Blogs from the Refugee Resettlement Conference

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Sussex Centre for Migration Research

Refugee resettlement in the UK: initial results of a large scale 3-year research project

Linda K. Tip, Linda Morrice, Rupert Brown, & Michael Collyer, University of Sussex

The Gateway Protection Programme is the UK's refugee resettlement scheme, operated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in partnership with the UK government. When the programme started in 2004, it had a quota of a maximum of 500 refugees per year. Although this was later increased to 750, the actual number of refugees resettled in each year has been fewer than the quota permitted. In the UK, refugees are selected for resettlement specifically on the basis of their vulnerability, making their adaptation challenging.

In 2013, we started a research project exploring the experiences of 280 resettled refugees who arrived in the UK through the Gateway Protection programme in 2010 or earlier. Research considered how resettlement operates in the UK. We were particularly interested in the wellbeing of resettled refugees over the long term, and to find out if this could be improved. The focus on those who already have substantial experience of living in the UK differs from previous research in this area, and allows the research to explore longer term integration. It also allowed us to follow refugees over the period during which they were eligible for naturalisation. During the course of our research, we have interpreted integration very broadly: as a wide range of psychological and sociocultural processes that help refugees to adapt to living in a new country.

Our research is longitudinal. Respondents were interviewed three times, with almost a year between each time point. It also uses a range of methodologies – questionnaires, individual interviews and focus groups. 280 people filled out the questionnaire in the first year, during the second year 221 of them filled it out again, and 180 people filled it out all three times. Furthermore, each year, in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 people. Participants had been resettled to Brighton and Hove, Norwich, Greater Manchester, or Sheffield, from a range of different countries: Ethiopia, Iraq, the DRC, and Somalia. Eleven representatives from each of these refugee communities were recruited to work as research assistants on the project. They followed a week long training course and provided a new perspective on the research. In addition, an advisory committee consisting of members of local authorities and support organisations has been assembled and are regularly consulted before starting each data collection, and after data analyses.

The project included a very wide range of variables and data collection and has only recently finished. A number of interesting findings are already apparent and suggest clear policy recommendations. Future blogs will report subsequent findings.

Language learning

The quantitative data confirms the unequivocal importance of language for several spheres of integration, such as employment, education, and health, and also to less tangible markers such as self-efficacy and contact with the British majority, cultural understanding, and preference for cultural adaption. However, personal characteristics are related to people's language proficiency, and shows that in particular those with little prior education, women, and older people have more difficulty becoming self-sufficient. Qualitative data confirms the overwhelming importance that resettled refugees attach to language learning and to gaining employment. Despite this clear priorities their efforts are often thwarted by a lack of appropriate language provision and the limited pathways and support into the labour market.

Both quantitative and qualitative results confirm that resettled refugees are a very diverse group: they have varying motivations, ambitions, and aspirations for learning English. Currently, for the majority of participants ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) are a maximum of two hours, twice a week, irrespective of their background. The results indicate that a more tailored approach is needed which meets the learning needs of the individual. For example, separate classes for people who start at the lowest levels (particularly those who are not literate in their own language), with smaller steps of learning. There needs to be recognition that, for this group, it may take a long time to learn the language, that they are a significant distance from the labour market and that their priorities might be different. For refugees who have not experienced formal education in the past, classroom and paper-based approaches might not be the most appropriate. Informal alternatives such as one-to-one mentoring and volunteering could be piloted. Additional solutions need to be created to make sure that those with caring responsibilities at home - usually women - can still learn the language, to avoid them becoming isolated. On the other hand, there are those who have high qualifications and much prior work experience from their home country, often not recognised in the UK. For these groups of people, it can be extremely frustrating and depressing to have to start from scratch. For them, fast track and higher level courses are needed (e.g., ESOL with vocational skills or ESOL for academic purposes) which would support those with higher level qualifications and professional backgrounds access the labour market quicker, and access employment commensurate with their backgrounds.

More generally, the majority of people would benefit from more intensive language courses (longer and more frequent), especially when they have just arrived, to speed up and shorten the learning process. Not only would this increase the chances of people getting into employment, it could also support other aspects of the integration process. Even after many years of living in the UK, many people indicated that language barriers kept them from finding a job and from establishing more contact with other people.

Employment

Employment rates among the resettled refugees are much lower than those among the general population in their areas. Many of them are desperate to find work and are very disappointed about not being able to do so. In addition, they experience much stress associated with their appointments with the Job Centre. The procedures, many of which are online and in English, are often too complicated to understand. They need additional support and instructions before entering mainstream services which are not sufficiently tailored to their situation. As with the language provision, it would benefit resettled refugees if employment would take into account previous work experience, qualifications, and interests of the individual. More generally, guidance in finding employment for resettled refugees should be improved and more focused: it should be prioritised much earlier following arrival, following the Swedish model. This would not only have long-term financial benefits, it will also aid other aspects of integration.

Contact with the British majority

Those who did not find work and are not enrolled in education tend to find it difficult to make contact with the British majority: British people were seen as often busy and not always open for contact. When trying to find out what could predict more contact between the two groups, results show that over time, having better English language skills leads to more contact with British people (but not vice versa!). This again highlights the importance of good and tailored language classes, as this indicates that people are unlikely to learn the language by simply spending more time with British people. The results also show that this contact between refugees and British people is very

important for the psychological well-being of refugees. This emerged clearly from longitudinal analyses of the questionnaire data: over time, more contact with British people led to better well-being, but again, not vice versa. This suggests that intergroup contact may be playing a causal role in maintaining well-being. The role of the English majority needs to be recognised in facilitating this contact. Projects which encourage and increase contact between groups, for example, community events or sporting events could support integration and well-being. Finally, these findings emphasise the importance of locating refugees in communities where contact with the majority is possible (i.e., mixed neighbourhoods with a non-hostile atmosphere towards minorities).

Before and after

Brigitte Suter (PhD Ethnic and Migration Studies, Malmö University)

My presentation is based on the research project "Before and after – new perspectives on resettled refugees' integration process" which I (in collaboration with my colleague Karin Magnusson) conducted at Malmö University. We completed the project in May 2015 with a book, a policy brief and a conference (you can find an electronic copy of the book and more information on the project here: https://www.mah.se/beforeandafter). The project ran over 30 months and was financed by the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and Malmö University.

What is the project about?

Our project focuses on the part of the refugee experience that deals with establishing a new life after resettlement to Sweden, the integration process. Basically, we have been interested in the integration potential of the various social networks a refugee is part of. Importantly, we include social networks that were forged both before resettlement and after arrival in Sweden into our analysis.

