

# • C A N A D I A N • DIVERSITÉ C A N A D I E N N E

## Refugee Children and Families in the Canadian Context

GUEST EDITORS Howard Ramos & Michael Ungar, Dalhousie University

## Les enfants et les familles réfugiés dans le contexte canadien

RÉDACTEURS INVITÉS Howard Ramos et Michael Ungar, Université de Dalhousie

20   
20 years of  
Metropolis

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20 ans de  
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Canadian Diversity is a quarterly publication of the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). It is distributed free of charge to individual and institutional members of the ACS. Canadian Diversity is a bilingual publication. All material prepared by the ACS is published in both French and English. All other articles are published in the language in which they are written. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ACS or sponsoring organizations. The Association for Canadian Studies is a voluntary non-profit organization. It seeks to expand and disseminate knowledge about Canada through teaching, research and publications. The ACS is a scholarly society and a member of the Humanities and Social Science Federation of Canada.

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## LETTERS

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*Your letters may be edited for length and clarity.*

# REFUGEE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

HOWARD RAMOS and MICHAEL UNGAR, Dalhousie University

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It has been two years since Canada re-entered the world stage as a major player in refugee settlement. The country was mobilized to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, boldly declaring that Canada has a place on the world stage again. At the same time, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada reoriented its immigration policy towards a greater focus on the needs of families and resettlement of the most vulnerable populations drawn from around the world. All of these changes are timely, especially given the fact that United Nations statistics show that over half of the world's refugees are children, which means that refugee resettlement is ultimately about families.

Over the last two years Canadians mobilized quickly to support refugees, as have the academic community and service providers. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, for example, created a targeted competition on Syrian Refugee Arrival and Resettlement and Integration, and academics across the country rose to the call, committing themselves to understanding how to better accommodate refugees within the Canadian mosaic. Networks were also formed, such as the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC)—led by Michael Ungar and a dozen academics and service provider as co-leads from across Canada. With over a hundred members, the CYRRC is focused on how academics, service providers and policy makers can work together to design and deliver interventions and conduct timely research to help facilitate the settlement of refugee children and their families in both rural and urban communities.

This issue of *Canadian Diversity/Diversité Canadienne* is dedicated to examining refugee, child, youth and family issues and presenting the research that has emerged over the last two years as part of these and other efforts. As you will see in this issue, in many respects Canadian academics and service providers, along with the Canadian population as a whole, have learned to work quickly, think differently, and explore new methods to help refugees resettle in Canada. Our efforts have garnered us attention from around the world.

Given that so many recent refugees to Canada are children and youth, education and language learning have become a special focus for resettlement. Both aspects of a child's life are key to their successful integration. Yan Guo, Srabani Maitra, and Shibao Guo explore these issues through interviews with parents and children in Calgary, showing how refugees look to schools as institutions to help children and families form friendship and social networks. At the same time, and unfortunately, schools are far too often the first place where children and youth experience bullying, discrimination and other setbacks. James Baker explores these issue through interviews with youth in St. John's and Hamilton, looking at the micro-aggressions they face in their day-to-day lives. Mazen El-Baba, Redab al Janaideh and Xi Chen also look at education and language but examine instead how learning can occur outside the classroom through summer camps. They show the power of working across academic and service sectors to create programs that enhance the lives of the young people who participate.

Refugee families clearly face struggles in their new homes and adapting to a new life. Many also wrestle with memories of traumatic and stressful events. These experiences can lead to anxiety and other mental health challenges among children and their caregivers. E. Anne Marshall examines best practices in counseling refugee youth and considers the factors that influence their mental health outcomes. She cautions that well-intentioned programs can fail to recognize and build on refugees' strengths. Patrick McGrath also explores issues of mental health, but focuses on supporting not only children and youth but refugee families as a whole. He shows how governments and communities can mobilize new technologies to offer better and more affordable access to mental health supports.

When educational opportunities are not present and children and youth's challenges are exacerbated by discrimination, unmet expectations, and poverty, we know that youth can be led astray. In Europe and other regions of the world a number of refugees and asylum seekers have been linked to terrorism and violence. Amarnath Amarasingam critically examines whether Syrian refugees pose such a threat in Canada. He explores the myths and realities of this potential for violence as well as how such beliefs influence public opinion towards refugees.

Public opinion and discourse is also examined by Jessica Anne Déry and Elke Winter who look at Québec and English Canadian media coverage of Syrian refugees. They show how identities such as "us" and "them" are created and how labels become obstacles for newcomers to overcome. These issues are also analyzed by Reza Nakhaie in his contribution to this issue. He discusses the xenophobia of dominant groups in Canada and challenges it by showing that despite obstacles, access to and incentives for free access to Official Language schooling for newcomers mitigates against mental health struggles and better integrates young people and their families into communities and the broader economy.

The arrival of a large number of Syrian refugees offered many opportunities for Canadians to show their best and most welcoming qualities. Many did so by forming community partnerships and refugee sponsorship groups. Norine Verberg and Joseph Khoury chronicle how the town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, banded together to create SAFE (Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace) to support four families. Their piece highlights how people worked across academic, service, and other sectors to support refugees over the past two years. They also illustrate how Canadians learned to welcome newcomers differently as a result of the Syrian cohort of refugees — that is they learned to work more quickly and think outside the box when looking for settlement solutions.

The arrival of Syrian refugees also shone a light on social problems native-born Canadians face, such as access to a living wage and affordable housing. The arrival of large families showed how Canada's housing stock is designed for older and

single people rather than young and large families. Issues like these are explored by Lori Wilkinson and her colleagues, who interviewed refugee families arriving to the Prairies. Damaris Rose and Alexandra Charette also engage with these issues looking at Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Windsor, Hamilton, Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Gatineau, Montréal, St. John, and Halifax. Like Wilkinson's team, they found a lack of information for settlement providers and impediments to affordable housing required for the settlement of refugees across the country.

Despite the challenges, refugees have landed across all parts of Canada. For the Atlantic region their arrival reversed population trends in Nova Scotia from a net loss to a gain. This has led many to ask whether family based migration and non-economic immigration might be a solution to population woes in the country's secondary cities and regions where outmigration compounds aging. Fernando Matta explores whether refugees are likely to stay where they landed looking at administrative data of recent refugees. He finds that many will move on and they most likely will move to where jobs can be found and larger population centres. If communities want to retain newcomers they will need to be proactive.

Part of being proactive means collecting data and tracking whether policy and other interventions are working. Despite enormous mobilization of resources, in the fall of 2017 the Auditor General of Canada cautioned that the federal government is struggling to track the impact of its effort to resettle Syrian refugees. In this issue we offer some insight on the research being done, but also recognize that the work is far from complete. The more we learn, the better prepared Canada will be for the next cohort of refugee newcomers. Not only are we back as a nation on the world stage, the research presented in this special issue shows that our country has great potential to sustain its position as a world leader in refugee research and settlement.

# SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN CANADIAN SCHOOLS: THREE PROMINENT ISSUES

**YAN GUO** is Professor in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. Her research interests include socio-cultural and sociopolitical perspectives on language learning, Teaching English as an Additional Language, immigrant parent engagement, transnational identities of immigrant and refugee children, language policy, and international education.

**SRABANI MAITRA** is a Lecturer in the School of Education at University of Glasgow, UK. Her research combines interdisciplinary theories and methodologies from sociology and education to focus on the issues of education/ learning, workplace skill training, transnational migration as well as socio-economic inequities and struggles of marginalized groups.

**SHIBAO GUO** is Professor in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. He specializes in citizenship and immigration, multicultural and anti-racist education, and comparative and international education.

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This article focuses on the initial integration experiences of Syrian refugee children in schools in Canada. Our research shows that Syrian refugee children not only find it difficult to make friends with local students but are also subjected to constant bullying and racism that affect their sense of belonging and connection.

*Cet article porte sur les expériences initiales d'intégration des enfants réfugiés syriens dans les écoles du Canada. Notre recherche montre que les enfants réfugiés syriens ont non seulement du mal à se faire des amis avec les élèves locaux, mais qu'ils sont également victimes d'intimidation et de racisme constants qui affectent leur sentiment d'appartenance et de connexion.*

Since 2011, the armed conflict that began in the Syrian Arab Republic has displaced an estimated 12 million Syrians, forcing them to seek refuge in various countries. Over half of those uprooted are children, who traumatized by war had to leave their home and live in camps and resettlement countries. The crisis in Syria has severely affected the education of these children, which is key to their integration and is critical for bringing back a sense of normalcy, routine, as well as emotional

and social well-being in the lives of refugee children as well as their families.

For these reasons we pursued a Social Science and Humanities Research Council grant to explore the initial integration experiences of Syrian refugee children in schools in a city in Western Canada, particularly in their first year. We conducted 5 focus groups with 12 Syrian refugee parents and 18 Syrian

refugee children between the age group of 10-14. The focus of our research was on Calgary, however, findings are of considerable relevance to other cities across Canada where the Syrian refugee student population is increasing and placing new pressures on policy-makers and education systems.

Schools can have a stabilizing effect for children by allowing them to make new interactions, relations and social participation, which are vital for not only making friends but also achieving academic success. Our research found that schools provided varying opportunities for refugee children to socialize and make friends. Our participants were excited and happy to be far away from camps where most of them had a negative experience. In Canadian schools, they were making new friends from different backgrounds, attending birthday parties of their new friends, playing hockey together, attending music and gym classes as well as swimming lessons. These social activities were key to bringing back a sense of normalcy in their lives. Nonetheless, they faced many barriers affecting their social integration.

## DIFFICULTY IN DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS WITH LOCAL STUDENTS

Social bonding is a key factor for young refugee children to get established in a new country during their first few years. Indeed, the wellbeing of the children is quite dependent upon the environment of the broader school community, “the extent to which it is welcoming, offering opportunities to become at home — to belong and flourish in their new host country” (Correa-Velez et al., 2010, p. 6). Children should be able to bond and bridge with their new peers. However, many participants in our study identified the challenges refugee students face in making friends. Most refugee students lived in neighborhoods where there was a predominance of an Arabic speaking Syrian population that did not provide them with much opportunity to gain friends outside of their own community. In school, since most of the students were in specialized English classes, they primarily interacted with other non-English speaking students with similar refugee backgrounds. While a few children actually liked being with others like themselves, there were many others who wanted an opportunity to interact with what they called “Canadian” students.

Thus, we argue that schools need to ensure that Syrian students, and other refugee children, have both bonding and bridging relationships (Putnam, 2000). Bonding relationships with one’s own ethnic community will be important for “learning from others like them about getting a feel for the game in the new country, and for the material resources shared among extended family and ethnic networks” (Correa-Velez et al., 2010, p. 20). However, bridging relationships with the broader host community will provide students with a sense of being at home in their new country (Correa-Velez et al., 2010).

## BULLYING AND RACISM

An inclusive social community is key to Syrian refugee children’s wellbeing. Bullying and racism can be disruptive of such wellbeing. In fact, a growing body of researchers indicate that post migration stressors such as bullying or negative peer relationships can have a far more significant effect on the psycho-emotional health of refugee children when compared to pre-arrival trauma (De Haene et al., 2007). Some of our research participants shared their experiences of racist bullying that they were subjected to in Canadian schools. They mentioned how scared and unnerved they were from bullying and were picked on just because they were new in the country. While all bullying can be distressing, race and religion based bullying is particularly disturbing. Prejudice among children against Arab Muslims has been identified in other studies as well. Children in our study recounted incidents of ethnic-religious discrimination when they were beaten up and told to go back to their “own” country when they attempted to pray outside the school. In order to ensure that Syrian refugee children integrate into the school with ease, it is essential that attempts are made to dispel negative preconceptions and alleviate prejudice toward them. One way to achieve this might be to teach all children about refugees at school.

## DISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS

In terms of social integration, children were upset by the lack of support they got from teachers when they were subjected to discrimination and bullying. Even though the importance of schools is well recognized, educational institutions, like other host-country institutions, often unwittingly replicate minority—majority tensions and become places where exclusion and discrimination are experienced at different levels by refugee children. For example, although some teachers become passionate advocates of refugee children and may work outside their academic role to support refugee families, others are quite reluctant to take refugee specific characteristics into consideration. In our study children reported how teachers often lacked proper interventions when it came to addressing bullying or racist remarks. Students believed that teachers failed to take much action because they were refugees, hinting that discrimination extended beyond unconscious or subtle bias. Perceived discrimination among young refugees from the Middle East is associated with mental health problems and weakening of social adaptation (Montgomery, 2008). Developing strong social supports is clearly an essential component of refugee children’s mental health. Specific work needs to be done to reduce discrimination in the community, educating teachers and parents in how children display trauma, and increasing resources to help adults cope with a traumatized child’s behaviour.



## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

In term of social integration, Syrian refugee children in our study not only found it difficult to make friends with mainstream Canadian students but were also subjected to constant bullying and racism that affected their sense of belonging and connection. Many were ridiculed and beaten up by other students during their prayers and told to go back to their own country. Lack of religious accommodation in many schools coupled with the pressure to “fit in” thus threatened children’s sense of religious and cultural identities, thereby posing further barriers to their socio-emotional wellbeing. For teachers working with students in these contexts this poses an incredible tension as they struggle to create conditions in which students can participate in classrooms, and at the same time meet these students’ particular social needs in ways that are not underpinned by deficit assumptions. Furthermore, teachers and school personnel should be geared towards developing interventions that would incorporate strategies that can reduce prejudice in school settings. Making the views of these students explicit, we hope to provide a starting point for not only understanding their experiences in more detail, but also for developing educational strategies, resources and policies that might best meet the needs of these students and future refugee children and youth.

