

Refuge



CANADA'S JOURNAL
ON REFUGEES

REVUE CANADIENNE
SUR LES RÉFUGIÉS

SPECIAL ISSUE

*Private Sponsorship
in
Canada*

Refuge

Canada's Journal on Refugees
Revue canadienne sur les réfugiés

Vol. 35, No. 2

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Founded in 1981, *Refuge* is an interdisciplinary journal published by the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University. The journal aims to provide a forum for discussion and critical reflection on refugee and forced migration issues.

Refuge invites contributions from researchers, practitioners, and policy makers with national, international, or comparative perspectives. Special, thematic issues address the broad scope of the journal's mandate, featuring articles and reports, shorter commentaries, and book reviews. All submissions to *Refuge* are subject to double-blinded peer review. Articles are accepted in either English or French.

Refuge is a non-profit, independent periodical funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and supported by the membership of the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS). The views expressed in *Refuge* do not necessarily reflect those of its funders or editors.

Refuge is indexed and abstracted in the *Index to Canadian Legal Literature*, *Pais International*, *Sociological Abstracts*, the *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences*, and *Canadian Business and Current Affairs*. In accordance with the journal's open access policy, the full text of articles published in *Refuge* is also available online through our website, www.yorku.ca/refuge.

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ISSN (online): 1920-7336

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Introduction: Special Issue on Private Sponsorship in Canada

JOHANNA REYNOLDS and CHRISTINA CLARK-KAZAK

Introduction

The Canadian government, community organizations, sponsorship agreement holders, and ordinary people have invested significant time, energy, and resources in the resettlement of refugees to Canada since the establishment of the private sponsorship program in 1979. Other countries are beginning to adopt and adapt private sponsorship in very different contexts. However, there has been limited research to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of sponsorship as a resettlement process.

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program provides Canadian citizens the opportunity to identify and sponsor refugees for resettlement to Canada. For twelve months or more, sponsored refugees receive settlement and financial support from their sponsorship group. A sponsorship group can be formed in various ways: by five or more permanent residents or citizens, also called a Group of Five (G5), who collectively arrange to sponsor a particular refugee living abroad; or by community sponsors, such as an organization, corporation, or association; and a constituent group, working with a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH), can also support a refugee or family in their community of settlement. Support during this first year of sponsorship (both through direct service provision and financial support) is provided by the sponsorship group in partnership with service providers.¹ The

Blended Visa Office–Referred (BVOR) Program, launched in 2013, is a new category of hybrid sponsorship, a cost-sharing initiative between the Canadian government and sponsorship groups, through which refugees are referred for resettlement by UNHCR and approved by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

To complement a previous *Refuge* special issue focusing on the historic establishment of Canada's private sponsorship and a forthcoming edited volume by Shauna Labman and Geoffrey Cameron, this special issue focuses specifically on lessons learned from sponsorship efforts and concrete suggestions for future policy and programming. The articles in this issue make empirical and conceptual contributions to understanding the diversity and context specificity of sponsorship, particularly in relation to the variability of "success," as well as the ways in which Canadian-specific examples can or cannot be "exported" to other countries.

Literature Review: Private Sponsorship in Canada

While Canada's private sponsorship program has existed for forty years, until recently there was little academic literature evaluating the program and its impacts. Shortly after the large-scale sponsorship and resettlement of Indochinese refugees to Canada in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a few articles described and analyzed the process² and evaluated

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refugees' integration.³ In the early 2000s some practitioners published reflections on private sponsorship,⁴ while scholars analyzed resettlement outcomes of sponsored refugees⁵ and relationships and partnerships amongst actors involved in sponsorship.⁶ There was also limited literature on the World University Service of Canada's (WUSC) Student Refugee Program (SRP).⁷ Despite these important efforts, there was no comprehensive systematic account and evaluation of Canada's private sponsorship system.⁸

To partially redress this gap, a special issue of *Refuge*⁹ focused on the historical establishment of private sponsorship in response to Indochinese refugees. Subsequently Molloy and colleagues published a book¹⁰ recounting the experiences of Canadian government officials who set up and implemented those early private sponsorship efforts.

In the context of relatively large-scale resettlement of Syrian refugees to Canada through private sponsorship, government assistance, and BVOR channels in 2015–16, and efforts to “export” the Canadian sponsorship model,¹¹ new research has emerged. Scholars have focused on motivations and experiences of sponsors,¹² peer networks,¹³ regional variations,¹⁴ and new administrative processes and categories of sponsorship.¹⁵ A forthcoming edited volume by Labman and Cameron will use case studies to explore the conceptual and historical basis for sponsorship and prospects for successful “exportation” of the program.

This research has established several important findings about private sponsorship as a resettlement strategy. The discretionary decision-making involved by UNHCR, government actors, and private sponsors naming specific persons to resettle has resulted in some variability in who gets chosen, from what areas, and what resources they have once they arrive in Canada. For example, Turner has critiqued the exclusion of single Syrian men from recent resettlement efforts.¹⁶ Hyndman, Payne, and Jimenez demonstrate how the prioritization of private sponsorship of Syrians by the Canadian government in 2015–16 caused delays in the resettlement of refugees from other regions.¹⁷ Sponsorship groups have variable experience in sponsorship,¹⁸ resulting in uneven support to, and resettlement outcomes of, refugees.¹⁹ The introduction of a new BVOR sponsorship category also blurs private sponsorship with government assistance.²⁰ Relatedly, some critique the privatization of refugee protection.²¹

This special issue complements this literature in three ways. First, while much of the literature has focused on the legal and bureaucratic process of private sponsorship, Kyriakides et al.; Hynie et al.; McKee et al.; Lenard; Good Gingrich and Enns; and Haugen in this issue turn their attention to the micro-level human relationships at the heart of sponsorship. Second, two articles in this issue (Kwadrans and Bond; Hirsch, Hoang, and Vogl) provide a comparative perspective

on sponsorship in Canada and other countries.²² Third, articles in this special issue attempt to offer practical lessons learned to guide current and future private sponsorship.

Measuring the “Success” of the Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

The articles in the first section consider the variability of “success” in sponsorship programs and perceptions of “success” by sponsored and sponsoring groups. The program has been recognized globally as unique “because it deeply empowered ordinary individuals from any background to take primary responsibility for all aspects of welcoming and integrating the newcomers” (Kwadrans and Bond, this issue). Indeed, the personal efforts and deep commitment of many individuals and refugee sponsorship groups is immeasurable. What motivates civil society to engage in refugee sponsorship? What are some of the complexities of the sponsored relationship, and how might they be resolved? How is “success” defined and by whom? What markers of “success” are achievable within the first year of arrival, and how can sponsored refugees best achieve them? What conditions make a private sponsorship “successful”? Alternatively, what is viewed as a sponsorship “failure”? The following articles provide strong empirical contributions that frame sponsorship programs in Canada, including student-led initiatives and faith-based groups.

Good Gingrich and Enns aptly explain how markers of refugee success or “integration” are falsely based on an expectation that the sponsored refugee will adapt quickly to the new society, typically defined by a narrow understanding of self-sufficiency, framed as financial independence or an emotional sense of belonging and trust. The authors employ a reflexive analysis that shifts our gaze from the refugee “Other”—the targets of these policies—to the institutional and interpersonal relationships of private refugee sponsorship. They outline the complex nature of these relationships and show how these roles and relationships develop and change. The authors focus on the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as their case study, the first agency to set up the private sponsorship of refugees in Canada. They demonstrate how the Mennonite or MMC ethos influenced sponsor–newcomer relationships and associated values and goals in MCC's refugee sponsorships.

According to **Kyriakides et al.**, resettlement success depends in part on pre-arrival communication. Kyriakides et al. demonstrate the importance of regular pre-arrival contact via digital applications such as Facebook, Skype, and Whatsapp for more “successful” and positive resettlement experiences. In their study with groups of privately sponsored Syrian refugees in Ontario, understanding resettlement “needs” was influenced by the level of interpersonal

trust that had developed between refugees and their sponsors. Pre-arrival exchanges that were conducted via social media have the potential to translate resettlement information into resettlement knowledge assets, what the authors term “third spaces of refugee resettlement,” reducing uncertainty by bridging the gap between interpretation and expectation, and the actual conditions encountered in resettlement. The result was to mutually reduce the uncertainty of resettlement. As noted by the authors, another important result of pre-arrival correspondence is that both sponsored and sponsors engaged and corresponded from their respective *social roles*, thereby also recognizing the needs that corresponded to those roles, be it as parents, spouses, and so on.

However, conditions of variability influence the settlement experience of refugees in Canada. In their mixed-methods study on newly arrived adult Syrian refugees in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, **Hynie et al.** consider whether early integration benefits observed among government-assisted refugees (GAR) and PSRS can be attributed to pre-migration differences, or to the anticipated benefits of private settlement, specifically potential differences in social capital between GARS and PSRS. They apply the holistic integration model, which moves the responsibility for success (or failure) of integration purely from the individual level, to also include conditions in the dominant host society and broader socio-political contexts of integration (e.g., colonial, racist, and xenophobic policies). The authors demonstrate that a host of pre-migration conditions affect the integration pathway, including length of time in transit and associated physical and psychological hardships, previous knowledge of English/French, having relatives in Canada, and the importance of local contexts in which they settle. Importantly, the authors show that PSRS are not a homogenous group and that comparing settlement outcomes of PSRS with other groups such as GARS is ineffective, given the variability within and between the categories.

The importance of place in settlement outcomes is also clearly demonstrated in **Haugen’s** article, which discusses the important role that smaller cities or rural communities play in hosting privately sponsored refugees. Despite inadequate infrastructure and settlement challenges in smaller communities (e.g., lack of newcomer services, lack of public transportation, limited access to higher education, and religious and racial discrimination), rural communities can also offer benefits to refugee families who decide to remain there, including affordable housing and strong social supports. The author’s findings from rural communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia emphasize the uniqueness of *place* while at the same time contribute to knowledge about the process of integration and refugee resettlement experiences outside urban centres.

Lenard draws attention to the structural conditions that make independence within one year difficult to achieve. The infamous “month 13” requires that refugees become independent with a year of their arrival, and sponsors are tasked with supporting their pathway to independence. And yet multiple conditions and variables result in refugees not being prepared to be on their own by the time their sponsorship ends. Lenard explains that there is also a common misunderstanding of what constitutes independence, or what skills are needed for newcomers to become independent, including tensions between sponsors and sponsored around financial budgeting. For example, a common misconception is that financial self-sufficiency is synonymous with integration. Lenard shows that there is need for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of what “success” at month 13 looks like and that independence and integration into Canadian society is gradual: “The failure to attain it by month 13 means neither that the newcomers have failed, nor that the sponsorship has failed.”

The article by **McKee et al.** focuses on the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) Student Refugee Program. This youth-to-youth sponsorship model is an effective approach to integrate young refugees into their receiving community. Youth volunteers, they argue, can play an important role in supporting integration for newcomers to Canada. More than 130 refugee students are resettled to Canadian post-secondary institutions each year, through more than ninety campus-based WUSC local committees. The authors argue that resettling refugee youth to Canadian post-secondary institutions reduces many barriers to integration faced by other refugee youth, such as providing access to education, language training, and employment opportunities. Their results show that local committees were instrumental in providing refugee students with job opportunities both on and off campus. Furthermore, interviewed participants also indicated feeling “at home” and attributed this feeling to the support of the local committee and the broader community, even in cases where their ethnic community was largely absent. An important lesson from the SRP is that “youth are uniquely positioned as innovative leaders capable of mobilizing their peers and community on global issues.” Engaging students in refugee sponsorship by raising awareness about global migration can have ripple effects both on campus and in the broader community.

These articles collectively demonstrate that pre-arrival conditions, social and structural barriers, policies, and institutional supports all need to be carefully considered when assessing what constitutes the “successful” integration of newcomers to Canada.

Private Sponsorship in a Global Context

The second section highlights examples of private sponsorship programs in other countries that seek community-based solutions to fill the resettlement gap. Community sponsorship programs are unique in that they empower ordinary citizens to welcome and integrate refugee newcomers into their communities. They are viewed as a complementary model to state-led resettlement commitments. How does such a program function when there is no national framework, as in the United States? Or when the state uses community-based solutions in lieu of their own national commitments, which result in downloaded responsibility, as in Australia?

Bond and Kwadrans provide a comparative analysis of the legal and administrative frameworks that have underpinned sponsorship programs in Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Argentina. They also briefly examine the introduction of co-sponsorship in the United States, a country without any formal national program. What policy structures are required to operationalize community sponsorship programs? The authors highlight a historic overview of the Canadian model, focusing on the original legislative changes that created the foundations for the world's largest community sponsorship program. As they further explain, the Canadian model offered a unique referral mechanism that permitted sponsors to identify refugees they wished to resettle and was enabled by an explicit provision in the 1976 *Immigration Act*. This model underscores the very minimal legislative framework necessary to facilitate introduction of this radically different approach to refugee resettlement. The United Kingdom and New Zealand, on the other hand, each introduced community sponsorship into pre-existing and well-established refugee resettlement infrastructure. Alternatively Argentina—a newer resettlement country—created a resettlement program delivered exclusively through a sponsorship model. The final case study, the United States, is a large resettlement country that does not have a national community sponsorship program. Nevertheless, a number of American civil society organizations have recognized the potential of sponsorship and built their own mini infrastructure within the country's broader overall resettlement scheme. The authors show that sponsorship models are not “one size fits all,” encouraging countries to consider new sponsorship programs without undertaking wide-scale legislative reform.

Hirsch, Hoang, and Vogl examine Australia's current Community Support Program (CSP), which began in late 2017, as a cautionary tale: a sponsorship program that reduces government accountability and financial commitment to humanitarian resettlement programming. The authors also demonstrate that the eligibility criteria for CSP shows a preference for “job ready,” “economically self-sufficient” refugees

between the ages of eighteen and fifty, with “functional English,” an overall higher integration capacity, and from particular countries of origin. This “cherry picking” of refugees undermines the humanitarian nature of this program and discriminates on the basis of gender, age, and other criteria. The authors provide an important discussion on whether this program can preserve its humanitarian focus as a durable solution for refugees or whether economic independence and other criteria in fact support an economic model of self-sufficiency.

The Future of Private Sponsorship?

The Global Compact on Refugees calls upon states “to establish private or community sponsorship programs that are additional to regular resettlement” in order to provide timely access to durable solutions to refugees.²³ Canada's private sponsorship program has gained global attention as a leader in refugee resettlement.²⁴ In 2019 Canada will resettle four times more privately sponsored refugees than in 2015.²⁵ It is thus imperative that we pay close attention to the evaluation of Canada's private sponsorship system and the lessons learned provided in new and emerging research to guide future private sponsorship.

NOTES

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A Reflexive View of Refugee Integration and Inclusion: A Case Study of the Mennonite Central Committee and the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

LUANN GOOD GINGRICH and THEA ENNS¹

Abstract

Through a qualitative case study with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) sponsorship groups and former refugee newcomers, we adopt a reflexive, relational, and systemic lens (Bourdieu) to analyze the institutional and interpersonal relationships in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program, and more specifically, the ways in which MCC Ontario's sponsorship program invigorates or frustrates dynamics of social inclusion. We situate the institutional relations of the PSR Program as nested social fields and sub-fields, revealing complementary and competing systems of capital that direct explicit and implicit visions for "success" in MCC sponsorships. A peculiar Mennonite/MCC social field and structure of capital generates institutional and social tensions, yet an ambivalent disposition or divided habitus presents possibilities for seeing, understanding, and challenging dynamics of social exclusion.

Résumé

À travers une étude de cas qualitative avec des groupes de parrainage du Comité Central Mennonite (MCC) et d'anciens nouveaux arrivants comme réfugiés, nous adoptons une perspective réflexive, relationnelle et systémique (Bourdieu) pour analyser les relations institutionnelles et interpersonnelles dans le Programme de parrainage privé des réfugiés, et plus spécifiquement les façons dont le programme de parrainage du MCC Ontario fortifie ou entrave les dynamiques d'inclusion sociale. Nous situons les diverses relations institutionnelles du Programme de parrainage privé des réfugiés comme étant des champs et sous-champs sociaux imbriqués, révélant des systèmes complémentaires et concurrents de capital qui orientent des visions explicites et implicites de la "réussite" dans les parrainages du MCC. Un champ social et une structure de capital Mennonite singuliers génèrent des tensions institutionnelles et sociales.

Toutefois une disposition ambivalente ou un habitus divisé présentent des possibilités pour voir, comprendre et remettre en question les dynamiques d'exclusion sociale.

What Is the Sponsor's Role?

Your role ... is not to provide instant answers, but rather to encourage the newcomers to weigh and test a variety of possibilities.... Sponsors should be involved in a mutual learning process.... Each culture, and individuals within that culture, have their own way of doing things.... Remember that they, as yourself, need to be treated as people with feelings and needs.... Patience, mutual respect, good humour and love are invaluable assets as you work together in resettlement.²

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program in Canada has been hailed by some as an exemplar for social inclusion and integration of refugee newcomers into the host society. This self-proclaimed “pioneering refugee resettlement program,”³ overseen by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) through the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), gives “ordinary people across the country” the opportunity to use their own personal resources (monetary and otherwise) “to be directly involved in the resettlement of refugees from abroad.”⁴

According to IRCC, the role of a sponsor, post-arrival, is “to support the refugees for the length of the sponsorship [one year]. This includes help for housing, clothing and food, as well as social and emotional support.”⁵ Sponsoring groups are directed to partner with IRCC-funded Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) to “support the settlement and integration of PSRs.”⁶

While *settlement* and *integration* are not defined in government documents, emphasis is given to *independence* and *self-sufficiency*. For example, the *RSTP Handbook for Sponsoring Groups* states, “During the first year, newcomers learn a tremendous amount and generally move from a high degree of dependence to a high degree of independence. Through it all, your role is that of an enabler, supporting newcomers to equip themselves, make their own decisions and find out as much as possible about their new environment. Above all, you are providing warm friendship and support.”⁷

The specific outcomes identified by the Canadian government—“finding employment, learning English, learning life skills to function in Canada”⁸—suggest that priority is placed on effecting individual level adaptation so that the refugee newcomer family reaches economic self-sufficiency through paid work. In contrast, we open this article with an excerpt from a 1979 Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) document when the PSR Program was in its infancy. This passage provides a glimpse of a peculiar Mennonite/MCC ethos that is defined by a non-conformist and communal heritage, culture, and institutional structure.⁹ This, we argue,

is consequential for the nature of sponsor–newcomer relationships, associated values and goals, and positions and dispositions that develop through MCC’s refugee sponsorships.

We adopt a reflexive, relational, and systemic lens to analyze the institutional and interpersonal relationships in the private sponsorship of refugees. We are most interested in examining the tensions and contradictions of sponsor–newcomer relationships and associated positions and dispositions (or habitus) that are produced, at the institutional and interpersonal scales. We situate the PSR Program as a *social field* with a particular *system of capital* and *habitus*. This theoretical lens brings to our attention the symbolic economy, or logic, of the social relations of private sponsorship, revealing both complementary and competing systems of capital that direct explicit and implicit visions for “success” in MCC sponsorships, and result in institutional and social tensions and an ambivalent disposition or divided habitus. We argue that the “double privatization” of the PSR Program is consequential, even in shaping individual private sponsorship roles and associated dispositions. Equally important in this case example is the unique synergies between MCC as an organization and the congregations that make up its base of support, many of which have sponsored refugees for a sustained period of time. Thus, we theorize, these local and global synergies reproduce a distinct Mennonite ethos (or social field) that is embodied in institutions and individuals.

In this article we draw on focus group and interview data with MCC constituent group (CG) members and former refugee newcomers, along with organizational documents, to examine the nature and evolution of the relationships, responsibilities, positions, and dispositions of private sponsorship.¹⁰ We begin with a brief history of the private refugee sponsorship program in Canada and MCC’s part in its development, followed by an outline of this study’s theoretical framework and methodology. The bulk of the article is devoted to our analysis of institutional and interpersonal relationships, tensions, contradictions, and possibilities as they emerged in our data.

Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada

Complementing Canada’s Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) Program, the 1976 *Immigration Act* officially institutionalized the PSR Program. Cameron and Labman note that “sponsorship is permitted through three types of sponsorship groups: ‘Groups of Five,’ ‘Community Sponsors,’ and ‘Constituent Groups (CGs),’ who are members of an organization that is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH).”¹¹ As of February 2019, there were 114 SAHs across Canada,¹² 75 per cent of which are connected with religious communities.¹³ Approximately 65 per cent of refugees privately resettled are sponsored or co-sponsored by a SAH.¹⁴

Until recently, much of the literature on private refugee sponsorship has focused on program evaluation and history¹⁵ and falls within the context of the Indochinese refugee movement, when the program was initially used and internationally recognized.¹⁶ Research tends to compare refugee resettlement streams (e.g., GARS versus PSRS) or demographic features and is focused more on outcomes for refugee newcomers than on processes and practices in resettlement.¹⁷ More recently an influx of research has addressed the realities of private sponsorship of Syrian refugee newcomers, considering identity¹⁸ or motivations and characteristics of sponsors.¹⁹ There is a much smaller body of literature on the unique history and involvement of MCC during this time and prior to signing the first Master Agreement.²⁰ MCC's role in refugee resettlement is acknowledged within the larger fabric of Christian institutions in Canada,²¹ while some literature specifically addresses cross-cultural and religious interactions between Indochinese refugees and their Mennonite sponsors.²² Our focus is on the sponsoring relationships within a larger social system and specific social subfield of MCC as a SAH.

Theoretical Considerations: Models of Integration, Social Fields, and Structures of Capital

Integration and inclusion are regularly considered critical to settlement of refugee newcomers.²³ In practice, *integration* and *inclusion* are often used interchangeably, notwithstanding discrete conceptual roots and distinct vast literatures. Particularly in the context of settlement services for immigrants and refugees, inclusion may emphasize a subjective sense of belonging and trust over the material realities of settlement and integration.²⁴

Despite their ubiquity, definitions and indicators of inclusion, or integration, commonly remain implicit and specific to national contexts and cultural trends that shift over time, revealing the normative nature of an unquestioned social ideal. We consider concepts of refugee integration or inclusion to be produced by an assumed logic that is associated with material and symbolic capital (or resources) in a social field.

From an individualistic and categorical point of view, integration is most often equated with participation in various social arenas, and interventions focus on increasing individual capacity for meaningful incorporation into mainstream communities and institutions. For example, the stated objective of settlement services in Canada is “to help them [refugee newcomers] to become participating members of Canadian society as quickly as possible.”²⁵ This familiar evaluative gaze lands squarely and exclusively on the refugee newcomer, producing an invisible yet idealized individual and collective self. Integration or inclusion

through person-change measures—to help them fit into social systems, institutions, and cultural norms—implies a “centre” or series of centres whereby voluntary engagement or mandatory insertion moves an individual from exclusion to inclusion.²⁶

Offering more depth of meaning and complexity, a popular analogy for integration or inclusion of immigrants and refugees is a “two-way street,”²⁷ recognizing the need for reciprocal change between newcomers and hosts, where “both the receiving communities and the newcomers change, and change each other.”²⁸ Emphasis is placed not only on rights, but also on responsibilities of both the newcomer and residents²⁹ to create the “opportunities for the immigrants’ full economic, social, cultural and political participation.”³⁰ This interpersonal change remains focused on the level of the individual, yet gives some recognition to the self in relation to the Other.

Aiming for a more robust conception of integration, or inclusion, that recognizes refugee newcomers as “stakeholders” in integration rather than sites of intervention, Lamping, Bertolo, and Wahrlab posit that the primary goal of resettlement is not to provide services, but to build relationships and a welcoming community.³¹ Similarly, Hynie’s holistic integration model strengthens the emphasis on changes within the social context and on the interrelatedness of different social levels or dimensions.³² This shift from the individual to the social as the unit of analysis and site of intervention requires situating the Other in a social context, stressing place change over person change.

A key principle or value that operates in MCC’s refugee sponsorship program is a concept of “mutually transformative relationships,”³³ suggesting a model of integration or inclusion that expands the sites of intervention to include interpersonal change, place change, and even system change. We propose that an approach to integration or inclusion of refugee newcomers that is congruent with the Mennonite/MCC ethos (or structure of capital) situates refugee sponsorship within the broader context of forced migration—in *conflict* that is at once interpersonal and systemic, manifesting itself in fractured relationships between individuals, groups, communities, societies, and nations. This, we argue, is the essence of social exclusion.³⁴ In writing about transformative relationships in protracted internal and internationalized conflict—contexts that produce refugees—Mennonite scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach emphasizes the “interdependence between various levels of society affected by and affecting change processes.”³⁵ Thus, a system-change model of integration involves transformation at all levels—personal, relational, institutional, and cultural.³⁶

Seeing integration, or inclusion, as conflict transformation, or system change, is uncommon in refugee-receiving

countries in the Global North.³⁷ The social and legal environments of host nations are relatively just and fair, compared to refugee source countries, and by virtue of offering safety and protection, a national moral superiority is implied. Furthermore, this narrow perspective denies the inextricable ties between “refugee-producing” and “refugee-saving” nation-states, and the incessant historical practices that give rise to collective violence and “populations that have experienced a deep fracture in human relationships as a result of fundamental violations of their human rights.”³⁸ Especially in the relationships of refugee sponsorship, system change is a demanding point of view, as a critical gaze must be turned to the self and the Other in social and historical relations of power. To recognize the sustained conflict and slow violence of “soft domination”³⁹ requires eschewing common sense binaries to, instead, hold paradox.

Some definitions of terms are required. According to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the social world is made up of multiple and diverse social fields and subfields, or arenas of contest and struggle.⁴⁰ A *social field*, analogous to a field of play in a highly competitive game of sport, is defined by its structure of capital, both material and symbolic, as individuals and groups compete for available resources that are effective and valued in that social field. All social space is ordered according to the legitimate means of appropriating and circulating capital, and the resulting structure and volumes possessed by individuals and groups engaged in any given social field. Occupants of various positions in social fields “seek, individually or collectively, to safeguard or improve their position.”⁴¹ In other words, a particular disposition, or habitus, is associated with advancement in this social field, with the accumulation of various species of capital. The habitus—much more than identity—is “socialized subjectivity” and “the product of collective and individual history,” which is expressed through taste and disposition, or embodied habits that are adjusted to social economies in which we engage.⁴² A divided habitus, or “coherent incoherence,”⁴³ is a necessary “conciliation of contraries”⁴⁴ in response to competing social fields and structures of capital, and coincident and opposing positions (i.e., dominant and dominated) in each. We will draw on this tripartite concept in the analysis that follows.

Methods and Methodology: A Case Study of MCC

History of MCC and Canada’s Private Sponsorship Model

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was founded in 1920 when famine and the decimation of Mennonite communities in Ukraine during the Russian Revolution stirred Mennonites in North America to respond to the need of their co-religionists.⁴⁵ In addition to aid, resettlement to Canada was an important aspect of the work of the newly formed

organization.⁴⁶ Between 1923 and 1930, Canada accepted over 21,000 Mennonites from the Soviet Union, with the understanding that Canadian Mennonite communities would provide for and resettle these newcomers. In the following decades, MCC expanded its relief and international development work well beyond assistance to fellow Mennonites.⁴⁷ According to William Janzen, a long-time director of MCC Canada’s (MCCC) Ottawa office, the historical experience of MCC in refugee resettlement served as a precedent for Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugee (PSR) Program, which was established more than fifty years after MCC was established.⁴⁸ Janzen also served as one of the negotiators of Canada’s original Master Agreement, which MCCC signed in 1979. This agreement with the federal government provided the legal basis for MCCC to work with local congregations that, in turn, offered organizational and logistical support for groups of citizens to privately sponsor refugees. MCCC has sustained a vibrant refugee sponsorship program among Mennonite churches for forty years.

Today MCC defines itself as “a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches,” with national offices in both Winnipeg (Manitoba) and Akron (Pennsylvania), enabling congregations to become engaged in “relief, development and peace in the name of Christ”⁴⁹ at home and abroad.

MCC provides a longstanding and unique case example for considering the relationships of private sponsorship in Canada for at least four key factors: its origins in providing aid to refugees; its role in Canada’s private sponsorship program; its ties with Mennonite and Anabaptist churches and their refugee heritage; and the sustained engagement of individuals, sponsorship groups, and sponsoring congregations in private sponsorship.

Research Methods

This analysis emerged from a qualitative research partnership between MCC Ontario (MCCO) and York University. Our study used a reflexive community-based framework, whereby the research purpose, question, design, and data generation were collectively formulated and conducted in a partnership between researchers at York University, the MCCO Refugee Sponsorship and Settlement Associate, and the MCCO refugee program coordinator. The objective of this study was to examine how the relationships and practices within MCCC’s private sponsorship program invigorate or frustrate dynamics of social inclusion.

Qualitative data were gathered in 2018 through seven focus groups with five to eight sponsors each, totalling forty-nine participants from twenty-one churches in six geographical regions that sponsored refugees through MCC Ontario between 2007 and 2015; seven interviews with seventeen former refugee newcomers who were sponsored by one of

the sample groups;⁵⁰ a key informant interview with Brian Dyck, the National Migration and Resettlement Program coordinator; and MCC documents and publications. None of the sponsorships were named cases, but rather the sponsored individuals and families were identified through the Visa Office Referred (VOR) or Blended Visa Office–Referred (BVOR) Program. This is significant for the purposes of our study, since sponsors had no prior relationship with the refugee newcomers they sponsored. Apart from one sponsoring church that was affiliated with the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada, all congregations within the sample were members of Mennonite denominations that are formal contributing constituents of MCCC, with the majority belonging to the Mennonite Church.⁵¹ MCCC staff used its database to identify sponsors across Ontario and provided formal invitations on behalf of the organization. Because a primary objective of the research was to understand the nature and development of sponsorship roles and relationships over time, the sample of CGs was limited to those who had sponsored a family or individual prior to the 2015–16 Syrian resettlement efforts. Contact information for CGs before 2007 was limited, thus our sample captured sponsors between 2007 and 2015. However, as the data reveal, several congregations had been sponsoring for decades, even since 1979. A purposive sample of these long-standing groups that had engaged in multiple sponsorships prior to 2015 was selected from regions in Ontario with the largest representation of these groups: Waterloo Region, Stratford, Niagara, and the Greater Toronto Area. Aiming for multiplicity of perspective, purposive sampling was further employed to add three additional focus groups: (1) sponsors from the Leamington area, to provide a rural perspective; (2) sponsors from Ottawa Mennonite Church, to understand the experiences of the longest-standing CG with the most completed sponsorships; and (3) a CG comprising individuals who attended two different Mennonite churches and were sponsored through MCCC but independent of either congregation. Subsequently, sponsors extended the invitation to participate to those whom they had sponsored, resembling a purposive snowball sampling method, as recruitment was limited to former refugee newcomers with whom sponsors had an ongoing relationship. Refugee countries of origin represented included Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, South Sudan, and Colombia. Interpreters were used for four of the seven newcomer interviews, for Arabic, Tigrinya, and Spanish.

Focus group discussions and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Discussions with sponsors centred on the following topics: expectations or goals of sponsorship, values and guiding principles of sponsorship, shifting and growing relationships between sponsor and sponsored refugees over time, best practices, and personal experiences

of sponsorship. Demographic information for each focus group participant was collected prior to each focus group. Thematic analysis of the focus group data was conducted through a collaborative and iterative approach, combining independent analyses by authors Enns and Good Gingrich, and collaborative analysis with MCCC program coordinators. Direct quotations from former refugee newcomers⁵² are identified with pseudonyms, and those from sponsors with the number of the focus group.

A Reflexive Lens

Research and practice that adopt a relational and systems framework are necessarily reflexive. In other words, the focus of attention is on the ways in which we engage with one another, as well as the outcomes of our work together. We identify the overarching methodology that guided this research project as “epistemic reflexivity.”⁵³ Bourdieu’s practice of reflexivity entails the systematic analysis of practice in everyday social relations, “the objective archeology of our unconscious,” and the arbitrary.⁵⁴ Reflexive sociology “is critical of established *patterns* of power and privilege as well as of the politics that supports them.”⁵⁵ More simply, a reflexive analysis shifts our gaze. Rather than the conventional focus on excluded individuals or groups—the Other—who are the targets of policies and services to help them become included or integrated, we take as our object of study the social spaces that comprise this largely uncontested “centre,” specifically, the institutional and interpersonal relationships of private refugee sponsorship: a primary objective is “to historicize and so denaturalize that which seems most natural in the social order,” to the point of seeming inevitable.⁵⁶ Epistemic reflexivity requires us to see what we take for granted, to recognize that we *have* a world view that is not the only way to view the world.

Institutional Relations: The Nested Social Fields of Refugee Sponsorship

As for all social fields, the institutional relations of private sponsorship are arenas of contest and struggle. Specifically, MCCC has a duty through its sponsorship agreement to function as an extension of the federal government (IRCC) in carrying out the directives of the PSR Program. Yet equally important in our case example is MCCC’s obligation to its constituency of Mennonite and affiliated congregations. Thus, MCCC is answerable to two distinct constituencies and systems of institutions, policies, and practices. As a broker between government directives and sponsors, MCCC must hold in tension two conflicting sets of values, or structures of capital. We will explore the institutional and interpersonal implications of these contradictory social fields and structures of capital in the following sections.

The Market-State Social Field

With its primary purpose of refugee settlement, Canada's PSR Program fits within the social welfare arm of the nation-state. Yet private sponsorship programs do not fall neatly under one of the four sectors commonly associated with national welfare states: government (or public), market (or private for-profit), community/voluntary sector (private not-for-profit), and family (private and informal). The "settlement and integration of PSRs" is to be achieved through a "partnership of support" from informal civil society (sponsorship groups) and publicly funded Service Provider Organizations (SPOs).⁵⁷

Canada's PSR Program is designed to be a public-private partnership, but direct service provision and a portion or all of the cost is delegated to the formal not-for-profit community/voluntary sector as well as informal family and civil society, yet the state imposes the legal framework and practice regulations. This is a double privatization, as the marketized public transfers international and domestic responsibility to both the formal and informal not-for-profit private sectors, blurring multiple boundaries within and beyond the nation-state.

The logic or structure of capital of the PSR Program is made explicit in its goals, the terms for "success," and what sponsors are "to make/to do."⁵⁸ Even a cursory glance at IRCC guidelines and instructions for sponsors reveals that the standard for successful private sponsorship is measured primarily by a particularly narrow version of self-sufficiency of refugee newcomers at the end of the one-year sponsorship. In practice, whether defined as settlement, integration, or inclusion, the outcome is most often assessed through individual and static indicators of financial independence and/or an emotional sense of belonging and trust. Market logic assumes that the subjective and material realities of social exclusion are best addressed through paid work. Such person-change measures constitute enforced dependency on the market. This is social exclusion by design, as we know that inclusion is not available for everyone through paid work.

The Mennonite/MCC Social Field: A Countercultural System of Capital

Despite a range of personal beliefs and contradictory expressions of proximity or distance to religion and the Mennonite church, a common sponsorship ethos, or structure of capital, runs through official MCC discourse and all participant responses. This ethos is institutionalized in MCC and its constituent churches and is reinforced in the specific practices of synergy that are mutually productive for Mennonite organizations, MCC programs, and participating individuals.

We have argued elsewhere that MCC has maintained a commitment to refugee sponsorship largely as the result of historical beginnings steeped in refugee resettlement, its local and national credibility as a SAH, its substantial presence and history in international development work, and its structure and grassroots connections with Mennonite and affiliating denominations in North America.⁵⁹ Consequently, we theorize this diverse yet singular social context as a social field, with its own "institutional boundaries," "barriers to entry," and "specialists in the elaboration of a distinctive source of authority and sociodicy."⁶⁰ As with all social fields, the Mennonite/MCC social field functions according to its own discernible structure of capital that cuts across place and time and directs the accumulation and exchange of material and symbolic assets, and produces a particular habitus or disposition.

We identify the following distinct features of the Mennonite/MCC social field that have supported and sustained a unique model of refugee sponsorship with long-standing sponsoring groups for over forty years.

A Heritage of Persecution

Mennonite identity is steeped in "refugeeness." The MCC disposition, or habitus, is rooted in stories of Mennonite refugees from the twentieth century. Janzen and Epp-Tiessen identify the significance of an inherited refugee story, most importantly flight from the Soviet Union during and after the First and Second World Wars, in motivating Mennonites to become involved in the sponsorship of Indo-Chinese refugees. Epp-Tiessen explains: "They, their parents, or grandparents had been refugees, and they now wished to ease the suffering of others."⁶¹ A familiar and inspiring grand narrative is the almost 400-page first-hand account of MCC's second refugee resettlement effort of 12,000 uprooted Mennonites from Russia to South and North America from 1941 to 1949, as told by lifelong MCC workers and Canadian Mennonites Peter and Elfrieda Dyck (1991). The title, *Up from the Rubble: The Epic Rescue of Thousands of War-Ravaged Mennonite Refugees*, contains the essence of this legendary David and Goliath story.

Nearly half of the sponsors in our study articulated a familial refugee story. This sense of personal connection to "refugeeness" was repeatedly identified as a motivating factor for sponsors: "I think one of the reasons that I feel strongly about this is that my parents were refugees after the Second World War."⁶² Some respondents described a direct and intimate relationship with MCC, as they associated their current life in Canada with the support and aid provided by MCC when they themselves, or their family, resettled in Canada as refugees. When asked why they chose to sponsor through MCC, an older couple noted, "When we talk about our family

experience, it was MCC who was there, and they found sponsors for my parents and they found sponsors for [my wife] and family. The natural choice.”⁶³

While not all North American Mennonites reference a familial refugee past from the twentieth century, the Mennonite heritage and collective identity also draws from stories of sixteenth-century Anabaptists, who were persecuted for opposing the religious and political leaders and institutions of the day. The Anabaptist disposition is countercultural, even radical, outside the mainstream and inclined toward the margins. Mennonites often use this history to identify with the disadvantaged and powerless, as social and cultural capital—far more important than material capital in a Mennonite social field—is associated with (triumph over) oppression and suffering. This “posture” for the dispossessed and the outsider has shaped the particular Anabaptist/Mennonite interpretation of biblical teaching and theological explanations for MCC’s vision and mission of “serving with humility and in partnership to meet local needs with local solutions” and “to prevent violence and promote peace and justice.”⁶⁴

A Culture of Beliefs in Action/An Ethos of Sponsorship

A practical and collective response to human crisis or need is an obligation that grows out of religious and humanitarian beliefs and values that have shaped Mennonite cultures for over 500 years. For focus group participants who articulated a refugee past, sponsorship was clearly expressed as a means to strengthen their Mennonite identity by weaving this heritage with their current practice. Some also drew on classic formulations of Anabaptist/Mennonite theology to explain their motivation to sponsor: “Our congregation is very influenced by Anabaptist theology. Specifically, we recognize the call of the gospel to make a difference in the world and discipleship and service, so the thrust of our service is that we want to reach out to some of these people globally that are in stressed situations.”⁶⁵ Discipleship, central to Mennonite theology and culture, emerged as an important element for some sponsors who specifically described sponsorship through MCC as “an extension, a practical part of [Mennonite] faith”⁶⁶ and of “loving mercy and acting justly.”⁶⁷ One respondent from a congregation in southern Ontario with a long history of sponsorship noted that refugee sponsorship is a “Christian service,” and there “seems to be this understanding that within the call to discipleship we should be *doing* something, and we do this.”⁶⁸ Although all respondents had some affiliation with a Mennonite church or heritage, several explicitly articulated that their involvement in sponsorship was not tied to faith: “The fact that we can do it is why we did it. Not out of any obligation, out of any faith, or anything else. It was just that we had the means, and therefore we

could participate.”⁶⁹ For these sponsors, MCC’s “theological hands-off” stance made it possible to participate in “a hands-on, real thing—it’s not just talking about it.... This is real. I can contribute to making a real difference, a meaningful difference.”⁷⁰ For Mennonites in Canada, whether claiming religious affiliation or not, sponsorship through MCC gives expression to a past refugee experience, a current representation of triumph over hardship, and a sustained collective identity as people of peace. In turn, a unique MCC sponsorship ethos is reinforced.

A Community of Sponsoring Communities

MCC’s structure expresses an organizational commitment to “relationships with our local partners and churches”⁷¹ that is consistent with Anabaptist principles of community, mutual aid, and sharing of material and social resources. The church as a faith community provides a natural structure and culture for sponsorship. A prominent theme in focus group discussions was the mutually supportive and constitutive relationship—an institutional synergy—between MCC and affiliated churches. Congregations that have maintained a long-term engagement in private sponsorship are heavily reliant on MCC, its structure, reputation, and staff support. In turn, the stability of MCC’s refugee program is owed to the sustained engagement of individual congregations. The tight connection between Mennonite churches and MCC was articulated by a focus group member: “Our churches are all part of MCC, we are constituents of MCC—we see MCC as the extension of our local congregation that does the local and international relief and development work and MCC as an extension of the community and development work.”⁷²

In addition to the reputation and practical support of MCC, long-standing congregational structures, practices, and relationships offer the material, social, and symbolic resources necessary for refugee sponsorship. Local congregations are an established collective of people who provide financial and in-kind resources, form sponsorship groups, replace group members as necessary, generate additional supports and resources, connect with community networks, and have ready access to a physical space to hold events or meetings. Many churches have designated funds for refugee support in the form of mission budgets, benevolence funds, or even a designated budget line specifically for refugee resettlement needs. Further, the congregation provides a financial and social safety net, a pool of potential resources.

Furthermore, MCC’s extensive international development work and the involvement of North American Mennonite churches has cultivated institutional and interpersonal relationships that extend across place and time. MCC has programs in fifty-six countries and is involved in another ten countries, with 1,118 workers around the world,⁷³ and

depends on both local staff and a substantial contingent of North American Mennonite volunteers to implement its international programs. With its unique capacity to provide accessible and popular international programming that grows a community of returned alumni—known as “MCCers”—MCC’s international work is infused into local congregations through interpersonal relationships. The high number of refugees sponsored from specific countries (e.g., Colombia, Palestine) reflects MCC’s long-term and trusted relationships with international and local partners in those countries, including churches, governments, service organizations, and communities.

Peacebuilding

A centrepiece of Anabaptist/Mennonite theology and tradition is pacifism, or non-violent resistance. Similarly, MCC values initiatives that encourage “relationship-building as peacebuilding.”⁷⁴ MCC views sponsorship through this peace lens, and hopes for “transforming and everlasting” relationships,⁷⁵ particularly between people of different faiths and cultures. Writing as an employee of MCC, Stephanie Dyck states that MCC encourages sponsors to “move to deeper levels of engagement” with newcomers to encourage a “mutually transformative process of integration and community building.”⁷⁶ While much of the material on successful sponsorship of refugees emphasizes self-sufficiency and independence, MCC’s focus on mutually transformative relationships is somewhat unusual in the world of refugee sponsorship. For example, unlike many SAHS that select refugees to sponsor through named cases, MCC is committed to meeting the resettlement needs of any refugee, regardless of religion or culture.⁷⁷ This was a deliberate decision made after a review of the sponsorship program in 2008, when MCCC stipulated that at least 60 per cent of all cases were to be referred by UNHCR or the Canada Visa Office in order to prioritize those who had been identified as most in need. Further demonstrating this commitment, MCCC resettled approximately one-third of all refugees identified for resettlement by UNHCR in 2017.⁷⁸

MCC’s goal of relationships of mutual transformation appears in various organization documents and repeatedly came up in conversation with staff during the course of our research. Dyck asserts that sponsorship can promote “mutually transformative relationships.”⁷⁹ Although the term defies definition, it is clear that the ideal of transformative relationships as an objective of sponsorship emphasizes relationships over belief and goes beyond the utilitarian roles and expectations commonly associated with newcomer integration. Whereas MCCC may mark “successful” sponsorship with economic independence of the refugee newcomer family, a hope for long-term reciprocal relationships is an

additional and equally valued ideal, producing a split in the habitus in Mennonite sponsoring relationships.

MCC Refugee Sponsorship: An Arena of Contest and Struggle

From a relational and reflexive point of view, the dynamics of social exclusion and inclusion produced in the private sponsorship of refugees are directly tied to the nested social fields, their operating structures of capital, and associated positions and dispositions of the sponsor in relation to the Other. The conflicting structures of capital of the Mennonite/MCC and market-state social fields introduce complexities, tensions, contradictions, and possibilities for a range of positions and dispositions in the sponsoring relationship and practices that both promote and obstruct social inclusion.

The Divided Habitus of Mennonite Sponsorship

The identities and roles afforded refugee newcomers in the sponsorship relationship and beyond have recently been examined. For example, Kyriakides et al. draw on Said’s theory of Orientalism to argue that the refugee, as “non-Western other,” is constructed as “uncivilised, unruly, and lacking in cultural sophistication,”⁸⁰ thus rendering “our’ Western morality and civilization.”⁸¹ Alternatively, humanitarian views of the refugee subject emphasize the suffering and hardship experienced by “undifferentiated masses” of refugees and asylum seekers, framing the character of the refugee in a positive light, but without agency.⁸² Similarly, Kyriakides et al. focus attention on “representations of passivity and infantilization which must be negotiated as part of the resettlement experience.”⁸³ The refugee as deviant, ascribed low power and low value,⁸⁴ is easily turned to threat. In contrast, the refugee as passive victim is deemed a worthy recipient of aid and support.

In the context of the sponsorship relationship, the ascribed identities of the refugee newcomer have everything to do with the disposition, posture, and (imagined) identity taken up by the sponsor. A focus on the Other as the object of study and site of intervention constructs certain configurations of “them,” but more importantly, assembles an idealized “us.” The refugee as threat, which Winter and colleagues point out is common in social and news media, feeds a collective illusion of vulnerability, even victimization by the undefined Other.⁸⁵ In the sponsoring relationship, this duality is unlikely, as the undeserving refugee justifies avoidance of engagement, withholding of support, or even punishment and retaliation. In contrast, however, the constructed identities of humanitarian discourse fit nicely within the sponsorship relationship, as the “passive ‘them’” positions the sponsor as the “agentic ‘us.’”⁸⁶ The natural disposition of the sponsor in relation to the refugee newcomer in need

of a humanitarian response is one of “helper” or “protector,” which, as Kyriakides et al. imply, reinforces a good deal of social distance and a hierarchical order of things. The helper habitus is inclined toward a person-change approach to refugee newcomer integration.

These positions and dispositions—commanding helper and passive victim—seem natural, especially in the early days of settlement. The sponsoring relationship was reported by both sponsors and refugee newcomers to be primarily utilitarian for the first six to eight months, assisting newcomers with the basics of everyday life as outlined by MCCO, such as financial, health, housing, education, shopping, and transportation.⁸⁷

Humanitarianism also encourages sponsors to “put themselves in the shoes’ of people coping with difficult situations.”⁸⁸ This position and disposition, contrasting the helper habitus, brings the self into full view. Mennonite sponsors were particularly inclined toward this “alongside” position. One sponsor illustrated how the refugee history had been absorbed into his own identity as a Mennonite and how the story of “the refugee” had become his own story: “Many of us came from refugee families ourselves, as Russian Mennonites, and that story resonates especially strongly with me. My parents were both victims of violence and [witnesses to] murder in Russia and then came here as refugees, and their story became my story.”⁸⁹ Similarly, one respondent felt connected to the past work of MCC and believed he was continuing a tradition of helping others: “[MCC] is still there, and I can tell this Muslim family, ‘The same organization that helped my ancestors come to Canada, now helps you, and it has been around a long time.’”⁹⁰ For these individuals, sponsorship offers a means to engage in the work of MCC to give back to an organization from which they themselves, or their ancestors, had personally benefited. Even though still rooted in humanitarianism, this sponsor disposition is distinct from both the masterful “helper” and the compassionate “protector,” as the identification of the self with the Other collapses social distance. The pretence of sameness suggests an ambivalent disposition and position in relation to the refugee newcomer, because only the sponsor is afforded the capacity to take on and discard “refugeeness” and the associated symbolic power at will.

Sponsoring relationships evolve, often moving from more immediate and practical concerns to emotional and social supports. Imposing the helper disposition into more personal aspects of life, some sponsors aspired to direct the decisions of newcomers, “to make them good, Canadian citizens.”⁹¹ Ideas of citizenship were associated with learning English, finding employment, and becoming “contributing members of Canadian society.”⁹²

Both sponsors and former refugee newcomers related encountering uncertainty, disappointment, and frustration. Revealing some coherence with the dominant market-state social field, sponsors’ efforts toward person-change integration—defined for and practised to the refugee newcomer⁹³—sometimes backfired. For example, sponsors described using their time and social resources to find potential employment options for newcomers, efforts that were ignored or rejected. One respondent lamented, “Part of this makes me angry, like they’re milking the system—this bothers me.... We’re trying to be helpful and they’re not really willing to do their end of the bargain.”⁹⁴ Shifting the locus of control, the newcomers who reported having a sustained job and were satisfied in their line of work had ultimately settled on employment that they had sought and secured on their own accord. For many newcomers, the “survival jobs” available to them could not replace the livelihoods they left behind. Nicolas commented that his occupational background was “useless” in Canada and explained how he was struggling with finances: “I can’t stop. There are no savings, no safety net.” As commonly reported in previous research, our data indicate that newcomers continue to encounter barriers to dignified employment, even years after resettlement.

The complicated nature of sponsorship relationships was defined by one sponsor as a “tension between wanting to help and wanting to not help too much.”⁹⁵ Most sponsors asserted that newcomers should become independent, and many noted certain times when they felt newcomers should “make their own way in life.”⁹⁶ Revealing an ambivalent disposition, or divided habitus, many sponsors expressed a desire or expectation for their relationships with the refugee newcomer to extend beyond the sponsorship year, noting that “successful [sponsorships] are the ones where there have been positive relationships established and maintained.”⁹⁷ In some instances, the objective of “independence” was overshadowed by the desire to maintain close relationships. For example, sponsors recognized their involvement might do newcomers a “disservice”⁹⁸ and have direct impact on their independence. To enable newcomers to learn and make decisions themselves required sponsors to back off: “I think for some committees, they [refugees] almost become like children and so they’re very happy when the sponsorship groups make decisions for them, [but] for me, the goal was independence—to make myself redundant as quickly as possible.”⁹⁹ Extending the helper-helped dispositions well beyond the sponsoring year, sponsors reflected the need to strategically position themselves in the relationship so they do not abandon the newcomer, but also do not create new relationships of dependence. This framing largely assumes that sponsors are the ones who are both providing

independence and standing in the way of it—that they alone bear this responsibility.

Encouraging an alternative sponsor position and disposition, a valuable role identified by former refugee newcomers was that of simply listening—as Tiffany said, to “listen to the needs of the person they’re taking care of” and “be patient,” because newcomers “know things” but may find it difficult to express themselves, or as Ayah said, “to talk to us, to feel comfortable.” Although sponsors readily fulfilled their utilitarian responsibilities, few recognized this more passive role and disposition, to simply visit with the family and to learn “what’s important to them.... We think that we know what is the best way to do things, but sometimes you really have to listen to them and let them do what they think they have to do.”¹⁰⁰

Staying with the helper-helped dyad, yet expressing a shift in the sponsor disposition, it was noted that a certain amount of advocacy is necessary for the utilitarian responsibilities of sponsors, such as facilitating access to medical and education systems. The objective of advocacy was often identified as negotiating adjustment in the *interaction* between the individual and institution rather than individual-level change, thus bringing the social context into view. Adopting a reflexive point of view and extending the line of vision even further to include the self in social relations, sponsors also described recognizing and using their personal privilege and influence to challenge the institution itself. Indeed, sponsors noted advocating for change within their own congregations and larger communities in order to shift the narrative on refugee issues and dispel myths that fed xenophobia: “People have this notion that refugees are given tons and tons of money, more than anybody else.... When I see something like that and I say, ‘This isn’t true, check your facts—don’t go spreading false rumours about what’s happening.... You gotta give your head a shake and speak up.’”¹⁰¹ This recognition of relative privilege—not by virtue of personal merit but due to uneven social relations in Canadian institutions and communities—shifts the emphasis from person change to system change.