How did we do it?

We conducted 60 semi-structured (and in-depth) interviews with 23 resettled refugees of Somali and with 15 refugees of Burmese origin in Sweden. In Sweden we also benefitted from additional information from various key informants (such as the Migration Agency, municipality officials, UNHCR, Caritas and a number of academics). In addition to that 13 interviews with Burmese refugees and stakeholders were conducted in Thailand. The refugees from Somalia and from Burma/Myanmar have been resettled to Sweden in the past two decades: in fact, Sweden accepted an almost equal number (roughly 1,700) of these refugees since 2000. Both groups have spent a long time in refugee camps, on average between 15 and 20 years. The Burmese refugees (most of them belonging to the ethnic group Karen) were displaced in Thai refugee camps, while the Somalis we interviewed spent time in refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tunisia. While Somali immigration to Sweden has been occurring since the 1990s, the Burmese are a pioneer group in the Swedish migration context. Sweden has been one of the first countries to resettle refugees on a regular program basis. The country started resettlement in the 1950s, and has the highest quota among European countries with 1,900 places annually. The program and process of refugee resettlement is fully state-organised and financed: Refugee reception is a collaboration between municipalities, regional authorities and national actors (migration board, employment services etc.). Contrary to asylum refugees, resettled refugees cannot choose their municipality. Instead, they are assigned a municipality which prepares everything from housing to day-care for the children and the introduction program (consisting of language course, a civic orientation course and job-training for

the adults). This programme is designed for 24 months during which the refugees receive a monthly income.

Theoretical background

Refugees that spent many years in a refugee camp hardly ever have financial capital (money). Furthermore, human (formal qualifications) and cultural capital (informal qualifications, skills) are often devalued at best and lost at worst. Therefore, we look at social capital to which we count all the social connections that can help a person advance in society. Analytically we make a difference between bonding ties which are forged with other members of the group, and bridging ties which are forged with people perceived to be different, usually the wider society. The value of bridging ties for the integration process is undisputed. However, earlier studies on social networks and refugee integration (with examples from Canada, Australia, the US and Germany) agree that bonding ties are a pivotal requisite for refugees in the integration process as well. This is mainly for two reasons: firstly, because the create security and reduce feelings of isolation, and secondly, because they give group members the possibility to benefit from the bridging ties of others.

Highlights from the interviews

For the Burmese interviewed, it became very obvious that the social and cultural capital acquired before arrival matters for (re-)establishing bonding and bridging social ties in Sweden; both for the individuals themselves and also for the Burmese (Karen) as a group. This is an important finding not at least in regards to the narratives of brain drain that were told in the interviews in Thailand. It seemed that many of the educated and experienced resettled refugees who worked as medics, camp leaders or any other leading position made a crucial impact on the lives of the Karen as a group in Sweden. It was through their contacts to other Karen, their English language skills and their acquired informal skills in dealing with foreigners/Westerners that the Karen Swedish Community (KSC) could be established. This organization not only seeks to unite the Karen in Sweden and provide an intra-group network, it also actively seeks to establish contacts to the rest of the Swedish society. So we can say that the creation of bonding ties through KSC's activities enable their members to make contacts with the larger Swedish society. Another aspect to highlight is the Christian church that has become a major venue for accessing information and support, and of making friendship with Swedes. It is so important that even non-Christian Karen regularly show up at the church.

Compared to the Burmese, the overall Somali response appeared to be much more fragmented and also somewhat disillusioned. Many persons told of severe constraints to their well-being in Sweden. While for some this was due to the bureaucratic struggle of family reunification, others suffered from social isolation in Sweden. Partly we can explain it with the relative recent arrival of Somali resettled refugees to Sweden: while the majority of the Burmese came between 2005-08, the largest number of the Somalis did not arrive until 2010-12. By the time of the interviews (2013-14), many Somalis were still in a process of re-orientation. Another reason we found on the scattered placement of Somalis around the country. While Sweden accepted an almost equal number of Somalis and Burmese, (1,700), the Somalis were placed in far more municipalities (92) than the Burmese (33). Also, 67 municipalities accepted a low number of Somalis (up to 19), while only 12 accepted a low number of Burmese. In contrast, 6 municipalities accepted 100 or more Burmese, while no municipality accepted the same number of Somalis. This scattered placement may also have contributed to the fact that we could not find any obvious benefits from earlier Somali migration; in fact, many of our interviewees were the first Somalis to be placed in their respective

municipalities. Nevertheless, there are a number of Somali organisations, but they do not seem to have the same national reach as the Karen organisations do.

Conclusions

There are a number of general conclusions to draw. Firstly, bonding ties are difficult to establish when there is only small number of co-nationals, paired with a general lack of trust, and the lack of skills and experience of how to organize as a group. While the Burmese (Karen) are quite well-known for their skills and pursuit to organize themselves, they also had the chance to practice this during displacement in Thailand. Also after resettlement, their geographical placement in Sweden in a relatively small number of municipalities enabled the re-creation and maintenance of bonding ties. The Somali on the other hand came from various refugee camps in which they did not enjoy the same level of self-determination as the Burmese did in Thailand. Furthermore, they were placed in small numbers in a large number of Swedish municipalities all over the country. A second point is the importance of capital-rich persons in resettlement as their skills and experiences decisively influences the ability to creating both bonding and bridging ties as a group. In that sense, resettlement clearly connects to circumstances both before and after the arrival in Sweden. Third, forging new ties, both bonding and then bridging, is a time-intensive process. This became very clear in the interviews with the newly arrived Somalis many of whom still seemed to go through a phase of getting used to living in a new country. All in all, our study points at the importance of being able to create and maintain social networks in all phases of displacement.

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement System: A Different Kind of Integration Challenge

Elzbieta M. Gozdziak (Georgetown University)

The U.S. refugee resettlement system is the largest in the world. Since 1975, over 3 million refugees have been resettled in the United States. It has garnered bipartisan endorsement in Congress and as well as local support, particularly by faith communities. It is often said that the U.S. refugee resettlement program reflects the United States' highest values and aspirations to compassion, generosity and leadership. But let's not be too Pollyannaish: tensions between newly arrived refugees and local communities have always existed. Learning a new language and culture and becoming fully integrated take time and can create friction between the new arrivals and established residents in the community. In the past few years, a number of communities have expressed concern about the local impact of resettlement, and there have been statewide legislative and executive efforts to restrict and deter refugee resettlement. And let's not forget the anti-refugee sentiments expressed by the current Republican presidential nominee and his supporters.

