

Paper Title: Obligations and Expectations: Impacts of transnational housing investment on housing consumption decisions of Ghanaian immigrants in Canada

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Abstract: Transnational housing investment is a pervasive practice among many migrant groups residing in various destination countries; including Ghanaian migrants living Canada. For many, the need to engage in transnational housing investment is beyond the standard rationale with two prime significance; symbolic and practical utility. Investment in this endeavour requires substantial financial commitments over extensive periods of time with potential consequences for various aspects of immigrants' lives in their destination areas including their housing consumption. This paper examines the impacts of such long-term commitments on housing consumption decisions among Ghanaian immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The findings show that although engagement in transnational housing is associated with constraints on immigrants' decision to enter homeownership, type of dwelling to rent and the neighbourhood choices, it was also associated with a sense of pride, success and integration into Canadian society. The paper concludes that a redefinition of the measures of immigrant housing integration in particular which narrowly considers destination parameters to one that includes transnational factors is critical in moving the debate on understanding immigrant integration in general forward.

Key words: transnational housing, housing experiences, housing consumption, integration, Ghanaian immigrants