As responsibilities officially end come “month 13,” there is a need to redefine and reshape the sponsorship relationship. The majority of sponsors and newcomers described their ongoing relationships in familial terms, and in some respects, the use of familial words legitimizes the continuation of the sponsorship relationship. With an average age of sixty-five among the sample’s sponsors, many noted that they considered themselves parents to many of the newcomers. Nearly all newcomers at some point referred to sponsorship members in relation to family. Hassan commented, “The sponsorship group is my family. All of them, because they help me to understand the future.” Omar explained, “Until today, we

still communicate and we still get together every once in a while, and we just became a small family. Or, I should say, we added to their big family.” Omar’s self-correction highlights contradictory meanings of these familial relationships, as sponsors incorporate new members into their existing families and lives, while newcomers are forced to begin their lives in Canada from experiences of loss. As Dhalia said, “They were our family, we had nobody here.”

MCC encourages “mutually transformative” relationships that continue beyond sponsorship, facilitating the shift “from sponsorship to [interpersonal-change] integration.”¹⁰² Navigating this transition from an uneven relationship bound within the duties of one year to that of “mutual transformation” post-sponsorship, is paradoxical, introducing tensions and conflicts—and possibilities—in practice. The divided habitus, an expression of congruence to multiple positions and the divided self, allows for paradox to be contained dividing practices in the market-state field to be subverted.¹⁰³ The cleft habitus—“to step into one’s authority while remaining ever mindful of its limits and offences”¹⁰⁴—opens the possibility to look beyond person-change integration, to interpersonal change, place change, and perhaps even system change.

Institutional Tensions, Contradictions, and Possibilities

Distinctions between MCC’s international and domestic programs (especially the refugee sponsorship program), particularly vis-à-vis the ideal of mutually transformative relationships in practice, highlight tensions and contradictions in the Mennonite/MCC social field. Specifically, MCC’s operating principles and institutional theory of change, articulated in a brief internal document, “encapsulate MCC’s conviction that lasting change often requires long-term commitment and happens when all members of a community connect across lines of difference to actively participate in shaping and implementing visions for just social, environmental, and economic structures.”¹⁰⁵ Following the example of Jesus, and working in partnership with local organizations and communities, “unjust systems that oppress and exclude” are transformed to “just economic relationships,” “conflict” into “relief and development work,” and “structures of injustice and their legacies” to “a just peace.”¹⁰⁶

In its more prominent international relief and development work, MCC does not enter into agreements with foreign governments as is required for the refugee sponsorship program in Canada. As a result, MCC is freer in its overseas work to contest governments, policies, and local practices, and “to engage in community-based efforts and public policy advocacy at local, national, and international levels that build durable peace.”¹⁰⁷ Unlike the international contexts in which MCC engages, little emphasis is placed on transformation of

unjust social relations in Canada, suggesting an institutional bifurcation between the need for transformation of communities, institutions, and economic systems at home and abroad. Further, despite MCC's focus on "the radical transformation of unjust systems" in its international programs, MCC staff and sponsors rarely identify or address refugee newcomer experiences of social exclusion in Canada. A personal and institutional reluctance to recognize uneven power relationships in our own backyard is revealed. Ironically, reflexivity—to see the self and the Other in social and historical relations of power—is resisted in refugee sponsorship. Yet the shared principles of relationship-building and practical engagement are given expression and reinforced through MCCC's refugee sponsorship program.

Conclusions

We return to our guiding research objective: to examine the ways in which MCCC's private sponsorship program invigorates or frustrates dynamics of social inclusion. The settlement experiences articulated by former refugee newcomers in our study expose stubborn dynamics of social exclusion, mingled with genuine experiences of social inclusion. This is the paradox—the simultaneous gain and loss—of forced migration and settlement. Former refugee newcomers expressed their appreciation for the hands-on, practical support they received from sponsors: Nicolas commented, "People who arrive with the help of the Mennonite [church] or with churches with programs like that arrive with a huge blessing. It's a big help." Other newcomers recalled being pleasantly surprised by how they were received. Fatimah stated, "I did not expect such treatment. I had never seen that kind of kindness and hospitality before."

However, the everyday lives of refugee newcomers continue into "month 13" and beyond, long after the contrived relationships of sponsorship end. Even the sustained relationships of some sponsorships could not shield the ways in which communities and institutions function to keep people marginalized. The persisting and intersecting dynamics of social exclusion experienced by former refugee newcomers included economic exclusion, or loss of livelihood and meaningful work that is commensurate with acquired education and skills; spatial exclusion, or isolation and loneliness compounded by segregation in one neighbourhood, apartment building, or high school; socio-political exclusion, or barriers to accessing informal and formal social supports, such as health care, education, even friends beyond the sponsorship group; and subjective exclusion, or discounted classification, to find oneself "boxed up," defined by and for others as *only* refugees, as *only* vulnerable, as *only* needy.¹⁰⁸ The systematic devaluation of education, knowledge, and expertise for newcomers—even when they are no longer newcomers—in

Canada's labour market and local communities is well documented. Subjective exclusion functions over time. This is the dispossession of symbolic capital, and it works to keep people in disadvantaged positions.

The Mennonite/MCC social field and structure of capital generates tensions and contradictions. Yet this uncommon sense resists the common sense individualized perspective that limits integration to person change, thus presenting possibilities for seeing, understanding, and challenging processes and outcomes of social exclusion. The invisible yet idealized subject and "centre" of person-change integration is brought into view from a position and disposition outside. Yet in the context of the PSR Program in Canada, identification with the Other without a reflexive view of the self in social relations of power is disingenuous and unstable. Furthermore, well-meaning efforts to change or support the excluded individuals, while overlooking the processes that *make* them excluded, ultimately serve to reinforce long-standing social and economic divides. Social inclusion requires us to reverse our gaze—to examine and confront the assumptions we hold and everyday practices in which we engage that prop up our undeserved places and identities of privilege.

NOTES

- 1 Good Gingrich and Enns have no current or past formal relationship with MCC Canada or MCC Ontario. Both authors are associated with the Mennonite community and culture by ethnicity, with differing relationships with the church. We would like to thank Kerry Fast for her editing and consulting assistance. Her expertise in developmental editing and her past involvement in MCCC's refugee program helped shape this article.
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- 4 Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, "The Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program."
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- 6 Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, "Responsibilities of Sponsorship Groups & Availability of IRCC-Funded Resettlement and Settlement Services," Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), May 2017, <http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/ircc-resources/>

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 - 8 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *RSTP Handbook*.
 - 9 See Thea Enns, Luann Good Gingrich, and Kaylee Perez, "Religious Heritage, Institutionalized Ethos, and Synergies: Mennonite Central Committee and Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program" (paper presented at "Private Refugee Sponsorship: Concepts, Cases and Consequences," Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, October 18–19, 2019).
 - 10 The research reported in this article is part of a larger project that aims to measure processes and outcomes of social exclusion and inclusion for immigrant and refugee newcomers in Canada. The authors gratefully acknowledge the funding support of the Social Sciences and Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada through the Insight Grant entitled "Advancing Social Inclusion in Canada's Diverse Communities: Neighbourhood, Regional, and National Comparisons," PI Luann Good Gingrich.
 - 11 Geoffrey Cameron and Shauna Labman, "Private Refugee Sponsorship: An Evolving Framework for Refugee Resettlement" (paper presented at "Private Refugee Sponsorship: Concepts, Cases and Consequences," Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, October 18–19, 2019)
 - 12 Government of Canada, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: Sponsorship Agreement Holders," 15 January 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/agreement-holders/holders-list.html>.
 - 13 Judith Kumin, *Welcoming Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union*, Migration Policy Institute Europe (December 2015).
 - 14 Cameron and Labman, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program," 10.
 - 15 See Jennifer Hyndman, William Payne, and Shauna Jimenez, "Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada," *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017): 56–9; Shauna Labman, "Private Sponsorship: Complementary or Conflicting Interests?" *Refuge* 32, no. 2 (2016): 67–80; Michael Lanphier, "Sponsorship: Organizational, Sponsor, and Refugee Perspectives," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 4, no. 2 (2003): 237–56; Barbara Treviranus and Michael Casola, "Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A Practitioner's Perspective of Its Past and Future," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 4, no. 2 (2003): 177–202.
 - 16 See Michael J. Molloy, Peter Duschinsky, Kurt F. Jensen, and Robert J. Shalka, *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees, 1975–1980* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017); "The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Launch of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program: Special Issue," *Refuge* 32, no. 2 (2016).
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 - 18 Michaela Hynie, "Canada's Syrian Refugee Program, Intergroup Relationships and Identities," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 50, no. 2 (2018): 1–12.
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 - 21 Christine McKinlay, "Welcoming the Stranger: The Canadian Church and the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program" (MA thesis, Ryerson University, 2008).
 - 22 See Stephanie Phetsamay Stobbe, "Cross-cultural Experiences of Laotian Refugees and Mennonite Sponsors in British Columbia and Manitoba," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 24 (2006): 111–28; Daphne N. Winland, "Christianity and Community: Conversion and Adaptation among Hmong Refugee Women," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 19, no. 1 (1994): 21–45.
 - 23 A variety of terms have been adopted to reference the target outcome of settlement policies and programs for immigrants and refugees, such as *acculturation*, *adaptation*, *assimilation*, *integration*, and *inclusion*. For an overview of integration-related terms, definitions, and debates, see Stephen Castles, Maja Korac, Ellie Vasta, and Steven Vertovec, "Integration: Mapping the Field" (Oxford: University of Oxford, Centre for Migration and Policy Research and Refugee Studies Centre, 2002); Jennifer Hyndman, "Research Summary on Resettled Refugee Integration in Canada" (Toronto: York University, Centre for Refugee Studies, 2011).
 - 24 Hynie, for example, integrates the subjective considerations of belonging and security commonly associated with inclusion into her "holistic integration model (HIM)" to strengthen emphasis on the social context and "the nature of the relationships between refugees and other members of their communities" as well as "general community attitudes and beliefs about refugees." See Michaela Hynie, "Refugee Integration: Research and Policy," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 24, no. 3 (2018): 265–6, 267.
 - 25 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Resettlement Services for Government-Assisted Refugees," last

- updated 21 January 2016, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2016/01/resettlement-and-settlement-services-for-government-assisted-refugees.html>
- 26 See Luann Good Gingrich, *Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 52–5.
- 27 Hynie, “Canada’s Syrian Refugee Program,” 267. The idea of “two-way integration” has been taken up by governments in the Global North, including Canada, Australia, and across the EU.
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- 33 See, for example, Stephanie Dyck, “Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada: An Opportunity for Mutual Transformation,” *Intersections: Challenges and Opportunities in Refugee Resettlement* 5, no. 4 (2017): 13–14.
- 34 Good Gingrich proposes that social exclusion is, essentially, *conflict* that is manifested in processes and outcomes of economic, spatial, socio-political, and subjective divides. See Good Gingrich, *Out of Place*.
- 35 John Paul Lederach, “The Origins and Evolution of Infrastructures for Peace: A Personal Reflection,” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7, no. 3 (2012): 8–13.
- 36 For a useful discussion of conflict transformation, see John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995); John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
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- 39 Pierre Bourdieu et al., *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, trans. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 512.
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- 41 Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 101.
- 42 See Pierre Bourdieu, “Principles of an Economic Anthropology,” in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 85.
- 43 Good Gingrich, *Out of Place*, 219.
- 44 Pierre Bourdieu, *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 112.
- 45 In October 1920 representatives from Mennonite churches in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta met to organize a Canadian Central Committee similar to the Mennonite Central Committee just organized in the United States. The work of providing shelter and support for thousands of Mennonite refugees “until they were financially viable” prompted the formation of multiple Mennonite organizations, including the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in 1922, the Mennonite Land Settlement Board in 1924, the Central Mennonite Immigration Committee (made up of Mennonite newcomers in Canada), and the Mennonite Central Relief Committee in western Canada. Esther Epp-Tiessen notes that “by the end of 1963, a wide representation of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations had agreed to the transformation of their existing inter-Mennonite organizations into one new national entity known as Mennonite Central Committee Canada, with provincial counterparts.” See Esther Epp-Tiessen, *Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History* (Winnipeg: CMU, 2013), 71; Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, MB: Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962).
- 46 William Janzen, “The 1979 MCC Canada Master Agreement for the Sponsorship of Refugees in Historical Perspective,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 24 (2011): 211–22.
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- 48 Janzen, “1979 MCC Canada Master Agreement,” 212.
- 49 For MCC’s complete vision and mission statement, see MCC, “Vision and Mission,” 2019, <https://mcccanada.ca/learn/about/mission>.

- 50 One interview with a former refugee newcomer/family was conducted in each of the six main focus group regions. Individuals and families were chosen on the basis of the overall diversity of the sample, considering factors such as family makeup, country of origin, and time of arrival. Seven separate interviews were conducted, comprising seventeen participants.
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- 52 For the sake of brevity, and to highlight the identities of sponsorship relationships, former refugee newcomers or previously sponsored refugees are often identified as simply "refugees" or "newcomers." We recognize the symbolic violence of limiting the identity of sponsored individuals to refugees or newcomers, even years after resettlement.
- 53 For more on epistemic reflexivity, see Good Gingrich, *Out of Place*.
- 54 Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3.
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- 56 Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 4.
- 57 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Responsibilities of Sponsorship Groups & Availability of IRCC-Funded Resettlement and Settlement Services," <http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Responsibilities-of-Sponsorship-Groups-Availability-of-IRCC-Resettlemen....pdf>.
- 58 Liisa H. Malkki, *The Need to Help: The Domestic Arts of International Humanitarianism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
- 59 Enns, Good Gingrich, and Perez, "Religious Heritage."
- 60 In an interview with Aksu Akçaoğlu, Loïc Wacquant clarifies Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social field and symbolic power. See Loïc Wacquant and Aksu Akçaoğlu, "Practice and Symbolic Power in Bourdieu: The View from Berkeley," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 17, no. 1 (2017): 45.
- 61 Epp-Tiessen, *Mennonite Central Committee*, 150.
- 62 Sponsor, focus group 4.
- 63 Sponsor, focus group 2.
- 64 MCC, "Vision and Mission."
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- 67 Sponsor, focus group 3a.
- 68 Sponsor, focus group 5a.
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- 70 Sponsor, focus group 6.
- 71 MCC, "About MCC," 2019, <https://mcccanada.ca/learn/about>.
- 72 Sponsor, focus group 2.
- 73 MCC, "Where We Work," 2019, <https://mcccanada.ca/learn/where>.
- 74 Epp-Tiessen, *Mennonite Central Committee*, 235.
- 75 MCC, "Refugee Response," 2019, <https://mcccanada.ca/learn/what/refugees/sponsorship>.
- 76 Dyck, "Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada," 14.
- 77 Treviranus and Casasola, "Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program," 195.
- 78 Rachel Bergen, "MCC Resettles One-Third of Canada's BVOR Refugees," MCC, 2018, <https://mcccanada.ca/stories/mcc-resettles-one-third-canadas-bvor-refugees>.
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(Mis)Trusted Contact: Resettlement Knowledge Assets and the Third Space of Refugee Reception

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Abstract

Drawing on interviews with 204 participants in two studies of privately sponsored refugee resettlement in Ontario, Canada, we explore the resettlement effects of pre-arrival contact on the interactional dynamics between private sponsors and privately sponsored Syrian refugees. Those who had regular pre-arrival contact via digital applications such as Facebook, Skype, and Whatsapp reported more positive, “successful” resettlement experiences than those who had not. This pre-arrival interactive dynamic has theoretical/conceptual implications beyond an understanding of the benefits of “information exchange.” Pre-arrival sponsor-sponsored interaction is not bound by the contexts of displacement or resettlement, but constitutes a “third space” of reception, co-created through trusted contact. We develop the concept of “resettlement knowledge assets” and report on how these assets emerge through pre-arrival trust building, modify the resettlement expectations of both sponsors and sponsored, and reduce resettlement uncertainty.

Résumé

À partir d’entrevues avec 204 participants à deux études sur la réinstallation de réfugiés parrainée de façon privée en Ontario, Canada, nous explorons les effets sur la réinstallation que les contacts avant l’arrivée ont sur la dynamique interactionnelle entre les parrains privés et les réfugiés parrainés de façon privée. Ceux qui ont entretenu des contacts réguliers avant l’arrivée à travers des applications digitales telles que Facebook, Skype et Whatsapp ont rapporté des expériences de réinstallation plus positives et réussies que ceux qui n’en ont pas eu. Cette dynamique interactive avant l’arrivée a des implications théoriques et conceptuelles au-delà d’une compréhension des bénéfices de l’échange d’information. L’interaction avant l’arrivée entre les parrains et les parrainés n’est pas limitée aux contextes de déplacement et de réinstallation, mais constitue un espace tiers de réception, co-créé à travers un rapport de confiance. Nous développons le concept d’atouts de connaissance liées à la réinstallation et rapportons comment ces atouts émergent à travers le

développement d'un rapport de confiance avant l'arrivée, modifient les attentes liées à la réinstallation des parrains et des parrainés, et réduisent l'incertitude de la réinstallation.

Introduction

This article reports on findings from two studies that examined the inclusion and exclusion of privately sponsored Syrian refugees in Ontario, Canada. In late 2016 and early 2017, we carried out a qualitative study of the Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program in the rural reception context of Northumberland County. We interviewed 109 participants from private sponsor groups, public agencies, and privately sponsored Syrian refugees during their first twelve months of resettlement. Our follow-up urban comparative study in late 2017 and early 2018 included ninety-five participants from private sponsor groups and privately sponsored Syrian refugees in the Greater Toronto Area, some of whom had completed their twelve months of sponsored resettlement. An unexpected finding emerged from the first study: those who had engaged in regular pre-arrival contact via digital applications such as Facebook, Skype, and Whatsapp reported more positive, “successful” resettlement experiences than those who had not. Our follow-up comparative study confirmed our original findings.

In this article we report on, and offer an analysis of, the findings from both studies. In analyzing the effects of pre-arrival, digitally supported, sponsor-sponsored contact on refugees’ subjective experiences of resettlement success, we turned to Mollering’s tripartite theory of trust-building, Horst and Grabska’s work on uncertainty and refugeeness, and Sharratt and Usoro’s observations on the role of trust in distinguishing between information and knowledge. Their work helped us to develop two concepts: the “digital third space of refugee reception” and “resettlement knowledge assets.” We demonstrate that when pre-arrival, sponsor-sponsored exchanges occur in co-created, digital “third spaces of reception,” trust can flourish and information can become “resettlement knowledge assets” that modify the resettlement expectations of both sponsors and sponsored, reduce resettlement uncertainty, and enhance subjective experiences of resettlement success.

Trust, Refuge, and Communication

The study of trust is a key area of social scientific enquiry.¹ Trust generally exhibits situational characteristics in which two or more parties engage in a mutually accepted relationship where the future outcomes of their transactions are unknown. The uncertainty of future outcomes connotes the degree of risk associated with the condition of reliance between the parties involved. As a potential influence on,

and outcome of, individual interaction, social group engagement, and as a generalized state of a given society, trust is an asset.

National citizens who place greater trust in one another have more efficient public institutions and experience higher rates of economic growth.² Trust is involved in starting a business and performing voluntary work.³ Trusting individuals are healthier and happier.⁴ Ljunije has demonstrated that the “inherited trust” of second-generation immigrants is positively correlated with economic and educational success, significant even after controlling for additional first-generation influences such as income per capita and institutions.⁵ Trust has profound implications for understanding forced migration and is fundamental to the experiences of refugees.⁶ The dissolution and restoration of trust lies at the core of conflict-induced displacement.⁷ While a “trust deficit” cannot be generalized to all refugees, a shortage of social trust is embedded in the experience of conflict-induced displacement.⁸

Recent work draws attention to the trust involved in refugee institution interactions;⁹ the relationship between the sociocultural context of countries of origin and the degree of social trust in exile;¹⁰ the role of displacement/conflict events in establishing fear and trust in exile;¹¹ and the effect of conflict-induced trauma on refugees’ social trust, sense of belonging, and community integration in exile.¹² Hynes’s study of asylum seekers in England notes that refugees “mistrust and are mistrusted at many levels in both industrialized and developing countries,” and that once lost, trust is difficult to restore.¹³ Of the four forms of trust—social, political, institutional and restorative—that Hynes identifies, restorative trust—“the process by which an individual regains social, political, or institutional trust”—is particularly difficult to achieve.¹⁴ There are important considerations related to trust with respect to differences between refugees and migrants and their descendants. In both cases, third-country resettlement often entails entry into host cultures of mistrust.¹⁵ But, especially in the case of refugees who flee conflict, mistrust is often an appropriate response that can enhance the feeling of security.¹⁶

While there is an informative body of academic research on private sponsorship,¹⁷ there is a significant lack of in-depth work on how the complexity of sponsor-sponsored interaction—especially with regard to restorative trust—might positively or negatively affect resettlement. The Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP) provides a unique opportunity to investigate the dynamic of trust/mistrust in refugee-host relations. PSRP formalizes a state-sanctioned “private” relationship between “sponsors” and “sponsored” who interact regularly during the first twelve months of resettlement. Sponsor group “hosts” are expected to help

sponsored “refugees” attain self-sufficiency within one year of sponsorship. Both refugee and host are placed in direct, formalized, interactive relationships. In the refugee-host dynamic of PSRP-initiated resettlement, citizen hosts have not been party to the initial trust-eroding conflict that refugees experience. The refugee-host relationship is not reconciliatory in the strict definition adhered to by scholars of conflict-resolution. Nevertheless, it is a relationship in which one party (arguably) has greater power than the other. Given that trust entails cooperation,¹⁸ the power dynamic occasioned by the charitable responses of Canadians with full citizenship rights towards non-citizen refugees has the potential to undermine or even erode restorative trust. The interactive sponsor-sponsor relationship therefore offers a micro-level lens into the dynamic of trust-building in refugee-host relations.

Mollering’s tripartite theory of trust-building, including interpretation, expectation, and suspension, is instructive.¹⁹ Expectation is derived from a combination of interpretation and the suspension of the unknowable: “Bracketing the unknowable” makes “interpretative knowledge momentarily knowable.”²⁰ A trust-control duality is important in drawing out how the contingency of future outcomes, which can lead to a state of dependency between unequal actors, is countered by trust.²¹ Mollering’s theory resonates with sponsor-sponsored pre-arrival communication in three ways. First, “uncertainty” is a basic feature of displacement and exile. As Horst and Grabska note, “Uncertainty, in its meaning of imperfect knowledge and the unpredictability of the future, is central to studies that theorize conflict-induced displacement, transit, and refugeeness.”²² Uncertainty related to the unknowable outcome of future events conveys precarity, but in relation to resettlement it also suggests the impossibility of knowing where one will end up. What are the socio-cultural conditions, economic opportunities, and political climate of reception? What characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes do sponsors display? Pre-arrival communication has the potential to reduce or even suspend uncertainty by making the conditions of resettlement knowable in advance of arrival.

Second, in most instances, digital communications via Facebook, Skype, and Whatsapp facilitate pre-arrival contact and provide the pre-arrival reception context of many sponsor-sponsored interactions. A useful cue can be taken from knowledge management scholars who conceptualize information and communication technologies (ICT) as collaborative tools that underpin online communities. Trust figures prominently in the literature on ICT communities, especially regarding the important difference between information and knowledge.²³ Sharratt and Usoro explain: “Both information and knowledge are grounded on data. The two can be differentiated if we consider interpretation and meaning. Information by definition is informative and, therefore, tells

us something. It is data from which we can derive meaning. Knowledge is directly related to understanding and is gained through the interpretation of information. Knowledge enables us to interpret information, i.e., derive meaning from data. The interpretation of meaning is framed by the perceiver’s knowledge. So what one person perceives as information can equate to meaningless data to another.”²⁴

In the co-created pre-arrival digital space, resettlement information is interpreted and made meaningful by both hosts and sponsored. Information becomes knowledge when it is deemed of direct relevance to the parties engaged in communicative exchange. Resettlement information is readily available, but any given piece of information may have little connection to the realities of resettlement. Consider the 2015 and 2016 media broadcasts of Prime Minister Trudeau welcoming refugees at Toronto’s Pearson Airport, with gifts of winter clothing.²⁵ This is an example of resettlement information, accessed and then interpreted by viewers. But it is not resettlement knowledge derived from the mutual recognition of needs exchanged between sponsors and sponsored. By contrast, pre-arrival sponsor-sponsored exchanges conducted via social media have the potential to translate resettlement information into resettlement knowledge assets, reducing uncertainty by bridging the gap between interpretation and expectation, and the actual conditions encountered in the resettlement context. Anyone expecting Justin Trudeau to greet them at Pearson Airport is likely to be disappointed.

Third, pre-arrival communication conducted in a co-created digital space potentially breaks through the condition of refugeeness. As we have demonstrated elsewhere,²⁶ paternalistic approaches by sponsors are often a consequence of a latent orientalism—“the sponsored” are defined as objects to be rescued—laying the groundwork for future conflict between sponsors and sponsored. In some cases, the sponsor-sponsored relationship breaks down completely. As Malkki notes, the “refugee” label often connotes the absence of sociocultural history.²⁷ Processes and practices of reception and resettlement can homogenize persons whose individual hopes, fears, aspirations, and resignations are shaped through different ethnic, cultural, religious, class, gender, sexuality, and familial affiliations. Pre-conflict identities are not erased by the experience of war, persecution, and displacement; they are integral to how such experiences are negotiated, contested, accepted, and lived every day.²⁸ Nor are experiences of third-country resettlement automatically determined by the definitional forces of host-reception.²⁹

We have already written about how sponsored persons aspire to move beyond “refugeeness,” to confirm their eligibility to exist and authority to act in pursuit of a life beyond refuge.³⁰ But in analyzing the pre-arrival context delimited by “refugee-host” interaction we must go beyond what is

permitted by identity-based approaches to resettlement. In social identity approaches to trust, scholars focus on group-based stereotypes or in-group favouring behaviours based on salient group memberships.³¹ Trusted interactions with strangers, or out-group members, are generally thought to be weaker. However, in the case of the conflict-induced dispersal referred to as “the Syrian refugee crisis,” a population of gendered and classed, rural-urban, Sunni and Shia Muslims, Assyrian Christians, Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Druze, Kurds, Turkmen, atheists and secularists, often pitted against each other, do not reformulate as a socio-culturally constituted “Syrian refugee group” on resettlement.

A limitation arises if a single group identity is assumed for all Syrian refugees and another is assumed for all hosts. Just as there is no single refugee voice or experience but voices and experiences of refugees, there is no single host voice or experience.³² Consequently, communication-based trusted contact does not fit neatly with acculturation, cross-cultural adaptation, or coordinated management of meaning approaches,³³ where trust is assumed to be a condition of interacting socio-culturally constituted in-groups versus out-groups. While socio-cultural factors must be considered in any analysis sensitive to the condition of refugeeness, they cannot be the starting point for understanding how trusted relationships emerge between those defined as refugees and those defined as hosts.

In this article we demonstrate that, through digitally mediated, pre-arrival, trusted exchanges in co-created “third spaces of refugee resettlement,” sponsors and sponsored transform resettlement information into “resettlement knowledge assets.” These interactions not only facilitate the choice-centred, pre-settlement sharing of information, but also build trust between sponsored and sponsors and enhance the subjective experience (and reporting) of resettlement success.

Data and Methods

The data for this article are drawn from two studies on the PSRP. The first study examined the multi-perspectival nature of “resettlement success” in the rural reception context of Northumberland County, Ontario. Partnering with the Office of the Federal Member of Parliament and of the Director of Northumberland’s Department of Economic Development, Land Use Planning and Tourism to facilitate introductions to the local sponsorship community, we interviewed 109 participants between December 2016 and March 2017. The sample included thirteen one-to-one interviews with representatives from public sector agencies; thirteen focus group interviews with private sponsor groups ($N = 47$ individuals); and in-depth interviews with forty-nine private sponsored refugees during their first twelve months of resettlement.

Our data collection and analysis followed a grounded theory approach, with the research team comparing data,

refining concepts, and discussing theoretical implications throughout the study. A grounded theory approach—involving analytic inductive, deductive, and abductive modes of reasoning about empirical instances, cases, and the connections thereof (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Timmermans and Tavory 2012)—is well suited for not only discovering novel social processes and patterns, but also—when and where the emerging data fit—integrating, extending, and revising existing theory and research. While the orientalism thesis and broader forced migration literature served as an analytical reference point in approaching the research setting, the analytical focus of the data collection and analysis was on the under-studied and under-theorized phenomenon of “resettlement success”; specifically, we focused on when and how sponsors and sponsored tended to experience resettlement in positive terms. A significant finding of the first study was that “resettlement success,” as defined by the participants, was often tied to the quality of sponsor-sponsored pre-arrival contact.

In the second study, we pursued this analytical lead in a more focused and detailed way, identifying specific instances, types, processes, and patterns of pre-arrival contact in urban resettlement. We partnered with two Ontario-based NGOs—the Al-Qazzaz Foundation for Education and Development and the Syrian Canadian Foundation—to facilitate interviews with sponsors and sponsored refugees in the Greater Toronto Area. Between January and March 2018 we interviewed ninety-five participants from private sponsor groups ($N = 45$) and privately sponsored Syrian refugees ($N = 50$). Drawing on the insights of the first study and referencing the trust, refuge, and communication literatures, our data collection and analysis followed a semi-structured, in-depth interview approach, focusing on sponsor-sponsored, pre-arrival contact experiences and perspectives.

All private sponsor group and public agency interviews were conducted in English. All refugee interviews were conducted in Arabic. Consent forms and research descriptions were provided in both Arabic and English as appropriate. All interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed. All names used in this article are pseudonyms.

In what follows, we draw on the private sponsor group and refugee data from both studies to illustrate how digitally supported, pre-arrival contact between sponsor and sponsored contributed to and enhanced refugees’ resettlement experiences. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings.

The Pre-Arrival Reception Context

“We love this city and we do not want to go away from our sponsors, as we consider them like family.”

“The sponsor does not know our needs. I did not expect that my sponsorship program would be so bad. If I knew that in advance, I would have preferred to stay in Lebanon. I will not advise anyone to come here.”

These contrasting responses from two privately sponsored refugees—the first from someone who had experienced pre-arrival digitally mediated contact with sponsors, the second from someone who did not—capture the polarity that emerged in our two studies. Both respondents quoted above were resettled in the same geographical area in Ontario. Both experienced and interpreted successful resettlement in ways that link their resettlement outcomes to their relationships and experiences with sponsors. In both cases, an understanding of what constituted their resettlement “needs” was underpinned by the level of interpersonal trust that had developed between them and their sponsors, and by the extent to which their expectations were congruent with those of their sponsors. We found examples of the same polarized outcomes in both studies, confirming that the congruence of sponsored-sponsor expectations was affected by the *quality of trust obtained and the type of resettlement knowledge developed in advance of arrival*. Elsewhere we more fully explore the nature and dynamic of sponsor-sponsored interpersonal trust after arrival.³⁴ Here we focus on the role of “third space interactions” in the dynamics of pre-arrival (mis)trust building, on the role played by pre-settlement digital contact in the acquisition of resettlement knowledge assets, and on subsequent reporting about resettlement success (or lack of success).

Resettlement (Mis)information

The majority of refugees in both studies had been exposed to four sources of information about Canadian resettlement: (1) media representations of resettlement, (2) online resettlement “facts,” which sometimes overlapped with (3) diasporic resettlement rumour, and (4) Canadian government pre-arrival orientation sessions. Those who had not experienced significant pre-arrival contact with their sponsors arrived with resettlement expectations (as informed by these four sources of information) that often went unmet after arrival. This heightened rather than reduced resettlement uncertainty and negatively affected the already precarious experience of resettlement.

One interviewee who had no contact with his sponsors prior to arriving in Canada illustrated how his resettlement expectations were influenced by global media representations:

When we came to Canada, we were supposed to live a life of leisure until we get the citizenship, so we feel in harmony with the society.

It was supposed that the prime minister would receive us at the airport, or that he would come to visit the refugees to assure himself of their condition. No one from the government visits us and we cannot communicate with them.

His expectations (fuelled by media reports of the prime minister greeting Syrian refugees at Pearson Airport in Toronto) went unchallenged and thus were unmet. He was bitterly disappointed, and his social and institutional mistrust increased.

For others who hadn’t experienced any sustained pre-arrival contact with their sponsors, expectations about what they would find in Canada were a product of diasporic rumour:

In Lebanon, forty families received approval to travel to Canada. Some of them who travelled before us contacted us and told us that their situation is much better. All of them told me that their homes are beautiful with new furniture. Except me, my situation is very bad and the furniture is shameful. The laid carpet would not be laid in refugee camps in Lebanon. The computer they brought was not good and broke down.

This respondent’s expectations of what awaited him in Canada were not out of proportion to the life he and his family had enjoyed prior to the conflict. But with diasporic rumours as his only source of information, his aspiration to attain a life beyond refuge had become conflated with the (false) expectation that his pre-conflict status and role as breadwinner and father, and the material goods his family had enjoyed, would be attainable on resettlement.

Diasporic rumours about what to expect in Canada also could be negative:

Safer: I read about it on the internet. I would check the Facebook pages for information about resettlement. They would write that the Western governments will take our children and that if you go to such countries you will be forced to leave your faith. They wrote such things to scare people.

Institutional and social mistrust among refugees who went without pre-arrival contact with sponsors was further fuelled by false information, which keyed into fears related to threatened sociocultural history (faith) and social roles (parent-child). This kind of misinformation was effectively countered through sponsor-sponsored, pre-arrival contact:

Zina: [Pre-arrival, social media contact with sponsors] was useful, provided relief, and helped me feel less worried. I knew that there were people waiting for me, ready to help. I trusted them. People in Amman told me that we will be living in camps here in Canada, but

I told them that I have people who will prepare a house for me. I trusted them, but I was afraid of bad luck.

The development of a trusted relationship with sponsors, achieved over time via regular interactions in co-created digital spaces reduced anxiety by rendering knowable what was previously unknowable. And while uncertainty remained, as Zina's interview attests, trusted contact was enough to counter misinformation spread by rumour. Key to trust-building were social-media-facilitated conversations with sponsors during which pre-conflict social roles, such as parent, father, and breadwinner were explicitly recognized and affirmed.

Bashir: Yes, it made me feel relieved every time. I knew that everything was prepared and that they would support us. I told my friends that there was someone in Canada who prepared a house for me and will help put my children in school.

The recognition of pre-conflict social roles helped to establish communication that went beyond language barriers.

Rasha: We felt more confident as he talked to us. Some people told us that we will be shocked as soon as we arrive. They said you won't be able to communicate with others, but as the sponsor talked to us we trusted him, and we felt it will be OK.

While socio-cultural histories have an influence on how resettlement is interpreted and negotiated, recognition of pre-conflict social roles such as "parent-child," "home maker," "breadwinner," and the material resources sustained through these roles created a bridge between conflict loss and the aspiration to attain a life beyond refuge. Central to trusted sponsor-sponsored contact was the co-creation of a shared interpretative framework through which resettlement information that addressed the concerns of refugees could become a resettlement knowledge asset, reduce uncertainty, and provide a mutual understanding of realistic resettlement expectations. This has significant implications when we consider an important means through which institutional trust could be built: government pre-arrival orientation programs.

(Mis)trusted Contact

Since 1998 the government of Canada has offered Canadian Orientation Abroad pre-arrival orientation sessions to help newcomers adapt to life in Canada by providing skills and information about what to expect upon arrival. Research has provided a mixed review of pre-arrival orientation sessions.³⁵ Our findings indicate that limitations of the sessions are not related to the veracity of the information they provide. Some respondents, for example, were satisfied:

Fayrouz: It was an introductory seminar on Canada, its laws, how to live there, its weather and nationalities that live there. It contained a lot of information and they even explained to us about the air travel and how many kilos we are allowed to carry. All of us attended the seminar, including my younger child (ten years old). It was very useful for us.

However, the majority of our respondents were left with the impression that the information offered was patronising, paternalistic, and premised on a one-sided understanding of resettlement from the host perspective. As one couple told us,

Um Halil: The information we obtained was that we should not expect that we are going to paradise. That the air we breathe there costs money, and that life in Canada is not easy and we must work to be able to live.

Abu Halil: The course was not useful because they did not give us any information that would help us to survive. In my opinion, the course aimed to make the refugee understand that we should not be a burden on the Canadian government and we should work hard to be able to survive.

Institutional mistrust increased, as did uncertainty, and so information made available in pre-arrival institutional reception did not translate into knowledge assets that could facilitate realistic expectations of resettlement. Institutional mistrust increased when resettlement information was interpreted as biased by cultural status beliefs, which undermined attendees' pre-conflict sociocultural history and social roles:

Saher: They gave us a brief background about Canada and they told us not to hit our children when we arrive in Canada. We have left Syria and the war to be able to raise our children in a better way, not to hit them. There are a thousand ways that you can raise a child without hitting, but this is their idea about the Middle East. They think that the women and the children are hit and oppressed. But our religion keeps us from doing so.

By contrast, for those who developed pre-arrival trusted contact with sponsors, resettlement mistrust was reduced:

Lana: For us, if we didn't have those calls with our sponsors, we wouldn't have come to Canada. When they talked to us, we started to accept the idea of moving to Canada.

The perceived threat of sociocultural alienation de-escalated:

Samira: I didn't want to come to Canada. I didn't want to leave the Arab countries and come here to live among the foreigners. The sponsor's calls made me feel comfortable to come.

We have laid out the pre-arrival terrain of resettlement information in order to demonstrate that imparting information, whether factually correct or not, can increase resettlement uncertainty. Information in and of itself cannot be thought of as an asset to inclusive resettlement. But, as our studies also show, resettlement information can be transformed into resettlement knowledge assets in the pre-arrival sponsor-sponsored relation of trusted contact.

Resettlement Knowledge Assets and the Third Space of Refugee Reception

It is important to note that there are instances in which pre-arrival sponsor-sponsored contact does not result in a common interpretative framework through which resettlement uncertainty can be sufficiently reduced. This occurred when pre-settlement engagement was premised solely on the exchange of impersonal information about the status of the sponsored's resettlement application. As one couple and their son told us,

Um Fuad: We received a phone call from the sponsor who said that our application was approved, and we should start preparing ourselves to travel to Canada. She kept calling me all the time to inform me about the progress of our application and the travel arrangements.

While contact was appreciated, procedural-based communication, even when frequent, did not establish a trusted relationship:

Abu Fuad: It would have been better if we got to know the sponsors pre-arrival. It would have given us the feeling of security. Having a relation with the sponsors before arrival would have helped us to feel more confident about our decision to go to a country we don't know anything about and we don't speak their language.

Um Fuad: It's not about getting information from the sponsors, it's about building a friendly relation with the people who will support us.

Their insights were confirmed by sponsor groups:

Alison: They [the refugees we were sponsoring] told me on Skype that they were living and surviving in that extreme and dangerous situation because they knew that there were people on this side of the world in Canada who love them. That made a whole difference in their lives. I think the communication is important, not only for the matter of filling out the paperwork, but also through Skype to talk to them and be their friend, be their listener and support. That helped them to keep on going through the one year almost of waiting for their application to be approved.

Pre-arrival sponsor-sponsored contact in and of itself is not experienced as a knowledge asset for either party. Resettlement information becomes a resettlement knowledge asset when trust grows and uncertainty is reduced empathically. The reflections of some sponsors provide further insight into the relationship between trusted contact and the reduction of uncertainty.

Gerard: Through Whatsapp texting and voice we called [the father] and started talking to him, trying to give him an idea of what to expect. It was challenging because they were really scared. They had no clue what was going on, like who are these people and why are they doing this? Why would anyone do this? So there was a lot of conversation between us. We tried to paint a picture of what is actually happening here, like, we are getting an apartment for you guys. It was really tough for them to grasp that level of participation from everyone, the cooperation and willingness to take them in as family.

For this sponsor group, the resettlement expectations of the sponsored were formed through reassurance and trust-building communications that reduced the unknown. By imparting information about sponsorship activities (such as the preparation of housing), concerns about significant elements of pre-conflict life that had been lost were mitigated. Through the sponsors' recognition of the challenges of displacement loss, resettlement fears were reduced. There was cooperation in support of resettlement between people who had never met. Other sponsor groups' experiences illustrate how interpersonal trust, social trust, and institutional trust developed through pre-arrival contact.

Alice: They really didn't know what they were signing up for. They went through all of the interviews and just thought they were going to come whenever.... I think it is natural for it to take time to build trust, right? These are strangers who are bringing us to a strange country, different language, so there was a lot of building of trust. We explained basically who the group was, what we are doing as a group, what the government is doing, so we explained the entire system on several occasions.

From the perspective of sponsors, pre-arrival contact enabled them to develop a better understanding of how their expectations and those of the sponsored could influence and be influenced by incongruent perspectives. Insights developed before arrival became assets during resettlement.

Janice: There is sometimes a lack of understanding from each other's perspectives. For example, the experience of finding their new home or encouraging them to get a new job. From the sponsors' side, we've been in Canada for twenty years or fifteen years and we know how challenging the job market is. So when we were

communicating, I needed to adjust how I conveyed this. They just came out of three years or longer of disastrous environment with no hope whatsoever for their lives, future, or dreams. Now they are in a new country, we can't just go and tell them, "No, it is a depressing job market. Canada will be harder to live in." Emotionally they weren't ready for that.

Familiarity, established through pre-arrival contact, merged with the practical matters of everyday life; seemingly insignificant gestures keyed into "normal" needs, the unquestioned activities of pre-conflict life:

Andrew: Each person involved in the sponsorship submitted a photo. Here's a photo of us. Here's what you're coming to, our family history, two boys, this and that, what do we like to do. So we sort of did those once every week or two so that there was some content going out, work it like a blog with content going out. They did the same for us. The father has an incredible backstory, which he sent over Whatsapp before they got here. Then as things went on, our communication went to more logistical things, you know, what's your shoe size and clothing size, so that as we collected things within the community for them, we knew what would work. So it became a very functional kind of thing.

Through trusted contact facilitated by digital communications, sponsors and sponsored engaged and developed trust, and the resettlement knowledge assets that resulted. The pre-arrival space in which they interacted is not determined by the context of displacement or that of resettlement. Rather, it is a neutral space in which the resettlement needs of the sponsored and those of their sponsors could achieve greater congruence. Sponsors and sponsored co-create a third space of refugee reception. This was confirmed by refugees:

Fayez: There was one sponsor in particular, she supported me, every single day when I was in Turkey. She knew how stressful it was and she supported me every day. I actually don't consider them sponsors, they are my friends. When I came they gave me so many books, because they know I lost my entire library when I left Syria.

Familiarity, trust, and knowledge created in this third space of refuge prepared the terrain for sponsorship actions that connected pre-conflict histories with post-refuge resettlement. Choice, discerned through sponsor/sponsored interactions in this third space, was significant in that it supported deliberative actions and agency:

Yasser: They were very nice to us. Gloria was the leader of the group and she is the one who was contacting us. She gave us the option to choose. She said they could either find a house for us or we would

stay twenty days in Toronto in a temporary and choose the house we like and the area we would prefer to live in.

Refugees gave estimates of how frequent pre-arrival contact should be, providing insights into the effect it had on their resettlement experience. During the sponsorship application stage, hosts are generally in the position of selecting whom they sponsor. They have access to biographical and some demographic information about the sponsored. The same is not true for those being sponsored. But, as one respondent explained, the potential for a power imbalance, where hosts are accorded a greater sense of control over resettlement, can be countered by the reciprocal exchange of "refugee-host" information, which builds trust:

Saher: At least once per week. Every week we could have a thirty-minute chat, and this would help me understand how the life is here and if I will be able to live here or not. The sponsors know a lot about us; we should also be able to know about them too, to be prepared.

As trusted contact built, resettlement information exchanges became resettlement knowledge assets, with an impact on "lost time," a major effect of displacement. As trust developed, information became knowledge, providing continuity during long pre-arrival wait periods and helping to make up for lost time after arrival:

Yara: If possible, two or three times a month. This would at least build a relationship between the sponsors and the refugees. Through the phone calls or the video calls, a relationship will start. I personally prefer video calls. This relationship will make them comfortable, and although this might not seem that important at that time, it helps a lot and saves hours and days afterwards during the sponsorship process. It gives them the trust they need. The refugees are in a miserable state and they need this type of trust and support.

The resettlement effects of trusted pre-arrival contact, where information exchange is premised on mutual recognition, also became knowledge assets for sponsors, merging before and after reception, and creating online a third space of reception that was time sensitive:

Rex: It was just a whole level of comfort with them.... I would go as far as saying that if we didn't have that earlier communication over the long wait time, then we would have started to consider this a dead program in our lives and that we were not even engaged with anything.

Alfred: We all arrived at the airport. A few of us came back to the apartment to show them around. I remember that night [the

husband] sitting down in the chair and talking with us, “I’m just curious, where do we go from here because I already feel like you’re family.” We would not have had that connection if it was not for the earlier communication. Without that, we would have been starting from scratch.

Pre-arrival trusted contact was co-created in the digital third space of refugee reception, not limited to the temporal and spatial boundaries of displacement or resettlement. In the building of resettlement knowledge assets, neither party is rendered dependent on the other; rather, their respective needs merge to form “community-like” solidarities forged through the reduction of resettlement uncertainty. Unknowable future outcomes are made more knowable.

Discussion

In this article, we developed an understanding of the resettlement benefits of pre-arrival contact, by exploring what we conceptualize as resettlement knowledge assets and third-space resettlement contexts. Those who had engaged in digitally facilitated pre-arrival contact were able to mutually reduce the uncertainty of resettlement. The reduction of uncertainty was established in two senses related to trust building. First, sponsors keyed into the experience of precarity during displacement. They were made sensitive to experience in which the pre-conflict social roles of the displaced had assumed significance in providing a sense of continuity between what had been lost and what they aspired to regain post-conflict. Second, by engaging one-to-one pre-arrival, sponsors and sponsored orientated the exchange of resettlement information towards a recognition of needs that corresponded with their respective social roles. The sponsored could be recognized in their pre-conflict social roles as parents, spouses, and heads of family, while sponsors appeared in the roles they normally occupied in their daily lives. Information exchange premised on mutual need recognition was transformed into resettlement knowledge. The reduction of uncertainty through trust building modified the resettlement expectations of both sponsors and sponsored to the extent that resettlement knowledge became an asset after arrival.

The data included in this article pertain only to sponsorship participants, previously strangers to each other, some of whom engaged spontaneously in direct, digitally mediated, pre-arrival contact. There were other instances in which pre-arrival contact was facilitated indirectly by a Canada-based family member who was known to, but not part of, the sponsor group. And there were instances in which some sponsor group members were extended family members or acquaintances of the sponsored refugees. In such cases, resettlement knowledge assets did not always develop. Further research is required in order to better understand why this was the

case. In all cases, longitudinal research would help to chart the relationship between resettlement knowledge assets and social, cultural, economic, and other well-being indicators during and after the first twelve months of resettlement.

All pre-arrival contact experiences detailed here are post-arrival recollections recorded with the benefit of hindsight. This can give the impression that pre-arrival contact was planned. In the majority of cases, pre-arrival contact occurred out of necessity and was not pre-meditated by sponsors or sponsored. This becomes more relevant when we consider the responses (developed in this article only by contrast) of sponsors and sponsored who did not have the opportunity to engage in pre-arrival contact, and whom we asked to gauge the extent to which they felt doing so would have been beneficial. Their responses could easily be the subject of an additional article. All of the sponsored refugees who had not experienced pre-arrival contact felt they would have benefitted, but when asked to imagine why this would be, tended to envisage the opportunity to ask procedural questions about the status of their applications. In the absence of trusted contact they could not imagine nor see the relevance of trust. Similarly, some sponsor group members who had not engaged in pre-arrival contact felt it would be useful to keep refugees apprised of the status of their applications. Others felt that pre-arrival contact could run the risk of placing refugees in a position of emotional dependency, and that contact should be limited to matters of procedural information-exchange. In the absence of trusted contact they could not envisage how establishing mutual reliance has beneficial effects on the unknowable future outcomes of resettlement. To those who had not co-created a third space of reception, resettlement knowledge assets were elusive.

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What Role Does Type of Sponsorship Play in Early Integration Outcomes? Syrian Refugees Resettled in Six Canadian Cities

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Abstract

There is little longitudinal research that directly compares the effectiveness of Canada's Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) and Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) Programs that takes into account possible socio-demographic differences between them. This article reports findings from 1,921 newly arrived adult Syrian refugees in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. GARS and PSRs differed widely on several demographic characteristics, including length of time displaced. Furthermore, PSRs sponsored by Groups of 5 resembled GARS more than other PSR sponsorship types on many of these characteristics. PSRs also had broader social networks than GARS. Sociodemographic differences and city of residence influenced integration outcomes, emphasizing the importance of considering differences between refugee groups when comparing the impact of these programs.

Résumé

Il existe peu de recherches longitudinales comparant directement l'efficacité des programmes gouvernemental (RPG) et privé (PPR) de parrainage des réfugiés au Canada qui tiennent compte de possibles différences socio-démographique entre eux. Cet article rend compte des résultats de 1921 nouveaux arrivants syriens adultes en Colombie-Britannique, en Ontario et au Québec. Les RPG et PPR diffèrent largement sur plusieurs caractéristiques démographiques, dont le temps du déplacement. De plus, les PPR parrainés par groupes de cinq ressemblaient davantage aux RPG que les autres types de parrainage PPR sur plusieurs de ces caractéristiques. Les PPR avaient aussi des réseaux sociaux plus larges que les RPG. Les différences sociodémographiques et la ville de résidence influent sur l'intégration, ce qui fait ressortir l'importance de tenir compte des différences entre les groupes de réfugiés dans la comparaison de l'impact de ces programmes.

Introduction

The number of people displaced worldwide has increased dramatically to 68.5 million over the last ten years.¹ More than two thirds of refugees face protracted displacement, with the average length of exile at around ten years, and over a third of refugees in situations lasting twenty years or longer.² Durable solutions have not kept pace with demands for protection. In 2017 only 3% of the more than 25.4 million people forcibly displaced across international borders were repatriated, locally integrated in host states, or resettled.³ The international community has been seeking new solutions to forced migration, and Canada's unique private sponsorship model has garnered significant interest.⁴ The Private Refugee Sponsorship Program allows non-profit organizations and groups of citizens to financially and personally support people through their first year in Canada,⁵ one small additional way to contribute to the successful resettlement of refugees worldwide.

Between 4 November 2015 and 30 June 2018, Canada resettled 56,260 Syrian refugees, with almost equal numbers coming through privately sponsored and government assisted pathways.⁶ The ability of the Canadian government to meet its increased targets reflects one of the intended benefits of the PSR Program: it allows rapid responses to exceptional situations.⁷ This article addresses the question of whether early integration benefits observed among GARS and PSRS can be attributed to pre-migration differences, or to the anticipated benefits of private settlement—specifically, potential differences in social capital between GARS and PSRS.

Refugee Resettlement in Canada

Canada provides protection to resettled refugees through three different programs. Government assisted refugees (GARS) are provided financial and settlement support for the first year of settlement through government resettlement agencies. Privately sponsored refugees (PSRS) receive financial and settlement support from non-profit organizations and volunteer groups. In the third program, Blended Visa Office–Referred (BVR), financial support is divided between government and private sponsors, while the latter provide settlement support.⁸ In all categories, refugees should be offered reception, orientation, and focused assistance with housing, physical and mental health, language training, education, employment, referrals to essential federal/provincial programs and settlement programs, and financial assistance.

Private sponsors are citizens or residents who volunteer their time and money to support a refugee family or individual for one year. There are various types. Sponsorship agreement holders (SAHS) are incorporated organizations who have ongoing contractual agreements with the federal

government to resettle refugees. They are frequently faith-based organizations, though they may contain subgroups that are faith or non-faith-based groups. Community sponsors are any organizations in a community that form an agreement with the government to settle refugees into their community. The program that has received the greatest attention in discussions of private sponsorship is the Group of Five (G5) sponsorship, where five or more private citizens or permanent residents (or as few as two in Quebec)⁹ over the age of eighteen form a sponsorship group and undertake to sponsor a refugee.