But I do not want to dwell on the raising anti-refugee and anti-immigrant sentiments. Rather, I want to focus on refugee integration. Most scholars and policy makers define integration as the process by which refugees become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups, emphasizing the notion that the responsibility for integration rests not with one particular group, but rather with many actors—the government, local communities, and the refugees themselves. When assessing integration, researchers analyze a wide range of measurable outcomes: attainment of early economic self-sufficiency, income levels, participation in public benefits programs, and English language proficiency, to name a few. Studies also look at how the mainstream society welcomes

refugee newcomers, at the social connections, social bridges, and social links between the host society and refugee communities.

What seems to be missing in these analyses is the emphasis on integration between and among different newcomer groups. The 2012 GAO (Government Accountability Office) report on the U.S. resettlement system-- that includes analysis of several studies on integration of refugees-- talks about integration solely in terms of relationships between established residents and newcomers, without really discussing the diversity of both populations and the need for refugees to integrate into a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious society.

Integration into a multicultural environment is particularly important since refugees arriving in the United States often find the country more diverse than the lands they left behind. The American society is composed of different waves of immigrants, some more empathetic than others to new refugee arrivals. But the refugee populations resettled in the U.S. are also very diverse. Between 2009 and 2014, the U.S. resettled 402,000 refugees from 106 countries. Among the most numerous groups were refugees from Iraq (98,000), Burma (97,000), Bhutan (73,000), followed by Somalia (34,000), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (14,000). A great deal of intra-group diversity is also present. For example, the people of Burma consist of eight main ethnic groups that can be further divided into more than 130 distinctive subgroups and this multiplicity of backgrounds is reflected among the arrivals from Burma as the United States accepted the Chin and Kachin as well as Karen refugees. Many advocates are also urging the US to increase the number of Rohingya refugees. Similarly, among the Iraqi refugees who have been coming in considerable numbers to the country since the Gulf War there are Iraqi and Kurdish Muslims as well as Chaldean Christians. And a last example: The Somalis Bantus are ethnically, physically, and culturally distinct from the Cushitic majority. As such, they have long been considered second-class citizens in Somali society - exploited as laborers, and excluded from education, land ownership, political opportunities and representation--and yet in the United States they often live side-by-side with their Cushitic copmatriots.

Because refugee status is determined on an individual basis, it is not totally outside the realm of possibility that families or individuals that have been mortal enemies during the armed crisis that made them flee their homeland and seek refuge in the U.S. are now neighbors. I am reminded of my time in the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) where two of my grantees brought the war from the Balkans to Boise, Idaho. The animosity between the groups that were of the same ethnicity and lived in the same village but supported different sides in the war continued in Idaho. Sometimes the antagonisms took on a humorous form and expressed themselves in fierce folk song competitions, but at other times the continued bickering and bullying threatened the neighborhood's social cohesion. I worked hard to make both groups set aside their politics and concentrate on the problems that faced them and other refugees and immigrants living in the community: quality of education for their children, domestic violence, and petty crime that was rampant in the neighborhood. I could plead but I had no resources to support different groups of refugees and immigrants to get together to solve common problems.

According to the stipulations enshrined in the Refugee act of 1980, ORR's budget for refugees has always been split between 85% of the federal monies going to employment-related services (after all, early economic self-sufficiency is the main goal of the U.S. resettlement program) and 15% to social services. There is also a smaller discretionary fund pot. However, without exception, ORR directors have used their discretionary funds mainly to support activities of discrete groups of refugees. I used to call it "funding by ethnicity." When the first cohort of Iraqis came the Office of Refugee Resettlement funded a three-day conference for the community. It was a wonderful event!

We even funded childcare so Iraqi women with childcare responsibilities could also participate. The same type of conference was organized for other groups: The Somalis, the Bosnians, and the Sudanese. When I questioned the rationale for supporting the same type of activities for diverse groups of people who often had very different needs, the powers that be invoked equity. Don't get me wrong, I am all for equity, but tailoring funding and activities to the special needs of different groups is also very important, isn't it?

My main criticism, however, related to the propensity of the federal government to focus on one ethnic community at a time. Newcomers interact with established residents—U.S.-born folk and refugees and immigrants who came before them—in many different social arenas. Community boundaries are created through exchanges between these groups in schools, workplaces, government offices, law enforcement, and health care facilities. It is this social space that fosters integration and change, on one hand, or isolation and conflict on the other. Successful integration often requires both newcomers and establishes residents to expand their notions of community.

Even among long-standing residents, establishing a sense of community is often a challenge. "Community" refers both to where people live and how they feel and act. In one sense, it evokes a feeling of collectivity that is linked to a specific geographic area or physical space such as a city, a town, a school, a place of worship, or a city block. In another sense, it transcends geographic limitations to unite a group of people sharing common behavioral patterns, values, and social ties related to traits such as ethnicity, religion, and nationality. It often takes time to feel comfortable when moving to a new city or town, entering a new school or changing jobs. This challenge is heightened for both newcomers and established community members when the newcomer's cultural and linguistic background is different from that of the majority.

Many localities create action plans to promote positive social interaction between newcomers and established residents and ensure that all residents receive quality service. These plans often emerge from the grassroots level as concerned residents, businesses, and public officials join forces to respond to rapid population change. In other instances, local governments take it upon themselves to create committees or task forces dedicated to incorporating all residents into community life. One approach is bottom up; the other is top down. The two often work in unison and can both be effective in solving challenges pose by rapid new settlement of foreign-born populations.

Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada: a special case or blueprint for others?

Jennifer Hyndman (University of York)

Private sponsorship of refugees once they arrive in Canada is a fascinating phenomenon. Basically, private citizens in groups of five (i.e. faith groups, community groups, neighbourhoods, universities, and workplaces) take it upon themselves to guarantee sufficient funding for refugees for one year, and to assist in the settlement process once they arrive. Sponsors often meet refugee newcomers at the airport, find and furnish an apartment for them, take them shopping the first few times, help interpret and navigate the health system and schools where necessary during the initial settlement period. After that, sponsorship takes on more varied and customized forms: job searches, child care assistance during English (or French) classes, Sunday dinners at the sponsors home, sightseeing, or not. What mobilizes members of a given civil society to take on such responsibilities of their own

free will remains a largely unanswered question. Equally, what motivates sponsors to undertake such discretionary but significant responsibilities remains largely unexplored.