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# MICROASSAULTS: A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF RACISM AS EXPERIENCED BY REFUGEE YOUTH LIVING IN ST. JOHN'S AND HAMILTON

DR. JAMES BAKER is currently a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at McMaster University. His work has appeared in *Sociological Inquiry*, *National Identities*, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *Refuge*, and the *Journal of Youth Studies*. James has taught courses in sociology and political science and, for nearly 15 years, worked with the Association for New Canadians, an immigrant settlement agency located in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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This short article examines microassaults as identified by 16 refugee youth living in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador and Hamilton, Ontario. Given that the respondents reported sadness, hurt, and anger following their experience of racism, these findings reinforce the need to ensure supports are available to assist refugee youth as they integrate into Canadian society.

*Ce court article porte sur les micro-assauts identifiés par 16 jeunes réfugiés vivant à St. John's (Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador) et à Hamilton (Ontario). Comme les répondants ont rapporté de la tristesse, de la douleur et de la colère à la suite de leur expérience du racisme, ces constatations renforcent le besoin de s'assurer que du soutien soit disponible pour aider les jeunes réfugiés à s'intégrer dans la société canadienne.*

While immigration scholarship strongly suggests that both immigrants and refugees experience racism, discrimination, and prejudice, for refugees such experiences have additional physical and mental health implications. Most forms of contemporary racism experienced by refugees are subtle and experienced in everyday life (Baker 2013; Phan, 2003). Yet, this remains largely under-researched and under-examined, especially within the Canadian context. For this reason, this short article examines the racial microaggressions faced by 16 young refugees aged 14-25 who have resettled in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador and Hamilton, Ontario.

## BACKGROUND

Empirical research in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States has documented that refugees and visible min-

orities are often marginalized, treated poorly due to their race, or experience racially motivated violence. Hadley and Patil (2009) suggest that resettled refugees "are at a particularly high risk of discrimination because they show many outward signs of their minority status, including dress, skin color, language, neighbour of residence, religion, and socioeconomic status" (p. 505-6). In fact, refugee youth are an especially vulnerable group given that they often enter countries of resettlement with high levels of trauma exposure and significant mental health needs including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, Ellis et al. (2008) argue that ongoing stressors, such as those brought on by experiencing racism, discrimination, and prejudice, can further increase refugee youths' risk to healthy development and potentially function as traumatic reminders. This is especially relevant for youth who have fled their country due to persecution associated with their ethnic or religious identity.

## RACIAL MICROAGGRESSION THEORY

First coined in 1970, racial microaggressions can be understood as brief, daily, verbal or non-verbal exchanges that communicate negative views, ideas, or beliefs to people of colour because they belong to a racial minority group. While Sue and his colleagues (2007) have developed a racial microaggression taxonomy that comprises three types, this article will focus specifically on the first type - *microassaults* - which are verbal or non-verbal acts designed to defame an individual through name calling, avoidant behaviour, or purposeful discriminatory actions. Despite the growing trend towards research on racial microaggression theory using psychology, few studies have been conducted using a sociological lens and little research has been done in Canada.

## EXPERIENCES OF MICROASSAULTS

The most commonly experienced form of microassaults faced by refugee youth in St. John's and Hamilton come in the form of name calling or avoidant behaviour. As reproduced below, one participant stated that she had been called the n-word by "Canadian girls" while another young black male indicated that a white woman crossed the street following his approach. When interviewed, they said:

P1: ...In my class some people swear, they say "oh n—ger." Canadian girls say to Somali girls "n—ger."<sup>1</sup>

I: How does that make you feel?

P1: It made me angry

P2: The only racism I experienced is when I'm walking at night time and if I pass a white lady and she walks to the other side, it makes me feel uncomfortable because I think I'm not gonna hurt nobody, I'm just walking on the street. They're probably not racist but it's how their mind is put on, they probably put all black people in same category.

P3: Yes. Someone hates you but they don't wanna say it ... they like to keep it to hurt more, so it's inside, a lot of people show you love but a lot of hate. To be honest a lot of people hate me too here. Sometimes people treat you different because you're Muslim, they say "Oh you're Muslim."

In each case, the participants had equally reasonable responses to their experiences as the actions of the white majority reinforces negative stereotypes regarding minorities.

In fact, such responses underpin the notion that some white people "engage in racialized performances to show people of color that they are *trespassers* into white space" (Picca and Feagin 2007, p. 80; emphasis in original). The second participant quoted above poignantly notes the unintended and subtle outcomes of their actions. While he senses that the person may not be racist, their actions nonetheless belie a different feeling. Similarly, the third participant quoted above notes that while she feels she is disliked or hated due to her religion, her peers do not actively demonstrate it. It is clear that these examples have the effect of reinforcing the view that while Canada purports itself to be multicultural nation, it nonetheless belies a lack of tolerance for diversity. As a result, it appears that some Canadians simultaneously hold egalitarian values while exhibiting racist attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

## WHAT MICROASSAULTS OF REFUGEE YOUTH SHOW

In many of the interviews conducted for this research, refugee youth reported feelings of sadness, hurt, and anger resulting from the actions of white Canadians while others felt ashamed of their identity. This was especially prevalent among the Muslim youth, who felt that they were being unfairly targeted due to their religion. Perhaps one of the most troubling outcomes of this research is the supposed "normalizing" of racism insomuch that some youth were advised by friends and family members to expect it or to ignore it — a point made in my previous research on refugee youth (Baker 2013). Indeed, such approaches are problematic as it may lead to higher degrees of isolation, alienation, segregation, depression, and concomitant stress among minority youth. It is clear that there is a need to respond to and address their experiences in order to ensure these youth are able to fully integrate into and experience the fruits of Canada's 'multicultural' society.

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1 Following the example of Essed (1997), this article does not spell out racial slurs unless it is necessary for comprehension.

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# PROMOTING LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND WELL-BEING OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN THROUGH SUMMER CAMPS

**MAZEN EL-BABA** is pursuing a Doctor in Medicine degree at the University of Toronto. He is the Founder and Director of H-appi, a not-for-profit organization that aims to destigmatize addictions and mental health illnesses in the Middle East and Africa. Mazen leads an annual summer program for refugee children that focuses on literacy, integration, and well-being.

**REDAB AL JANAIDEH** is a Ph.D. student at OISE/University of Toronto. Her current research focuses on discourse skills of Arabic children, and her dissertation will examine language and literacy skills of Syrian refugee children. The goal of her research to improve education for Arabic children in the multilingual Canadian society.

**XI CHEN** is a professor at OISE/University of Toronto. Her research focuses on language and literacy development of bilingual and multilingual children. She examines cross-language transfer of language and literacy skills. She also specializes in early identification of and early intervention for at-risk readers in bilingual and multilingual populations.

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This paper describes the activities carried out in the H.appi summer camps established for Syrian refugee children and discusses the benefits of these camps on language, literacy and well-being for the refugee population. The success of the summer camps has implications on effective policies and practices for the refugee population.

*Cet article décrit les activités menées dans les camps d'été pour les réfugiés syriens et les avantages de ces camps en ce qui a trait à la langue, l'alphabétisation et le bien-être de la population réfugiée. Le succès des camps d'été a des répercussions sur les politiques et les pratiques efficaces pour la population réfugiée.*

Refugee children have specific needs relating to their language development and mental health. Effective policies and practices that are specifically tailored to this population must be examined and executed. This means that the key to integrating refugee children and youth into Canadian communities is to offer a safe, supportive, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating space for learning. We will examine the factors that facilitate integration through the lens of a unique summer camp for refugees called H.appi (2017).

## LANGUAGE, LEARNING AND WELL-BEING

In order to fully participate in Canadian society, refugee children need to achieve fluent language and literacy skills in an official language, which is English in the context of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). English language and literacy skills increase the integration into Canadian culture and improve academic performance educational and career prospects. At the same time, maintenance and development of

children's first language is key to healthy family relationships, group cohesion and personal identity, and may confer cognitive advantages associated with bilingualism.

Refugees are at a higher risk of mental health problems compared to the general population and non-refugee migrants. Stressors that impact many Canadian refugee children include emotional stress due to parents' socio-economic conditions, violence and neglect from school administrators, teachers and parents, as well as gender-based violence in the family. Further, many refugee youth fear of further relocation, being kidnapped, and sexually harassed. Such stressors significantly impact their overall mental and emotional wellbeing. Many refugees come from areas in the world where mental health problems are highly stigmatized. Therefore, mental health problems become internalized and act as a barrier for refugees to seek help.

## THE H.APPI CAMP

The H.appi camp is a month-long summer camp program for refugee children and youth who are left "furthest behind". The goals of the camp are to help integrate refugees into Canadian communities, improve their literacy and English language skills, and improve their quality of life by ameliorating their emotional and mental health. What distinguishes this summer camp is that it is designed to be culturally sensitive and meet the specific needs of refugee children and youth.

The H.appi Camp was first piloted in the summer of 2016 in Toronto, Ontario, and it registered 81 Syrian refugee children at no cost to families. The fairly homogenous cultural and language background of the children were selected to ensure that the children felt safe in a familiar and inclusive environment. The camp councillors carried out reflective activities to promote language and literacy skills, as well as to improve mental and emotional wellbeing. Camp councillors were bilingual in English and Arabic, which allowed them to effectively communicate with all campers.

Following the camp's success in Toronto in 2016, H.appi's efforts expanded to London, Ontario. In 2017, the H.appi camp hosted 200 children across the two Canadian cities and opened its doors to Canadian refugees from many different countries of origin. The program consisted of physical activities, creative arts, and theatre. Further, focused thematic activities were designed and administered that aimed at building core competencies in the individual, group, and the community. For example, a thematic activity that focused on building key individual and group competency was called "Stand-Up and Be Heard". This activity focused on building self-esteem in campers by teaching participants how to effectively communicate their thoughts and feelings to their peers. These thematic activities were continuously revised

based on feedback from the campers. For instance, cigarette smoking among youth became a growing concern to many refugee families. Among the children that attended in 2016, six returned in 2017 that self-identified as regular smokers. In response to this concern, we developed focused group activities that explored issues relating to smoking and engaged the youth in group discussion on mental health and wellbeing. Of the six children, five ceased smoking by the end of the camp, while the sixth decreased the amount smoked with the goal of complete cessation in the future.

Empowerment was an additional goal that was added to the 2017 camp to encourage children to become active leaders in their communities. The empowerment workshop, the "I AM" project, was created and implemented by a partnering local charity — Jayu. The program focused on campers between the ages of 12 and 15 years of age. Its goals were to help the campers tell their stories through the lens of a camera, while also engaging in critical and creative thinking on the meaning of home and freedom. Their stories were audio recorded and their photographs were displayed in galleries across Toronto (Jayu 2017).

The camp experience had tremendous impact on campers and their families, as well, on the H.appi staff. Through various blogs, camp councillors expressed the long-lasting impact that the camp has had on their professional and personal development. Understanding the importance of empathy and compassion was a common theme at H.appi's debriefing sessions.

## BRIDGING THE GAP IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Bridging the gap between two different cultures and enhancing the English proficiency of refugee youth were important objectives of the H.appi summer camp. Daily literacy sessions within the regular summer camp days were designed by a team from the Multilingualism and Literacy lab (Chen, 2017) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. These literacy sessions gave the camp participants the confidence to excel in their new English Canadian schools and reduced the negative effects of the "summer slide".

The literacy sessions were designed to cover themes and concepts important for newcomers to Canada. The themes included recreational activities in summer, snow and the winter season, popular sports and the food variety in Canada. Specific classes were prepared with all necessary equipment to welcome these children. A new theme was introduced to the students each week.

The instructors asked the camp participants to brainstorm on each topic, taught them the vocabulary used to describe the activities, and asked them to write sentences and essays

in their notebooks. Each theme was also supported by worksheets created to suit the needs and interests of the different age groups. Children were always eager to share their own thoughts on each theme. They described similarities as well as differences between what they had back home and what they were experiencing in their new country.

Unfortunately, many refugee children had little if any formal schooling before arriving in Canada. As a result, it was challenging for literacy instructors to address different literacy levels within each age group. Assessing English literacy levels of refugee children before the camp started helped instructors meet their needs.

## **SUPPORTING AND CREATING CHANGE**

Early life experiences impact children's development and future health outcomes. As a society, we need to move past acknowledging the need for support and focus on creating change. Many children and youth need their community's help in forging a new path for success. These positive experiences help build the foundation for refugee children and youth to flourish in their new environments. The success of H.appi emphasizes the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration to create, execute, and evaluate effective community programs and interventions. Through the work at H.appi, research and community service was combined to ensure that programming targets real issues at the individual, group, and community levels.

In light of our experience at the H.appi camp, future work will continually bridge research with community service. The overarching aim of our work is to integrate the H.appi camp into local and international communities to positively impact the development of marginalized children. Only through collaboration and innovation can we ensure that no child is left behind, and that every child is, simply, H.appi.

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# MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING FOR REFUGEE YOUTH: ISSUES AND GOOD PRACTICES

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Experiences of loss, trauma, uncertainty, and upheaval during pre-migration and migration journeys often place refugee youth at risk for mental health problems. Mental health professionals need particular knowledge and skills to help these youth identify positive connections, address mental health difficulties, and establish new relationships in their host communities.

*Les expériences de perte, de traumatisme, d'incertitude et de bouleversement pendant les voyages de pré-migration et de migration placent souvent les jeunes réfugiés à risque de problèmes de santé mentale. Les professionnels de la santé mentale ont besoin de connaissances et de compétences particulières pour aider ces jeunes à identifier des liens positifs, à résoudre les problèmes de santé mentale et à établir de nouvelles relations dans leurs communautés d'accueil.*

Refugees experience many difficulties and barriers in transit and after arriving in their new host country. Even with support available from governments and private sponsors, many refugee youth and their families experience challenges in language learning, housing, employment, education, social relationships, and health, including mental health. Many experience adversity pre-migration, during migration, and after resettlement; it is not surprising that they exhibit symptoms of mental health disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Yet, despite challenging circumstances, young refugees also demonstrate adaptability, perseverance, and resilience; they possess strengths and attributes that will help them adjust positively to a new home. It is vital that mental health practitioners remember to acknowledge and build upon the assets and potential that refugee youth possess.

## UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES FOR REFUGEE YOUTH

Understanding the mental health challenges young refugees face requires consideration of the multiple losses associated with being forced to leave one's home, compounded with the stress and trauma encountered pre-migration or during their journey to a settlement or host country. Experiences of trauma can include loss of family members or friends through death, disappearance, or displacement; witnessing or experiencing emotional or physical torture and other forms of violence; fear for safety; hunger; homelessness; and loss of property. Unaccompanied youth are most at risk for mental health challenges; they are more likely to be exposed to pre-migration trauma and also to show more depressive symptoms upon resettlement. Other mental health issues among refugee youth include depression, low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, and con-



duct disorders. Many refugee youth experience symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder such as emotional numbness, disturbed sleep patterns, and flashbacks.

Because of multiple losses, many refugees experience grief during migration and resettlement. Some experience prolonged or complicated grief, in which maladaptive responses to the losses persist. Counsellors consistently identify themes of loss of home, belonging, and culture that emerge in therapy sessions with migrants. At a key developmental period, refugee youth also experience a disrupted sense of self or identity that can erode self-esteem and coping. Forced migration can lead to a deep sense of isolation or lack of identification with a home, which negatively impacts sense of self. Mental health professionals can assist refugee youth by engaging them in discussions about loss, transitions, identity development, and cultural conflicts affecting them and their families and by helping them to address and resolve these tensions.

Although stress is experienced differently by young men and women, gender is an often-overlooked factor with respect to mental health. Refugee girls and young women have distinct needs, barriers, and strengths that can go unrecognized within the context of male-centered settlement policies. Mental health programming that accommodates girls' and young women's home and family responsibilities can promote greater access to services. A further key factor is increasing accessibility of services for young women who have experienced sexual and physical violence. Gender-focused support can pose some challenges, however, because of the need to balance recognition of refugees' cultural roles while addressing structural barriers that may segregate and devalue young women.

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG REFUGEES**

Migration does not in itself cause mental health problems; rather, a multitude of factors interact to influence individuals and families. Direct and indirect exposure to violence is associated with increased mental health problems. However, so is injury sustained during pre-migration. Pre-migration mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, and exposure to stressful life events also impact refugees' post-migration mental health.

Family history and disruptions to the family unit have an impact on young refugees' mental health outcomes too. Children separated from their families pre- or post-migration are at increased risk of psychological problems. Family support and cohesion is related to better mental health for young refugees, as is parental mental health. Parental worries about financial problems, a common occurrence upon resettlement, can have

an adverse effect on children's mental health. Mental health professionals need to have some understanding of family context and history in order to establish priorities in therapy.

Yet, too frequently, well-intentioned programs fail to recognize and build on refugees' strengths. Those who have encountered hardship and trauma may even exhibit Post Traumatic Growth (PTG), such as greater appreciation for life, enhanced spirituality, and increased personal strength. Instead a positive, holistic approach in mental health counselling that emphasizes abilities and coping.

Refugee youth need to find positive connections and develop relationships in school and in their host community (Marshall et al., 2016). The extent to which youth perceive themselves as accepted or discriminated against within host countries is related to mental wellbeing. Research has identified a relationship between peer discrimination and low self-esteem, depression, and PTSD among migrating youth. Perceived positive social support, in contrast, is related to improved psychological functioning. Therapists can help refugee youth establish relationships where they experience the sense of belonging that has been found to protect against anxiety and depression.

## **ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Despite experiencing disproportionately more mental health challenges, research shows that immigrant and refugee youth make significantly less use of mental health services; many who are in need go without support. Community and mental health referral contacts need to be aware of barriers to services; these include distrust of authority, stigma, language and cultural differences, and other priorities.

Many refugees develop distrust of authorities after negative experiences with government systems and other establishments. Sometimes the very organizations put in place to provide support and safety are, in fact, responsible for inflicting trauma. Some refugees might also feel hesitant with helping professionals due to perceived power imbalances. Hundley and Lambie (2007) recommended that therapists devote increased time and effort to develop rapport and a sense of safety with refugee clients. Ellis et al. (2011) suggest enlisting help from other refugee families and the broader community to develop and deliver appropriate mental health services can assist in establishing trust.

Refugee youth and their families may hesitate to seek counselling services because of the stigma surrounding mental illness and those who seek this form of help, which can exacerbate the negative impact of mental health problems. One strategy to diminish stigma is to embed mental health services in other acceptable forms of refugee support such

as counselling services that are available in secondary and post-secondary educational settings. Community cultural agencies, sports organizations, and other outreach programs are examples of refugee support services that can include mental health information and promotional activities in their programming.

Language differences can constitute a considerable barrier between refugees and host country mental health professionals and these also need to be considered. Assessment and therapy sessions are often one-on-one encounters that require good language skills. Using interpreters can address the need for both linguistic and cultural relevance in treatment, however, having an extra person present affects the therapeutic relationship and can compromise confidentiality. Moreover, given the wide diversity within and among refugees, it cannot be assumed that an interpreter will have a full cultural understanding of a client's background. Ellis and colleagues (2011) recommend including community voices and cultural experts in the development and delivery of refugee mental health services and training.

A significant barrier for young refugees is that other resettlement needs may be seen as more urgent and pressing than mental health concerns. Therapists can include attention to basic needs as part of their initial assessment and either take on an advocacy role themselves or refer clients to additional services. Having mental health services located with or close to other health, family, and community refugee services can facilitate a holistic approach to resettlement support. Another strategy is to spend a significant portion of counselling sessions on fostering client strength and agency rather than focusing solely on pre-migration or migration experiences and problems.

Refugee youth arrive in host countries with experiences and histories of loss, trauma, uncertainty, and upheaval. Although their pre-migration context and migration journeys may place them at greater risk for mental health problems, they also settle in their new homes with skills, abilities, and hope. Mental health professionals have a key role to play in assisting these young people to overcome mental health difficulties and realize their full potential in their new environments.

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# IMAGINE BEING A REFUGEE

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Many refugees experience repeated trauma that impacts their well-being. Many develop intrusions of traumatic memories into everyday life in the form of flashbacks, bad dreams or unexpected negative emotion. This post-traumatic stress disorder or injury and the related anxiety and depression can significantly impair learning, socialization and quality of life. There are effective treatments that involve changing traumatic memories into normal memories but these interventions are not available for most sufferers. Interventions delivered at a distance can overcome many of the barriers to care.

*De nombreux réfugiés subissent des traumatismes répétés qui ont des répercussions sur leur bien-être. Beaucoup développent des intrusions de souvenirs traumatiques dans la vie quotidienne sous forme de flashbacks, de mauvais rêves ou d'émotions négatives inattendues. Ce trouble de stress post-traumatique et l'anxiété et la dépression qui en découlent peuvent nuire considérablement à l'apprentissage, à la socialisation et à la qualité de vie. Il existe des traitements efficaces qui impliquent de transformer des souvenirs traumatiques en souvenirs normaux, mais ces interventions ne sont pas disponibles pour la plupart des patients. Les interventions à distance peuvent surmonter bon nombre des obstacles à la prestation de soins.*

Imagine having your town occupied by soldiers in war, witness bombing, shelling and sniper fire in your neighbourhood, and direct violence against your friends, family and neighbours. Imagine your family is terrified and then forced to flee for their lives; your extended family is separated; two of your cousins were tortured and two others have disappeared. You spend months in a very overcrowded and sometimes violent camp with serious deprivation. You finally are one of the lucky ones who is able to immigrate. You land in Canada with people cheering you at the airport. You immerse yourself in the challenge of learning a new language, a new culture. More than anything you want to get a job so you can support your family and you want your kids to do well in school. You are

also trying to get your sister and her family to be able to join you but you have had no success.

In spite of this, you are able to learn basic English and you land a part-time job stocking shelves. Because you are determined to be a success, you also start a small business selling pastries at the local farmers market. You are eager to put the past behind you. However, you cannot seem to shake memories of the horror you have experienced. You are afraid you are going crazy. You do your best to avoid thinking about the past. You have dreams of some of the things that happened to you. You feel sad for no good reason. When you hear a loud noise you jump. It is making it difficult for you to work. You

are becoming desperate as the memories are starting to come back as vivid flashbacks during the day. You are also worried about your 15 year-old-son who seems to have some of the same problems. He is having difficulty in school.

You are ashamed for having this problem. You feel that if only you were stronger you could manage. You feel guilty for not coping even though now you and your family are safe.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) occurs when highly emotional memories acquired during serious trauma interfere with life. In war ravaged refugees, PTSD is reported to be common. There are two major types of scientifically proven interventions. The most commonly used are antidepressants, SSRIs. They have, in average, some effects but the effects are small, most people have a little benefit, some have a lot of benefit and some have no benefit. The second, scientifically validated type of treatment are the exposure based interventions. Sufferers are guided in reorganizing their memories. Exposure based interventions are more effective than SSRIs. For many people, most symptoms are overcome. For some there is little effect and some not benefit at all.

Although we know that exposure based interventions are very effective, refugees face significant barriers to getting care for PTSD:

- Language: Treatment needs to be given in the language that the memories were acquired with.
- Stigma and shame with having a mental illness: Stigma appears even stronger in Middle Eastern cultures than in Western cultures. Oftentimes, those afflicted will not share this even with close family.
- Lack of training. Many mental health practitioners are not trained to treat PTSD.
- Private care specialists are expensive.
- Incidental expenses. Travelling to clinics and taking time off work may increase the cost of even “free” care.

I like to think of PTSD as a memory problem with mental health impacts rather than a psychiatric problem. Highly emotional memories become fragmented and intrude into daily life in the form of nightmares, intense flashbacks during the day, or feelings of depression, anxiety or anger. It is common that situations that trigger these memories are avoided. Thus, the lives of people with PTSD become more restricted. These memories are stored differently than regular memories. Thinking of PTSD as a memory problem may reduce stigma and facilitate help-seeking.

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition, as part of our Social Sciences and Humanities Partnership Grant, is

working with Service Providers to develop a PTSD intervention that can be delivered at a distance, by e-health. It will use the Strongest Families model ([www.strongestfamilies.com](http://www.strongestfamilies.com)) and the Narrative Exposure Therapy model of exposure treatment that has been developed by the Konstanz University group in Germany. Strongest Families is a system of care that was developed at the IWK Health Centre and is delivered by the not for profit Strongest Families Institute. We now see over 4,000 families a year with the most common problems being anxiety and disruptive behavior. We are also active in Finland and about to start offering service in New Zealand.

We hope to have extending our work in this area with participants from Canada's refugee communities. Investing in this kind of intervention will have a lot of bang for the buck. It is low cost and can offer discrete support that will ensure that families can work with their past experiences to open a bright future.

# IS THERE A TERRORIST THREAT TO CANADA FROM SYRIAN REFUGEES?

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The public conversation around Syrian refugees in Canada has been heavily securitized partly due to the frequency of ISIS-inspired attacks in the West. The assumption has been that, first, Syrian refugees, due to the trauma of dislocation are somehow unique vulnerable to radicalization and, second, that ISIS is determined to infiltrate the refugee flows in order to send hardened fighters to Western countries to launch attacks. This article examines the evidence around these two assumptions and argues that, particularly for Canadians, these fears are unfounded.

*La conversation publique autour des réfugiés syriens au Canada a été fortement orientée vers les questions de sécurité, en partie à cause de la fréquence des attaques inspirées par l'EI dans l'Ouest. L'hypothèse est que, d'une part, les réfugiés syriens, en raison du traumatisme causé par la dislocation, sont vulnérables à la radicalisation et, d'autre part, que l'EI est déterminé à infiltrer les flux de réfugiés pour envoyer des combattants endurcis aux pays occidentaux. Cet article examine la preuve entourant ces deux hypothèses et fait valoir que, particulièrement pour les Canadiens, ces craintes ne sont pas fondées.*

On 19 September 2016, two months before the American election, the candidate Donald Trump's son tweeted a picture that caused an uproar on social media. It said: "If I had a bowl of skittles and I told you just three would kill you, would you take a handful?" with an accompanying graphic stating, "That's our Syrian refugee problem." The tweet was roundly criticized for its insensitivity as well as the bizarre comparison of human beings to candy. Shortly after the ISIS-inspired terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, candidate Donald Trump released a proposal calling for the "complete shutdown"

of Muslim immigration into the United States until we "can figure out what is going on." Since then, he became President and issued Executive Orders banning people from largely Muslim countries.

The fear of terrorism and refugees is not confined to the Trump family. An Ipsos poll conducted in July 2017 showed that 51% of Canadians believe that terrorists pretending to be refugees will enter Canada to cause violence and destruction.<sup>1</sup> A Pew Research poll a month later was more comforting, but

1 Russell, Andrew and Ryan Rocca. 2017. "Canadians are Concerned Refugees Pose a Terror Threat: Should They Be Worried?" *Global News*. July 6. Available at: <http://globalnews.ca/news/3568629/canadians-are-concerned-refugees-pose-a-terror-threat-should-they-be-worried>

still showed that 25% of Canadians believe that “large numbers of refugees leaving countries such as Iraq and Syria” was a major threat to their country.<sup>2</sup>

While poll numbers often produce more questions than answers, it seems clear that large numbers of Canadians, aware of the threat posed by groups like the Islamic State and its ability to inspire individuals to launch attacks on its behalf, are uneasy about letting people into the country from the very same conflict zone. The fear seems to stem from assumptions around two separate phenomena. The first is the assumption that refugees, particularly young men, are somehow uniquely prone and vulnerable to radicalization and extremist violence. The second is that the Islamic State is committed to making full use of the routes and pathways employed by asylum seekers moving out of Syria and Iraq.

