

AUSTERITY and its **ALTERNATIVES**



Settling on Less

Canadian Immigrant Settlement in the Age of Austerity

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- Introduction
 - Central place of immigration and settlement policy to Canadian history
- The Centrality of Canadian Immigration and Settlement Services
 - between 260,000 and 300,000 permanent newcomers are invited to Canada – this constitutes more than .7% of the total Canadian population
 - Settlement services cover a broad range of services required by immigrants (orientation, language, labour market, housing, etc.)



- Settlement system that developed became widely regarded as a 'best practice model' (Richmond and Shields, 2005)
- Area of shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments, although the feds have dominated
- Feds spend around \$1 billion a year (Levitz, 2015) and close to 1 million newcomers are eligible for these supports
- The importance of settlement services offered they must be viewed as a part of the larger Canadian social welfare state structure
- But part of the structure that constitutes the 'residual welfare state'



Key elements of this Canadian model of settlement:

- 1.** Services are provided mainly by nonprofit agencies located in the communities where newcomers are located;
- 2.** These services are funded primarily by government;
- 3.** Many of the service providers are drawn from the newcomer communities themselves fostering strong connections with cultural and linguistic competencies that builds communications linkages and shared understandings between provider and client;



4. The Canadian approach to settlement is characterized as two-way-street between immigrants and Canadian society (Tolley, 2011). Each adjusts and changes in a dialectal process of integration and accommodation - stands in contrast to assimilationist models of immigration.
5. The Canadian model of immigrant settlement does require a more engaged state, financially and legislatively, supporting settlement programming and providing public policies like multiculturalism to promote diversity and 'inclusion'.



Settlement Services, Neoliberal Restructuring and Austerity

- Settlement services have been developed in Canada to help smooth immigrant transitions thus enhancing economic and social benefits of the large numbers of newcomers entering Canada since the latter 1980s these services have been subject to neoliberal restructuring and market rationalization
- Austerity bent governments see cuts and restructuring of supports to these organizations as less publicly visible and as being easily absorbed through the use of more voluntary sources of labour and internal efficiencies – ‘doing more with less’ – to make up for lost government revenues (Baines et.al 2015).



- settlement sector has faced, since the latter 1980s a state of 'permanent austerity'

The neoliberal/austerity driven change within settlement services can be summarized in the following way:

- Services and care previously provided by the state has been increasingly downloaded onto local government, nonprofit providers, communities and families. This process is referred to as "responsibilization" as the state relinquishes many of its duties shifting the responsibility increasingly onto individuals and other bodies (Kelly and Caputo 2011: 11).



- Increased use of Alternate Service Delivery (ASD) involving reduced services, restricted access and nonprofit delivery agents as key elements in the implementation of neoliberalism.
- NPM commands the adoption of 'business models', 'lean production' and a narrow focus on 'efficiency' by delivery agencies to receive state funding for services. This promotes one size fits all approaches to delivery that favours measurable quantity over quality, and rigidity over flexibility in the way services are provided (Cunningham and James 2011).
- Funding of ASD, moreover, moves away from longer term more flexible block grants to short-term, competitively-based program financing tied to narrow and strict audit-oriented accountability mechanisms.



- The end result is a marketized model of thinned out and leaned out services and a system that does not constitute a true partnership between the state and nonprofit service providers but a relationship that is dominated by the funder. In this model the state is able to control nonprofit delivers at a distance through their funding and accountability arrangements, a process Shields and Evans have termed 'centralized decentralization' (1998: 13).
- There is a greatly diminished place for advocacy by nonprofit providers.
- A system where nonprofit provider accountability to the funder comes to trump all other forms of accountability.



- The delivery of settlement services through nonprofit bodies, of course, pre-dates NPM. What changed with NPM for immigrant settlement agencies is reduced autonomy for providers, the tight control of programming by the state, a narrowed role in society, and funding instability (Evans, Richmond and Shields 2005).



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