Since its inception in 1978, the Canadian government has enabled private sponsors to support tens of thousands of refugees to come to Canada and establish new homes (Albiom, 2016). The large number of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees in need of protection in the late 1970s spurred the Government to action, and it pledged to resettle one refugee for every privately sponsored individual when the program was first introduced (Kumin, 2015). Government support for resettlement helped to shape public opinion in a positive way (Lanphier, 2003). Who influenced whom remains an open question, but media messaging also played a role in conveying need and aligning various stakeholders: civil society groups, government, and the media.

Since the resettlement of some 60,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotians in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the number of privately-sponsored refugee arrivals has waxed (especially during the Cold War period) and waned. For the first time in a long while, Canada experienced a surge most recently with the arrival of some 25,000 Syrian refugee in three months (December 2015-February 2016). Roughly one-third were privately-sponsored, resulting in a promise from the government to admit more government-sponsored refugees in 2016. Ironically, public outrage that there were not *enough* Syrian refugees processed by the government for private citizens to sponsor hit the news, and another refugee screening and processing exercise began in spring 2016. Exactly what put private and public Syrian refugee sponsorship on the radar, after many had been displaced for over four years, remains unclear, but the tight Canadian election in fall of 2015 was formative.

Until recently, Canada's has been the only country that offers private sponsorship to refugees in cooperation with the federal government that must coordinate security and health screening, and officially admit them. Its private sponsorship efforts have been gaining attention in the past few years, with Australia piloting a program in 2012 and then making it permanent in 2015 (*The Economist*, 2016). Germany too has established private sponsorship agreements in 15 of 16 its states/*landers* across the country. Britain has said it will create permanent resettlement program based on the Canadian and Australian models, and has been piloting and researching its efforts on a small scale (Research Councils UK, 2016).[1] The British government has committed to resettling 4,000 Syrian refugees per year over the next five years, a significant sum given that the current quota for all nationalities is 750 refugees each year (personal correspondence, M. Collyer June 2016). Switzerland and Ireland have experimented with private sponsorship since 2013, and New Zealand and Argentina are exploring related options in the current context. According to UNHCR in Ottawa, Argentina has taken 300 Syrian refugees, and Brazil has accepted some as well, though its commitment waned in mid-2016 during Brazil's financial crisis (Casasola, 2016).

An estimated 44,800 Syrians are estimated to arrive in Canada by the end of 2016, potentially the largest number of resettled refugees in a single year (Casasola for UNHCR, 2016).[2] In 2015, Canada resettled the second largest number (10,236) of refugees globally, ahead of Australia (5211), and behind the US with 52,583. On a per capita basis Canada leads the world on resettlement at the current time.

At a High Level Meeting on Pathways to Admission of Syrian Refugees organized by UNHCR in March 2016, IRCC Minister John McCallum outlined four areas of Canada's commitment to Syrian refugee resettlement. He pledged **first** to "to work with other countries to provide training and technical support in order to expand the number of global resettlement spaces, coordinate humanitarian development and migration programming, and help host states to build their migration management capacity."[3] Canada is in a strong position to 'export' its expertise in this area, as

identified by the Minister. **Second**, he underscored the important role of post-secondary education as a way of providing protection and expanding resettlement, as demonstrated by the World University Services of Canada (WUSC). **Third,** he committed to assisting refugee youth through stronger partnerships with the private sector in Canada, and **finally,** the Minister promised to continue considering "Syrian refugees as prima facie refugees for another year until September 2017 and **to reduce the administrative requirements in our Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program by waiving the regulatory requirement for UNHCR or state determination of refugee status for sponsorship of Syrians by private sponsors**" (emphasis added). Private sponsorship of Syrian refugees remains a priority until 2017, and this administrative exceptionalism (introduced by former Citizenship and Immigration Canada Minister, Chris Alexander) can faster facilitate processing times and reduce the labour required. A shorter application form to register for the resettlement in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey has also streamlined the process (Casasola, 2016).

Through a small tuition deduction, Canadian students have sponsored more than 1400 refugee students to Canada over several decades through World University Service Canada, an NGO that facilitates and supports the local committees (Kumin, 2015). In 2016, the capacity of this small but remarkable resettlement program doubled to over 160 fully funded spaces through increased pledges

What makes private sponsorship for refugees, such as the Syrians, possible in Canada?

Specific to the Syrian situation, *The Economist* (2016) observed that "Canada's three main parties indulged in a curious game of one-upmanship during last year's general election campaign."[4] All three parties pledged some Syrian resettlement, but the Liberal promise of 25,000 refugees by January 1, 2016 was the largest number and won the day. The new Liberal government delivered on that promise two months late, with private sponsors pledging support for 11,000 of the 26,166 Syrian refugees who arrived. Following through on these promises had been a priority of the new government, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

There is no single private sponsorship recipe to follow, and the process is highly unregulated once security and health screening are complete during selection and refugees arrive in the country. The conditions that make private refugee resettlement in Canada possible are somewhat unique: the alignment of elected government leadership, skilled civil servants, Canadian public opinion, and related media messaging has shaped the political space available for the private sponsorship of refugees and the motivations of its civil society actors.

Still, there may be some key policy, legal, and technical requirements for private refugee sponsorship. Some of these have been noted already: *prima facie* refugee status determination as sufficient to be eligible for private sponsorship; a strong and comprehensive registration database in regions hosting refugees that may be considered for resettlement; and a shorter application form for potential PSRs.

In his paper, "What's so special about Canada?", Hiebert (2016: 17) identifies one critical policy element to maintaining a pro-immigration consensus in terms of public opinion: "Build a firewall between the issues of immigration and integration on the one hand, and national security on the other." The same is true for resettlement: separate out the potential for Syrian radicalization or attacks from the refugees who seek protection in Canada.

In Canada, the refugee resettlement file was deftly handled by Canadian politicians and civil servants after November 4, 2015 when a new government took power, pledging to resettle 25,000 Syrians by the end of the year (which was later moved to the end of February 2016). While the brutal attacks

on Paris, Beirut and Brussels all affected Canadians, Syrian refugee resettlement was treated as a separate policy commitment and conversation. Civil servants quickly reversed the decision to process final security and medical checks at military bases *in Canada*, instead opting to do all this screening, checking and vetting in Lebanon and Jordan before refugees arrived by plane. This helped, in my view, to assuage Canadians' anxiety about the attacks in Europe.[5]

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[1] http://gtr.rcuk.ac.uk/project/BD48112F-2D46-4618-BEF9-F4E03A68485E

[2] Michael Casasola, presentation, Centre for Refugee Studies Summer Course, York University, May 11, 2016.

