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 A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES

## REFUGEE PATHWAYS

Guest editor HOWARD RAMOS





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# BEYOND THE WELCOME

Join us at the National Metropolis Conference's plenary session on March 16, 2017, exploring what research funded by the Government of Canada can tell us about resettling and integrating Syrian refugees.

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## LETTERS

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**The Government of Canada provides  
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# A DEFINING MOMENT IN RESPONDING TO REFUGEES

Howard Ramos, Professor, sociology, Associate Dean Research Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Dalhousie University

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During the fall of 2015 the Canadian public was captured by striking images of the lifeless body of Alan Kurdi on the shores of a Turkish beach. It vividly woke the country to a refugee crisis that had been brewing for years and brought the crisis home because he and his family were trying to make their way to Canada. It became an election issue and later a point of nation building as Canadians rose to the occasion to support refugees.

The crisis sparked individuals, communities, academics, business leaders, politicians and service provider organizations to act quickly to welcome unprecedented numbers of refugees in a short time. This was something not seen for at least a generation or two. Now, almost a year later this issue of *Canadian Diversity/Diversité canadienne* examines the global refugee crisis and Canada's response.

Articles in this issue come from a wide range of perspectives and sectors and focus on the Syrian crisis but also look at issues facing refugees more generally. The issue opens with insights from John McCallum, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. He reminds readers that this is not the first time Canadians have welcomed large numbers of refugees, noting how the country received 37,000 Hungarians 60 years ago and 60,000 Vietnamese in the late 1970s. He also highlights the leadership, dedication and generosity displayed by not only individual Canadians but also the country's private sector. This is linked to the country's unique approach to integrating refugees through not only Government Assisted streams but also its Private Sponsor-

ship of Refugee program.

Elke Winter and Benjamin Zyla engage these issues further in their article, by offering a general context of the Syrian conflict and Canada's response. They also situate the crisis and response in relation to countries in Europe that have seen millions of migrants arrive over the last few years. They pay special attention to Sweden and Germany — who like Canada are outliers on the global stage by initial opening rather than closing borders and seeing this moment as a unique time to show humanitarianism and compassion. Whereas McCallum emphasized the role of private sponsors and the business community, they highlight the importance of local service providers in making the response to this crisis a defining moment for Canada.

In the article that I have contributed with Michael Ungar we explore the Syrian cohort of refugees demographically. Like most other refugees, this cohort is young. In fact the vast majority are under the age of 25. We argue that if this is the case, then Canadians need to focus on offering these young people access to language and learning, focus on opportunities for their social and cultural integration, and consider their long-term physical and mental wellbeing. We argue it is likewise important to have systematic information and evidence to create targeted interventions and generate evidence-based policy. Only then can we assure that the immense potential of these young people is tapped for the benefit of their own communities and Canada as a whole.

The potential of refugees is also analysed by Jack Jedwab and Lori Wilkinson in their article. Using General Social Survey data they examine the intersection of social, cultural, linguistic and economic dimensions of integration to Canada. They do this by comparing refugees to economic stream immigrants. Generally they challenge many popular conceptions of refugees. Although they find that refugees earn less than economic stream immigrants and are less trusting, over the long run refugees are more active in the labour force with higher rates of employment and have a greater sense of belonging. They find that money doesn't buy belonging and social integration is not just about getting a job.

Related, a number of articles in this issue focus on attracting refugees and newcomers to smaller centres around the country. This is noted by Minister McCallum as well as Winter and Zyla. The issue is explored fully by Naomi Alboim's contribution. She has years of experience in the area, both as a policy maker and leading academic researcher in the field. In her article she offers an overview of how to attract and retain newcomers in secondary regions. Like Jedwab and Wilkinson she shows that it isn't just about jobs.

Articles by Michaela Hynie and Tina Changoor as well as Ashley Korn and Philippe Raphael contest this. Although they concede that many factors matter, they emphasize that long term success in resettlement and integration is based on employment first and foremost. Hynie and Changoor explore this by looking at barriers to employment, such as lack of language skills or lack of recognition of degrees. They also look at how under- and un-employment contribute to mental and physical health stress. Korn and Raphael also examine employment issues, but focus on Government Assisted Refugees. In doing so they echo the same barriers and note the importance of employment programs and the role of service provider organization in ensuring the integration of refugees.

A core issue of employment is language. Nathalie Piquemal and Yves Labrèche, in their article, examine how it is also crucial to other forms of integration. In particular they look at Francophone refugees, largely from Africa, as "involuntary minorities" in Anglophone communities. Like Jedwab and Wilkinson, they explore what fosters or hinders the development of a sense of belonging and intercultural dialogue and exchange. They emphasize the importance of offering people a strong understanding of the issues and challenges associated with ethnic and cultural diversity.

Understanding culture and diversity is not only important for economic and social and cultural integration, it is also a major factor in accessing services. Virginia Lane and Hassan Vatanparast's article analyses this by considering optimal healthcare services models for newcomers. They question whether they should be centralized in hubs or more localized across centres. In exploring these issues, like Piquemal and Labrèche, they show that it is not only important to recognize

the lack of familiarity newcomers have with the healthcare system, but it is essential for the dominant community and service providers to understand the unique needs of newcomers. It is a two way street.

The last article in this issue is by Fariborz Birjandian, who offers a powerful auto-ethnographic perspective as a refugee, settlement provider, and contributor to policy development. Like Lane and Vatanparsat he advocates for a holistic approach. He offers a personal narrative of how providing a seamless system of support is key to helping refugees overcome their past traumas, confront their fears, and realize their hopes of a new life. It is fundamental to successful integration. He also reminds readers that the refugee crisis is a global one, with refugees from far too many contexts, and Canada like other developed countries has a responsibility to respond and take action to prevent the creation of refugees in the first place. That is, for thinking about the crisis from pre- to post-arrival and truly investigating and alleviating its root causes.

Overall the articles in this issue remind readers that Canada has a rich history of responding to refugee crises and that it is a leader in integrating newcomers. At the same time, contributions show that despite its many successes, newcomers to the country still face many obstacles and there is a continued need to research and tackle them to make the country, if not the world, more equitable and open to refugees and newcomers.

# RESETTLING SYRIAN REFUGEES: A NATIONAL PROJECT

The Honourable **JOHN MCCALLUM**, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, was first elected to the House of Commons in 2000. He was re-elected in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2015.

Mr. McCallum has previously served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, and member of the Standing Committee on Finance. He served as Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions) from January to May 2002. From May 2002 to December 2003, he served as Minister of National Defence and, in 2003, as Minister of Veterans Affairs. In July 2004, he was appointed Minister of National Revenue and Chair of the Expenditure Review Committee by Prime Minister Paul Martin. He recently served as the Critic for Citizenship and Immigration, Multiculturalism, and Seniors.

Before entering politics, Mr. McCallum was Senior Vice President and Chief Economist of the Royal Bank of Canada. Mr. McCallum worked as a professor of economics at McGill University (1987-94), as well as at the Université du Québec à Montréal (1982-87), Simon Fraser University (1978-82), and the University of Manitoba (1976-78).

He is the author or co-author of eight books or monographs, and has written on fiscal and monetary issues, comparative macro-economic performance of OECD countries, Canada-U.S. economic integration, and other economic issues. A native of Montréal, Mr. McCallum obtained a Bachelor of Arts from Cambridge University, a Diplôme d'études supérieures from the Université de Paris, and a doctorate in economics from McGill University. Mr. McCallum and his wife, Nancy Lim, have three children.

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**Our national effort to resettle thousands of Syrian refugees in Canada has helped write a new chapter in Canada's history as a welcoming beacon for newcomers.**

**The resettlement and integration of refugees has been critical to building our nation, as refugees and their descendants have become contributing members of Canadian society.**

**We've seen that engaging Canadians, and giving them a chance to display their generosity in service of a national project, has led to an overwhelmingly supportive response.**

**Internationally, we have taken a leadership role in protecting vulnerable individuals, and are sharing our experiences and lessons learned.**

As much as our national effort to resettle thousands of Syrian refugees in Canada over the past few months has been unprecedented in so many ways, it has also been part of a great Canadian tradition – one embedded in our country's DNA.

Since November, Canadians of all walks of life and in every part of the country have worked together to bring victims of a brutal civil war and vicious acts of terrorism to our diverse, peaceful and welcoming land, and to help them begin new lives here.

By doing so on such a scale and in such a short period of time, we have helped to write a new chapter in Canada's long history as a haven for people from around the world escaping persecution and violence.

It is a notably rich history.

Over the decades, many have sought and found refuge in Canada: Hungarians in the 1950s; Vietnamese in the late 1970s; refugees from Kosovo in the 1990s; and others from African and Middle Eastern countries, and countless other troubled places around the world, in more recent years.

Canadian history also helps to explain how and why this country became such a welcoming beacon for all newcomers, including refugees.

More than 125 years ago, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of our greatest Prime Ministers, said this of our nation:

“There is no longer any family here but the human family. It matters not the language people speak, or the altars at which they kneel.”

That positive outlook toward harmonious diversity still resonates today among Canadians of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is reflected in our approach on refugee resettlement.

In contrast with the populations of many other countries, Canadians by and large believe that our tolerance, and our welcoming attitude toward those in need of protection, make our own country better and stronger.

We believe that the successful resettlement and integration of individuals and families fleeing war and persecution has been critical to building our nation. I would argue that we do not only believe these things, but that we have actually witnessed this particular nation-building effect over and over again throughout our country's history.

From the 37,000 Hungarians who came to Canada 60 years ago, to the 60,000 Vietnamese boat people who arrived almost four decades ago, to the thousands and thousands of refugees we have welcomed from different places around the world in

the years between and since, we have consistently seen refugees and their descendants become tremendously productive and contributing members of our society and our economy.

That is one of the reasons we confidently and enthusiastically encourage refugees to apply to become Canadian citizens. Many do, as do many of their children, which means that citizenship is passed along from first to second generation refugees. Canada is quite exceptional in the world in that citizenship is an important part of our refugee resettlement process, not least because about 85 per cent of those who are eligible to become Canadian citizens take up that citizenship.

I expect that the Syrian refugees will be no exception to this notable phenomenon that has brought so many benefits to this country.

Canada fulfilled its commitment to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February, and we continue to welcome refugees from Syria throughout 2016 and beyond. In addition, my department will make every effort to finalize the processing of the privately sponsored Syrian refugee applications that we received before March 31, by the end of 2016 or early in 2017.

As we do so, we also continue to learn important lessons from our historic national effort.

It has been an effort made possible only thanks to an unprecedented collaboration among different levels of government, NGOs, service provider organizations, the public sector, the private sector and, unique to Canada, private sponsors of refugees. This project has also been embraced with enthusiasm by Canadians in communities large and small across the country. I am glad to be the only immigration minister in the world with the major challenge of trying to deliver enough refugees quickly enough to satisfy the remarkable generosity of Canadians who want to sponsor them.

That enthusiasm speaks volumes about our country, and about the general view by Canadians of the Syrian refugee effort. I cannot overstate how inspiring it has been to witness both the generosity of Canadians in that effort, as well as the heartfelt expressions of gratitude from the resettled refugees toward Canada and Canadians. I have grown even more confident as I have met personally with many Syrian refugees in Canada that this gratitude will translate into a determination among these new arrivals and their descendants to give back to this country over the years and decades to come.

Indeed, there has been something of a “virtuous circle” in our experience of resettling Syrian refugees. We've seen that engaging Canadians, and giving them a chance to display their generosity in the service of a national project, has led to an overwhelmingly supportive response.

In all stages of this project, we have embraced an open dialogue with Canadians, whose support in return has re-energized our sponsorship community. This has allowed us to do more as a government, which in turn has helped to reinforce, and even broaden, that ongoing public support for the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

The leadership, dedication and generosity displayed by Canada's private sector employers in this effort also deserves to be highlighted. So many employers deserve thanks and congratulations for the important and dedicated role they have played in our effort to welcome Syrian refugees, by giving them the opportunity to better integrate into Canadian society and to contribute to our economy.

They have done this by helping the newcomers secure housing, offering them jobs and training, mentoring newcomers formally and informally, providing direct material support, offering services at affordable rates, and providing time off or flexible work schedules to newcomers so they may attend the language training classes that are so critical for their integration into Canadian life.

We have also witnessed our Canadian private sector demonstrate great generosity with financial contributions to support refugees in communities across Canada, as many corporate donors have heeded our call to action and contributed millions of dollars so far to this cause.

Of course, the important work to help all Syrian refugees fully integrate into Canadian society is also ongoing through the efforts of federally-funded service provider organizations, community and charitable organizations, private sponsors, communities across Canada, and different levels of government.

In 2016-17, the government is allocating \$38.6 million in additional funding to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees who will need settlement services to help them successfully integrate into Canadian society. Securing permanent housing for Syrian refugees has been a key priority. As of mid-May, more than 98% of government-assisted Syrian refugees had moved into permanent places to stay.

The great levels of energy and enthusiasm, not to mention the generous, open-hearted responses of Canadians toward our new arrivals, that have sustained this national project over the past several months are continuing, as our project focuses more and more on settlement and integration. Many programs and services are available to refugees to help them become participating members of Canadian society as quickly as possible. These federally-funded services, provided by specialized non-governmental organizations, include:

- assistance upon entering Canada;
- counselling and cultural orientation;

- information and orientation; referral to community resources;
- translation and interpretation;
- language training; and job-related services.

Through our Private Sponsorship of Refugee Program, which is unique in the world, many private citizens and organizations are stepping up to support our efforts. In our national effort to resettle Syrian refugees, private sponsors have been invaluable partners in welcoming and helping to integrate our new arrivals, and — even after only a few months in our country — so many of those newcomers speak of their sponsors as their Canadian family. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi recently said that our private sponsorship program could serve as a model for other countries around the world facing refugee resettlement challenges.

Indeed, one important thing that Canada has shown through our efforts in resettling Syrian refugees, is that we stand prepared to work together with our international partners, and all interested parties around the world, to take a leadership role in helping to ensure the protection of these vulnerable individuals, and to sharing our experiences and our lessons learned in this area.

As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said:

“Canada is committed to playing a positive and constructive role in the world in order to advance Canadian interests and make meaningful contributions to solving global challenges.”

I am very glad that our ongoing national effort to resettle Syrian refugees has been a positive example of this commitment.

# PATHWAYS INTO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS AND SOME ESCAPE ROUTES OUT

**ELKE WINTER** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Ottawa and research director of the thematic focus Migration, Ethnic Pluralism and Citizenship at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Citizenship and Minorities (CIRCEM). She just published *Report on Citizenship: Canada* at the European Union Democracy Observatory on Citizenship ([eudo-citizenship.eu](http://eudo-citizenship.eu)). Her current projects examine the integration experiences of recent Canadian citizens, the securitization of Muslims in the media, and the social acceptance of refugees in Canada and Germany.

**BENJAMIN ZYLA** is Professor in the school of International Development & Global Studies at the University of Ottawa and co-director of the Failed States Research Network at the Centre for International Policy Studies (CIPS). His research concentrates on failed states, the security-development nexus, the securitization of migration as well as Canada's foreign & development policy.

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In this paper, we construct a timeline to the arrival of 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada in February 2016. We first provide some background information on the conflict in Syria. Correlating UNHCR data and major political interventions, we then draw a rough portrait of the refugee flows from Syria into the neighboring countries and Europe. Finally, we sketch out the situation that led to the acceptance of Syrian refugees in Canada and offer a preliminary portrait of those who arrived.

## BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT<sup>1</sup>

In March 2011, three months after the Arab Spring began in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya (Henry & Jang, 2012: 16), fifteen Syrian schoolchildren were arrested and tortured for writing on a wall the anti-regime slogan: "The people want the overthrow of the regime" (Danahar, 2013). This event sparked massive outrage across the country, notably in Homs and Damascus, protests and uprisings against President Bashar al-Assad began (CBC News, 2014; Danahar, 2013; Henry & Jang, 2012: 214), eventually leading to a civil war that has been

called by some as "the worst humanitarian crisis of our time" (Amnesty International, 2015; Ban, 2015). In the years leading to the uprising, Assad's opposition was fragmented and struggled to form a united front. The opposition was made up of Islamist, liberal, leftist and nationalist figures and factions that initially had difficulties maintaining a conspicuous profile and was largely disconnected by their varying grievances (Hokayem, 2013: 74). At the same time, President Assad assembled a strong, militarized front comprised mainly of the Syrian Armed Forces (Syria's national army), the National Defence Force (a unit made up exclusively of Alawites), a

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1 We thank Chelsea McManus and Charlotte Murret-Labarthe for their research assistance. Chelsea has helped putting together the timeline of refugee flows; Charlotte has helped gathering facts related to the arrival of Syrian refugees in Canada.

pro-government militia led by members of Assad's extended family, the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Malantowicz, 2013: 57). In response to this military build up, rebel forces rallied together to form the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in July 2011 to support the protesting civilians. The government responded to regime critics with high levels of brutality in hopes of subjugating those who protested The President's rule (Adams, 2015, p.6). The FSA gradually seized control of various towns and villages and surprised the government with their military capacity and resilience.