These assumptions are based on several mistaken ideas about not only the nature of refugees but also the process of radicalization. The view that asylum seekers are particularly prone to radicalization assumes that they are socio-economically downtrodden, uneducated, and traumatized and that these factors naturally contribute to radicalization. The Syrian and Iraqi refugee population, rather, have been remarkably diverse — made up of males and females, and individuals from a variety of socio-economic and class backgrounds. The civil war in Syria and the Bashar al-Assad regime’s indiscriminate targeting of civilians has turned millions of people from all walks of life into refugees and an overwhelming number of them are children and youth. Decades of research on terrorism, moreover, shows no evidence that any single group is uniquely prone to radicalization and terrorism based on their socio-economic background. This is something scholars of terrorism never tire of pointing out: there is no typical profile of someone who radicalizes to violence.<sup>3</sup>

The argument that refugees are inherently prone to terror-

ism and violence seems to stem from some cases in Europe. Riaz Khan Ahmadzai, the July 2016 Würzburg train attacker for instance, was a Pakistani asylum seeker in Germany.<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Daleel, who perpetrated the Ansbach bombing in July 2016, was a Syrian asylum seeker who had his claim rejected.<sup>5</sup> The Berlin Christmas market attacker, Anis Amri, traveled from Tunisia to Italy and eventually was denied asylum in Germany.<sup>6</sup> Rakhmat Akilov, who was behind the April 2017 Stockholm attack, was also a rejected asylum seeker.<sup>7</sup> While some may argue that these cases vindicate Donald Trump Jr.’s Skittles analogy, the opposite is actually true.

None of these attackers were legitimate refugees; they all had their claims studied and rejected for a variety of reasons. In theory, anyone can enter a refugee-accepting country and seek asylum. It is the receiving country which decides if this claim is legitimate and eventually grants refugee status. In other words, the cases above are instances where the asylum system actually worked, even if law enforcement and border services were not able to subsequently detect and foil plots.

While I argue that a generalized fear of asylum seekers is unwarranted, there is an important security threat arising from how the Islamic State has sought to influence and direct attacks outside of Syria and Iraq. There is evidence emerging that ISIS is very much committed to using refugee flows, smugglers, fake passports and the like, to funnel operatives into Europe and North America. Early evidence of this emerged after the brutal attacks in Paris in November 2015, when ISIS operatives launched attacks on a series of locations, killing 130 and injuring more than 300. After the attacks, two Syrian passports were found near the bodies of the attackers under the names Ahmad Almohammad and Mohammad al-Mahmod.<sup>8</sup> Things only got more bizarre as time went on: German intelligence has noted that ISIS is training its fighters to act like asylum seekers and has been teaching them how to pass asylum interviews.<sup>9</sup>

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In July 2017, Interpol circulated a list of 173 ISIS fighters that were purportedly being trained and sent to launch attacks in Europe.<sup>10</sup> When colleagues and I looked at the list, we were expecting them to be mostly western foreign fighters returning or radicalized youth born in Europe. But, the opposite was the case: 132 of the 173 individuals were Iraqis, and many of them were quite young. Experts began to suspect that this was intentional. Western fighters would be much more difficult to sneak back into Europe, as they would already be well-known to European law enforcement officials. Iraqis, on the other hand, would not be known to law enforcement, would not have any fingerprints or biometric data registered in European countries, and could much more easily blend into the refugee flows. While these theories are not completely verified, it seems to fit with the Islamic State's stated objective to launch more attacks in the West.

In essence, a blanket ban on asylum seekers from Syria and Iraq, such as that pursued by President Trump in his Executive orders, would be cruel to the millions of people fleeing indiscriminate shelling and chemical attacks from the Assad regime and its supporters. While Canada is not immune to terrorist attacks, the country has experienced less of them compared to European counterparts, and Canada has also exported fewer numbers of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq. This is the case even as the country has accepted thousands of refugees, from a variety of backgrounds, over the last several decades. This is because Canada handpicks the refugees it wants and is not land-locked with countries that are experiencing protracted conflict. The country should remain vigilant, but not overreact. It should pursue its national security objectives, but, above all, should not sacrifice its humanitarian values.

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<sup>10</sup> Flade, Florian. 2016. "Deutschland droht mit Alleingang bei Grenzkontrollen". Welt. October 12. Available at: [www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article160177393/Deutschland-droht-mit-Alleingang-bei-Grenzkontrollen.html](http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article160177393/Deutschland-droht-mit-Alleingang-bei-Grenzkontrollen.html)

# L'ACCUEIL DES RÉFUGIÉS SYRIENS FACE À LA « DUALITÉ CANADIENNE »

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Comment l'immigration humanitaire s'insère-t-elle dans la construction identitaire au Canada et au Québec? Alors que le Québec a servi comme référence d'altérité (« eux ») dans les années 1990, il est absent de la construction identitaire du Canada dans les discours entourant l'accueil des réfugiés syriens. Du côté du Québec, les rapports de pouvoir avec le Canada se font encore ressentir, bien que subtilement. Des deux cotés, en 2015, les réfugiés syriens sont représentés comme ayant le potentiel de contribuer à « notre » société canadienne ou québécoise.

*How does humanitarian immigration fit into the construction of identity in Canada and Québec? While Québec served as a reference of otherness in the 1990s, it is absent from the construction of Canadian identity in the speeches surrounding the welcoming of Syrian refugees. On the Québec side, power relations with Canada are still perceived, though subtly. On both sides, in 2015, Syrian refugees are represented with the potential to contribute to “our” Canadian or Québec society.*

Il est de notoriété qu'il existe des tensions historiques entre le Québec et le Canada anglais en ce qui concerne leurs conceptions de la communauté politique canadienne. Le domaine de l'immigration et de la gestion de la diversité n'a pas échappé à celles-ci. De fait, dans les années 1970, alors que le Québec prône une vision dualiste du Canada — c.à.d. biculturelle et bilingue — le Canada anglais développe une politique multiculturelle affirmant, en principe, l'égalité de toutes les cultures sur le territoire national. Ces relations tendues se reflètent dans le rôle respectif qu'ont joué la conception québécoise de la gestion de la diversité et celle anglo-canadienne dans le

développement identitaire de l'un et de l'autre (Winter, 2011). C'est par opposition au nationalisme québécois que ce serait développé et consolidé le multiculturalisme canadien et en réaction à celui-ci que l'interculturalisme québécois est né.

Bien plus est, ces divergences de visions ont pour conséquences des rapports différents à l'immigration et à la gestion de la diversité ethnique qui persistent de nos jours (Bouchard, 2012, Chapitre 3). Est-ce de même avec l'immigration humanitaire? Comment l'immigration humanitaire s'insère-t-elle dans la construction identitaire au Québec et au Canada?



## LE QUÉBEC, LE CANADA ANGLAIS ET L'IMMIGRATION

Le Québec est décrit, par une majorité d'intellectuels, comme ayant une relation pluraliste interculturelle avec les minorités culturelles et les immigrants. Effectivement, depuis les années 1990, le Québec reconnaît l'existence des minorités culturelles sur le territoire de la province. Cette approche vise à favoriser la convergence culturelle entre les minorités culturelles et la majorité au Québec en passant notamment par la promotion de la langue française et le respect des principes démocratiques. Bouchard (2012) précise même que les rapports identitaires y sont pensés au travers d'une dichotomie entre la majorité fondatrice et les minorités culturelles dans laquelle la première prime.

Dans l'imaginaire canadien anglais, le philosophe Will Kymlicka (2007) soutient que l'ouverture à l'immigration et aux minorités culturelles se fait au travers d'une politique multiculturelle fondée sur le libéralisme, les valeurs démocratiques et les droits de l'homme qui agissent comme « épée à double tranchant » permettant à la fois de défendre les droits des minorités et d'exclure celles-ci en cas de non-respect. Ainsi, en principe, les cultures sont considérées sur un pied d'égalité et il n'y a pas de culture fondatrice ou majoritaire, du moins au niveau des politiques. Toutefois, cette vision normative est fortement disputée non seulement par les minorités qui doutent sa mise en pratique, mais aussi par quelques segments de la majorité canadienne anglaise qui l'accusent de faire trop de concessions aux minorités.

Dans son ouvrage étudiant la formation du « nous multiculturel » au Canada, Winter (2011) revendique qu'il est nécessaire pour avoir une compréhension plus approfondie de la formation identitaire dans une société pluraliste d'aller au-delà des modèles binaires (nous/eux) car ceux-ci ne permettent pas la prise en compte des relations de pouvoirs et l'existence de plusieurs groupes d'acteurs. En fait, le « nous pluraliste » (multiculturel ou interculturel) devrait incorporer « nous » et l'« Autre » (ce dernier à titre conditionnel) vis-à-vis du « eux » rejeté. Elle appuie sa théorie en mentionnant que dans les années 1990, les relations avec les immigrants au Canada ont été pensées conjointement avec une représentation du Québec. Elle défend l'idée que le « nous multiculturel » était composé du « nous » — Canadiens anglais — et de l'« Autre » — immigrants et minorités — en opposition avec « eux » — le Québec et son nationalisme (modèle triangulaire). Mais quelle est la place des réfugiés au sein de ces triangles ?

## LES RÉFUGIÉS SYRIENS DANS LA COUVERTURE MÉDIATIQUE QUÉBÉCOISE ET CANADIENNE

Pour répondre à cette question, nous dressons un portrait préliminaire de la formation des « nous » sociétales respectif

au Canada anglais et au Québec lors de la crise des réfugiés syriens de l'automne 2015. Plus précisément, nos résultats s'appuient sur un corpus de 25 articles d'opinion publiés dans les trois jours suivants le début de la couverture médiatique entourant la découverte du corps d'Alan Kurdi et ceci au sein de deux journaux québécois — *Le Devoir* et le *Journal de Montréal* — et deux journaux canadiens anglais — le *Toronto Sun* et le *Toronto Star*. L'analyse a été réalisée à l'aide de la méthode d'Analyse Critique du Discours tout en considérant la possibilité de l'existence des rapports triangulaires entre différents acteurs. Étant donné que le corpus analysé est limité, il va sans dire que les résultats présentés devront être confirmés, approfondis et nuancés par des recherches postérieures.

Il semble que dans le cas des réfugiés syriens, les discours d'opinion au sein de la presse au niveau du Canada anglais ne font pas de références au Québec. On constate plutôt une distinction selon les allégeances politiques, à savoir qu'il y a un discours qui discrédite le gouvernement de Stephen Harper (du côté du *Toronto Star*) et un autre qui discrédite l'opposition officielle (davantage du côté du *Toronto Sun*). De fait, les discours du *Toronto Star* opposent les Canadiens — gens vraisemblablement généreux et emplis de compassion — au gouvernement de Stephen Harper dont les actions sont perçues comme allant à l'encontre des valeurs canadiennes. Un article présentera même une question aux Canadiens après constat de la politique gouvernementale : « *are we no longer the compassionate country and welcoming country we once were? The answer is yes we [Canadians] are* » (*Toronto Star*, 4 septembre b). Cependant, il n'y a pas du côté du *Toronto Star* un rejet complet des actions du gouvernement. De fait, on mentionne qu'il a quand même contribué financièrement à la cause des réfugiés (*Toronto Star*, 4 septembre a). Du côté du *Toronto Sun*, l'opposition se fait davantage avec les partis de l'opposition à qui l'on reproche de politiser la mort d'un enfant : « *shame on those who have politicized the gut-wrenching image of a lifeless three-year-old Kurdish boy [...]* » (*Toronto Sun*, 5 septembre). Un autre élément important dans la construction identitaire est la comparaison avec les pays européens qui seraient moins généreux que le Canada au niveau de l'acceptation volontaire de réfugiés (*Toronto Sun*, 5 septembre).

Du côté du Québec, la plupart des articles définissent le Canada de manière impersonnelle par l'utilisation de pronoms impersonnels. De fait, une comparaison entre les journaux canadiens anglais et ceux du Québec permet de bien déceler cet élément. Par exemple, en parlant des prouesses passées du Canada, les journaux anglophones diront que « *[with] the Kosovars our government acted quickly [...]* » (*Toronto Star*, 6 septembre) alors que sur le même sujet dans les journaux francophones on revendique qu'« en 1999, il [Canada] a accueilli, non sans problèmes, 7000 réfugiés kosovars [...] » (*Le Devoir*, 4 septembre a). Non seulement, les pronoms sont impersonnels au Québec, mais dans ce passage, on semble minimiser la bonne action que le gouvernement du Canada a

posée en 1999 en indiquant que cela s'est produit « non sans problèmes ». On a, donc, une opposition entre le gouvernement du Canada (peu importe le parti gouvernant) et le Québec ce qui est confirmé par *Le Devoir* (4 septembre b) lorsqu'il mentionne que le Canada devrait s'inspirer de son passée au niveau de l'accueil des réfugiés syriens « surtout que le gouvernement du Québec est disposé à des actions de parrainage [...] ».