[3] http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1044299

[4] "Why so many Canadians privately sponsor Syrian refugees", *The Economist,* March 3, 2016. During the election the Conservatives pledged 10,000 over 3 years, and the NDP committed to 10,000 by end of 2015 and 9,000 annually thereafter.

[5] Albiom (2016), a former federal civil servant herself during the mass Canadian sponsorship of Indochinese refugees 35 years ago, made this important observation about the key role of the federal civil service in relation to Syrian resettlement:

"Trust in and respect for the civil service matters: This allows civil servants to make decisions, use discretion, and be flexible and innovative, so they can get the job done effectively…. There was very little trust in the civil service under the previous administration. Processes had become extremely complicated and rule-bound, and risk aversion was ingrained at all levels of the organization. It was difficult for some public servants to make the cultural shift necessary to meet the objectives set by the new government for the Syrian movement."

Power dynamics in the selection and the labour market integration of resettled refugees in Quebec

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In the context of the Syrian crisis, Canada has under the Prime Ministership of Justin Trudeau resettled more refugees than has been the case since the 1970s. A significant proportion of the newcomers has arrived to the Francophone province of Quebec. Resettled refugees' labour market integration has in turn become a more pressing concern. This blog posts addresses this concern with a focus on linkages between the admission of resettled refugees and their labour market integration in Canada and Quebec.

Analysis of legislation, statistics as well as interviews conducted in 2015 and 2016 in the region of Montreal lead to the following observation. Canada and Quebec are committed to support the arrival of vulnerable resettled refugees, yet while resettled refugees are overall able to integrate the labour market, their professional trajectories often remain precarious. The pro-market rationale of immigration policy hampers measures the labour market inclusion of the most vulnerable resettled refugees. This constrains the power of settlement services providers.

Humanitarianism in pro-market context: Admission of resettled refugees in Canada and Quebec

There are two main categories of resettled refugees in Canada: government-sponsored refugees (GARs) and privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs) (Canada also admits refugees after an asylum claim). Quebec is the only Canadian province to have the prerogative to select GARs and PSRs destined for the province, though these refugees have to be admissible according to federal regulations. Resettled refugees are admitted as permanent residents and have as such access to free counselling on settlement by immigrant settlement services during their first five years in Canada. GARs are entitled to settlement assistance in the first year after arrival, whereas PSRs' settlement is to be supported by their sponsors.

According to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) adopted in 2002, resettled refugees are admitted to Canada primarily on the basis of humanitarian considerations. Whereas all admissible permanent residents to Canada and Quebec have to demonstrate their 'ability to become successfully established in Canada', secondary legislation and administrative guidance exempt resettled refugees from this criterion. Quebec's own regulations entail a similar exemption. In addition, IRPA exempt refugees from inadmissibility in Canada on the ground of 'excessive demand' on the country's health system.

The humanitarian focus of IRPA had an impact on the profile of resettled refugees. Surveys conducted since the adoption of IRPA show that GARs have lower levels of proficiency in Canada's official languages as well as lower levels of education at the time of admission than GARs who arrived before the adoption of IRPA. Assessments in Quebec noted the increasingly complex profile of GARs as well as their increased medical needs.

From 2005 to 2014, the federal number of resettled GARs remained stable, oscillating between 7300 and 7550. In Quebec, the admission of GARs declined, with a low below 1100 in 2013. PSRs admission fluctuated more strongly, to reach almost 6300 at the federal level and almost 700 at the provincial level in 2013. Beyond refugees, immigrant admission shifted towards immigrant categories considered less costly to the public purse, with a particularly strong increase of temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers (domestic foreign workers) and provincial nominees, which in most cases must show proof that they have a future employer in Canada. In 2013, the Harper government introduced the Express Entry system, which prioritizes skilled migrants who are offered an employment contract before admission in Canada. The province of Quebec introduced a similar reform in 2016.

Public opinion in Canada has consistently supported immigration as well as the country's increasing diversity, an exception among industrialised states. However, polls also show that the public supports immigration perceived as economically beneficial. According to geographer Daniel Hiebert, this means that the Canadian government 'is in fact giving the electorate what it wants' even though some might regret 'the shrinking of humanitarian principles in Canadian immigration'.

Resettled refugees' labour market integration

Canada-focused statistical data on income evolution has consistently shown for decades that resettled refugees' earnings remain far below the average for Canadian-borns. Figure 1 uses recently released longitudinal data to compare GARs' and PSR's earnings evolution in Canada and Quebec. It shows that resettled refugees' average earnings are lower in Quebec than in the rest of Canada, confirming studies pointing at an enduring wage gap between immigrant earnings in Quebec and the rest of Canada. The data also shows that GARs earnings after two and five years in Canada decline over time, indicating that their position on the labour market has deteriorated (findings over this

period of time are less negative for PSRs, yet earlier research has suggested long-term earning stagnation for PSRs). Understandably then, employment is one of resettled refugee's major concerns while refugees more broadly report being particularly keen for skills training. This is reflected in use of settlement services, which is higher than the immigrant average for resettled refugees and particularly strong for GARs.

In Quebec, frontline service delivery is provided by nonprofit organizations - the 'community sector' has historically had strong autonomy and this autonomy has long been supported by Quebec's provincial government. No organization exclusively caters for the needs of resettled refugees; however one immigrant settlement organization in each of the 13 municipalities receiving GARs is tasked with assisting GARs in the first year after their arrival to Canada.

Interviews with labour market active resettled refugees and settlement service providers (staff from immigrant settlement and employability organizations) in Montreal and two smaller municipalities receiving GARs, Saint-Hyacinthe and Saint-Jérôme revealed the following. Resettled refugees who had managed to secure stable employment had two distinct sets of characteristics. On the one hand, they were male, had a higher level of education and were resettled at a younger age (between 18 and 25 years old) than other refugee participants. They were also somewhat proficient in English – yet not proficient at all in French – whereas most other participants had no command of either language on arrival. Earlier studies have shown that such individual characteristics predict better labour market outcomes for immigrants and refugees.

On the other hand, organizational factors played a role in labour market trajectories. Dynamic networks between various stakeholders supporting settlement helped starting or furthering labour market trajectories. For instance, one steadily employed refugee participant benefited from the co-operation of his educational provider with employers keen to develop a new vocational training open to 'atypical' profiles such as his, as he had been unable to finish regular secondary school in Quebec. In contrast, several unemployed participants deplored their inability to find a good job, or any job at all, without completing secondary education. Employability support participants noted that refugees' perception of a lack of employment opportunities led to secondary migration within Quebec or towards other provinces.