## THE REFUGEE CRISIS

In June 2011, the civil war reached a military impasse while Syrians started to flee their country to neighboring states in light of the escalation of violence and worsening living conditions. In 2016, an estimated 13.5 million Syrians were in need of humanitarian assistance and 4.8 million Syrians sought refuge in other countries, with another 6.5 million internally displaced (World Vision, 2016; MercyCorps, 2016; Barnard, 2016). The majority of Syrian refugees have fled to neighbouring countries like Jordan and Lebanon, as well as the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq. In addition, more than two million Syrians have attempted to travel across the Mediterranean Sea to seek refuge in Europe.

In 2013, most notably Germany and Sweden agreed to re-settle Syrian refugees (roughly 5,000 each, temporarily in the case of the former, permanently in the case of the latter). At the same time, there appeared first reports in December 2013 that fighters seized parts of Ramadi, not far from the capital Baghdad in Iraq. A month later (Jan. 2014) Syrian rebels and the Islamic Front launched an offensive against ISIS. In mid 2014, ISIS intensified its military campaigns in both Syria and Iraq announcing a Caliphate stretching from Aleppo in northwest Syria to eastern Iraq. As a result, 500,000 people fled the city of Mosul, and the United States commenced an air-campaign to contain ISIS. Disregard strike through here, the stream of refugees started to take a significant burden on the refugee camps. In December, the World Food Program (WFP) announced a suspension of food vouchers in refugee camps due to a lack of funding, which aggravated the humanitarian crisis. Six months later (June 2015), the UN was forced to announce a funding shortage for its agencies as well as NGOs providing immediate assistance on the ground, with only 23% of funding requirements met at that point. Against this backdrop, and in light of suffering refugees being televised on TV, the German government announced in August 2015 that it would temporarily accept roughly 800,000 refugees, which came on the so-called Balkan route (see map) passing through countries like Macedonia, Serbia, Austria, etc. Months of

what seem somewhat uncontrolled flows of refugees arrived in European countries, resulting in temporary border closures among the EU member states. For example, Hungary closed its border with Serbia and subsequently Croatia. Sweden also started border controls in November 2015 after roughly 10,000 migrants arrived per week. Part of the challenge was that among this large number of refugees were not only Syrians but also refugees from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia (see table for details). While the European Union had significant difficulties in finding a solution to the refugee challenge, it was finally able in March 2016 to reach a complex agreement with Turkey that would host those refugees in Turkey rather than in the EU. Furthermore, it is obvious that as the crisis in Syria dragged on and as European countries were restricting their family reunification programs, the percentage of women and children among the refugees increased (see graphic). In fact, 75% of those fleeing Syria are women and children (*Lifeline Syria*).

## ARRIVAL OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN CANADA

In Canada, by the end of 2014, only 1,285 Syrians had been approved for Canadian refugee status, and just under 1,100 had travelled to Canada (Mas, 2015). At the beginning of 2015, Stephen Harper's Conservative government made a pledge to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next three years. 60% of them would be privately sponsored, and 40% would be sponsored by the government (Mas, 2015). Priority would also be given to individuals who belong to an ethnic, religious or sexual minority (Mas, 2015). Between 2011 and 2015, public interest in the refugee crisis had been modest to say the least. However, things changed dramatically on 3 September 2015, when the body of Alan Kurdi, 3, was washed up on the Turkish shore and it became known that he and his drowned family had been trying to come to Canada. By then Canada had accepted 2,500 refugees from Syria<sup>1</sup>, and some 20,000 from Iraq. Because of Alan Kurdi's tragic death Canadians came to realize that the "refugee crisis" was not merely a European problem, but rather that there is a direct relationship between the lack of options that refugees have and their willingness to take desperate measures. Elected in October of 2015, Justin Trudeau's Liberal government promised to bring in an additional 25,000 refugees with a budget of up to 678 million dollars. 15,000 of the refugees were to be sponsored by the government, while the other 10,000 were to be privately sponsored (Wherry, 2014; Government of Canada, 2016). Originally, all refugees were to arrive by the end of 2015; that goal was finally attained on February 27<sup>th</sup> 2016 (*CBC News*, 2016b). Currently, 32,700 Syrian refugees have been resettled into Canada under the Liberal government (Government of Canada, 2016).

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1 Under the Conservatives, a total 3,089 Syrian refugees have been resettled into Canada (*The Canadian Press*, 2016).

In order to bring Syrian refugees to Canada, with the help of the United Nations Refugee Agency, the government first identified those who desire migrating to Canada. Potential individuals are carefully screened, and the selected cases are then processed. Currently, there are three different programs by which Syrian refugees can come to Canada: *Government-Assisted Refugee Resettlement Program*, *Privately Sponsored Refugee Resettlement Program* and *Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugee Resettlement Program*. At the time of writing, there are 15,355 Government-Assisted Refugees, 9,494 Privately Sponsored Refugees and 2,341 Blended Visa-Office Referred Refugees (Government of Canada, 2016). In either case, resettlement into Canada can take six months or more, a medical examination, background check and security check are necessary, travel costs and medical examination costs are covered by a loan to the refugees and loan payments must begin within 30 days of arrival in Canada (Government of Canada, 2016<sup>3</sup>). Once in Canada, refugees are being hosted and/or introduced to their sponsors if they have any. After that the long journey to settlement and integration begins (Government of Canada, 2016).

## A PRELIMINARY PORTRAIT

At the time of writing, almost 75% of the Syrian refugees are located in three provinces: Ontario (42%), Québec (18%) and Alberta (13%) (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2016), and have been spread out within 285 “welcoming communities” (Government of Canada, 2016). 49% of these refugees are women and 51% of them are men. 44% of them are aged between 20 and 59 and 53% are under 20 (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2016). Only 46% of the refugees have self-reported that they knew one of Canada’s official languages (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2016). Among those who are older than 18, 69% have secondary education or less, 21% have some university or more, and 10% have a formal trade certification or an apprenticeship certificate (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2016). Information regarding the education levels of children is not given by the government, but, given the fact that Syrian infrastructures and social services have collapsed (World Vision, 2016; Omer, 2015) and that the current civil war that began in 2011 has “reversed 10 years of progress in education for Syrian children” (World

Vision, 2016), it seems safe to assume that the education levels of those under 18 would be low, if not lower than that of the older refugees. The Government of Canada also does not offer information regarding the religion of the Syrian refugees. However, we do know that 87% of the Syrian population is Muslim: 74% of them Sunni Muslim and 13% Shia Muslim. 10% of the population is Christian and 3% is Druze (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015; Danahar, 2013, p. 374).

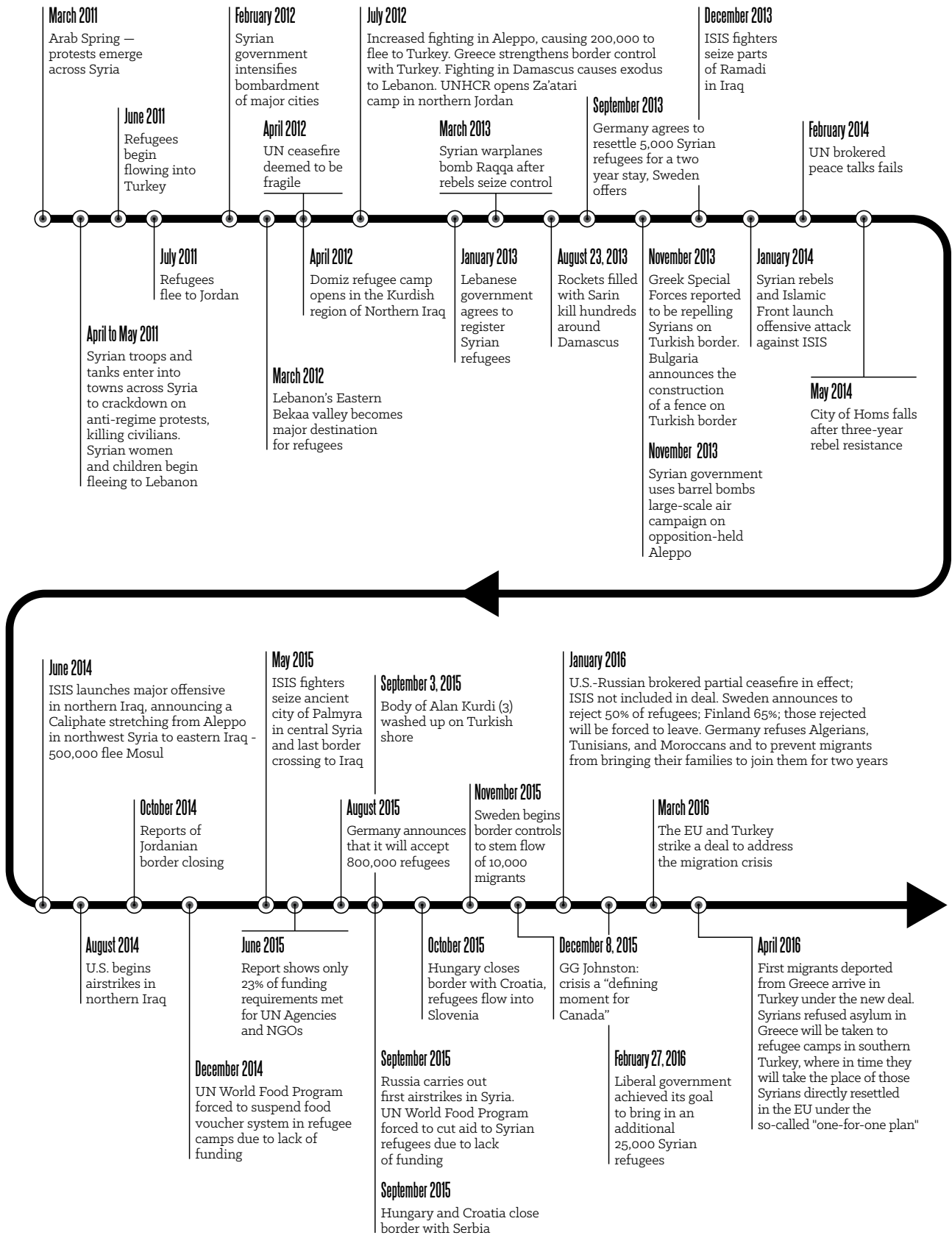
In February 2016, Immigration Minister John McCallum acknowledged that “the federal government alone is really bad at long-term integration of groups such as these” (Furey, 2016). Rather, local providers were those who knew best what to do to help refugees and meet their needs (Furey, 2016). The challenges ahead are abundant: the accepted refugees have fled war, many have lived in refugee camps, they had limited or interrupted education, and many have lost family members. Exacerbating the problem, we know that refugees in Canada tend to be chronically under-employed (Krahn, Derwing, Mulder, & Wilkinson, 2000) and that many refugee youth experience racial discrimination and bullying (Baker, Price & Walsh, 2016)<sup>4</sup>. The arrival of the Syrian refugees may thus indeed be a “defining moment” for Canada, as underlined by Governor General David Johnston. On the one hand, their integration tests the country’s commitment to diversity, inclusiveness and tolerance. On the other, it speaks to the refugees’ courage, resilience, and adaptive capabilities. As such, the arrival of more than 25,000 Syrian refugees is also a good opportunity to remember that this nation’s success was built on welcoming of others, from helping the first European settlers to survive to accommodating ethnically diverse migrants from all four corners of the world. From this perspective, lending a hand seems just a “normal” thing to do.

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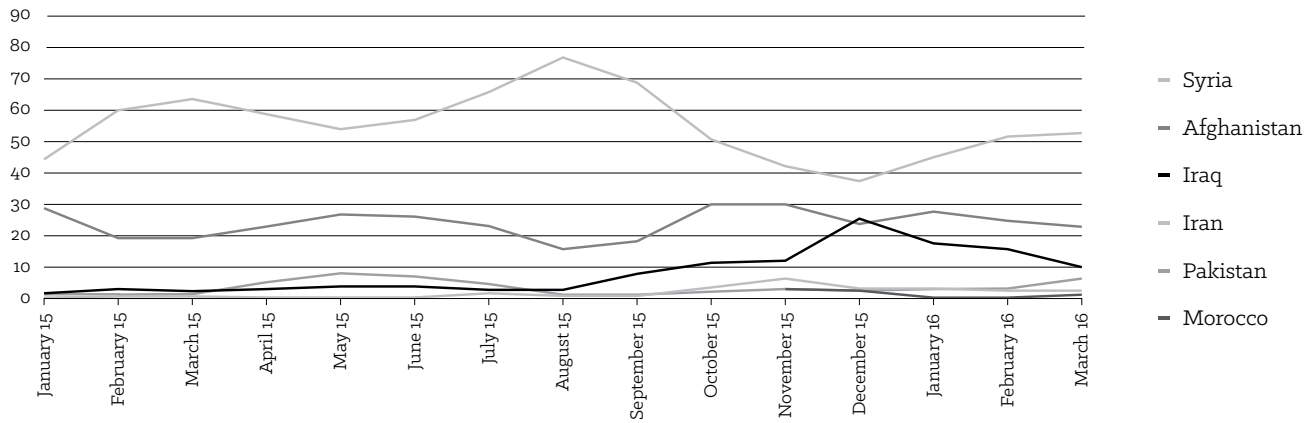
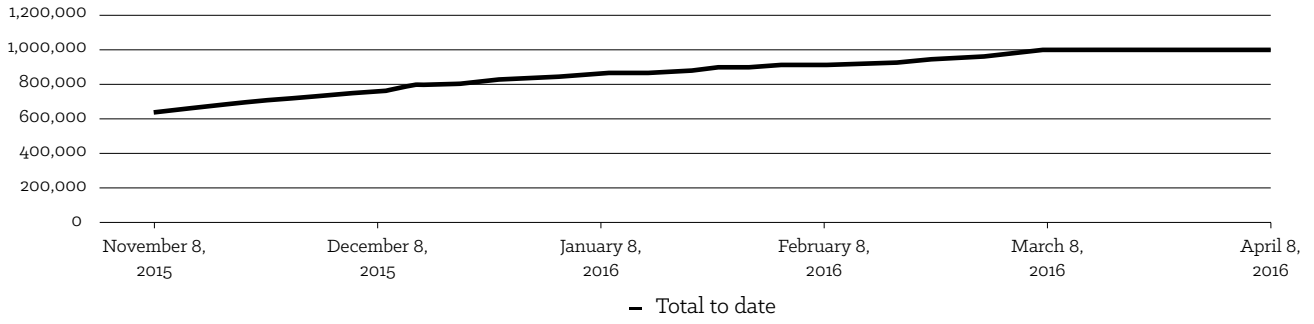
3 The main differences of these programs are the amount of time financial support will be given, as well as by whom it is given. Although government-assisted refugees benefit from services delivered by the communities they are placed in, they are the sole responsibility of the federal government. They are provided with 12 months of financial support to cover the cost of food, rent and some medical services. Privately sponsored refugees receive support from a private group of Canadians for one year, or until they become financially independent. This group is responsible for the integration of the refugees as well. The Blended Visa-Office Referred program is a mix of the previous two programs, in which both the government and private groups work together in order to support and integrate refugees. They can receive up to six months of financial support from the government, followed by six months of support from a private group of individuals who have decided to sponsor them.

