Where Do Migrants Rent in Vancouver: Mapping Rental Listings on the Chinese Craigslist

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The relationship between immigrants and housing is increasingly polarized in public discourse. On one hand, immigrants are stigmatized as scapegoats for Canada's housing crisis, blamed for rising unaffordability in major cities. On the other, recent immigrants are disproportionately vulnerable to housing insecurity, a concern recognized in Canada's National Housing Strategy. Adding to this tension is immigrants' use of home-language rental platforms – rather than sites like Craigslist which operate in the host country's dominant language – a practice that raises questions about information exclusivity and its consequences for residential segregation. This study compares online rental listings on Vanpeople/人在温哥华 (Chinese) against those on Craigslist (English) to examine whether linguistic segmentation creates distinct rental submarkets. Using web-scraped listings from October 2022 to September 2023, it addresses two key questions: (1) Does the supply of rental information differ across these platforms, and (2) how do differences online compare to real-world settlement patterns? Research on rental markets has largely focused on English-language platforms, overlooking how immigrants navigate housing through home-language sites. The rental market's signature dominance of informal agreements and high turnover further obscure immigrant rental strategies, making non-English rental listings an underexplored but crucial data source. By quantifying differences in location, price, unit characteristics, as well as descriptive content across platforms, this research highlights sources of housing vulnerability among Chinese-speaking renters and explores the broader implications of linguistic segmentation in digitally-mediated housing markets. Findings will contribute to discussions on housing equity, immigrant integration, and the role of language in shaping access to rental markets. They will also provide empirically-grounded insights to counter xenophobic narratives that blame immigrants for systemic housing challenges.