Another employability support participant pointed at ideological tensions between the community sector's interpretation of its mandate as an agent of social change and the focus of the provincial government on austerity and new public management. Increasing managerialism in Quebec is an indication of the province's catch up with neoliberal practices already well-established in other Canadian provinces.

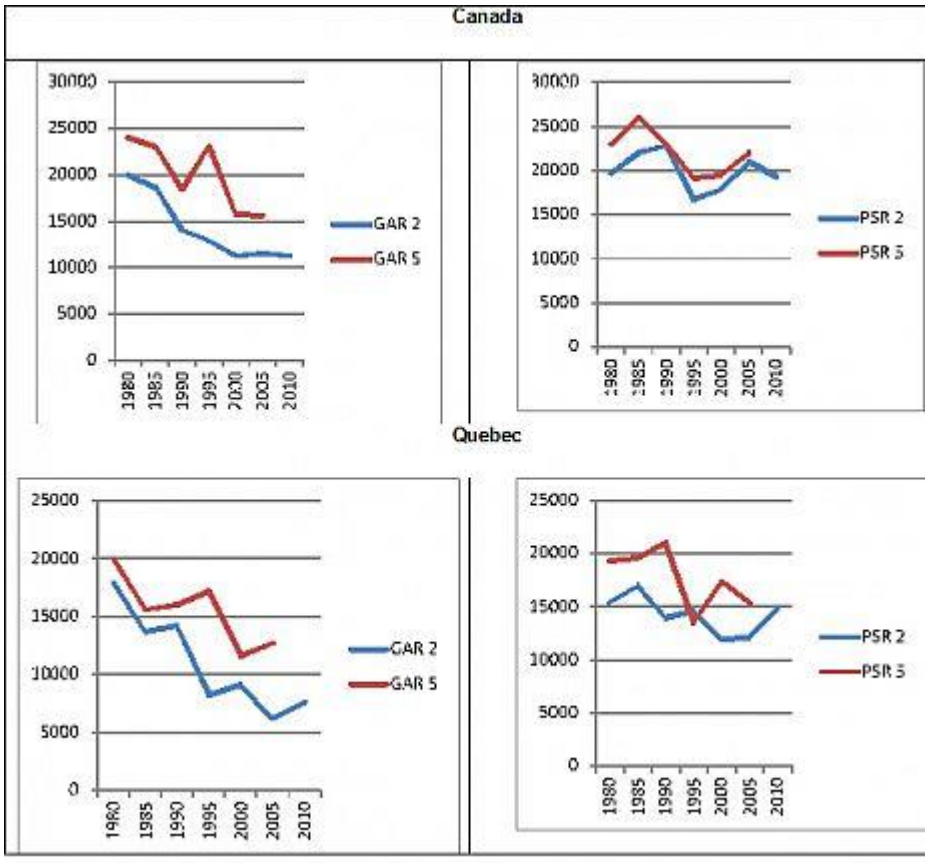
Perspectives

The more systematic pursuit of closer relationships between settlement stakeholders may improve the labour market situation of more vulnerable resettled refugees. Closer relationships over a single issue are however hard to achieve because each settlement stakeholder is pursuing multiple goals at the same time and stretching resources doing so. Imposing a hierarchy of goals in favour or resettled refugees' labour market integration would be difficult for immigrant and employability services catering for the needs of broader population groups. Yet this seems an even bigger ask from employers and educational providers whose goals do not necessarily align with immigration-related issues. To foster such alignment, the Trudeau government's current refugee policy is certainly helpful. Yet coherence between federal and provincial policy objectives as well as long-term

commitment to increase financial resources appear necessary to decisively increase the power of settlement services and sustainably improve the labour market integration of resettled refugees.

Figure 1 Evolution of median employment income of GARs and PSRs cohorts respectively 2 and 5 years after admission in Canada, in 2013 constant dollars.

Data extracted from Statistics Canada, CANSIM tables 054-001 and 054-014. For instance 'GAR 2' shows that in 1980, the median income of GARs admitted in Canada 2 years earlier was about 20,000 dollars (in 2013 dollars) whereas it was about 17,000 dollars in Quebec. By 2010, the median earnings of GARs arrived 2 years earlier was about 12,000 dollars in Canada and 7,000 dollars in Quebec.



Refugees and integration in the UK: the need for a gender sensitive approach to supporting resettlement

Jenny Phillimore (IRiS, University of Birmingham) & Sin Yi Cheung (School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University)

A combination of conflict and environmental catastrophe together with improved transport and communication have first, prompted high levels of displacement, and second, enabled asylum seeking beyond national borders. While the majority of the world's refugees are internally displaced or live in camps and urban areas in countries adjacent to their countries of origin, millions seek asylum in developed countries. The years 2015 and 2016 experienced an increase in this trend as well over a million refugees undertook perilous journeys into Europe to escape conflict and civil war

in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Europe has at times struggled to respond to what has been described as a humanitarian crisis unprecedented since World War II. The large scale movements of the displaced and persecuted is increasingly being problematized despite the arrival of highly vulnerable women and children who now constitute around half of all arrivals. Many countries have introduced measures intended to reduce the numbers of arrivals with the tendency to offer support to those who make it into Europe against the odds. Others, such as the UK, have introduced resettlement programmes aimed at bringing the most vulnerable, frequently women and children, from conflict zones or camps in the Levant, directly to the country of refuge.

There are now 1.5 million recognised refugees in Europe with 149,765 residing in the UK in 2013 (UNHCR 2013). Numbers are continually rising as the UK receives more asylum seekers, many of whom eventually gain some kind of refugee status. Around 30% of refugees are women but frequently their numbers are obscured by the tendency to report asylum data in the UK by the gender of the lead applicant who is often male. This approach to registering asylum seekers has led to a situation whereby the average refugee is portrayed as male (Bloch et al. 2000). The United Nations Population Fund has stressed the importance of a gender analysis in developing an understanding of refugee experience and of refugee integration highlighting the importance of women's role supporting family integration, as well as their being more likely to experience social and structural inequalities in countries of origin and migration.