4 See Ramos’ and Unger’s contribution to this volume.

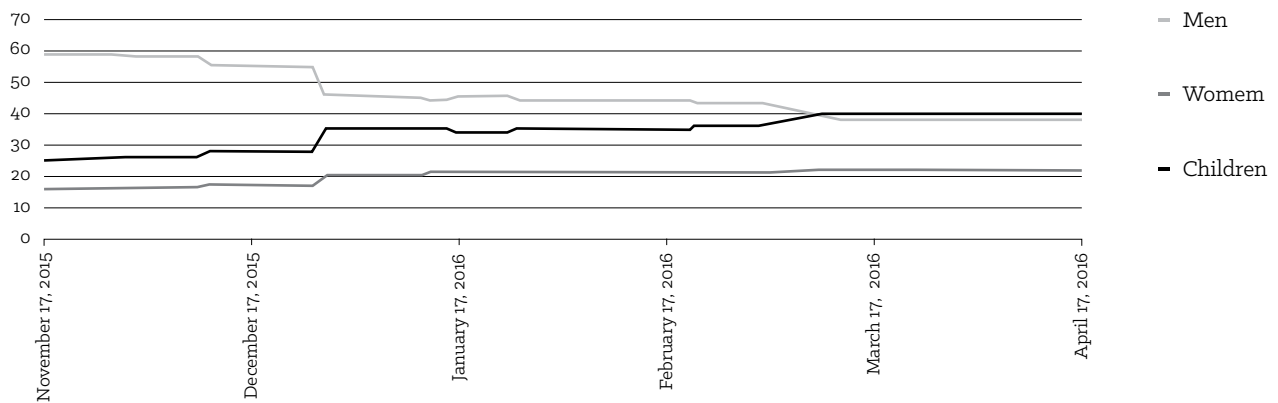
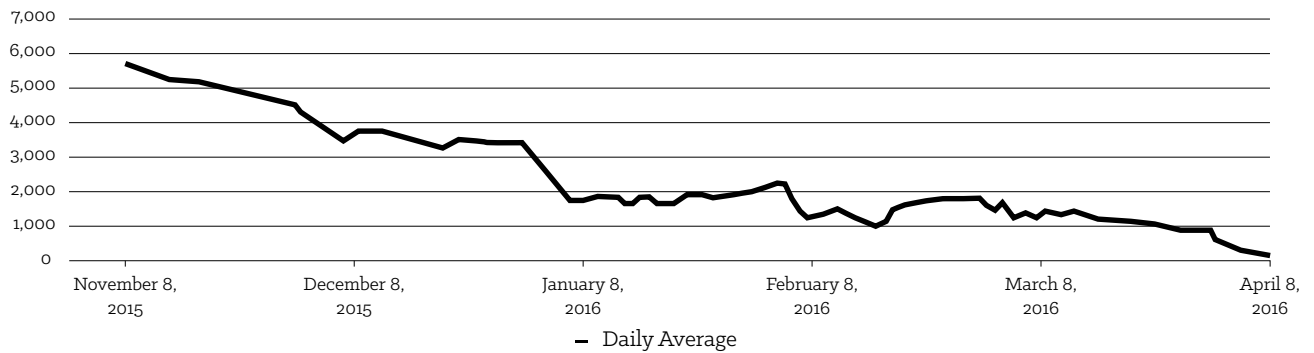
A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS



### NUMBER OF MIGRANT ARRIVALS IN GREECE



### DAILY AVERAGE OF MIGRANT ARRIVALS IN GREECE



- Schengen countries
- EU but non-Schengen
- Non-EU, non-Schengen
- Border controls
- Fence
- Fence under construction
- ▨ Fence under construction
- ~ Section of river Drava



- Closed border
- Fence under construction
- Border controls



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# FOCUSING ON REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**HOWARD RAMOS** is a Professor of sociology, and Associate Dean of Research in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Dalhousie University. His research on immigration focuses on non-economic categories of immigrants, migration to secondary cities and regions, data and methods to measure integration, and evaluation of immigration programs.

**MICHAEL UNGAR** is the Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience, and Scientific Director of the Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts Network at Dalhousie University. He has authored 14 books and more than 135 peer reviewed publications on the topic of resilience and the social ecologies that facilitate access to promotive and protective factors

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Canada made a commitment to offering refuge to over 25,000 Syrians between November 2016 and the end of March 2017. It placed priority on admitting families, those from minority religious groups, and people fleeing persecution because of their sexual orientation. This has meant that the majority of those admitted are children and youth. It also means that for Canada to truly profit from its investment in this cohort refugees, that is to successfully integrate them, it also needs to invest in research on language and learning, social and cultural integration and wellbeing. Without it, evidence-based interventions that contribute to successful integration could be missed.

Canada has had a mixed record when it comes to welcoming those in need of refuge. During the Second World War it refused thousands of Jewish Refugee escaping the Holocaust (Abella and Troper 2012). After the war Canada acceded to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Since then the country has committed to receiving cohorts of refugees from around the world with significant cohorts coming from Eastern Europe and South East Asia, mostly Vietnam, fleeing communism in the 60s and 70s as well as Somalia and Sri Lanka in the 90s and the turn of the millennium.

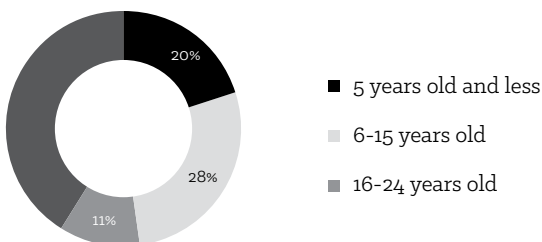
In the fall of 2015, during the heat of a federal election, the country was deeply moved by images of refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict. No image influenced Canada's commitment more than the picture of three year-old Alan Kurdi's lifeless body washed up on a Turkish shore.

During the election the opposition Liberal Party, under Justin Trudeau, made a commitment to offering refuge to 25,000 Syrians by the end of the year if elected. In November, with the Liberal's enjoying a majority government, Immigration Minister John McCallum set out to honour that commitment. Logistical challenges, and the need to mobilize unprecedented resources, however, meant that an overly optimistic timeframe had to be extended to the end of February, 2016. Despite the delay, Canadians responded to the challenge of resettling so many families quickly with local communities committing their time, money, and resources to support refugees. Thousands of local groups took on the responsibility of privately sponsoring families themselves.

Though the political landscape shifted, the new government kept the previous regime's framework for prioritizing families,

those from minority religious groups, and people fleeing persecution because of their sexual orientation. This meant that by March 1<sup>st</sup>, the country had accepted just over 26,000 refugees, with 58% of the Syrian cohort being under the age of 25 (48% were 15 years old and younger) (IRCC 2016). An additional 10,000 refugees are expected to arrive before the end of 2016.

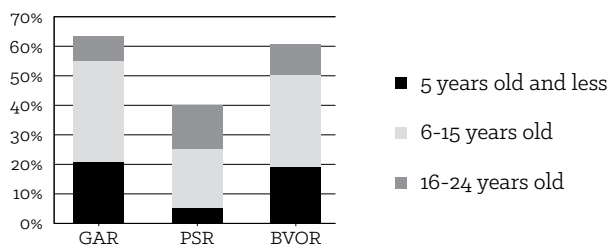
FIGURE 1: PERCENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEES BY AGE GROUP



Source: IRCC Permanent Residents as of March 2016.  
Date request tracking number: CR-16-0095

The Syrian refugee cohort is largely made-up of those who are Government Assisted (GAR) and who will receive federal benefits for one year after arriving, those that are Privately Sponsored (BSR), who receive support from citizens and communities for one year after arriving, and those who are Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR), those who get a mix of government and private support. When you look at the proportion of children and youth in these groups, we see that 66% of GAR, 44% of PSR and 64% of BVOR fall into these age groups.

FIGURE 2: PERCENT OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH BY AGE GROUP AND CATEGORY



Source: IRCC Permanent Residents as of March 2016.  
Date request tracking number: CR-16-0095

When we talk about Syrian refugees, we are largely talking about children and youth who have lived in refugee camps and have had limited or interrupted education. Despite such obstacles, we can expect many to do well based on the experiences of other refugee cohorts that arrived in Canada (Wilkinson 2002). In fact refugee children have higher rates of post-secondary education than their Canadian-born peers, with approximately 30% attending university (Hou and Bonikowska 2016).

It is unclear, however, whether we can assume that such past successes will also be seen for the Syrian cohort of refugee children and youth. Refugee children and their families are at particular risk for social and psychological problems as a result of the challenges they experience during resettlement in the destination country (Denov, 2014). Previous research has shown that refugee children and youth are likely to experience changes in family dynamics (Lewig, Arney, & Salveron, 2010), introduction to a new education system and language (Cranitch, 2010), racial discrimination and bullying, and mental health challenges pre- and post-settlement (Montgomery, 2008). Fortunately, these are all interrelated problems that are preventable with appropriate intervention.

Among Canada's priorities must be support for second language learning. Empirical evidence shows that children's fluency in either English or French and literacy skills take years to develop to the level of their monolingual peers (Paradis, in press). For this reason it is important to create refugee and Syrian focused language learning.

Social integration and family stability will also be challenging for Syrian refugees as it is for all migrants (Creese, Dyck, & McLaren, 2006). Child-rearing techniques common in Syria – such as leaving children with their siblings – will pose challenges to refugee families (Lewig *et al.*, 2010). Child refugees also frequently become “cultural brokers” for their parents, shifting power dynamics (Cottrell & VanderPlaat, 2011) or introducing new understandings of children's rights. Despite the many advantages of settling in a new country, the associated changes to the structure and power balance of the family may negatively impact refugee children.

Beyond these problems which are shared by many different groups of refugees, there are also fears of radicalization of adolescent refugees from Syria, especially if their educational, mental, physical and social needs are not addressed immediately after resettlement (Sageman 2008). The good news is that we have the evidence-informed interventions to prevent these problems before they occur through social interventions in schools and communities and better public policies.

Hand in hand with these interventions, there is a need for investment in research and program evaluation. If we can identify the protective factors that ensure the successful resettlement of children and youth over time, we will be much more able as a country to reach out to other cohorts of forcibly displaced people. We will also be able to ensure that the immense potential of young people is tapped for the benefit of their own communities and Canada as a whole. It's for these reasons that a national coalition of researchers, service providers and federal and provincial departments of government has formed to address this challenge.

# WHEN IT COMES TO MIGRANT BELONGING AND TRUST, IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY, MONEY...: A COMPARISON OF CANADA'S REFUGEES AND ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS

**JACK JEDWAB** is presently Executive Vice President of the Association for Canadian Studies. From 1994-1998 he served as Executive Director of the Québec Region of the Canadian Jewish Congress. From 1989-96 he was Adjunct Professor in the Department of Sociology at McGill. His particular interests include demography, national identity and multiculturalism. He is the founding editor of *Canadian Diversity* Magazine. Widely published in newspapers and academic reviews, he is Canada's most quoted social researcher.

**LORI WILKINSON** is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. She specializes in immigration and refugee studies, particularly on issues related to discrimination, settlement and health among newcomers to Canada. She is currently the editor of the *Journal of International Migration and Integration* and the Director of Immigration Research West, an academic and community think-tank concerned with issues related to successful settlement and integration. Some of her recent work appears in the *Canadian Review of Sociology* (2013), *Canadian Ethnic Relations* (2013), and *Adolescent Behaviour* (2013). She has coauthored two books, *The Research Process* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition and *Understanding Social Statistics*, both published by Oxford University Press.

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Immigrant integration and settlement is often seen as a sort of linear process. But considerable research questions this notion. Does social integration occur at a quicker pace amongst those immigrants who perform or adjust better economically? Employing data from Statistics Canada's 2013 General Social Survey (GSS Cycle 27) on social identity, the authors assess the social integration of newcomers by virtue of the economic category under which they were admitted. They describe newcomer trajectories that are often multifaceted and complex.

Over time the economic standing of skilled workers and refugees improves. On average, while refugees lag behind skilled workers on almost all economic indicators, they do better when it comes to their sense of belonging. The authors conclude that the higher sense of belonging on the part of Canada's refugees is connected to the reasons for their departure from their country of origin.

Research has shown that integration is far from linear. What we don't know is whether or not social integration occurs at a quicker pace amongst those immigrants who perform or adjust better economically. Canada's immigrant selection process favors skilled workers with a view that they have a better opportunity to secure employment and presumably hold an advantage over others when it comes to integration.

By consequence, their impact on the economy is more visibly immediate. But what about the non-economic dimensions of integration? How do immigrants fare in that regard? Using data from Statistics Canada's 2013 General Social Survey (GSS Cycle 27) on Social Identity, we compare aspects of social integration for immigrants selected in the economic category (under the points system) with refugees admitted to the country.

We contend that integration patterns do not necessarily proceed in a straight line and that the trajectories followed by migrants are often multifaceted and complex. In effect, different aspects or dimensions of integration do not follow parallel lines and hence identifying connections between them is not simple.

Why is a paper comparing economic and social integration among skilled workers and refugees needed? While there is considerable research about economic indicators among skilled and other professional workers, the link between belonging and trust merits greater attention. Does money buy trust and belonging? Perhaps this relationship is different due to the circumstances which brought skilled workers and refugees to Canada. Skilled workers tend to come for economic reasons – to earn more money, to have a better standard of living for their families and other objective reasons. Refugees, in contrast, are involuntary migrants, forced from their homelands due to extreme violence. In an alternate reality, they wouldn't be in Canada. It also means that by definition, refugees come less prepared – meaning that they are much less likely to know English or French prior to arrival which is increasingly a requirement for skilled workers. They also have lower levels of education and less work experience than economic class immigrants. They are also, on average, much younger than other immigrant groups – meaning that they have less work and educational experience than their economic class counterparts. They are also a group that has experienced extreme persecution, so we might expect that their sense of belonging and trust scores would be lower than other immigrant groups. It makes a comparative study a very interesting case to analyse.

A 2010 survey of Canadians conducted by Ekos research for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) identifies several key hurdles facing newcomers in establishing themselves in Canada. Amongst the ones that come to mind most often are language/cultural barriers (mentioned by 61% of Canadians), followed by employment (31%). Social concerns (such as housing, daycare, racism – 17%) and credential recognition (10%) were also mentioned by a number of the respondents surveyed. In this paper, we examine two key aspects to the integration process among skilled workers and refugees. We investigate various aspects related to economic integration among these two groups, followed by an examination of the sense of belonging to Canada and various kinds of trust (towards people in general, neighbors, and people at work and school) as key determinants of this type of integration. We begin with a short description of the demographic characteristics of these two groups.

## SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF REFUGEES AND ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS

Although there are a number of assumptions about the profile of refugees, they constitute a diverse group in terms of ethnic and economic backgrounds. Neither refugees nor economic immigrants are monolithic, nor does the Canadian government treat them in the same way. There are a number of programs that comprise the refugee program in Canada. The private sponsorship of refugees program (PSR) allows groups of Canadians to financially and socially sponsor refugees selected to come to Canada. The government assisted refugee program (GAR) provides federal support to individuals who are identified as refugees from abroad. Unlike the PSR program, the GAR program is run entirely by the federal government<sup>1</sup>. There are fundamental differences in the time it takes for GARs to economically and socially integrate when compared with their PSR counterparts. Unfortunately, we are not able to address these differences here.

As observed below, between 2005 and 2014 the source areas of refugees to Canada shifted considerably. In 2005, 31.8% of refugees came from Africa and the Middle East compared with 33.7% from the Asia and Pacific region and 10.5% from the United Kingdom; yet by 2014, nearly 60% came from Africa and the Middle East compared with some 18% from Asia and Pacific and 5% from Europe and the United Kingdom. Conversely, economic migrants are far more likely to come from Asian and Pacific regions than any other group (54%) in 2005, a pattern that has not significantly changed by 2014. (See chart 1.)

It's fair to assume that as a whole, the degree of vulnerability of most refugees upon arrival in Canada is greater than for economic immigrants that are frequently selected by the government on the basis of skills that are designed to be in line with existing economic needs. Recent research by Hou and Picot (2016) and by Bevelander and Pendakur (2012) confirm that the economic integration of refugees is much slower than among skilled worker and other economic immigrants.

