlement and integration in your neighbourhood? • Are there any neighbourhood spaces that you would like to see changed? If so why and how? • Do you have any recommendations to help improve any aspect of your neighbourhood? Please, discuss.
	Before closing, are there any additional thoughts you wish to share around these issues?
We thank you for your time and for your interest in participating in this study.	

APPENDIX J – Recruitment Poster



Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada



Migrant Resilience Ottawa-Gatineau Immigration et Résilience

Are you an immigrant/refugee living in Heron Gate ?

We're looking for:

**Participants for a study on the role of
neighbourhoods on immigrants' resilience during
their settlement and integration in Ottawa**

What: Two interviews, 1 week apart,
(45min and 60-90min long);
Take pictures of neighbourhood spaces
between interviews

When: Of your choosing

Where: Of your choosing

Who: Luisa Veronis and Brian Ray, University of Ottawa;
Jen Ridgley, Carleton University
Anyek Dauphin, Université du Québec en Outaouais


Eligibility:
**immigrants and
refugees to Canada,
18+ with children
and/or dependents,
comfortable speaking
English or French**

A \$30 cash compensation will be offered to participants

Participants will be selected on a first come/first served basis

For more information, please contact:

Lily Xia, Research Assistant- 613-562-5800 ex. 1040

 Migrant Resilience Ottawa-Gatineau Immigration et Résilience

This project is conducted independently from the organizations and agencies from which participants may be recruited.

APPENDIX K - Coding

Code	Number	Theme	Subtheme	Category
Parks		Scale/space of the neighbourhood as built environment (things inside the neighbourhood)	Resources	Parks
Schools/Daycares				Schools and Daycares
Other Resources				Other Resources
Infrastructure				Infrastructure
Missing Nbh				Missing
Invisible Nbh				Invisible
Loss Nbh				Loss of Resources
Out of Nbh Resources			Out of Neighbourhood	Resources
Out of Nbh Networks				Networks
Physically Accessible			Accessibility (Physical – locked/occupied/ crowded/poor maintenance/ affordability)	Accessible
Physically Inaccessible				Inaccessible
Convenience				Convenience/ Proximity
Capacity of built spaces			Capacity of spaces	
Housing Diversity			Housing (when talking about housing overall in the neighbourhood, not their specific dwelling)	Diversity of housing types
Nbh-Poor Maintenance				Poor Maintenance
Nbh-Affordability of Housing				Affordability
Evictions				(Fear of) Evictions
Nbh-Size of Housing				Size
Housing Availability				Availability
Walking			Transportation	Walking
Biking		Biking		
Busing		Busing		
Driving		Driving		
OCT Inconvenient		OC Transpo System Inconvenient		
Busing Inconvenient		Taking the Bus Inconvenient		
Other Inconvenient Transportation		Other Inconvenient Transportation		
Boundaries		Neighbourhood Boundaries		

Code	Number	Theme	Subtheme	Category
Formal Community Resources		Scale/Space of the Neighbourhood as Community	Resources (Community)	Formal Community Resources
Informal Community				Informal Community Resources
Missing Community				Missing Community Resources
Invisible Community				Invisible Community Resources
Fragmentation			Challenges	Fragmentation (Social/Political/Etc.)
Stigmatization				Stigmatization
Discrimination				Discrimination
Crime				(Fear of) Crime
Other Challenges				Other Challenges
Participation			Participation	
Socially Accessible			Accessibility (Socially – Fear of crime/ criminalization/ exclusion)	Accessible
Socially Inaccessible				Inaccessible
Solidarity			Solidarity (politics/mobilization/etc.)	

Code	Number	Theme	Subtheme	Category
Nbh spaces – Belonging		Belonging	Belonging to physical neighbourhood	Belonging
Nbh spaces – Not Belonging				Not Belonging
Nbh community – Belonging			Belonging to Community	Belonging to Neighbourhood Community
Eth community – Belonging				Belonging to Ethnic Community
Community not belonging				Not Belonging
Loss of Community				Loss of Community
Coexistence				Coexistence

Code	Number	Theme	Subtheme	Category
Res - Education		Individual/Household/Family (individual characteristics and experiences)	Resources	Education
Res - Language				Language
Res - Networks				Networks
Res - Transportation				Transportation
Res - Employment				Employment
Individual Capacity			Capacity	
Identity			Identity	
Dif - Language			Challenges/Barriers	Language
Dif - Network				Lack of Network
Dif - Transportation				Transportation
Dif - Employment				Employment
Dif - Discrimination				Discrimination
Dif - Health				Health
Dif - Affordability				Affordability
Personal Networks			Social Networks	Personal Networks
Ethnic Network				Ethnic Network
Community Network				Community Network
Other Network				Other Network
Pathway			Housing	Pathways to Housing
Future Plans				Future Plans
Pros Housing		Pros of Housing		
Cons Housing		Cons of Housing		
Challenges of Housing		Challenges of Housing		

Code	Number	Theme	Subtheme	Category
Municipal		Actors	State	Municipal
Provincial				Provincial
Institutions			Institutions	
Private			Private Sector	

Formal Community Actors			Community Sector	Formal
Informal Community Actors				Informal
NGOs				Non-profit Organization
Partnerships			Partnerships	

Code	Number	Theme	Subtheme	Category
Development		Structures	Neoliberal Capitalism	Development
Disinvestment				Disinvestment
Precarity				Precarity
Top Down			Dynamics	Top Down
Bottom Up				Bottom Up