Dans les deux cas, le « eux » bien que différents est caractérisé par une antipathie envers les réfugiés ce qui nous amène à la place qu'ils occupent dans les identités respectives du Québec et du Canada anglais. Ceux-ci sont représentés positivement dans les journaux canadiens anglais et québécois ce qui laisse supposer qu'ils font partie de la catégorie « Autre » que Winter (2011) identifie. Dans les faits, dans les articles analysés des « deux solitudes » on souligne la contribution que les réfugiés syriens pourraient apporter dans la société :

« *Anyone who perseveres and is willing to face death and deprive to find a better life is going to make a hard-working, ambitious citizen* ». *Toronto Sun* (4 septembre)

« Pour celles et ceux qui l'ignorent, les Syriens sont des gens très instruits. Et comme j'ai lu que la Beauce cherchait 600 personnes pour pourvoir des postes dans des entreprises, voilà une occasion heureuse de s'ouvrir aux réfugiés, ces gens qui comme nous, ont des familles et qui n'ont pas cherché la guerre. » *Journal de Montréal* (5 septembre)

Ainsi nous pouvons dire que, selon le modèle de Winter (2011), le Canada anglais construit son identité comme suit :

**Nous pluraliste = Canadiens (nous) + parti de l'opposition ou parti conservateur (autre) + réfugiés (autre) ≠ tout pays manquant de compassion envers les réfugiés (eux).**

Bien que plus subtile, la construction identitaire du Québec laisserait suggérer, avec quelques exceptions près, la formule suivante :

**Nous pluraliste = Québécois (nous) + réfugiés (autre) ≠ Canada anglais (eux).**

## LES RÉFUGIÉS SYRIENS SE VOIENT INTÉGRÉS AUX « NOUS » QUÉBÉCOIS ET CANADIENS RESPECTIFS

Pour conclure, ces résultats préliminaires visent à mieux comprendre la formation des identités nationales — « nous » — au Québec et au Canada anglais face aux représentations de la

crise des réfugiés syriens. Cette étude préliminaire démontre qu'alors que le Québec a servi d'« eux » en 1990, il est absent de la construction identitaire du Canada au moment des discussions entourant l'accueil des réfugiés syriens en 2015. Il semble que ce soient les pays démontrant peu de compassion (Europe) qui sont définis comme le « eux » dans le discours. Quant aux réfugiés syriens, ils sont généralement représentés positivement et comme ayant le potentiel de contribuer à « notre » société. Ils font, donc, partie du « nous » pluraliste canadien.

Du côté du Québec, les rapports de pouvoir avec le Canada se font encore ressentir, bien que subtilement. Malgré quelques exceptions, le discours semble identifier un « nous » pluraliste québécois distinct du Canada qui semble être perçu comme peu enclin à la générosité envers les réfugiés. Cependant, à l'instar des Canadiens, les réfugiés sont représentés comme des individus compétents, gentils et intelligents pouvant contribuer de manières bénéfiques à la société québécoise laissant, de ce fait, suggérer qu'ils font partie du « nous » pluraliste québécois.

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# SOCIOCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

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Recent arrivals and refugees have less knowledge about Canada and a lower perception of their own ability to adjust than earlier arrivals and immigrants, respectively. However, language proficiency acts as an important leveling force in socio-cultural adjustment for these groups. It also trumps religion or ethno-racial origins.

*Les nouveaux arrivants et les réfugiés ont moins de connaissances sur le Canada et une perception plus faible de leur propre capacité d'adaptation que les vagues antérieures d'immigrants et les immigrants en général, respectivement. Cependant, la maîtrise de la langue joue un rôle important dans l'ajustement socioculturel de ces groupes, plus que la religion ou les origines ethno-raciales.*

Canada is a world leader in welcoming refugees and immigrants. Yet, Canadian media presents refugees as a “problem” and “undesirable” (Jackson and Bauder, 2013). Similarly, there is wider narratives that “good” refugees and immigrants should be allowed while “bad” ones should be barred from entering Canada altogether. The former groups are perceived to be better able to fit in while the latter is perceived to lack such ability. Kellie Leitch, a candidate in the last Canadian conservative leadership race, for example, suggested that Muslims should perform ‘values’ tests. They are portrayed as “bad” refugees and immigrants who are unable or unwilling to “fit in” and a threat to the core values of the majority. Evidence, however, shows that once refugees and immigrants develop language proficiency, they adapt to the Canadian sociocultural environment independent of their origins or religions, and concerns and worries are overblown.



Socio-cultural adjustment entails a set of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to negotiate various aspects of the new culture, manage everyday life, “fit in,” and live successfully in the new environment. Some of these skills depend on newcomers’ motivation, self-efficacy, and knowledge about the new society. Others are developed through contact

with the host society and through cross-cultural experiences and training. Still others are developed in the pre-immigration period in preparation for migration. For example, voluntary immigrants leave their country of birth to improve their quality of life. They are more motivated to integrate in the new society, and in anticipation of their migration they tend to imagine and simulate the new environment by shaping their own knowledge of how they are expected to behave. Accordingly, they prepare themselves for immigration by learning about the host's language, culture, institutions, resources, and services. Anticipatory preparation and positive expectation help with successful settlement and adaptation. On the other hand, forced migrants such as refugees who suddenly decide, or are forced, to immigrate do not have the time and resources to develop the necessary and appropriate expected socio-cultural skills in anticipation of migration. Refugees are different. They flee their own country due to sociopolitical upheavals, war, ethnic cleansing, violence, torture, and rape and experience significant traumatic physical and psychological suffering. These experiences and sudden interruptions of their life routine not only have profound effects on their physical and mental health and their continual struggle to deal with the grief of their past experiences and insecure future, but also prevent them from planning for, anticipating, and making preparation in a new society. Therefore, the difference between immigrants and refugees is fundamental to the speed of their adjustment and integration.

To examine the potential of immigrants and refugees to integrate into Canada, Table 1 presents their perceptions of their own knowledge about and ability for socio-cultural

adjustment in Canada. Information is based on a sample of newcomers using services at the Windsor YMCA. These constructs are created by summing 5 Lickert scale questions for the knowledge index and 4 questions for efficacy index for scores ranging from 1 to 21 and 1 to 17, respectively. The table shows that refugees scored lower than immigrants in both knowledge and efficacy scales. This difference suggests that not only do refugees have less knowledge about Canada, they also seem to have a lower perception of their own ability, which may prevent them from building up skills and knowledge and thus may become increasingly fearful and isolated. However, after five years in Canada, the differences between refugees and immigrants become negligible.

The Table also shows that the longer immigrants and refugees live in Canada, the more they are knowledgeable about Canadian culture and customs, are aware of opportunities to volunteer and to connect to social, community, and professional networks, and know about services and resources to assist with job searches. Similarly, the longer they are in Canada, the higher is their perception of their own efficacy. They are better able to deal with the emotional effects of moving to their new home, to make informed decisions, to plan and set goals for their settlement, and to access community facilities independently. Of interest is the fact that there is little increase in their knowledge and perception of their own abilities during the first three years of residency. The sudden change occurs after three years of residency. Three years seem to be the minimal amount of time needed for newcomers to master language of the majority and become familiar with its cultural environment.

TABLE 1: KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND PERCEPTION OF EFFICACY TO ADJUST IN CANADA BY REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

Years in Canada	Refugees				Immigrants			
	Knowledge	N	Efficacy	N	Knowledge	N	Efficacy	N
1	8.4	321	321	331	331	331	12.1	12.1
2	7.9	337	337	351	351	351	12.1	12.1
3	9.0	332	332	340	340	340	12.2	12.2
4	10.0	309	309	311	311	311	12.9	12.9
5	13.5	95	95	97	97	97	13.1	13.1
6+	13.7	245	245	251	251	251	13.8	13.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>1639</b>	<b>1681</b>	<b>1681</b>	<b>1681</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>

Newcomers' ability to communicate in the language of the majority is crucial for improving knowledge about their new home, accessing resources and services, and becoming confident in their ability to negotiate their daily social encounters. Table 2 confirms these expectations. It shows that those who scored 4 or higher in the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) have higher knowledge about Canada and feel more

able to manage their life than those who scored CLB 3 or lower. This pattern applies to both immigrants and refugees, though on average refugees scored lower in their knowledge and efficacy than immigrants. Language proficiency seem to be an important levelling force. It helps offset the advantage of anticipatory immigration by the immigrant class newcomers.

TABLE 2: LANGUAGE AND NEWCOMERS' SOCIOCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT BY LENGTH OF RESIDENCY

	Less than Three Years			More than three Years		
	Low English Proficiency					
	Knowledge	Efficacy	N	Knowledge	Efficacy	N
Refugees	7.9	9.9	796	10.8	11.1	454
Immigrants	8.6	11.1	136	11.0	12.6	276
High English Proficiency						
Refugees	11.2	12.2	163	14.3	13.1	194
Immigrants	12.3	13.1	151	14.2	13.9	436

The importance of language proficiency for sociocultural adjustment is not specific to knowledge and the ability of any group of newcomers. Language proficiency often trumps religious beliefs and ethno-racial origins for both immigrants and refugees. Once mastered, most immigrant and refugees can adjust, integrate, and contribute to their adopted country. Table 3 reports differences in knowledge and efficacy of various groups of Windsorite refugees and immigrants. For every ethno-racial group, whether they are from Muslim or non-Muslim origin countries, those with higher language proficiency scored higher in knowledge and efficacy indices than those with lower language proficiency. Ethno-racial differences are larger among those with three or less years in Canada than those who lived in Canada for a longer period. Iraqis, Africans, Syrians, other Middle Easterners, and Latin Americans, more than other groups, benefited the most from higher English proficiency, particularly among recent arrivals.

There are also signs that individuals whose compatriots had settled in Canada earlier scored higher in these indices. For example, among those who have lived in Canada for three or less years, Lebanese immigrants scored higher than Iraqis or Syrians, the former having groups of earlier immigrants who settled in Canada in the early seventies while the latter as groups are among the more recent arrivals. This suggest that newcomers can also adjust better by benefiting from the support of their more established ethnic community.

Taken together, the data show that perceptions about being

able to understand and cope in the new environment is an important ingredient for successful integration, and language proficiency speeds up this process significantly. The evidence suggests that successful adjustment and integration of newcomers requires attention to availability of, incentives for, exposure, and free access to Official Language schooling. It helps with development of cultural knowledge, confidence building, social skills, social connections, and access to social services. Language proficiency has also been shown to have negative effects on depression and positive effects on employability (Beiser and Hou, 2001). These benefits will easily compensate the cost of making language classes available and subsidizing newcomers during their attendance in these classes. If Canada aims to be successful in integrating its most recent waves of refugees and immigrants, investing in language pre- and post-arrival is well worth it.

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TABLE 3: ETHNO-RACIAL ORIGINS, LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND SOCIOCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

	Low Language Proficiency				High Language Proficiency			
	Three Years and Less in Canada							
	Knowledge	N	Efficacy	N	Knowledge	N	Efficacy	N
Europe	13.9	18	12.9	18	14.1	26	14.0	26
Latin America	8.2	11	9.6	11	14.2	6	14.8	6
Africa	7.6	28	9.6	28	13.2	6	12.1	8
Asia	8.75	28	12.6	29	11.9	46	13.5	46
Lebanon	9.9	11	13.0	11	12.6	19	13.3	19
Iraq	5.6	12	10.3	14	13.1	9	13.8	9
Syria	5.8	10	12.2	10	10.6	5	12.8	5
Other Middle East	6.9	14	8.7	15	10.9	31	11.5	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>151</b>
Four Years and More in Canada								
Europe	12.3	16	11.6	16	15.1	34	14.6	34
Latin America	14.8	14	13.2	14	16.0	26	14.2	26
Africa	10.8	14	11.9	14	14.6	42	13.9	42
Asia	10.2	161	12.4	162	13.8	187	13.8	193
Lebanon	14.3	21	13.9	19	13.2	25	13.6	25
Iraq	11.8	18	12.9	18	14.4	18	13.5	18
Syria	10.0	8	12.8	8	14.2	10	13.1	11
Other Middle East	10.5	24	13.1	25	14.4	86	14.1	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>436</b>

# TEAM SYRIA: THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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This article locates the humanitarian settlement work happening in Antigonish, Nova Scotia to trends across the country: universities and community groups creating partnerships to fundraise, sponsor and settle Syrian refugee families. Individuals from diverse backgrounds and institutional affiliations collaborated to sponsor and welcome several Syrian families.

*Cet article inscrit le travail d'établissement humanitaire à Antigonish, en Nouvelle-Écosse, dans le mouvement observé à l'échelle du pays, c'est-à-dire des universités et groupes communautaires créant des partenariats pour accueillir, parrainer et établir des familles de réfugiés syriens. Des personnes de divers horizons et affiliations institutionnelles ont collaboré pour parrainer et accueillir plusieurs familles syriennes.*

Canadians touched by the tragic story of Alan Kurdi sought ways to bring Syrian refugees to Canada. Universities became major players in this humanitarian effort (*University Affairs*, 2015). Ryerson University established 25 sponsorship teams, each setting out to raise \$27,000 to sponsor a Syrian refugee family; the University of Toronto, York, and OCAD together set out to fundraise for 75 families; other universities offered assistance through tuition waivers, student awards, and bursaries. This article focuses on one small but significant campaign at St. Francis Xavier University, located in the town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The campaign, called *StFX for SAFE* (SAFE being the name of a local settlement society: Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace), set out to raise \$100,000 specifically for sponsorship of Syrian refugee families. In the community, three separate sponsorship societies were fund-

raising to sponsor Syrian refugees: Tri-HEART Society (representing three rural parishes), C.A.R.E., *Canadians Accepting Refugees Everywhere* (St. Ninian's Parish), and SAFE. Thanks to the federal government initiative under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, three Syrian families arrived in Antigonish town and county in January and February of 2016, four families have since arrived, and applications for two families are underway. We think it remarkable that Antigonish county, with a primarily rural population of under 20,000, plus 4500 students who arrive each September, raised enough money to sponsor nine families. We explore the significance of this university-community partnership, and argue that its replication in other communities in Canada is to be lauded.

In May 2015, SAFE was established by a small group of community members, and their fundraising efforts were quite visible through the local press. When the academic year started, a few faculty members at St. Francis Xavier University worked with the Students' Union, three employee unions, the Association of University Teachers, and senior administrators on a motion to create *StFX for SAFE*. It passed unanimously and the goal of raising \$100,000 was confirmed as an "all Xaverian" campaign: students, staff, alumni, faculty would raise sponsorship money for SAFE.