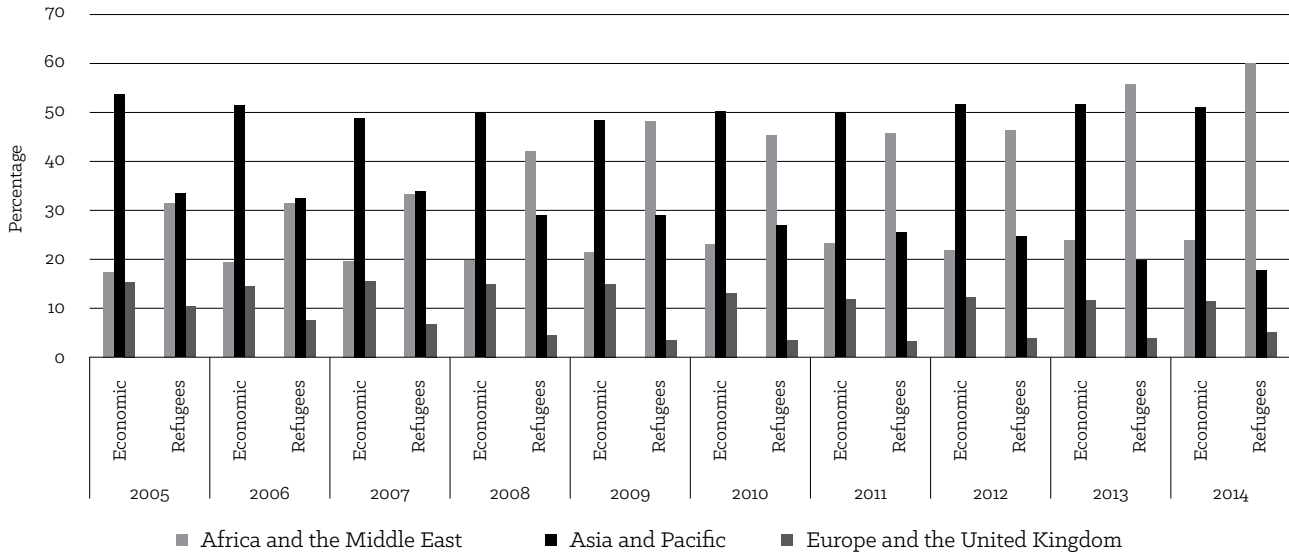
## LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION OF REFUGEES AND SKILLED WORKERS

Mastery of a country's official language is regarded as an important dimension of newcomer integration. Beiser and

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1 The refugee assistance program is actually far more complicated, with other streams of entry including the Blended Visa Office Referral Program (BVOR) and the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program. Please see Wilkinson and Garcea (2016) for additional descriptions of this program.

CHART 1: TOTAL BY SOURCE AREA (PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION) VS. REFUGEES (PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION)



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, "Facts and Figures-2014: Immigration Overview: Permanent Residents"

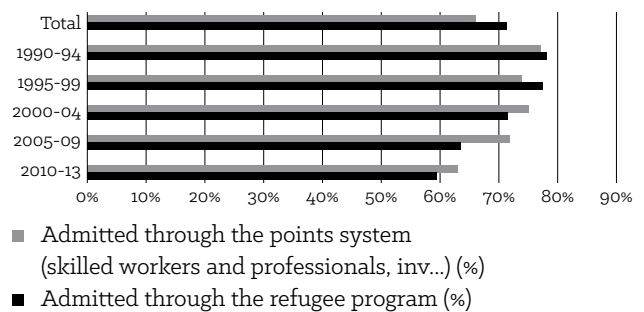
Hou (2000) noted the important role of language proficiency in unemployment and labour force participation. Data from CIC point to important differences in the extent to which economic immigrants and refugees respectively report language knowledge upon arrival in the country. More recent immigrants are far more likely to arrive with English or French language knowledge due to changes in immigration policy. In 2005, some 17% of economic immigrants spoke neither English nor French upon arrival compared with 6.8% in 2014. As for the spouses and dependants of economic immigrants, some 49.2% spoke neither English nor French upon arrival in 2005 and the share reduced to 27.4% amongst those who arrived in 2014. In the case of refugees amongst those who arrived in 2005, some 32.6% spoke neither English nor French upon arrival compared with 54.2% in 2014. This is largely due to changes in source country of origin. Refugees arriving today are far less likely to have previous exposure to English or French than cohorts arriving in the 1990s or early 2000s.

In the GSS 27 data on education levels nearly 52% of economic immigrants with university degrees in contrast with 28% of refugees. This difference is hardly surprising. Refugees come to Canada because they are forced out of their country of origin. Skilled workers, in contrast, plan to come to Canada and are rewarded in the immigration process by being awarded extra points for post-secondary education. Whether or not education has economic value after arrival in Canada has little bearing on either groups economic and social integration.

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Just as there are gaps in official language knowledge and educational attainment when refugees are compared to economic immigrants, we find that there are differences in employment status, at least during the first years in Canada. The GSS data finds that the differences in employment are eliminated between ten and fifteen years after arrival. Among refugees arriving in the period between 2010 and 2013, only 59.4% were employed compared with 63.1% of those in the skilled worker program – a 4% gap in employment. But the 1990-1994 and 1995-1999 refugee cohorts are actually more likely to be employed today than those arriving under the skilled worker program at the same time.

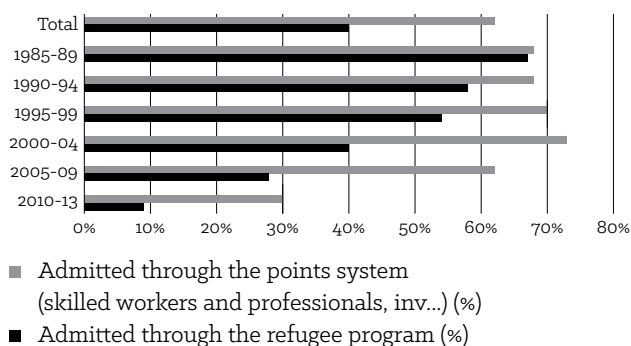
CHART 2: PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH THE REFUGEE AND POINTS SYSTEM RESPECTIVELY WORKING IN WEEK PRIOR TO THE SURVEY



Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

On the basis of household income, perhaps not surprisingly, the GSS data reveals that a considerably higher share of economic immigrants is in the upper most income bracket. In 2013, one-third of skilled workers were living in households with incomes between \$100,000 and \$149,999, compared with only 24% of refugees. That said, about 21% of refugees report income of less than \$30,000. Two-thirds of all skilled workers have incomes greater than \$60,000 per year compared with just under 50% of refugees.

**CHART 3: IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH THE REFUGEE AND POINTS SYSTEM RESPECTIVELY BY TIME OF ARRIVAL WITH A HOUSEHOLD INCOME \$60 000 AND MORE**



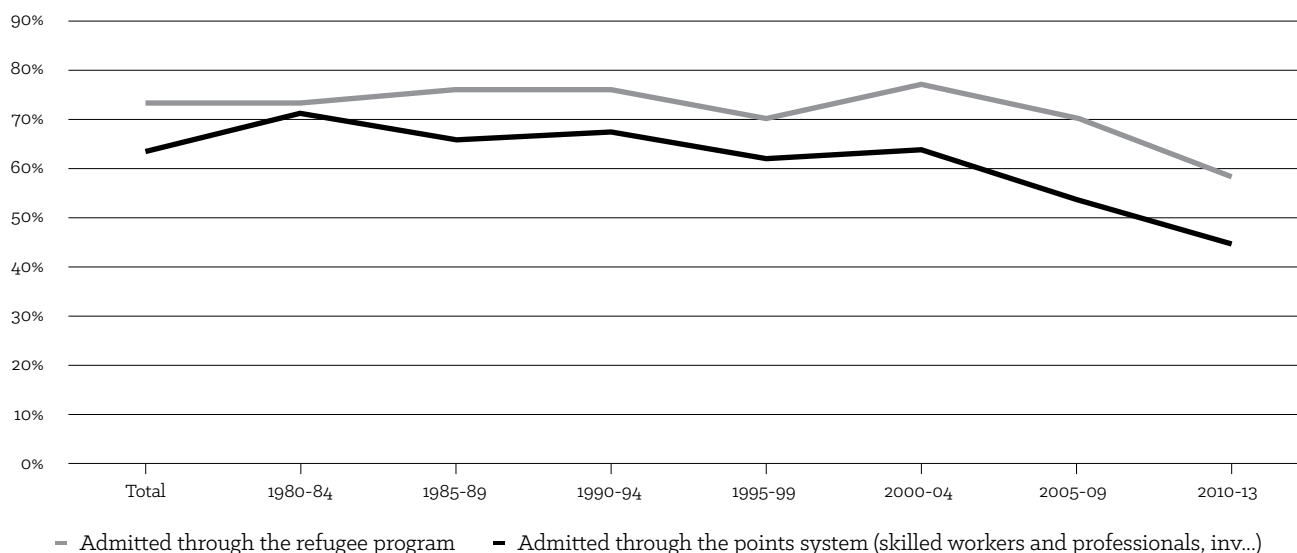
Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION: SENSE OF BELONGING

As observed above with respect to language knowledge, education and income, it might be concluded that economic immigrants might meet key dimensions of integration much faster than refugees. If indeed upon arrival refugees encounter higher levels of economic vulnerability than do economic migrants, should it follow that they encounter a different trajectory when it comes to key elements of social integration? In other words, does a stable income and job ensure social integration among newcomers? The results of the GSS are surprising.

When comparing the sense of belonging to Canada on the part of refugees and skilled workers on the basis of time of arrival, since 1980 refugees manifest higher and more positive scores on belonging than economic immigrants regardless of year of arrival. The gap is widest amongst those migrants that arrived over the past fifteen years. Among those in Canada for the longest period of time, refugees outscore skilled workers by 10% in terms of sense of belonging. Even among the most newly arrived, refugees score 13% higher than skilled workers. This is counter-intuitive because refugees are generally in precarious employment and income situations in their first three years in Canada. It could be that economic indicators are not tied to sense of belonging at all.

**CHART 4: PERCENTAGE OF REFUGEES AND SKILLED WORKERS WITH STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING BY YEAR OF ARRIVAL**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

While refugees exhibit a higher sense of belonging to Canada than economic immigrants, the former have a somewhat lesser sense of belonging to their country of origin. In comparison to other immigrants, refugees score significantly

lower in this regard. Table 3 shows that is worth noting that immigrants possess a much higher sense of belonging to Canada than to their country of origin, with 31% of refugees feeling a strong sense of belonging to their country of origin

compared with 36% of skilled workers. Perhaps this is not surprising as refugees were forced to flee their countries

involuntarily, many experiencing extreme violence, loss and death of loved ones.

TABLE 1: SENSE OF BELONGING TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND CANADA FOR IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH THE REFUGEE PROGRAM AND THE POINTS SYSTEM

Sense of belonging to...	Canada		Country of Origin	
	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)
Very strong	73.2%	63.7%	31.5%	36.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

Sense of belonging is influenced partly by area of origin. As regards sense of belonging to Canada on the basis of the source areas of immigrants, the table below reveals that refugees originating from Africa report the highest sense of

belonging to Canada. This too is interesting given that there is strong evidence that African immigrants are more likely to report experiencing racism and discrimination in Canada than other newcomers.

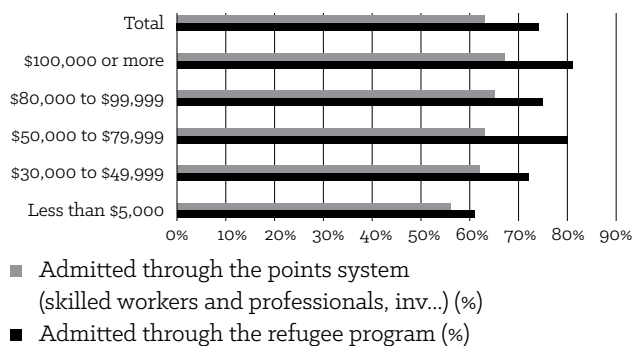
TABLE 2: VERY STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO CANADA BY SOURCE FOR IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH THE REFUGEE PROGRAM AND THE POINTS SYSTEM

Source Area	Very Strong Sense of Belonging to Canada	
	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)
Americas	69.1%	63.3%
Europe	73.9%	66.8%
Africa	80.8%	68.9%
Asia	70.7%	60.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

If income is a key indicator of integration, should it be assumed that when income differences are removed for classes of immigrants, the outcome is roughly similar levels of social integration (in this case as measured by sense of belonging to Canada)? In effect, the GSS data does not provide empirical support for the link between income and sense of belonging as regards social integration. This is due to the fact that a higher sense of belonging amongst refugees persists despite relative parity in income levels with economic immigrants. For example, nearly two-thirds of refugees who don't have income have a strong sense of belonging to Canada, compared with only 56% of skilled workers. At the other end of the income bracket, 81% of refugees with household incomes greater than \$100,000 feel a strong sense of belonging, compared with only 67% of skilled workers.

CHART 5: VERY STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO CANADA BY INCOME BRACKET, REFUGEES AND SKILLED WORKERS COMPARED



Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

## SOCIAL INTEGRATION: TRUST

Another key dimension of social integration examined here is the degree of trust on the part of immigrants with a focus on trusting people in general, trust of people in one's neighbourhood and trust of persons at work and in school. On each of these measures, the GSS 27 data reveal that refugees are less trusting than economic immigrants. Only 45% of refugees believe most people can be trusted, while nearly 60% of

skilled workers feel the same. Two-thirds of skilled worker immigrants trust people at their place of work or school compared to only 57% of refugees. Less than half of refugees trust people in their neighbourhood, while nearly two-thirds of skilled workers feel trust toward their neighbours. Perhaps this finding is not surprising as trust is a very precious commodity — something that is irrevocably extinguished when witnessing large scale social violence.

TABLE 3: TRUST LEVELS FOR IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH THE REFUGEE PROGRAM AND THE POINTS SYSTEM

	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)
Most people can be trusted	45.4%	45.4%
*People in neighbourhood	47.2%	47.2%
* Work and School	56.6%	56.6%

\* Trust 4 and 5 on a 5 point scale where 1 means "Cannot be trusted at all" and 5 means "Can be trusted a lot"

Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

With relatively few exceptions, the detailed table below reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between persons admitted via the refugee program and those admitted via the points system when it comes to gaps in trust

regardless of when they've respectively arrived in Canada. In effect, the time in Canada doesn't influence trust measures which remain consistently higher for persons admitted to the country as refugees.

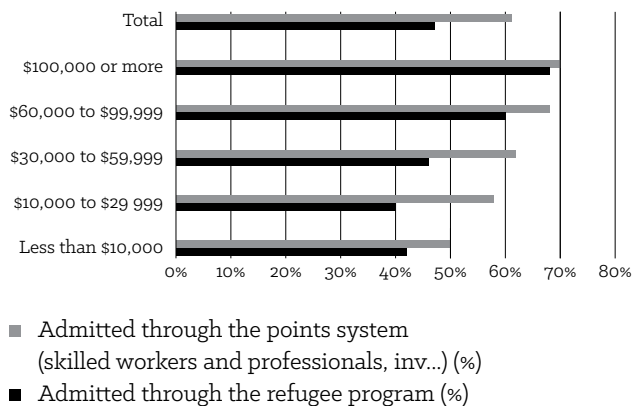
TABLE 4: TRUST LEVELS BY TIME OF ARRIVAL FOR IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH THE REFUGEE PROGRAM AND VIA THE POINTS SYSTEM

	Trust People in General		Trust - People in neighbourhood		Trust - People from work or school	
	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)	Admitted through the refugee program	Admitted through the points system (skilled workers and professionals, inv...)
TOTAL	45.4%	59.8%	47.3%	60.1%	56.6%	68.8%
1975-1979	50.0%	73.8%	39.4%	61.0%	51.7%	63.7%
1980-1984	46.9%	64.4%	46.2%	63.2%	55.8%	78.5%
1985-1989	53.3%	58.0%	57.2%	60.5%	72.4%	69.6%
1990-1994	45.2%	58.5%	52.6%	55.9%	56.2%	68.7%
1995-1999	43.8%	61.3%	42.6%	62.6%	57.2%	68.5%
2000-2004	48.8%	59.2%	54.1%	59.7%	58.6%	69.1%
2005-2009	37.2%	56.5%	32.4%	51.8%	47.1%	67.0%
2010-2013	30.0%	52.5%	35.5%	50.3%	42.3%	64.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

Unlike sense of belonging, trust measures are influenced by income bracket. In general, as income increases, so does trust, though the increase is more apparent for skilled workers than for refugees. As well, there is no income bracket where trust scores for refugees is greater than for skilled workers. Although increasing economic stability does increase trust among refugees, it never reaches parity with skilled workers. In short, money does not buy trust for refugees.

**CHART 6: VERY STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO CANADA BY INCOME BRACKET, REFUGEES AND SKILLED WORKERS COMPARED**



Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

## SOCIAL IDENTITY: SENSE OF BELONGING AND TRUST

In the case of refugees, we observed that they generally exhibit a higher sense of belonging to Canada than do economic immigrants while they feel less trusting of others. That relationship is counterintuitive as data from GSS 27 for the total population underscore the importance of strong sense of belonging to Canada as a driver of higher levels of trust of others.