Private sponsorship has been promoted as benefitting Canada and refugees.¹⁰ More Canadian citizens have the opportunity to interact with refugee newcomers, which may promote better or broader intergroup relationships.¹¹ In addition, refugee newcomers could achieve better settlement through private sponsorship because of the increased social capital available through their relationships with their sponsors.¹² However, there is little longitudinal research that directly compares the effectiveness of the GAR and PSR Programs in supporting the integration of refugees into society.¹³

Research identifies stronger employment outcomes for PSRS in general.¹⁴ PSRS outperform GARS in the early years, but this relative advantage decreases over time.¹⁵ However, there are significant differences between GARS and PSRS. PSRS and GARS are selected differently: GARS on the basis of their vulnerability according to UNHCR criteria, whereas PSRS may be named by family members resident in Canada or faith-based institutions. PSRS tend to have stronger English- or French-language skills and higher levels of education, often mirroring the populations already in Canada with which they have pre-existing family or social network connections.¹⁶ They are also more likely to be single adults (57% vs. 47%) and thus have more mobility to pursue economic and integration activities.¹⁷ As a result, it is not clear whether better employment outcomes for PSRS can be attributed to the category and the care of sponsors or whether their resettlement outcomes are more a reflection of the very different socio-demographic profiles of two groups of sponsored refugees.¹⁸

Research Design and Methods

This article reports on the data collected in the first year of a longitudinal study on Syrian refugee integration in Canada (SyRIA.lth). SyRIA.lth is a four-year, CIHR-funded study that compares integration outcomes for government assisted and privately sponsored refugees resettled into Canada as part of Canada's response to the Syrian conflict. The purpose of this longitudinal mixed-methods study is to compare how GAR and PSR resettlement programs in three different provinces support long-term social integration pathways for refugees

and the impact of these pathways on physical and mental health. Ethics approval was obtained from a university-affiliated ethics board at each research site.

Theoretical Underpinning

The theoretical underpinning of this research study and the guiding principle for the quantitative longitudinal survey reported here is the holistic integration model¹⁹ (see figure 1). The holistic integration model (HIM) is derived from the Ager and Strang model of integration²⁰ and was developed to emphasize key issues in integration theory. These include the interrelatedness of different integration elements and the moderating effects of refugees' past experiences and social identities. A central motivation for the development of this model was also the importance of considering the larger sociopolitical context in which refugees settle. Focusing only on changes in refugee newcomers fails to acknowledge how policies, institutions, and social environments create social and structural barriers to integration.²¹ In emphasizing the importance of social and structural processes in the HIM, we echo calls from feminist and post-colonial scholars that concepts such as integration can result in "strategic integration" of refugees and immigrants from racialized backgrounds into "bare life" existence.²² Resettlement for racialized refugees is often marked by persistent poverty, un/underemployment, and overrepresentation in low-income underserved neighbourhoods, conditions that mirror and deepen colonial/racialized and gendered inequalities. In the HIM the onus to integrate, adjust, and change does not fall on just refugees/immigrants but also on the dominant host society. Holistic and equitable integration requires policies and public education campaigns to help overcome colonial/racist and xenophobic world views, policies, and socio-economic conditions. Although our quantitative measures do not allow us to measure the more structural elements of the HIM, our analysis and discussion places the elements we are able to measure (i.e., social networks) within the broader socio-political context.

Methods

Participants

Research sites include six urban centres of varying sizes in three of the largest immigrant-receiving provinces in Canada. The aim was to enrol at least 10% of the anticipated 18,000 adult PSR and GAR arrivals between January 2016 and June 2017. A total of 1921 adult Syrian refugees representing 856 households participated in Year 1. A small number of BVORS were also included, not through purposive sampling, but because they resided in households with GARS or PSRS. Recruitment was through snowball sampling, and

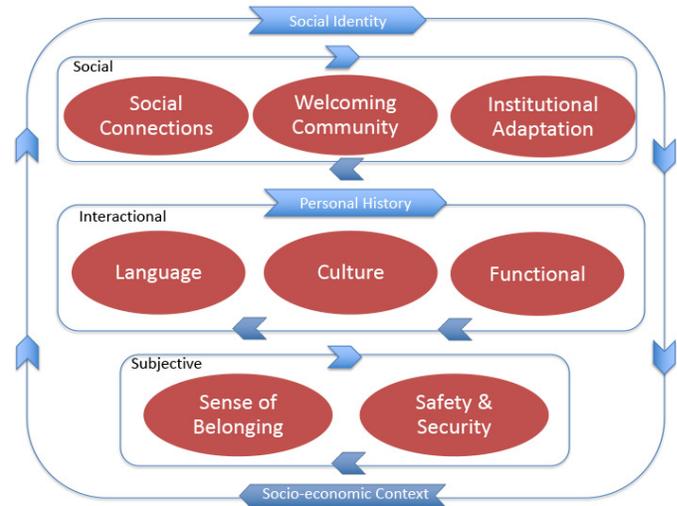


Figure 1. Holistic integration model

announcements, flyers, and direct requests at settlement agencies, community agencies, community events, food banks, and in buildings and neighbourhoods with high concentrations of Syrian refugees between April and July 2017. We interviewed a maximum of six participants from each household.

Measures

The national research team represented multiple sectors, including settlement, health care, mental health, and academia, and from a number of different disciplines, including social work, geography, psychology, family medicine, nursing, and psychiatry. Consistent with our commitment to an interdisciplinary community-based approach, peer researchers from the Syrian refugee community were involved from the beginning and throughout the project, including editing, revising, translating, and pilot testing survey materials, data collection, and data analysis.

Survey questions were developed collectively from categories identified in the holistic integration model. Priority was given to standardized scales that had validated Arabic versions. Professional English to Arabic translation was obtained for additional measures, followed by back translation by two bilingual Syrian Canadians to confirm accuracy. Surveys were discussed question by question with recently arrived Syrian newcomers, and unclear or discrepant terms were reviewed and modified. The project's (bilingual) research assistants conducted a final check to resolve any remaining issues with the translation and to ensure local relevance. The modified surveys were then piloted with twenty-four recent Syrian refugees, with changes again discussed

and finalized with the national research team. The final version of the survey contained 245 questions.²³ Only the measures being reported in this article are described below.

Sociodemographic and migration variables: These included questions about age, gender, religious affiliation, languages spoken at the time of interview, ethnicity, pre-migration occupation, marital status, number of children under eighteen years of age who are in Canada, and education.

Social-level variables: Measures of social networks were derived from the General Social Survey (GSS)²⁴ and included questions about number of friends, closeness to friends, frequency of socializing, having friends from other ethnic communities, and closeness to friends from other communities. We added questions about number of relatives in Canada, friends from the Syrian community who had been in Canada for more than five years, and where they had met friends from other communities.

Interactional-level variables: These questions addressed self-assessed language skills, including how frequently they needed an interpreter for appointments and their self-rated ability to speak, understand, read, and write in English or French.²⁵ Detailed questions were asked about the characteristics of employment, housing, health-care access, and educational access, which were modified from the Social Integration Inventory.²⁶ For this article, we will focus on whether or not participants were employed, how they found employment, whether they had a family doctor, and satisfaction with their current housing, rated on a five-point scale.

Subjective variables: Questions about sense of belonging were also taken from the GSS, including belonging to one's neighbourhood, city, co-ethnic community in the city, and Canada.²⁷ For brevity we focus here on sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood and sense of belonging to Canada. Responses were rated on a 1 to 5 scale, with higher scores indicating greater sense of belonging. Participants who were privately sponsored were also asked about how much they relied on their sponsors for information and help. Security was assessed through financial security; participants were asked if they ever had trouble making ends meet at the end of the month and had to ask for help.

Additional measures: Additional measures were included but will not be addressed here, for the sake of brevity. These include which social, health, and settlement services were used and satisfaction and comfort with these services, and self-rated health and mental health measures, including health behaviours, post-traumatic stress symptoms, depression, stress, and perceived control.

A coding table for all of these measures is available in the appendix.

Procedures

All participants provided informed consent prior to the interview and were paid for their participation. Surveys were collected using Quicktapsurvey on iPads through face-to-face interviews in Arabic. These took approximately sixty to ninety minutes each and were done primarily in participants' homes. Additional field notes documented researcher observations.

Analysis

All analyses were conducted using SPSS v. 24. All analyses were conducted using hierarchical linear modelling (HLM), with individuals nested within households, thereby clustering all results by family. A complete list of variables and coding is provided in the appendix. *P* values are reported to facilitate interpretation of the models. However, these should not be taken to indicate significance of patterns in the population of Syrian refugees as a whole because the sample is not randomly selected; the *p* values are being used descriptively.²⁸ There were three levels of variables. Level 1 included the variables of sponsorship, city, and length of time in Canada, which reflect the general context of the participants and are likely to determine their social networks but also, because of the nature of refugee selection process, determine their socio-demographic characteristics. Level 2 included socio-demographic variables that are characteristics of the individual: namely age, gender, religious affiliation, education, length of time displaced, and self-assessed language knowledge at the time of testing—variables that can affect the ability to develop social networks. Level 3 variables reflected social networks: namely having relatives in Canada, number of friends from the established Syrian community, and having friends from other ethnic communities.

To describe the predictors of social networks, two models were tested. The first model included the Level 1 context variables. The second model included the Level 1 variables plus the Level 2 socio-demographic variables. Predictors of Relatives in Canada was an exception, as it was explored only in terms of the context variables. For integration outcome variables, three compounded models were tested: Models 1 and 2 as indicated, and Model 3, which included the Level 1 and Level 2 variables plus Level 3 social network variables. Models were compared using deviance statistics, with results reported only for the highest model showing an improved fit associated with a *p* value of .05 or less, with the *p* value indicating relative strength of improvement rather than inferential significance.

Results

The breakdown by type of sponsorship was: in British Columbia, Vancouver (*N* = 245; 186 GAR, 48 PSR, 11 BVOR)

and Okanagan Valley ($N = 67$; 24 GAR, 22 PSR, 21 BVOR); in Ontario, Kitchener/Waterloo ($N = 139$; 86 GAR, 48 PSR, 5 BVOR), Toronto ($N = 531$; 315 GAR, 187 PSR, 39 BVOR), and Windsor ($N = 235$; 185 GAR, 45 PSR, 5 BVOR); and in Quebec, Montreal ($N = 694$; 67 GAR, 626 PSR, 1 BVOR). These numbers are equal to approximately 31% of the adult (eighteen and over) GARS and 8% of the adult PSRs who were intended to settle between 4 November 2015 and 31 July 2017 in the three cities in Ontario; 16% of the adult GARS and 18% of the adult PSRs destined to settle in Montreal, Quebec; and 41.6% of the adult GARS and 26% of the adult PSRs destined to Vancouver and the Okanagan (Kelowna, Vernon, and Kamloops) in British Columbia.²⁹ The proportions suggest that PSRs were under-sampled relative to GARS in Ontario and BC.

Just under half of the participants were male (48.8%) and over half were female (51.1%). Participants ranged in age from eighteen to ninety and had been in Canada for up to thirty-five months. A one-way ANOVA on each variable showed that PSRs were significantly older and had been in Canada on average one month longer than GARS or BVORS (see table 1). This is consistent with differences reported in the population of Syrian refugees arriving in the first wave of the Syrian initiative. According to IRCC, among those arriving in the first six months, 54% of GARS but 59% of PSRs were fifty years of age or older. Because BVORS were not part of our intended sample, they were represented in numbers too small to make meaningful comparisons and thus the BVORS are excluded from subsequent analyses, leaving a sample of 1,837.

Are There Differences by Type of Private Sponsorship?

Among the privately sponsored participants in our national sample, more than two thirds 68.6% ($n = 659$) were sponsored by faith organizations, 16.8% ($n = 161$) were sponsored by family, and 9.7% ($n = 93$) were sponsored by community organizations. Only 5% ($n = 48$) of the sample were sponsored by a Group of Five (G5 or Groupes 2-5 or G2-5 in Quebec). In Vancouver, 95.7% ($n = 45$) were sponsored by faith organizations, whereas the remaining 5.2% ($n < 10$) were sponsored by family or community organizations. In the Okanagan, 81.8% ($n = 18$) were sponsored by faith organizations, whereas the remaining 18.2% ($n < 10$) were sponsored by G5s. In Kitchener/Waterloo, 68.1% ($n = 32$) were sponsored by faith organizations, whereas the remaining 31.9% ($n = 15$) were sponsored by family, community organizations, or G5s. In Windsor, 86.7% ($n = 39$) were sponsored by faith organizations, whereas the remaining 13.3% ($n < 10$) were sponsored by family or community organizations. The pattern of sponsorship was more evenly distributed in Toronto, with 47% ($n = 85$) sponsored by faith organizations, 26.5% ($n = 48$) sponsored by community organizations, 15.5%

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Syrian refugee sample, by migration pathway

	GAR	PSR	BVOR
Mean age	35.9 ^a	41.0 ^{ab}	35.2 ^b
SD	(12.13)	(14.7)	(12.4)
Mean time in Canada (months)	12.7 ^a	13.9 ^{ab}	13.2 ^b
SD	(5.3)	(5.6)	(5.7)

Note: Means with shared superscripts differ significantly at the .05 level.

($n = 28$) sponsored by family, and 11% ($n = 20$) sponsored by G5s. Finally, in Montreal, 71.1% ($n = 440$) were sponsored by faith organizations, 19.9% ($n = 123$) were sponsored by family, 5.7% ($n = 35$) were sponsored by community organizations, and 3.4% ($n = 21$) were sponsored by G2-5s.

The characteristics of privately sponsored refugees differed by type of sponsorship, with G5s in particular showing differences from other sponsorship types (see table 2). This includes differences on characteristics that past research suggests are particularly relevant to integration outcomes such as employment (language ability, number of children),³⁰ health (months displaced, months in a refugee camp),³¹ and community welcome (religion, particularly in light of the current wave of anti-Islamic attitudes)³² but not in terms of education and urban residence. Table 2 provides the means and frequencies for these characteristics for GARS, for PSRs overall, and then for the different types of PSRs. Comparison to the characteristics of the population in the first six months of the Syrian initiative suggests similar differences between GARS and PSRs overall. Namely, as in our own sample, IRCC data show much higher rates of university education among PSRs (31.6%) than GARS (5.3%), and higher self-reported knowledge of either English or French, with 18.2% of PSRs and 83.6% of GARS nationally reporting no knowledge of either of Canada's official languages.³³

Social Networks

Social networks play an important role in refugee integration.³⁴ The engagement of civic society is expected to promote integration for newcomers by increasing social support and access to social capital through sponsors.³⁵ We therefore examine whether PSRs and GARS differ in the breadth of their social networks, in terms of relationships to (a) family; (b) established co-ethnic community members; (c) members of other communities; and (d) closeness of these relationships to other community members.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics by sponsorship

	GAR	PSR overall	Private sponsorship by type			
			G5/G2-5	Faith	Family	Community
<i>Residence</i>						
Small urban centre	41.0%	19.8%	16.6%	21.5%	17.4%	14.2%
Large urban centre	59.0%	80.3%	83.3%	78.5%	82.6%	85.9%
<i>Religious affiliation</i>						
Muslim	97.2%	22.4%	83.3%	19.3%	17.1%	23.9%
Christian	2.8%	77.6%	16.7%	80.7%	82.9%	76.1%
<i>Education</i>						
0–6 years	40.9%	12.1%	14.6%	13.7%	13.7%	15.1%
7–12 years	46.6%	42.1%	43.8%	39.5%	46.6%	47.3%
College-trade	5.9%	16.2%	14.6%	17.5%	14.3%	14.0%
University-professional	6.6%	29.6%	27.1%	31.8%	25.5%	23.7%
<i>Mean English/French knowledge at testing*</i>	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.2	2.9
<i>Number of children</i>	3.0	1.5	2.3	1.6	1.3	1.6
<i>Country of asylum</i>						
Lebanon	22.5%	82.2%	45.8%	84.9%	86.8%	76.3%
Jordan	43.1%	4.6%	14.6%	4.8%	0	4.3%
Turkey	25.7%	5.4%	20.8%	4.2%	2.5%	10.8%
Other	8.7%	7.7%	18.8%	6.1%	10.7%	8.6%
<i>Mean time in refugee camp (months)</i>	3.3	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.0
<i>Mean time displaced (months)</i>	38.0	19.5	29.4	18.6	19.6	20.1

*1–none to 6–excellent. This measure is self-assessed.

Relatives in Canada: For relatives in Canada, only the model with Level 1 variables was tested (see table 3). Not surprisingly, PSRs (80.3%) were more likely to report having relatives in Canada than GARS (52.0%). Percentage of GARS with relatives in Canada was particularly low in Okanagan (29.2%) and then Windsor (41.6%), but otherwise over half reported relatives in Canada (52% to 59.7%). Among PSRs, those in Vancouver were least likely to have relatives in Canada (63.8%), followed by Okanagan (72.7%) and Toronto (77.5%). In the other cities, about 80% reported Canadian relatives (from 80.3% to 82.4%).

Three variables measured friendship: friends in the established Syrian community, having friends from other communities, and closeness to friends from other communities.

Friends from the established Syrian community: The model with both Level 1 (city and sponsorship) and Level 2 (socio-demographic variables) predicted having more friends

from the established Syrian community. PSRs reported more established Syrian friends (61.6% reported at least one or more) than GARS (39.1% reported at least one or more). Having a greater number of established Syrian friends was also positively predicted by greater length of stay in Canada, older age, being male, having a higher level of education, and better fluency in one of the official languages.

New friends in other ethnic communities: The model with both Level 1 and Level 2 was retained for new friends from other communities. Friends from other ethnic communities were reported by 55.5% of the sample overall and were more likely for those in Canada longer, who were younger, more highly educated, male, more fluent in self-assessed English/French, and Muslim. Sponsorship did not predict friendships with people outside the Syrian community.

Closeness to friends from other ethnic communities: The higher order model with 2 Levels was retained for closeness

Table 3. Hierarchical models predicting social network variables

	b	SE	p	Improvement in fit of highest model
<i>Relatives in Canada</i>				
City	-0.023	0.009	0.014	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	0.250	0.030	0.000	
Length of time in Canada	-0.000	0.002	0.967	
<i>Number of friends from the established Syrian community</i> $\chi^2(6) = 86.78, p < .001$				
City	-0.009	0.101	0.398	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	0.153	0.043	0.000	
Length of time in Canada	0.008	0.003	0.003	
Age	0.005	0.001	0.000	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.080	0.022	0.000	
Education	0.049	0.010	0.000	
Official language fluency	0.028	0.011	0.015	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.065	0.046	0.153	
Length of displacement	-0.000	0.001	0.760	
<i>Have new friends from other ethnic communities</i> $\chi^2(6) = 219.31, p < .001$				
City	-0.006	0.010	0.524	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	0.055	0.040	0.168	
Length of time in Canada	0.011	0.002	0.000	
Age	-0.004	0.001	0.000	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.076	0.020	0.000	
Education	0.030	0.010	0.002	
Official language fluency	0.074	0.011	0.000	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.201	0.043	0.000	
Length of displacement	0.000	0.001	0.779	
<i>Closeness to friends from other ethnic communities</i> $\chi^2(6) = 81.352, p < .001$				
City	0.036	0.021	0.088	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	0.178	0.086	0.038	
Length of time in Canada	0.012	0.006	0.036	
Age	-0.002	0.002	0.395	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.050	0.052	0.350	
Education	-0.046	0.023	0.050	
Official language fluency	0.031	0.030	0.261	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.190	0.093	0.043	
Length of displacement	0.003	0.002	0.060	

to friends from other ethnic communities. Participants were somewhat close to friends from other communities ($M = 2.5$ on a 4-point scale). PSRS reported being closer to these friends than did GARS. Participants were also closer to friends from other communities if they had been in Canada longer, had lower levels of education and were Muslim.

How Useful Are Sponsors and Social Networks for Achieving Integration Goals?

If sponsorship processes determine integration outcomes, then sponsorship and social networks should predict integration outcomes, even after pre-migration socio-demographic differences are taken into account. The impact of sponsorship and social networks on integration outcomes was addressed in two ways: (a) self-reported usefulness of sponsors, and (b) the extent to which integration outcomes related to employment, housing, health-care access, economic security, and sense of belonging are predicted by sponsorship category, socio-demographic variables, and social network variables.

How much did private sponsors help? Participants who were privately sponsored were asked how much they relied on their sponsors for information or help (not at all / a little / very much). Given that in some cities PSRS were sponsored almost exclusively by faith groups, cities were combined. As can be seen in figure 2, the majority (57.4%) of those sponsored by G5s reported relying on their sponsors a great deal. In contrast, those sponsored through the other paths varied in their reliance on their sponsors, with approximately equal numbers reporting relying on their sponsors very much, a little, or not at all.

Although resettled refugees can start working earlier, by month 13 in Canada, they are expected to find employment or move on to social assistance. A total of 64.3% of the GARS and 74.5% of the PSRS had been in Canada for thirteen months or longer. Among GARS, 11.4% had some form of employment at the time of the interview; for PSRS the proportion was 33.8%. Among those employed, both groups identified co-ethnic friends as the most likely to have helped them find their job, with about one fifth having found their job on their own. Very few GARS (6.7%) or PSRS (4.9%) found jobs through employment agencies; community agencies were somewhat more helpful (GARS, 17.8%; PSRS, 11.2%). Sponsors were reported as the source of employment for only 12% of those PSRS who had found jobs (see figure 3).

Employment: The highest level model including Levels 1 and 2 plus the Level 3 social network variables fit better than either of the lower models with a p of less than .05 and thus was retained. Current employment was predicted by sponsorship, such that PSRS were more likely to be employed than GARS, even when socio-demographic variables were in

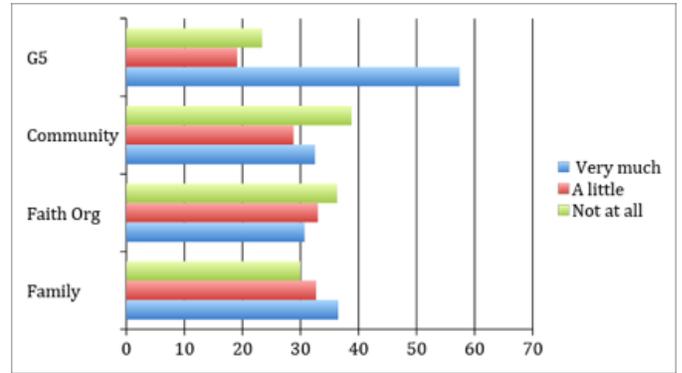


Figure 2. How much did you rely on sponsor for information or help, by sponsorship type?

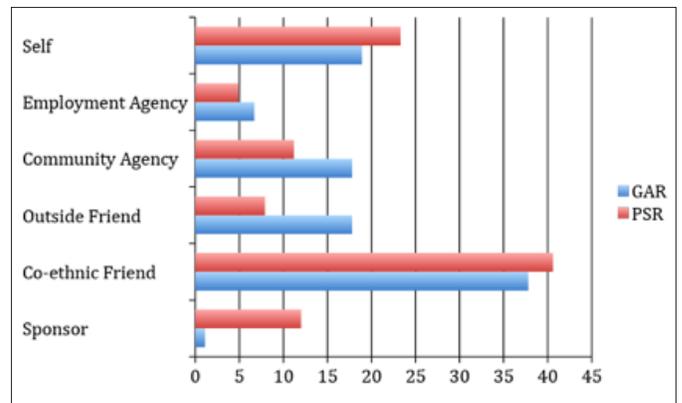


Figure 3. Who helped you find employment?

the model. Employment was also more likely for those who had been in Canada longer, were younger, male, Christian, or had relatives in Canada and friends in other ethnic communities (see table 4).

Trouble making ends meet: Model 3 with all variables was the best fit for having trouble making ends meet. In Model 3, older age and less language fluency were associated with having trouble making ends meet. Sponsorship did not predict this measure of financial difficulty when these other variables were taken into account.

Family doctor: Model 3 with all variables showed improved fit. Most participants reported having a family doctor, but this varied by city. In Vancouver only 79.4% had a family doctor, compared to 90.3% in Kitchener/Waterloo, 98.2% in Toronto and 100% in Okanagan. In Montreal only 54.9% of participants had a family doctor. Given the dominance of PSRS in this city, we looked at GARS and PSRS separately; only 33.3% GARS and 57.2% of PSRS had a family doctor. Having a doctor was also more likely for those who were older and were in Canada longer (see table 5).

Table 4. Hierarchical models predicting employment and financial security

	b	SE	p	Improvement in fit of highest model
<i>Employment</i>				$\chi^2(3) = 152.61, p < .001$
City	0.024	0.008	0.002	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	0.162	0.032	0.000	
Length of time in Canada	0.011	0.002	0.000	
Age	-0.006	0.001	0.000	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.2339	0.018	0.000	
Education	-0.009	0.008	0.261	
Official language fluency	-0.006	0.009	0.486	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	0.219	0.035	0.000	
Length of displacement	0.001	0.001	0.062	
Relatives in Canada (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.046	0.022	0.034	
Number of established Syrian friends	0.011	0.020	0.593	
Friends from other ethnic communities (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.068	0.020	0.001	
<i>Trouble making ends meet</i>				$\chi^2(3) = 348.77, p < .001$
City	0.022	0.016	0.166	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	-0.028	0.064	0.662	
Length of time in Canada	0.006	0.004	0.106	
Age	0.003	0.001	0.005	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.002	0.022	0.942	
Education	0.008	0.012	0.480	
Official language fluency	-0.027	0.013	0.040	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.021	0.067	0.759	
Length of displacement	0.002	0.001	0.058	
Relatives in Canada (No 0 / Yes 1)	-0.056	0.032	0.083	
Number of established Syrian friends	0.009	0.028	0.738	
Friends from other ethnic communities (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.028	0.029	0.328	

Satisfaction with housing: Respondents were moderately satisfied with their housing. On a 5-point scale, with 1 representing not at all satisfied and 5 being very satisfied, both GARS and PSRS rated their satisfaction at 3.6. Although Model 3 was a better fit than either Model 1 or Model 2, no variables were significant predictors in this model suggesting relatively weak relationships. Model 2, which included

only Levels 1 and 2, is therefore presented here. City was the only predictor of housing satisfaction achieving a $p < .05$. Participants were most satisfied in Windsor ($M = 3.8$) and Toronto ($M = 3.7$) and least satisfied in Vancouver ($M = 3.4$) and Kitchener/Waterloo ($M = 3.3$).

Sense of belonging: For sense of belonging to one's *neighbourhood*, Model 3 was retained. GARS reported a higher sense

Table 5. Hierarchical models predicting health care and housing outcomes

	b	SE	p	Improvement in fit of highest model
<i>Have a family doctor</i>				$\chi^2(3) = 113.37,$ $p < 0.001$
City	0.075	0.010	0.000	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	-0.033	0.039	0.392	
Length of time in Canada	0.008	0.002	0.000	
Age	0.002	0.000	0.000	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	-0.008	0.009	0.380	
Education	-0.008	0.0050	0.139	
Official language fluency	0.004	0.005	0.429	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.029	0.040	0.477	
Length of displacement	0.001	0.000	0.228	
Relatives in Canada (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.011	0.014	0.415	
Number of established Syrian friends	0.002	0.012	0.885	
Friends from other ethnic communities (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.015	0.012	0.213	
<i>Satisfaction with housing</i>				$\chi^2(6) = 98.52,$ $p < 0.001$
City	0.045	0.023	0.051	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	0.106	0.093	0.253	
Length of time in Canada	0.002	0.005	0.703	
Age	0.002	0.002	0.121	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.006	0.036	0.859	
Education	-0.013	0.019	0.484	
Official language fluency	0.018	0.021	0.390	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.095	0.099	0.338	
Length of displacement	0.000	0.001	0.965	

of belonging to their neighbourhood ($M = 2.8$) compared to PSRs ($M = 2.6$), and those in Windsor ($M = 3.0$) and Toronto ($M = 2.9$) reported higher sense of belonging to neighbourhood than those in other cities, where scores ranged between 2.5 and 2.7. Sense of belonging to neighbourhood was also somewhat higher among men ($M = 2.3$) than women ($M = 2.2$) and among those who were older (see table 6).

For overall sense of belonging to *Canada*, the model with all three levels was retained. Sense of belonging to Canada differed by city. It was lower among those in Montreal ($M = 3.1$) than the other cities, which ranged between 3.3 and

3.4. Sense of belonging to Canada was also higher among those with lower levels of education, who were male, and who had friends from other ethnic communities.

Discussion

As mentioned above, this study is guided by the holistic integration model.³⁶ Here in our discussion we aim to place our results on the differences between Syrian PSRs and GARS within the socio-political context in which they are resettling. Specifically, we discuss how Canadian refugee resettlement policy and the composition and political mobilization

Table 6. Hierarchical models predicting sense of belonging

	b	SE	p	Improvement in fit of highest model
<i>Sense of belonging to neighbourhood</i>				$\chi^2(3) = 495.76, p < .001$
City	0.043	0.016	0.008	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	-0.178	0.067	0.009	
Length of time in Canada	0.003	0.004	0.506	
Age	0.006	0.001	0.000	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	-0.121	0.033	0.000	
Education	-0.006	0.016	0.726	
Official language fluency	0.005	0.018	0.778	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.044	0.072	0.538	
Length of displacement	0.001	0.001	0.305	
Relatives in Canada (No 0 / Yes 1)	-0.045	0.042	0.288	
Number of established Syrian friends	0.052	0.042	0.288	
Friends from other ethnic communities (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.060	0.039	0.128	
<i>Sense of belonging to Canada</i>				$\chi^2(3) = 497.12, p < .001$
City	0.039	0.015	0.011	
Sponsorship category (GAR 0 / PSR 1)	-0.090	0.065	0.171	
Length of time in Canada	-0.000	0.004	0.937	
Age	0.000	0.001	0.934	
Gender (female 0 / male 1)	0.186	0.033	0.000	
Education	-0.053	0.016	0.001	
Official language fluency	0.016	0.018	0.368	
Religion (Muslim 0 / Christian 1)	-0.200	0.070	0.005	
Length of displacement	0.001	0.001	0.423	
Relatives in Canada (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.000	0.042	0.998	
Number of established Syrian friends	0.064	0.038	0.093	
Friends from other ethnic communities (No 0 / Yes 1)	0.093	0.039	0.018	

of earlier Syrian immigrant communities shaped the characteristics of refugees coming to Canada. We then look at how these characteristics (length of time displaced, religion, for example) may be influencing settlement outcomes, keeping in mind the local context (for example, local health or housing markets). Using the HIM allows us to go beyond

individual outcomes to consider structural issues that may be addressed by changes in policy or practice.

Historically, private sponsorship in Canada has had two important elements. The first is the principle of additionality: refugees accepted into Canada as privately sponsored are *in addition to* at least the same number of refugees supported

by the federal government for resettlement. It is this principle that allowed Canada to respond so quickly to the Syrian situation, exceeding its initial targets, and holding promise as a way to increase opportunities for the durable solution of resettlement. And yet the current Canadian government has set refugee resettlement targets for 2020 that defy the principle of additionality: 10,000 GARS versus 20,000 PSRS.³⁷ The second principle of private sponsorship is that sponsors can name a specific person or family whom they wish to settle.³⁸ Family members already in Canada often use private sponsorship as a means of family reunification through renewed support from their own sponsors or the SAH they know. They may also create a SAH or constituent group to become sponsors themselves. An evaluation study commissioned by IRCC found that 62% of PSRS surveyed reported that they were sponsored by a family member.³⁹ Known colloquially as “the echo effect,”⁴⁰ this decision to sponsor family members left behind clearly shapes the characteristics of those who are sponsored and the nature of their settlement experience by shaping the social context, as described in the HIM, but that may also ultimately have a strong influence on the newly arrived refugees’ settlement outcomes through their moderating influence on other levels of integration.⁴¹

Canada had a small community of Syrian immigrants prior to the Syrian conflict. In 2011, 40,840 Canadian residents identified as having Syrian ethnicity. They lived primarily in Montreal (40%) and Toronto (20%); 57% identified as Christian, 31% as Muslim, and 10% reported no religious affiliation. They were also highly educated, with 48% university graduates.⁴² As the Syrian conflict escalated and became protracted, private sponsorship became a pathway for some residents of Syrian origin to bring relatives to Canada. The characteristics of the PSRS in our sample mirrored those of the more established Syrian Canadian community living in Canada prior to the war. Given that the population living in Canada was more likely to be Christian and highly educated than the average Syrian refugee, and given Syrian Canadians’ active participation in private sponsorship, this partially explains the more pronounced differences between GARS and PSRS (along the lines of religious affiliation, language ability, and level of education) than normally observed.

The Canadian government actively sought to resettle those identified as the most vulnerable refugees through the GAR Program, further amplifying the differences between GARS and PSRS in this cohort. Families with disabilities, acute medical conditions, and single mothers with young children were among those who met the criteria for “vulnerability.” Early results from the Canadian government’s Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian resettlement initiative support these assumptions.⁴³ In the first wave of resettlement, the Syrian GARS had lower levels of education, less knowledge

of official languages, and larger families than other cohorts of GARS. These differences between GARS and PSRS are seen in other refugee cohorts also, thus the importance of taking pre-migration differences into account when comparing integration outcomes between GARS and PSRS,⁴⁴ but especially so with the Syrian cohort. Caution is also important in comparing this cohort to others, given the unique nature of this initiative.

Our study identified other differences that to our knowledge have not been previously noted. GARS were displaced in a first country of asylum almost twice as long as PSRS, 38 months versus 19.5 months, suggesting longer exposure to the psychological and physical hardships of asylum. In this cohort there was also a large difference in the religion of GARS and PSRS, with almost all GARS being Muslim while three-quarters of the PSR sample was Christian, explained above as possibly being related to the presence of a relatively large and well-organized community of Christian Syrians in Montreal and Toronto. In the current climate of anti-Islamic discourse and attitudes, these differences may contribute to integration outcomes. Religion did contribute to some of the integration outcomes in this study; Muslim respondents were more likely to have friends from other ethnic communities and be closer to those friends, but less likely to have found employment. It will be important to explore further how religious identity is intersecting with other aspects of identity, social context, and migration pathways in shaping Syrian refugees’ integration pathways.

This research also shows that privately sponsored refugees are not homogenous and need to be considered more closely in terms of types of sponsorship. While only 5% of our PSR population were sponsored by Groups of Five, there are distinctive features of this group compared to the other PSRS sponsored by faith, family, and community groups. During the Syrian resettlement, Groups of Five may have been less likely to be named than other privately sponsored refugees, although many are now trying to bring in family members of the first families they sponsored.⁴⁵ Their post-migration experiences also seemed to differ. Those sponsored by Groups of Five reported relying on their sponsors to a much greater extent than did the other types of PSRS. There is very limited research on the nature of private sponsors themselves, a recent paper by Macklin and colleagues being a notable exception.⁴⁵ It suggests that these new sponsors were highly committed and motivated. More work is needed to understand this pattern and determine if it is replicated in other samples.

The breadth of our participants’ social networks varied widely. Having friends in either the established Syrian community or among other communities was related to having spent more time in Canada but also to education, a better

ability to speak one of the official languages, and being male. These findings are consistent with work on social exclusion among immigrants that finds women and those with lower language skills are more likely to be socially excluded.⁴⁶ The importance of social inclusion for health and well-being is well established. This research contributes to the body of work that argues that additional steps need to be taken to ensure all members of newcomer communities can build community here.

The primary impact of social networks in this analysis emerged in the context of employment. Having employment was predicted both by having relatives in Canada and having friends from other ethnic communities. Similarly, co-ethnic friends were the most frequently mentioned pathway to finding employment. These findings underline the importance of social networks to accessing early employment and are consistent with qualitative reports on how refugees access employment in Canada.⁴⁷ It also suggests the need to mobilize social networks to overcome social and structural barriers to employment.⁴⁸ PSRS had more family and friends from the established Syrian community than did GARS, so this aspect of private sponsorship may help support the early advantage typically observed for PSRS in employment rates. Nonetheless, although previous research has shown that private sponsors can be key resources in finding employment through social connections,⁴⁹ in our study, only a small proportion of our sample reported relying on their sponsors to find employment.

The second place where social networks had an impact was in a sense of belonging; having friends from other ethnic communities also predicted a sense of belonging to Canada, although not to one's immediate neighbourhood. This latter finding underscores the relationship identified in the HIM between a welcoming community, building social bridges, and a subjective sense of integration. Sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood, however, was predicted by the city one lives in, older age, being female, and being a GAR. The difference between these two forms of belonging may contrast an abstract sense of belonging with the strength of one's local social networks. Interestingly, sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood was also related to one's satisfaction with their housing, $r(1813) = .22, p < .001$, suggesting that physical and social environment may contribute to this sense of belonging.

Indeed, this study also illustrates the impact of the local context into which newcomers settle on key integration variables. Differences between cities include satisfaction with housing, sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood,

and access to a family physician. These differences likely reflect local differences that affect all residents. For example, health-care access differences mirror findings on regional differences in the availability of family physicians. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, Canadians in Ontario were among the most likely to have a primary care provider (90%), whereas those in Quebec were the least likely (72.2%).⁵⁰ It is therefore not surprising that the sample in Quebec was least likely to have access to a family physician. Health-care access may also reflect the extent to which specialized health-care services exist for recently arrived refugees. A study of the impact of a dedicated health clinic for GARS showed improved referrals and decreased wait times consistent with the authors' claims that the unique health-care needs of recently arrived refugees are better addressed with specialized services.⁵¹ The findings on housing, however, are surprising, since Toronto is known to have a very difficult housing market, and yet participants there reported relatively positive views of their homes.

A number of limitations must be taken into account. Although the sample is large, it is not randomly selected, and those Syrian refugees who are experiencing the most hardship or isolation may be the most difficult to reach. Likewise, those who have had success in employment may have less time to participate in research, so it is unclear in what ways the sample might be biased relative to other Syrian refugees in these cities. The study also only recruited from six urban centres and thus cannot speak to resettlement experiences in rural regions.

In conclusion, the first wave of data for this project show that comparing GARS and PSRS is a fraught exercise, given the incommensurate profiles of each category. GARS are likely to be displaced almost twice as long as PSRS before emigrating to Canada. Furthermore, PSRS are not a homogeneous group: Groups of 5 resemble GARS more than other PSR sponsorship types. This article presents the first research we know that disaggregates private sponsorship into the various kinds of groups that exist. While family reunification is occurring because refugees can be specified by name, it is unclear how strong the echo effect is in terms of a kind of chain migration within the PSR Program. More research is needed to fill these gaps.

Funding

This work was funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research grant number PJT-148960.

Appendix. Dummy coded variables for hierarchal linear modelling (HLM)

Variable	Coding
<i>City</i>	1 = Kitchener 2 = Montreal 3 = Okanagan 4 = Toronto 5 = Vancouver 6 = Windsor
<i>Sponsorship category</i>	1 = Government-assisted refugee (GAR) 2 = Privately sponsored refugee (PSR)
<i>Length of time in Canada</i>	Continuous variable
<i>Friends from the established Syrian community</i>	1 = Yes 0 = No
<i>Friends from other ethnic communities</i>	1 = Yes 0 = No
<i>Closeness to friends from other communities</i>	1 = Not at all 2 = A little close 3 = Mostly close 4 = Very close
<i>Age</i>	Continuous variable
<i>Education level</i>	1 = No education / very low education–elementary school 2 = Low education–middle school 3 = Moderate education–high school 4 = High education–university degree 5 = Very high education–postgraduate studies
<i>Length of displacement</i>	Continuous variable
<i>Gender</i>	0 = Female 1 = Male
<i>Official language fluency</i>	Continuous variable: mean score from 1–6 (1 = Not at all; 6 = Excellent) of current ability to speak and ability to understand French (Montreal) or English (all other sites)
<i>Religion</i>	Muslim = 0 Christian = 1
<i>Relatives in Canada</i>	1 = Yes 0 = No
<i>Employment</i>	1 = Yes 0 = No
<i>Trouble making ends meet</i>	1 = No, never had to get assistance 2 = Yes, had to get assistance once or twice 3 = Yes, had to get assistance several times
<i>Have a family doctor</i>	1 = Yes 0 = No

Appendix A (continued)

Variable	Coding
<i>Satisfied with housing</i>	1 = Very unsatisfied 2 = Unsatisfied 3 = Neither satisfied or unsatisfied 4 = Satisfied 5 = Very satisfied
<i>Sense of belonging to neighbourhood</i>	1 = Very weak 2 = Weak 3 = Strong 4 = Very strong
<i>Sense of belonging to Canada</i>	1 = Very weak 2 = Weak 3 = Strong 4 = Very strong

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“We Feel Like We’re Home”: The Resettlement and Integration of Syrian Refugees in Smaller and Rural Canadian Communities

STACEY HAUGEN

Abstract

Despite the media attention to Syrian refugee families being welcomed, finding work, and feeling at home in small towns across Canada, little is known about resettlement and integration in smaller and rural communities. Addressing this knowledge gap, this study visited four rural communities across four provinces in an effort to highlight the experiences of smaller and rural communities and the refugees living there. Based on interviews and conversations with rural refugee sponsors and community members, Syrian refugees, and service providers, the findings tell a story of refugees being welcomed into rural and smaller communities and of communities coming together to support the newcomers and find solutions to rural challenges. The article concludes that rural places can have a lot to offer refugees, some of whom settle permanently in these areas, and their experiences should be included as part of the larger narrative of refugee resettlement in Canada.

Résumé

Malgré l'attention médiatique portée envers l'accueil, l'emploi et le sentiment de se sentir chez soi des familles de réfugiés Syriens dans de petites villes à travers le Canada, on sait peu de choses sur leur réinstallation et leur intégration dans les communautés rurales. Cette étude comble cette lacune en visitant quatre communautés rurales et les réfugiés qui y vivent. S'appuyant sur des entrevues et des conversations avec les parrains en région rurale et les membres de la communauté, les réfugiés syriens et les prestataires de services, les résultats racontent l'histoire de réfugiés ayant été accueillis dans des communautés rurales et de petite taille, et de communautés qui se sont rassemblées pour soutenir les nouveaux arrivants et trouver des solutions aux défis ruraux. L'article conclut que les régions rurales ont beaucoup à offrir aux réfugiés, dont certains s'y installent de façon permanente, et que leurs expériences devraient être incluses dans la narration plus large de la réinstallation des réfugiés au Canada.

Introduction

“We feel like we’re home,” is what Boushra Albik told the *Globe and Mail* in 2016 about her new home in Claresholm, a small town with a population of 3,758 in southern Alberta. Boushra, her husband, Ziad, and their young son, Elyas, are Syrian refugees who fled to Lebanon in 2015 and were privately sponsored into their new Canadian community by the Faith Community Baptist Church. The article goes on to say that Ziad is hoping to work as a barber in the small community, since the previous barber has retired, and members of the church are helping the family run errands, as there is no public transportation in the area. Boushra and Ziad also comment that they “feel loved” in the small community and miss their new home when they travel to Calgary to visit friends or run errands.¹ Across the country in Nova Scotia, Assam Hadhad, a successful chocolate maker from Damascus, Syria, and his family were settling into their new home in Antigonish, a small community of 5,000. They opened the now famous chocolate factory, Peace by Chocolate, in 2016 and are expanding their business and employing other Syrian refugees across the country. Tareq Hadhad told CBC that his family has been overwhelmed by the support of the small community, and that “without being in Antigonish, without being in this lovely community, really none of that could happen.”²

These are only two examples of Syrian refugees finding a new home in smaller and rural communities across Canada. Other media articles from numerous sources including the CBC, Global News, and the *Globe and Mail* speak of Syrian refugees settling in rural Canada and being welcomed into their new communities.³ However, despite the media interest, very little is known about the processes of resettlement and integration outside of urban Canada. With funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), this study begins to address this knowledge gap and asks, What does refugee resettlement and integration look like in rural Canada? And, in the context of a global refugee crisis, are smaller and rural Canadian communities being under-utilized as sites for refugee resettlement?

This article makes a positive claim for the value of smaller communities and rural resettlement. My findings support the argument that many rural communities provide good integration opportunities for refugees, who are learning English, finding work, buying homes, and feeling welcomed in rural Canada. Before diving deeper into the challenges, innovations, and benefits of rural resettlement, the article will provide background on the resettlement system in Canada and a discussion of what is meant by the term *rural Canada*. Despite the challenges that refugees face in rural communities, including lack of public transportation

and access to specialized services, this is overwhelmingly a positive story, and the experiences of community members and refugees in rural areas must be included in the broader narrative of refugee resettlement in Canada.

Background

Refugees can be resettled into Canada through government assistance or the private sponsorship program. Through the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) Program refugees are referred to Canada for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and refugees receive support for one year from the government of Canada (or province of Quebec).⁴ The majority of government-assisted refugees are resettled in urban centres across the country, such as Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, and Edmonton,⁵ and are supported by service-provider organizations that are funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The government of Canada works with provinces and territories, service-provider organizations, and other partners and stakeholders to deliver services and provide resources to refugees. Services available through this network include, but are not limited to, language training, career supports, and help accessing support services such as child care and interpretation services.⁶ A limited number of service-provider organizations have a signed agreement with the IRCC designating them as Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) centres.⁷ Under RAP, the Canadian government or province of Quebec provides government-assisted refugees with essential services and income support.⁸ RAP service-provider organizations exist throughout the country, with the majority, but not all, located in large cities.⁹

Private sponsorship across the country occurs through two streams of sponsorship. The first is strictly private sponsorship, in which sponsors can name the individual(s) they want to sponsor into their community or be matched with a refugee through an inventory of visa office-referred cases. In this stream, sponsors pay the full cost of resettlement, which is laid out by the government of Canada and includes a start-up allowance for refugees and monthly stipend based on family size. Sponsoring groups agree to provide the refugees with care, lodging, settlement assistance, and support for twelve months or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient.¹⁰ The second stream is called the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program. The government of Canada provides up to six months of RAP income support, and the sponsors provide another six months of financial support and up to a year of social and emotional support.¹¹ Refugees sponsored through the private sponsorship program can be resettled anywhere across Canada that a sponsorship group has formed, including in rural and smaller communities.

Much of the research that has been conducted on refugee resettlement and integration in Canada has neglected to study private sponsorship and the unique experiences of smaller communities and the refugees who settle there. In 2017 the Refugee Research Network and Centre for Refugee Studies at York University submitted a policy brief to the government of Canada on the state of private refugee sponsorship. The brief identified this rural knowledge gap and recognized the need for further research, stating that “it would also be productive to discover how PSRS [privately sponsored refugees] fare in cities compared to smaller centres or rural areas.”¹² In 2011 the Canadian Council for Refugees published a report entitled “Refugee Integration: Key Concerns and Areas for Further Research.” Regarding access to settlement services, private sponsors, academics, and settlement practitioners felt more research was needed on access to settlement services in different provincial jurisdictions, how experiences differ between smaller communities and larger cities, and if the centralization of settlement agencies and services in urban centres affects integration.¹³

What is understood as *rural* is a highly debated and contested topic. For many analysts and researchers, the term is a reflection of distance and population density, while for others it is a social construction that reflects a specific history, lifestyle, and local knowledge.¹⁴ While the concept is fluid and changes, depending on the community and the context, “there is a general understanding that rural areas are places that generally have smaller populations, are distant from urban areas and have distinct identities and cultural ties.”¹⁵ Rural Canada is extremely diverse, and the economic, social, cultural, ecological, physical, and linguistic characteristics of rural communities vary from province to province, and from community to community.¹⁶ For example, rural economies can range from single-industry communities, such as those that depend solely on fishing or tourism, to mixed economies. While some rural areas may boast vibrant and growing economies, others lack job opportunities and have a high rate of unemployment.¹⁷

Rural communities in Canada today are facing numerous obstacles and many are struggling to survive. Globalization and the liberalization of markets have changed rural areas and placed added stressors on communities.¹⁸ For example, as youth migrate to urban centres in search of jobs, rural populations decline and businesses and local services begin to disappear. This process is cyclical, as without local services it becomes very hard to keep and attract new residents, and the population continues to decline.¹⁹ Challenges facing rural communities, including aging populations, lack of adequate infrastructure, and environmental concerns, are compounded by the global reality of climate change and international economic development.²⁰

When refugees settle into rural communities they face challenges that are characteristic of living in a rural community. Population decline in rural areas means fewer local services that many refugees need, including medical, education, and translation services. A lack of infrastructure and dispersed population results in no public transportation, which can be crucial for newcomers who may not have a driver’s licence or access to a vehicle. The Rural Development Institute (RDI) found that refugees face these and other challenges when settling into rural communities. During a case study of five rural Manitoba communities where refugees had been resettled, the RDI spoke with refugee sponsorship groups and service-provider organizations. From these interviews the RDI found that rural resettlement challenges included “difficulty finding work, followed by affordable housing, volunteer fatigue, availability of food that meets newcomers’ religious needs (e.g., halal meat) and access to post-secondary education. Overall, though participants indicated that there are strong supports, some of the challenges of settlement are simply inherent with living in a rural area (e.g., lack of public transportation, meeting specific food requirements, limited access to higher education).”²¹ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities also recognizes the hurdles that newcomers face in rural Canada, including a lack of multilingual health-care professionals, rental housing, and advanced language training.²²

While these challenges present barriers for refugees in rural areas, rural citizens work to address and overcome adversity through the strength of community networks and social connections. When conducting their study in rural Manitoba, the RDI heard from rural service providers and refugee sponsorship groups spoke not only of the challenges of rural resettlement, but also about the strong volunteer and community networks that mobilized to support the refugees in their communities.²³ In her book Stacey Wilson-Forsberg discusses the informal community networks involved in the integration of immigrant adolescents in a small city and rural town in New Brunswick. She states that the purpose of her book is “to examine how engaged citizens in New Brunswick set in motion social capital and social networks to create the necessary conditions to support an important aspect of the adaption and integration of immigrant adolescents: sense of belonging.”²⁴

Rural communities can utilize social capital and community networks to address adversity and create sustainable, welcoming communities, and refugee newcomers can be a part of this process. Because of smaller populations and distance from urban areas, small communities generally have enhanced social capital, understood as the “relationships between people characterized by trust and norms of reciprocity that can be used to achieve individual and collective

goals,” when compared to metropolitan areas.²⁵ Building social capital is an important way that smaller communities can improve their resilience in the face of increasing challenges and stressors. When a community increases its connections and interactions with diverse groups on a local, national and global scale, it builds “enduring social capital” through strengthened relationships and knowledge sharing and increases “community initiative, responsibility, and adaptability,” which is needed to ensure sustainable communities.²⁶ Diversity is thus an asset to smaller communities, as newcomers bring new resources, skills, and innovative ideas into the community.²⁷

The presence of social capital and social support networks in a community are also an important resource for resettled refugees. Social ties and support networks are vital to successful resettlement, as refugees use these ties as “mechanisms for support and integration.”²⁸ Social connections, within and outside the newcomers’ ethnic groups, are central to refugee integration and are important for refugees’ emotional support, confidence, language skills, and sense of safety and security.²⁹ In addition, resettled refugees can have a lot to offer smaller communities looking to build social capital, as “refugees are for the most part resilient and resourceful, and often come from societies that place a higher value on interpersonal relationships than most Western societies, making them quite adept at developing effective social networks.”³⁰

Research Design

In an effort to further understand these informal social and community processes of resettlement and integration in rural Canada, I embedded myself in four communities across four provinces. I chose these communities because they illustrate the diverse nature of rural Canada and have varying population sizes, economies, and geographies. Despite their differences, all the communities face similar rural challenges, as they are not metropolitan centres and each struggles with a lack of public transportation and other available services, as discussed previously. Prior to my fieldwork visits, I spoke with refugee sponsors over the phone and via email. I made preliminary, short visits to three of the four communities, before returning and immersing myself in each community for about a week in May and June 2017. While in each community, I interacted with community members and refugees at informal social events and conducted semi-structured interviews. I attended community functions, met diverse sets of community members, and visited with refugee families and sponsors multiple times. I conducted formal interviews with ten Syrian refugees and forty-five private sponsors, community members, service providers, and/or resettlement experts, but also met and spoke informally with other refugees and community members in the areas during my

visits. Many of the individuals with whom I spoke had multiple roles in their community. For example, one individual could be both a private sponsor and a local service provider, and thus the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the sponsorship process were not often clearly defined.