This humanitarian crisis brought Xaverians and community members together in a spirit of social cooperation. University President Dr. Kent MacDonald invited the first Syrian refugee to arrive in Antigonish, a (then) 23 year old former medical student, to speak at the President's Colloquium, entitled: *A people in crisis: What can we do?* Well, it turns out Xaverian can do a lot! Quite spontaneously they held bake sales and barbecues, dodgeball tournaments and square dances, book sales and concerts, to name just a few examples. Individuals gave private donations and unions gave generously. Students established the *StFX for SAFE Society*, and with collaboration from staff, faculty, and alumni, organized a community *Peace for Syria* walk, two *Pause for the Cause* campaigns, and *Hair/Peace Today, Gone Tomorrow*, which paired a haircutting fundraiser with a moving autobiographical play co-authored by a StFX alumnus and the 21 year old Syrian youth who performed the play. \$100,000 was raised in 18 months.

The diversity of engagement went beyond fundraising to include education through newsletters, interviews with the media, and engagement with younger students in grade school on. Two film festivals featured documentaries on the Syrian conflict and students invited speakers to coffee houses. Beyond the usual and necessary EAL (English as an Alternative Language) instruction, outreach with the new families included swimming and music lessons, tobogganing trips, skating, community teas, and much else. Behind the scenes, Xaverians were serving as translators, writing sponsorship applications, and consulting with government officials. A McGill University medical student who chose to do her internship on Immigrant Support with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre completed a Needs Assessment for resettling Syrian refugees in Antigonish. Her work included collaborating with community members to organize the first ever public Eid celebration. A fourth year student applied for and won the Ocean Path Fellowship to research employment integration of Syrian refugees, and finds herself immersed in the rich settlement community. A StFX alumnus and a local, retired theatre professional worked with a 21-year-old student who used theatre to tell his story of narrowly escaping Syria with his family (Girvan, 2017).

What did we learn from this, and can we generalize from what happened here to other locations in Canada? We learned that when a university is integrated into a community, strong cre-

ative partnerships will emerge to achieve common goals. Like the settlement societies we collaborate with, these partnerships are multi-generational and they connect people with diverse backgrounds. An especially touching example of community spirit comes from an 82-year-old alumna (who donated a woven scarf for a draw) who wrote to us:

Organizers, volunteers, donors: we are all part of "Team Syria." We all do our part according to our skills, interests, time available—all are equally important. Like a pebble causing widening ripples in the water, I hope the scarf will be the catalyst that spurs StFX family and friends to buy tickets and donate to this very important cause. We must continue the Xaverian spirit of helping others.

*StFX for SAFE* is now the pebble causing widening ripples. In September, the *StFX for SAFE Society* decided to raise \$50,000 by graduation day to establish a Student Refugee Bursary Endowment. We applaud the humanitarian activism on campuses across the country, and we are proud that our collective efforts have helped to settle several Syrian refugee families into our welcoming community. We give the closing sentiment to the President of the *StFX for SAFE Society*, Kristian Rasenberg: "Never doubt that every kind gesture, big or small, builds lives." (News at X, 2017).

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# HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS FOR REFUGEE FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

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Housing is one of the major foundations for settlement, and for large families, the challenge of finding appropriate accommodation can be difficult. Results from a survey of Syrians arriving to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba indicate that affordability and the shelter-to-income ratio is particularly problematic for newly arrived refugee families.

*Le logement est l'une des principales fondations de l'établissement, et pour les familles nombreuses, le défi de trouver un logement approprié peut être difficile. Les résultats d'une enquête menée auprès de Syriens arrivant en Alberta, en Saskatchewan et au Manitoba indiquent que l'abordabilité et le ratio du revenu au logement sont particulièrement problématiques pour les familles de réfugiés nouvellement arrivés.*

For refugees “housing represents the foundation upon which settlement unfolds” (Sherrell, 2017: 67), and is an essential factor for successful settlement and integration. Everyone, including refugees, has a right to safe housing, which is an important facet of adequate housing. After all, Canada has pledged to uphold the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* as two documents in which the right to safe housing for everyone is enshrined. Given the likelihood that the worldwide crisis of displaced persons is unlikely to end soon and Canada continues to perform a notable exemplary role in permanent resettlement, it is important that attention is given to the housing situation of refugees by researchers, policy advocates and policy makers in this country.

For these reasons we examine some of the unique aspects in housing refugee families, particularly those with large

numbers of children. In many respects, the housing needs of refugee families are very similar to those refugees arriving on their own. Many of their needs are also very similar to marginalized peoples such as Indigenous persons, low-waged, impoverished, unemployed and persons with disabilities. Refugees, especially the Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), face additional housing problems mainly because they do not have a credit history or co-signers (e.g., private sponsors) who can take responsibility on their behalf either for rents or mortgages. Moreover, for most of them the lack of networks of family members or friends to refer them to reputable landlords over time makes them vulnerable to exploitation within the rental housing market. Having ‘too many children’ is also a problem for refugees seeking adequate and affordable housing.

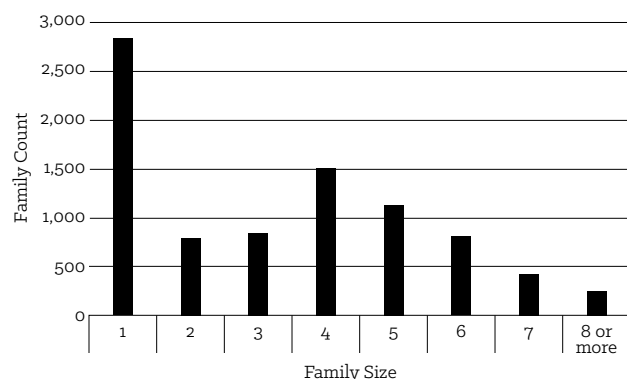
In this paper, we examine data from a survey of 631 newly

arrived adult refugees to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba collected over a 13-day span in March 2017. Interviews were conducted by settlement workers from 12 of the 13 prairie cities with Refugee Assistance Program contracts (RAP). For this reason, the vast majority of the participants are Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), and only 8% are Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs). The survey instrument includes questions about initial housing needs, use of settlement services, language training and employment experiences. Additional information about methodology, valuable partners who contributed to the research project and other findings is located in Wilkinson et al., (2017).

## FAMILY COMPOSITION OF REFUGEES

According to a recent study conducted by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, nationwide, 53% of GARs arrived as family units as did 43% of PSRs and 44% of Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVORs) program (IRCC 2016a). Table 1 shows that 8,644 Syrian refugee families arrived in Canada and most had large families and Table 2 reveals that over half (52.1%) of all the Syrian refugees arriving to Canada were aged 18 years or younger at the time of arrival (Despite “knowing” that the average Syrian family would be larger than most Canadian families, the federal government was still surprised at how many children eventually arrived).

TABLE 1: COMPOSITION OF FAMILY UNITS AMONG SYRIAN REFUGEES TO CANADA, 2015-2016



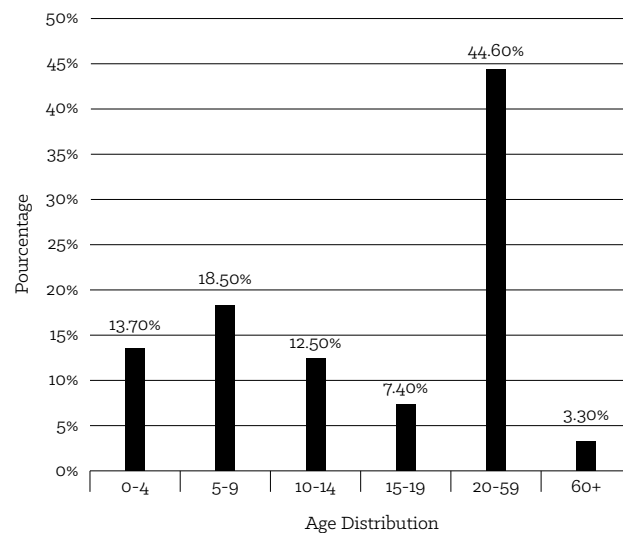
Source: IRCC 2016c

## ADEQUATE, SUITABLE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines adequate, suitable and affordable housing as follows:

- **Adequate** housing does not require any major repairs, according to residents.
- **Suitable** housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to

TABLE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES ARRIVING IN CANADA, 2015-2016



Source: IRCC 2016b

National Occupancy Standard’s (NOS) requirements. Enough bedrooms based on NOS’s requirements means one bedroom for each cohabiting adult couple; unattached household member 18 years of age and over; same-sex pair of children under age 18; and additional boy or girl in the family, unless there are two opposite sex children under 5 years of age, in which case they are expected to share a bedroom. A household of one individual can occupy a bachelor unit (i.e. a unit with no bedroom).

- **Affordable** housing costs less than 30% of before-tax household income.

Statistics Canada has elaborated on CMHC’s basic criterion for ‘affordable housing’ as follows: Affordable housing is defined as rent or mortgage payments, along with the monthly costs of electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services, amounting to 30% or less of the total before-tax household income, commonly known as the “shelter-cost-to-income” ratio (Statistics Canada, 2016). According to Statistics Canada (2017), 11.2% of Canadian households are in severe housing need, devoting 50% or more of their pre-tax income to housing while another 13.9% devote between 30% and 50% of their total income to shelter costs.

## HOUSING COSTS FOR REFUGEES

Whereas GARs receive financial support for their first year in Canada or until they are located in jobs, whichever comes first, PSRs receive such financial support from their sponsorship group, BVORs receive a combination of funding from a sponsorship group and the federal government during their

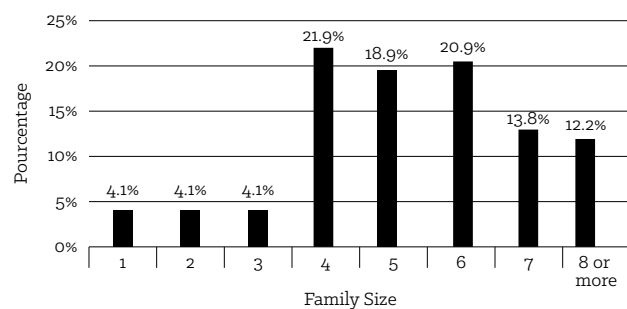
first year in Canada. The amount of these payments is allocated according to where in the country the refugee family is resettled. Those living in major urban centres require more funds to rent their accommodation than those living in smaller centres. The average rent for a single bedroom apartment in the largest 35 Canadian cities is \$774 (IRCC, 2016a). This means that the shelter-cost-to-income ratio for many families would far exceed 50% and data supports this. IRCC (2016a) reports that almost two-thirds (62%) of refugees rely on assistance from food banks during their first year in Canada.

A recent evaluation of resettlement conducted by IRCC (2016a) concedes that the payments offered to refugee families are not enough to cover their living costs over the first year and is particularly problematic for larger families including many of those receiving the Canada Child Benefit, the precise amount of which is based on the age of each child and family income (CRA 2017). There is also ample evidence that settlement provider organizations and sponsorship groups had to raise additional funds to cover the shortfall in financial assistance for the newly arrived Syrian refugees during their first year in Canada due to a shortage of rent-geared-to-income housing among the refugees.

## HOUSING SATISFACTION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THE PRAIRIES

Findings from our tri-provincial study of 631 newly arrived Syrian refugees conducted in March 2017, reveal that 70% were satisfied with the accommodation they were placed in upon arrival (Wilkinson et al., 2017). There were no differences in satisfaction between families without children and those with children. When we examined whether or not the number of children under age 18 influenced satisfaction, we found a pattern, as reflected in Table 3. Families having four or more children were far more dissatisfied with their present housing situation than families with fewer children.

TABLE 3: REFUGEES NOT SATISFIED WITH CURRENT HOUSING BY SIZE OF FAMILY, 2017



Source: Wilkinson et al., 2017

When we asked the families to tell us why they were not satisfied with their current housing situation, the number one issue was size—many apartments were just too small for their

families. The second issue was fear that they would be unable to afford their current house or apartment after funding from their sponsorship agreements or their government support ended. Other housing issues that were unique to families with children included concern about the distance their house was from their children's school as many were afraid of sending their children alone on a school bus. Another problem with being placed far away from schools is the lack of playground and outdoor play spaces—which tend to be located close to school grounds. Those families living in downtown areas, where apartments tend to be more affordable, are more likely not to live close to schools and playgrounds. Having outdoor playspaces nearby is important for families living in apartment buildings who often complained that their apartments were too small for the children to play in. Some families received noise complaints from their neighbours and/or landlords when their children played indoors.

Another unique difficulty some families with children faced is living in housing with indoor stairs. For most North Americans, housing with stairs is acceptable as part of the architectural landscape of city living. For many newcomers, however, housing with stairs is a new phenomenon. Many families with small children commented on their fear of indoor stairs because they worried that they might fall and hurt themselves. We suspect many have never heard of baby gates as a safety measure.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

There are many policy and practical issues about adequate, suitable and affordable housing that can be gleaned from the responses to our survey.

Given that the number one concern of the families is housing affordability, attention to the shelter-to-income-ratio for refugee families is an important consideration for future housing policies. There simply is not enough household income to cover the costs of adequate shelter and provide the other needs necessary for the family's survival in their first years in Canada. Because of this gap, settlement organizations require additional emergency funding to assist with the extra housing costs and that refugee families tend to have more children than the average Canadian household. This suggests that it is imperative for governments to reconsider the amount of funding they provide for shelter costs during the initial settlement years.

The difficulties that sponsors and settlement organizations experienced in finding large and affordable apartment units to house larger refugee families are indication that the housing stock is too small in size for many refugee families from certain parts of the world in which larger families is the norm. Incentives for developers to design apartments to include four or

more bedrooms are necessary to assist with adequate, and hopefully affordable, housing of future refugee families.