**TABLE 5: DEGREE OF BELONGING TO CANADA AND LEVEL OF TRUST FOR THE TOTAL CANADIAN POPULATION**

	Very strong	Somewhat strong	Somewhat weak	Very weak
Most people can be trusted	58%	48%	42%	37%
* Trust - People in neighbourhood	65%	54%	43%	40%
* People from work or school	72%	63%	52%	53%

\* Can be trusted a lot 4 and 5

Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, General Social Survey (Cycle 27), Social Identity, 2013

Does this relationship hold when we compare economic immigrants to refugees? The data also indicates that the same is true for immigrants, but that when economic immigrants and refugees possess a similar sense of belonging to Canada, the gap of trust in others remains quite steep between the two. Amongst those possessing a very strong sense of belonging to Canada some 47% of those admitted to Canada as refugees believed that most people could be trusted. This is in marked contrast to those with a very strong sense of belonging to Canada that were admitted under the point system where 61% felt that people could be trusted.

## CONCLUSION

What we have learned is that skilled workers and refugees differ in some surprising ways. As time in Canada increases, so does the economic standing of skilled workers and refugees. Although refugees still on average lag behind skilled workers in almost all economic categories, they out-pace them in measures of sense of belonging. It is not surprising that refugees have high sense of belonging to Canada as they are fleeing vastly more dangerous and unstable situations than many skilled workers. What is surprising is that among certain groups, like Africans, sense of belonging is significantly higher—surprising considering that this group is the most likely to experience discrimination in Canada.

Less surprising is the low level of trust that refugees express relative to their economic migrant counterparts. Trust is a precious commodity. Once it is lost for any reason, it can be very difficult to regain. What is surprising is that trust is not affected by sense of belonging. Those with less trust are not necessarily more likely to have a lower sense of belonging — and vice versa. Trust is truly a distinct condition than sense of belonging.

Trust and sense of belonging, however, cannot be bought.

Having more money does not necessarily bring a stronger sense of belonging and higher levels of trust, particularly among refugees. That economic stability doesn't have as strong an influence on trust and sense of belonging is a reassuring finding in terms of social integration measures, at least among the newcomer population. And maybe this is an important consideration. Maybe Jesse J. was right "it's not about the money..."

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# ATTRACTING, RETAINING AND INTEGRATING NEWCOMERS IN SMALLER CENTRES

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Attracting, retaining and integrating newcomers in smaller centres has been an issue in Canada for more than a century. This paper briefly describes efforts that have been made in past, the factors that contribute to “welcoming communities” that may increase the numbers of immigrants choosing to go to and stay in those communities, and the actions that smaller (but perhaps not small) communities can take today to successfully attract and retain newcomers.

Attracting, retaining and integrating newcomers in smaller centres is not a new issue. With apologies to any historians reading this, I am going to give a simplified overview of how Canada has dealt with this issue over the past century and a half in just a few pages.

Once upon a time, there was a new nation coming into existence that had dreams of confederation from coast to coast. It was a huge land mass with strong neighbours to the South and a very small population concentrated in a few major centres. There were huge gaps in the middle of this country with few ways to connect the east and the west, and no easy way to get the goods Europe wanted to market.

“Build a railroad!” was the answer, but that required workers and populated stops along the way to service it and to cultivate

the products that were in ever-increasing demand at home and abroad.

“Bring in people!” was the answer, but only those who would stay where they were needed... not go into the cities, because “they were not like us” and “could not be integrated”.

That worked for a while with Mennonites and Ukrainians and Jews populating the West, happy to escape the conditions in their home countries, and to accept the incentives given to them by government to settle the land, develop the communities and provide the services needed there.

But then industrialization took hold and cities became the focal point for development. Construction workers were needed, factory workers were in demand, and the children

of the large western farmers were having difficulty finding new land to cultivate when their older siblings inherited their father's and grandfather's tracts. So they moved to the cities where the jobs were, and new immigrants went where the jobs were too.

Over time, word got back to the home countries...

"Come to the cities. We're here and can help you. We have jobs and there are some for you too; we can worship in our own faith communities; we have our own stores where we can get everything we had back home and more; we get together and speak in our native language; we've developed our own *landsmannschaften* to help each other out; and our kids go to good schools and are having opportunities they would never have had back home. Come!"

And come they did to the cities where they had family and friends and others from their home countries who spoke their language, ate the same food, and practiced the same culture. And yet, they became Canadian, working and living and playing with people from other countries, who spoke English or French and a multitude of other languages, adopting each other's foods and eventually cheering the same hockey teams.

As urbanization continued to grow in Canada, the children of those in smaller communities left for the big cities where they saw the economic, cultural and social opportunities, and immigrants in large part chose to settle in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver (MTV) too. Both they and the cities thrived.

Meanwhile smaller communities began to worry about their economic futures as their population declined. There were labour and skill shortages in certain areas and certain sectors of the country, and employers started relying on temporary foreign workers to fill the gaps.

Provinces decided that they wanted to re-assert their role in immigration, to address their population and labour needs, and began to push for a role in the selection of immigrants. The first Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) Agreement was signed with the federal government in 1996 and implemented in Manitoba three years later in 1999, followed over time by the other provinces and territories allowing them to nominate people for immigration to their regions.

These programs varied significantly across the country and experimented with many different approaches: some focused on retaining temporary workers already employed in their jurisdiction, others focused on the retention of international students studying in their jurisdiction, and others recruited people from abroad who had family or community connections in the province which made them good candidates for retention.

The programs were very successful in many respects and grew

dramatically, resulting in a rebalancing of where immigrants initially settled, away from MTV and towards other communities. But there were also problems with the programs, and the federal government decided to rein in the PNP by imposing caps on the numbers to be nominated, and standard criteria for selection, much to the chagrin of the provinces.

In 2002 the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act came into effect which identified as one of its objectives "to support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy, in which the benefits of immigration are shared across all regions of Canada"

The Minister of the day, Denis Coderre, tried to introduce a 'regionalization' strategy which would require new immigrants to remain in their initial communities of destination for three years before being allowed to move elsewhere. The assumption was that after being in a community for three years and establishing roots and networks there, people would choose to stay. Since this proposal would be unconstitutional given the mobility rights for all Canadian citizens and permanent residents enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, he proposed that they enter Canada with temporary status and only be eligible for permanent residence status if they had in fact remained in their first communities of destination for the full three years.

This proposal was hotly contested and never came into effect, but it did result in much discussion about what in fact could be done to incentivize immigrants to settle and remain in smaller communities across the country voluntarily. Much thinking and writing was done on regionalization strategies, small community strategies, and welcoming community strategies. It was a topic discussed at Metropolis conferences, meetings of Federal/Provincial Territorial Ministers, meetings of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Prime Minister Paul Martin's Task Force on Cities, and in the academic and settlement sectors. And I know this because I participated in many of those meetings.

What became clear was that different strategies are required for different immigrant classes and different source countries... At least initially:

- Family Class members will naturally go to where their family sponsors are
- Privately Sponsored Refugees will go where their sponsors are
- Government assisted refugees will go where the federal government sends them and this has become a hot issue during the Syrian refugee resettlement program with small communities and mayors across the country clamoring to be a refugee resettlement centre

- Provincial nominees will go to the Province that selected them
- Economic immigrants selected on the basis of a job offer will go where their employer is
- Other economic immigrants will choose to go anywhere in Canada that they think will be best for them and their children, and that tends to be the larger centres

However, all can choose to assert their mobility rights and leave those communities of first destination, or never go there at all, as soon as they receive their permanent residence status at the port of entry, and many do exercise that right. Secondary migration is alive and well in this country.

So what is necessary to attract and retain immigrants in communities? Not surprisingly, the factors are almost identical to what is necessary to retain Canadians in those communities. Victoria Esses and her colleagues at Pathways to Prosperity based at the University of Western Ontario identified 17 characteristics of a welcoming community that will generally be more successful in this objective. They are in ranked order for all immigrant classes:

- Employment opportunities: diverse opportunities for all members of the family, ideally allowing them to use the skills, education and experience that they have
- The social capital of families, friends, co-ethnics, and co-religionists: clusters of at least 10-50 families to create a sense of community
- Affordable and suitable housing
- Positive attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of other newcomers in the community
- The presence of newcomer serving agencies and services like language training, settlement counselling and orientation
- Collaborative efforts between the main stakeholders to create welcoming communities
- Municipal services sensitive to the needs of newcomers
- Educational and training opportunities for all members of the family
- Accessible health care
- Accessible public transit

- The presence of diverse religious organizations
- Opportunities for social and cultural engagement
- Opportunities for political participation
- Positive relationships with the police and justice system
- A safe environment
- Opportunities for the use of public space and recreation facilities
- Favourable media coverage

Some of these characteristics weigh more heavily than others depending on the immigrant class, country of origin, and the individual needs of immigrant and refugee families. For example access to education, training and health care is critically important for refugees.

But generally only metropolitan and second tier cities with their population size and diversity would meet all 17 factors identified for welcoming communities to be able to attract and retain newcomers.

A lack of some may be compensated for by the existence of others but not always for the long term, and would require the significant involvement of many stakeholders in the local communities such as:

- Employers
- Educational institutions
- Community-based service providers
- Settlement organizations
- Ethnic networks

working together in place-based collaboration with all three orders of government to make it work.

Immigration policy continues to evolve and the new federal comprehensive ranking system of Express Entry for economic immigrants is having its own impact. 78% of those invited to apply for permanent residence in its first year of operation were already residing in Canada as either highly skilled Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) or International Students (IRCC Express Entry Year End Report). This is a result of the point bias towards those with job offers and those nominated by provinces, as well as those who get additional points for Canadian work experience. This increasing tilt towards two-step immigration, (in some ways harking back to Denis

Coderre's proposal) has implications for communities wanting to recruit and attract newcomers to their communities. It means that communities may want to place more emphasis on welcoming international students and temporary foreign workers already in their communities so that they will want to stay.

Since temporary entrants are not eligible for federally funded services, this places more of an onus on other levels of government and civil society to fill the gap so that these groups have the supports necessary to settle well.

In conclusion, if smaller communities have at least most of the 17 characteristics of a welcoming community, how can they strategically focus their efforts to successfully recruit and retain newcomers to their communities? They can:

- Work with all orders of government to use the Provincial Nominee Program in their jurisdiction to maximum effect
- Work with employers in their region to identify how to best use immigration programs to respond to ongoing local labour market needs.

For example:

- Can refugees be hired to fill jobs currently being filled by lower skilled Temporary Foreign Workers? In consultations held with representatives from the food processing, agricultural, hospitality and tourism sectors, they expressed real interest in this.
- Can necessary supports be provided to help Temporary Foreign Workers in their communities' transition to permanent residence status?
- Work with universities and colleges in their community to welcome and support international students and help them transition to permanent residence
- Work with IRCC to have clusters of government assisted refugees from the same source country settle in their community (minimum of 10 families) with the necessary service supports
- Recruit and support private sponsors of refugees to sponsor a cluster of refugees to add to the refugee complement in their community and create economies of scale for services
- Provide supports to family class immigrants and their anchor families to make their integration as successful as possible

None of this is rocket science but it is not easy either. The need for local solutions is well recognized; the challenge is

to find the policy and funding instruments to bring local coordination and collaboration to life in the recruitment and retention of newcomers to smaller communities. We need to continue to experiment with local collaborative approaches to solve both old and new challenges, share our successes and our not-so-successful attempts, so that we all learn from each other's experiences in settling, integrating and retaining newcomers in welcoming communities across the country.

# EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEES: BARRIERS ON THE PATHWAY TO A GOOD JOB AND THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THERE

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The humanitarian resettlement of refugees requires supporting their successful integration into their new country. Quality employment that is secure, well-paying, and commensurate with training is critical to integration and is recognized as vital to newcomers' health. Employment provides economic support, and strengthens language, cultural knowledge, and the sense of belonging of refugees. Language abilities, a lack of recognition of foreign credentials, and lower education levels can contribute to an increased likelihood of unemployment and under-employment for newcomers; these challenges can be elevated for refugees. As Canada commits to the resettlement of larger numbers of refugees it is imperative that opportunities for quality employment opportunities for.

The humanitarian resettlement of refugees means more than just removing people from harm's way; protecting refugees' rights and well-being requires supporting their successful integration into their new home. Integration refers to various levels of inclusion into society (Hynie, Korn and Tao 2016). At the most concrete level, it can be defined as ensuring equitable access to socially valued outcomes, such as safe and appropriate housing, education, and good health

(Smith, 2008; Strang & Ager, 2010). More broadly, it includes being able to contribute and participate in the community and society as a full member through civic engagement activities like voting and volunteering, and establishing social connections with members of one's own and other social or ethnic groups. Finally, at the subjective level, it means achieving feelings of security and belonging (Omidvar and Richmond 2003; Phillimore and Goodson 2008; Steel et al 2011).

Employment plays a critical role in successful resettlement and integration. Finding high quality employment is difficult for newcomers to Canada, regardless of their migration pathway (Latif 2015; Nakhaie and Kazemipur 2013; Schellenberg and Maheux 2007). Relative to other Canadians, immigrants and refugees are less likely to find employment, more likely to end up in precarious employment (i.e., temporary or part-time work), and less likely to find work that matches their skills and training. This is particularly true for visible minority newcomers, who are more likely to fill low-income jobs (Teelucksingh and Galabuzi 2005), are less represented in the high-income sector, and are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed (Galabuzi 2001, 2005; Nakhaie and Kazemipur 2013; Ng *et al.* 2005). These barriers may be greater for refugees, who are more likely to be unemployed or overqualified for the work that they do have, relative to other newcomers (Chen, Smith and Mustard 2010; Xue 2006).

## REFUGEES AND EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

Several factors that are known to affect employment may affect refugees to a greater extent. Relative to immigrants, refugees are less likely to speak English or French on arrival to Canada, which is a significant barrier to finding employment (Grenier and Xue 2011; Grondin 2007; Schellenberg and Maheux 2007; Yssaad 2013). Prior education, training and other qualifications may not be recognized (Oreopoulos 2011). Moreover, the training that they do have may not be appropriate for the Canadian context (Grenier and Xue 2011). But refugees face additional hurdles; documentation from their country of origin that demonstrates their qualifications may not be available or accessible (Hynie 2014). Refugees can also face greater acculturation challenges. For the approximately 40% of refugees who migrate to Canada from rural regions or refugee camps (UNHCR 2012), adjusting to the new social and physical environment requires a great deal of adaptation (Hynie *et al.* 2016).

Education levels among refugees are also highly variable. Education levels can be much lower than what is seen among immigrants although comparable with the general Canadian population. According to the 2006 Canadian Census, 60% of recent immigrants had an undergraduate degree, compared to 20% of Canadian born of similar age, and 10% to 20% of adult refugees (Korn and Hynie 2015; Rietz, Curtis and Elrick 2014; Statistics Canada 2008). The nature of forced migration means that refugee youth often experience frequent and/or prolonged disruption of education, and education opportunities in refugee camps can be limited and/or difficult to access. Refugee youth can therefore have low levels of education for their age, and relative to non-refugee immigrants (Shakya *et al.* 2010). Between 20% to 25% of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) who enter Canada may have no

formal education (Korn and Hynie 2015). The latter newcomers are faced with learning a new language and adapting to a new social environment without the benefit of literacy in their first language.

A good job that is full-time with a reasonable wage in the area of one's training or expertise, with opportunities for advancement (Benach *et al.* 2014) is especially difficult to obtain for refugees for the reasons described above. There are also some surprising challenges that emerge due to the financial support resettled refugees receive in their first year. One unique source of support that resettled GARs have access to is immediate and essential services, which includes temporary housing, as well as income support for up to one year. Refugees are provided financial support under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), which is intended to provide GARs time to acquire English/French language skills, and meet their other immediate settlement needs. For Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), who represent the other large group of resettled refugees, financial and settlement support comes from sponsoring groups who are either charitable organizations or groups of private citizens. A third pathway of support referred to as the Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugee (BVOR) combines private and government sponsorship. BVOR refugees only comprise about 10% of resettled refugees.

Refugees themselves and those in the settlement sector working with them report that the financial support received in the first year is often not enough to meet basic needs (Hynie 2014), but GARs who do find work in the first year and earn more than 50% of what is received through RAP will encounter cuts in financial support. As a result, some refugees resort to the informal employment sector, exposing themselves to exploitation and hazardous working conditions (Hynie 2014). Following the first year, economic hardship often forces refugees to choose between employment and education, particularly youth who learn English/French more quickly than their parents and thus are more easily employed. For these youth, for whom education is often highly valued, the need to contribute and support their family can result in repeated withdrawal from the education system (Shakya *et al.* 2010). The consequences are lower long-term income and less professional development. This is not only a loss for the youth and their families, but also for Canada as whole, as we lose the opportunity to benefit from their energy, talent and aspirations.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND POOR QUALITY EMPLOYMENT

The ability to find productive work is recognized as a key element of mental health and well-being by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014). Not surprisingly, unemployment is associated with poverty and an inability to pay for one's basic needs (Kaida 2015; Picot and Hou 2003). There is also substantial evidence that unemployment among immigrants

and refugees is associated with a range of other negative social, physical and mental health outcomes (Reitmanova and Gustafson 2008). Unemployment has generally been associated with elevated levels of depression, stress and anxiety, and increasing family problems including marital conflict and a range of negative outcomes for their children, including antisocial behavior and poor performance in school (Campbell 2012; Corvalan, Driscoll and Harrison 1994).