In all four communities, most of the individuals involved in the sponsorship group, as well as in other volunteer roles, were women. Thus, the majority of the individuals whom I spoke with were women, and groups stated that the majority of volunteers and people who had day-to-day contact with the refugee families were women. Each group also expressed a concern that the male refugees may not be getting as much male support or making as many male friendships as the women because of the lack of men involved in the process.

Of the sponsored refugee families that I visited, one is a government-sponsored family that moved out of the city, three are privately sponsored families, and two are Blended Visa Office–Referred families. The refugees had been in Canada for differing time periods. Three of the families arrived in Canada in the winter of 2016, and the other three families arrived in the fall of 2016.

- Community A is a community of 8,000 people in southwestern Ontario that is about 150 kilometres from the nearest metropolitan centre. This refugee sponsorship group sponsored a Syrian family. I spent seven days visiting in this community.
- Community B is a rural region in Nova Scotia. Here I visited three Syrian refugee families in two neighbouring communities who were sponsored by a coalition of individuals living in the area. Two of the Syrian families live in a community of 3,000 people that is about twenty kilometres from the nearest metropolitan centre, and the other Syrian family lives in another community of 500 people that is about fifty kilometres from the nearest urban centre. I spent eight days in this rural area.
- Community C has a population of 800 and is in southern Alberta. It is about 100 kilometres from the nearest urban centre. One intergenerational Syrian family was sponsored into this community, where I spent five days.
- Community D is a community in central Saskatchewan of 6,000 people that is about 110 kilometres from the nearest urban centre. One Syrian family was sponsored here. I spent six days in this community.

Research Findings

The collected data were analyzed in accordance with the research questions guiding the study. I identified common themes across the four communities and compared the similarities and differences between the experiences of

participants. Thus the findings below are organized into three common themes that each community experienced and had to address. The first theme is how communities dealt with and understood the common assumption that rural Canada is unwelcoming and intolerant towards immigrant or refugee newcomers; the second involves communities addressing and finding solutions to rural challenges; and the last theme looks at how communities and refugees utilized and enhanced their social capital through the resettlement and integration process. While the four communities faced many of the same resettlement challenges and opportunities, some findings were unique to each community, and I have disaggregated some of these examples within my discussion of the three themes.

Common Assumptions of Prejudice and Intolerance in Rural Canada

The assumptions made about rural communities manifest in how smaller communities perceive themselves and the actions that the four communities took to welcome the refugee newcomers. Rural communities are often viewed as being “more white and less tolerant,”³¹ and in all four communities each sponsorship group expressed initial concerns about prejudicial or unwelcoming attitudes towards refugee newcomers within their communities. They were all aware that their communities were largely white, Christian communities and that people in their community may not have had a lot of experience with other ethnicities or religions. With this in mind, every group took steps to inform and involve the wider community in the private sponsorship process through some or all of the following activities: community meetings, community fundraising, presentations to the town council, community-wide requests for volunteers and donations, etc. Throughout this process, the sponsors and other involved community members stated that intolerant or unwelcoming attitudes were not overt in their communities and overall the communities were very supportive. One sponsor stated, “The whole response was a lot more positive at least than I specifically thought it would be, and I think we as a group were really pumped by how excited the whole community seemed to be ... and overall people were really just excited to help.” Another sponsor stated, “People were asking us regularly when they were going to get here,” and another, “The response of the community was overwhelming.” One refugee commented that the people were very nice in his community and “everybody in the community wants to help.”

The unwelcoming attitudes that were mentioned by sponsors or community members included negative Facebook rhetoric about immigration or refugees in general, and personal conversations with people who were opposed to the sponsorship or had concerns about the process. One

sponsorship member stated, “I haven’t noticed it a whole lot, but I do know it’s there. Sometimes it’s just ignorance. People don’t understand ... people are afraid of what they don’t know.” Another community member said, “Once they saw the family and got to know them, and their kids are in our schools ... most people feel like it’s quite silly now to be afraid or anything like that.”

However, there is religious bias in these communities, even if it wasn’t overt. In at least three of the four communities, the subject of religion and how well some community members think the refugee family “fits” into the community came up during my fieldwork. For example, in one community a few sponsors reflected that some community members seemed more willing to embrace a refugee family because they were Christian. In one community discussions around the ability of a Christian family to “fit in” faster, and integrate more easily into the rural community than a Muslim family was a dividing point between some sponsorship members. This community ended up specifically choosing to sponsor a Christian family because they thought they would “fit in” better than a Muslim family.

Everyone said that since the refugees have arrived in their communities they have not heard any intolerant or negative comments directed at the families in person or otherwise. When asked, none of the refugees said they had experienced unwelcoming attitudes when out in the community. However, some refugees may have been reluctant to disclose anything negative about their communities.

Addressing Rural Challenges through Community Connections and Networks

When speaking with refugees and private sponsorship groups, the most pervasive and articulated challenges for refugee families centred upon acclimatizing to new social and cultural norms and dealing with a lack of available services. The most commonly mentioned challenge, other than the language barrier, was access to transportation. A vehicle of one’s own is the only constant mode of transport in the four rural communities I visited. Thus, transporting refugee families to the grocery store, or appointments in the city, involved a lot of volunteer driving. If the refugee family was large, transportation involved multiple volunteer drivers at one time or the need to rent a bus. Because rural communities are small, some of the families could walk to services in town. However, walking was not always an option, as some families lived a considerable distance from services, and the cold and snow didn’t encourage walking long distances. To overcome this challenge, groups worked hard to get the adults their driver’s licence. This process could involve paying for a driving test or extra lessons, helping to look for an inexpensive vehicle, and/or helping to pay for a vehicle.

Another common challenge mentioned by all sponsorship groups was the lack of an Arab and/or Muslim community in the rural area. This lack of Arab community meant that most families must drive to the city to access the mosque and obtain ethnic foods, including halal meats, and Arabic translators are often hard to find. Some families also must travel to the city to buy cultural-specific attire and other items of clothing. Sponsorship groups and communities worked to address this lack of community by driving families to the city for mosque or other cultural events, connecting them to other Arab or Muslim people in surrounding rural areas, using personal networks to find translators who were willing to drive or translate over the phone, and asking the local grocery to bring in specific foods.

Another challenge was a lack of newcomer services in rural areas. The availability of local services depended largely on the province and the size of the community. In the absence of formal newcomer service centres, rural sponsors and community members spent hours trying to find and access services for their newcomers. Even when sponsorship groups had members who were trained professionals, such as social workers, people working within the immigration system, English teachers, and doctors, figuring out how to navigate services was difficult for many. The system is complex, and service providers don't necessarily know of the sponsorship program or the benefits, such as the interim federal health plan, that refugees have access to. One sponsor commented, "As much as you know about it [service provisions and programs] you still don't know, because service providers themselves don't necessarily know about it."

For housing, only one group in Community D was able to access government subsidized housing, while the others found private rental homes or townhouses in the community. Every group was able to find a physician in the area who could see the refugee family (and in some cases they were able to find Arabic-speaking physicians). However, finding and accessing affordable dental care was a challenge for every group, and every refugee family needed extensive dental care. To deal with the costs, some groups were able to find dentists in the area who would do some work pro bono.

At least two groups explored professional counselling options for their families. However, the services available were offered in English only and not necessarily accessible. In one case, a sponsorship group considered driving the refugees into the city to access services but couldn't find an appropriate service there either. In most cases the sponsorship groups addressed mental health concerns more informally. For example, when one group became aware that a young refugee woman appeared to be very lonely and isolated within her home during the winter months, the group made an effort to stop by the home more often and take the woman

out for coffee or other activities. Another group mentioned that some mental health concerns remedied themselves once the refugee family was able to purchase a vehicle and gain some independence.

Each group also accessed English-language services differently. In some cases, access to English classes was limited, and sponsorship groups informally organized volunteers who were often retired teachers who would go into the family's home during the week to teach English. For formal instruction, Community C accessed a non-profit service in their community and also drove one young adult to a government-funded class in the city, while Community A accessed a unique volunteer-run service in a neighbouring community. Community B found a university scholarship program for one refugee, and Community D accessed classes offered through their local college. Three groups had to organize volunteers to drive refugees to language classes in neighbouring communities weekly or daily. While this commitment decreases somewhat after the family has acquired a vehicle and driving licences, it doesn't necessarily disappear, as the vehicle may be needed by one family member for work, and the others had to continue to rely on volunteers to attend classes.

Many of the refugees said that they liked the mix of formal and informal English instruction. During our conversations, many spoke of Syrian friends or acquaintances who lived in big cities who were not learning English as fast as they were. Some said that their friends didn't need to learn English because they lived in an Arabic-speaking community, or that they had trouble accessing language services because of long wait lists. The refugees I spoke with were eager to learn English, and one refugee stated that "language was the biggest barrier" when they first arrived.

Utilizing and Enhancing Social Capital

Across all the communities I visited, community members and refugees were quick to point to the positive attributes of rural places, which were often linked to the enhanced social capital in rural areas. Many comments were made to this effect including, "In a smaller community you can get to know people a lot easier," "We're a very close, very supportive community," and "It's a really helpful community here." Refugees commented that their communities were welcoming, and one said, "It's a special area." Everyone pointed to the close sense of community, where everyone knows everyone, in rural areas as a benefit to refugee resettlement. Each sponsorship group included individuals from different parts of the community who often held many different roles and had access to different resources and parts of the community. For example, one sponsor commented, "It feels especially, in a community this size, like a very arbitrary, made up division,

especially if you look at me, I am both a [sponsorship] member and an employee of the --- so when am I volunteering and when am I working? I don't even know, so it kind of feels silly sometimes to enforce a division that's really not there.... It's a small community, and everyone overlaps in their various roles." Thus, even if the sponsorship group didn't have a specific connection, someone within the group would know someone who could help in a specific area.

For example, personal connections were often used to help the refugees access employment opportunities. Because everyone knows who the refugees are, many of the refugees were offered jobs by local business owners. Older youth and adults were offered part-time jobs from local businesses, including restaurants, industrial plants, and grocery stores. Further, through the communities' social connections, some refugees also found jobs within their trained professions.

When I spoke to the refugees specifically about what they liked about the communities in which they are living, they spoke about similar things. Many of them stated that they liked that their community is quiet, the people are friendly and everyone knows them and says "Hi," it is safe and their children can go outside, everything is close by, they are close to their sponsors (the people who care about them and help them), and they can live in a house and have a garden. Some said that they liked going to the city for shopping, but they really liked coming back "home" afterward. Everyone spoke about the warm welcome they received when they first arrived and at community events, such as church potlucks or concerts. Others spoke of their ability to access certain services close to home.

Other commonly identified benefits of rural communities, by both sponsors and refugees, included the fact that everyone in the community embraced the families and is invested in their success (because the whole community worked together to bring them here), the community is safe, there is no traffic, the cost of living is lower in comparison to urban centres, large families can afford appropriate housing, the available services are close by and everything is easy to get to, and the refugees learn English faster, because there are few, if any, other Arabic-speaking individuals. Some sponsorship members also mentioned that retired people and seniors are a rich resource in rural communities, as they have a lot of time to volunteer and spend time with the newcomers.

Community members and sponsors also recognized the social capital that the newcomers brought to, and fostered within, their communities. Many commented that the refugee family brought diversity into their community and exposed the community to a new culture. Individuals also mentioned that it was great to have the community work together and rally around a common goal. One sponsor said that the sponsorship had "pulled people together for different

events that might not [otherwise] come together." Refugee sponsorship also offered the community an opportunity to be part of something bigger and do something concrete in response to an international crisis. When speaking about private sponsorship one sponsor said, "It's like the intersection of local community building and international relief work, and it's so rare that you actually have those two things come together in one."

The community bonds and connections present in these communities influenced the decisions of refugee families to stay in their new communities. Many of the private sponsors and service providers I spoke with assumed that the refugees would want to move to a city once their year of sponsorship was over in order to be closer to an Arabic-speaking community, a broader range of newcomer services, and other ethnic and cultural services. However, while this is true for some, many of the refugees I spoke with have decided to stay and make a home for themselves and their families in their small community. The decision of families to stay surprised many community members. One service provider commented, "I don't think anybody expected them to want to stay here."

Of the refugee families with whom I spoke, some have bought homes in their new communities, while others are renting. One family in Community A bought a house in their new community just after their year of sponsorship ended. They commented that Community A is "home" and they don't want to leave. They said that the people are friendly, and everyone knows who they are, because they are the only Syrian refugee family, which makes them feel special. Another family, living in Community B, who have now finished their one year of support, are renting a house in the centre of their small community. While they did live in an urban centre in Canada for a brief period, they didn't like living in an apartment and say that they are much happier with their house and large yard. They like having the ability to garden, they would miss their friends and sponsors if they moved, and the children do not want to leave the small community school. The family in Community D have also chosen to remain in their community.

Another family in Community C stated that they can't imagine moving to a bigger centre and they have also bought a house in their community. They feel safe where they are and like the quiet. They go shopping in the city and always like coming back "home." Earlier this year, the family welcomed some of their other family members into the community, who were also sponsored by the same group. In this instance, family reunification, or the "echo effect," is bringing another Syrian family to this small community. However, two families from Community B moved to the nearest urban centre, with the support and help of their sponsorship group. They are both young families and are moving in order to be

closer to the university, more job opportunities, and a larger Arab community.

Conclusion

Despite the very real challenges in rural places, communities are finding unique solutions, and many refugees have decided to stay and rebuild their lives there. Refugees are finding quality jobs, accessing service, and buying homes in rural Canada, while small centres are becoming more diverse and welcoming new members into the area. While I am confident in the identified findings of this project, it is important to note the limitations of this study, as it was not a longitudinal research project and consisted of a small sample size. This is an initial look into rural resettlement and my findings are not meant to be generalizable or conclusive. Much more research is needed on this topic in order to expand our understanding of rural resettlement and integration. In this conclusion, I will expand on this story of rural resettlement through a discussion of community-led solutions to rural challenges, economic opportunities for newcomers, and recommendations for policy change.

Rural challenges, such as a lack of newcomer services, have led communities to develop their own creative solutions. Despite the fact that refugees can be resettled anywhere in Canada through the private sponsorship program, the current system does not offer expanded services outside of urban centres. For example, the growing number of sponsored Syrian refugees in one region in southwestern Ontario resulted in the community-led creation of an English-language school, which is accessed by the refugee family from Community A. The school began when an Arabic-speaking couple with backgrounds in non-governmental organizations in the Middle East, and one with official English as a Second Language (ESL) training, started teaching two refugees who were sponsored through their church in 2015. In a few months, they went from teaching four to thirty students in January 2016, as more and more private sponsorship groups requested to access this unique program. The school now runs five days a week in a church basement. Most of the students are refugees, but some immigrants and other newcomers are also accessing the centre. Over forty volunteers help run the program. There are students who are just learning to read and write, and others who are university graduates. While transportation has been the biggest challenge for refugees to access the school, sponsors either drive their students or helped the refugees with vehicle costs. The refugees not only learn English, they are also able to meet with other refugees and integrate into the community and meet new people.

Another example comes from Camrose, Alberta, a city of 18,000 where three churches came together to open the

Camrose Refugee Centre in November 2017. While churches in the area have been sponsoring refugees for decades, this is the first unified effort to help newcomers in the community. Community members saw a need for a service to help newcomers and they worked together to find a solution. The centre, which is mostly run by volunteers, assists churches and organizations sponsoring refugees and helps newcomers adjust to life in Canada and meet other newcomers in the area. Erhard Pinno, chairman of the Refugee Centre, commented, "I consider it a very historic day in the life of this community. It's another important step, I think in terms of being a real welcoming community ... letting refugees from all over the world know we are here to help you as much as we can."³²

These creative solutions are just some examples of how rural communities use their social capital to address rural challenges. When private sponsors were concerned that their community may not be welcoming to newcomers, they held community meetings, sat in local grocery stores, and spoke with local community organizations. In the absence of public transportation, private sponsors rallied community members and organized carpooling. Without formal language classes, community members with a background in education volunteered their time and organized classes. Despite the challenges, rural communities lean on their social connections and use community networks to find solutions. This social capital is strengthened by diversity and is an important asset in rural communities that often lack the more formal, government-funded newcomer services that exist in urban places.

Social connections in rural communities offer some refugees the chance to find and keep good employment, and rural Canada can be a place of economic opportunity. For example, in Community C a Syrian man found a job working in a tire shop, which made use of his extensive experience. A man in Community B found a job as a pastry chef in his rural community, while another family started catering in Community A. Michael J. Molloy (a former civil servant who worked on the refugee provisions of the 1976 immigration act and helped coordinate resettlement of Indochinese refugees into Canada from 1979 to 1980) stated that knowledge of previous employment could be used before placing some refugees in rural communities. Matching some rural communities with refugees could help bring new people and services into their communities, and refugees with relevant skills could find good employment, affordable housing, and available services.

The relative affordability of housing in smaller communities can benefit refugees and their families, as refugees who resettle in large metropolitan Canadian cities, such as Vancouver, often struggle to find an inexpensive and appropriate

place to live.³³ A report from the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights contends that Syrian refugees have had difficulties finding affordable housing in Canada's major urban centres: "Many GARS [government-assisted refugees] who arrived between 4 November 2015 and 29 February 2016, for instance, were accommodated in hotels for longer periods than usual because they had difficulty finding housing. For some, the arrangement lasted months. During this time, families were confined to small hotel rooms designed for short stays."³⁴ Smaller communities with low-cost housing options could be utilized by the government to house newly arrived refugees so that families avoid living in hotel rooms for long periods of time. Finding long-term, appropriate housing for large families in Vancouver and Toronto is difficult and costly, and smaller and rural communities could be used to find sustainable housing options for refugees. As stated earlier, some of the families that I spoke with have been able to purchase homes in their new communities, but that would have proven more difficult if they lived in a large urban centre.

Moving forward, it is crucial that we share the positive stories coming out of rural Canada and begin to utilize smaller and rural communities more effectively for refugee resettlement. Refugees can benefit from the social capital, economic opportunities, and affordable housing options that rural communities can offer. In some cases, refugees can readily access services in rural communities that have become stretched in the cities. Because multiple levels of government are involved in newcomer services, select rural communities have government services in their communities. Community D in Saskatchewan has access to formal English-language courses through their local college, available public housing, and an immigrant services centre. One sponsor from the community in Saskatchewan stated, "We have so many services here, we have housing here, why aren't they settling some of these people here? If they can help us with the money part ... we could probably bring a whole community in if we could afford to find a benefactor who could pay for it, the housing is sitting here, the services are here." In an effort to further consider rural communities for resettlement, the government could expand the RAP to include more rural and smaller communities. If a community has services for resettlement and integration, it is worth examining ways in which they can be used more effectively.

This point has been made by others in small communities seeking to help refugees. Joseph McMorrow and Catherine Caufield wrote about the benefits of rural resettlement: "Why did large numbers of government sponsored Canadian Syrian refugees recently spend weeks isolated in urban hotels awaiting a permanent residence when there were small towns in Canada lining up asking to be allowed

to provide them with a welcome, a residence and friendly personal support?"³⁵ Despite the extensive experience that smaller communities have had with refugee resettlement, and the success of these communities to support newcomers, despite a lack of formal services, the IRCC continues to concentrate resettlement services in urban centres. McMorrow and Caufield saw this first hand in Camrose: "The Camrose Refugee Coordinating Committee recently asked that Camrose be named as a welcoming community for government-sponsored Syrian refugees. This offer included the complete provision of initial housing and meals. No formal reply was ever received because Camrose could not meet the settlement criteria—criteria that suspiciously look as though they were created to ensure that smaller communities would not be considered."³⁶

The evidence and information above tells a positive story of rural refugee resettlement. Even though this is a small research study and much more research is needed on the benefits and challenges of rural resettlement, these stories give us a place to start. Many rural and smaller communities are working to create welcoming spaces for refugees, many of whom have decided to build a new life in rural Canada. These stories need to become part of the resettlement narrative in Canada, and communities with positive resettlement stories need to be considered by the government as potential destinations for refugees. As more and more people become displaced around the globe, rural resettlement is an opportunity that we can't afford to ignore.

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How Do Sponsors Think about “Month 13”?

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Abstract

There are many different ways in which one might describe the goal of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. For sponsors, though, one goal is clear: to get “their” refugees ready to handle the rigors of “month 13.” The supposed ideal is that, by month 13, newcomers are employed and living independently in Canada, as productive members of society. The reality is messier. The objective in this article is to offer an account of how sponsors think of their job, in relation to month 13. Using data collected via interviews with nearly sixty private sponsors in Ottawa, it is shown that sponsors are motivated by securing stability for newcomers by the time month 13 arrives, but that sponsors differently flesh out the meaning of the stability they are seeking to achieve on behalf of newcomers. In particular, the data suggest, sponsors believe that newcomers' attitude to integration is especially strongly related to their actual integration, and newcomers do especially well by month 13 to the extent that sponsors are able to build and support a positive attitude towards it.

Résumé

Il y a plusieurs façons dont pourrait être décrit l'objectif du Programme de parrainage privé de réfugiés du Canada. Pour les parrains, toutefois, l'objectif est clair: il s'agit de

préparer « leur » réfugié à gérer les rigueurs du « 13^e mois ». L'idéal supposé est qu'à partir 13^e mois, les réfugiés travaillent et vivent de façon indépendante en tant membres productifs de la société. La réalité est plus compliquée. Cet article a pour objectif de rendre compte de la façon dont les parrains envisagent leurs tâches en lien avec le 13^e mois. S'appuyant sur des données recueillies auprès d'une soixantaine de parrains à Ottawa, cet article démontre que les parrains sont animés par le désir d'assurer la stabilité des réfugiés avant 13^e mois. Cependant, les parrains définissent de manière différente ce qu'ils entendent par stabilité. Notamment, les données indiquent que les parrains estiment que le niveau d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants est particulièrement relié à leur attitude envers l'intégration. Les parrains estiment également que la réussite des nouveaux arrivants dépend de leur capacité à développer et soutenir chez eux une attitude positive envers l'intégration.

There are many different ways in which one might describe the goal of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program:¹ it gives Canadians with a commitment to refugees a way to personally increase the number of resettlement spaces for them in Canada; it provides a highly personalized and robust welcoming team for newly arriving refugees; it involves the community in the larger Canadian project of welcoming refugees to our country. Refugees to

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Canada are admitted in one of two ways: as government-assisted refugees and as privately sponsored refugees. Government-assisted refugees are admitted with formal links to Canada's extensive settlement services, which take charge of supporting them as they construct their new lives in Canada. Privately sponsored refugees are selected by Canadian citizens and permanent residents for admission. In supporting their application to Canada, sponsors commit to a range of tasks with respect to "their" refugees, including finding them accommodation, health care, language classes, and so on, all of which are directed at facilitating their integration into Canadian society. This commitment is officially one year long, and the supposed ideal is that, by month 13, refugee arrivals are self-sufficient in a meaningful way. The reality is messier. Using data collected via interviews with nearly sixty private sponsors in Ottawa, this article offers an account of how sponsors think of their job, in relation to month 13.

In this article, Part 1 outlines the overarching theoretical questions that motivated this work, and elaborates the ways in which the terms *integration*, *independence*, *agency*, and *self-sufficiency* are understood across a range of fields in social science. Part 2 offers a summary of recent accounts of the objectives of month 13; this summary includes anecdotal accounts suggesting that not all refugees are prepared to be on their own when their sponsorship comes to an end. Part 3 describes the methods deployed to carry out the research. Part 4 offers an account of how "independence," and the related concepts listed above, is conceptualized by sponsors, to reveal that they describe it both in "hard" terms, i.e., with respect to whether refugees have jobs or competence in a national language, and in relatively "softer" terms, i.e., with respect to whether refugees arrive with attitudes towards their new lives that makes integration easier or more difficult. This part also offers an account of how sponsors worked to support refugees in achieving success in both dimensions. The results suggest, ultimately, that while many sponsors have a multidimensional understanding of what success at month 13 entails, a significant minority of sponsors continue to have narrow accounts of what counts as success at month 13, understanding it only or mainly in terms of economic self-sufficiency. These latter sponsors, in particular, expressed some disappointment with their sponsorship experience, in those cases where this objective was not reached. Yet it is well known among scholars and settlement workers, as described below, that integration into Canadian society, and the labour market in particular, is gradual; the failure to attain it by month 13 means neither that the refugees have failed, nor that the sponsorship has failed. As the guidelines from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program for Month 13 note, "It is important for sponsors not to feel disheartened or discouraged if the refugee(s) they have sponsored are

not self-sufficient by the end of Month 12 ... integration is a long-term process."²

What Is the Goal of Month 13?

Month 13 looms large, for both sponsors and refugees. As articulated above, sponsors agree to support refugees for one year, and the legal dimension of the relationship between sponsors and refugees concludes one year after the refugee arrives in Canada. The most concrete dimension of the cut-off is financial: whereas sponsors take on the financial responsibility for supporting refugees for their first year in Canada, on the first day of month 13 this financial responsibility concludes. In a small number of cases, sponsors are willing and able to continue offering at least some financial support to refugees beyond month 13, but according to the data gathered from sponsors in Ottawa, that is not the norm. In a larger number of cases, strong affective ties have developed between sponsors and refugees, so the friendships continue beyond month 13.

Much of the commentary on the implications of month 13 is anecdotal. Between November 2015 and January 2017, over 40,000 Syrian refugees were admitted to Canada, over 18,000 of whom were privately sponsored.³ In early 2017, after many of these refugees had been present for a year or more, journalists in Canada and the United States profiled many of these refugees, reporting on how their first year in Canada had gone.⁴ One central theme in these stories was that there was a lot of nervousness felt among all parties—refugees, sponsors, and settlement workers—about how the transition would go. The point is not that support is not available—all provinces have welfare systems that will support refugees, if they require it, and refugees continued to be permitted to access settlement services of all kinds, although some reports suggest that refugees are unaware that ongoing support, financial and otherwise, is available.⁵ But the precise mechanisms by which refugees would support themselves after the formal cut-off point, and how the relations among refugees and sponsors would be navigated, were all hazy in ways that generated anxiety for refugees and sponsors alike.

The Research Set-up

The data reported below were collected from interviews with nearly sixty sponsors in Ottawa, conducted as part of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant.⁶ The research design was approved by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board. We recruited sponsors by communicating with refugee settlement agencies in Ottawa as well as sponsorship agreement holders, across all major religious groups in Canada.⁷ These agencies forwarded our recruitment email to the sponsors with whom they worked, asking them to be in touch with us if they were willing to speak with

our interviewer. Each of these sponsors reached out to the research team and an interview was scheduled, and it ran approximately ninety minutes. One interviewer conducted all of the interviews, between October 2017 and January 2018. The interviewer used a questionnaire⁸ to direct the interview, but followed the standards associated with semi-structured interviewing techniques, allowing her to ask follow-up questions when sponsors hinted that they had more of relevance to say on the areas of focus. Respondents came from every major religious group in Canada (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu), and many were secular.⁹ They were mainly women, often retired, many from the Canadian public service.¹⁰ With two exceptions, sponsors resided in Ottawa.¹¹ All of the people interviewed had completed their sponsorship year. In many cases, interviewees were first-time sponsors who had responded to the call to support Syrian arrivals; in several others, interviewees had been participating in refugee sponsorship for years, and even decades. The intention was to interview sponsors individually, but several sponsors early on indicated a strong preference to be interviewed in groups, and that preference was respected. As a result, while most interviews were one-on-one, a dozen were conducted in small group of between two and four sponsors.

Three main questions form the basis of the analysis:

1. One of the main jobs of a sponsor is to secure the independence of newcomers. What do you think *independence* means?
2. What skills do you believe that newcomers need, in order to be independent?
3. At what point, if any, do you believe that the newcomers with whom you worked became independent?

The interviewer asked these questions in order but had flexibility to pursue additional follow-up questions where she felt it was appropriate.

A word about linguistic choice: the research was born from the observation that *something* is meant to be achieved for refugees by the time their first year in Canada comes to an end. This something was initially conceived as *agency*, a term familiar to philosophers, which designates the capacity of an individual to formulate decisions among quality options and to be able to act on these decisions in meaningful ways.¹² Are refugees *agents* in their own lives, and do sponsors support refugees' agency? The language of agency, it turns out, is familiar to scholars but not as familiar to sponsors. Correspondingly the language deployed in the research was shifted to focus on independence; questions focused on the nature of independence, and related terms were better able to capture quality data on the actions sponsors were taking to support the refugees with whom they worked. In particular, our research framework, and the specific questions selected to begin conversations, was derived from

an analysis of labour market integration literature; from accounts of "self-sufficiency"; and from the philosophical literature focused on agency and empowerment.¹³ As with the entire research team, the interviewer was armed with the broad understanding of independence described here and so was cognizant that the simple questions reported above may not have been able to capture the nuance sought in this project. She was therefore able to probe further, shifting language in follow-up questions, towards self-sufficiency or agency, where appropriate. No doubt the language is imperfect, but these initial thoughts are intended to frame the readers' understanding of the objectives and results reported here.

The theme of "economic independence" will prove especially relevant to the analysis below, but there is an important caveat: the research team does not believe that self-sufficiency, integration, or independence translates in any easy way to *economic* independence. Yet much of the rhetoric around immigration admission and settlement in general—and refugees are not excluded—is about the ways in which migrants of all kinds contribute to the Canadian economy. Moreover, attempts to mobilize support in favour of admitting refugees, by the government and often refugee advocates themselves, emphasize the contribution that they will make to Canadian society. Admitted refugees may impose short-term costs, so the public discourse goes, but over the long term they become active contributors to our economy; indeed, there is considerable evidence suggesting that, overall, refugees do in time contribute as taxpayers to the Canadian economy, and that the work they do recoups the short-term costs their arrival and early integration generates.¹⁴ To take just one example, in a recent speech detailing new pre-arrival services available for migrants to Canada, Minister of Immigration, Citizenship and Refugees Ahmed Hussen began by noting the ways in which immigrants support Canada's economic success, and casually and repeatedly mentioned the "positive role that immigrants play in our economy and society."¹⁵

There is nothing striking or original about this quotation, other than it is run-of-the-mill for immigration-related commentary from the Canadian government. Yet public statements of this kind sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly propose that, were Canadians to believe that refugees imposed only, or mainly, costs on Canadian citizens, they would not be willing to support their admission. More worryingly, this emphasis on the economic contributions that refugees ultimately make suggests that, where they do not do so, or were they not to do so, they would be understood as *burdens* on Canadian citizens. This view is particularly problematic, since refugees ought to be admitted for resettlement because a commitment to humanitarianism

demands it; Canadian refugee policy recognizes this, moreover, and in general prioritizes the admission of refugees who are most in need, rather than (as historically had been the case) those who appear best able to make contributions to the Canadian economy.¹⁶

Three central findings that emerge from the data are outlined below. One finding is that sponsors offer two general accounts of how independence should be defined, and what skills are associated with it. One account emphasizes hard skills like education and linguistic competence; a second emphasizes softer skills, some of which are not straightforwardly *skills*, including the capacity and willingness to shift habits and norms, and a willingness to “jump right in.” A second finding is that large numbers of sponsors focused explicitly on engaging with refugees in ways that they believed built independence; for many, something like independence was at the top of their minds. Yet when and where they were able to support transitions to independence were not always clear, or were impeded by other considerations. A final and related finding is that month 13, though a cut-off of sorts, does not correspond neatly with the achievement of independence; rather, independence is gained gradually and imperfectly, over the course of sponsorships and beyond.

Findings: Defining and Supporting Independence

What Is Independence?

As noted above, sponsors were asked to consider what it means to be independent. Broadly, sponsors offered two kinds of responses: one focused on the development of skills (or accomplishment of certain tasks) and another focused on the possession (or development) of specific attitudes.

Among sponsors who focused on skills development, one group described independence straightforwardly in terms of gainful employment, as did these sponsors: “I think being employed or knowing how to access a source of income” is central to independence; “I think it means, ultimately to get working”; and “Financially independent: I guess this means they should be getting jobs or at least getting the skills to get jobs.”¹⁷ Sponsors who defined independence in employment terms expressed frustration with refugees who rejected what they viewed as perfectly good jobs. One sponsor noted a low-skilled refugee, with poor English skills, refusing to clean toilets, for example. Another expressed frustration with a refugee who insisted that he work as a barber, for whom an apprenticeship position was found, but who then refused to study for the additional qualifications that would have secured him more stable and lucrative employment.

Among those sponsors who immediately associated independence with employment, there was a persistent worry about the danger of refugees accepting a life on social assistance. One sponsor, when asked to consider the meaning

of independence, immediately observed that “they have only to be not dependent on Canadian taxpayers’ money.”¹⁸ Sponsors with this attitude described their job as, in part, to ensure that refugees did “not think that it’s OK to be on social assistance.”¹⁹ Another explained that they were very clear, in working with refugees, that “welfare is a way of life that you really don’t want to get addicted to.”²⁰ One sponsor reported a conversation with refugees in which refugees were asking for support in sponsoring additional family members; the sponsor explained that sponsorships are expensive and cannot be undertaken easily. The refugees responded that the additional money was not necessary, since their family members could “get on welfare.” The sponsor noted, “Nobody had educated them that welfare isn’t a default way of life here.... You need to educate them that welfare is not an end state in Canada.”²¹ Some sponsors expressed the worry that “they” believed that social assistance was “a way of life” or theirs for the taking, and that sponsors thereby should count among their jobs ensuring as much as possible that refugees do not “go on welfare.” Regardless of whether sponsors believed that being financially self-sufficient was necessary to declaring the sponsorship a success, most advised against relying on social assistance unless it was essential, and, at least according to the data, sponsors are generally successful in persuading refugees to avoid it. In the discussion section below, the reasons and implications of a sponsor focus on economic integration—and the pressure to encourage avoiding social assistance—will be considered in more detail.

In addition to employment, many sponsors connected independence to linguistic competence. One sponsor noted, “First of all language is a big thing, because obviously if they can’t communicate then they’ll never be independent.”²² Another sponsor echoed this view: “To learn the language ... that’s number one. That means they can become independent if they have the English language.” Every sponsor we spoke to understood that among their jobs was securing language education for refugees, noting its key role in securing self-sufficiency among refugees. Some sponsor groups supported formal language training by offering in-home additional tutoring, in one case by focusing specifically on language instruction appropriate to the employment desires and experiences of the refugees with whom they were working. The stories varied, but the motivation was the same: to encourage and support the learning of English (in our sample, only English) so that refugees could navigate Canadian life on their own.

Correspondingly, multiple sponsors reported anguish at navigating the challenges of month 13 precisely in terms of linguistic acquisition and competence. As sponsors reported, refugees overwhelmingly arrived with a desire to work as quickly as possible. These sponsors highlighted how often refugees worried about being burdens on Canada, since

the country had offered their family a new home in safety and security; they wanted to “repay” Canada as quickly as possible, and if not pay Canada back, at least not impose additional costs on Canada. Yet where refugees arrived with no competence in English, one year simply did not seem to be adequate to give them the base they needed to operate fully independently (of their sponsors) in Ottawa. In response, sponsors felt, refugees were forced into difficult choices. Many refugees who were able to access the labour market often preferred to abandon language classes, simply to ensure that they did not have to rely on social assistance. For many individuals—overwhelmingly but not exclusively men—after having secured safety for their families, after often traumatic and dangerous journeys, the thought of being unable to financially support families at month 13 was painful. In response, some sponsors focused on encouraging refugees to understand that they could make more and better contributions if they chose to slow down and gain competence in English before entering the labour market. Some sponsors, with additional capacity, opted for hybrid options in which they encouraged employment but continued offering (sometimes extensive) in-home tutoring in English.

Not all sponsors responded to questions about independence in terms of hard skills. Many others responded by pointing to attitudes or character traits that supported achieving self-sufficiency in new environments. Sponsors who answered questions about independence in this way were quick to point out that refugees had not only survived extensive trauma before arriving in Canada, but that they had *survived* this trauma without sponsor support. They described refugees as resilient in the face of significant trauma and change, and connected this resilience to the grace with which refugees responded to the challenges they faced in learning how to flourish in Canadian society. This approach was reflected in statements like the following: “We were very respectful of the fact that this family managed just fine in Syria without us.”²³ They were, said these sponsors, already independent in all the relevant ways, and described the sponsorship job in terms of guiding refugees towards understanding how to achieve their own objectives in Canada.

Some sponsors in this category referred to refugees who seemed to possess basic problem-solving skills that enabled them to confront and adapt to their new circumstances. Others noted that the refugees they sponsored had an orientation that lent itself to coping with new circumstances—one noted with affection that the grandfather in the family simply went for extended walks, not worrying about whether he would get lost. One described this attitude as a “certain amount of get-up-and-go ... you need to be motivated to go.”²⁴ This sort of attitude facilitates the trajectory towards independence, explained many sponsors. Sponsors described refugees as

“adaptable” or as willing to learn and incorporate the Canadian “way of life.” Said one sponsor of the family she was working with, “They are the most resourceful, and adaptable, and flexible people imaginable. And I think they are going to do just fine.”²⁵ Typically, sponsors who responded in this way noted that among the refugees with whom they worked, there was an orientation towards understanding how Canadian society worked, and that this orientation propelled choices among them that would allow them to flourish in Canadian society specifically.

To take just one example: many sponsors appeared attentive to gender norms and dynamics in operation in the families they had sponsored. Several sponsors noted the importance of encouraging both men and women to achieve linguistic competence, and especially highlighted the efforts they had made to ensure that especially mothers of young children were able to attend classes, detailing, for example, extensive cooperative babysitting they had provided until day-care spaces for young children became available. Many sponsors expressed the view that families in which men and women were willing to abandon relatively less egalitarian gender relations in favour of integrating both women and men in a family, the better able the family seemed to be able to cope with the challenges of integration; sponsors understood this “abandonment” as evidence that refugees were taking on Canadian gender norms. One sponsoring group especially noted a new dad’s willingness to stay home with his baby while his wife attended language class; as they reminisced, they told a story of the panicked dad calling the sponsors to them the baby was crying, and to ask what he should do. The sponsors reassured him that the baby loved him, and that he should try various strategies for helping the baby to calm down. In their telling, as the baby’s mother was working to gain linguistic competence, a key element of independence, so too was the dad learning that he was capable of caring for his family in multiple ways.

Supporting the Development of Independence

When sponsors were asked how they supported the development of independence among refugees, two consistent themes emerged. One theme centred upon how best to engage refugees in decision-making about critical issues, and another focused on how best to “help” refugees, when some ways of helping them were occasionally thought to threaten to undermine their own capacity-building in the longer term. Overshadowing these reflections is the obvious fact that sponsors simply do know more about how Canadian society operates, and what it takes to be successful within it; moreover, it is *of course* the sponsors’ job to work towards securing the well-being of the refugees they have sponsored. This knowledge differential, along with the

felt pressure among sponsors to do their job well, can create challenges as sponsors aim to support refugees who do need the information sponsors possess, but who often have distinct priorities about what is valuable and how to spend their time and money.

Correspondingly, one way in which sponsors supported the development of independence was via a focused attempt to involve refugees in as many major decisions as possible, such as about housing and educational trajectories. The former is especially meaningful, since there is some pressure on sponsors to ensure that accommodation is available upon the refugees' arrival; yet many sponsors chose to offer temporary accommodation so that refugees could be more directly involved in selecting their "permanent" home.²⁶ These sponsors thought of their job as providing refugees with the resources to make often complicated decisions among options available: "A lot of it is about your own decision-making—having all the information that they need to be able to make the decisions they need for their lives."²⁷ Another sponsor noted of their sponsorship group, "We really tried to involve them in all the decision-making, everything we can."²⁸ The goal, as sponsors saw it, was to provide information about options, do what they could to ensure that information was adequately absorbed and understood, and then step back as refugees made decisions, such as to buy cars, to continue or halt language classes, to take or reject certain jobs.

Multiple sponsors noted distinct ways of supporting refugees, hinting at a distinction between passive and active forms of support. Passive forms of support place refugees in the position of receiving help, at the whims of sponsors, whereas active forms of support involve sponsors attempting to create the conditions under which refugees could help themselves, in the present and also in the longer term.²⁹ When, asked this sponsor, was it appropriate to respond to requests for "help" by refugees, such as with providing transportation to appointments, by saying, "OK, you've been to the doctor five times already, you know where it is,"³⁰ or when just to stop offering transportation automatically? The answer is, of course, that sponsors must judge a range of factors, including the readiness of refugees to tackle day-to-day tasks like getting to appointments on their own, as well as the resources within the sponsor group to expend on such tasks.

One sponsor noted, for example, "I do think that it's really important for the sponsors not to be too hands-on,"³¹ and another noted, "You are not doing them any favours by holding their hand too much."³² The sentiment these statements reflect is that refugees were well served by sponsors who encouraged them to take on basic life tasks on their own, and quickly. One sponsor explicitly connected this orientation to independence: "From the outset, that was very much the goal, was for them to become independent. A lot of that

for us meant not trying to do every little thing for them. Showing them how to do things rather than for them, and to help them find their way around with life in Canada."³³ Ultimately, explained a sponsor, "at a certain point ... you step away a little bit, so you can never let them feel lost and feel abandoned, but you step away in small bits and if you do it bit by bit.... You follow their lead, you check in with them."³⁴ This approach can also backfire, as one sponsor explained, reflecting on their group's decision to step back from the refugees they were supporting: "We just figured they would have to now step up and, you know, be more active in their own lives and in their decision-making. But unfortunately, they didn't.... They felt as if our group had kind of abandoned them. And yet the intention of our group was to help them become more independent.... So that strategy didn't work."³⁵

A frequently noted complication is that there are ways that sponsors can "help" refugees, which refugees would appreciate, but that according to some sponsors are better withheld; sometimes sponsors believed that the conscious choice to withhold certain forms of help that they *could* offer was more likely to support refugees in gaining independence in the longer term. This situation arose mainly with expenditures, a complication that stems from the fact that, as sponsors repeatedly observed, they are often well-off financially, especially compared to the refugees they support.³⁶ Add this to the general desire of sponsors to support refugees, and their genuine affection for them, and many sponsors felt that they were in the position to do favours for their refugees by buying them things they needed or wanted, and so on. But, noted many sponsors, this inclination can and sometimes did get in the way of refugees' education about the real cost of living in Canada.

A single refugee's income for one year is approximately \$12,600, so careful budgeting is necessary.³⁷ Sponsors noticed that refugees to Canada often had no experience with Western banking systems and so were unfamiliar with bank accounts and machines, credit cards, the way interest works, and so on. For many, the fact that in Canada tax is added to the cost of items, at the cash register, is disconcerting. Additionally, as with any new arrival, the basic cost of items in Canada must be learned—for example, many were surprised that cellular service in Canada is much more expensive than in their countries of origin. Newly arrived refugees often appeared to feel overwhelmed by the choices that had to be made, relatively quickly after arrival. Correspondingly, many sponsors focused on making sure that refugees understood the cost of necessities.

Yet, even as sponsors understood that their job was to provide information, many reported uncertainty and sometimes tension in describing how and when to intervene

where refugees deliberated options and made choices that to sponsors appeared financially irresponsible, especially in the choice to purchase cars, cigarettes, and other goods that they felt were unnecessary and perhaps frivolous. Car purchases was repeatedly mentioned as a tension point, focused upon how best to understand what does and does not support independence in refugees. The frequent story was that a newly arrived family, generally with multiple children, expressed interest in buying a car. Overwhelmingly, sponsors expressed anxiety over this expression, citing what they viewed as the significant costs associated with such a purchase, suggesting that the family continue to make do with public transportation. Refugees' budgets, they felt, could not accommodate the cost of a car; according to sponsors, the source of refugees' inability to understand this was traced in part to their lack of financial literacy. Sponsors certainly recognized that these choices *were* the refugees' choices to make, and correspondingly that their job was to offer information and advice, sometimes strenuously, but nevertheless to support refugees even where their advice was not heeded. When asked about their felt need to encourage financial responsibility (according to their own understanding of it) in refugees, many sponsors pointed out that they had raised money from friends, colleagues, and (often) co-religionists, and felt an obligation to their donors to ensure that their donations were being used responsibly. Upon reflection, however, many sponsors acknowledged that the choice to purchase a car had in fact served refugees well; whereas the worry and hesitation stemmed from worries about financial stability, the result was relief on both sides of the equation, since refugees no longer needed to rely on sponsors to get around, and sponsors were free to use their valuable time to support refugees in other ways. What these reflections suggest is that the priorities of refugees and sponsors do not necessarily align, and moreover that (of course) refugees often have a better sense of what is in their best interests than do sponsors.

The Complexity of Attaining Independence

Multiple sponsors, prompted by questions about when refugees achieved independence, noted that, even if it is in some sense the goal to achieve by month 13, it is gained gradually. Some explicitly, and others implicitly, rejected the idea that independence is achievable by month 13, saying something like "I wouldn't see a natural association between sponsorship and independence.... It could take years for a family to be fully independent, and sponsors can be an important part of supporting that. But I don't think that is only sponsors who would have that role. And there are so many other services, friends and other resources that play into that."³⁸

When sponsors were asked to reflect on when (if at all) independence had been achieved, refugees were described in

general as having made significant progress in getting by, day to day, and sponsors acknowledged that the sheer number of times that refugees called on them for support decreased over time. Many noticed that over the course of the sponsorship year there was a gradual pulling away from sponsors (several noted that refugees returned to them regularly after the sponsorship year had completed for help in deciphering government forms, including income taxes). Said one sponsor, "I think it's like a bit of a scale.... In order to get there, there were so many different steps."³⁹ Another sponsor responded, "There were just many, many milestones. And there is no scale on 1 to 10. But they asked for help ... less and less. They asked questions less and less."⁴⁰ Repeatedly sponsors noted that the first several months were intense, but that often things would start "rolling along" somewhere approximately half way through the sponsorship: "Certainly, we have seen them become more independent as the year went on."⁴¹

Even so, several sponsors noted that, after all, one year had not been sufficient for the refugees with whom they worked to achieve full independence. One sponsor noted of independence at month 13, "It won't mean necessarily that they can function entirely only their own. But one of the most basic things is that to promote independence is that they should be helped to know where to go if they need help."⁴² Some noticed this as a matter of fact, as described above, that full integration into Canadian society for individuals who arrive with no competence in English simply is a longer-term venture than formal sponsorship timing admits. Others observed that even where refugees were financially self-sufficient, in the sense of employed adequately to cover their basic needs, this self-sufficiency did not seem adequate to declare that refugees were "flourishing." One sponsor said of the refugees, "While I think they could stand on their own at the end of the year, I am not sure they would necessarily flourish."⁴³

Discussion

This research was conducted to gain some insight into how sponsors think of their objectives, especially in relation to "month 13." Month 13 is the first month in which refugees are expected, in some sense, to be able to fend for themselves in Canadian society. As outlined in the introduction, the main change at month 13 is that, suddenly, sponsors are no longer responsible for supporting refugees financially. The strong implication, for sponsors and refugees alike, is that at this moment, refugees should be financially self-sufficient or on the road to financial self-sufficiency. This implication finds support in multiple sources, including in particular in the rhetoric invoked by government officials who aim to shore up support for refugee admissions and defend higher

admission numbers in terms of the financial contributions that refugees will ultimately make to Canadian society. Indeed, as outlined earlier, the economic contributions that immigrants of all kinds offer to Canada are repeatedly invoked as a justification for the high number of immigrants admitted, and are offered as an explanatory factor for why anti-immigrant sentiment has remained low in Canada even as immigration goes up.⁴⁴

As a result, it is no surprise that sponsors are focused on achieving this objective, nor is it surprising to find that some sponsors express discomfort, and even disappointment, when refugees transition, not to financial self-sufficiency, but to social assistance. For some sponsors, certainly, a transition to social assistance felt like a kind of failure of the sponsorship venture: their job was to work with refugees to give them the tools they needed to be financially independent, but had not successfully done so. Some sponsors blamed refugees for failing to understand that being “dependent” on Canadian taxpayers was inappropriate or problematic in some way. Refugees, in this story, had somehow failed in their job to the Canadians who had supported them to find safety here; these refugees were portrayed as taking advantage of Canadians and their generosity. Other sponsors took responsibility for the failure, saying that they had tried but failed to communicate that social assistance was a backup, which should be resorted to only in times of emergency. Some took responsibility partially, suggesting that there were cultural explanations for refugees’ preferences to rely on social assistance, so the failure was not that sponsors did not communicate the information, but that cultural biases among refugees remained so strong that they were not able to penetrate them. Even among those sponsors who noted that integration was gradual, the sense that financial independence was the objective of sponsorship loomed large.

Only a handful of sponsors acknowledged familiarity with the normal trends that immigrants in general, and refugees specifically, follow during integration into Canadian society.⁴⁵ Data suggest that refugees are among the most likely to require social assistance support in the first several years after they arrive.⁴⁶ Approximately 30 per cent of privately sponsored refugees do transition to social assistance, either immediately at month 13 or later, and the mere fact of this transition to social assistance should not merit declaring the sponsorship a failure.⁴⁷ Thus, the transition to social assistance should not be surprising or disappointing. Refugees are, first of all, not voluntary migrants, in the sense that they have been forced to flee and have not chosen to make their lives in a new and unfamiliar environment—in the Canadian case, the vast majority of migrants are entering to gain access to our robust labour market and the benefits it offers. Moreover, refugees have almost certainly experienced

trauma that can reasonably be expected to affect their ability to attain self-sufficiency rapidly.⁴⁸ Their objectives are not simply to get ahead as quickly as possible, but also to decompress in a safe and secure environment. Both factors, and undoubtedly more, explain why refugees may be slowed in their progress towards independence; that they have not achieved full “independence” in 13 months and are thereby more likely than other migrants (and Canadian citizens) to require social assistance support⁴⁹ is neither unreasonable nor lamentable.

Space restrictions prohibit extensive consideration of the policy implications that flow from the research reported above. Moreover, the conclusions are one-sided, and without corresponding contributions from sponsored refugees they are necessarily incomplete.⁵⁰ Yet the results suggest that as the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship continues to search for ways to stimulate private sponsors to volunteer their time in support of refugees, it would do well to find ways to offer sponsors access to more nuanced information about trends among refugees and immigrants in gaining self-sufficiency. It is not that they should be counselled differently, away from encouraging refugees to focus on preparing to become self-sufficient; on the contrary, at least some evidence suggests one benefit of private sponsorship is that sponsored refugees are better (than their government-assisted counterparts) able to gain financial self-sufficiency.⁵¹ Yet no one is served if sponsors believe (mistakenly) that sponsorships are successful if and only if refugees are fully self-sufficient when it comes to its formal conclusion. Since their willingness to do this work is predicated, in part, on their belief that they can successfully support refugees, there is value in ensuring, among sponsors, that what “counts” as success is broadened. Although it is difficult for any individual sponsors to view their work as part of a larger Canadian resettlement project, the results of their individual labours of love suggest tremendous success that, if successfully mobilized, could be deployed to resettle even more refugees, and to support their transition to self-sufficiency in Canada, than it has done in the past.