In regard to the location and other concerns about housing units, urban planners need to be encouraged to provide more play structures closer to downtown apartment units. Not only would these benefit refugee families, but they would greatly benefit other families living in the same area. Creating apartment units that could accommodate families with several children may also give them places to play inside their homes. Special design features, such as sound proof flooring and walls would make these units more family-friendly spaces in which children could play.

Providing baby gates and instructions about their use would make newcomer families feel more comfortable in housing with staircases. Again, these measures would benefit not only refugee families but also other families by making housing units more appropriate for all.

Finally, in the case of suitable housing, the issue of bedrooms-to-family-members ratio is a problem for many refugee families. To reiterate, CMHC's standards for 'suitable housing' require that different-sexed children ought not share a room after the age of five. Thus, for example, to meet the CMHC's standards a single mother with three teenaged boys and girl older than would require a four-bedroom apartment (one room for her, one for two boys, one for a single boy and one for the girl). We know that this is not possible in many situations either due to an insufficient number of larger units and the higher costs of any such units that may be available. Consequently, many large Syrian refugee families, as well as other large families of refugees and other categories of immigrants, are probably living in housing that is not in compliance with those standards. Part of the reason for this is that a "typical" apartment rental unit in Canada consists of 1-3 bedrooms. Larger apartment units are difficult to locate and more expensive. Reports from across Canada reveal that some larger Syrian refugee families had to be accommodated in two or even three separate apartment units given the short period of time settlement service organizations and private sponsors had to locate housing for them prior to their arrival.

The foregoing overview of the survey results suggests that policy advocates, policy makers, and planners must all do more to ensure that adequate, suitable and affordable housing is available for refugees and particularly those with large families.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding and in-kind support for this study provided by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada-Integration Branch (Prairies and Northwest Territories Division) and the

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA). Our sincerest thanks to Brooks and County Immigration Services, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Catholic Social Services (Edmonton), Catholic Social Services (Red Deer), Lethbridge Family Services-Immigrant Services, Moose Jaw Multicultural Council, Regina Open Door Society, Saskatoon Open Door Society, YWCA Prince Albert, La Société franco-manitobaine/Accueil francophone (Saint-Boniface), Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc. (Winnipeg), Westman Immigrant Services (Brandon) for their assistance in conducting the interviews.

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# CHALLENGES AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS IN FINDING HOUSING FOR REFUGEE NEWCOMERS: LEARNING FROM THE SYRIAN RESETTLEMENT OPERATION

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This article presents key findings of a study of the challenges and successes of the refugee-serving organizations tasked to find the first permanent housing for the 2015-2016 cohort of Syrian refugee newcomers. It draws on interviews conducted with Resettlement Assistance Program providers in 13 Canadian cities.

*Cet article présente les principales conclusions d'une étude sur les défis et les réussites des organisations au service des réfugiés chargées de trouver le premier logement permanent pour la cohorte 2015-2016 de nouveaux réfugiés syriens. Il s'appuie sur des entrevues menées auprès de fournisseurs du Programme d'aide au rétablissement dans 13 villes canadiennes.*

Moving into their first permanent home is a major milestone for newcomers to Canada. Beyond shelter, decent, suitable and affordable housing is an anchor point for a new start in a new country and new city, especially for those experiencing traumatic dislocation as a result of fleeing war torn areas or other crises around the world. Housing needs to be accessible to the services and resources they need to help them settle. Where it is located, and in what type of neighbourhood, may affect their social connections as well as their overall sense of inclusion.

Canada's resettlement policy for refugees acknowledges that they need intensive assistance finding their first housing, because of the unplanned nature of their migration, their

lack of economic resources upon arrival, and because many have special needs. In each of the cities to which government assisted refugees (GARs) are destined, the newcomer serving community organization holding the government contract for delivery of the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) must find and offer them suitable permanent housing as soon as possible.

The operation to resettle Syrian refugees was on a scale not seen for 35 years and was the first major resettlement of refugees since Canada strengthened the humanitarian component of its refugee selection process in 2002. The Syrian operation is an important opportunity to examine how the organizations and groups responsible for finding housing for

resettled refugees went about this challenging task.

In many cities, the arrival timetable was concentrated over a few weeks in midwinter 2016, requiring a major ramp-up of all aspects of refugee welcoming capacity by different levels of government and by local communities. The Syrian cohort had large and complex family configurations and/or major health issues or disabilities, and/or low mother-tongue literacy rates, which presented significant barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency in the short- to medium-term. It also landed in Canada as cities across the country grappled with a lack of affordable rental housing.

For this study, we mainly focused on the process of finding the first permanent housing for GARs. We selected 13 cities varying in size and local rental housing market conditions: Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Windsor, Hamilton, Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Gatineau, Montréal, St. John, and Halifax. In each city, we conducted in-depth interviews with senior supervisory or management personnel of the organization holding the RAP contract, to understand the challenges they faced, the strategies they used, and the policy implications for welcoming future cohorts of refugee newcomers.

The study participants underscored that advance planning — involving an unprecedented degree of cooperation between different levels of government and local organizations as well as landlords and social housing providers in their city or region, over the weeks before the first arrivals of the intensified Syrian refugee operation—had crucial positive impacts on their capacity to manage the process of finding housing once the newcomers began to arrive. Planning meetings and housing tables helped all parties share their respective expertise and work out appropriate task division. The tables promoted buy-in by housing providers not previously involved in refugee resettlement, including private landlords and social housing providers. New or expanded housing portals or banks run by provincial, municipal or community organizations also helped coordinate the outpouring of ad hoc offers of accommodation.

Despite these concerted efforts at advance planning RAP providers found themselves facing major unforeseen contingencies once the refugees began to arrive. In the early weeks of the resettlement operation, insufficient advance information from the federal government on the timeframe of refugee newcomer arrivals and their family profiles hampered their housing search and placement work. Family sizes were far larger than expected, and 60% of GARs were minor children. These factors caused lengthy stays in hotels or other temporary accommodations in the tighter housing markets and where housing suitable for large families was scarce. Complex health needs also posed major housing challenges. Administrative log-jams stemming from the steep ramp-up of the operation also led to delays and even lost rental opportunities.

Nevertheless, whether it took less than two weeks or more than two months, RAP providers succeeded, with the support of housing providers, community based networks and citizen mobilization, in matching up all the newcomers with suitable housing. While generally quite basic, it was apparently almost always in good condition. Working with trusted landlords, and/or using lists of units whose quality had been checked by the city or province, seemed to be key to achieving this outcome.

After locating suitable housing, RAP providers had to ensure it would be affordable. The challenge is the gap between the amount of funds allocated to housing in the government's calculation of RAP income support versus the actual cost of renting. The Syrian operation highlights how the Child Benefit has become a de facto housing allowance for low-income Canadian families with children. But while it can make housing much more affordable for larger families, it helps small families only marginally and excludes low-income singles and couples without children. Even with Child Benefit boosting their income support, however, a GAR family with two children will spend 40-50% of their income on rent not only in Toronto and Vancouver but also in many mid-size cities. Renting a self-contained unit at market rates is totally untenable for a single person on a RAP allowance, yet sharing or rooming may not be suitable for those with high needs. Moreover, clients often need to use the transportation allowance component of RAP income support to help pay their rent.

RAP providers deployed two main strategies for tackling housing affordability. In balanced local housing markets or for rental complexes with higher vacancy rates, they negotiated year-long rent discounts (commonly 15-20%) and/or free rent for shorter-term cases of extreme need. In tighter housing markets, they used the Welcome Fund, a special allocation from Community Foundations of Canada funded by corporate donations, to supplement rent. Although this Fund played a major role in helping to make the first housing affordable in some cities, it created ethical dilemmas for RAP providers, since these funds were earmarked for Syrian GARs whereas they also had clients from elsewhere who needed rent supplementation.

Certain provinces and cities made taxpayer-funded sources of rent assistance, such as rent supplement programs for approved private rental units and rent-geared-to-income public housing, available to the neediest GAR newcomers. In a few cases, housing was offered in mixed-income non-profits and cooperatives. However, in most cases, such potentially long-term options for affordable and stable housing could not be implemented for the first permanent housing due to intractably long waiting lists and/or eligibility criteria that exclude people domiciled less than 6 to 12 months in the province or city.

Making GARs' first permanent housing sustainable and plan-

ning for contingencies were also priorities for housing search and support workers. Keeping friends together mattered for social support and mental health. They also had to find housing that was accessible to public transportation, essential services and cultural or religious institutions. As well, they often needed to assist their clients in coming to terms with the limited range of housing options for families on a tight budget. Some newcomers also needed ongoing accompaniment (after the RAP program) with the legal and cultural aspects of rental housing and high-density living. Local organizations also reserved funds in case of an emergency requiring moving to a new place. Finally, RAP-providers tried to reduce the impacts of the transition to provincial social assistance, known as the “month 13” problem, on housing affordability for those cases where it would lead to a substantial drop in income support. Some managed to plan for this in advance when negotiating initial rent levels or by asking for some of the Welcome Fund allocation to be held over beyond year 1.

Cutting across this study’s findings is the crucial role that volunteer efforts played in supporting successful housing outcomes. For interviewees, this is a propitious indicator of growing local community support to refugee integration. Nevertheless, the unprecedented upsurge in volunteer involvement generated by the Syrian crisis caught local newcomer support networks and RAP providers by surprise. It was challenging to work out how to integrate amorphous volunteer energies into established structures, especially in the larger cities, and to find the staff time and material resources to manage the volume of diverse offers of help. Promising practices in response to these challenges included newcomer support teams integrating professionals and trained volunteers, and municipal or private funding to manage donations of time, expertise, or goods.

## ISSUES FOR POLICY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The policy lessons stemming from our research address local, provincial and federal government stakeholders. Leaders of local newcomer support networks should make housing tables permanent components of the settlement infrastructure and ensure that they include private landlords and social housing providers. They should maintain the housing portals and protocols developed for managing volunteer offers, or at least retain the knowhow for reactivating them when needed.

During large-scale resettlement operations, the federal government should ensure that RAP providers receive timely information about arrivals and family profiles. Also, the housing component of pre-arrival orientation, in partnership with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, needs strengthening. Most critically, this study underscores that the gap between RAP income support and housing costs in Canadian cities has become untenable, and that the Canada Child

Benefit program is not an adequate solution.

This research also highlights the need for housing policy changes that would benefit not only high needs newcomers, but also other low-income Canadians. Both groups depend primarily on the older low-end rental stock, which suffers from under-maintenance. The impressive achievement of finding decent-quality first permanent housing for the Syrian GARs is no cause for complacency. Reinstating federal funding for rehabilitation programs is crucial, as are resources to meet the affordable rental housing needs of large and multigenerational families. Expanding access to non-profit affordable housing and rent-geared-to-income social housing offers a sustainable solution to housing stability for people relying on income support or precarious employment.

Finally, we identify several topics needing further research. These include how private sponsor groups deal with their housing-related responsibilities (which this study could only briefly touch on), and detailed tracking, over time and space, of the housing progress of newcomers in all refugee streams and in cities with differing housing market conditions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was funded under the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada’s Targeted Research program, Syrian Refugee Arrival, Resettlement and Integration. The research report is available at <http://espace.inrs.ca/6458/>

# TRACKING INTERREGIONAL MOBILITY AMONG RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEES IN CANADA

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Using the Immigration Database (IMDB), the purpose of the study was to track the interregional mobility among three cohorts of refugees arriving to Canada between 2000 and 2013. Confirming previous studies, favourable gains were made by the Prairies region although Ontario and Québec also benefited from migratory interchanges. All refugee subcategories participated in these movements. Newly arrived refugees will eventually embark into interregional migration a few years after arrival bringing settlement challenges to both the sending and receiving regions.

*À l'aide de la Base de données sur l'immigration (BDIM), l'étude visait à suivre la mobilité interrégionale entre trois cohortes de réfugiés arrivant au Canada entre 2000 et 2013. Confirmant les études précédentes, des gains favorables ont été enregistrés dans la région des Prairies, bien que l'Ontario et le Québec aient également bénéficié d'échanges migratoires. Toutes les sous-catégories de réfugiés ont participé à ces mouvements. Les réfugiés nouvellement arrivés se lancent habituellement dans la migration interrégionale quelques années après leur arrivée, ce qui entraîne des problèmes de peuplement dans les régions d'origine et d'accueil.*

Between 2012 and 2014, 92,881 refugees were admitted to Canada and these represented approximately 12% of the total intake for this period. Like in the past, Canada's five major geographical regions (Atlantic, Québec, Ontario, Prairies, and British Columbia) were important macro-contexts for refugee settlement. They are the hubs for labour force markets, industry, trade, commerce and significant demographic concentrations. They also differ in the ability to attract and retain newcomers. Ontario, Québec and British Columbia offer a wide range of social and economic opportunities, which are highly attractive

to both refugees and other immigrant groups. They are "magnets" for both immigrants and refugees. Things are less clear cut in the Prairies and the Atlantic struggle with both attracting and retaining newcomers.

Refugees are social actors whose migration decisions occur within very constrained choices. In order to cross regional boundaries, refugees mobilize considerable financial and social resources and overcome significant distance, institutional, and linguistic related barriers. If opportunities in cities



or towns close to their place of residence, refugees may embark on “long-distance” migration across their host countries. Like other immigrants, residential decisions of refugees in their new countries are tied to the perceived costs and benefits of moving elsewhere. Costs may range from losing access to local welfare, housing and social services to leaving established social networks and government or sponsors' support. Benefits may include better, higher paying jobs and being closer to co-ethnics residing in the major urban centers of the host societies.