It is not just employment that matters, however, but also the quality of the employment. There are a number of negative outcomes associated with poor quality employment (Benach *et al.* 2014). Research finds negative health outcomes associated with poor quality employment where it involves more physically demanding work. This includes high rates of injuries and chronic health conditions. Those working in precarious jobs are unable or afraid to seek medical help, to request changes in their work environment to prevent injury, or to take a medical leave when required. Those working in physically demanding jobs for which they do not have formal training are also more likely to sustain injury through a lack of knowledge of health and safety measures (Chen, Smith and Mustard 2010; Smith and Mustard 2009; Wilson *et al.* 2011).

Working in a job that is not commensurate with training and education also has psychological consequences. Longitudinal research with a large sample of refugees in the UK found that over-qualification for employment was associated with decreased mental health over time (Campbell 2012). The negative mental health effects associated with being overqualified occur in part through newcomers' dissatisfaction with their work (Smith and Mustard 2009). This suggests that newcomers with the highest expectations may face the greatest disappointments and may partially explain the finding that mental health outcomes are worse for refugees with the highest pre-migration education and socio-economic class (Porter and Haslam 2005).

## BELONGING AND EMPLOYMENT

While a lack of employment and a lack of high quality employment clearly has negative effects on refugee well-being, participation in employment is an important pathway to integration. Employment plays a role in several different aspects of integration including building friendships with Canadians outside of one's co-ethnic group, strengthened language skills and cultural knowledge, and improved economic circumstances (Beiser and Wickrama 2004; Gupta and Sullivan 2013; Regitmanova and Gustafson 2008; Wilson-Forsberg 2015). Employment may also play a critical role in developing a sense of belonging to Canada.

As part of an impact evaluation of Client Support Services for GARs in Ontario who had arrived within the past six

years, we asked focus group participants the question "what makes you feel like you are at home?" (Korn and Hynie 2015). As one participant put it: "First, of course, the job." Indeed, for men, this was a universal first response to this question. For women, the presence of family members was equally important, and employment was more likely to be framed in terms of meeting personal goals and material needs. The men also spoke of material needs and poverty, but they also clearly linked employment with their ability to participate in and contribute to society. In the words of one member of a focus group:

"When you pay the tax you become more relax. Yeah. You feel you are man to give to your town. Not just give me, give me, give me. No. You give back to community."

Likewise, in the words of another focus group member:

"Because you know, when you have job and... give to Canada, you feel this is your home."

## CONCLUSIONS

Employment supports multiple aspects of the integration process. However, the nature of the employment matters; good quality jobs are critical. As we commit to the resettlement of larger numbers of refugees in Canada, we must revisit how we are supporting their ambition to be full contributing members of Canadian society, and reflect on how we can best foster a context where refugees, and all newcomers, can find satisfying and meaningful employment, to the benefit of us all.

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# EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEES: AN APPROACH FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS FOR GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES IN ONTARIO

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This paper builds on the literature presented in *Employment Pathways for Refugees, Part 1* and offers a programmatic approach to overcome barriers faced by refugees when seeking employment. Refugees have unique profiles and needs that differentiate them from other newcomers and therefore require informed program and service responses to support their settlement and integration. Results from the *Employment Pathways* prototype, which took place in four Government-Assisted Refugees resettlement communities to address employment barriers, will be shared.

## CLIENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ONTARIO

Each year an average of 2,000 Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) are resettled to Ontario. These refugees are supported throughout their first year of settlement by the Client Support Services (CSS) program. CSS is a holistic, client centered case management program, which is coordinated across Ontario to address the resettlement needs of (GARs) by: facilitating the development of client capacity to navigate services independently through case management; and increase awareness in receiving communities of the GAR population

while supporting sustainably responsive interventions to GAR needs through community capacity building. The CSS Regional Program Network is comprised of six program delivery organizations which include:

- Hamilton - Wesley Urban Ministries
- Kitchener - Reception House Waterloo Region;  
London – Cross Cultural Learner Centre
- Ottawa - Catholic Centre for Immigrants;

- Toronto - COSTI Immigrant Services
- Windsor - Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, and is coordinated by the YMCA of Greater Toronto.

CSS Case Workers are trained to support GARs through an empowerment approach, focusing on client strengths to guide their settlement path, aiming to develop clients' self-sufficiency to navigate services independently. Client's needs are assessed regularly to ensure Case Workers are providing appropriate and timely referrals, while facilitating access to these referrals through service navigation, accompaniment support and community capacity building. As a coordinated program, CSS conducts comprehensive monitoring of GAR needs and trends, offering timely and innovative programmatic responses through a collective impact lens.

## PRE-MIGRATION EXPERIENCES OF GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES IN ONTARIO

Pre-migration factors such as language skills, previous education, work skills and previous living conditions can affect the overall settlement and integration of GARs into their local communities. GARs with low English language skills, low literacy levels in their primary language, and/or have lived in rural settings or refugee camps are more likely to experience barriers and difficulty accessing and navigating services in their communities and are found to benefit from tailored supports to access services (Kappel Ramji 2009, Hynie 2014; Hii & Dossal 2009, Hynie, Korn and Tao 2014).

The CSS program uses a centralized database that captures demographic information, needs, service outputs and outcomes of GARs as they receive case management support in their first year in Canada. Drawing from data collected in the CSS Regional Database from 2013 – 2015, a total of 6,910 GAR clients were received across the Ontario equating to over 2,000 clients and 900 cases each year. A case constitutes a family structure comprising of singles, or family units. About 54% of the cases served in CSS are singles and 46% include families that range from two to nine (or more) individuals; the bulk of cases have two to six family members. A total of 51% of clients served were 25 years old and over, 25% were youth between the ages of 13-24 and 24% are children between the ages of 0-12 (Raphael 2016).

GARs that are served in the CSS program have diverse profiles that reflect their pre-migration experiences coming from, at times, conflict areas and various protracted refugee situations. The countries of origin of GARs resettled to Ontario reflect the federal government's resettlement commitments. Between 2013-2015, the largest resettled refugee group in Ontario is of Iraqi origin comprising 47% of the population. The remaining 53% of the current population served in CSS are of Iranian origin (13%), Somali origin (7%), Syrian origin (6%), Bhutanese origin (6%), as well as other groups from Asia and Africa<sup>1</sup>. The majority of GARs in the last three years arrived from urban locations (72%). The remaining 26% of GARs come from rural settings (11%) and refugee camps (11%)<sup>2</sup> (Raphael 2016). GARs may face challenges transitioning to urban settings and for those with prolonged time in refugee camps may have greater challenges becoming self-sufficient in the Canadian context because of the limited agency and opportunities in refugee camps (Hynie, Korn and Tao 2016, Harell-Bond 2000, Shakya *et al.* 2014).

The education profiles of GAR clients differ. At program intake, 41% of GARs over the age of 18 indicated having less than a high school diploma and 14% having no formal education prior to arriving in Canada. In comparison to those with little or no educational background, 20% indicated having completed their high school diplomas and 22% indicated having completed post-secondary or higher education prior to arriving in Canada. The majority of GARs served in the CSS program also reported having low levels of English language and French language fluency. When examining the self-identified language levels of GARs over the age of 18, 47% of GARs state having no English language skills, while 48% having some English language skills, and only 5% identify as fluent in English (Raphael 2016). Limited English language proficiency is connected to difficulties in refugee and immigrant settlement and integration (Schellenberg and Maheux 2007, Yu, Oullette and Warmington 2007, Strang and Ager 2010).

## DIVERSE AND CHANGING NEEDS OF GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES

As informed by their diverse profiles, the needs of GARs served in the CSS program vary and change throughout their first year of settlement. The needs of GARs are captured through the CSS needs assessment framework, which is administered to clients throughout their first year in Canada. Finding employment for GARs can be difficult and overwhelming, and, as identified through the assessment framework, GARs have varying and competing initial needs

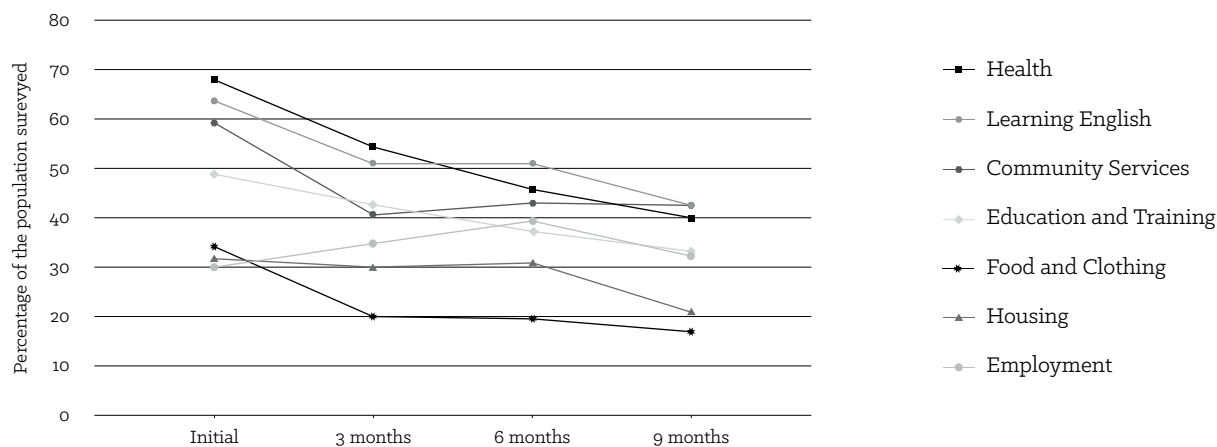
1 These statistics were collected prior to the Liberal Government's commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian Refugees which began in November 2015. Those Syrian Refugees that arrived in Canada in November and December 2015 are not reflected in this dataset as they did not receive CSS Services or were not entered into the CSS Regional Database until into 2016.

2 No data collected for remaining 2% of clients surveyed.

that require attention prior to searching for employment. Often GAR cases arrive with complex health needs, which can include acute physical conditions, mental or emotional health issues and family members with physical disabilities or impairments. Although GARs are provided support with obtaining a primary health care provider, health needs can last throughout the year and beyond, and act as continuous barriers to progressing on their settlement path, and more specifically accessing employment and pre-employment services. As shown in Figure 1, learning English and accessing community services are top initial needs that fluctuate throughout the

year as GARs learn of the importance of these supports in settling and acquiring employment. Accessing education & training programs, food & clothing banks, and housing services are also competing needs that require ongoing attention and can compete with seeking employment. Despite the competing needs of GARs, obtaining employment, although not an initial need, rises notably throughout their first year as GARs begin to meet their initial needs. Addressing the initial needs of GARs is pertinent to ensure a strong start to searching for employment<sup>3</sup>.

FIGURE 1: TRENDS IN GAR (18+) NEEDS IN THEIR 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR (2013-2015)



Note: this data represents information of respondents who participated in a needs assessment and not the complete population of GARs served in Ontario.

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES AFTER FIRST YEAR IN CANADA

The CSS program recognizes that GARs value employment and actively seek employment to subsidize their income (Hynie, 2014). Although the focus of GARs in their first year in Canada is not necessarily to find employment, 56% of GARs reported in their exit interview that finding employment is their top goal. From data collected in the CSS Regional Database at program exit, 21% of GARs over the age of 18 indicated that learning English continues to be a barrier to finding employment and accessing employment programs. Lack of affordable childcare was reported as a barrier to accessing employment services for 8% of men and 15% of women. Complex health concerns are continually reported by 12% of GARs at program exit, which continues to be a barrier to accessing employment and employment programs (Raphael 2016).

GARs also experience external barriers to gaining employment

similar to skilled newcomers. As found in focus groups conducted with previous GAR clients in the 2014 CSS Program Evaluation, employers are unaware of the skills the GARs have and their ability to work. GARs reported experiencing issues with having their credentials and skills recognized by employers and often lack the “Canadian experience” employers are seeking, which decrease their chances of obtaining employment (Hynie 2014).

Despite the barriers that many GARs face, 12% of GARs over the age of 18 reported they were employed at program exit. Of the 12% employed, 49% reported working in part-time jobs and the other 51% reported working in full time jobs in various occupations in the service and manufacturing sector. About 18% of GARs reported actively seeking employment at program exit and close to 18% are attending post-secondary programs. At the exit interview close to 43% of GARs surveyed indicated they were continuing to attend language classes to improve their English to increase their chances of finding employment (Raphael 2016).

3 Data collected from the CSS Regional Database, 2013-2015.

Although improving language skills and accessing services to meet their initial needs is the focus for GARs in their first year in Canada, many are not able to participate in employment programs and services because they require a certain level of proficiency in English prior to enrollment. These barriers make it especially challenging for GARs with low-English language levels to find employment and integrate successfully into their new communities.

## EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS EVENTS FOR GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES

In response to the identified need for employment opportunities for refugee populations that arrive with a low English language proficiency and low education and labour skill background, the CSS program worked in partnership with the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, Policy Innovation division to develop a prototype to meet this service gap. The Employment Pathways event was offered in four CSS communities during March 2015:

- Hamilton – Wesley Urban Ministries
- London – Cross Cultural Learner Centre
- Ottawa – Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- Windsor – Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County.

The Employment Pathways for GARs event was modeled after the Career Pathways program for skilled immigrants, which is a sector specific event bringing together newcomer job seekers and employers from the sector for a day of networking and engagement, but adapted to meet the context of the refugee profile demonstrated above.

The overall objectives of the Employment Pathways event were to: build GAR clients capacity to obtain employment despite barriers such as language proficiency and labour skills; and engage employers and employment programs and community services to learn about GARs in their community and the needs and barriers they face to accessing services and employment. Over four days, the Employment Pathways event engaged 135 GARs, 23 employers and a number of settlement and mainstream employment service providers.

The four CSS organizations that participated in the event proposed a unique event format tailored to their community context. Tools and resources to support the client profile were developed such as an event checklist, which included things the participant can do before, during, and after the event to maximize their benefits through participation.

This prototype yielded a number of immediate outcomes for all involved, which was collected through evaluation and post-event discussion. It was clear that stakeholders valued the event and indicated that the event format enhanced and strengthened partnerships, while increasing awareness of refugees in the community. Employers considered the event as a source for recruitment of new employees. Some employers identified ideas to address refugee barriers to employment such as offering language learning on the job and transportation to and from the workplace. Community service providers identified gaps in programs and services offered based on the GAR client demographics and have since adapted service offerings to improve access for GARs.

The refugee participants stated that the event: increased their job searching skills; offered information about job-related training and language supports; and improved their social connections. Many refugee participants planned to follow-up with employers and services they connected with, while some were offered employment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONTINUE DEVELOPING PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR REFUGEES

The Employment Pathways event is a model that could be scaled up and offered in an ongoing sustained program with suggested improvements to increase GAR client and employer outcomes. The following recommendations are important to consider enhancing employment pathways events for refugee job seekers and other vulnerable groups to facilitate their initial entrance into the job search process:

- Work with employers in preparation for future Employment Pathways events; it is essential to ensure they understand the needs and barriers refugees face to employment. Sufficient time is required to cultivate relationships with employers and increase their awareness of refugees and to work with employers to identify what they can do to alleviate some of the barriers and challenges GARs experience when searching for employment and in the workplace
- Ongoing close collaboration with existing employment service supports that can work with GARs to provide pre-employment skill development to prepare them for the event is required. Pre-employment and employment programs should adapt services to engage low-skilled/low-English language level GARs that will facilitate their initial job search and integration into the Canadian Labour market
- GAR participants require more coaching and preparation for the Employment Pathways events;

focusing on how to network with employers and benefit from this type of event to meet their objective of finding employment.

## CONCLUSION

Employment is sought by GARs and is an important part of the overall success of their settlement and integration into their communities. GARs have diverse profiles and can experience multiple barriers when accessing employment/pre-employment programs and finding employment. In addition, GARs have competing initial needs that must be addressed to enable a strong start on their employment path. Tailored services and employment pathways events for low-skilled and low-language GARs are found to be promising methods to addressing some of the barriers GARs experience when accessing the Canadian labour market.