NOTES

- 1 Government of Canada, “Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program,” 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program.html>.
- 2 Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, “Month 13 Planning: Resource Kit,” 2016, <http://www.rstp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Month-13-Resource-Kit-v.1.4.pdf>, 2.
- 3 Government of Canada, “#WelcomeRefugees: Key Figures,” <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees->

- citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/key-figures.html (figures updated January 2017).
- 4 For several recent stories about the anxieties associated with month 13, see Michael Friscolanti, "A Milestone Looms for Canada's Syrian Refugees: 'Month 13,'" *Maclean's*, 15 December 2016, <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/a-milestone-looms-for-canadas-syrian-refugees-month-13/>; Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, "Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came 'Month 13,'" *New York Times*, 25 March 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html>; Nicholas Keung, "Honeymoon for Syrian Refugees Over as 'Month 13' Looms," *TheStar*, 10 December 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/12/10/honeymoon-for-syrian-refugees-over-as-month-13-looms.html>.
 - 5 Lori Wilkinson and Joseph Garcea, "The Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada: A Mixed Record?," Migration Policy Institute, 6 April 2017, 18, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/economic-integration-refugees-canada-mixed-record>. Additional challenges must be overcome to ensure that newcomers are comfortable to access the services available to them, i.e., to communicate that they have a "right or entitlement" to them. See Jill Hanley, Adnan Al Mhamied, Janet Cleveland, Oula Hajjar, Ghayda Hassan, Nicole Ives, Rim Khyar, and Michaela Hynie, "The Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital of Syrian Refugees Privately Sponsored to Settle in Montreal: Indications for Employment and Housing during Their Early Experiences of Integration," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 50, no. 2 (2018): 123–48.
 - 6 "Success and Failure in Supporting Agency among Refugees: Lessons from Refugees and Their Sponsors."
 - 7 I am principle investigator of this grant. Ravi Pendakur is co-principle investigator, and Emily Regan Wills is collaborator. I am solely responsible for the analysis in this article. Stacey Haugen conducted all of the interviews reported in this article.
 - 8 The questionnaire is available upon request. We asked questions on a range of themes pertaining to the sponsorship experience.
 - 9 We did not ask whether sponsors were working with sponsorship agreement holders (SAH), or as constituent groups under their supervision. But, the majority of private sponsorship does happen with SAH support (rather than, for example, as a 'group of five'), and since our recruiting was via settlement agencies that work with SAHs, it is likely the case that our respondents were collaborating with SAHs to do their work. See Jennifer Hyndman, "Refugee Research Synthesis: 2009–2013" (CERIS report submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ottawa, 2014), 58. Additionally, we did not distinguish between groups who deployed the Blended Visa Office–Referred Program (BVOR) and those who engaged in a fully private sponsorship. Our thought was that the experience of sponsorship was more or less the same regardless of the legal mechanism by which the sponsorship was arranged.
 - 10 As such, although not representative, our respondents look very much like those profiled in Audrey Macklin, Kathryn Barber, Luin Goldring, Jennifer Hyndman, Anna Korteweg, Shauna Labman, and Jona Zyfi, "A Preliminary Investigation into Private Refugee Sponsors," *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal* 50, no. 2 (2018): 45.
 - 11 Two sponsor groups were based in Perth, which is approximately an hour from Ottawa. With respect to the questions that are the focus of this article, their responses showed no noticeable differences from people living in Ottawa proper.
 - 12 For example, see Charles Taylor, "What Is Human Agency?," in *The Self: Psychological and Philosophical Issues*, ed. T. Mischel, 103–135 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977).
 - 13 Pieter Bevelander and Ravi Pendakur, "The Labour Market Integration of Refugee and Family Reunion Immigrants: A Comparison of Outcomes in Canada and Sweden," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, no. 5 (2014): 689–709; M. Emirbayer and A. Mische, "What Is Agency?," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 4 (1988): 962–1023; Taylor, "What Is Human Agency?"
 - 14 Rignam Wangkhang, "How Syrian Refugees Will Help the Canadian Economy," *TVO*, 25 May 2016, <https://www.tvo.org/article/current-affairs/how-syrian-refugees-will-help-the-canadian-economy>; "B.C. Bound Syrian Refugees to Boost Local Economy by \$563 Million," *Vancity.Com*, 2 December 2015, https://www.vancity.com/AboutVancity/News/MediaReleases/RefugeesBoostLocalEconomy-Dec2-15/?xcid=tw_Refugees.
 - 15 Ahmed Hussien, "Speaking Notes for Ahmed Hussien, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship: An Announcement on the Pre-Arrival Settlement Services Program" (Government of Canada, 4 January 2019), <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2019/01/speaking-notes-for-ahmed-hussien-minister-of-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-an-announcement-on-the-pre-arrival-settlement-services-program.html>.
 - 16 See, for example, Hyndman, "Refugee Research Synthesis," 31. Hyndman notes that the choice to focus on those most in need (rather than integration potential) is a result of legislative changes enacted in 2002.
 - 17 Interviews with sponsors 1, 13, and 14.
 - 18 Interview with sponsor 16.
 - 19 Interview with sponsor 9.
 - 20 Interview with sponsor 13.
 - 21 Interview with sponsor 13.
 - 22 Interview with sponsor 6.
 - 23 Interview with sponsor 6.
 - 24 Interview with sponsor 26.
 - 25 Interview with sponsor 38.
 - 26 Interview with sponsor 17.
 - 27 Interview with sponsor 26.

- 28 Interview with sponsor 15.
- 29 Interview with sponsor 25.
- 30 Interview with sponsor 25.
- 31 Interview with sponsor 6.
- 32 Interview with sponsor 7.
- 33 Interview with sponsor 1.
- 34 Interview with sponsor 4.
- 35 Interview with sponsor 26.
- 36 The financial stability of sponsors in general is supported by the data reported in Macklin et al., "Preliminary Investigation into Private Refugee Sponsors," 45.
- 37 There are many factors that go into the question of how much sponsors must raise to support a single refugee or refugee family, as well as how much of this raised money goes to refugees in the form of income. As well, the costs and incomes of families are treated differently. Additionally, families are often entitled to additional benefits, in the form of child tax credits and so on. To see how the Canadian government advises sponsors on these matters, see sections 2.8-2.10 of Government of Canada, "Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program."
- 38 Interview with sponsor 12.
- 39 Interview with sponsor 26.
- 40 Interview with sponsor 1.
- 41 Interview with sponsor 15.
- 42 Interview with sponsor 17.
- 43 Interview with sponsor 6.
- 44 Derek Thompson, "Canada's Secret to Escaping the 'Liberal Doom Loop,'" *Atlantic*, 9 July 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/07/canadas-secret-to-escaping-the-liberal-doom-loop/564551/>.
- 45 It is worth pointing out that the reality that newcomers who arrive as refugees may require social assistance as part of their transiting to self-sufficiency is well-recognized by Sponsorship Agreement Holders. See for example this document produced by the Mennonite Central Committee, an organization that has been involved in refugee sponsorship since its inception: Wendy Adema, "Month 13: From Sponsorship to Integration," Mennonite Central Committee, 2016, <https://mcccanada.ca/stories/month-13-sponsorship-integration>.
- 46 For example, see <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/economic-integration-refugees-canada-mixed-record>.
- 47 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)" (Government of Canada, July 2016), <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/resettlement-programs.html>; Andrea Woo and Wendy Stueck, "Privately Sponsored Refugees Fare Better in the Short Term, Research Says," *Globe and Mail*, 1 December 2015, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/privately-sponsored-refugees-fare-better-in-the-short-term-research-says/article27543752/>; Nicholas Keung, "Sponsored Refugees Fare Better Than Government-Assisted Peers, Study Shows," *Star*, 31 October 2016, <https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/10/31/sponsored-refugees-fare-better-than-government-assisted-peers-study-shows.html>; Shaina Luck, "Many Syrian Refugees in Canada Reluctantly on Social Assistance," *CBC News*, 12 November 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/syrian-refugees-struggling-social-assistance-language-barrier-1.4368833>; Wilkinson and Garcea, "Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada," 12; Friscolanti, "Milestone Looms."
- 48 Branka Agic, Kwame McKenzie, Andrew Tuck, and Michael Antwi, "Supporting the Mental Health of Refugees to Canada" (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2016), https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/2016-01-25_refugee_mental_health_backgrounder_0.pdf.
- 49 See <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2015051-eng.htm>.
- 50 As part of this work, data from both privately sponsored refugees and government-assisted references were also collected, and this analysis will be available in future publications.
- 51 Woo and Stueck, "Privately Sponsored Refugees Fare Better." See Wilkinson and Garcea, "Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada," 18, for references to many research studies outlining this. There is some countervailing evidence, suggesting instead PSRS are encouraged to go in to the labour market earlier than GARS, at some cost to their overall income capacity in the future. See in general the discussion by Hyndman, "Refugee Research Synthesis: 2009–2013," 14–16. See also Jennifer Hyndman, William Payne, and Shauna Jimenez, "Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada," *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017): 56–9.

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Fostering Better Integration through Youth-Led Refugee Sponsorship

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Abstract

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) participates in private sponsorship as a sponsorship agreement holder through its Student Refugee Program. More than ninety campus-based constituent groups known as WUSC Local Committees resettle approximately 130 refugee students to Canadian post-secondary institutions each year. This article seeks to assess the effectiveness of the Student Refugee Program's youth-to-youth sponsorship model in integrating former refugees into their receiving communities. We outline the impact of the Student Refugee Program upon its beneficiaries, the important role youth volunteers play in supporting their integration and building more welcoming communities for newcomers in Canada, and the effect of the program on receiving societies. We conclude with recommendations for scaling up the program in Canada and sharing the model internationally.

Résumé

Entraide universitaire mondiale du Canada prend part au parrainage privé en tant que Signataire d'entente de parrainage à travers son Programme d'étudiantes et d'étudiants

réfugiés. Plus de 90 comités locaux sur les campus réinstallent approximativement 130 étudiants réfugiés dans des institutions postsecondaires canadiennes chaque année. Cet article cherche à évaluer l'efficacité du modèle de parrainage par et pour les jeunes du Programme d'étudiantes et d'étudiants réfugiés à intégrer d'anciens réfugiés dans leurs communautés de réception. Nous présentons l'impact du Programme d'étudiantes et d'étudiants réfugiés sur ses bénéficiaires, le rôle important que les jeunes bénévoles jouent afin de soutenir leur intégration et construire des communautés plus accueillantes pour les nouveaux arrivants au Canada, ainsi que l'effet du programme sur les universités d'accueil. En conclusion, nous présentons des recommandations pour améliorer le programme au Canada et partager le modèle à l'international.

Introduction

In recent years, the global refugee crisis has pushed public discourse on refugee and migrant issues into the spotlight in Canada and around the world. Since 2015, more than 107,245 refugees were resettled to Canada through different channels.¹ Refugees are resettled to Canada directly

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from overseas contexts² through three programs: the Government Assisted Refugees Program, the Blended Visa Office–Referred Program, and the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP).³ This article will focus on the last.

The PSRP provides an opportunity for Canadians and permanent residents to become actively involved in the resettlement of refugees. The program is a partnership between the government of Canada, the government of Quebec, and groups that decide to offer sponsorship to a refugee or refugees. These groups include faith-based groups, groups of five or more individuals, or community associations. Under the PSRP, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) facilitates refugees' arrival in Canada, and private sponsors provide the individuals with housing, financial support, and settlement assistance for their first year of residence in Canada. Organizations can hold agreements with IRCC to allow other groups to sponsor on their behalf. These organizations are called sponsorship agreement holders (SAHs), and the subgroups are known as constituent groups. SAHs are responsible for selecting their constituent groups, submitting immigration paperwork to IRCC, and guiding and supporting their constituent groups to provide quality integration support to refugees. The SAH and constituent groups are jointly responsible for the emotional and financial support of the refugees resettled under their agreements.

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a SAH that supports more than ninety campus-based constituent groups, known as WUSC Local Committees, to resettle approximately 130 refugee students to Canadian post-secondary institutions annually. Student members of local committees with support from faculty and staff (all referred to as local committee members) provide integration support to Student Refugee Program beneficiaries (the refugee students who are resettled to Canada through the program) and work to build more welcoming communities for newcomers by organizing public engagement activities on their campuses.

This article has a dual purpose: to assess the effectiveness of the Student Refugee Program's youth-to-youth sponsorship model in integrating former refugees into their receiving communities, and to share lessons learned and policy implications.⁴ We outline the impact of the Student Refugee Program upon its beneficiaries, and the important role youth volunteers play in supporting the integration process and in helping to build more welcoming communities for newcomers in Canada.

The evidence that supports this article's conclusions is drawn from a case study on groups of Student Refugee Program beneficiaries, local committee members, and alumni of both groups. Data were collected using a mixed methods approach: questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. This article will include a review of the literature on holistic newcomer integration and youth

leadership in global issues, followed by a presentation of our methods and results. The discussion includes analysis of the results of the study in relation to the impact of the program on its beneficiaries and youth volunteers, as well as the broader community. Finally, we will share WUSC's plans to scale up the program in Canada and recommendations for other countries and refugee resettlement programs regarding youth involvement in supporting the integration of resettled youth with a refugee background (herein referred to as refugee youth).

Holistic Integration of Newcomers

While refugees resettled to Canada arrive in safer environments than their home contexts, they face challenges upon settlement and throughout the integration process in Canada. Language proficiency in French or English is a primary challenge for newly arrived refugees, which is a barrier to obtaining appropriate employment, navigating the education systems and accessing higher education, and building social bridges within Canadian communities.

Holistic Integration Model

Over the past decade, researchers in Canada have focused primarily on the more traditional economic markers of "successful" integration such as type of employment, income, and poverty levels; however, there is a growing need to demonstrate the importance and role of social and systemic factors that influence overall integration success of refugee populations. In addition, there is a need to better understand the role that receiving communities play in creating welcoming and responsive communities to meet the needs of diverse refugee groups. Yu, Ouellet, and Warmington defined refugee integration as a "dynamic, multi-faceted two-way process which requires adaptation on the part of the newcomers, but also the society of the destination" on social, functional, and psychological levels.⁵ Ager and Strang built on this idea by developing the social integration model, which pushed the discourse beyond objective material markers to include other variables related to socio-economic context, such as language, culture and knowledge, and safety and security.⁶ While this model further refined past theories of refugee integration, it was limited in that it did not include refugees' sense of belonging to their new communities, institutional adaptation to refugee needs, or the holistic nature of the integration process.

Hynie, Korn, and Tao refined Ager and Strang's model to create the holistic integration model (figure 1).⁷ This model showcases how each of the factors relevant for strong integration found in Ager and Strang's theory (i.e., citizenship, language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability, social bonds, bridges and links, housing, education, employment,

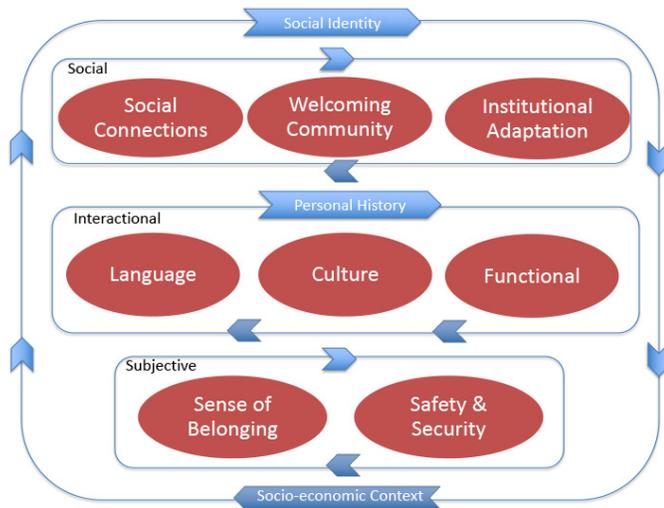


Figure 1. Holistic integration model

and health) are interdependent. These factors are grouped into three main categories: social identity (social connections, community welcome, institutional adaptation); personal history (language, culture, functional); and socio-economic context (sense of belonging, safety, and security). Hynie, Korn, and Tao emphasize the essential role of the receiving communities and explain the interdependence of these categories as “the extent to which agencies, institutions, and communities accommodate refugee needs ... facilitate the functional aspects of integration [and] also create a feeling of welcome, thus affecting the integration process at the social and subjective, as well as functional levels.”⁸

The holistic integration model suggests that although refugees are required to build their skills and knowledge of the receiving community, such as language and socio-cultural practices, the receiving community must also support changes within institutions, systems, and social attitudes to accommodate refugee needs and experiences in order to achieve effective integration.⁹

The Role of Youth: Integrating Refugees and Building Welcoming Communities

The Student Refugee Program (SRP) is the only known youth-to-youth refugee sponsorship model, attracting global attention. As such, the effect of youth-to-youth sponsorship on both refugee integration and youth sponsors themselves is an emerging topic of study. Despite this gap in the literature, we can draw on the broader research conducted on the role that youth can play as leaders in their communities to effect change. From this research we know that youth can be agents of positive and constructive change for global issues.

A United Nations subgroup states that youth can be innovators and active citizens, and argues that their activities are integral to building peaceful communities for all.¹⁰

The SRP engages a particular segment of youth: post-secondary students. Although there is no research on student-to-student refugee integration, the research on student-to-student mentorship for international students provides relevant evidence to draw from, despite the differences in experiences between international students and students with a refugee background. International students have chosen to leave their home country to study, may have social connections in their country of study, and have access to family networks and resources to fund their studies. Refugee experiences are grounded in fleeing conflict or persecution, and refugees often arrive in their country of resettlement with little to no financial capital and limited social networks. However, research on international students’ experiences in their adaptation to their places of study within the country and local communities is relevant.

Shakya et al. found that newcomer students who have not received timely orientation and guidance can experience “confusion and misdirection” in their academic path.¹¹ According to the United Nations report on youth and migration, when international students are well oriented to their academic institutions, they can have more positive academic and integration experiences: “Research has shown that international students provided with an initial orientation by their educational institutions tend to be much better prepared for their foreign academic experience and life abroad. Such support can make a critical difference to their adjustment to unfamiliar surroundings. A student migrant who feels disoriented or unwelcome is likely to have difficulty learning and is more vulnerable to risks within a new community.”¹²

Not only are orientations important to international student success, but research has also shown that student-to-student mentorship schemes are particularly effective. Such schemes “have been found to aid social adjustment or enhance social support, improve academic achievement, and increase utilization of university services including counseling services” for international students.¹³ Thomson and Esses found that their mentorship pilot program resulted in improved socio-cultural and psychological adaptation for international students.¹⁴

wusc’s Student Refugee Program: A Youth-to-Youth Sponsorship Model

While many countries are developing community sponsorship programs, education schemes, and other forms of complementary pathways for refugees, wusc’s SRP is the only program that combines resettlement with higher education.

wusc Local Committees secure the funds required and support the integration of the refugee students upon their arrival. In addition to providing initial settlement and integration support to refugees on their campuses, local committee members also build more welcoming communities for newcomers by engaging their personal networks and the public on their campuses and in their communities through awareness-raising activities.

The SRP has two ultimate objectives: to help refugee students make meaningful contributions to their communities (locally and globally) and secure better lives for themselves and their families; and to build more welcoming communities for newcomers in Canada. For the SRP, more welcoming communities are aware of and responsive to refugee needs by adapting programs and policies to reduce barriers for refugees and newcomers, and create a sense of safety and belonging for newcomers. Students on local committees are particularly well placed to achieve these objectives. Their ability to provide comprehensive student-to-student academic and social support to SRP beneficiaries can help refugee students feel more welcome on campus and enable them to access the resources they need to improve their learning outcomes.

The SRP's student-to-student model provides a platform for engagement with other actors on campus, including administrators, faculty, and students outside the local committee. Local committees advocate for SRP beneficiaries' admittance to their post-secondary institutions by working closely with institutions' admissions offices and requesting flexibility on their admissibility requirements. By explaining the extenuating circumstances surrounding refugee students' documentation and language test scores, for example, local committees expose admissions offices to the unique needs and experiences of refugee students.

Another primary role of local committees is to engage the student body on their campuses on refugee issues, which in turn contributes to the financial sustainability of the program. Local committees leverage a sustainable funding mechanism unique to post-secondary institutions: the student levy. Student levies are small fees applied to the tuition and administrative fees of each student who attends a given institution. The SRP on campuses collects a levy from over one million Canadian students per year at an average of three dollars per student per year. This indirectly engages all contributing students in the SRP. Local committees also directly engage these students by running referendum campaigns to implement and increase the levy amounts and "thank you" campaigns for students' levy contribution on their campuses, to raise awareness about the levy and its impact on the lives of refugee youth on campus, along with other awareness-raising initiatives each school year.

Methods

In 2017 wusc began to pursue an impact study as a follow-up to a study that was completed in 2007. One survey was designed and disseminated by wusc to SRP beneficiaries to collect information on their educational pursuits and experiences, as well as their social and economic outcomes following their participation in the sponsorship program. wusc also surveyed local committee members and alumni about their experiences with wusc and the SRP specifically, and whether their participation in the program affected their civic engagement, their academic or career paths, or their long-term engagement on refugee issues. The surveys comprised multiple choice and Likert scale questions. wusc then contracted third party consultants to gain further insight on the findings through qualitative interviews (in the form of focus group discussions and key informant interviews) with program beneficiaries in February 2018.

The main objectives of the study were twofold: to assess the impact of the SRP on its beneficiaries with respect to their settlement and integration and what factors contribute to positive outcomes; and to assess the impact of the program on the local committee members and alumni on Canadian campuses, related to their role as private sponsors, and the impact their participation has had on their personal, professional, and academic paths and networks.

Phase I: Impact Surveys

The surveys gathered quantitative data on the impact of the program on SRP beneficiaries and local committee members and alumni. The survey study population comprised two groups.

SRP beneficiaries were university students who arrived in 2013 or earlier, and college/CEGEP students who arrived in 2014 or earlier ($N = 192$). The rationale for focusing on these respondents was that the majority of respondents who arrived in these years or earlier would have graduated at the time the survey was conducted in spring 2017.

Approximately 770 people were contacted to fill out the survey. Respondents numbered 250 and 192 gave complete responses. The response rate was approximately 34%. More than 1,800 SRP students have participated in the program from its inception in 1978 until 2017, therefore about 10% of all program participants between 1978 and 2017 fully completed the survey.

Local committee members and alumni were students, staff, and faculty members who have been members of a local committee ($N = 135$).

Approximately 4,100 people were contacted to fill out the survey. Respondents numbered 265 and 135 gave complete responses. The response rate was therefore approximately 6.6%.

Table 1. SRP respondent demographics

Gender breakdown	139 male, 52 female, 1 prefers not to say
Year of arrival in Canada by decade	1980s (9), 1990s (21), 2000s (87), 2010–14 (75)
Province of sponsoring institution	BC (27), AB (6), SK (16), MB (13), ON (92), QC (13), NS (21), NB (1), PEI (1), NL (2)

Table 2. Local committee respondent demographics

Gender breakdown	94 female, 44 male, 3 prefer not to say
Year of participation on local committee by decade	Before 1980 (1), 1980s (1), 1990s (5), 2000s (40), 2010–17 (87), no answer (1)
Member type	Student (102), staff/ faculty (31), no answer (2)

Participants from both populations were recruited for the study via the program database e-mail contact list, social media, and through word of mouth. The sample was not representative, as all prospective study participants were contacted based on the availability of their current contact information, and not according to a probability sampling technique. All alumni that fit the criteria of the study were asked to fill out the survey. Due to an incomplete list of alumni contact information in the program database, response rates were low.

Phase II: Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

Qualitative approaches, including individual interviews and focus groups, were used to examine and better understand findings from the survey data analyses. A letter of invitation was emailed to all the SRP beneficiaries and local committee members and alumni that WUSC had on file. Twenty-one individual interviews and one focus group with four participants were conducted with SRP beneficiaries. Sampling criteria included gender, university and college/CEGEP alumni, region of sponsorship, and current location. The majority of interview respondents had been in Canada for less than five years.

Eight individual interviews and one focus group with four participants were conducted with local committee members and alumni. Efforts were made to select participants who reflected different roles on the committee, type/size of institution, language, and location. Of the twelve local committee members and alumni who participated in the interviews, eight participants were students and four were faculty or staff at the time of their involvement.

Individuals took part in a semi-structured interview or a focus group. All interviews were conducted in English, except for one conducted in French. The interviews were conducted over the phone and were recorded. Each interview lasted from forty-five to sixty minutes. The focus group was conducted using a teleconference line allowing for multiple participants.

WUSC and the consultants developed an interview guide in keeping with a grounded theory approach. The interview guide questions highlighted the experiences of the SRP beneficiaries and gathered information about their objective and subjective integration outcomes. A research assistant supported the coordination, delivery, and transcription of the interviews. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Axial coding was used to identify themes and codes related to participants' experiences.

Strengths and Limitations

A case study approach was used, which did not allow for the collection of data that could be extrapolated to a larger population. As discussed above, the survey response rates were low and the sample was not representative of the population of program participants.

Response bias is another potential limitation of the study: for example, participants may have framed their experiences with the SRP in a positive light because the program helped them in the past. Alternatively, it is possible that participants felt they could share their experiences even if they were negative, as a result of their trust in and comfort with WUSC, and the amount of time that had passed for some individuals since taking part in the program.

The sample may have been biased because it may have not included the population of SRP beneficiaries who are not doing as well. The study was conducted anonymously, and limited demographic information was collected, so it was difficult to uncover trends within the sample. The reason for this approach was to ensure that participants felt comfortable providing feedback about the program while remaining anonymous, thus supporting the participation of as many respondents as possible.

Despite these limitations, the strength of a case study approach is its ability to provide an in-depth exploration of a topic: in this case, participants' experiences with the SRP. Although the data are not generalizable to a larger population, they provide insight into the program's impact on this

small group of individuals. The study also highlights areas for further research on the integration experiences of resettled refugees in Canada (discussed in the Conclusion).

Results: SRP Beneficiaries

Completion of Education

The results of the case study show that 94% of surveyed SRP beneficiaries completed a degree after their arrival in Canada, and 80% completed their degree at their original sponsoring institution. Few (11%) study participants experienced interruptions in their studies after arrival in Canada, with 64% of those who did experience an interruption returning to their studies later. Key barriers associated with interruptions to study included the cost of living, cost of studies, family obligations, or illness. Among the survey respondents, 55% had pursued or are pursuing further education beyond their first studies completed in Canada.

Access to Employment Opportunities and Skills Development

The interviews with SRP beneficiaries indicate there is a connection between education and employment outcomes.

Education ... gives me the job I have now [and] the freedom and power and mindset to have everything that I have. In a big way.
—SRP beneficiary, interview

Two-thirds of respondents indicated they are satisfied with their jobs, with job satisfaction increasing in relation to the number of years spent in Canada. As seen in figure 2, the majority of SRP respondents who arrived in Canada ten or more years ago are satisfied with their jobs.

The case study also revealed, through the qualitative interviews, that local committee members were key to connecting SRP beneficiaries to job opportunities on and off campus, and thus contributed to their later employment outcomes:

It was helpful. I was working at the library of the university. The members of WUSC were instrumental in helping me get that job. I told them that I wanted a job and they went around and basically got me a job at the library. It was very helpful, a lot of customer service helping students at the university. The skills that I got in that first job were transferable to all of my other jobs. —SRP beneficiary, interview

When I was at school the local committee found me my first job in Canada at the college library.... [From] second semester until graduation I worked there. I gained experience in all areas, especially language.... [My] English was not that good. So the more

exposure to students, it boosted my language ... I made so many connections through my campus job. I had a lot of friends, and I was making money. —SRP beneficiary, interview

A common theme among the SRP beneficiary interviews is the importance of networking and social and professional connections for their integration. Local committees connecting SRP beneficiaries with jobs on campus, helpful references from professors when applying to postgraduate education programs, and the sponsoring community's role in contributing to a strong sense of belonging were some of the examples provided by interview respondents.

Sense of Belonging and Navigating Services

Seventy per cent of SRP beneficiaries who responded to the survey reported a strong sense of belonging to Canada overall, as well as their family (87%), city (81%), ethnic community (69%), and neighbourhood (69%).

I feel part of the general community. I am a citizen now. I feel ... that I belong somewhere. It makes me feel proud. I feel real belonging. —SRP beneficiary, interview

SRP was a foundation—having that first family that show you everything you need to know.... That was my foundation. I had a family that loved me ... [and] helped to get into bigger Canadian setting.
—SRP beneficiary, interview

Interview participants indicated they feel “at home” where they live and are “proud Canadians”; many attributed this feeling to the support of their local committee when they first arrived, as well as connections to community.

Students who were resettled in small communities felt a sense of belonging even where their ethnic community was largely absent. Overall, respondents reported that the social support of members of their ethnic community and former SRP students with a similar lived experience contributed to their safe and supportive transition to Canadian society. There was evidence of bridges and bonds built, as respondents reported strong friendships both within and outside of their ethnic communities. SRP beneficiaries overwhelmingly (92%) describe Canadians as “welcoming and accepting.”

While many SRP beneficiaries reported in interviews that they had experienced homesickness and missed their families, many were also able to build family-like relationships in Canada with their sponsoring community. Some interview participants described long-term friendships with those they referred to as their “Canadian parents” (families who had supported them since their arrival in Canada). Even after moving across the country, some respondents make annual trips to their original city of residence in Canada to

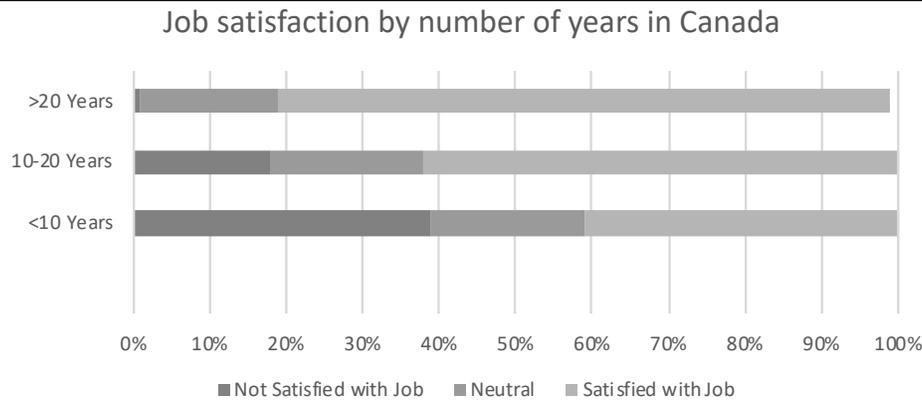


Figure 2. SRP beneficiaries' job satisfaction according to the number of years spent in Canada

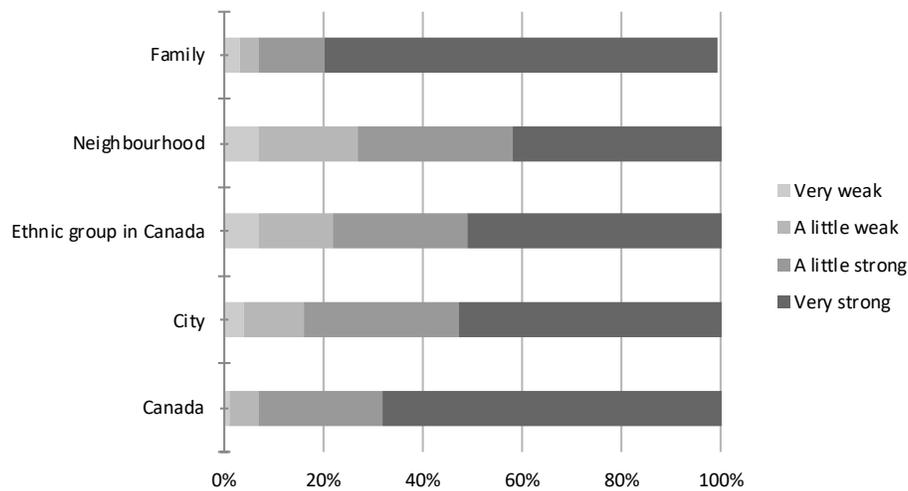


Figure 3. SRP beneficiaries' sense of belonging

visit their first friend and family networks. They expressed deep gratitude for the openness and support provided, particularly during their initial settlement:

My initial contact was the local committee. Some of these people became friends throughout university.... The [local committee] coordinator became a main support.... In my third year I actually moved into her house. She became like a mother figure.... The last two years I stayed at her place.... I still stay in touch with her.... She's Canadian white, we're different in all aspects, but we're still connected. There are some amazing people in a small town that you can connect with more than in a bigger city. —SRP beneficiary, interview

I feel like I absolutely belong. I do belong here. It's my home.... I don't think there is any freedom anywhere like in Canada.... wusc connected me with two boys from [my country of asylum] in [my city of resettlement], and they were like brothers for me. They took me into the mosque. The local community takes you in and

welcomes you. The community ... feels like a different country. My friends are from all over the world. I met them through work and school. —SRP beneficiary, interview

The majority (87%) of SRP beneficiaries who responded to the survey feel that they have adapted to Canadian society. A further 82% feel accepted and 80% feel respected in their community. However, approximately two-thirds of survey respondents indicated they have experienced and/or witnessed racism while in Canada. One-quarter of interview respondents reported experiences of discrimination due to their immigrant status, race, religion, name, accent, and in some cases gender. This was specifically related to experiences searching for employment in their communities. The role of local committee members is to support students while they navigate and overcome these experiences and challenges during the sponsorship. The interview data illustrate that local committee members contribute to creating a welcoming environment, but this does not prevent SRP

beneficiaries from experiencing discrimination similar to other immigrant groups.

Interview participants overwhelmingly expressed a desire to “give back to the community” after their sponsorship, either with time or financial contributions. Some are involved in charity work through their churches, and/or supported youth-serving or immigrant-centred agencies and NGOs. Other SRP beneficiaries are active in charity work within their ethnic communities, in Canada and back home, while still others are part of broader community engagement.

I spent last night watching Canadian women’s hockey and stayed awake until 1:30 a.m. I feel connected to the community and country. I feel connected to the politics at the provincial and federal level elections. I follow everything. I accepted that it is my home and to stay here and experience everything Canadians experience.... I voted and participated in elections—federal, provincial, municipal.... If you want to change things, you can’t just ignore, you have to be heard to have an impact. I think after almost six years in [city of residence], I feel a connection. This is my city.”—*SRP beneficiary, interview*

When I was at university I used to volunteer at [the] hospital. I volunteered at so many places.... I feel like I’m part of a community.—*SRP beneficiary, interview*

When I was a student I volunteered. It contributed to a sense of belonging.... I have the freedom to vote in an election. An incredible experience to choose your leader.... You will learn to appreciate every single day you spend here.—*SRP beneficiary, interview*

The above examples show the diverse ways in which SRP beneficiaries have involved themselves in the community, from voting in elections to volunteering. Many prioritized volunteering even during their studies, and it made them feel a sense of belonging to their community.

Results: Local Committee Members

Academic and Career Path

More than half (57%) of survey respondents who were students when they were on a local committee indicated that they felt that being on the committee influenced their decision to pursue courses related to global issues. A further 77% reported that their overall academic experience was improved by their involvement on a local committee.

Ultimately it ignited my passion to pursue a career in immigration and newcomer settlement. I did a master’s in immigration settlement. I am an English teacher. It has played a part in all areas of my life. It has lasting impact in what I do today.—*Local committee alumnus*

Not only did being part of a local committee affect their academic experience while on the committee; 40% also indicated it influenced their decision to pursue additional studies. Involvement on a local committee also affected 57% of students’ career paths. Local committee members demonstrate sustained engagement in refugee issues in their personal and professional lives, as is evident below.

Continued Involvement in Newcomer Issues

The majority (77%) of local committee members and alumni who responded to the survey remained connected with SRP students, indicating that strong relationships were built among the students during (or in some cases outside) the sponsorship. Local committee members and alumni have also been involved (29%) or somewhat involved (14%) in supporting refugee and newcomer settlement and integration beyond their work with the SRP. Of survey respondents who voted in elections, 98% indicated that policies that promote the protection, inclusion, and integration of refugees inform how they vote. All local committee respondents indicated they have volunteered or worked at settlement agencies, community centres, libraries, and mentorship programs that connected them directly to newcomers.

I am an advocate in immigrant/refugee issues [and] I am involved with the asylum seekers in Manitoba.—*Local committee alumnus*

Approximately 20% of local committee members who responded to the survey reported that they are or had been part of a group that participated in private sponsorship of refugees outside the SRP. For example, one interview participant was part of a Group of Five working to sponsor Syrian refugees. In addition, one in four respondents indicated that they have worked to support the inclusion of newcomers in the workplace or the broader labour market. More than twenty examples of these efforts were described by respondents, including hiring former refugees or recommending them to their employers, providing language instruction, helping with résumés, creating clubs and social events aimed at inclusivity, and more.

Results: Broader Canadian Community

Local committee members and alumni are having an impact on their community by voting in elections and volunteering in newcomer programs. They also work to influence their professional and social networks to be more aware and knowledgeable of refugee issues and needs. Local committee members and alumni reported increased awareness about forced migration issues from their efforts to engage their broader networks. This is evident in figure 4, where respondents indicated they had increased awareness of

Increased awareness among Local Committee alumni networks

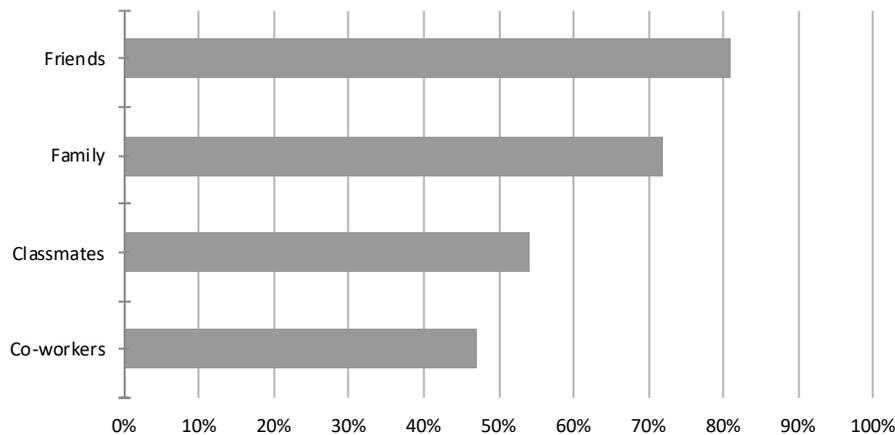


Figure 4. Increased awareness among local committee alumni networks

forced migration in the networks of friends (81%), family (72%), classmates (54%), co-workers (47%), and faith groups (11%).

As demonstrated in the holistic integration model (figure 1), mutual adaptation to the needs and experiences of refugee populations by receiving communities is essential to building welcoming environments for refugee populations. Local committee members and alumni across Canada are strengthening public awareness of and engagement in forced migration issues among their personal and professional networks, thus contributing to building a mutually adaptive society.

Discussion

Impact on Program Beneficiaries

The results of this study show that a youth-to-youth sponsorship model can effectively integrate refugees socially and economically into Canadian society. The findings illustrate that the program model contributes to the creation of more welcoming communities, through awareness-raising activities and the trickle-down effect from local committee members' broader networks.

Resettling refugee youth in Canadian post-secondary institutions reduces many barriers to integration faced by other refugee youth, such as providing access to education, language training, and employment opportunities. It is important to acknowledge that SRP beneficiaries begin their integration at a place different from other refugees arriving in Canada. To be eligible for the program they have strong language skills in English or French, have completed secondary education, have access to some academic documentation, and are immediately enrolled in Canadian post-secondary institutions as part of the program. As shown by the holistic integration model, this would affect their ability to integrate quickly.

The study results demonstrate the interconnectedness of integration outcomes for refugees that can lead to positive integration experiences, as illustrated in the holistic integration model. Local committee members support SRP beneficiaries academically, helping them navigate the education system and access on-campus academic support services. The findings reveal the positive outcomes of this support: the majority of SRP beneficiary survey respondents completed their degrees in Canada, and more than half pursued additional education at universities and colleges in Canada. According to the interviews with SRP beneficiaries, academic success and local committee support contributed to accessing satisfying employment at different stages of their career. Many SRP beneficiaries found their first jobs on campus with the support of the local committee members. These first jobs helped build Canadian experience on students' resumé, improved their language skills, and connected them to other employment opportunities and networks.

Having skills, tools, and networks upon arrival and early on in the integration process supports refugee youth to achieve positive integration outcomes, including feeling a sense of belonging to their receiving communities. SRP-beneficiaries described local committees as their "Canadian family" who played a key role in making them feel welcome in their community, particularly in the first months. This sense of belonging is also reflected by the fact that many SRP beneficiaries felt the desire to "give back" to their communities through volunteer and financial efforts.

Impact on Communities

Early engagement of local committee members with newcomers and the issues they face leads to long-term involvement through work, volunteer, and civic efforts to support

newcomer integration in their communities, including influencing their voting considerations in elections. Their participation also influences their choices in working and volunteering with newcomer programs and sponsoring refugees beyond the SRP. The SRP provides opportunities for new youth volunteers to get involved each year as new students begin their studies at post-secondary institutions.

As discussed in the literature review, youth are uniquely positioned as innovative leaders who can mobilize their peers and community on global issues. While youth in local committees are directly involved in and transformed by refugee sponsorship through the SRP, this impact extends beyond the local committee members. As local committee members engage their communities through events on campus and provide integration support to SRP beneficiaries, the wider community becomes more aware of refugee issues and how they can support newcomers. This is demonstrated through the institutional adaptation seen in refugee student admissions at receiving institutions. Local committee efforts are directly reducing barriers and making post-secondary communities more aware of the barriers while offering solutions to overcome them. These students go on to inform more institutional adaptation, as they engage their places of employment, family, friends, and other personal networks.

Lessons Learned and Further Research

wusc's model of combining education and youth-to-youth refugee integration aims to achieve the objectives of the holistic integration model as outlined by Hynie, Korn, and Tao. The quantitative and qualitative results of the case study show that the SRP addresses many of the desired outcomes outlined in the holistic integration model to ensure that resettled refugees can start their new lives in Canada with a strong foundation, leading to positive long-term integration. Although selection criteria of the program may also contribute to successful integration, it is clear that youth-to-youth model enhances integration and creates more welcoming communities as a result of the work of local committees to engage their peers and communities on and off campus.

Personal experiences with refugee sponsorship can have a positive impact upon perceptions of those working with refugees through the SRP. These experiences often result in local committee youth's long-term commitment to global issues and acting as change agents to create more welcoming communities. In addition, raising awareness builds welcoming communities among the campus and community stakeholders surrounding the sponsoring group. Further study is required to explore if there is an impact on the broader networks of local committee members and alumni, through changes in behaviours, perceptions, and actions related to

reducing barriers for refugees and newcomers in Canada, and engagement in other forced migration issues.

Further research on refugee integration is also needed, particularly on the peer-to-peer refugee integration models that connect refugees and sponsors based on identity factors such as LGBTQ identities. As more research is done in Canada that applies the holistic integration model for resettled refugee groups, it is imperative that this research focuses on whether youth-to-youth or peer-to-peer sponsorship models would result in more effective integration and build adaptive receiving communities. In addition, research comparing the SRP to other models in private sponsorship would be helpful to better contextualize the program's strengths and areas for improvement. More research needs to be done on welcoming communities: how they are created, SRP beneficiaries' experiences in these communities (including experiences of racism and how local committees can support students to navigate these experiences), and the role of community engagement on societal and institutional change. The SRP plans to strengthen its capacity to monitor more longitudinal outcomes of the program on the stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as broader Canadian communities.

Overall, the research conducted on the SRP has elucidated some lessons about youth leadership in refugee integration. We know that local committee members play a key role in supporting SRP beneficiaries to navigate academic and on-campus systems that help them begin their academic career positively and contribute to their completion of their education. Local committee members also support SRP beneficiaries' access to employment by connecting them to their first jobs on campus and to different networks on and off campus to build experience on their new Canadian resumé, which links to later employability. In many cases, local committee members form strong bonds with SRP beneficiaries, as they are the first to welcome them to their new community and are of a similar age group. This contributes to SRP beneficiaries' later sense of belonging to their communities. Local committee members also demonstrate long-term engagement in refugee and global issues through their voting practices, volunteer work, and advocacy for newcomers in their workplaces. As a result of these lessons, wusc recommends that other refugee sponsorship groups consider implementing a youth-to-youth or peer-to-peer model.

Future Directions for the SRP

While the SRP is a successful model of refugee integration in Canada and reaches thousands of Canadians each year, either directly or through public engagement events, the number of refugees resettled (130 per year) is small relative to global need. wusc is reaching out to new post-secondary partners

in college and CEGEP networks to provide more placements for refugee students, while supporting long-time partner institutions to sponsor more students. Colleges and CEGEPs provide unique opportunities for students to access language programs, flexible admissions requirements, and often faster pathways to employment after completion. Between 2017 and 2019, WUSC welcomed an additional twenty-two institutions to its network, offering thirty-nine new placements for refugee students.

With the success of the SRP model in Canada, WUSC is also sharing the model internationally, as other countries develop education and resettlement schemes in commitment to new principles for refugee protection and integration. The United Nations Global Compact on Refugees, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2018, outlines commitments to several principles that are well aligned with the SRP. The document emphasizes “a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach” that includes refugee and receiving community members, development actors, cities, public-private partnerships, and academic networks, among others.¹⁵ The SRP is compatible with this “whole of society” approach to refugee protection and education, and thus engages all of these actors, often through the work of young local committee members.

The compact emphasizes the empowerment of refugee and receiving community youth to build “their talent, potential and energy” to support eventual solutions.¹⁶ The compact indicates that states and relevant stakeholders should “utilize and develop” youth capacities and skills, and facilitate youth networking and information sharing, which is in keeping with the SRP mandate to create welcoming communities.¹⁷ WUSC has a long tradition of encouraging youth to share best practices in refugee sponsorship and public engagement regionally and nationally. WUSC is working expanding this network transnationally in partnership with student groups in Europe.

The compact also highlights the importance of complementary pathways for refugees, in particular through educational opportunities through partnerships with governments and academic institutions.¹⁸ The inclusion of education in the compact emphasizes its importance as a complementary pathway to durable solutions and mechanisms through which refugees can become part of and maximize their contributions to communities. As more community sponsorship schemes are developed in response to the recommendations from the compact (which is led by the UNHCR with buy-in from member-states and civil society), education will increasingly be seen as a key component of facilitating integration.

Conclusion

WUSC’s Student Refugee Program, in partnership with academic institutions across Canada, provides pathways to

resettlement for refugees through education, as well as an opportunity for young refugees to effectively integrate into increasingly welcoming communities in Canada. This integration and welcoming is facilitated not only by education itself, but by the youth involved in the program’s youth-to-youth sponsorship model. Youth studying at post-secondary institutions support refugee students’ integration on campus and in their community and share their experiences with those around them to build more welcoming communities for newcomers. With over forty years of experience in these areas, WUSC is seen as a global leader with lessons to share on youth-to-youth and peer-to-peer sponsorship models. While the SRP’s daily operations differ from campus to campus, WUSC is able to recommend standard practices that can apply across the campus network, including the student levy funding model. WUSC recommends that more countries consider models of sponsorship and education programs similar to the SRP in their plans for fulfilling the recommendations of the compact.

NOTES

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- 3 Refugees who arrive to Canada through the Government-Assisted (GAR) or Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) Programs are referred by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees or another referral organization and are financially supported by the government for between six (BVOR) and twelve (GAR) months. Social support comes from government-funded settlement agencies (GAR) or from groups of private citizens (BVOR).
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Resettling Refugees through Community Sponsorship: A Revolutionary Operational Approach Built on Traditional Legal Infrastructure

JENNIFER BOND and ANIA KWADRANS¹

Abstract

More than a dozen states are exploring the potential of introducing community sponsorship programs as a way of contributing to the global refugee protection regime. This article provides a comparative analysis of the legal and administrative frameworks that have underpinned the introduction of community sponsorship in four diverse countries: Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Argentina. We also briefly examine the introduction of co-sponsorship in the United States, a country without any formal national program. We conclude that while community sponsorship programs have the potential to revolutionize refugee resettlement, their operationalization is not contingent on revolutionary legal infrastructure.

Résumé

Plus d'une douzaine de pays à travers le monde envisagent activement la possibilité d'introduire des programmes de parrainage communautaires comme manière de contribuer au régime global de protection des réfugiés. Cet article offre une analyse comparative des cadres légaux et administratifs sur lesquels s'est appuyée l'introduction du parrainage communautaire dans quatre pays: le Canada, le Royaume-Uni, la Nouvelle-Zélande et l'Argentine. Nous examinons aussi brièvement l'introduction du co-parrainage aux États-Unis, un pays qui ne possède pas formellement de programme national. Nous concluons que bien que les programmes de parrainage communautaires aient le potentiel de révolutionner la réinstallation des réfugiés, leur mise en oeuvre ne dépend pas d'une infrastructure juridique révolutionnaire.

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Introduction

Community sponsorship programs empower ordinary citizens to welcome and integrate refugee newcomers into their communities. More than a dozen countries are exploring the introduction of these programs as part of their global commitments to refugee protection, and each exploration includes an assessment of feasibility—including considering what statutory,² regulatory,³ and policy⁴ structures are required to operationalize the unique model. This article fills a gap in academic literature and policy documents by providing a comparative analysis of the legal and administrative frameworks that have underpinned the introduction of community sponsorship programs in four diverse countries: Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Argentina. We also briefly examine the United States, a country that has recently seen the localized introduction of sponsorship-style programs, despite the absence of a dedicated national scheme or any formal framework. As discussed below, we term the US model “co-sponsorship.”

Since the inception of Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program in 1979, ordinary individuals have resettled over 300,000 refugees to large and small communities across the country. Comparative data emanating from this program over the past forty years demonstrate that sponsored refugees have better and quicker integration outcomes than refugees resettled through more traditional government programs.⁵ Community sponsorship also engages a broad range of Canadian citizens and enjoys consistent bipartisan political support.⁶ Refugee sponsorship received increased attention in late 2015, when a brewing political crisis over refugees spilled into the mainstream media⁷ and mobilized millions of people around the world looking to directly assist the vulnerable individuals flashing across their screens each day.⁸ In Canada, sponsorship provided an ideal vehicle to organize and leverage this mobilization and—following a time-bound political commitment by a new national government⁹—tens of thousands of Syrians were sponsored to the country in just a few months.¹⁰ Canada’s PSR Program also provided a unique channel to sustain and broaden this engagement: since 2015, over two million Canadians from over 400 communities have sponsored refugees¹¹—extraordinary figures that hint at the potential power and scope of the community sponsorship model.

In September 2016 the government of Canada, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and the Open Society Foundations announced the formation of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI), a partnership aimed at sharing the community sponsorship model, and supporting its adoption around the world.¹² The Giustra Foundation and the University of Ottawa joined the GRSI before it formally launched

in December 2016, and the new partnership articulated three goals: increasing and improving refugee resettlement; strengthening and supporting local host communities; and improving the narrative surrounding refugees and newcomers.¹³ In its first two years of operation, the GRSI worked with over twenty countries around the world, supporting community and government stakeholders as they assessed feasibility, designed, piloted, and/or implemented sponsorship programs.¹⁴ Jennifer Bond co-founded the GRSI and serves as its chair, while Ania Kwadrans has played a critical role on the team since the initiative launched. While this article does not directly draw on that work, our understanding of community sponsorship is deeply informed by it.

The GRSI’s formation, and its subsequent high level of activity, is only one indication of growing global interest in community sponsorship programs. Increasing engagement is also formally reflected in statements and initiatives by the European Union¹⁵ and in the final draft of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), a multilateral agreement that explicitly encourages states to “establish private or community sponsorship programmes ... including community-based programmes promoted through the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative.”¹⁶ Momentum is also visible in individual countries, as is clearly reflected in a strong joint statement issued by immigration ministers from Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Argentina, Spain, and New Zealand. The statement notes the benefits of community sponsorship and encourages other countries to adopt these programs.¹⁷

Collective experience with the process for introducing new community sponsorship programs is growing, but nascent. The case studies presented in this article aim to advance the field by providing examples of varying technical structures that have facilitated introduction of sponsorship across a range of countries. Each of our case studies explores legislation, executive announcements and orders, and any operational infrastructure that may have been established through regulation and policy documents, and subsequently implemented by government organizations or entities with delegated authority. On the basis of our five country examples, we conclude that while the legislative and policy nuances of each community sponsorship program have emerged in ways tailored to each state’s particular context, the frameworks that underpin these programs contain key similarities, including reliance on the same basic infrastructure as traditional refugee resettlement schemes.