Based on these considerations, there are several important research questions worth pursuing. For instance, what is the general picture of refugees' interregional mobility? Does interregional mobility increase after arrival to Canada? Looking at regional inflows and outflows, what are the typical socio-demographic characteristics of refugees participating in interregional moves? Focusing on three cohorts of refugees arriving between 2000 and 2013, this analysis utilized tabular data from the Canadian “Immigration Database” (IMDB) to track refugees' geographical mobility during this particular period to provide a historical summary and address some of these important research questions. It should be noted that the major thrust of this paper was to identify the broad patterns of interregional mobility and, in this sense, the work undertaken is essentially descriptive.

## DO REFUGEES STAY OR LEAVE?

*Interregional mobility and period of residence:* Out of the 181,005 thousand refugees entering Canada during 2000-2013, 15% had already left their original region of landing by 2013. For the 2000-2004 cohort 17% moved, for the 2005-2009 cohort 12% moved, and 9% for the 2010-2013 one. The likelihood of interregional moves, thus, increases with the length of residence of refugees in the country.

*“Winners” and “Losers” of Mobility Exchanges:* In terms of regional gains, between 2000 and 2013, Alberta benefited the most from the influx of immigrants, including refugees. Net migration rates or *NMRs* calculated for Alberta were found positive for arrival cohorts in this period. In absolute terms, Alberta received more than 4,000 refugees from the first two refugee arrival study cohorts (2000-2004 and 2005-2009) and about 2,300 from the third one (2010-2013). British Columbia was also a net gainer in the first two arrival cohorts and Ontario gained only in the first arrival cohort. The Atlantic and Québec regions lost the most refugees to interregional interchanges. The Atlantic region lost 3,100 refugees from the first arrival cohort, 6,400 from the second and 4,800 from the third.

*Refugee subcategories and interregional mobility exchanges:* Both Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately

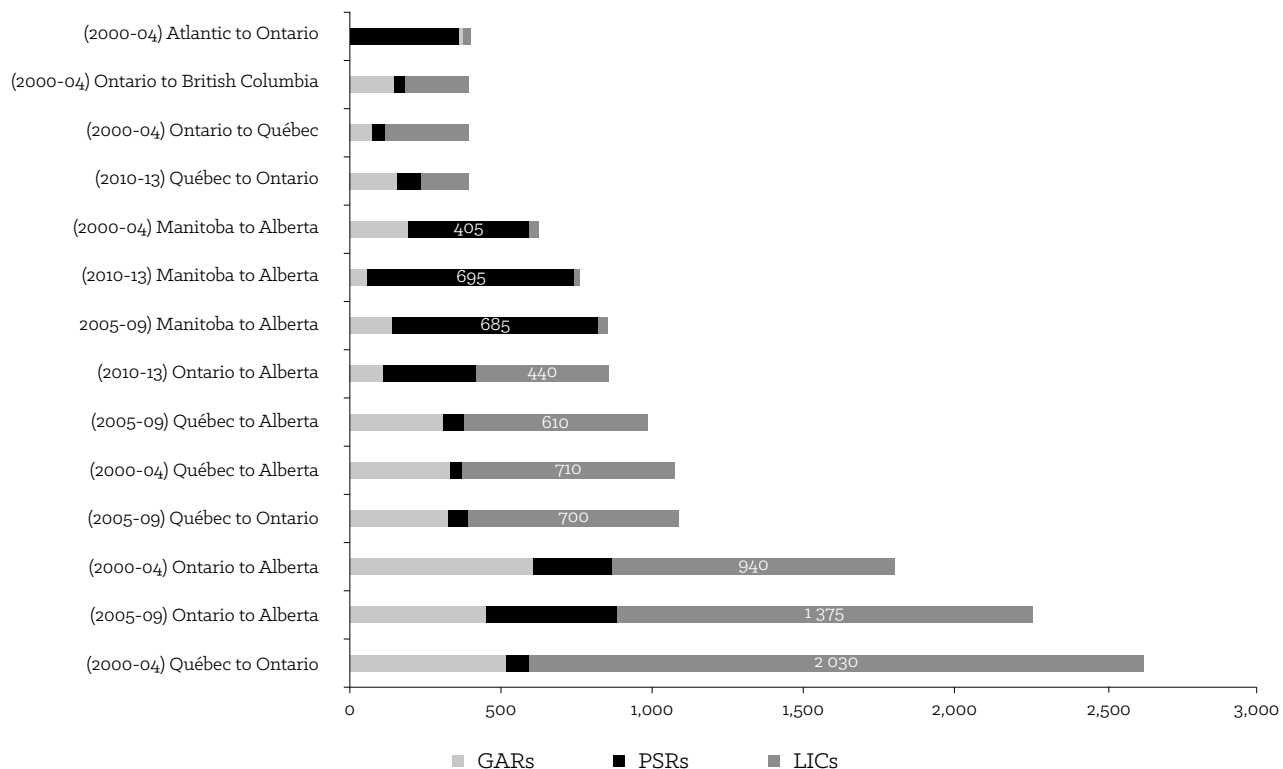
Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) contributed to positive *NMRs* with respect to their in-migration to the Alberta region. Net migration gains of 1,400 GARs were noticeable for the 2000-2004 arrival cohort, 1,200 for the 2005-2009 cohort and 400 for the 2010-2013 one. PSR net gains for the Alberta region totaled 1,200 for the 2005-2009 cohort and less than one thousand for the other cohorts. Net gains in Ontario were attributed to inflows of GARs coming from Québec and the Atlantic region. Positive *NMRs* for Ontario were observed for the three arrival cohorts of GARs. With respect to Landed in Canada (LICs), all Prairies Provinces and British Columbia displayed mostly positive net migration rates for first and second arrival cohorts suggesting greater inflows to these areas for this refugee category.

Prairies Provinces and British Columbia displayed mostly positive *NMRs* for first and second arrival cohorts suggesting greater inflows to these areas for this refugee category. Alberta's net gain of LICs totaled 1,600 and 1,900 among those from the first and second arrival cohorts. Patterns for dependents resembled those of the general population of refugees in terms of in-flows direction towards Ontario and the Prairie region.

*Historical Flows 2000-2013:* Figure 1 shows the largest interregional mover flows for the three arrival cohorts by the major refugee categories observed at tax year 2013. LIC refugees were over-represented in the largest flows particularly those from Québec to Ontario and Ontario to Alberta. Also noticeable was the presence of PSRs in three flows directed from Manitoba to Alberta for the three arrival cohorts as well as that of GARs in the flow from the Atlantic region to Ontario for the first arrival cohort.

*Socio-demographic correlates of the mover status of flows:* To identify the major socio-demographic correlates of interregional mover status of flows, socio-demographic characteristics of 71 interregional “mover” flows were contrasted to those of 21 interregional “stayer” flows. Principal Components Analyses (PCA) was used to identify these and reduce the data to a number of “manageable” dimensions. It produces bi-plots reported in Figure 2, which presents a bi-plot comprising 15 indicators related to the socio-demographic composition of refugee flows including gender, age, birthplace, official language proficiency and educational characteristics of flows. Indicator vectors found the closest to the interregional mover status vector were those related to the percent of males, percent of those aged 25-34 at arrival, percent of African-born, 3 of high school education and percent lacking official language skills. The refugee subcategory vectors were not as closely situated to the status vector as the former vectors. These all play important roles in determining interregional mobility compared to refugee landing categories.

CHART: TOP INTERREGIONAL MOVER FLOWS OF REFUGEE ARRIVAL COHORTS, TAX YEAR (2013)



Source: IMDB especial table, 2016 IMDB especial table, 2016

## REFLECTIONS

The data tracking suggests that, during 2000- 2013, the likelihood for refugees' undertaking interregional migration increased with the length of residence in Canada. The major mobility interchanges involved Québec, Ontario and the Alberta regions where the latter one was a clear "winner". The Atlantic region appeared as the region that lost the most refugees during this period. Although most refugees' sub-categories participated in interregional movements, LICs were among the most over-represented in the historical flows occurring during the period. PCA analysis suggested also that age, gender, birthplace, educational levels and official language proficiency were more important socio-demographic correlates of interregional mobility than refugee category themselves.

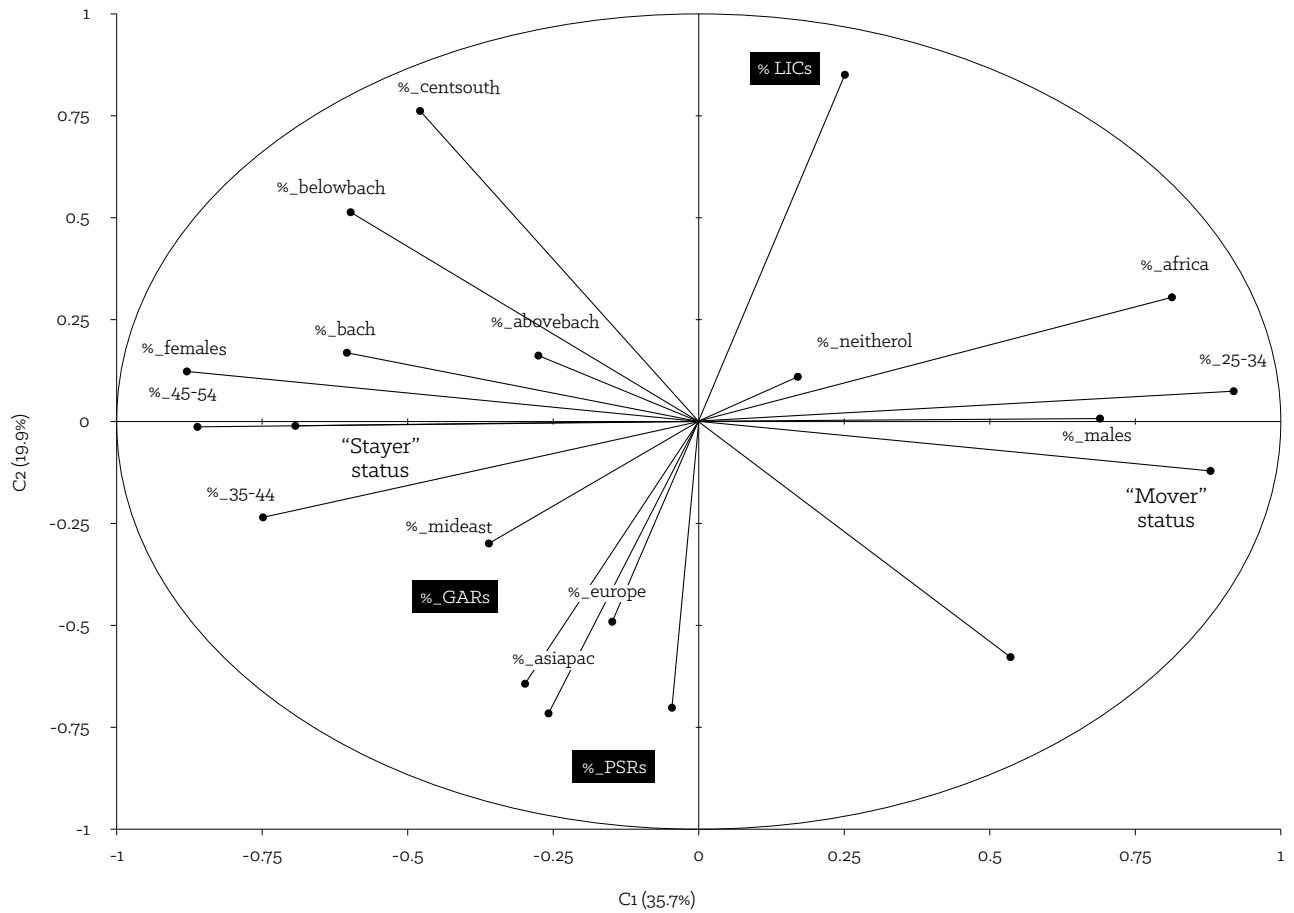
Although the interregional mobility of refugees is a smaller fraction of the overall mobility occurring across the country their impacts on sending and receiving communities are not negligible. Newly arrived refugees may relocate elsewhere in Canada a few years after arrival. In this quest, refugees may resettle multiple times at different locations, which may include metropolitan or non-metropolitan centers such as smaller cities, towns or rural areas where secondary refugee settlement is now happening. A final reflection refers is that the heterogeneity of birthplace related backgrounds of refugees

presents significant challenges for federal, provincial and local institutions as well as service providers supporting newcomer integration. In light of the findings presented, the issue of creating local opportunities and support for refugees and their families comes to the fore. While those refugees who stay in their original regional location need to be reassured that there are adequate long-term employment and educational opportunities for them, potential refugee movers need be provided information on opportunities in possible destinations and logistical support for their future interregional moves.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express its thanks to Statistics Canada's Social and Aboriginal Statistics unit for providing the data and guidance during the research process.

CHART 2: PCA BI-PLOT, SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATES OF INTERREGIONAL "MOVER" AND "STAYER" STATUS OF FLOWS



Symbols: %\_high school=% refugees with high school education in flow, %males=%male refugees in flows, %\_25-34=% refugees aged 25-34 at arrival in flow, %\_africa=% refugees born in the African region in flow,%\_neitherol=% refugees speaking no official language at arrival, %\_abovebach=% refugees with education above bachelor level in flow, %females=% female refugees in flows, %\_45-544=% refugees aged 45-54 at arrival in flow, %\_35-44=% refugees aged 35-44 at arrival in flow, %\_mideast=% refugees born in the Middle East region in flow, %\_europe =% refugees born in the European Middle East region in flow, %\_asiapac% refugees born in the Asia Pacific region in flow, %\_PSRs=% of Privately Sponsored Refugees in flow, %\_GARs=% of Government Assisted Refugees in flow, %\_LICs=% of Landed in Canada Refugees in flow

Source: IMDB especial table, 2016