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# INVOLUNTARY MINORITIES AMONG FRANCOPHONE MANITOBANS: RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE AND REVIVAL

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Using ethnographic accounts, this paper offers a reflection on the difficulties, aspirations and strategies that francophone refugees face as they try to integrate into a cultural and linguistic landscape dominated by English. Given migration movements and identity shifts that affect Francophone communities in Western Canada, our discussion relies on concepts of 'deterritorialization/reterritorialization' (Deleuze & Guattari) as well as on the notion of 'minority within a minority' (Maddibo), with special attention to the issue of social, linguistic and identity dispossession.

As involuntary minorities, francophone refugees encounter difficulties in integration that are far from negligible. Living within a social context marked by the predominance of the English language and of values tainted by European colonial movements, refugees from French-speaking backgrounds often find themselves cast as minorities, and, de facto, treated as the Other on two levels: because of language and because of their ethnicity. In this article, we propose to bring to light the factors of adversity and those that support the integration of these minorities in an urban context.

In this reflection on refugees, we use the anthropological approach to minority status developed by Ogbu and Simon (1988), which includes the following four categories: autonomous, voluntary or immigrant, and involuntary or non-immigrant.

Ogbu and Simon define involuntary minorities as people who have been conquered, colonized or enslaved (1988, p. 165). Refugees are classified as a separate category, but it has been suggested that they too, by default, belong to the category of involuntary minorities: "Refugees who were forced to come to the United States because of civil war or other crises in their places of origin are not immigrants or voluntary minorities. They did not freely choose or plan to come to settle in the United States to improve their status." (Ogbu & Simon, 1988, p. 164) Hence, we propose to operationalize the concept of involuntary minority in the following way: individuals who have not freely chosen their destiny because of colonialism, physical violence or any other factor of oppression that has driven them to the margins of society or forced them into exile.

Our reflection examines the processes for the resistance, the resilience, and the renaissance of refugees from Francophone African countries, people who may nevertheless have transited through refugee camps in English-speaking countries. Taking into account the migratory movements and the changes in identity that affect these pockets of French-speakers in Western Canada, our reflection draws upon the concepts of deterritorialization/reterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972 and 1991) and of minority within a minority (Maddibo, 2008), with emphasis on the issues of social, linguistic and identity-related dispossession of involuntary minorities.

Refugees in Manitoba come primarily from “humanitarian” immigration, one of the three immigration categories identified by the Government of Canada: humanitarian, economic and social (Becklumb, 2008). The immigration referred to as humanitarian, which is the subject of this reflection, stems from a concern for human rights, and its goal is to “to offer safe haven to persons with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, as well as those at risk of torture or cruel and unusual treatment or punishment (Department of Justice, Canada, 2012).

As migrants out of necessity, often forced into exile because of war, social and political instability, famine or other forms of violence that violate human rights and human dignity, refugees have for several decades made up a sizeable proportion of Manitoba immigrants, a minority of which are of French-speaking origins (Piquemal and Bolivar, 2009). Dispossessed of their property, their homes and their loved ones, of their land and the sense of belonging that goes with it, and often even their social status, refugees generally suffer from an initial form of deterritorialization when they leave home to seek refuge, sometimes temporary, sometimes nearly permanent, in a refugee camp (Piquemal, Bahi, and Bolivar, 2010). Refugee camps can lead to a process of territorialization, in that “the societies that occupy them take possession of and organize the space there” [our translation] (Dedenis, 2007, p. 2). This initial reterritorialization does not take place without friction, because it is clear that exile is harmful to one’s sense of identity and sense of belonging socially, especially “when exile is due to conflicts where the ethnic or identity factor is put forward by the enemy” [our translation] (*Ibid.*, p. 3). Certain people, even whole societies, can become settled into refugee camps, having been there for many years, or even generations. Others manage to get involved in a process of migration that will allow them to settle into a permanent territory, for example in Canada. A second stage of reterritorialization, involving identity, the social and the political, then comes into play. During this reterritorialization, a process of reconstruction, of rebirth of identity and social position takes place, and this process follows three distinct emotional stages: *attachment-detachment-reattachment* to the host country (Piquemal and Bolivar, 2009). Research has shown that the resilience of refugees is a key phenomenon in intergenera-

tional opportunities for social mobility (Bahi and Piquemal, 2013).

This paper focuses on only two of the questions that guided our ethnographic research with refugees. To what extent was the individual or the family able to develop a sense of belonging, even of attachment to the social environment, as well as a sense of achievement? What are the factors that foster, or in other cases hinder, the development of this sense of belonging and of adaptation in an intercultural context?

As to methods, the research team (Piquemal, Bahi, and Bolivar, their research assistant) chose a qualitative and phenomenological approach and carried out semi-structured interviews. Eighteen (18) adolescents from 11 to 17 years of age (who entered Canada as refugees at least four years previously from DRC, Uganda, Tanzania or Djibouti) took part, as did 16 refugee families (DRC, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti). We will look at certain narrative segments on pre- and post-migration experiences and the connection to be made with the social and academic success of the person, beginning with the accounts of students:

“Sometimes I think of my friends back there. I miss everything, even the earth.” - Student (16 years old)

“The first day of school I was scared; I was scared of the students because I wasn’t used to White people. And then I was scared of the languages, French and English; French for the lessons and English because here in the [French-language] high school everyone always talks English.” - Student (17 years old)

“I feel good at school. There are lots of friends to help me. And there is a prof who helped me a lot.” - Student (13 years old)

The accounts of parents also bring out the difficulties, but also show hope or resilience:

“How can it be that when others are killed or raped we can live in peace? Do you think I can live in harmony? No. There is a constant pain. But we push ourselves to keep going, to take what is good here.” - Parent (Piquemal, Bahi, and Bolivar, 2010, p. 47)

“I found a meaning to life, hope for a good life; the possibility of succeeding.” - Parent (Piquemal and Bolivar, 2009)

“Canada showed up like Moses the saviour.” - Parent (Piquemal, Bahi, and Bolivar, 2010, p. 45)

“We do our best, we want to adapt, so we have a motto: We work hard.” - Parent (Piquemal, Bahi, and Bolivar, 2010, p. 45)

"I have to accept that I have entered into a new world, and then that I have created a new world. And this world does not have to be the world I grew up in." - Parent (Piquemal, Bahi, and Bolivar, 2010, p. 47)

This last statement clearly expresses a sense of deterritorialization experienced in the beginning, and then, in keeping with the Deleuze theory, a productive and creative sense of reterritorialization.

## THE DETERRITORIALIZATION/RETTERRITORIALIZATION OF INVOLUNTARY MINORITIES

Deleuze and Guattari have described the process of deterritorialization in numerous ways, and in their final collaboration called in English *What is Philosophy?* (1991), they explain that deterritorialization can be physical, mental or spiritual. The concept can be seen as a movement that produces change. Imagined as a trajectory, deterritorialization thus contains the creative potential of an amalgamation, and it can mean an emancipation with respect to the fixed relations that characterize a social body while exposing it to a new form of organization. Deterritorialization is always related to a process of reterritorialization, its corollary, which does not mean a return to the original territory, but the manner in which deterritorialized elements recombine and form new relationships (Parr 2010, p. 69 and 73).

A close look at the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1972), which includes a criticism of oedipal psychoanalysis, and later a criticism of capitalism, reveals the process of deterritorialization to be a process of emancipation of the human subject with respect to institutional codes that are often oppressive. The idea of desire is thus central to this philosophy, suggesting that the subject and the ebb and flow of desire are nomadic in nature, in short, unpredictable. In this sense, to be deterritorialized would be a way of escaping from codes, of becoming free of them. The concept of deterritorialization has also been taken up in reflections on globalization by Lafontant (2008), who sees migratory flow and socio-economic exchanges as a source of social and political recombination. In the geo-political context, the concept of deterritorialization refers to loss of territory.

The idea of emancipation seems relevant to us in the case of immigrants who are part of a migration project characterized by choice, freedom and independence. However, our reflection on refugees leads us to posit that the deterritorialization of involuntary minorities is a destructive process in that it is part of a movement of violence that leads to a persistent minority and Other status (colonization, civil wars, etc.). If there is indeed social and political recombination, it occurs less through emancipation than through oppression, even

through the destruction of a community and the unilateral imposition of a political and social organization. In other words, *I* become a stranger and part of a minority in *My Own* territory. The refugee has become the Other in the exile that follows conflict, often of an ethnic nature, where deterritorialization took the form of genocide, as in Rwanda, expulsion, or else forced nomadization, as is the case for the Bedouins.

The reterritorialization of involuntary minorities can bear the mark of an oppressive, dictatorial regime, which is destructive, or evolve towards a different but equitable shared space, which is constructive. Reterritorialization as a process of rebirth begins with the resilience and resistance of involuntary minorities and with recognition and reparation of the abuses committed by the majority.

According to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, reterritorialization is a creative process that allows for movement, for a new incarnation, as is the case for writing, for example. As for the involuntary minorities in Canada, reterritorialization has finally led to a creative process in that, even if there was suffering due to migration, there is a process of occupation and appropriation of space that seeks to be inclusive and equitable, thanks in part to the possibility of having the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982). It is clear that such a process is complex, and that the possibility of enjoying these rights remains a constant concern in the political sphere. Resistance and resilience are characteristics of the transition from deterritorialization to reterritorialization for involuntary minorities, paving the way for a rebirth in which each individual reconstructs a personal identity anchored in their identity of origin, more or less pronounced according to each person's circumstances.

## MINORITIES, TRANSFORMATIONS AND BECOMING

According to Kant, a minority is associated with "receiving one's laws or one's determination from another person. In concrete terms, it is the fact of being under someone else's guardianship" [our translation] (Aliana 2010, p. 21). This can also mean the state in which minority groups are plunged when they are subjected to an authoritarian regime, to a full set of measures of domination and normalization. To take another tack, the works of Deleuze and Guattari on the concepts of "minority," "being part of a minority" and "becoming part of a minority" can serve as a point of departure for a reflection on the factors involved in the creation of new sociocultural contexts using terms that accentuate the potential and the plasticity of becoming a minority (Bouaniche 2007, p. 202). From this point of view, one that bears hope for the displaced and for groups reduced to minority status, Deleuze and Guattari have sketched out a policy of *métissage* and transhumance by making deterritorialization more acceptable (Aliana 2010,

p. 19). “Whether physical, psychological or social, deterritorialization is *relative* as long as it relates to the historical connection between the land and the territories drawn upon it, or erased from it [...] (Deleuze and Guattari, 1991, p. 85). Human rights were trampled in Canada and elsewhere, notably because they co-exist with many other axioms that allow for the appropriation of lands and resources (*Ibid.*, p. 103). In the context of neo-capitalism and globalization, entire populations continue to bear the brunt of this. Forced into a semi-sedentary life in makeshift camps, refugees become strangers to themselves, to their own language and their own nation. Their transplanting to North America and the metamorphosis that accompanies it do not take place without upheaval, but the reterritorialization of these foreigners who are born again among the “*Métis nation*”<sup>1</sup> of Canadians (Saul 2008) should serve as a lesson so that we can better “diagnose our current prospects for the future” and propose new trajectories in the service of life (Deleuze et Guattari, 1991, p.108; see also Nietzsche 1990). It will not be enough to welcome these individuals and wandering groups and to offer them sufficient physical, psychological and social accommodations, it will be important to reinvent with them a reciprocity and new ways of being in our schools and in all sectors of social life (arts, economics, politics, etc.).

Briefly put, minority Francophone identities are enriched and are determined in territories henceforward characterized by movement, nomadism and the circulation of information and values. In our work, which combines research and teaching, our approaches and our attention turn to cultural *métissage*, intercultural relations and education for citizenship, instead of looking only at ethnogenesis or the centuries-old establishment of human communities in their natural environment and their traditions.

In closing, we wish to emphasize the relevance of intercultural dialogue, of ethics and of the awareness-raising efforts deployed to establish connections between groups who have been turned into minorities, and other Canadians with a view to finding territory favourable to reciprocity, to equitable exchanges and to adaptation. We also emphasize the importance of offering young people, the citizens of tomorrow, a better understanding of the issues and the challenges associated with ethnic and cultural diversity.

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1 Aboriginal people have played a determining role in defining Canada and Canadian identities, and every day they continue to influence Canadians' common future. For this reason we have used this author's expression with an emphasis on its identity dimension rather than its geographic one.

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# INCLUSIVE OR TARGETED HEALTH SERVICES FOR NEWCOMERS

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Although there has been much research on the barriers and supports that impact newcomer access to healthcare, there is not agreement on whether the optimal healthcare services model for newcomers should be targeted specialized healthcare services for specific populations or an inclusive model where extra navigation or language supports are embedded in regular healthcare. This paper describes the health partnership model in Regina and presents some learnings from their experience. Overall it would be ideal to enhance the capacity of the healthcare system to provide responsive, culturally competent healthcare through the addition of mobile healthcare navigators.

The vast majority of the 260,000 plus newcomers who arrive annually in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015) are in fairly good health, somewhat better than that of the average Canadian, but they commonly experience health declines shortly after their arrival (Newbold, 2009). Given the large annual influx of newcomers and the additional Syrian refugees in 2015-2016, it is important to understand the potential health and nutritional concerns of newcomers and how healthcare services can be optimally designed to meet those needs. This will support the development of effective healthcare policies and programming that support the healthcare needs of newcomers and ensure the development of an overall healthy, productive Canadian population.

## ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Access to healthcare plays a vital role in preventing diseases and promoting the health and well-being of newcomers to Canada. Some Canadian research suggests that newcomers access primary healthcare less frequently than the Canadian-born. A Canadian study focused on healthcare use found that newcomers with less than 15 years in Canada had 5-24 percent fewer physician visits than longer-term immigrants and the Canadian-born (McDermott *et al.*, 2010). Newcomer healthcare service use decreased over the first few years in Canada and then increased in later years. The study also identified several sub-groups, including refugees and female family class immigrants who visit physicians more often than the Canadian-born. It is possible that newcomers make frequent physicians visits shortly after their arrival to address older health

problems (McDermott *et al.*, 2010) and/or that settlement agencies are actively supporting newcomers to access health services soon after arrival. Over the next few years of residency decreased use of physician services may indicate that newcomers are preoccupied with engaging in the labour market and/or taking English classes; while increased use of medical services may occur among longer-term newcomers as they develop chronic disease conditions similar to the Canadian-born.

A key component of primary healthcare is preventive care, such as immunizations and screening for chronic disease development. McDermott *et al.* (2010) did not observe any difference in the rates of immunizations or annual check-ups among recent newcomers, longer-term newcomers and the Canadian born, so newcomer children appear to be accessing preventive care on an equitable basis. However, at least one study noted that children of refugees are less likely to have up-to-date immunizations compared to other immigrant classes (Guttmann *et al.*, 2008). Another group at high risk for poor access to preventive care are newcomers with undocumented status (Access Alliance, 2011), likely due to ineligibility for provincial healthcare coverage. This research indicates that refugees and undocumented immigrants are at increased risk of not accessing recommended preventive care.

## **BARRIERS**

As described above, all newcomers do not necessarily experience equitable access to healthcare to support their health and well-being. A Canadian study found that 43 percent of recent immigrants experience difficulties with accessing immediate healthcare, while only 15 percent of the Canadian-born had the same difficulties (Sanmartin & Ross, 2006). Research has identified several barriers that impact newcomer access to healthcare services, including lack of familiarity with the healthcare system (Wu *et al.*, 2005), cost (Access Alliance, 2011), cultural competency (Hansson *et al.* 2009), traditional beliefs (Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, 2008), and lack of transportation (Kilbride, 2010), or childcare (O'Mahony & Donnelly, 2007).

Unfamiliarity with the healthcare system being noted as a barrier in some studies suggests the need to ensure that newcomers are systematically provided with information on how to access healthcare and healthcare benefit programs and a healthcare contact to address any questions related to navigating the healthcare system. Lack of cultural sensitivity or competency suggests the need to critically examine the capacity of healthcare services to appropriately serve newcomers. In addition, healthcare services need to consider how to make their services more responsive to newcomer needs, which may include offering extended hours and decentralized services to address practical service access barriers. The documented

existence of ongoing barriers to healthcare highlights service gaps and points to the need for advice on optimal models of healthcare to ensure equitable access for newcomers.