Definitions and Methodology

The terms *community sponsorship*, *private sponsorship*, and *refugee sponsorship* have not been universally defined,¹⁸ resulting in conceptual confusion amongst stakeholders—a topic Jennifer Bond is exploring in a dedicated piece of

writing.¹⁹ For the purposes of this contribution, we define *community sponsorship programs* as programs that empower groups of ordinary individuals—as opposed to governments or professionalized agencies—to lead in welcoming, supporting, and integrating refugees.²⁰ While policy design features vary between countries,²¹ the basic model is a “public-private partnership between governments who, [at minimum,] facilitate legal admission of refugees, and private actors who provide financial, social and/or emotional support to receive and settle [those] refugees into [their] community.”²²

Under our conceptualization of community sponsorship, the model responds to the observation that “by redefining basic human needs as ‘problems’ that only professionals can resolve ... over-professionalization alienates people from the helping relationships they could establish with neighbours and kin.”²³ The deep engagement and high degree of responsibility undertaken by individual refugee sponsors repositions newcomers from vulnerable outsiders whom private individuals watch fail or succeed, to partners in a project of collective interests: the newcomers’ success is inherently also the sponsors’ success. This profound partnership divides sponsorship programs from other forms of refugee support, including those that rely heavily on volunteers but are fundamentally led by paid professionals.

This article presents the legal and policy architecture that states have used to enable citizen sponsors to lead in resettling refugees. In addition to exploring four countries with government-created, national sponsorship programs, we also briefly examine the United States, a country with a large refugee resettlement program but no formal community sponsorship scheme at the legislative or policy level. Despite this absence, several local resettlement organizations in the United States have developed de facto sponsorship-style initiatives by sub-delegating authority in a way that manifests the type of citizen-led process at the core of our understanding of sponsorship. Since professionalized agencies retain official responsibility for newcomers’ integration, these programs do not fall within the scope of our definition of *community sponsorship*, and we thus present them using a different but related term: *co-sponsorship*.

We also deliberately restrict our analysis to countries that have introduced sponsorship programs in the context of resettlement—the relocation of a refugee from her country of asylum to a third country, usually with the support of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).²⁴ Resettlement programs are voluntary: while the Refugee Convention codifies obligations for states to protect certain non-nationals who claim asylum from within their territory,²⁵ they are not legally obliged to offer protection to refugees who remain in the jurisdiction of other states. Despite this lack of formal requirement, the international community has repeatedly recognized the need

for more “equitable sharing” of responsibility for refugees,²⁶ and over forty states have established resettlement programs as one way of contributing to this objective.²⁷ Each resettlement country has established its own distinct national procedures for operationalizing its program, but Canada’s PSR Program was, for many decades, unique because of the way that it empowered ordinary individuals to take primary responsibility for all aspects of welcoming and integrating newcomers.²⁸

Our focus on community sponsorship in the context of resettlement means that our analysis does not consider community-driven models that support asylum seekers²⁹ or other populations of newcomers.³⁰ We also consciously omit programs where the “welcomers” are exclusively family members,³¹ as well as programs where costs are shared between private and public actors, but integration is led primarily by government or professionalized refugee support organizations as opposed to community groups or individuals.³² Finally, because we are interested in exploring the infrastructure that has enabled the creation of sustainable, national sponsorship programs, we have not considered ad hoc, community-driven initiatives negotiated with single civil society groups via time-limited agreements.³³

This article provides a technical analysis of the statutory, regulatory, and policy structures that were required to initially operationalize a selection of community sponsorship programs. As a result, we take a historical view of our first case study—Canada—and examine the legislative changes that created the foundations for the world’s largest and longest-running community sponsorship program.

Canada

Enabling Legislation and Orders

Canada acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1969.³⁴ A detailed review of Canada’s immigration policy followed in 1973, culminating in the 1976 *Immigration Act*,³⁵ which introduced Canada’s first official resettlement program.³⁶ Prior to 1976, refugee resettlement was based on ad hoc decisions and Cabinet orders-in-council.³⁷ The new legal framework explicitly recognized refugees as a distinct class of migrants and included a more transparent approach for overseas selection and resettlement on humanitarian grounds.³⁸ Refugees who met the requirements of the Act were to be granted permanent resident status upon arrival to the country.³⁹ Since 1959, Canada has resettled over 700,000 refugees from all over the world.⁴⁰

The 1976 resettlement framework also included a provision that explicitly enabled refugee resettlement through community sponsorship.⁴¹ Specifically, the new *Immigration Act* gave power to the Governor-in-Council to make regulations “prescribing classes of persons whose applications for landing may be sponsored by Canadian citizens [or]

... permanent residents,”⁴² and “establishing the requirements to be met by any [sponsoring] person or organization including the provision of an undertaking to assist any such Convention refugee, person or immigrant in becoming successfully established in Canada.”⁴³ These brief statutory references provided the foundation for the world’s first community sponsorship program.

Canada’s new approach to resettlement was quickly operationalized: in December 1978 the country pledged to accept 5,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as part of an international response to the forced displacement of millions of Indochinese refugees.⁴⁴ The scale and visibility of the crisis continued to increase, however, prompting public calls for the government to further expand its commitment.⁴⁵ In June 1979 the Canadian government announced that it would admit 12,000 Indochinese refugees—8,000 of whom would be government-assisted and 4,000 of whom would be privately sponsored by individual groups and organizations.⁴⁶ That same month, the commitment was increased further to 50,000 resettled refugees by the end of 1980.⁴⁷ To manage the rapidly increasing numbers, the government established a Special Refugee Task Force to specifically manage Canada’s resettlement of Indochinese refugees.⁴⁸ It also pledged to meet its ambitious new targets by offering a “matching” model to the Canadian public, whereby it would admit one Indochinese refugee to the government-supported stream for everyone who was privately sponsored. With this commitment, the country’s new PSR Program rapidly took hold as one of Canada’s principal resettlement mechanisms.⁴⁹

Regulations and Program Administration

Canada’s *Immigration Regulations, 1978*,⁵⁰ contained provisions that contoured the country’s new PSR Program,⁵¹ including defining the eligibility parameters for a sponsored refugee⁵² and specifying that sponsor groups must be composed of at least five adult Canadian citizens or permanent residents (or be a Canadian corporation) residing or located in the expected community of settlement.⁵³ Eligible groups were permitted to resettle refugees after signing a written undertaking that they would provide one year of financial and settlement support⁵⁴ and demonstrating sufficient financial resources and a plan for “adequate arrangements ... for the reception of the Convention refugee and his accompanying dependants.”⁵⁵ The new regulations were in place before the Governor-in-Council designated the first three classes of refugees eligible for the program on 29 January 1979.⁵⁶

Faith communities and ethno-cultural groups in Canada had a long history of supporting resettled refugees before the PSR program was introduced⁵⁷ and were well positioned to support the influx of Indochinese newcomers through the new sponsorship stream. These national organizations sought

ways to leverage their own infrastructure, and beginning in March 1979, developed master agreements” with the Canadian government⁵⁸ that allowed them to authorize individual congregations across Canada to sponsor Indochinese refugees.⁵⁹ These agreements also allowed the government of Canada to delegate sponsor-screening responsibilities to agreement-holding organizations,⁶⁰ while government officials retained responsibility for vetting refugees and thousands of “Groups of Five” who were unaffiliated with a larger sponsorship organization.⁶¹ Within weeks, the government had signed agreements with almost all the national church bodies in Canada.⁶²

Today Canada’s refugee law is governed by the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, 2001*⁶³ (*IRPA*) and its associated *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, 2002*⁶⁴ (*IRPR*). The *IRPA* retains the central provision that enables sponsorship,⁶⁵ and the *IRPR* sets out, *inter alia*, the eligibility criteria for sponsors⁶⁶ and sponsored refugees.⁶⁷ The dual track set in 1979 between master agreement holders (today, “sponsorship agreement holders”) and Groups of Five continues to underpin the program’s modern form.⁶⁸ However, Canada’s sponsorship program has diversified and today includes dedicated and specialized programs for sponsor-identified refugees; UNHCR-referred refugees;⁶⁹ individuals persecuted for sexual orientation or gender identity;⁷⁰ refugees with complex medical needs;⁷¹ urgent cases;⁷² and post-secondary students.⁷³ Despite this evolution, the core of all of Canada’s community sponsorship programs remains robust citizen responsibility and empowerment.

As described above, the world’s first community sponsorship program was formed simultaneously with, and integrated into, Canada’s new national resettlement program. Its unique referral mechanism permitting sponsors to identify refugees they wished to resettle was enabled by an explicit provision in the 1976 *Immigration Act*, which also delineated very generally the parameters through which persons could seek protection, and gave scope for regulations to fill in myriad details.⁷⁴ This model underscores the minimal legislative framework that was necessary to facilitate the introduction of this radically different approach to refugee resettlement.

Unlike Canada, our next two case studies—the United Kingdom and New Zealand—each introduced community sponsorship into pre-existing and well-established refugee resettlement infrastructure. In the following sections, we examine the distinct approach each country took to doing so.

United Kingdom

Enabling Legislation and Orders

The United Kingdom ratified the Refugee Convention on 11 March 1954.⁷⁵ It has been resettling refugees since the early 1970s via a combination of two informal programs⁷⁶ and ad hoc initiatives to respond to specific humanitarian

crises.⁷⁷ Since 1971 the legal basis for refugees to be admitted to, and stay in, the United Kingdom—including through resettlement—has been the *Immigration Act, 1971*.⁷⁸ The Act requires any individuals who are neither UK citizens nor members of the European Economic Area to obtain leave⁷⁹ from UK authorities before entering the country.⁸⁰

Building on its three decades of experience with informal and ad hoc resettlement programs, the United Kingdom formalized its approach to resettlement in 2004 by introducing the Gateway Protection Program (GPP).⁸¹ The GPP was operationalized and continues to function by virtue of section 59 of the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, 2002* (NIA),⁸² which enables the secretary of state to “participate in [projects] designed to ... facilitate co-operation between States in matters relating to migration”⁸³ and to “arrange or assist the settlement of migrants.”⁸⁴ The NIA further specifies that the secretary of state may provide financial support to international organizations in the United Kingdom for their migration-related projects, and may partner with other governments that advance similar programs.⁸⁵

The same broad provision in the NIA that underpinned the GPP also facilitated the more recent introduction of two newer resettlement programs: the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), and the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS).⁸⁶ The VPRS was announced on 29 January 2014 in a statement to Parliament by the home secretary,⁸⁷ in which she committed to creating a new resettlement program for Syrian refugees. The home secretary did not initially quantify the scope of the initiative, but on 2 September 2015 it was announced that the VPRS would resettle 20,000 Syrians by 2020.⁸⁸ In July 2017 the scope of the program was expanded to include refugees not only of Syrian nationality but also others affected by the Syrian conflict.⁸⁹ The VPRS relies on the UNHCR to refer eligible refugees residing in Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon.⁹⁰ A cross-government Syrian Resettlement Team that includes the UK Home Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for International Development, and several other ministries was created to implement the program.⁹¹ The United Kingdom also pledged to resettle 3,000 at-risk children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa by 2020, a commitment that resulted in the creation of the VCRS.⁹² Refugees resettled through the VPRS and VCRS programs are granted refugee status, which enables them to work and to access benefits in the United Kingdom.⁹³ After five years of residency in the United Kingdom, resettled refugees may apply for indefinite leave to remain in the country.⁹⁴ The United Kingdom resettled over 25,000 refugees from all over the world between 2003 and 2018.⁹⁵

The UK community sponsorship program was introduced as a component of the VPRS and the VCRS in a separate and

very brief political statement by the home secretary at the Conservative Party conference on 6 October 2015. There, it was announced that the United Kingdom would “develop a community sponsorship scheme ... to allow individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugees directly.”⁹⁶ This statement launched work to create a robust national sponsorship program. Further, by putting no limits on the number of refugees who could be sponsored from within the broader resettlement scheme, the United Kingdom established the most ambitious sponsorship initiative since the one Canada introduced forty years ago.

The UK sponsorship program relies entirely on the same legislative architecture that underpins its broader resettlement program: the only statutory reference to the community sponsorship scheme is a ministerial arrangement under the *Equality Act, 2010*, a technical inclusion that addresses the fact that the program focuses only on Syrian nationals and individuals affected by the Syrian conflict.⁹⁷ Otherwise, the formal legal framework enabling resettlement is silent on the introduction of community sponsorship.

Regulations and Program Administration

Details of the UK community sponsorship scheme are delineated through policy instructions, guidelines, and forms produced by the UK Home Office.⁹⁸ Collectively, these documents establish that citizens and community groups chosen as sponsors have primary responsibility for welcoming and integrating UNHCR-referred refugees to their local neighbourhoods.⁹⁹ Prospective sponsors must partner with registered charities or community interest companies, but these organizations are not required to have expertise in working with refugees and do not lead the process—thus preserving the core of the sponsorship model.¹⁰⁰ Sponsors must also obtain written approval of the local authority in the sponsored family’s future place of residence;¹⁰¹ demonstrate financial capacity to sponsor;¹⁰² and provide a detailed settlement plan that illustrates how they will deliver on their responsibilities, including securing housing for two years.¹⁰³ After the UK Home Office provisionally approves a sponsor’s application, a formal agreement is signed,¹⁰⁴ and the sponsors must attend a training workshop before being authorized to resettle a family.¹⁰⁵ Once authorized to sponsor, the UK Home Office works with the sponsors and local authority to allocate a suitable refugee family to each specific group.¹⁰⁶

The UK community sponsorship scheme has inspired hundreds of local neighbourhoods to welcome refugees, and millions of pounds of public and private sector funding have been invested to develop capacity to recruit, vet, and support sponsorship groups and to evolve the policy model.¹⁰⁷ This has resulted in significant sponsorship-specific infrastructure at the government and community level,¹⁰⁸ and

the program has become an entrenched part of the United Kingdom's resettlement landscape, with its own unique and sustainable ecosystem.

As a result of recent success in the United Kingdom, many countries considering their own sponsorship programs are interested in learning from the UK experience. This makes the absence of any dedicated legal architecture to support the UK sponsorship scheme noteworthy: unlike the Canadian program, which was introduced by a specific statutory reference, the robust UK program was enabled exclusively through a high-level political statement and detailed administrative processes. However, the program is part of a well-established overall resettlement program, and some of the state-level operations associated with that broader program—including the overseas refugee referral mechanism—have been largely retained. This means that the focus of the new sponsorship scheme has been exclusively on transitioning the modality for delivering post-arrival reception and support.

Our next case study, New Zealand, also introduced sponsorship within a well-established resettlement program. However, New Zealand relied on the combination of existing legal architecture and a robust Cabinet document to pilot both a new community-based reception program and new refugee referral criteria.

New Zealand

Enabling Legislation and Orders

New Zealand acceded to the Refugee Convention on 30 June 1960 and has a long history of welcoming newcomers fleeing persecution.¹⁰⁹ It has been resettling UNHCR-referred refugees since the early 1980s and operating its formal Refugee Quota Programme since 1987.¹¹⁰

New Zealand's 1987 *Immigration Act*¹¹¹ introduced an extensive framework for refugee protection. The *Immigration Act, 2009*¹¹² built on this framework and explicitly authorized resettlement.¹¹³ The 2009 Act also gave the minister a broad mandate to certify immigration instructions relating to, *inter alia*, residence class visas,¹¹⁴ and "any general or specific objective of immigration policy."¹¹⁵ These Immigration Instructions set out the criteria for granting visas and permitting entry into the country, and provided the legal basis for a resettlement program.¹¹⁶ Between 2003 and 2018, New Zealand resettled over 10,200 refugees through its state-led Refugee Quota Programme.¹¹⁷

In June 2016 the New Zealand Cabinet agreed to increase its annual resettlement quota from 750 to 1,000 UNHCR-referred refugees¹¹⁸ and to pilot "a community organisation refugee sponsorship category ... as a new form of admission."¹¹⁹ A Cabinet background paper on the community organization refugee sponsorship category (published on 30 August 2017) informed this decision; proposing that

the sponsorship program would be distinct from the Refugee Quota Programme and would form a new "part of New Zealand's broader refugee and humanitarian programme."¹²⁰ In September 2018, New Zealand announced that it would also increase its core annual quota by an additional 500 refugees per year, beginning in July 2019.¹²¹

Many specifics of New Zealand's pilot sponsorship program were laid out in the NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision (9 August 2017).¹²² In particular, individuals selected for the Community Organization Refugee Sponsorship Category needed to be recognized as refugees by the UNHCR; to possess a basic facility with English and a minimum of three years' work experience (or a qualification requiring a minimum of two years' tertiary study); and be between eighteen and forty-five years of age.¹²³ Sponsors under the program needed to be registered legal entities; to have demonstrated experience working with refugees or other vulnerable people (although they did not need not be professional resettlement agencies); to possess financial and settlement capacity to support the sponsored refugees; and be willing to enter into an outcomes agreement with Immigration New Zealand for the provision of their settlement and integration responsibilities.¹²⁴ Refugees resettled through the pilot community sponsorship program were to be granted permanent resident visas.¹²⁵

The New Zealand Cabinet also agreed that sponsoring community organizations could either nominate refugees eligible for the sponsorship program or be matched to refugees referred to New Zealand by the UNHCR.¹²⁶ The addition of new eligibility criteria and the option of sponsor-naming represented major Cabinet-directed variations to New Zealand's traditional resettlement program, and it is noteworthy that introducing these changes did not require legislative amendment. Instead, the very general nature of the existing statutory framework—focusing on visa criteria rather than the specifics of a particular resettlement stream—was deemed to provide the requisite legal authority for the pilot to be introduced and operationalized.

Regulation and Program Administration

New Zealand's 2009 Act is complemented by a series of regulations,¹²⁷ and by the Department of Immigration's "Operational Manual." Amongst other things, the "Operational Manual" sets out specific details for the Refugee Quota Programme, including its objectives and eligibility requirements.¹²⁸ It also establishes the requirement that resettled refugees receive an orientation at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre¹²⁹—a component that was retained in the community sponsorship scheme.¹³⁰ The Cabinet decision that gave rise to New Zealand's community sponsorship program was also implemented through the "Operational

Manual.”¹³¹ In addition to repeating the specific program requirements mandated by the original Cabinet decision, the “Operational Manual” also established the detailed process through which both sponsor groups and eligible refugees could apply to participate in New Zealand’s pilot program.¹³²

On 13 October 2017 the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment issued a request for applications from community organizations interested in becoming community sponsors under the new sponsorship stream.¹³³ Interested organizations needed to establish that they met the requirements for sponsorship and were willing to sign a formal deed of agreement¹³⁴ with the government of New Zealand guaranteeing that they would provide the required settlement responsibilities.¹³⁵ According to the deed, approved community sponsors were solely responsible for fulfilling and could not subcontract to any other entity without first obtaining the written permission of the ministry.¹³⁶ The four community-based groups selected to participate in New Zealand’s community sponsorship pilot were announced in January 2018,¹³⁷ and it is noteworthy that none were professional refugee resettlement agencies. The first sponsored refugees arrived in New Zealand in July 2018.¹³⁸

The government of New Zealand is reviewing its pilot program and considering whether to continue with a more permanent commitment to refugee sponsorship. In anticipation of this review, two distinct stakeholder groups—the Core Community Partnership and Amnesty International—each presented proposals to the government urging, *inter alia*, that the community sponsorship program be made permanent; that funding be provided for a community-based “catalyst entity” to provide future sponsors with support; and that non-humanitarian criteria for refugee selection be reviewed.¹³⁹ Amnesty International also presented a petition with over 10,000 signatures, encouraging New Zealand to continue the program.¹⁴⁰ The New Zealand immigration minister responded publicly to this petition by noting that it was “heartening to see so many signatures from people in New Zealand saying they warmly support [the community sponsorship] program and encouraging the Government to go beyond the pilot.”¹⁴¹

Like the United Kingdom, New Zealand introduced its community sponsorship program by using the legal framework of its existing refugee resettlement scheme, rather than introducing any new statutory provisions. However, the New Zealand Cabinet both authorized the new program and provided significant direction on its parameters. This is different from all other countries, where detailed policy parameters for sponsorship programs were developed under delegated regulatory or administrative authority.

It is also noteworthy that, while New Zealand, Canada, and Argentina (described below) have all experimented with

allowing sponsorship groups to support either a UNHCR-referred refugee or a sponsor-referred refugee (with some specific restrictions in each case), only Canada has introduced legislation that has formally recognized distinct referral mechanisms. In the other examples, the formal legislative instruments are silent on referral methodology.

Our next case study examines a newer resettlement country, Argentina, and explains how administrative processes created a resettlement program delivered exclusively through a sponsorship model.

Argentina

Enabling Legislation and Orders

Argentina ratified the Refugee Convention on 15 November 1961¹⁴² and has a long history of welcoming newcomers through its asylum system.¹⁴³ However, the country’s approach to resettlement has been noticeably iterative: in 1979 and 1980 its first formalized resettlement program focused on 300 refugees from Southeast Asia,¹⁴⁴ and in 2005 it participated in the regional Solidarity Resettlement Program to resettle Colombian refugees.¹⁴⁵ The creation of this second resettlement initiative corresponded with a broader overall restructuring of the country’s formal legal architecture relating to refugees and immigrants, resulting first in introduction of the *Migration Law*¹⁴⁶ in 2004, and then in the enactment of the *General Law of Recognition and Protection of Refugees* in 2006.¹⁴⁷ Neither of these instruments specifically references either resettlement or sponsorship, but the *Migration Law* provides the legal basis for an individual’s admission to, permission to stay in, or removal from Argentina and also enables humanitarian admissions using temporary status visas.¹⁴⁸ Individuals resettled to Argentina with humanitarian visas may petition for refugee status once they arrive in the country.¹⁴⁹

Argentina’s most recent resettlement commitment has focused on Syrian refugees, and operates under the combined authority of the humanitarian visa regime set out in the *Migration Law* and two presidential decrees.¹⁵⁰ The first presidential decree was issued in 2010 and sets out more detailed parameters for implementing the *Migration Law*, including its humanitarian provisions.¹⁵¹ The 2010 presidential decree also established the National Directorate for Migration as the agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the *Migration Law* and for creating associated regulations.¹⁵² Importantly, the 2010 presidential decree also delegated authority to Argentine consulates abroad to issue entry permits and visas, including humanitarian visas.¹⁵³

A second presidential decree was issued in September 2016, shortly after Argentina’s president announced at a UN summit that the country would resettle 3,000 Syrian refugees. The 2016 decree established a National Cabinet for the Syria

Program to coordinate efforts of the ministries¹⁵⁴ involved in the integration of refugees.¹⁵⁵ It also stipulated that the National Directorate for Migration would coordinate an inter-institutional working group to implement the national Cabinet's instructions and provide recommendations to the national Cabinet.¹⁵⁶ The result was that two key coordinating bodies for the Syrian Resettlement Program were established through the 2010 and 2016 presidential decrees.

Further contours of Argentina's current resettlement commitment—the Special Humanitarian Visa Program for Foreigners Affected by the Syrian Conflict (Syria Program)—are delineated in a regulatory scheme established by the National Directorate for Migration pursuant to its authority under the *Migration Act* and the 2010 presidential decree. As we explain below, Argentina's entire commitment to resettle Syrian refugees was designed to function as a national community sponsorship program.¹⁵⁷

Regulations and Program Administration

In response to international appeals for more states to resettle Syrian refugees, Argentina's National Directorate for Migration created an administrative provision¹⁵⁸ on 14 October 2014 (First Syria Program Provision), which established the country's Syria Program. The First Syria Program Provision introduced the initial iteration of the country's community sponsorship program by relying on the humanitarian admissions section of the *Migration Law*¹⁵⁹ to enable Argentinian relatives of Syrian and Palestinian refugees to sponsor their family members' resettlement. Under this original program, Argentinian relatives (termed "callers" [*llamantes*]) needed to provide a letter of invitation attesting to their kinship bonds with the sponsored refugee;¹⁶⁰ proof of identity;¹⁶¹ and proof of domicile.¹⁶² In 2014 and 2015 over 200 sponsorship applications were submitted under this original Syria Program, and the basic operational framework for Argentina's first community sponsorship program was formally established.

Momentum for Argentina's Syria Program was renewed in September 2016 when the country pledged to resettle 3,000 Syrian refugees.¹⁶³ Responding to this commitment, the National Directorate for Migration issued a second provision¹⁶⁴ (Second Syria Program Provision), which updates the 2014 Syria Program by broadening the eligibility criteria for sponsors to include not only groups of individuals ("callers")¹⁶⁵ but also sponsoring organizations referred to as "requesters" (*requirentes*). The revised program allows both callers and requesters to initiate the humanitarian admission of individuals affected by the Syrian conflict by presenting a letter of invitation explicitly assuming a one-year commitment to provide accommodation and other integration support.¹⁶⁶ Callers are also given the option of submitting a letter of endorsement from an organization, guaranteeing

that callers will fulfil their commitments,¹⁶⁷ and meaning that requestors may sponsor refugees directly or act as guarantors for callers.¹⁶⁸ Significantly, the Second Syria Program Provision removes the requirement of familial ties between the sponsors and the sponsored refugees,¹⁶⁹ enabling the introduction of a UNHCR referral mechanism.¹⁷⁰

Argentina's Second Syria Program Provision also enables the National Directorate for Migration to implement mechanisms to collaborate with, and support, callers and requesters with the integration process.¹⁷¹ This function is implemented by the inter-institutional Working Group coordinated by the National Directorate for Migration, which—by virtue of the 2016 presidential decree—also receives instructions from the national Cabinet for the Syria Program.¹⁷² Successful implementation of Argentina's Syria Program and growth of its overall resettlement infrastructure is also supported by the UNHCR's Emerging Countries Joint Support Mechanism¹⁷³ and by a 2018 investment by the European Union.¹⁷⁴ As of July 2018, Argentinian callers and requesters had sponsored more than 400 refugees.¹⁷⁵

As we have seen, Argentina relied on broad statutory provisions and two presidential decrees to authorize the issuance of humanitarian visas and create important infrastructure for resettlement, including the establishment of two key coordinating bodies. Critically, Argentina is the only country under examination that plans to deliver its entire resettlement program via community sponsorship.¹⁷⁶ As with other examples, the details of this model were established and operationalized at the administrative level, but Argentina is unique, both in relation to its degree of reliance on sponsorship and the fact that the model is neither mentioned in statutory instruments nor referenced explicitly by orders from the executive branch. The cumulative effect is that Argentina used entirely administrative processes to translate its broad humanitarian visa regime and a political commitment to support Syrian refugees into a well-delineated community sponsorship-based resettlement scheme.¹⁷⁷

Our final case study examines the United States—a large resettlement country that does not have a national community sponsorship program. Nevertheless, a number of American civil society organizations have recognized the potential of sponsorship and built their own mini infrastructure within the country's broader overall resettlement scheme.

United States

Resettlement Framework

The United States is not a party to the Refugee Convention but did accede to its additional protocol on 1 November 1968 and is thus bound by articles 2–34 of the convention and to the core principle of *non-refoulement*.¹⁷⁸ The country has a long history of accepting refugees from all over the world¹⁷⁹

and in 1980 created the US Refugee Admission Program (USRAP) through the enactment of the *Refugee Act of 1980*.¹⁸⁰ Introduction of the USRAP created a “standardized system for identifying, vetting, and resettling” refugees¹⁸¹ and, since then, the United States has resettled more refugees than any other country: annual admissions peaked between 1990 and 1995 with an average of 112,000 refugees resettled annually, and remained high into the 2010s, with 78,761 refugees resettled in 2016.¹⁸² These numbers dropped precipitously to 24,559 in 2017¹⁸³ and to 15,784 in 2018¹⁸⁴ under a new US administration. Between 2003 and 2018 the United States resettled over 640,000 refugees from all over the world.¹⁸⁵

The backbone of US immigration and refugee policy is the *Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)*, a wide-ranging statutory regime introduced in 1985.¹⁸⁶ The *INA* continues the US resettlement program and gives the president absolute discretion to set the country’s annual refugee resettlement quota, taking into consideration both humanitarian concerns and the national interest.¹⁸⁷ The scheme specifies that, once the president establishes the annual quota, the United States must work with the UNHCR, other specially trained NGOs, and its embassies abroad to receive referrals of individuals eligible for its refugee admissions program.¹⁸⁸ Resettled refugees are admitted to the United States with refugee status. After one year of residency, they may request permanent resident status, and after five years they are eligible to apply for US citizenship.¹⁸⁹

The *INA* also established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services. The ORR is tasked with funding and administering the domestic implementation of the US resettlement program.¹⁹⁰ Specifically, the *INA* gives the ORR authority to work with stakeholders to develop policies on resettlement¹⁹¹ and to provide grants and contracts to “public or private non-profit agencies for initial resettlement ... of refugees in the United States.”¹⁹² To deliver on its resettlement mandate, the ORR partners with nine professional resettlement agencies,¹⁹³ each of which is responsible for ensuring that a refugee’s settlement needs are met,¹⁹⁴ including housing, furnishings, food, clothing, and facilitated access to community and state-provided services.¹⁹⁵

The ORR’s nine resettlement partners in turn subcontract these responsibilities to hundreds of local service providers all across the United States. These organizations welcome and integrate refugees under authority delegated by the ORR.¹⁹⁶ There is wide variance in how these local partners operate, but the majority use a combination of professional case workers and volunteers to provide support.

Certain US organizations have, however, been inspired by the community sponsorship model and have chosen to further delegate core integration and decision-making

responsibilities to highly empowered groups of sponsors.¹⁹⁷ This has the effect of creating de facto community sponsorship models within certain communities. Since the US government did not create or formally acknowledge these programs,¹⁹⁸ and since the refugee agencies retain ultimate oversight and responsibility for the groups, we term this model “co-sponsorship.”

Community-Level Co-sponsorship

One example of a robust and successful community co-sponsorship program was introduced by Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) in Connecticut—a local affiliate of two of the nine US resettlement agencies.¹⁹⁹ Under the IRIS co-sponsorship model, community groups of at least ten people are empowered to take primary responsibility for welcoming and integrating resettled refugees into their communities.²⁰⁰ Once these groups demonstrate to IRIS that they are prepared to welcome a refugee family, they must sign a formal agreement pledging to fulfill their responsibilities towards the resettled refugees.²⁰¹ Responsibilities include fundraising to provide housing and basic necessities; welcoming the family on arrival; providing orientation and transportation assistance; assisting in connecting the family with health, education, and other services and benefits; helping the family manage its resources and secure employment;²⁰² and offering overall logistical and emotional support.

IRIS provides guidance and training to co-sponsorship groups as they prepare to meet their responsibilities, and subsequently provides light-touch support to sponsors as needed. It also delivers federally required case management for the refugee family through a number of check-ins during the initial resettlement period.²⁰³ However, the agency does not direct the activities of the co-sponsors, who become the key decision-makers and implementers of all aspects of the settlement process. This represents a radical shift from the more traditional, highly professionalized US resettlement model. In 2016 one-third of the 530 refugees referred to IRIS were settled by community co-sponsorship groups,²⁰⁴ allowing the agency to increase its overall capacity, welcome more newcomers to its area, and significantly grow the number of individual citizens engaging in significant ways with newly arrived refugees.²⁰⁵ While the United States does not have a formal sponsorship program, the IRIS program demonstrates that key components of sponsorship can be implemented not only within existing legal frameworks, but also within traditional operational models.

Conclusion

Community sponsorship programs have the potential to be truly transformative. Countries seeking new ways to

contribute to global refugee protection, while simultaneously improving integration outcomes and benefiting their own local communities, are examining Canada's long history with sponsorship and considering how similar models might be introduced in their own domestic contexts. Our work with the GRSI has shown us that one of the first steps for any country considering a community sponsorship program is an examination of what laws, regulations, and policies are necessary to make it operational. The case studies presented in this article illustrate some of the varying approaches that have been taken in this regard.

Canada is the only country to have embedded sponsorship into its principal immigration and refugee statute simultaneously with the introduction of a nascent resettlement program. The United Kingdom and Argentina provide interesting contrasts to this approach. Both countries developed and operationalized sponsorship programs subsequent to high-level political announcements. In Argentina the commitment was a general one to resettle Syrian refugees, while in the United Kingdom it was a specific reference to the introduction of a community-led sponsorship program. After these announcements, both countries introduced their programs without any new supporting legislation: Argentina by creating a new regulatory framework under the broad authority of its general immigration law; and the United Kingdom by leveraging the administrative frameworks associated with two pre-existing resettlement programs. It is also noteworthy that, while both of these newer sponsorship programs are limited to refugees affected by the Syrian conflict, the specific regulatory infrastructure enabling the UK program does not reflect this restriction,²⁰⁶ while Argentina's does. This is consistent with Argentina's iterative approach to resettlement and may mean that additional political directives or legal authority would be needed for the country to retain its sponsorship program as a longer-term feature of its overall refugee policy.

Like the United Kingdom, New Zealand introduced its community sponsorship program into a well-established resettlement framework. However, while both programs rely on existing resettlement infrastructure and were introduced without legislative amendment, a significant amount of programmatic detail for the New Zealand program was included in the authorizing Cabinet documents. As a result, any subsequent policy changes to New Zealand's program will presumably require renewed parliamentary approval. It is of course noteworthy that, at the time of writing, New Zealand's sponsorship program was limited to a small-scale pilot initiative; it is possible that a future, longer-term commitment will be embedded into the country's legal infrastructure in a different way.

Finally, the development of co-sponsorship programs in the United States illustrates how the core elements of sponsorship can be implemented by motivated and creative civil society actors willing to deliberately de-professionalize their approach to refugee resettlement. The successful program at IRIS is a particularly strong example of what can be achieved in the absence of any formal adjustments to the national infrastructure. Of course, these initiatives rely on an existing resettlement pathway that is legally and administratively embedded, and in this way the United States most closely resembles the UK example.

While each of these situations is unique, our overall conclusion is that community sponsorship programs do not require significant, dedicated legislative infrastructure. In fact, Canada is the only country to have introduced a statutory provision explicitly authorizing community engagement in resettling refugees, and that provision is extremely broad. More frequently, sponsorship programs have been introduced through a combination of political will and administrative creativity.

For the many countries considering new sponsorship programs, this is good news: while they may need to carefully consider the political, policy, and operational realities of these systems, they likely do not need to undertake wide-scale legislative reform. As true believers in the power of sponsorship to transform the lives of both newcomers and the communities that welcome them, we hope this means that more programs will be introduced in the near term. Indeed, with global capacity shrinking at an alarming rate and the world desperately in need of creative solutions, the future of refugee resettlement may depend on it.

NOTES

- 1 We owe thanks for research and editorial support to Eliza Bateman, Christina Clemente, Rebecca Dickey, Mari Galloway, Jacintha Gedeon, Marcos Gomez, Shannon Kristjanson, Meghan Steenhoek, and Lyndsay Scovil. All errors or omissions are of course our own.
- 2 Via an enactment of a law by the legislative branch of a government.
- 3 Merriam-Webster OnLine, s.v. "regulation," accessed 30 January 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regulation>. For the purposes of this article, we are using the following definitions of regulation from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*: "an authoritative rule dealing with details or procedure" and "a rule or order issued by an executive authority or regulatory agency of a government and having the force of law."
- 4 *Merriam-Webster OnLine*, s.v. "policy," accessed 30 January 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?src=search-dict-box>. For the purposes of this article,

- we are using the following definition of policy from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*: “an overall plan, principle, or guideline; especially: one formulated outside of the judiciary.”
- 5 Recent data suggest that refugees privately sponsored to Canada find employment within their first five years of settlement at higher rates (70 per cent) and earn higher incomes than their government-resettled counterparts (57 per cent). Penetration into the labour market levels out between these two groups after approximately ten years. Twenty years after arrival, privately sponsored refugees have a median income better than other Canadians. Median income for government-resettled refugees after twenty years is just below that of other Canadians. Note that these studies do not disaggregate between UNHCR-referred sponsored refugees and sponsor-referred refugees. The latter may have family or other ties to Canada and may not possess the same vulnerabilities as UNHCR-referred refugees, who have additional integration challenges. See Statistics Canada, “Immigrant Income by World Area, Canada,” <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=4310003401>; Government of Canada, “Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP),” 7 July 2016, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/resettlement-programs.html>.
 - 6 A 2018 report published by the Environics Institute for Survey Research found that in 2015/16 close to two million adult Canadians were involved directly in community sponsorship of Syrian refugees: Environics Institute for Survey Research, *Canada’s World Survey 2018: Final Report* (Toronto: Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2018), 35, <https://3meaon49d536386oyn4ri4go-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Canada-World-Survey-2018.pdf>. In September 2015 much of the federal election focused on the respective parties’ commitments to welcoming Syrian refugees, including through community sponsorship: Mark Kennedy, “Where the Parties Stand on Syrian refugees,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 September 2015, <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/where-the-parties-stand-on-syrian-refugees>. Since the election, opposition parties have continued to urge the Canadian government to expand and remove barriers to the community sponsorship program. See, e.g., Michelle Rempel, “Urgent Measures Required to Assist Yazidi Victims of Genocide,” Conservative Party of Canada, 21 July 2016, <https://www.conservative.ca/urgent-measures-required-to-assist-yazidi-victims-of-genocide/>; *National Post*, “Opposition Calls for Liberals to Be True to Refugee Rhetoric, Change System,” 20 June 2017, <https://nationalpost.com/pm/news-pmn/canada-news-pmn/opposition-mps-press-liberals-to-be-true-to-refugee-rhetoric-change-system>.
 - 7 See, e.g., BBC News, “Migrant Crisis: Photo of Drowned Boy Sparks Outcry,” 3 September 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34133210>; BBC News, “Migrant Crisis: Nine Key Moments from the Last Year,” 7 September 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34173972>; Gregor Aisch, Sarah Almkhtar, Josh Keller, and Wilson Andrews, “The Scale of the Migrant Crisis, from 160 to Millions,” *New York Times*, 22 September 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/09/10/world/europe/scale-of-migrant-crisis-in-europe.html>; *Economist*, “Strangers in Strange Lands,” 12 September 2015, <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2015/09/12/strangers-in-strange-lands>.
 - 8 See, e.g., Joel Gunter, “Migrant Crisis: The Volunteers Stepping In to Help,” BBC News, 3 September 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34130639>; Emma Graham-Harrison, Patrick Kingsley, and Tracy McVeigh, “Cheering German Crowds Greet Refugees after Long Trek from Budapest to Munich,” *Guardian*, 5 September 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/05/refugee-crisis-warm-welcome-for-people-bussed-from-budapest>; Eliza Goroya, Khairunissa Dhala, and Lorna Hayes, “Volunteers Help Refugees Survive while Europe’s Leaders Still Search for Solutions,” *Amnesty International*, 21 September 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/09/volunteers-help-refugees-survive-while-europes-leaders-still-search-for-solutions/>; Emily Anne Epstein, “Welcomed to Europe,” *Atlantic*, 22 November 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2015/11/the-arms-outstretched/416916/>.
 - 9 In November 2015 a newly elected Canadian government sought to fulfill a campaign commitment to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada before the end of 2015. It ultimately succeeded in landing over 26,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February 2016, with over 11,000 of these being privately sponsored or sponsored through Canada’s Blended Visa Office–Referred Program. See Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “Canada’s Syrian Commitments,” last modified 26 July 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/canada-commitment.html>.
 - 10 A total of 40,081 Syrian refugees were resettled to Canada by the end of 2016, including 18,205 who were privately sponsored or sponsored through Canada’s Blended Visa Office–Referred Program to over 400 Canadian communities from coast to coast to coast. See Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “#WelcomeRefugees: Key Figures,” <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/key-figures.html#popup1>.
 - 11 An additional seven million know someone who sponsored during this period: Environics Institute for Survey Research, *Canada’s World Survey 2018: Final Report*.
 - 12 UNHCR, “Canada, UNHCR and Open Society Foundations Seek to Increase Refugee Resettlement through Private Sponsorship,” news release, 19 September 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/9/57e0e2784/canada-unhcr-open-society-foundations-seek-increase-refugee-resettlement.html>.
 - 13 Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, “About GRSI,” <http://refugeesponsorship.org/who-we-are>. See also UNHCR,

- “Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative Promotes Canada’s Private Refugee Sponsorship Model,” 16 December 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/12/58539e524/global-refugee-sponsorship-initiative-promotes-canadas-private-refugee.html>. The launch event brought together over ninety civil society and government official participants from nine countries. The GRSI works toward these goals by providing tailored, direct assistance to government officials and community leaders in countries around the world interested in learning about, designing, and implementing community sponsorship programs. Support activities, *inter alia*, technical support in policy development, infrastructure planning, development of materials such as forms and guides, evaluation design, facilitating peer-to-peer learning, and providing training to sponsors.
- 14 Frank Giustra, “It Will Take More Than Governments to Solve the Global Refugee Crisis,” *Globe and Mail*, 30 April 2018, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-it-will-take-more-than-governments-to-solve-the-global-refugee-crisis/>.
 - 15 The European Commission has encouraged EU member states to establish sponsorship schemes and has mandated the European Asylum Support Office to coordinate a pilot sponsorship project. See European Commission, “State of the Union 2017: Commission Presents Next Steps towards a Stronger, More Effective and Fairer EU Migration and Asylum Policy,” news release, 27 September 2017, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3406_en.htm.
 - 16 UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—Part II: Global Compact on Refugees*, 73rd Sess, UN Doc A/7312 (Part II), 2 August 2018, para 95, <https://www.unhcr.org/excom/unhcrannual/5ba3a5d44/report-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees-part-ii-global-compact.html>.
 - 17 Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, “Joint Statement: Ministers from Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Argentina, Spain and New Zealand Underline Their Support for Community-Based Refugee Sponsorship in Advance of the 2018 United Nations General Assembly and Agreement on the Global Compacts on Refugees,” news release, 16 July 2018, <http://refugeesponsorship.org/uploads/5b4ca01e5c883.pdf>.
 - 18 European Commission, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes as a Possible Pathway to Safe Channels for Admission to the EU, Including Resettlement: Final Report* (Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union, 2018), 4.
 - 19 Jennifer Bond, “Conceptualizing Sponsorship” (forthcoming).
 - 20 Community-based refugee sponsors take on financial and settlement responsibilities for a designated period (usually one to two years). These include initial reception and welcome; providing housing, furniture, and furnishings; orienting sponsored refugees to their communities and helping them access necessary public services (e.g., health, education); assisting in securing employment; supporting language training; and providing emotional and moral support.
 - 21 Some programs allow sponsors themselves to nominate refugees for sponsorship, while others rely on UNHCR or other agencies to refer eligible refugees, who are then matched to approved sponsors. Criteria for sponsor and refugee eligibility may differ. The manner in and degree to which responsibilities are divided between the sponsors, government, and other service providers depends on the broader welfare context of a particular country.
 - 22 European Resettlement Network, *Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement* (Brussels: ICMC Europe, 2017), 11.
 - 23 Lester M. Salamon, “The Resilient Sector: The State of the Nonprofit America,” in *The State of Nonprofit America*, ed. Lester M. Salamon (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2002), 20. See also Emilia E. Martinez-Brawley and Paz M-B Zorita, “Immigration and Human Services: The Perils of Professionalization,” *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* 92, no. 2 (2011): 133.
 - 24 While there is no settled, universally applicable definition of *resettlement*, most definitions contain two key elements: (1) refugees moving from a country of asylum; (2) to a country that has voluntarily agreed to provide them with protection. The most frequently used definition of *resettlement*, particularly by governments and refugee organizations, is that established by UNHCR: “the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them—as refugees—with permanent status.” See *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), 3, <http://www.unhcr.org/46f7c0ee2.pdf>. The European Union draws a distinction between *resettlement* and *relocation* to reflect its regional governance structure: European Commission, “Resettlement and Relocation,” https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/relocation_and_resettlement_factsheet_en.pdf. There is greater variance in definition among academics, with some using similar definitions to that of UNHCR, such as Lyra Jakuleviciene and Mantas Bileisis, “EU Refugee Resettlement: Key Challenges of Expanding the Practice into New Member States,” *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* 9, no. 1 (2016): 93; some adding to it, such as Kristin Bergtora Sandvik, “A Legal History: The Emergence of the African Resettlement Candidate in International Refugee Management,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22, no. 1 (2010): 20–47; some combining resettlement with integration, such as Gillian Morantz, Cécile Rousseau, Anna Banerji, Carolina Martin, and Jody Heymann, “Resettlement Challenges Faced by Refugee Claimant Families in Montreal: Lack of Access to Child Care,” *Child & Family Social Work* 18, no. 3 (2013): 318.