Integration has been defined in multiple ways with no agreement on exactly what good integration looks like. Many academics and policymakers recognise that integration is multi-dimensional, constitutes a series of processes and is non-linear with the overall goal being "acceptance into society" (Pennix 2003). Despite the complexity of integration processes and the importance of gender being acknowledged there has been a lack of research that looks at the multi-dimensionality of integration. Most research focuses on measuring single functional outcomes – especially employment outcomes, language competency and the nature of refugees' social networks. The majority of work undertaken has been qualitative making it difficult to assess how different aspects of integration interact. Further there is an almost complete absence of work looking at the role of gender in integration processes. Much research has considered specifically the experiences of women largely investigating small groups of women, in a single locality, often from a single country of origin or examining a single integration indicator. Such analysis does not allow for a nuanced understanding of how men and women's experiences of integration vary and the implications of those variations for policy and practice. Such an approach is important given claims that women fare worse than men particularly in relation to health and employment (ie Carolan 2010, Koyama 2014). In order to try to examine the ways in which gender impacts upon integration across multiple integration indicators we turned to the UK's Survey of New Refugees.

The Survey of New Refugees was the only large scale quantitative survey of refugees' integration outcomes undertaken in the UK (Cebulla et al 2010). Whilst it was undertaken 2005-2007, the large sample size and wide array of questions asked, and the fact that it has not been repeated, means that it offers the best systematic data source available into refugee integration in the UK. The survey is particularly useful in that it is a longitudinal study and followed new refugees from grant of leave to remain to 21 months after that moment in three follow-ups after 6, 15 and 21 months. Some 5678 valid responses were received in the first wave of the survey but there was a high attrition rate with only 939 refugees completing the survey in the final wave. This might have been because the survey was distributed by post. The survey was offered in a range of refugee languages meaning it could be completed by those unable to communicate in English but not those who lacked literacy skills. From the survey questions we constructed a number of key variables covering the presence

and frequency of social networks (personal, ethno-religious & formal), language fluency and literacy, housing and NASS accommodation. We also controlled the analyses by age, partner, dependent children, time in UK, place of origin, religion and pre-arrival education enabling us to isolate the impact of gender on integration outcomes. The main questions asked concerned what are key gender differences in – social networks, language proficiency, self-reported health, education and employment, and housing? To do this we undertook a series of multivariate analyses using binary and ordinal logistic regressions (see Cheung and Phillimore 2016).

Some key gender differences from the initial descriptive analysis were identified as well as a number of similarities. We found that women were likely to have more types of networks than men. Men however had higher levels of fluency and literacy with women not catching up until the 21 months' point. Women were also less likely to attend ESOL classes or to attend later than men which may explain why it took them longer to progress. Some 23% more men were employed than women and on the whole it appeared that women fared worse than men, were more likely to have difficulty budgeting and paying bills: particularly problematic given that many more of them had dependent children than men. Fewer women were in problem free housing than men although this difference reduced over time. Most worrying was strong evidence that not only did women report poorer health than men but that these reports increased over time.

With the multivariate analysis, we sought to predict integration outcomes. We found that language proficiency, length of time in UK, women having dependent children and men with higher levels of education all increased the frequency of contacts with respondents' social networks but that residing in the accommodation allocated by the then National Asylum Seeker Support Service (NASS) on a no-choice basis was associated with reduced social networks' contacts. Living in NASS accommodation was associated with poorer language proficiency in the early stages of life as a refugee. Length of time in the UK and access to ESOL classes plus the number of years of pre-migration education an individual had all shaped individuals language proficiency: the longer they were in the UK, the better their language. Possessing personal and informal networks were also associated with proficiency in the early stages of life as a refugee.

Good English proficiency was associated with ability to access quality housing for men and with access to stable housing for women. Length of residence also increased odds of finding stable housing for women but worryingly men with dependent children were less likely to access stable housing. Once again personal and formal networks were found to help integration: in particular they increased access to quality housing. Men were three times more likely that women to report better health which may explain why so many more were in work although to some extent this finding mirrors the experience of the general population especially for those with dependent children. Without further detailed qualitative research it is hard to understand why women reported worse health status with longer resident time in the UK. We know from our analyses that language proficiency is important for men's health and years of education for women's health. The health of both genders is affected by living in NASS housing which appears to be highly problematic for refugee health perhaps a reflection of poor housing conditions which have been widely reported but also the no-choice allocation of housing, the expectation that individuals share with strangers and that they can be re-dispersed with little notice.

So we now have clear evidence that there are gender differences in integration particularly in terms of social networks, housing, health, language and access to education, training and work. We also know that, as we would expect given that integration is a set of processes, that individuals' integration outcomes do change over time. Women on the whole catch up with men but there is not a full equalisation of outcomes and most concerning of all, significantly lower proportion of

women reported good health 21 months after leave compared to men. Perhaps the effect of sexual violence (Pittaway & Bartolemei 2001) and delayed onset PTSD (Koyama 2014) affected the women respondents in the SNR. Given the tendency for men to be lead applicants we might speculate that those women who appeared in this survey as lead applicants had particularly intense experiences of persecution.

The findings of our analysis can help us understand the kinds of integration policy and practice that might support more equitable refugee integration. First it is important to note some factors that are important for all refugees. Social networks and language proficiency are important for all– measures that support the development of networks and language are thus crucial. Further, residing in NASS accommodation has wide ranging negative effects on integration – problematic for social network and language development but also for long-term health and employability. Clearly integration outcomes would benefit from a change in policy around dispersal at least to reduce some of the well-known concerns with the approach. These might include offering asylum seekers a choice of location where possible so they can live near people they know, improving the quality of housing so it at least meets minimum standards, ceasing the re-dispersal of refugees on a no-choice basis and allowing women to reside in single-gender only accommodation if they wish.

Given that women's progress in integration is slower than men's and the UN's highlighting of the role of women in the integration of their whole family some gender sensitive integration policy and practice is required. Language classes should be offered to asylum seekers so that they can begin to make progress before they gain status – the ESOL fee remission should be reinstated for all asylum seekers and classes offered for women close to NASS housing with childcare provision on site (Koyama 2014; Phillimore 2012). Further provision of mentors for women would help them to more effectively navigate complicated housing and benefits systems and to register on language classes and training more quickly after refugee status is received. Mentors can help in the search for better quality housing and aid rapid social network expansion. Perhaps most important is increasing the visibility of refugees in social policy monitoring data. Unless we can identify refugees in housing, employment and health data we cannot tell how they are faring. Identification of poor outcomes could allow for targeted initiatives and support the call for more refugee and women friendly services. Such demands are perhaps unrealistic given the Conservative Government's pre-occupation with austerity and Brexit yet with plans to bring 20,000 refugees to the UK, the majority of them likely to be women and children, and the ongoing arrival of spontaneous asylum seekers, we do have a responsibility to ensure that individuals given sanctuary can thrive. Finally the migration crisis has prompted increased funding into research around refugees and integration. Researchers must pay heed to gender in their studies and ensure that gender analyses are an integral part of their work.