## **SUPPORTS**

Given the many barriers that impact newcomer access to healthcare, healthcare systems should be designed to better accommodate newcomers. The World Health Organization (2010) advocates that healthcare systems should be designed to accommodate cultural, religious, linguistic, and health status differences common to newcomers that can impact their ability to access healthcare. The use of basic English words in healthcare material or translated resources; engagement of immigrant communities in a program advisory capacity; provision of culturally competent health services, including the use of interpreters; and collaboration between traditional and biomedical practitioners can support enhanced newcomer access to healthcare (Young *et al.*, 1999; Anderson *et al.*, 2003). At the heart of all the inter-related initiatives that support newcomers' health is the provision of culturally competent health services. It is evident that we need to progress from research to the implementation and evaluation of model programs that comprehensively address the recognized barriers.

Current research suggests the need to review healthcare services to ensure that they are responsive to the health needs of newcomers; and to redesign services and/or offer staff training to ensure that services are culturally competent. Although there has been much research on the barriers and supports that impact newcomer access to healthcare, there is not agreement on whether the optimal healthcare services model for newcomers should be targeted specialized healthcare services for specific populations or an inclusive model where extra navigation or language supports are embedded in regular healthcare services that can be accessed by anyone.

## **HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES IN REGINA**

The Regina Open Door Society (RODS), Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR) and Regina Community Clinic (RCC) have partnered to offer targeted health services to government assisted refugees (GAR) in the Regina area since 2004. The partnership has established a coordinated healthcare protocol to guide the provision of comprehensive services to GARs during their first six months in Canada. All GARs receive an initial health assessment from the public health nurse at the Regina Open Door office and are then referred to the RCC for their complete physical examination, which can be done urgently if required; otherwise it may be completed within a couple of weeks. The RCC is a comprehensive primary care centre that includes a lab, x-ray department, nurses, nurse

practitioners, nutritionist, exercise therapist, counselor, and salaried physicians. These physicians have time to spend with people who do not speak English and might need interpretation, which can take additional time that fee-for-service physicians may not have. The RCC has also developed a health guide, available in seven languages, to tell refugees what to expect when they come to the facility. The health guide includes a range of useful health resources, including crisis response resources, when to go to emergency, how to read medication labels and an explanation of the Saskatchewan health card. The RCC provides supportive interpretation services in the client's first language, either with a contracted interpreter, or through a staff member who can speak their language. These supportive services facilitate GARS' access to healthcare.

## SUCCESSSES

Overall, RODS perceives that the Regina partnership has been highly successful in terms of healthcare access measures and client satisfaction. The partnership has been working very effectively as it has resulted in coordinated healthcare for all individuals with high medical needs, and reports a 99 to 100 percent success rate of up-to-date immunizations. RODS estimates that about 98 to 99 percent of clients continue to access a family physician at the RCC. In addition, they estimate that the partnership approach has prevented 95 to 96 percent of clients from accessing emergency services when that level of care was not required. Before the partnership started, RODS reported that many refugees used Emergency Department services as their default healthcare service because there was no systematic approach to facilitate access to healthcare.

Many recent refugees have indicated their satisfaction with healthcare services provided by RQHR and RCC shortly after their arrival. When they first arrive they usually have no idea of where to go to see a physician or access healthcare so they appreciate that their RODS case managers guide them through the process and that interpretation is provided when necessary. In some instances quick access to the targeted healthcare service has been beneficial for those with existing health issues. As part of the Healthy Immigrant Children study we conducted in-depth interviews with families to understand their experiences with the healthcare system. A refugee shared her husband's experience of accessing care for his depression. When the family first arrived the public health nurse identified them as needing urgent referral to RCC so the father could access medication for depression. He continued to see a physician there for about one year. After he got a job and started working he no longer required the medication. The family credits the good care he received at RCC with supporting his recovery. This refugee, who had a potentially stigmatizing mental health issue, had facilitated access to proper treatment that assisted him to recover and successfully integrate into Canadian society.

## CHALLENGES

The Regina Community Clinic is committed to meeting the healthcare needs of GARS, although they are currently experiencing increased service demands that they are stretched to accommodate with existing resources. When the partnership started, there were about 20 or 30 new GAR patients per year and the number continues to increase annually to about 200 to 250 patients per year in 2014-2015. This figure will be even larger once the Syrian GARS are added. RCC estimates that they have over 1000 GAR patients, since over 90 percent of them continue to seek their primary care at the clinic on an ongoing basis. GARS are part of the official health partnership during their first six months of residency, but GARS are not forced to leave the care of RCC physicians at the end of that term. GARS appear to be comfortable at the clinic because even though they are advised that they can find another physician in the community, perhaps more conveniently located near their residence, they don't leave. Perhaps the good service they get from their RODS case manager who provides transportation to the clinic or the interpretation provided at the clinic creates such a welcoming environment that there is no motivation to transfer to another healthcare provider. Since RCC accepts all new GARS in the Regina area as patients and many of them do not transition to other physicians in the community, it can become difficult to continue the same level of service without the addition of new resources. Even demand for the public health services provided by RQHR at the RODS location is growing. RODS notes that the annual flu clinic they host at their office has grown exponentially in recent years to close to 700 clients in 2014-2015, which is becoming difficult to accommodate within existing space.

Although the RQHR Public Health Services and RCC are providing high quality targeted service to GARS, immigrants and privately sponsored refugees do not have access to the same dedicated service. Given this lack of targeted services for new immigrants and the increasing demand for supportive healthcare services by refugees, RODS suggests the need for a primary healthcare clinic that focuses on newcomer health. Presently, immigrants are not getting any interpretive services to access healthcare in Regina, while GARS are only getting in-person interpretation services for the first six months while they are going through the health partnership.

## CONCLUSION

The experience of the Regina GAR health partnership provides some guidance to inform the development of an optimal newcomer healthcare services model. It would be ideal to enhance the capacity of the overall healthcare system to provide responsive, culturally competent healthcare so that one specific site would not be burdened with an ever-increasing patient load. This could be accomplished by expanding

healthcare system navigator programs that currently exist to serve Aboriginal populations to also include a broader target group of new Canadians from various ethno-cultural backgrounds. Cultural navigators would proactively contact all new refugees and immigrants to help arrange access to appropriate healthcare services with the support of a pool of trained interpreters available on an as-needed basis. Co-location of the navigators within selected health region or clinic sites in areas with high newcomer populations would likely support convenient access to healthcare services over the long-term. However, the navigator should not be confined to supporting newcomers in specific locations. In a truly patient-centered approach, navigators should be able to assist newcomers to access healthcare that is convenient for the patient.

In Canada we do not currently have a unified evidence-based approach to providing healthcare to newcomers. Thus, there is an opportunity to thoughtfully consider policy and practices options by moving forward with a cohesive national review of current practices, challenges and opportunities, and the formation of a stakeholder group to review available information and make recommendations.

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# GLOBAL REFUGEE REALITIES: ENHANCING RESETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION OUTCOMES OF REFUGEES

From the local level to international, **FARIBORZ BIRJANDIAN** has served on many committees, boards and task forces related to immigration, refugees, diversity, equal rights and the cultural arts. He became a refugee when he left his home country of Iran with his family and settled for a brief time in Lahore, Pakistan, where he began his work with refugees through the UNHCR. When Fariborz resettled in Canada, he volunteered with Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) and soon worked as a Settlement Counselor for the organization. For the past 22 years, he has been the Chief Executive Officer of CCIS, the fourth largest immigrant serving organization in Canada, and is responsible for 300 staff and 1,600 volunteers, overseeing approximately 70 programs.

Fariborz has received numerous awards and recognitions for his involvements including, *Government of Canada's Citation for Citizenship*, *the Alberta Centennial Medal*, *the Queen's Gold Jubilee* and *the Queen's Diamond Jubilee*.

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While we, as a global community, still have work to do in preventing the creation of refugees, and in developing a resettlement process that facilitates the integration of refugees into our communities, there are many best practices that we can build upon. As a refugee and the CEO of CCIS, Fariborz Birjandian outlines how a collaborative, holistic approach is fundamental to resettlement, and how providing a seamless system of support, which begins upon arrival and ends with integration, is key to helping refugees overcome their past traumas, confront their fears, and realize their hopes of a new life.

I believe that people become refugees when humanity fails them, locally and internationally. In my own experience, as someone who never dreamt of becoming a refugee, humanity failed me when my family and I were stripped of our basic human rights, simply because we refused to convert to the dominant religion in the country where I was born. I lost the right to employment, to education for my children, and to any opportunity to appeal for, or expect, justice. Every day, people around the world are treated as less than human because of their political views, religious beliefs, the way they show love, or their stance on war.

Refugees undergo a painful process of losing everything and becoming stateless, without any protection from governments

whose primary obligations should be to protect their citizens. They have their properties taken away and their basic human rights violated; they are tortured, raped, and murdered. The only resolution to this painful journey is the restoration of their faith in humanity, and the restoration of their own human rights. To heal and move forward, these individuals must be provided with a loving environment, wherein they can regain their dignity and self worth.

When I became a refugee in 1987, I was forced to reconcile with my new identity. I realized there were 12.2 million refugees or displaced people around the world, and I now numbered among them. The number in 1987 was staggering; imagine 12.2 million men and women, including the elderly and children,

homeless and going to sleep without knowing what the next day would bring, or if we would be alive the following night. Every day these people were crossing borders, risking their lives, and living in camps with little hope that they would ever restore their lives as dignified human beings. I have devoted my life to understanding the psychological and emotional experiences of refugees, and to identifying how someone who has lost their safety, their belongings, their homes, their rights, and even their hope, can rediscover their faith and trust in humanity, and begin to look forward to their futures.

Today, as a refugee advocate, I see that the number of forcibly displaced people around the world has increased. In 2014, this number reached a record high of 59.5 million, 19.5 million of whom were recognized as refugees. UNHCR has reported that, by the end of 2014, the number of people assisted or protected by UNHCR had reached a record high of 46.7 million. This leads me to question: are we, as a whole, failing to learn from the past? Are we losing the battle in preventing the creation and plight of refugees? Despite all of the advancements we have made in establishing a world-wide human rights protocol, and enforcing accountability for heads of state, this number has increased by 500%. Looking to the future, the outlook for these numbers remains grim as political and religious persecution continues in countries all over the world. Individuals with diverse sexual orientations are being persecuted, treated as less than human, and placed in jail or even killed, simply for being themselves. In some regions, it seems that war and the destruction of cities has become the norm, and is somehow accepted as an inevitability by the global community. In addition to political strife, we add disasters and the effects of global warming, such as droughts, creating environmental refugees. Although I still have a lot of hope in our humanity, I believe the challenges are becoming more severe, and public interest and resources are spread thin.

Since the 1951 Convention, which introduced an international commitment to protect refugees, we have seen a great deal of effort on the part of governments, organizations, and institutions to provide protection and support to displaced peoples in need. International protocols have been signed, research projects have been undertaken within the academic realm, and we have developed many best practices for healing the psychological and emotional wounds of refugees and facilitating their resettlement and integration in their new communities and new lives. At the same time, when we look at the number of countries that have actually agreed to play an active role in this refugee resettlement (27 countries), we see that few nations are willing to step up and take action in preventing people from becoming refugees, and offering them full protection and assistance when they do.

Research and practices have taught us that refugee protection and resettlement is a complex and lengthy process. A number of factors impact the failure or success of the refugee resettlement process. The three remedies that the UNHCR applies to

refugee crises (repatriation, local integration, and resettlement) are moderately successful but, overall, they are simply not enough. In recent history, repatriation has failed as authorities have forced millions of people to live in refugee camps and return to harsh, inhospitable environments with little infrastructure or protection (for example, the repatriation of Afghani refugees). As for local integration, many refugees are never recognized as full citizens and live with daily discrimination, racism, and treatment as second-class citizens (for example, the Palestinian refugee situation). The third approach, resettlement, has been successful in many instances and has garnered worldwide attention. The numbers for resettlement, however, are limited, with about 100,000-120,000 individuals resettled each year, compared to the 19.5 million refugees recognized globally.

I give full credit to countries now involved in the refugee resettlement scheme, but the fact that there are only 27 countries out of 193 United Nations members taking part in this process is highly discouraging. While the UNHCR and a number of countries such as Canada have made a concerted effort to bring other countries on board as willing partners in refugee resettlement, these efforts have had little impact.

Of the 27 countries that are actively engaged in resettlement, Canada has emerged as a leader in the successful settlement and integration of refugees. I attribute this success to three best practices. The first is the engagement of grassroots groups in the sponsorship and settlement of refugees; Canada is unique from other countries in that it boasts 106 Sponsorship Agreement Holders that have been actively engaged in sponsoring refugees for 35 years. Second is the extensive network of community-based volunteer organizations in Canada's settlement sector that facilitate the integration of both Privately Sponsored and Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) into the community. The third is the collaborative and full-spectrum approach, from policy-making to service provision, wherein all three levels of government, public institutions (in areas such as health and education), service providers in the settlement sector, and the Canadian public at large, work together to ensure that systems and supports are in place which will make refugee resettlement a positive experience for refugees and their host communities alike.

Having gone through my own experience as a refugee, and having learned from 30 years of hands-on experience as a refugee advocate and a practitioner in the field of resettlement and integration, I can simplify all of the complex literature and research studies on the topic by stating: refugees arrive in their new communities with trauma from their pasts as well as fears and hopes for their future; when developing new policies and practices, our main focus should be the identification and elimination of these fears, and the creation of a condition wherein their hopes and dreams can come true.

In order to anticipate the needs of refugees, and to ensure

that appropriate policies, programs, services, and supports are established to holistically address these needs, we must understand the complexity of the refugee journey, including the reasons they became refugees, the process they underwent to be eligible for resettlement, and their refugee status. Further to this, it's important to understand the complex needs of refugees, as well as the barriers they will face upon their arrival. These needs and barriers include the trauma they endured in their own countries, their language skills, and their cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

Once the needs and barriers of refugee groups have been identified, it is essential to offer a net of support immediately upon their arrival, followed by a package of customized programs and services to help them overcome their personal barriers to integration. This creation of a welcoming environment, wherein immediate needs are met, is fundamental to ensuring a positive and successful settlement and integration experience. Mitigating the expectations of refugees is an important step; many arrive with skepticism and resistance to life in Canada, while others arrive with a great deal of hope that life here will offer an abundance of opportunity. Helping these individuals to recognize the arduous road ahead of them, but assuring them that they will be assisted along the way, is key to a successful settlement process wherein the refugee is "on board" with the services and systems that are available. Based on Calgary Catholic Immigration Society's (CCIS) extensive experience, once refugees feel welcomed, supported, and accepted, the settlement and integration work can begin.

The figure below outlines the way in which CCIS supports refugees, from creating a welcoming environment immediately upon their arrival at the airport, to the provision of temporary accommodations where they receive orientation to life in Canada, to the transition into programs and services that support their language learning, employment preparation, and ultimate integration into the workplace, the community, and Canadian society at large. This network of programs and services provide refugees with holistic support (addressing areas such as language, housing, health, and education) and relies on the collaboration and engagement of multiple partners (such as community volunteers, public institutions, the private sector, and government bodies). This collaborative, full-spectrum, holistic approach is the key to CCIS' and- in many ways- Canada's successes in assisting the refugee resettlement process.

Looking back at my own experience, and reviewing the settlement success of refugees in Canada over the past 35 years, (beginning with the experience of the Vietnamese refugees all the way to the recent Syrian refugee resettlement) I can say that the resettlement in Canada has been a positive and productive experience for refugees and Canadian society alike. As a result, many countries are looking to Canada's experience to help them improve their own resettlement policies and

processes. There is, however, room for improvement in our policy development, community engagement, and services delivery. Following are some ideas on how we could improve our short and long-term outcomes:

- Strategic planning for engaging smaller communities in refugee sponsorship and destining more GAR's to smaller centers
- Increasing investment in treating refugees who are suffering from trauma and mental health issues
- Conducting more research to capture the challenges and successes we have had in refugee resettlement in order to build upon these lessons learned
- Strategic approach to engage Canadian corporations in the settlement and integration of refugees. (Momentum has been gained through the Syrian crisis that we could build upon in the future)
- Broadening the definition of settlement to include deliberate community engagement that reflects cultural reciprocity.

While we, as a global community, still have many steps to take in preventing the creation of refugees, and while there is room for improvement in developing a successful and efficient resettlement process that facilitates the swift, long-term integration of refugees into our communities, there are many best practices that settlement providers, and all stakeholders, can build upon. In my experience, as a refugee and as the CEO of CCIS, I can say that the work that has been done to ensure a collaborative, holistic, and full-spectrum approach to resettlement is an achievement that we should recognize and celebrate. Mobilizing multiple stakeholders and providing a seamless system of support, which begins upon arrival and ends with integration, is key to helping refugees overcome their past traumas, confront their fears, and realize their hopes of a new and prosperous life in Canada.

FIGURE 1