- 25 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 28 July 1951, 189 UNTS 137 at preamble (entered into force 22 April 1954), https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1954/04/19540422%2000-23%20AM/Ch_V_2p.pdf. The Refugee Convention defines *refugee* in Article 1A(2) as any person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.” The Refugee Convention requires states to, *inter alia*, refrain from punishing refugees for their illegal entry or presence onto their territory for the purpose of making an asylum claim (Article 31); and refrain from returning refugees to a country where they would face a threat to their life or freedom on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion (the duty of *non-refoulement* in Article 33).
- 26 Refugee Convention, at preamble; UN General Assembly, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, resolution adopted by the General Assembly, 3 October 2016, A/RES/71/1 para. 68; UN General Assembly, Global Compact on Refugees, para 15. See also Global Compact on Refugees, paras. 90–3 referring to arrangement for “more equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing” and para. 95, which refers to responsibility sharing through community-based sponsorship.
- 27 UNHCR, *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2019* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2018), 78–9, <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/5b28a7df4/projected-global-resettlement-needs-2019.html>, which shows two tables documenting departures to resettlement countries from 2013 to 2017, and per capita resettlement per country of resettlement in 2017. For a detailed overview of the politics and power dynamics of global resettlement practices, see Adèle Garnier, Liliana Lyra Jubilut, and Kristin Bergtora Sandvik, eds., *Refugee Resettlement: Power, Politics and Humanitarian Governance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018).
- 28 It is important to distinguish community sponsorship from volunteering in support of refugees. “Although volunteers help professionals with important work, they are not ultimately responsible for the refugee’s well-being. Sponsorship is special because ordinary citizens drive the process. While sponsors may sometimes contact outside organizations to access training and support, they are uniquely responsible for making key decisions and supporting the newcomer in every way.” See Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative video, *How Communities Sponsor Refugees: Canada’s Program*, YouTube video, posted 23 April 2018, <https://youtu.be/KbdXZRbGxz8>.
- 29 See, e.g., Justice and Peace, a Dutch NGO that has developed a program called Samen Hier, which “connects groups of five Dutch citizens or more to an individual newcomer or family to help status holders find their way in a new society.” See Samen Hier, “Justice and Peace,” <https://www.justiceandpeace.nl/initiatives/samen-hier/>.
- 30 See, e.g., “Refugees at Home,” a “UK based charity aiming to connect those with spare room in their home with asylum seekers and refugees in need of accommodation”: Refugees at Home, “FAQ,” <https://www.refugeesathome.org/faq/index.html>.
- 31 For Ireland and Germany’s family reunification programs, see European Commission, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes*.
- 32 In Australia’s Community Support Program, “sponsors” are primarily responsible for identifying and funding resettlement applications, while professional agencies—“Approved Proposing Organizations”—“link applicants with secure, reputable employment and community support [and] link entrants with other government services.” See Australian Department of Home Affairs, “Community Support Program (CSP),” <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/refugee-and-humanitarian-program/community-support-program/approved-proposing-organisations>.
- 33 See Humanitarian Corridors programs Belgium, France, and Italy: see European Commission, *Feasibility Study*.
- 34 UNHCR, “States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol,” 28 June 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b73bod63/states-parties-1951-convention-its-1967-protocol.html>.
- 35 For a detailed description of the policy review and legislative drafting process, see Gerald E. Dirks, “A Policy within a Policy: The Identification and Admission of Refugees to Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 17, no. 2 (1984): 279. See also Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared*, 2nd ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 158.
- 36 The new legal framework explicitly recognized refugees as a distinct class of migrants and included a more transparent approach for overseas selection and resettlement: Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, 174–6; Michael Casasola, “The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR Resettlement Selection Policies,” *Refugee* 32, no. 2 (2016): 41.
- 37 Dirks, “Policy within a Policy,” 280; Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 404–5. It is noteworthy that some of these orders-in-council even permitted community-based sponsorship arrangements, such as the 2 June 1922 order for the admission of 21,000 Mennonites from the Soviet Union on the condition that Canadian Mennonite communities

- ensure they would be cared for, they would not become a burden to the public, and they would be settled on agricultural land. See William Janzen, "The 1979 MCC Canada Master Agreement for the Sponsorship of Refugees in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 24 (2006): 212. At 212–13 Janzen also describes a second movement of Mennonite refugees from Europe after the Second World War under similar sponsorship arrangements. At 213–15 Janzen describes a number of other resettlement efforts that, although they were not fully sponsorships, had substantial involvement from community and church groups in the selection of refugees and their integration into Canadian society.
- 38 The *Immigration Act, 1976* introduced admissibility criteria, as well as requirements for refugees to pass security, medical, and criminality screenings before being admitted to Canada. All immigrants—including refugees—were also required to demonstrate that they would be able to successfully settle in Canada, although the Act did allow for regulations to create exceptions in certain humanitarian situations: *Immigration Act, 1976*, SC 1977, c 52, s 19.
- 39 *Immigration Act, 1976*, SC 1977, c 52, ss 2, 9(4). Section 9(4) of the *Immigration Act, 1976* enabled visa officers to "grant landing or entry" to Canada if satisfied the applicant to Canada satisfied the requirements of the Act. The Act defines *landing* as "lawful permission to come into Canada to establish permanent residence."
- 40 UNHCR Canada, "Refugee Resettlement Facts," <https://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Canadian-Resettlement-Fact-Sheet-ENG-April-2017.pdf>.
- 41 *Immigration Act, 1976*, s 115(1)(b).
- 42 *Immigration Act, 1976*, s 115(1)(b).
- 43 *Immigration Act, 1976*, s 115(1)(k.1).
- 44 Kelley and Trebilcock, *Mosaic*, 407.
- 45 Kelley and Trebilcock, *Mosaic*.
- 46 Kelley and Trebilcock, *Mosaic*.
- 47 On top of the existing 8,000 pledged, an additional 21,000 Indochinese refugees would be government-assisted and 21,000 would be privately sponsored: Kelley and Trebilcock, *Mosaic*, 407. The 50,000 quota was increased even further to 60,000 on 2 April 1980 after the Liberal party had returned to power. More than 7,000 private groups and organizations sponsored 34,000 Indochinese refugees in the late 1970s, outpacing government resettlement and giving birth to Canada's new and unique form of refugee resettlement: Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, 183–4.
- 48 Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, 183.
- 49 Kelley and Trebilcock, *Mosaic*, 408; Casasola, "Indochinese Refugee Movement," 45; Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, 183–4. The Canadian Immigration Historical Society provides a flow chart detailing how Canadian private sponsorship applications were processed from the first step of sponsors identifying the refugees they wished to sponsor, to the refugees' arrival in Canada. See Canadian Immigration Historical Society, "Sponsorship System: Algorithm#2—March 1978," <http://cihs-shic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Sponsorship-Chart-1978-corrected.pdf>. However, the society notes that the "process was modified on May 1979 to factor in the new Destination Matching Centres that matched accepted refugees with potential sponsors in Canada who did not have a particular refugee in mind to support." For more details of the matching process, see Canadian Immigration Historical Society, "Historical Documents: The Indochinese Refugee Movement," <http://cihs-shic.ca/indochina-historical-documents/>.
- 50 *Immigration Regulations, 1978*, SOR/78-172.
- 51 See Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, 78–9, 175.
- 52 *Immigration Regulations, 1978*, Reg. 2: defined as "Convention refugee who has not become permanently resettled and is unlikely to be voluntarily repatriated or locally resettled."
- 53 *Immigration Regulations, 1978*, Reg. 7(2). These general requirements remain the same today, although they have been formalized into several types of sponsorship groups: Groups of Five, Community Sponsors, Sponsorship Agreement Holders, Constituent Groups, and Co-Sponsors. For more information, see Government of Canada, "2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program," s 2.3, accessed 24 January 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program/section-2.html#a2.3>.
- 54 *Immigration Regulations, 1978*, Reg. 7(2).
- 55 *Immigration Regulations, 1978*, Reg. 7(2)(e).
- 56 The other two were the Latin American Political Prisoners and Oppressed Persons class for refugees from, and the Eastern European Self-Exiled Persons class: see Kelley and Trebilcock, *Mosaic*, 406. See also Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration*, 78–9.
- 57 Janzen, "MCC Canada Master Agreement," 213–15; Casasola, "Indochinese Refugee Movement," 44; Barbara Treviranus and Michael Casasola, "Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A Practitioners Perspective of Its Past and Future," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 4, no. 2 (2003): 177, 184.
- 58 Stephanie Dyck, "Advancing Private Refugee Sponsorship: Engaging and Resourcing MCC Manitoba's Constituency" (master's thesis, University of Victoria, 2016), 6, accessed 24 January 2019, https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/7777/Dyck_Stephanie_MA_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
- 59 The Master Agreement also delineated the Master Agreement Holders' and the government's respective roles and responsibilities, and how communications would flow between Master Agreement Holders, their congregations, local immigration offices, and overseas Embassies. By the end of 1980, 485 constituent groups of Canada's First Master Agreement Holder—the Mennonite Central Committee of

- Canada—brought approximately 4,000 refugees to Canada. Janzen, “MCC Canada Master Agreement,” 212; Dyck, “Advancing Private Refugee Sponsorship,” 6.
- 60 Janzen, “MCC Canada Master Agreement,” 212; Casasola, “Indochinese Refugee Movement,” 44–5.
- 61 Casasola, “Indochinese Refugee Movement,” 44–5: “These organizations, initially mainly faith groups, serve as financial guarantors, enabling the organization and its constituent groups to apply to sponsor a refugee(s) without having to demonstrate the financial capability for each individual application as required of a Group of Five.”
- 62 Janzen, “MCC Canada Master Agreement,” 212.
- 63 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, SC 2001, c 27.
- 64 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, SOR/2002-227.
- 65 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, s 13(1): “A Canadian citizen or permanent resident, or a group of Canadian citizens or permanent residents, a corporation incorporated under a law of Canada or of a province or an unincorporated organization or association under federal or provincial law—or any combination of them—may sponsor a foreign national, subject to the regulations.”
- 66 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, Reg. 138.
- 67 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, Reg. 139.
- 68 Government of Canada, “2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program,” s 2.3.
- 69 Canadian sponsors may name the specific refugees they wish to sponsor through Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program. They may also be matched to UNHCR-referred refugees in Canada’s Blended Visa Office-Referred Program. Sponsors may also be matched to UNHCR-referred and Government-Assisted Refugees with special needs through the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program. For a description of these programs, see Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program,” <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program.html>.
- 70 See Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, “LGBTI Refugee Sponsorship Pilot Project,” <http://www.rstp.ca/en/special-initiatives/lgbti-refugee-sponsorship-pilot-project/>.
- 71 See Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, s 3.4, Urgent Protection Program, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/guide-private-sponsorship-refugees-program/section-3.html>.
- 72 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, section 3.4; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “Procedure: Expedited Processing and Vulnerable Cases,” [https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/processing-procedure-expedited-processing-vulnerable-cases.html)
- 73 manuals/refugee-protection/resettlement/processing-procedure-expedited-processing-vulnerable-cases.html.
- 73 World University Service Canada, a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, has developed its own infrastructure for the overseas selection of post-secondary refugee students, bringing them to Canada through the PSR program, and engaging on-campus student groups to welcome sponsored refugees not only to life in Canada, but to their new post-secondary educational environment. See World University Service Canada, “Student Refugee Program,” <https://srp.wusc.ca/>.
- 74 Today, Canada’s immigration and refugee law is governed by the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and its *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*. Section 13(1) of the *Act* retains a central provision enabling sponsorship. It states, “A Canadian citizen or permanent resident, or a group of Canadian citizens or permanent residents, a corporation incorporated under a law of Canada or of a province or an unincorporated organization or association under federal or provincial law—or any combination of them—may sponsor a foreign national, subject to the regulations.” The *Regulations* set out, *inter alia*, the eligibility criteria for sponsors (Reg. 138) and sponsored refugees (Reg. 139).
- 75 Ratification status of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1–3. It also joined the Additional Protocol on 4 September 1968: UNHCR, “States Parties to the 1951 Convention,” 4.
- 76 This consisted initially of two informal programs. Through the first, the UNHCR’s Ten or More program, countries would commit to resettling ten or more refugees and their families annually: Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, UNHCR *Resettlement Handbook*, Country Chapter—UK,” September 2007, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/46f3a7ac2.pdf>; Nadine El-Enany and Jeremy Bernhaut, *KNOW RESET: Building Knowledge for a Concerted and Sustainable Approach to Refugee Resettlement in the EU and Its Member States—Country Profile—United Kingdom* (San Domenico di Fiesole, Italy: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advance Studies, 2013), http://www.know-reset.eu/files/texts/00170_20130919160801_knowresetcountryprofileunitedkingdom.pdf. The second, the Mandate Resettlement Scheme (MRS), was established in 1995 and applies to *mandate refugees*, defined as “persons who are recognized as refugees by UNHCR acting under the authority of its Statute and relevant UN General Assembly resolution.” See Canadian Association for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies, “Mandate Refugees,” <http://rfmsot.appso1.yorku.ca/glossary-of-terms/mandate-refugees/>. The MRS enables the resettlement of mandate refugees with a close family member living in the United Kingdom: Government of the United Kingdom, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, 3. Further details for processing MRS cases are provided in the Asylum Policy Instructions for the program, although they

- remain very broad: Katia Bianchini, “The Mandate Refugee Program: A Critical Discussion,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 22, no. 3 (June 2010): 370; UK Border Agency, “Mandate Refugees,” 1 June 2012, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257392/manadaterefugees.pdf. Note: the UK Border Agency guidance cited above replaces a previous Asylum Instruction on Mandate refugees (described in Bianchini), which has been withdrawn for review. The current instruction points to the *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* for further information about the GPP and MRS schemes.
- 77 This included 42,000 Ugandan Asians (1972–4); 22,500 Indochinese (1979–92); 2,500 Bosnians (early 1990s); 4,000 Kosovars (1999); Refugee Council, “Resettling to the UK: The Gateway Protection Programme” (October 2004), accessed 28 January 2019, <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/projects/gateway-protection-programme/>.
- 78 *Immigration Act, 1971*, (UK), c 77.
- 79 The Act provides for two forms of leave: limited and indefinite: *Immigration Act, 1971*, s 3(1).
- 80 The United Kingdom makes it an offence to enter the country without such leave: *Immigration Act, 1971*, s 3; Immigration Rules, Rule 5, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-introduction#intro5>; Library of Congress, “Refugee Law and Policy: United Kingdom,” http://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/unitedkingdom.php#_ftn10.
- 81 Resettlement Inter-Agency Partnership, “Understanding Resettlement to the UK: A Guide to the Gateway Protection Programme” (Refugee Council, June 2004), <https://web.archive.org/web/20120225073106/http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/howwehelp/UnderstandingGPPJune2004.pdf>. Established in 2004, the GPP constitutes the United Kingdom’s formal resettlement program, offering “a legal route for up to 750 refugees to settle in the UK each year.” Through the GPP, the United Kingdom relies on UNHCR to refer eligible refugees based on criteria set by the UK government through its Asylum Policy Instructions on the GPP. Refugees resettled through the GPP receive indefinite leave to remain in the country. The GPP is overseen by a Resettlement Operations Team within the UK Home Office: UK Visas and Immigration, “Guidance: Gateway Protection Programme,” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gateway-protection-programme-information-for-organisations/gateway-protection-programme>. See also El-Enany and Bernhaut, *Country Profile: United Kingdom*; Bianchini, “Mandate Refugee Program,” 369.
- 82 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, (UK), c 41.
- 83 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, (UK), c 41, s 59(1)(c).
- 84 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, (UK), c 41, s 59(1)(e).
- 85 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, (UK), c 41, s 59(2).
- 86 UK Home Office, “Resettlement: Policy Statement,” 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730643/Resettlement_Policy_document_.pdf.
- 87 UK Home Office, “Oral Statement by the Home Secretary on Syrian Refugees Delivered on 29 January 2014,” 24 January 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/oral-statement-by-the-home-secretary-on-syrian-refugees>.
- 88 UK Home Office, “Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS): Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners,” July 2017, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/631369/170711_Syrian_Resettlement_Updated_Fact_Sheet_final.pdf, 4; BBC News, “UK to Accept 20,000 Refugees from Syria by 2020,” 7 September 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-34171148>.
- 89 BBC News, “UK to Accept 20,000 Refugees.”
- 90 Terry McGuinness, “The UK Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis,” House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 06805, 14 June 2017, 11; Carrie Hough, “The UK Government Approach to Syrian-Conflict Refugee Resettlement,” 2, <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/article/downloads/Carrie%20Hough.United%20Kingdom.The%20UK%20Government%20Approach%20to%20Syrian-Conflict%20Refugee%20Resettlement.docx>; UK Home Office, “Integration of Beneficiaries of International/Humanitarian Protection into the Labour Market: Policies and Good Practices,” May 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-28a_uk_integration_of_beneficiaries_of_international_protection.pdf, 15.
- 91 Hough, “UK Government Approach,” 21; UNHCR, “Towards Integration: The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the United Kingdom,” 28, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/5a0029174.pdf>.
- 92 UK Home Office, “VPRS Guidance for Local Authorities,” 7.
- 93 Initially, refugees resettled through the VPRS were granted five-year humanitarian protection status. On 22 March 2017, Home Secretary Amber Rudd announced that new VPRS arrivals would receive refugee status, noting that humanitarian protection “does not carry the same entitlements as refugee status, in particular, access to particular benefits, swifter access to student support for Higher Education and the same travel documents as those granted refugee status.” VPRS refugees who arrived before 1 July 2017 under humanitarian protection have the opportunity to request a change of status to refugee status: Written Statement by Amber Rudd (Secretary of State for the Home Department), “Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme: Arrangements,” 22 March 2017, <https://www.parliament.uk/>

- written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/ Commons/2017-03-22/HCWS551. See also “Request to Change Humanitarian Protection Status to Refugee Status” Form, 31 July 2017, last modified 13 August 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/request-to-change-humanitarian-protection-status-to-refugee-status>.
- 94 UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship: Guidance for Prospective Sponsors,” last modified 14 December 2008, 6, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/626810/Community_sponsorship_guidance_for_prospective_sponsors_July_2017.pdf.
- 95 UNHCR, “Resettlement Data Finder,” UK Data, <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#Ml05>.
- 96 “Speech by Theresa May to Conservative Conference,” 6 October 2015, Electronic Immigration Network, <http://www.ein.org.uk/news/home-secretary-use-conservative-party-conference-speech-warn-uk-needs-have-immigration-limit>.
- 97 2010, c 15, Schedule 23, s. 1(1)(d). The *Equality (Community Sponsorship) Arrangement* authorized an exception to the application of the *Equality Act* by allowing the UK Community Sponsorship Scheme to discriminate by limiting its application to Syrian nationals, arriving to the United Kingdom through the vPRS, only, “Equality (Community Sponsorship) Arrangement 2016,” 11 July 2016, http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2016-0667/Equality__Community_Sponsorship__Arrangement_2016_-_dated_11.07.2016.pdf.
- 98 See resources at the following UK Home Office webpages: UK Home Office, “Apply for Full Community Sponsorship,” last modified 14 December 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship>; and UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship: How You Can Make It Happen,” last modified 24 April 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-sponsorship-how-you-can-make-it-happen>.
- 99 Government of the United Kingdom, UNHCR *Resettlement Handbook* UK, 5.
- 100 UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship,” 9.
- 101 UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship,” 12.
- 102 UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship,” 11.
- 103 UK sponsors are required to provide initial reception support and settlement support for the first year, as well as to have secured housing for two years. See Resettlement Plan template, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Department for International Development and Home Office, “Apply for Community Sponsorship,” last modified 14 December 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship>; UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship,” 11. Resettlement responsibilities include initial reception support and settlement support for the first year, and housing support for two years.
- 104 The agreement includes requirements for safeguarding sensitive data and legally commits sponsors to fulfilling their responsibilities toward the sponsored refugees, as outlined in their settlement plan, which is attached as an annex to the agreement: UK Home Office, “Sample Agreement Relating to the Provision of Full Community Sponsorship,” 14 December 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554049/2016-09-16_SAMPLE_Full_Community_Sponsorship_Agreement_for_govuk.pdf.
- 105 UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship,” 14.
- 106 Once a family is proposed, both the sponsors and the local authority must confirm the match within five days. UK Home Office, “Community Sponsorship,” 16.
- 107 UK Visas and Immigration and The Right Honourable Caroline Nokes MP, “Home Office Awards £1 Million to Help Communities Support Refugees” news story, 18 June 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-awards-1-million-to-help-communities-support-refugees>. Within a year of its new Community Sponsorship Scheme, the United Kingdom granted funding to Reset, an umbrella organization mandated to help sponsors prepare to welcome refugees into their communities: See Reset’s website: <https://www.resetuk.org/>. By contrast, the development of training for sponsors in Canada came two decades into its model through the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), and national-level coordination of sponsorship agreement holders through the SAH Association. The RSTP provides optional training and support to sponsors of all types across Canada. The SAH Association represents the interests of SAHS across Canada, liaising with the government of Canada through an elected council funded by the government: See RSTP website: <http://www.rstp.ca/>. See also website of the Canadian SAH Association: <http://www.sahassociation.com/>.
- 108 In the emergence of several dedicated full-time positions in the UK Home Office and multiple new NGOs dedicated to growing and supporting the sponsorship scheme. See, e.g. Sponsor Refugees, <http://www.sponsorrefugees.org/>.
- 109 Including Europeans escaping political oppression in the nineteenth century, Chileans fleeing military dictatorship the 1970s and 1980s, Indochinese refugees in the late 1970s and 1980s, and Bosnian refugees in the 1990s: Marie-Charlotte de Lapaille, for the United Nations Association of New Zealand, “New Zealand’s Approach to Refugees: Legal Obligations and Current Practices,” policy paper 1 (October 2012), 1–2, <http://nzcg.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2012-UNANZ-Policy-Paper-01-2012-Refugees.pdf>. See also J. Marlowe and S. Elliott, “Global Trends and Refugee Settlement in New Zealand,” *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* 9, no. 2 (2014): 44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2014.953186>.
- 110 Marlowe and Elliott, “Global Trends,” 44. Until recently, the rate of resettlement has been 750 per year. Ministry

- of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Immigration," 26 October 2017, 5, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2017-12/Immigration.pdf>. See also Immigration New Zealand, "Operational Manual," last modified 17 December 2018, F3.5(b), <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/opsmanual/#35439.htm>.
- 111 Mike Mika, "Immigration Act: Key Changes," *Southland Times*, 9 November 2010, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/columns/4313985/Immigration-Act-key-changes>. The 1987 *Immigration Act* already contained extensive provisions around refugee protection: see *Immigration Act, 1987*, 1987 No 74, as repealed by 2009 No 51, s 404.
- 112 *Immigration Act, 2009*, 2009 No 51, s 124(a).
- 113 *NZ Immigration Act*, s 126(b).
- 114 *NZ Immigration Act*, ss 22(1), 22(5)(b).
- 115 *NZ Immigration Act*, s 22(5)(a).
- 116 Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Briefing for the Incoming Minister," 7.
- 117 UNHCR, "Resettlement Data Finder," NZ Data, <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#D05B>.
- 118 Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Briefing for the Incoming Minister," 5.
- 119 Cabinet Office, "Cabinet Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee, Minute of Decision: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category," <https://web.archive.org/web/20180201100844/http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/oia-responses/folder-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cabinet-egi-minute-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> [NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision]. The decision was heavily informed by a detailed background paper: Cabinet Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee, "Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category," (2017) para 2, <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/a28c781f78/cabinet-paper-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> [NZ Cabinet Paper 2017].
- 120 NZ Cabinet Paper 2017, at 1, para 3.
- 121 Jacinda Ardern and Iain Lees-Galloway, "Refugee Quota Increases to 1,500 in 2020," 19 September 2018, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/refugee-quota-increases-1500-2020>.
- 122 Which, in turn, reflects the adoption of recommendations set out in the detailed background paper, referenced in NZ Cabinet Paper 2017.
- 123 NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision, 5.1–5.3.
- 124 NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision, 6.1–6.5. The NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision also delineates the responsibilities of the New Zealand government, which include: providing sponsored refugees with access to public welfare services, housing support, education, and health services, as well as assessing the selection and screening of sponsored refugees and their initial reception at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre.
- 125 NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision, 4–5.
- 126 NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision, 7.1 and 7.2.
- 127 See a list of Regulations on the website of Immigration New Zealand, Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment, "Immigration Law," 3, <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/policy-and-law/legal-framework-for-immigration>.
- 128 Immigration New Zealand, "Operational Manual," F4.20.
- 129 Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Briefing to the Incoming Minister," 5.
- 130 NZ Cabinet Minute of Decision, 11.4. The Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre is a nationally run welcoming facility where newcomers receive orientation supports to prepare them for settlement in communities across the country.
- 131 Via instructions introduced through Amendment Circular 2017-14: Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, *Immigration New Zealand Instructions: Amendment Circular No. 2017/14*, 21 December 2017, <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/amendment-circulars/amendment-circular-2017-14.pdf>.
- 132 Eligible refugees interested in the community sponsorship program may submit an expression of interest in the program to an immigration officer or be invited to submit such an expression of interest by an immigration officer. Expressions of Interest will be entered into a pool and remain valid for six months. Refugees may submit an application for community sponsorship only if invited to do so. Once an application is submitted, New Zealand Immigration will grant a permanent resident visa if there is a sponsorship group for that refugee and the principal applicant meets requirements outlined in the Cabinet decision: Immigration New Zealand, "Operational Manual," F4.25.10; 4.25.20; 4.25.30.
- 133 New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Request for Applications (RFA) for the Pilot of the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category," 13 October 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180417055250/http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cors-request-for-application.pdf>.
- 134 New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Deed of Agreement for Services: Pilot of the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category," accessed 3 October 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180201105014/http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cors-deed-of-agreement-for-services.pdf>.
- 135 New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Request for Applications (RFA)," 8-9, 14. Responsibilities include providing domestic travel from the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre to the settlement location in the community; the arrangement of housing,

- furniture, and furnishings; providing community orientation and settlement assistance by connecting refugees to services in their new community; and providing support in employment search. New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, “Deed of Agreement,” annex 1 of appendix A.
- 136 New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, “Deed of Agreement, 18.2–18.3.
- 137 New Zealand Government, “Community Organisations Chosen to Sponsor Refugees in NZ,” press release, Community Scoop, 26 January 2018, <http://community.scoop.co.nz/2018/01/community-organisations-chosen-to-sponsor-refugees-in-nz/>.
- 138 “First Refugees Arrive under New Community Sponsorship Category,” Newshub, 6 July 2018, <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/07/first-refugees-arrive-under-new-community-sponsorship-category.html>.
- 139 Core Community Partnership, “Proposal to Confirm Community Sponsorship as a Permanent Pathway for Resettlement,” 12 November 2018, <https://www.swbc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/20181112-Community-Sponsorship-Proposal.pdf>; Amnesty International, *Community Sponsorship of Refugees: New Zealand’s Pilot Programme and Its Potential*, 2018, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5adea6a089c1722c3aed0f82/t/5bf4a446898583726608focd/1542759605586/AI_Shadow_Report_Final_Final_Web_Spreads-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf.
- 140 Meg de Ronde, “The Community Have Proved They Can Change Refugees’ Lives. Let’s Not Quit Now,” Spinoff, 27 November 2018, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/27-11-2018/the-community-have-proved-they-can-change-refugees-lives-lets-not-quit-now/>. See also Amnesty International New Zealand, “I Welcome Pledge,” <https://www.iwelcome.org.nz/report>.
- 141 Collette Devlin, “Govt Urged to Make Refugee ‘Community Sponsorship’ Pilot Programme Permanent,” stuff, 27 November 2018, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/108889889/govt-urged-to-make-refugee-community-sponsorship-pilot-programme-permanent>.
- 142 UNHCR, “States Parties to the 1951 Convention.” Argentina also ratified the Additional Protocol on 6 December 1967.
- 143 Maria-Julia Contardi and Nazli Zaki, “Through Thick and Thin: The Evolution of UNHCR’s Work in Argentina,” UNHCR, 3 April 2006, <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/latest/2006/4/44313ed84/thick-thin-evolution-unhcrs-work-argentina.html>. Refugees from countries like Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Iraq, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Armenia, and Chechnya would seek asylum in Argentina.
- 144 See generally, Dirección Nacional de Población, *Refugiados del Sudeste Asiático en la Argentina*, 7 November 2012, <http://www.mininterior.gov.ar/poblacion/pdf/Documentoo7>.
- 145 Argentina created its Solidarity Resettlement program by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNHCR to implement its commitments to responsibility-sharing outlined in the Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees in Latin America, 16 November 2004, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/424bf6914.html>. The Plan of Action encouraged Latin American states to introduce legislation relating to refugees and human rights and to “redouble their efforts to provide protection, assistance and find adequate solutions for refugees in the region” (preamble). The Mexico Declaration was adopted on the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration and was seen by signatory states as a means to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of refugee protection established in the latter. See Hiram Ruiz, “Evaluation of Resettlement Programmes in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay,” UNHCR, December 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/57c983557.pdf>. See also Paulo Cavaleri, “Argentina: Resettling Refugees within the Context of an Open Migration Policy,” *Forced Migration Review* 40 (2012): 49, <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/young-and-out-of-place/cavaleri.pdf>. Argentina’s *General Law of Recognition and Protection of Refugees*, Law No. 26.165 (8 November 2006) strengthened the legal infrastructure underpinning the Solidarity Resettlement Program and Argentina’s domestic refugee program by creating the National Refugee Committee (CONARE) and “fully regulat[ing] the process for determining refugee status and the rights and guarantees of asylum and refugee applicants.” In relation to the Solidarity Resettlement Program, CONARE was charged with liaising with the UNHCR and its consulates abroad to identify eligible candidates for resettlement and coordinate the issuance of visas and travel documents in accordance with an annual work plan. See UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook: Argentina Country Chapter* (last modified June 2013), <https://www.unhcr.org/4b7bc3a19.pdf#zoom=95>.
- This program remained operational until 2013. See S. Michelle Alfaro and Martin Lettieri, “In Search of Sustainable Refugee Resettlement Solutions for Latin America,” *Revista Jurídica de Buenos Aires* 42, no. 95 (2017): 237. See also Ruiz, “Evaluation of Resettlement Programs,” 3, 25. The Solidarity Resettlement Program was unsustainable because it relied on international funds and insufficient domestic ownership over the programs. According to Alfaro and Lettieri, “In Search of Resettlement Solutions for Latin America,” 237, “Without the continued financing of the international community and with the region sliding into an economic downturn, Argentina was unlikely to prioritize the needed funding from its budget to support a resettlement program.”
- 146 Law 25,871 (20 January 2004), arts 1, 21. Argentina has also legislated refugee protection through its *General Law of Recognition and Protection of Refugees*.
- 147 The *General Law of Recognition and Protection of Refugees*, art 4, incorporated the extended definition of refugee established in the third conclusion of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, which includes individuals

- forced to flee their homes in response to general violence, foreign aggression, internal conflict, widespread human rights violations, and other circumstances that gravely disturb public order: Cartagena Declaration on Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama, 22 November 1984, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36ec.html>; Cavaleri, “Argentina: Resettling Refugees.”
- 148 Argentina’s *Migration Law*, arts 23(m), 34. Article 23(k) provides that recognized refugees and asylum seekers will be granted two-year renewable residence permits. While individuals resettled to Argentina for humanitarian reasons by virtue of Article 23(m) are not formally recognized as refugees under the Refugee Convention definition, they may petition Argentina for Convention refugee protection once they have arrived on its territory.
- 149 Argentina National Directorate of Migration, “Special Humanitarian Visa Program: Integration,” 12 July 2018, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/programa-siria/acerca-del-programa>.
- 150 The presidential decrees were issued under the president’s constitutional authority to create “instructions and rules necessary for the enforcement of the laws of the nation, without altering their spirit with regulatory exceptions.” *Constitution of the Argentine Nation*, 1994, s. 99(2), <http://www.biblioteca.jus.gov.ar/argentina-constitution.pdf>.
- 151 *Argentina: Decreto 616/2010—Reglamentación de la Ley de Migraciones No. 25.871 y sus modificatorias* (6 May 2010), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4be2de512.html> [Decree 616/2010]. In Argentina, decrees are orders prescribed by members of the executive and ministers. See Ministerio de Coordinación de Gabinete, Seguridad y Trabajo, *Decreto No. 1449/00: Reglamento para la elaboración de proyectos de leyes, decretos, resoluciones y disposiciones: Decreto No. 144* (30 June 2000), <http://capacitacion.hcdn.gob.ar/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Dec.-N%C2%BA-1449-00-Regl-elab-normas-NEUQUEN.pdf>.
- 152 Decree 616/2010, preamble. The decree set out the roles and responsibilities for this new agency, including its mandate to collaborate with other entities and levels of government to ensure the successful integration of newcomers: see annex I, arts 6, 14.
- 153 Decree 616/2010, annex I, art 3.
- 154 Gabinete Nacional del Programa Siria, *Decreto No. 1034/2016* (16 September 2016), <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/265000-269999/265715/norma.htm> [Decree 1034/2016]. The Cabinet includes the chief of the Cabinet of ministers and heads of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Works, and Housing; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Justice and Human Rights; Ministry of Security; Ministry of Culture; and the Federal Intelligence Agency: See Decree 1034/2016, art 2.
- 155 Decree 1034/2016, preamble, art 1. As the program was structured at the time of writing, all refugees resettled through the Syria Program were resettled with the assistance of family or community sponsors. To facilitate its coordination function, the national Cabinet was mandated to create general guidelines for the settlement and integration of refugees affected by the Syrian conflict.
- 156 Decree 1034/2016, preamble, art 3.
- 157 Argentina has also pledged to grant 1,000 scholarships to Syrian refugees on top of the 3,000 commitment. See Oliver Griffin, “Argentina Grants 1,000 Scholarships to Syria Refugees, Urges Others to Follow,” Reuters, 7 April 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-argentina-refugees-scholarships-idUSKBN1792PU>.
- 158 *Provisions* are decisions issued by senior administrative authorities such as undersecretaries and heads of decentralized administrative bodies on questions within their area of expertise. See Decree No. 1449/00. See also Ministerio de Coordinación de Gabinete, Seguridad y Trabajo, “Glosario de Términos,” <http://www.trabajo.gov.ar/downloads/manualProcedimientos/titulo-preliminar-capII.pdf>.
- 159 As further defined by the 2010 Presidential Decree. See decree 616/2010.
- 160 *Disposición DNM 3915/2014* (14 October 2014), <https://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5a8de92c4.pdf> [Provision 3915/2014], annex I, arts 1, 5(a)(i); Family relationship understood in a broad sense, including relatives until the fourth degree, regardless of age. See Provision 3915/2014, annex I, art 5(a)(ii).
- 161 Provision 3915/2014, annex I, art 5(a)(iii).
- 162 Provision 3915/2014, annex I, art 5(a)(iii).
- 163 Demian Bio, “Macri Says Argentina Will Welcome Even More Syrian Refugees,” Bubble, 20 September 2016, <http://www.thebubble.com/macri-says-argentina-will-welcome-even-more-syrian-refugees/>; Frederick Bernas, “Syrian Refugees Reap Benefits of Argentina’s New Visa Rules” *UNHCR*, 10 November 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2017/11/5a0586774/syrian-refugees-reap-benefits-argentinas-new-visa-rules.html>.
- 164 Ministerio del Interior, Obras Públicas y Vivienda, *Disposición DNM 4683/2016* (5 September 2016), <http://www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5a8de1c34.pdf> [Provision 4683/2016].
- 165 Callers must be Argentinian citizens or residents. In addition to the letter of invitation cited above, they must also provide identification documents and a certificate proving residence from the Argentinian Federal Policy. See Provision 4683/2016, arts 3(1)(c); 9(a).
- 166 Provision 4683/2016, art 3(1)(a); 3(2)(b).
- 167 Provision 4683/2016, art 3(1)(b). Applications submitted with guarantee letters will be treated with greater flexibility by the National Directorate for Migration.
- 168 Argentina Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “Acerca Del Programa [About the Program],” <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/programa-siria/acerca-del-programa>. If sponsoring directly, requesters must be enrolled in the National Directorate for Migration’s National Registry for Foreign

- Applicants for organizations requesting admission of any foreigners into Argentina. The registry establishes extra safeguards for the process of organizations (including, e.g., employers hiring foreign workers, or education institutions) to seek admission of foreigners to Argentina by, *inter alia*, vetting their legal status and financial capacity, and imposing reporting requirements: “Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, Disposición 54.618/2008: Modificación de la Disposición N° 56.647/2005, mediante la cual se creó el Registro Nacional Único de Requirentes de Extranjeros” (29 July 2008), http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/pdf_varios/residencias/disposicion-dnm-54618-08.pdf. In addition to non-government or other organizations, municipalities and provinces may also act as requestors, as demonstrated by the province of San Luis: UNHCR, “Argentina: Dos nuevas familias llegaron a la Provincia de San Luis en el marco del Programa Siria,” 24 July 2018, <http://www.acnur.org/noticias/noticia/2018/7/5b58a7c24/argentina-dos-nuevas-familias-llegaron-a-la-provincia-de-san-luis-en-el.html>.
- 169 The Syria Program still requires, however, the specification of some link between sponsors and refugees. This link can be tangential, such as through an organization or institution that matches callers and requestors to eligible refugee families in need of assistance: Provision 4683/2016, art 3(3).
- 170 Specifically, the province of San Luis has “requested the support of the UNHCR to identify and refer Syrian refugees in Lebanon to the Humanitarian Visa program.” See Alfaro and Lettieri, “Resettlement Solutions for Latin America,” 239.
- 171 Provision 4683/2016, art 13.
- 172 Decree 1034/2016, art 3. The National Directorate for Migration coordinates the activities of the working group with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration, which include holding regular meetings with key stakeholders at local, provincial, and national levels: Argentina National Directorate of Migration, “Special Humanitarian Visa Program: Integration,” 12 July 2018, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/programa-siria/acerca-del-programa>.
- 173 UNHCR, “Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM),” <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Information%20Sheet%20on%20ERCM%20September%202016.pdf>; Bernas, “Syrian Refugees Reap Benefits.” This support is also authorized by art 9(c) of Provision 4683/2016. The ERCM provides financial support and technical assistance to emerging resettlement countries like Argentina to achieve three main objectives: (1) providing a mechanism for governments, private sponsors and donors to harness their expertise and contribute both financially and technically to supporting refugee resettlement and the world in a strategic and coordinated manner; (2) assisting new and emerging resettlement countries in assessing the sustainability of their resettlement programme, helping to identify vulnerable areas in need of support and providing, accordingly, targeted financial and/or technical assistance; (3) channelling and supporting the sharing of technical expertise and good practices among resettlement countries, international organizations, international NGOs and governmental and non-governmental actors in new and emerging resettlement countries.
- 174 Delegation of the European Union to Argentina, “La Unión Europea apoya a la Argentina en su política de recepción e integración de refugiados,” press release, 17 June 2018, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/argentina/47534/node/47534_es.
- 175 UNHCR, “Argentina: Dos nuevas familias llegaron a la Provincia de San Luis en el marco del Programa Siria,” 24 July 2018, <http://www.acnur.org/noticias/noticia/2018/7/5b58a7c24/argentina-dos-nuevas-familias-llegaron-a-la-provincia-de-san-luis-en-el.html>.
- 176 Argentina Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, “Joint Press Release: Meeting between Foreign Minister Faurie and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)” (10 October 2018), <http://enaun.mrecic.gov.ar/en/joint-press-release-meeting-between-foreign-minister-faurie-and-united-nations-high-commissioner>.
- 177 Alfaro and Lettieri, “Resettlement Solutions for Latin America,” 239.
- 178 UNHCR, “States Parties to the 1951 Convention,” Additional Protocol, art 1(1); Joan Fitzpatrick, “The International Dimension of U.S. Refugee Law,” *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 15, no. 1 (1997): 1, 4.
- 179 Refugee Council USA, “History of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program,” <http://www.rcusa.org/history/>.
- 180 The USRAP comprises the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration of the U.S. Department of State; the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; five international or non-governmental organizations that operate resettlement support centres around the world under the supervision and funding of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration of the U.S. Department of State; nine domestic nongovernmental organizations with about 350 affiliated offices across the United States; and thousands of private citizens who volunteer their time and skills to help refugees resettle in the United States. See U.S. Department of State, “Refugee Admissions,” <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/admissions/>.
- 181 Claire Felter and James McBride, “How Does the U.S. Refugee System Work?” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified 10 October 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/how-does-us-refugee-system-work>.
- 182 Felter and McBride, “How Does the U.S. Refugee System Work?”; Jens Manuel Krogstad and Jynnah Radford, “Key Facts about Refugees to the U.S.,” Pew Research Center, 30 January 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/30/key-facts-about-refugees-to-the-u-s/>; UNHCR, “Resettlement Data Finder,” US 2016 Data, <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#lBz6>.
- 183 UNHCR, “Resettlement Data Finder,” US 2017 Data, <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#eBr7>.

- 184 UNHCR, “Resettlement Data Finder,” US 2018 Data, <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#Ids7>.
- 185 UNHCR, “Resettlement Data Finder,” US 2003-2018 Data, <https://rsq.unhcr.org/en/#JJ6r>.
- 186 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Immigration and Nationality Act,” <https://www.uscis.gov/laws/immigration-and-nationality-act>.
- 187 Immigration and Nationality Act, (US), 8 USC 1158, s 207(a)(2) [INA]. The provision further enables the president to permit the resettlement of certain refugees in specific emergencies in addition to the annual quotas (207(b)). The INA incorporates the *Refugee Act* of 1980, which for the first time incorporated the Convention definition of *refugee* into U.S. law: Refugee Council USA, “History of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program,” <http://www.rcusa.org/history/>.
- 188 U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Refugee Admission Program,” <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/admissions/index.htm>. Potential cases are referred to one of nine resettlement support centres around the world operated by international and non-governmental organizations and funded and managed by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. Refugees are interviewed and vetted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and undergo a health screening before being approved for travel to the United States.
- 189 INA, s. 209(a)(2); *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, “Country Chapter: USA,” (July 2018), accessed 28 January 2019, 10, <http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e5a764.html>.
- 190 INA, s 411. The INA further mandates the ORR to ensure sufficient funding for employment training and placement, language training, and cash assistance to resettled refugees: INA, s 412(1)(A). It also provides that employable refugees should be placed in jobs as soon as possible after arrival in the United States, that available social services should be focused on employment acquisition, language training, and case management, and that “local voluntary agency activities should be conducted in close cooperation and advance consultation with State and local governments”: INA, s 412(1)(B).
- 191 INA, s. 412(2)(C).
- 192 INA, s. 412(10)(A)(ii).
- 193 U.S. Department of State, “Refugee Admissions,” <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/admissions/>; Refugee Processing Centre, “R&P Agency Contacts,” <http://www.wrapsnet.org/rp-agency-contacts/>. The current nine resettlement agencies are Church World Services, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, and World Relief. See also Refugee Council USA, “History of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program,” <http://www.rcusa.org/history/>.
- 194 The duration of this responsibility was a minimum of thirty days and up to ninety days after the refugees’ arrival. *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook USA*, 10.
- 195 *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook USA*, 10.
- 196 A map of Reception and Placement Program Affiliate Sites in 2017 can be viewed on the website of Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange: “Who We Serve,” <https://coresourceexchange.org/who-we-serve/>.
- 197 Some examples include RefugeeOne, “Co-Sponsorship Package,” http://www.refugeeone.org/uploads/1/2/8/1/12814267/co_sponsor_packet.pdf; Canopy Northwest Arkansas, *Co-Sponsorship Handbook: 2016*, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57eaaa21d2b857ed94d16fde/t/57f3cd8bff7c50d6307f9568/1475595660493/Co-Sponsorship+handbook.pdf>; Minnesota Council of Churches Refugee Services, “Co-sponsorship,” <http://www.mnchurches.org/refugeeservices/get-involved/church-and-group-opportunities/co-sponsorship>; HIAS Chicago, “Congregational Co-Sponsorship Program,” http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/901119/7404628/1483924108363/HIAS+Chicago+Co-Sponsorship+Program_Info+Packet.pdf?token=us%2BYk4WIGuOMmB87lP2TkxclRGQ%3D.
- 198 The closest the US government has come to a formal program was a 2016 announcement indicating interest in a program: “Top State Department officials voiced their support for private sector programs that can enhance resettlement capacity in the country. It was announced that the State Department was working in conjunction with Refugee Council USA—the umbrella organization that represents the nine charities that resettle refugees across the country—in crafting details for a private refugee sponsorship pilot program [that was] to launch in 2017.” However, the new administration elected in November 2016 did not continue this work: Matthew La Corte, “Let the U.S. Resettle Refugees Privately,” *Refugees Deeply*, 17 November 2016, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2016/11/17/let-the-u-s-resettle-refugees-privately>.
- 199 Episcopal Migration Ministries and Church World Service. See Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, *Community Co-Sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement—August 2016*, 4–5, <http://www.irisct.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CO-SPONSORSHIP-MANUAL.August.2016.pdf>.
- 200 Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, “Getting Started: Co-sponsorship,” September 2016, <http://www.irisct.org/getting-started/>.
- 201 Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, *Community Co-Sponsorship Program*, 8.
- 202 Integration Refugee & Immigrant Services, “Getting Started: Co-sponsorship,” September 2016, <http://www.irisct.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Sept.2016.getting.started.pdf>.
- 203 Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, *Community Co-Sponsorship Program*, 5, 7.

- 204 Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, “History,” <http://www.irisct.org/history/>.
- 205 Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services, *Community Co-Sponsorship Program Manual—October 2018 Edition*, 3, <http://www.irisct.org/wp-content/uploads/cs-portal/forms/RESOURCE%20DOCS/PRE-ARRIVAL/COMM%20CO-SPONSORSHIP%20OCTOBER%202018%20MASTER%20COPY.pdf>.
- 206 The United Kingdom would be free to change its policy and apply its Community Sponsorship Program to other resettlement programs like the GPP.

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Australia's Private Refugee Sponsorship Program: Creating Complementary Pathways or Privatizing Humanitarianism?

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Abstract

This article provides the first history and critique of Australia's private refugee sponsorship program, the Community Support Program (CSP). As more countries turn to community sponsorship of refugees as a means to fill the "resettlement gap," Australia's model provides a cautionary tale. The CSP, introduced in 2017, does not expand Australia's overall resettlement commitment but instead takes places from within the existing humanitarian resettlement program. The Australian program charges sponsors exorbitant application fees, while simultaneously prioritizing refugees who are "job ready," with English-language skills and ability to integrate quickly, undermining the principle of resettling the most vulnerable. As such, we argue that the CSP hijacks places from within Australia's humanitarian program and represents a market-driven outsourcing and privatization of Australia's refugee resettlement priorities and commitments.

Résumé

Cet article offre la première histoire et critique du programme de parrainage privé des réfugiés en Australie, le Community Support Program (CSP). Alors que de plus en plus de pays se tournent vers le parrainage communautaire pour combler les besoins en matière de réinstallation, le modèle australien tient lieu de mise en garde. Le CSP, introduit en 2017, n'étend pas les engagements de l'Australie en matière de réinstallation, mais accapare des places au sein du programme humanitaire de réinstallation déjà existant. Le programme australien impose aux parrains des frais de demande exorbitants tout en donnant la priorité aux réfugiés qui sont prêts à occuper un emploi, qui ont des compétences linguistiques en anglais et qui sont capables de s'intégrer rapidement, minant ainsi le principe de réinstallation des plus vulnérables. Nous soutenons que le CSP détourne des places du programme humanitaire australien et représente une sous-traitance axée sur le marché ainsi qu'une privatisation des priorités et engagements de l'Australie en matière de réinstallation.

Introduction

At a time when the global gap between refugee resettlement needs and resettlement places made available by governments is widening, countries around the world are increasingly looking to community sponsorship to expand and supplement their refugee resettlement. In September 2016 a meeting of UN General Assembly states resulted in the New York Declaration of Refugees and Migrants, wherein member states agreed to negotiate a Global Compact on Refugees in order to strengthen the international refugee regime's response to large refugee movements. The resulting final draft of the Global Compact on Refugees calls upon states "to establish private or community sponsorship programs that are additional to regular resettlement" in order to provide timely access to durable solutions for refugees.¹ Following from the New York Declaration, a number of states are experimenting with community sponsorship programs, following in the footsteps of Canada's long-running program, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Argentina, and some in the European Union.

In the lead-up to the New York Declaration, Australia confirmed its intentions to join this list and implement a permanent community sponsorship program. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced that "in addition to our existing programs, Australia will ... create new pathways for refugees to resettle in Australia through the establishment of 1000 places under a Community Support Programme, where communities and businesses can sponsor applications and support new arrivals."²

This article provides the first detailed overview of Australia's historical and current approaches to community sponsorship. In particular, it addresses the current Community Support Program (CSP), which formally began in late 2017, and the Community Proposal Pilot (CPP), which began in 2013 and preceded the CSP. As well, it traces Australia's prior experimentation in this policy area, namely the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme (CRSS), which ran for almost twenty years from 1979 to 1997. In doing so, we argue that potentials of private sponsorship cannot be assessed independently of the details and national context of specific sponsorship programs. The manner in which sponsorship programs are framed and promoted by nation states, as well as the design, are factors that determine the value of sponsorship programs, particularly when such programs are framed as "complementary" pathways to traditional government-led resettlement.

While the CSP provides a much-needed counterpoint to Australia's infamous Operation Sovereign Borders—a "military-led" border control program centred upon securitization and the absolute control of refugee movements³—there are problematic policies built into the program, which

include a lack of additionality;⁴ prohibitively high visa application charges and processing fees; discriminatory selection criteria; and lack of community engagement in the design and participation of the program. Read together, Australia's CSP is best understood as an exercise in the privatization of resettlement responsibilities and costs that ultimately reduces the Australian government's overall commitment to resettlement. The use of private funding to directly replace government-funded places, and the preference for "work-ready" refugees, which characterize the CSP, entail that the Australian program cannot be characterized as creating a complementary pathway to resettlement. Instead, we argue that in its current form it represents a market-driven outsourcing and privatization of the existing refugee program. This view is echoed in the government's own framing of the program, which it has promoted not only as "cost saving" but as a revenue-raising measure.

We argue that the Australian experience—in particular, the CSP—provides cause for pause and caution. While community sponsorship has considerable untapped potential in Australia, the parameters of community sponsorship schemes need to be carefully crafted and managed to ensure that governments do not use sponsorship to shift the cost of long-standing public programs for resettling refugees onto private actors, further entrench controlled migration as a precondition to offering protection to refugees, and shift resettlement focus away from the most vulnerable refugees—risks that are inherent within the current CSP framework.

In the first part of this article, we explain the history, design, and focus of the CRSS and the motivation for this program, which provides important background to contemporary private sponsorship in Australia. The following sections outline and critique the CPP and the CSP, with a focus on the political context of control and deterrence of refugee arrivals, into which both programs were introduced. Finally, we highlight the risks of "exporting" the Australian model to other jurisdictions and examine the sustained community—and sector-based efforts to promote reform and improvement of the CSP in Australia.

The Community Refugee Settlement Scheme

While there is a vast literature on refugee resettlement in Australia,⁵ there is little mention of Australia's historical use of community sponsorship to support the resettlement of refugees and humanitarian entrants. While Australia may appear as a newcomer to community sponsorship programs, it has, in fact, a significant history with community sponsorship through the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme (CRSS) that ran from 1979 to 1997. The CRSS, which helped to settle and integrate over 30,000 refugees in Australia, was a critical part of Australia's response to the Indochinese

refugee crisis and a key feature of Australia's resettlement policies in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁶

The program was introduced on 30 October 1979 by the minister for immigration, Michael MacKellar, following a recommendation of the Australian Refugee Advisory Council.⁷ MacKellar had floated the idea of a community sponsorship program a year prior, as part of a reconsideration of Australia's strategic response to the Indochinese refugee crisis, in particular the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees from countries of first asylum.⁸ A particular challenge facing the Australian government at the time was that resettled refugees were accommodated and processed in government-run hostels and migrant centres before being dispersed into the wider community.⁹ Not only were these migrant centres and hostels costly to run, they also couldn't cope with large numbers of Vietnamese refugee arrivals whom the Australian government had agreed to resettle. MacKellar thus identified a "need to cope with the transition from hostels to the community."¹⁰

At its core, the CRSS was a mechanism to allow refugees to bypass government-run migrant centres and hostels and be moved directly into the Australian community, into the care of those members of the local community who had undertaken to provide assistance. The aims of the CRSS were to:

- give members of the community an opportunity to become directly involved in the settlement of refugees and contribute to their integration;
- provide an alternative means of settlement for refugees who have a capacity to integrate quickly into the Australian community;
- encourage greater awareness of the government's refugee resettlement program; and
- achieve a more geographically dispersed settlement of refugees through the Australian community.¹¹

Initially the CRSS was available only to support Vietnamese refugees, but it was later expanded to cover Eastern European and Latin American refugees.¹² The CRSS was open to participation by established voluntary agencies (including religious organizations), organized groups of individuals, employers, and individuals as supporters. It was envisaged that the majority of offers of support would come from voluntary agencies, but offers from individuals who could demonstrate a capacity to fulfill sponsorship obligations would also be considered.¹³ Individuals were required to have "back-up" support from an established group or organization, in the event that they could not fulfill their responsibilities.¹⁴ Initially sponsors could also nominate a preference for sponsoring a specific ethnic group, family size and composition, or specific employment or linguistic skills, but they were not able to propose a refugee by name for CRSS sponsorship.¹⁵

Applications to participate in the scheme were vetted by the Community Refugee Resettlement Committee.¹⁶ The

committee had to be satisfied on both the eligibility of the persons or group to participate in the CRSS as sponsors, as well as the viability of the support offer. Whether a person or group was deemed eligible to participate as a sponsor depended on factors that included the standing of the group or organization, the level of financial resources, and their demonstrated capacity to assist refugees including previous experience with refugee settlement and community welfare matters. The viability of offers was tested against a range of criteria, which were strongly focussed on the quality and security of the resettlement assistance being offered. The criteria included the period of support offered, the suitability of accommodation, the avoidance of isolation, the prospect of securing employment for the refugees in the area, and the provision of English-language training. While, in theory, the CRSS allowed individuals, businesses, and community groups to provide sponsorship, as noted below the majority of sponsorships came from family members who used the CRSS to facilitate family reunion. The other major source of sponsors derived from church-based or ethnic community groups.¹⁷ There is very little evidence that businesses were involved in the CRSS.

The Australian government was responsible for processing and transporting refugees from abroad to Australia, and to the locality where they were to receive CRSS support. Entrants under the CRSS were selected from a pool of refugees who had passed the government's "normal refugee selection criteria."¹⁸ Beyond meeting the criteria for a refugee, considerable discretion was left to decision-makers at overseas posts to refer resettled refugees for CRSS support. At one end of the spectrum, nuclear families and groups who could speak English with reasonable employment prospects were always "well received."¹⁹ In particular, when Australia introduced the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) in 1981, many of these applications for entry also included offers of CRSS support. The SHP allowed individuals to nominate family members for resettlement to Australia. To be eligible for the SHP, applicants were required to "demonstrate a personal claim on Australia by virtue of having close relatives settled here, close former ties with Australia or, for a small number, a strong and well-established community which [was] well-organised and able and willing to provide all necessary settlement support."²⁰ By 1983 some 60 per cent of CRSS cases were family reunion cases, whereby CRSS offers of support upon arrival were attached to refugee and SHP cases (in effect a form of co-sponsorship).²¹ While it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a full analysis, the use of CRSS as a family reunification program was not well received by the Australian government. In essence, the government considered that the CRSS had morphed from a settlement support program into a "queue-jumping" or a "de facto sponsorship"

Table 1. Refugees supported through the CRSS, 1980–1993

Year	CRSS	CRSS as an approximate percentage of total refugee and humanitarian intake	
		Total	
1980	766	19,954	4%
1981	1569	22,545	7%
1982	2550	21,917	12%
1983	2242	17,054	13%
1984	2240	15,485	14%
1985	2191	14,207	15%
1986	2154	11,700	18%
1987	2509	11,291	22%
1988	2552	11,392	22%
1989	3480	11,309	31%
1990	3885	12,415	31%
1991	3580	11,284	32%
1992	2733	12,009	23%
1993	3419	11,845	29%

Sources: Data derived from Department of Home Affairs, *Historical Migration Statistics* (May 2018); Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *“Our Good Friends”: Australians Helping Refugees to a New Life* (Sydney: Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, 1991), 62.

mechanism that circumvented uniform management of the humanitarian program.²²

At the other end of the spectrum, the CRSS also placed special emphasis on “doubly-disadvantaged cases” including “the disabled, single parent families, and families who have individuals who, for some other reason, have a higher than usual chance of encountering settlement difficulties.”²³ In such doubly disadvantaged cases, a CRSS referral might “change the balance in favour of approving the application” for resettlement to Australia.²⁴

Another important feature of the CRSS, especially in light of Australia’s current program, was the level of government support provided to sponsorship groups. Support groups were eligible for government support for second and subsequent entrants, initially \$170 for an individual and \$450 for a family of four, and \$70 for each additional family member in 1983.²⁵ Support groups could also benefit from taxation concessions in the form of income tax deductions for donations and exemptions from sales tax for goods purchased to support the settlement of entrants. Further, sponsorship groups were provided with training by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and a quarterly newsletter was published to allow sponsors from each different state and territory to share their experiences.

The first group of refugees to be supported under the scheme were a group of twenty families, who were settled in Whyalla under the auspices of the St. Theresa’s Refugee Resettlement Committee.²⁶ In the first eight months of its operation, 766 Indochinese refugees were resettled under the scheme.²⁷ Between 1980 and 1993, the CRSS helped to settle over 30,000 refugees in Australia and, at its peak, accounted for approximately 32 per cent of Australia’s overall refugee and humanitarian intake (see table 1).

While the CRSS has not been subjected to rigorous academic study, a number of independent and government initiated reports pointed to the important role that the scheme played in facilitating the successful settlement of refugees in Australia.²⁸ The largest study of the CRSS was conducted by MSJ Keys Young in 1981,²⁹ commissioned by the Australian government and based on interviews with 157 refugee families and sponsors around Australia. The report painted the CRSS in a very positive light: “It is clear that the CRSS operates successfully to assist refugees in settling in Australia. It has demonstrated that the genuine care and the great time and effort offered by community people ensures that the refugees make use of all the services available in their communities.”³⁰

The report also highlighted deficiencies with the operation of the scheme, including that matching refugees to sponsors,

especially in rural areas, resulted in some refugees not being able to access appropriate services and employment opportunities. It also identified that some sponsor groups were not adequately prepared for the level of financial support required, and that sponsors' overbearing behaviour caused difficulties.³¹

Other reports later in the life of CRSS also raised concerns about its implementation. For example, a 1998 report by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) highlighted deficiencies in the manner in which the CRSS was implemented by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. The ANAO report found that the department's "procedures for review and accountability of [sponsorship] groups are not working well."³² In particular, the department had not properly followed its own procedures for accepting groups as CRSS sponsors, and, as the result of resource constraints, had not monitored sponsorships to the required level.³³ Such concerns were also highlighted by the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), which noted that the expectations and responsibilities of CRSS groups had grown, while logistical and training support from the department had been reduced in response to funding restrictions.³⁴

The CRSS was formally disestablished in 1997 and replaced by the Integrated Humanitarian and Settlement Strategy (IHSS).³⁵ The IHSS represented a departure from previous settlement policies, as it aimed for entrants to attain self-sufficiency as soon as possible rather than encouraging dependency. Under the IHSS, settlement services were contracted out to private service providers who were responsible for providing intensive initial settlement support to all humanitarian entrants.³⁶ Many of the services available under the IHSS were precisely the types of support previously provided by community sponsors.³⁷ However, community groups were allowed to contribute in a volunteer capacity to complement IHSS services and were provided with training to do so.³⁸ After the cessation of the CRSS, the sponsorship of refugees for entry into Australia continued informally through the SHP.

Overall, the available literature suggests that the CRSS was a positive component of Australia's resettlement policy. While the CRSS was not a sponsorship scheme *for entry* into Australia, it provided a post-settlement support mechanism and one that enabled the Australian government to resettle refugees throughout the country at a relatively low cost. Importantly, the CRSS facilitated and complemented Australia's resettlement program that was at the time largely focused on vulnerable refugees and family reunification.

Australia's Contemporary Sponsorship Programs

Given the breadth and relative successes of the CRSS, its absence in government discussions surrounding proposals for a new sponsorship program is surprising. Our research could

not find any reference to the CRSS in relevant government papers or policies. The very different framing of the programs, and the political context into which the CPP and CSP were proposed—of deterrence and control rather than reception and integration—goes some way to explaining this absence. This section outlines the contemporary community sponsorship programs, highlighting the broader political framing of both the purpose and potential of the CPP and CSP.³⁹

Prior to the introduction of the CPP, the Commonwealth government expressed interest in a community sponsorship program in its 2012 budget and released a discussion paper examining the "feasibility of a pilot which would enable organisations to propose a person, in a humanitarian situation, for entry to Australia under the Humanitarian Program."⁴⁰ More than sixty submissions were received in response to the paper, from humanitarian organizations, faith-based groups, community organizations, settlement service providers, and state and local governments.⁴¹ In addition to receiving submissions, in August 2012 the Department of Immigration conducted two formal meetings with representatives from refugee advocacy and settlement organizations and community and faith-based organizations. They also held informal meetings and discussions.⁴² The government did not make any of the outcomes or recommendations of this approximately six-month consultation period publicly available. Notably, the submissions to the 2012 discussion paper were not published, despite publication being the usual practice.

As these consultations were taking place, the government commissioned the report of the Houston Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers. In this period, the number of refugees arriving by boat to Australia had reached record highs,⁴³ and the Labor government was cast by media outlets as "losing control" of the border.⁴⁴ The expert panel was charged with producing a report on "how best to prevent asylum seekers risking their lives by travelling to Australia by boat."⁴⁵ Whilst commissioned as an independent report, the document was broadly seen as means to enable the Labor government to re-establish third-country processing, despite fulfilling an election promise to end offshore detention and repealing the policy in 2008. The 2012 re-establishment of Australian-funded detention centres in Papua New Guinea and Nauru in order to provide a "circuit breaker to the current surge in irregular migration to Australia" was the most immediate and significant outcome of the report.⁴⁶ However, the panel also made a range of recommendations on Australia's humanitarian program more broadly, and directly addressed the possibility of private humanitarian sponsorship.

In the context of addressing the costs associated with the panel's recommended expansion of Australia's "orderly" offshore humanitarian intake,⁴⁷ the report suggested,

Private and community sponsorship within Australia's humanitarian program could provide some important opportunities to assist with its expansion in a productive, cost-effective and community-based way. It is important that the private and community sponsorship arrangements be responsibly utilised to their full potential. The panel expects that *it may be possible to develop a sponsorship model that reduces the costs of a place under the humanitarian program by up to one-third and considers that any savings achieved through such an initiative should be used to offset other costs under the expanded program.*⁴⁸

In this and its other recommendations, the focus of the report was not on just the implementation of measures to “expand regular humanitarian pathways,” but also the “creation of disincentives” to irregular maritime migration that are “immediate and real”—and, by implication, punitive in their effect.⁴⁹ These objectives formed the political context in which the CPP was designed and introduced. The prospect of reducing the cost of the humanitarian program through sponsorship and the promotion of regular, “controlled” migration pathways were recurring themes in the introduction of the CPP and the subsequent CSP.

In the same period, the government further limited access to any meaningful form of family reunion for refugees arriving without authorization. As noted above, SHP has become the primary means by which refugee entrants are able to access family reunion in Australia. Alongside the barriers of high costs and prohibitively long delays,⁵⁰ refugees who arrived in Australia by boat after August 2012 have no access to any form of family sponsorship, and later, in 2016, applications made by those who arrived by boat before this date were directed to be given the lowest processing priority.⁵¹ These policies, directed towards “irregular” arrivals, reinforce concerns discussed below that private sponsorship in Australia is an expensive, proxy form of family reunion and exploits the undersupply or absence of other family reunion pathways.⁵² Moreover, it is well recognized that other migration pathways for family reunion such as partner, child, and parent visas are out of reach for many refugees due to their high visa applications costs, stringent eligibility criteria, or simply because some visas are subject to extremely prolonged waiting periods.

When the CPP was formally announced in mid-2013, it constituted Australia's first program for the full private sponsorship of humanitarian entrants by individuals, businesses, or community organizations.⁵³ Humanitarian entrants, for the purposes of the CPP and the subsequent CSP, are defined as refugees or persons outside of their home country who are subject to gross violations of their human rights. The pilot was to provide for up to 500 places per annum *within* the offshore component of Australia's humanitarian program,

rather than in addition to existing humanitarian commitments.⁵⁴ Sponsors could participate in the program only via organizations selected and approved by the Department of Immigration, known as Approved Proposing Organisations (APOS). APOS were responsible for proposing an applicant and managing the sponsorship application, as well as ensuring sponsors were able to meet the costs of sponsorship and resettlement. Under the pilot, there were five recognized APOS, four of which were based in two Australian states (New South Wales and Victoria).⁵⁵ The costs of sponsorship, which we discuss further below, included a fee paid to APOS for their services.

The first CPP applications were lodged in October 2013, and the first visas granted in February 2014.⁵⁶ Notably, under the CPP, while sponsors were required to meet the definition of a humanitarian entrant, and CPP applicants were prioritized over the SHP entrants,⁵⁷ applicants were not selected or prioritized on the basis of evidence of a job offer, English-language skills, or age. Over the course of the 2013–14 financial year, 154 applications were received under the CPP, representing 570 individuals. Over the same period, 245 visas were granted under the CPP.⁵⁸ Between the lodgement of the first applications under the CPP in October 2013 and the review of the program on 29 March 2015, 305 applications had been received under the pilot, representing more than 1,100 individuals. Over this period, 667 visas were granted under the CPP. Both demand for the program and the limited number of places resulted in the program being “consistently oversubscribed,” and even though capacity to integrate was not a formal priority, in 2016 the government reported that over 61 per cent of places were awarded to applicants under forty.⁵⁹ The highest number of applications and grants were made in relation to sponsors from Syria, followed by Iraq. Other visa grants were made to individuals from Afghanistan, Eritrea, and Somalia.⁶⁰

In 2015 the government sought public submissions in a review of the CPP. Under the heading “What happens next?” the paper noted that “community feedback through this discussion paper will inform government considerations on the feasibility and possible model of a Community Support Programme.”⁶¹ Once again neither the submissions in response to the discussion paper, nor the government's view of the submissions, was made public. Of the submissions that were published by the submitting organizations, the consensus in the nature of the concerns raised about the CPP and in the accompanying recommendations for reform is noteworthy. In data released to the authors under Freedom of Information laws, the government's own summary of public submissions noted that thirteen out of seventeen respondents recommended that the CPP operate in addition to the existing humanitarian program; that “stakeholders”

supported retaining the standard humanitarian eligibility criteria (rather than add new criteria such as capacity to work), and that “most organisations” submitted that visa application charges should be lowered.⁶²

Despite government engagement of participating organizations and stakeholders in a formal consultation, not one of the above recommendations was incorporated into the final program. RCOA, the peak body for refugee organizations in Australia, noted in its representative submission to the inquiry that as a result of the high cost of the CPP, and its lack of additionality, the CPP’s design risked undermining the humanitarian commitments of Australia’s program and the potential of securing genuine community involvement in “community” sponsorship.⁶³ In RCOA’s annual consultations in 2016, many community members expressed concern that the CSP was accessible only to those who could afford to pay the high fees.⁶⁴

In spite of these concerns, when the CSP was announced in 2017, the legal frameworks that governed the program more or less mirrored the design of the CPP, albeit with an entirely new set of selection criteria and higher fees. The most significant changes to the policy included an increased annual quota of sponsored places to 1,000 per annum from the previous 500, though again without an increase in Australia’s overall offshore humanitarian intake, and the announcement that priority would be given to applicants meeting specific criteria on age, language skills, capacity to work, and the government’s own “resettlement priorities.” At the time of writing, implementation of the permanent CSP program is still in very early stages. Eleven APOs were announced in early 2018,⁶⁵ and in May 2018 the CSP was tracking *not* to fulfill the quota for the 2017–18 financial year.⁶⁶

Critiques of the Community Support Program

Despite the claim that it draws from the experience of Canada’s private sponsorship program,⁶⁷ Australia’s CSP does not enhance or expand Australia’s refugee resettlement program. Instead, the program is best understood as an exercise in the privatization of resettlement responsibilities and costs, which preserves a policy of strict government control over the terms of refugee entry and resettlement. Instead of taking into account community views, the Australian government appears to have heeded assessments of the CPP model as a “credible means” of providing humanitarian support “without placing additional strain on the Commonwealth budget.”⁶⁸ As noted, and unlike Canada, the CSP quota of 1,000 places is not additional to the government’s Refugee and Humanitarian Program (RHP). This means that each sponsored refugee takes a place away from the government’s own resettlement commitment. In 2013 the Australian government announced that it would increase the RHP quota from 13,750 to 18,750 in

2018–19, including 2,750 places reserved for in-country asylum applicants.⁶⁹ However, with the introduction of the CSP, it became clear that this increase would be offset by 1,000 places set aside for private sponsors. As such, the CSP can be seen as a way to outsource the government’s commitments, exploiting the community’s good will, or, as is more often the case, a family’s desperation.⁷⁰

Indeed, the CSP has been promoted by the Australian government as a means to create “a sustainable model of private sponsorship for refugees that minimises costs to governments.”⁷¹ According to governmental estimates, the program “will provide a revenue gain to the budget of \$26.9 million” over the first four years.⁷² This revenue gain comes from the high costs of the visa fees, including a AU\$2,740 non-refundable application fee and a second instalment fee of AU\$16,444 for the main applicant and AU\$2,680 for each secondary applicant (family member).⁷³ In addition to visa fees, sponsors are required to pay fees to the APO. These fees are not fixed or regulated by the Australian government and are as high as approximately AU\$20,000, per application.⁷⁴ Sponsors are also required to cover the costs of airfares and medical checks prior to arrival. Most notably the visa application charges do not directly cover or fund the cost of the applicant’s resettlement. That is, they are simply transaction fees paid to the Australian government that are not attached to any clear service provided by the government to the humanitarian migrant or sponsor.⁷⁵ Once the sponsored refugee has arrived, sponsors are required to cover all living costs and settlement support for the first year, or otherwise repay the government for any use of social security benefits through an Assurance of Support arrangement.⁷⁶ All together, these fees and payments could total over AU\$100,000 for a refugee family of five, as shown in table 2.

Beyond the cost of sponsorship, the CSP adds further eligibility criteria that were not present in the CPP, which, read together, discriminate in favour of economically self-sufficient and easy-to-integrate humanitarian entrants. Under the CSP, applicants must be what we describe as “job ready,” including being between the ages of eighteen and fifty, having “functional English,” and “a job offer or skills to enable you to get a job quickly.”⁷⁷ Despite the fact that sponsors bear the costs of resettlement, priority is given to CSP applicants from countries that the government deems as “resettlement priorities.” The precise details are unclear. However, the government has confirmed that priority is given to refugees from select countries, including “Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Bhutan, Syria and Iraq.”⁷⁸ While other refugees are not formally excluded, they have been told that their applications “are highly unlikely to be considered, let alone accepted.”⁷⁹ As well, although refugees from these regions are indeed priority areas for UNHCR,

Table 2. Fees and costs under the CSP

Stage	Fee	Cost
Stage A	APO Expression of Interest fee	\$275
Stage B	APO fee	\$3,410
Stage C	APO fee	\$3,190
	First Visa Application Charge (to the Australian government)	\$2,740
Stage D	APO fee	\$5,865
	Second Visa Application Charge (to the Australian government)	\$16,444 (+\$2680 per each additional applicant)
Stage E	APO bond	\$5,000 (may be refundable)
	Humanitarian Settlement Support fee	\$611 per person
	Assurance of Support Program	The cost of social security use over the first year, which can be up to \$17,513.60 for an individual or \$42,595.28 for a family of five
Other costs	Airfares, pre-departure medical screenings, and costs associated with settlement support	Costs vary
Total	Individual	\$55,048
	Family of five	\$93,294

Source: AMES Australia, "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)," <https://www.ames.net.au/csp/faqs>.

Note: This is an example based on a specific APO's service charges. Precise APO fees differ between organizations, but visa application fees remain consistent.

these priorities have been set by the Australian government, and no reason has been provided for why other groups are deprioritized.

Aside from the age criterion, the requirements set out above are broadly stated and vague, and it is unclear how the criteria are being interpreted and applied. Indeed, questions of definition and interpretation arise acutely in the "work-ready" requirement. The government has confirmed that "priority [will be] given to applicants who have an employment offer" and to "applicants willing to live and work in regional Australia."⁸⁰ But in the absence of an employment offer, it is difficult to ascertain exactly who will be deemed to be job ready. Indeed, while the government envisions that the program will be taken up by corporate sponsors as part of their "corporate social responsibility" principles, this is yet to be seen. Indeed, it is much easier and cheaper for businesses to invest in and support refugees already in Australia, rather than pay significant fees to sponsor new refugees who are not guaranteed to be accepted and may take years to arrive. Feedback from APOs suggests that the only businesses involved in the CSP are those run by refugee communities themselves, through offers of employment to sponsored family members.

The overall profile of an eligible applicant confirms that the program is not designed, as a matter of priority, to resettle the most vulnerable or at-risk refugees and humanitarian applicants.⁸¹ The program certainly does not aim to accommodate "doubly disadvantaged" entrants, as was the case under the CRSS. The considerable definitional scope of the criteria and the emphasis on government resettlement priorities confirms that the government will retain high levels of discretion in selection. Certainly the elderly, those without "relevant qualifications," and those without English-language skills are unlikely to be viable candidates for sponsorship under the program. As well, there are clear gendered implications in the criteria. The "job ready" requirement means that female-headed households and those with major care responsibilities are less likely to qualify as primary applicants, and the criteria are also likely to compound women's uneven access to, or outright exclusion from, education and work in some countries of origin.

In its review of the CPP, the Australian government suggested that as a result of sponsors' limited access to state-funded support services, private sponsorship may not be the most appropriate avenue for highly vulnerable applicants for whom services may be more "appropriately provided by

government-funded settlement service providers.”⁸² While there is merit to this view, in the same breath the government confirmed that the processing of privately sponsored applications would be “assessed with high priority, wherever possible” to encourage sponsors to participate in the CSP “as a resettlement option over, or in addition to, other resettlement options through the standard humanitarian program.”⁸³ It is the cumulative effect of these factors that forms the basis of our critique. Resettlement places are being allocated away from vulnerable applicants, and those places are simultaneously being prioritized ahead of other refugee applicants.

Even in cases where applicants are not uniquely vulnerable but have “commonplace” resettlement needs, a related concern is the lack of clarity regarding how businesses and corporations might effectively act as sponsors. In 2017 Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection Alex Hawke said that the program was a chance for businesses to fulfill their corporate social responsibility rather than merely a cost-saving measure.⁸⁴ He explained that “the idea is of course to have that support there provided by business groups who may know refugees in different camps, who they want to bring out [to Australia] who have the skills.”⁸⁵ While the government has clearly emphasized the potential of businesses to meet corporate social responsibility targets through sponsorship, uptake of the program by businesses is unlikely to be strong without the careful and long-term establishment of relationships between refugee organizations, local refugee networks, and business communities. Further, the high costs of the program are likely to be a disincentive for businesses considering supporting refugees. As the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (CRSI) has noted, while businesses may play a vital role in a sponsorship program, they are not well placed to directly sponsor refugees or to “provide ongoing settlement support and assistance for sponsored refugees.”⁸⁶

A final concern with the current CSP model is the lack of a truly community-orientated settlement program. Sponsors are not required to form a sponsorship group, meaning that individuals can act as sponsors. As refugee advocacy organizations predicted in the discussion paper for the CSP,⁸⁷ the lack of a criteria for wider community participation has meant that the CSP has again become an expensive yet expedited family reunion program for those desperate to get their family to safety. According to information provided by an APO, over 90 per cent of applications under the CSP have come from individual family members.

Because there is an insufficient number of family reunion pathways for refugees in Australia,⁸⁸ the CSP offers those who can afford it a way to fast-track their family reunion application. While the lack of family reunion pathways in Australia must be addressed,⁸⁹ the current CSP risks becoming a privatized and extortionately expensive family reunion

program rather than a model that utilizes the social capital and support of the wider Australian community. Feedback from APOs suggests that this is already the case, with over 90 per cent of applicants being family members of sponsors. A truly community-based sponsorship program should enable and encourage the wider community to be involved in settling refugees, rather than leaving it to a single family or family members.

Private Sponsorship in Australia: A Cautionary Tale?

As noted in our introduction, Australia is one of a number of states that have adopted or are adopting new programs for private or community sponsorship of refugees. Amongst the wide range of approaches to refugee sponsorship, Australia’s program is unique insofar as it hijacks humanitarian places in order to allocate them into a privately funded resettlement program. By contrast, for example, New Zealand’s recently introduced community sponsorship pilot, the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, provides an additional twenty-five places to complement resettlement places from its quota. However, like the CSP, the eligibility criteria for the New Zealand pilot focus on individuals who have basic English-language proficiency, are between eighteen and forty-five years old, and have a minimum of three years’ work experience or a qualification requiring a minimum of two years of tertiary study.⁹⁰

Overall, the Australian and New Zealand approaches differ markedly from other community sponsorship models. The emphasis on employability and English-language proficiency arguably distorts the traditional focus on resettlement of the most vulnerable of refugees. Instead, these criteria allow states to claim that they are contributing to the global resettlement pool, while simultaneously using community sponsorship to reduce the cost of resettlement and increase their ability to select desired refugees. If other countries were to follow suit, this approach would have significant implications for resettlement principles and policy worldwide.

To address the concerns outlined above, in 2018 a group of leading civil society organizations in Australia formed a campaign group to advocate for a better community sponsorship model that harnesses the power of community support.⁹¹ The Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (CRSI) is calling for the government to provide up 10,000 community-sponsored places per annum in addition to the refugee program, with no revenue-raising visa charges or APO fees. In order to foster community engagement in the settlement process, the CRSI has recommended that individuals can partner with a registered and suitably credentialed non-profit association (an “Approved Community Organisation”), which will be responsible for raising funds to cover the costs

of airfares, other initial settlement costs, and the first year of settlement. Sponsored refugees would have access to government social security benefits, the costs of which would be billed back to the sponsors by the government after the first year of settlement. The CRSI model will “reduce the cost of sponsoring a family of five from up to \$100,000 (under the CSP) to between \$20,000 and \$50,000, depending on the extent to which income support is required in the first year after arrival.”⁹² The initiative also advocates removal of any discriminatory selection criteria and the requirement for sponsored refugees to be job ready.

The model proposed by CRSI would bring Australia closer to the model of community sponsorship in Canada, where additionality is a key principle, and umbrella sponsorship agreement holders play a key role in mobilizing a broad base of community sponsors. The model would also move Australia closer to its historical roots under the CRSS, where the focus of the program was on community involvement in refugee resettlement and the provision of quality of settlement outcomes, rather than requiring the applicant to be “integration ready” with no government support.

A further issue to be considered when reforming community sponsorship is whether sponsors are able to name or select which refugees to sponsor. In Canada the ability to name refugees in the private sponsorship program has created an “echo effect,” whereby those who are privately sponsored in turn use the program to sponsor family members. Over time, this has meant that private sponsorship is increasingly dominated by family reunification applications.⁹³ In order to address the issue of community sponsorship places being predominantly used as a means of family reunification, Canada has introduced a Blended Visa Office–Referred (BVOR) Program. Under the BVOR, UNHCR refers vulnerable refugees to the Canadian government, and they are matched to sponsors, and the cost of settlement is split 50/50 between the sponsorship group and the government. The uptake of BVOR has been limited, and it remains to be seen whether the program can shift emphasis away from family reunification.⁹⁴ The United Kingdom has taken a similar route. Under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), UNHCR-referred refugees are matched with sponsorship groups. Sponsorship groups must have support from their local area government and must have an approved settlement plan to sponsor refugees. The criteria for resettlement under the BVOR and VPRS are based on vulnerability rather than other settlement criteria. Given the limited opportunities for family reunification in Australia, we suggest that considerable thought needs to be given to the relationship between family reunification and community sponsorship.

The family reunification issue and the CSP’s focus on job-ready refugees points to a wider consideration central to

the design and implementation of private sponsorship in all jurisdictions: the relationship between community sponsorship and complementary or alternative migration pathways. An obvious question is whether refugees who are readily employable ought to be supported by states through concessions that allow them easier access to regular skilled/labour migration pathways. Similarly, states could provide refugees with easier access to family migration under mainstream migration programs. In order to preserve the inherent focus of resettlement on vulnerable refugees, states should carefully consider the role of community sponsorship in the context of a suite of durable solutions available to refugees. In the context of the CSP, it is reasonable to ask whether, as a matter of principle, Australia’s skilled migration program could be amended to achieve similar outcomes without intrusion into Australia’s humanitarian program.

Conclusion

Under the banner of the militarized joint-agency taskforce Operation Sovereign Borders, and through implementation of a series of aggressive non-entrée policies, including asylum boat turn-backs, Australia has prevented the arrival of onshore asylum seekers in favour of its “managed” refugee resettlement program. Simultaneously, the Australian government has attempted to promote the CSP as a complementary pathway for refugee protection. However, rather than being “in addition,” as promised when announced at the New York Leaders’ Summit on Refugees, the CSP does not complement or expand Australia’s humanitarian program. Rather, the program represents a continuation of the government’s policies of refugee deterrence and control. Indeed, when Prime Minister Turnbull announced the CSP at the 2016 summit, he stated, “Because we have control of our borders, we are able to deliver that generous humanitarian programme.”⁹⁵

This agenda of control is further pursued through the eligibility criteria for CSP, which seeks to cherry-pick “job ready” refugees with high integration capacity from preferred countries of origin. In addition, the Australian model of private sponsorship reduces the government’s financial commitment to humanitarian resettlement in real terms. Unlike other programs, it requires sponsors to pay fees that bear no clear or direct correlation with the real costs of resettlement. The costs of participating in the program are not merely prohibitive but, somewhat surprisingly, have been characterized by the government as a revenue-raising measure. These features of the CSP critiqued in this article are not minor details within the overall program. They reveal the core neoliberal principles of economic rationalization and market-driven privatization of public services, guiding private sponsorship in Australia. Given these elements of the

CSP, which outsource and economically rationalize humanitarian resettlement, it is difficult to comprehend how it will realize the government's apparent *other* objective for private sponsorship, of providing additional pathways to protection and "building on the goodwill that exists in communities" towards the resettlement of humanitarian entrants.⁹⁶

At a time when community sponsorship is emerging as a pillar to expand access to durable solutions for refugees, Australia's experimentation and practice is significant in shaping the normative understanding of community sponsorship vis-à-vis refugee resettlement. This article has argued that Australia's recent experimentation and practice through the CSP provides a cautionary tale. As the CSP experience shows, there are real risks that states could utilize community sponsorship as an instrument to control refugee movements and to hijack traditional government-led and vulnerability-based refugee resettlement by privatizing their obligations. This redistribution of resettlement places has occurred while Australia has simultaneously sought to reduce reliance on UNHCR-referred refugees and give priority to Christian refugees.⁹⁷ If community sponsorship is to fulfill its promise to enhance refugee protection, these risks must be addressed and avoided in the implementation of programs in all resettlement states.

NOTES

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- 10 MacKellar, "Immigrants or Refugees," 16.
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- 12 Ian Macphee, minister for immigration and ethnic affairs, "Extension of CRSS to East European Refugees," news release, 166/80, 8 December 1980.
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- 17 Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, *Our Good Friends*, 52. Organizations involved in the CRSS at its inception included the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Spencer Gulf Refugee Resettlement Committee, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, the Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie, the Anglican Church Diocese of Willochra, the Uniting Church, APEX Club, and the Whyalla Chambers of Commerce and the Soroptimist Club of Whyalla.
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Book Reviews

The Migrant Passage: Clandestine Journeys from Central America



Noelle Kateri Bridgen

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018, 264 pp.

In *The Migrant Passage: Clandestine Journeys from Central America*, Noelle Kateri Bridgen beautifully blends theories and methodologies from international relations (IR) and anthropology to present an ethnography spanning the 4,500 kilometres between El Salvador and the U.S.-Mexican border. Bridgen weaves together migrant narratives and analysis of national policies to call attention to the dangers of the migration trail through Mexico and to illustrate how migrants attempt to avoid these dangers. The major theoretical contribution of the book lies in how it engages practices of “improvisation”—those of the migrants and the people they attempt to avoid along their journey.

The book is laid out in three “acts”: Exposition, Rising Action, and Climax. This clever layout aids the reader in understanding Bridgen’s overarching point: that the act of migrating from Central America to the United States through Mexico is a constantly shifting improvisational play, being performed over and over again by migrants and the people they encounter along the route; and that these improvisations and interactions are constantly being shared, secreted away, and reinterpreted in ways that change not only the concept of migration through Mexico, but also the actual landscape over which the migrants must travel to stay ahead of immigration enforcement, gangs, and cartels.

Bridgen lays the groundwork for the reader in act 1, chapter 1, by introducing the migrants with whom she worked and the map-making exercise that she used to tease out how migrants understand the migration trail. She dubs these maps and the corresponding stories they elicit “survival plays.” It is through these survival plays that she

demonstrates how ambiguous and shifting the migratory path is, and how each individual migrant has a different idea about how they might get from point A to point B, what they might experience along the journey, and what they see themselves leaving behind and moving towards. In this section of the text she also lays out background research on the social, political, and historical factors that have shaped the current migration process in North and Central America. We learn that alongside globalization and the role of the nation-state in creating borders, migrants have become “unwilling props in the political theater of borders” (18).

In chapters 2 and 3, Bridgen lays out the plot of her ethnography, unpacking migration stories that illuminate the processes through which she sees human mobility occurring. These chapters also outline her methodological and theoretical frameworks, discussing how she mirrored the migration process in order to gather her data, spending two years on the migrant route through Mexico, volunteering in migrant shelters, riding “*la Bestia*,” the freight train that moves people swiftly north while atop its unsafe freight cars, and visiting the hometowns of Salvadoran migrants. Here Bridgen also lays out her conceptual framework, which draws from anthropology and IR. She notes the use of anthropological concepts surrounding flows and clandestine activity, helps to break down false binaries such as mobile/immobile and legal/illegal, and discusses how these concepts fill a gap in the IR literature surrounding transmigration and globalization. She also offers a “disruption of the boundaries of politics” (33) in order to show how unanticipated changes in the state–society relationship are contingent upon each

other's actions and reactions. In chapter 3, she explains how ever-changing political shifts in the United States, Central America, and Mexico have shaped the migration journey. These include push-pull factors such as poverty in El Salvador vs. economic opportunity in the United States. These factors have encouraged migration from 1979 to the present day, despite the steady increase in danger for migrants as U.S. and Mexican politics have become less friendly towards migration from the south.

Act 2, which encompasses chapters 4 and 5, discusses the performance of "survival plays" on the migration trail. Utilizing the survival plays, or survival strategies, of her informants, Bridgen demonstrates how migrants attempt to improvise aspects of their identity such as nationality, race, class, and gender; and what larger effects these strategies have on the social and political scenes in which they are performed. Bridgen had her informants draw maps so she could better understand "the construction of the social imagination of the route" (149). Through this exercise she teases apart ideas about the transit political economy and how migration has changed local cultures and the legal economy. She ends by discussing how helpful visualizations of the migration route can be for researchers who desire a way to understand, and thereby advocate for, vulnerable populations.

In act 3, the climax and conclusion, Bridgen describes the tragedy of migration for the many migrants who are caught between their homes, the transit route, and their destination. These "permanent wanderers" offer a cautionary tale to politicians and the proponents of neo-liberalism about the real

risks, to both the imagined boundaries of the nation-state and to the lives of transnational migrants, posed by current migration policies. She argues that the "sovereign stagecraft of policymakers" can no longer ignore the humanity of migrants, as people and cultures continue to move across transnational spaces in defiance of the borders that nation-states so forcefully continue to uphold.

Bridgen's fascinating account of the improvisations that are formed by and help form the migration route through Mexico sheds light on the motivations behind migration, the increasing dangers of the migration journey in North America, and the role the United States has played in the political turmoil in Central America that pushes many migrants to face the journey north. Likewise, she explains how the "blind eye" approach to immigration practices that Mexican officials take denies human rights protections to migrants travelling within their borders who face violence at the hands of drug cartels, the Mexican police, and immigration enforcement. This ethnography would be an excellent addition to anthropological courses on Latin America, cultural anthropology, and migration studies, and would be a superb resource for shifting the sights of international relations towards a more grounded understanding of the socio-political factors of migration that shape and are shaped by globalization, global politics, and neo-liberalism today.

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Forging African Communities: Mobility, Integration and Belonging



Edited by Oliver Bakewell and Loren B. Landau
London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 321 pp.

Through human mobility, identities and communities are forged. This is the central message of *Forging African Communities*, and the editors use the metaphor of the "forge" deliberately, playing with the word's double meaning. First, to forge is to build or create, "transform[ing] ... existing material into new, potentially unrecognizable forms that nonetheless build on past histories" (3). This sense highlights the emergence of new possibilities, while also acknowledging the continued importance of what came before. But to forge is also to fake, falsify, and misrepresent—actions that, the editors argue, are "often central to

migrants' experiences and strategies" (4). Both senses of the metaphor imply agency: as they move across multiple sites and scales, people actively make and remake communities and themselves.

This edited volume presents pieces from scholars across a variety of disciplines—including development studies, demography, sociology, and anthropology—that illustrate community building and self-making through mobility in African contexts. Africa, the editors suggest in their introduction, holds particular relevance for this kind of exploration because the fragility of states and formal institutions on

the continent means that people are especially likely to move and integrate in informal ways that are poorly understood and often overlooked. This premise aligns with the book's focus on looking beyond official policies to examine empirically how migrants actually join communities, and how members of host communities participate in this process.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, "Agents of Integration: Decentering Policy and the State," questions the policy- and state-centric assumptions evident in much of the literature on migrant "integration." Instead, the chapters in this section focus on migrants' perspectives and explore how official policies may sometimes lead to unintended results. In chapter 2, Hovil examines the situation of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, where a seemingly generous offer of citizenship from the Tanzanian government introduced new forms of precarity, since it was contingent on relocating away from their areas of settlement and thus threatened to disrupt social ties. This example shows how formal membership, such as citizenship, does not necessarily facilitate belonging. Chapter 3, by Tati, focuses on West African migrant fishing communities in Pointe-Noire, Congo, where official migration policies are virtually non-existent but where migrants and local actors formed alliances against an encroaching oil company. Chapter 4, by Berriane, explores the case of sub-Saharan African male migrants in transit to Europe through the Moroccan city of Fes. The Moroccan government's policies toward migrants are repressive and criminalizing, and in any case, most migrants have little desire to stay in Morocco. Nevertheless, migrants manage to establish temporary places on neighbourhood streets, engaging in economic activities that do not yield much money but allow them to form social ties with other sub-Saharan Africans and with some locals. In chapter 5, Bakewell returns to questions of membership with the case of Angolan refugees in rural Zambia. While the Zambian government has pursued a policy of refugee repatriation, Zambian border villages have nevertheless become spaces of inclusion and belonging for refugees, with the support of the local population.

The chapters in the second section, "Negotiating Scales and Spaces of Belonging," set aside questions of state and policy to focus more specifically on how migrants join and create new communities. In chapter 6, Konkonde explores how migrant Pentecostal church leaders in South Africa use strategies of "tactical creolization," drawing on doctrines and ritual practices familiar to migrants while also adapting them in ways that attract new South African members. But while these strategies create unified congregations, they have not led migrants to form significant social connections with South Africans outside of church settings. Chapter 7, by Mangezvo, examines how Nigerian male migrant traders in Zimbabwe cope with an insecure environment by forming

short-lived but meaningful social connections with one another in churches, markets, and neighbourhood streets. Ngoie's chapter 8 shows how Nigerian and Chinese communities in Lubumbashi at once seek to make connections with local Congolese people in economic "contact zones" while also maintaining a degree of social separation. In chapter 9, Binaisa discusses the experiences of Ugandan migrants returning to Kampala from the United Kingdom. Having endured one form of racism in the United Kingdom, returned migrants find their efforts to belong in Uganda unexpectedly complicated by ethnic and class differences. Together, the chapters in this section show how belonging is not absolute but rather relative, partial, and context-dependent.

The third section, "Emergent Socialities and Subjectivities," considers new forms of social life produced through mobility. Chapter 10, by Gordon, presents a quantitative analysis of data from South Africa, suggesting that social fragility and insecurity shape the behaviour of host community members towards migrants. In chapter 11, Cazarin shows how Nigerian and Congolese Pentecostal pastors in Spain and South Africa help create "imagined communities" through narratives that combine Pentecostal values with African cultural nostalgia, instilling trust and hope in contexts of xenophobic hostility. In chapter 12, Landau and Freemantle focus on migrant and host populations in Nairobi and Johannesburg, arguing that the multiculturalism that emerges is characterized not by "conviviality," but rather by precarious coexistence generated through the convergence of material interests.

Finally, in an afterword, Cohen reflects that while several of the book's chapters emphasize the exclusionary policies of states and the inclusive practices of communities, they also show how these roles may be reversed; in some cases, the most problematic social relations and xenophobic attitudes may be found in local communities.

Overall, *Forging African Communities* provides an impressive range of perspectives from the contributing authors, who not only represent multiple disciplines but also are in many cases based at African universities. Some readers may be disappointed that so few of the chapters engage analytically with the thought-provoking metaphor of the forge. Still, taken collectively, these diverse pieces effectively show that while the social relationships built through migration must not be romanticized, fraught as they often are with mistrust and insecurity, exploring how people actively create and recreate communities and selves is crucial to understanding contemporary mobility.

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The Criminalization of Migration: Context and Consequences



Dirigé par Idil Atak et James C. Simeon

Montréal et Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018, 423 pp.

Le discours populiste et anti-immigrant du président américain et la crise politique de l'Union Européenne présentée comme une crise des réfugiés – ont généralisé pour le grand public l'idée que nous vivons une période de sécurisation et de criminalisation de l'immigration et du refuge. À la veille des élections fédérales canadiennes de 2019, le gouvernement libéral – qui avait pourtant opéré un changement de cap important en matière de discours sur la migration – semble maintenant vouloir satisfaire un électorat conservateur en resserrant l'Accord sur les tiers pays sûrs, une forme claire de « néo refoulement » (Hyndman et Mountz 2008). Après une décennie active de politiques répressives du précédent gouvernement conservateur, il semble donc que la tendance coercitive de fond continue aussi au Canada.

Il ne fait ainsi aucun doute que le moment actuel est marqué par une criminalisation de l'immigration. D'ailleurs, comme le soulignent James C. Simeon et Idil Atak en conclusion de l'ouvrage, on note dans plusieurs pays un recours de plus en plus fréquent au droit criminel pour punir des stratégies migratoires, ainsi que l'imposition de sanctions migratoires comme conséquences d'un dossier criminel. Pourtant, malgré ce que le populaire néologisme « crim-migration » peut laisser supposer, les intersections entre le droit pénal et le droit de l'immigration sont multifformes, et la notion de criminalisation est elle-même polysémique. Comme l'indiquait déjà Weber en 2002, le terme peut faire référence à une criminalisation formelle (c'est à dire l'interdiction de certaines pratiques migratoires par le droit pénal), une quasi-criminalisation ou criminalisation procédurale (comme dans le cas de la détention administrative), et une criminalisation rhétorique (qui est souvent, mais pas toujours, articulée conjointement aux deux autres formes). Puis, si la situation politique globale actuelle laisse plusieurs analystes pessimistes, la criminalisation actuelle n'est pas nouvelle, mais s'inscrit dans le long tournant restrictionniste des 20 à 30 dernières années.

L'heure est donc aux bilans et ce livre offre, en ce sens, une contribution édifiante. Au premier regard, plusieurs éléments attirent l'attention sur cet ouvrage collectif. Le titre, d'abord, qui promet un survol exhaustif de la question, mais surtout la liste impressionnante des auteurs dont l'expérience et l'expertise ne font aucun doute. Par exemple, le fait que

collectivement les auteurs aient contribué – à titre d'avocats ou de conseillers juridiques – à plusieurs des cas emblématiques récents entendus à la Cour suprême du Canada et qui ont marqué la jurisprudence sur des questions liées à la criminalisation de l'immigration et du refuge: *Appulonappa et Boio* (Grant), *Tran* (Shazadi Meighen) et *Ezokola* (Waldman). Joseph Rikhof – un pionnier des travaux sur ce sujet – y a aussi un chapitre, et François Crépeau – l'ancien Rapporteur des Nations Unies sur les droits de l'homme des migrants (2011-2017) – signe la préface. D'autres auteurs ont aussi été actifs à la Commission de l'immigration et du statut de réfugié du Canada ou son équivalent britannique (Gleeson, Simeon, Weisman).

Idil Atak et James C. Simeon – qui ont en commun d'avoir siégé sur l'exécutif de l'*Association canadienne d'études sur les réfugiés et la migration forcée*, dont un colloque a mené au projet de livre – ont ainsi rassemblé les contributions de 16 chercheurs reconnus. Si la plupart des auteurs sont juristes et plusieurs des chapitres offrent des commentaires sur le droit, on retrouve aussi des textes plus philosophiques, criminologiques, sociologiques et historiques que nous avons beaucoup appréciés (Ben-Arieh, Horner, Godspeed, Hannan et Bauder, Hudson, Molnar). En particulier, les chapitres basés sur des entretiens ou sur un travail en archives ajoutent une richesse empirique qui rend la lecture très agréable tout en permettant d'offrir une grille de lecture novatrice et de dégager des tendances que l'analyse des politiques officielles tend à perdre de vue.

L'ouvrage collectif rassemble donc divers chapitres sous le thème très général de criminalisation de l'immigration, offrant ainsi un genre de « reader » qui est le bienvenu. Les étudiants en droit de l'immigration et leurs enseignants, les personnes qui veulent mieux connaître les formes que prend la criminalisation de l'immigration et du refuge au Canada (objet de la majorité des chapitres), ainsi que les chercheurs qui travaillent sur l'exclusion de la protection en vertu de l'alinéa 1F de la *Convention* de 1951 et de l'arrêt *Ezokola* (traitée par le tiers des chapitres) trouveront dans ce livre un survol exhaustif des enjeux importants ainsi que des clés de lecture pour saisir les implications juridiques et politiques de ces développements.

En effet, les textes apportent tous une perspective originale et sont de bonne facture. Il n'y a pas, à notre avis, de chapitre

dont la qualité contrasterait avec l'ensemble. La répartition inégale des approches, enjeux, et situations géographiques donne cependant l'impression que les chapitres sont inégalement intégrés, et les thèmes qui englobent chacune des sections semblent parfois un peu aléatoires. En effet, mise à part la Section 2 sur *Ezokola* et l'exclusion des réfugiés qui est très bien intégrée thématiquement, il est difficile d'identifier le fil conducteur qui unit les contributions dans chacune des sections. De même, comme la plupart des chapitres portent sur des cas canadiens, les textes qui divergent de cette tendance pour s'intéresser à la Turquie, à l'Union Européenne, ou aux États-Unis – tous très intéressants en eux-mêmes – se retrouvent tout de même un peu isolés. Par ailleurs, si Graham fait un travail franchement remarquable de problématisation des notions de «cimmigration» et de criminalisation et questionne la pertinence de l'analogie comme stratégie pour contrer les violences causées par le contrôle de l'immigration, et si Simeon et Atak offrent en conclusion une discussion de ces notions, plusieurs des auteurs ne définissent pas vraiment ce qu'ils entendent par criminalisation, cimmigration ou sécurisation, et les concepts semblent parfois interchangeables et vagues.

Cela dit, c'est le défi que rencontrent tous les ouvrages collectifs : il faut choisir entre une collection très intégrée mais un peu pointue, et un ouvrage de plus grande amplitude mais

plus diversifié. Le choix des directeurs de ce livre d'opter pour la deuxième option – malgré les limites inhérentes au genre – a clairement porté fruit. Ce premier titre de la nouvelle série *McGill-Queen's Refugee and Forced Migration Studies* est un choix parfait pour lancer cette collection et devrait nous inciter à suivre avec intérêt le futur de la série. Un livre pertinent qui tombe à point et représente une contribution importante aux débats contemporains.

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Refugee Resettlement: Power, Politics, and Humanitarian Governance



Edited by Adèle Garnier, Liliana Lyra Jubilut, and Kristin Bergtora Sandvik
Oxford, UK: Berghahn, 2018, 317 pp.

In the first decades after the Second World War, refugee policy meant resettlement and foreign aid. Since the 1980s, resettlement took a back seat to repatriation and asylum as dominant themes within refugee policy discourse. And now, it seems that it is back.

Since 2015, when the global refugee crisis commanded a greater share of international news, expanding resettlement has been seen as an important part of the solution. The Global Compact on Refugees, affirmed in December 2018 by the UN General Assembly, identified expanded access to third-country solutions as a key objective of international cooperation.

For this reason, *Refugee Resettlement: Power, Politics, and Humanitarian Governance* is timely. Few volumes have studied refugee resettlement within an international comparative

framework. This alone makes the book worthwhile: to obtain a perspective on third-country solutions with a wider set of cases and longer time horizon than other books on resettlement in the United States, Canada, and Australia—the three primary destinations for resettled refugees.

The volume's organizing concept is "humanitarian governance," the ways in which refugee resettlement involves both care for the vulnerable and control over their lives. In the introductory chapter, the editors describe how this concept directs the analysis of the chapters that follow, as they consider the ways in which power operates in resettlement. Resettlement works in a multi-level system in which international organizations, national governments, and other agencies all shape the journeys and opportunities of refugees moving through resettlement.

The subsequent chapters trace the ways in which resettlement has operated as a form of humanitarian governance at the international and regional levels, at the national level, and in particular cases. A chapter by van Selm considers the rise of “strategic use of resettlement,” and those by Sandvik and Jubilut and Zumar examine the evolution of resettlement within Africa (as a source of refugees) and South America (as a destination), respectively. The latter two chapters are distinctive for their novelty, by revealing how resettlement has featured within the refugee policies of states and institutions that are often peripheral to a policy conversation typically focused on a few countries in the Global North.

The following section turns to several of these states for national-level analysis: the United States, Canada, Australia, and Norway. The first of these chapters focuses on “the conflicting values embedded in U.S. refugee policy”—that is, humanitarianism and promoting employment as a means to settlement. It is not self-evident that these values are necessarily at odds, when employment is strongly associated with successful integration. Darrow calls for “a new identity of refugee service based on rights,” but surely the right to work would be among those given high priority for refugees.

Garnier’s chapter on Canada is also focused on refugee access to the labour market, and the role played by “humanitarian constituencies” (pro-refugee groups). She argues that these groups have lobbied to change regulations to allow for the selection of more vulnerable refugees, in spite of a law that technically allows selection to take into account a refugee’s ability to become economically established in Canada. Other groups also play a key role facilitating refugees’ access to the labour market, but most of their successes are with highly educated refugees. Unfortunately, Garnier does not make the observation that a logical consequence of selecting more vulnerable, less educated refugees for resettlement will likely make labour market access more challenging for this population. These are genuine dilemmas within refugee resettlement that deserve thoughtful analysis. The following chapter on Australia engages more directly with these issues, and Losoncz argues that the poor labour market outcomes for refugees are often due to labour market discrimination. Rekleve and Jumbert’s chapter takes a different direction, focusing on the debate on burden sharing in Norway following the Syrian refugee crisis.

The third part of the book examines in detail refugees’ experiences as they encounter different levels in the refugee regime. Lewis and Young’s chapter compares ethnographic

narratives of Cambodian and Karen refugees in the United States. The chapter on Congolese refugees follows and contextualizes one refugee’s effort to “fortify” her case for resettlement. Thomson narrates, from the perspective of a refugee, a repertoire of strategies to win a spot in the resettlement lottery. Instead of suggesting a moral equivalence between strategies that include bribery and prayer, Thomson observes that these are among the measures taken by those with limited information about or power over how decisions are made about their lives. Similar issues surface in the final chapter by Vera Espinoza on refugee experiences in Chile and Brazil.

The concluding chapter of the volume by Suhrke and Garnier distills many of the challenges associated with researching and writing about refugee resettlement in an international comparative context. The resettlement regime (to the extent it can be called one) is weak and fragmented. It is state-centric, with almost no duties held by domestic governments. Furthermore, the regime is normatively diverse: the numbers and criteria of selection for resettlement vary wildly across states. Finally, UNHCR depends on just a handful of states to carry most of the burden of global resettlement.

Indeed, until states embrace a significant degree of responsibility for resettlement, this aspect of the international refugee regime will remain weak and fragmented. This presents a challenge to scholars who are trying to study resettlement. How much can we understand from a comparative perspective, when the international institutions that are the basis for comparison have such little power over the decisions of states? The lack of multilateral authority can make the use of power throughout the regime appear to be arbitrary, and, from the perspective of many refugees, almost random. If one could point to a gap in this volume, it is that it does not seriously consider the role played by international humanitarian organizations within the resettlement regime. These organizations—many of them related to religious groups—are often the thread that ties together the patchwork of international and domestic law, policy, institutions, and individuals implicated in this regime of “humanitarian governance.” Oftentimes, they are the actors who keep the regime itself “humanitarian” at all.

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Forced Migration: Current Issues and Debates



Edited by Alice Bloch and Giorgia Donà
Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 2018, 178 pp.

With contributions by key thinkers in the field, Alice Bloch and Giorgia Donà's slim edited volume tackles some of the most profound shifts in the global context of forced migration today. The book combines a frank assessment of how unsuitable the current legal and humanitarian frameworks are today, with empirical evidence of people's struggles for rights, resources, and belonging in a changing landscape of displacement. Although the editors deliberately avoid offering "solutions" to address the twenty-first-century realities presented here, the questions raised throughout require readers to rethink our reliance on current paradigms that frame the field of practice. Authors give readers the benefit of not only their long experience tussling with the conceptual minefields of terminology and the historical boundaries of the field, but also helpful guidance for where to go next.

Bloch and Donà identify the major challenges, debates, and knowledge gaps in forced migration studies, and organize them along three themes in the introductory chapter: (1) the reconfiguration of borders, (2) the expansion of prolonged exile, and (3) changes in protection and rights. The chapters that follow are divided into two sets, with the first four (Zetter, Banerjee and Sammadar, Voutira, and Hyndman and Giles) providing a theoretical overview that loosely maps onto the book's themes. Zetter sets out a strong analysis of why the field still has not yet settled on a common understanding of what or who comprises our subject matter. His chapter goes well beyond describing tensions between normative concepts such as *refugee* and descriptive but ambiguous concepts like *forced displacement* to call for a realignment of our conceptualization itself with the drivers and processes of forced migration. His evaluation points away from the contemporary reconfiguration of borders towards a global order structured by displacements (through armed conflicts, environmental degradation, development projects, and natural disasters) that must be reconceptualized accordingly. Banerjee and Sammadar write more explicitly on bordering and the failure of forced migration studies to include the vast displacements produced by colonial systems and post-colonial disruptions. Their call to widen the scope of the field geographically and historically is taken up by Voutira, who has long modelled these recommendations through her pioneering scholarship on

post-Second World War re-bordering and displacements that asked us to review historical patterns of state and ethnic formations while unpacking the dilemmas of rights and identities. Voutira's chapter again reminds us that we define large-scale forced displacements as unconnected "crises" at the risk of forgetting what we have learned about the participation of displaced people in societies in which we all live. Hyndman and Giles round out this accomplished group of theoreticians with a sharp analysis of how and why "palliative" humanitarianism must be replaced with practices that remove the us/them divide that supports "protracted refugee situations." They do this through an artful combination of robust policy analysis and grounded theory from their work with Dadaab-based research participants. This chapter is the best argument yet for why forced migration studies needs to move beyond the paradigm of "durable solutions" to call states out on this unattainable policy goal.

The second set of chapters (Majidi and Schuster; Landau, Donà and Godin; and Chimienti, Counilh, and Ossipow) present equally sharp critiques of current policies that shape access to rights for people forcibly displaced, together with their lived experiences and ongoing formation of identities. Majidi and Schuster's contribution on deportation and forced return is a well-crafted rebuke of the wishful thinking behind lingering support for durable solutions. This brief unpacking of this "inhumane and illiberal practice" takes into account the history, practice, impact, and business of deportation. But, following upon the previous chapter, it shines an uncomfortable light on the idea of "permission to remain" within state boundaries, and all that implies. Next in this set is Landau's beautifully holistic rumination on the transformation of cities and current interactions among urban forced migrants and other residents, humanitarians, and municipal policy-makers. Landau and his colleagues have tracked experiments that provide services to refugees and other urbanites without legal protection, recognizing the agency of forced migrants themselves in strategizing their own livelihoods while working with local authorities to build solidarity around pro-refugee micro-interventions.

The last two contributions also draw on their authors' empirical work among people remaking lives and identities in contemporary displacement. Donà and Godin demonstrate the short- and long-term uses of mobile technologies

for people on the move and the diaspora-identified who strive to maintain belonging while separated geographically from other community members. The authors also cover the use of technology for activism and humanitarianism, as well as its flip side, surveillance. Their grounded analysis of mobile technology and all its uses at the securitized border at Calais, France, points to the emergence of mobile-centred economies and infrastructures, and how they relate to power differentials. The last empirical contribution discusses current experiences and discourses of children from three ethno-national communities who came to Switzerland as refugees. Chimienti, Counilh, and Ossipow find that their complex emotions about the countries of their parents' birth have emerged through transnational engagement such as money transfers, home visits, and activism. Their feelings of belonging to Switzerland, meanwhile, strengthen even while their heritage identities transform as a result of these activities. This chapter side-steps the usual either/or discourse around nation-based identities and contributes to our understanding of the complexities of displacement in the contemporary era.

The volume concludes with Bloch and Doná's brief summary of the questions raised by the contributing authors, and some suggestions for moving forward through a rethinking of tired narratives and discourses of the post-colonial world

order. Zetter's aggregation of estimates of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, UNRWA-registered Palestinians, disaster-displaced people, and development-displaced people (but not including those displaced by land-grabs) proposes that at least 99.6 million people today are living with displacement. Bloch and Doná's scholarly contribution illuminates the signposts towards a person-centred framework that puts into practice an alternative vision to the unworkable "people out of place" approach. The collection is underserved by the rather poor quality of Routledge's production; while books today may be required to economize through tiny text and inferior paper, the binding of my copy has already failed to hold the book's pages together. A final plea to all of us working in the academic world of forced migration studies: let us try harder to translate our crucially important ideas into formats and writing styles that are clear to non-scholars. Some authors in this collection manage this better than others, and a suggestion for all editors is to bring all contributions up to the same level of cogent writing.

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