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Beyond permanency

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I have been working in the settlement field in Vancouver, British Columbia for nearly four years. The region is one of the top three refugee recipient cities in Canada. For most of this time I worked in a suburban municipality called Surrey, which is home to a neighbourhood called 'little Baghdad', labelled as such because of the large number of Iraqi refugees settling there. Now the city is also drawing many Syrian refugees. The key reasons for this is because of the lower housing costs and pre-established cultural networks, but then Surrey is also one of the most at-risk areas for immigrants due to higher rates of poverty, particularly for newcomers.

Yet because this is where some of the greatest need exists, working here is also immensely rewarding. I worked near 'little Baghdad' for two years with a different agency, and now manage a family-based, integrated program for MOSAIC in another region in Surrey. It is innovative in that it looks at the needs of the family, rather than the individual. To that end, the program has delivered conversation circles for parents, with childminding services for children, so that the whole family is welcome. We offer employment services, and plan on having homework clubs for kids, youth activities for teens, and support circles for women along with ongoing one-to-one services, and at times home visits and accompaniments.

It's a very exciting and refreshing lens through which to view settlement because, as we know, the well-being or lack thereof of one person, affects the well-being of all.

Through this work, one of the areas that has become of most interest to me is seeing how we, as communities and settlement agencies, can lower the barriers to accessing health care for these newcomers during the first 2-3 years of their arrival, which are often the most critical. Health is vital for successful integration and settlement. It's the single most important link to finding employment, being able to learn a new language, caring for children and beginning to feel secure, stable and part of a new community.

It is well-documented that before being resettled, many refugees experience prolonged displacement, poor living conditions, lack of access to the most basic medical serviced, severe trauma and at worst, torture. Additionally, not only carry those experience with them but for refugees who arrive from areas of civil conflict, they are often not only anxious about finding their way in a new country but their hearts and minds are still very much with their loved ones what have remained in areas of strife or those who have fled and are lingering in camps.

The difficulty for these newcomers, particularly those living in the aforementioned area of concentrated number of refugees, is that the services that they are eligible to receive are in incredible high demand, including primary and secondary schools, English language courses, health resources such as access to doctors, and mental health support. And, there are few resources and support networks for them to tap into, other than settlement agencies, where they can learn about how to use medication properly, to understand the local health care system, to understand the at risk factors for diseases and making the link to lifestyle, nutrition, local food lables, and exercise.

The challenges experienced by these refugees were documented in a recent internal study by the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and which was reported by the Canadian Press. It found that "the 19,427 Iraqis who arrived between 2009 and 2014 faced numerous barriers, including the trauma of war, greater medical needs and a lack of English and French compared to others."

The surge of Iraqi arrivals strained resources, while the complexity of the cases made it hard to provide the right support, the study said. Furthermore, refugees also received little information about what to expect when they arrived and struggled to find affordable housing on income supports that didn't cover the high cost of living in urban centres.

For anyone working in the resettlement sector, this report is unsurprisingly, as most workers would have seen this witness in both the Iraqi and Syrian populations.

In case of health related issues, what was reported in the press was echoed by a nurse practitioner working at a clinic in Surrey that is dedicated to helping refugees. When I spoke with her recently, she told me that she is finding that the complexity of cases seen by health care provides continue to increase, especially around mental health challenges such as post-traumatic stress disorders. She is mandated to treat only the most at-risk patients, and so a gap can quickly develop between the most vulnerable persons and those who are in need of community-based primary care.

As mentioned, the resources are very stretched particularly in areas like Surrey that has seen huge influx of newcomers within a few short months. Iraqi populations have been arriving in Canada steadily, and even then, the support systems for them have been strained. But the Syrian refugees arrived very quickly. Between November 1, 2015 and August 7, 2016 Canada has received 29,817 refugees, of which 54% were Government-Assisted Refugees[1], 36% were Privately Sponsored Refugees s and 10% were Blended-Visa Office Referred Refugees.[2]

On average, Canada receives about 12,000-14,000 refugees per year. MOSAIC served 1,986 refugees from Sept. 1, 2015 to June 2016. About a quarter of those individuals were of Syrian origin, but that number is rising steadily as settlement staff work hard to find a delicate balance between continuing to assist existing clients and helping new ones.

Settlement workers are a vital link between the client and their connection to variety of services and resources. They provide information on local community events, explain how different systems work (eg. banking, schools, etc.) and, they can call government institutions on the clients' behalf.

Sometimes they simply provide the space for the person to feel listened to. But there are clear limits to what they can do. Settlement workers typically don't accompany clients on doctor's visits. They cannot provide medical interpretation or translation services because of the legal implications. They cannot provide counselling or therapy sessions of any kind.

With regard to helping refugees tap into resources and services, the ways in which we help include:

- Conducting workshops by settlement staff or guest speakers on a variety of health-related topics including how the Canadian medical system works, how to prepare for doctor's visits, how to manage stress, how to mitigate different disease (heart disease, diabetes, etc.), looking at women's health issues (pre & post-natal care, screenings, etc.), nutritional information on children's health (eg. not to give too much sugar and the effects thereof);

- Having ongoing support groups that gently facilitate discussion through art/craft work;

- In rare cases, arranging for home-visits or accompaniment to doctor's offices and arranging for interpretation and translation services;

- Translating documents, helping fill out forms, connecting with health-professionals on behalf of clients to help clarify questions and issues that arise.

There are many more things that we do but that is still not nearly enough. The make a lasting, systemic difference in the approach to health care, there is a critical need for greater collaboration and information sharing between all stakeholders. These include:

- Greater collaboration between health authorities, different levels of government and on the ground agencies working directly with newcomers, including settlement agencies, private sponsors and faith-based groups;
- Slower resettlement of refugees that will enable communities to build up capacity to support refugees;
- Greater focus and education on the migration flows within their context (ie. Arrival from conflict zones, from different cultural backgrounds, etc.);
- Organized, responsive and flexible medical translation services for refugees and newcomers;
- An organized network of volunteers/mentors to be paired with refugee families to provide support, primarily social support.

Of course, increased funding levels for many service-providers would always be welcome, but they are not necessarily available and the above initiatives do not need to cost much but could go a very long way to shaping more welcoming, capable cities.

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[1] GARs are Convention refugees whose initial settlement (for up to one year) is entirely supported by the Canadian government, on the other hand, PSRs are referred for resettlement by a private sponsor in Canada, who then provides financial and other support for the refugee for one year. The third, and newest type of refugee category is the Blended-Visa Office Referred refugees who are Convention refugees referred by the UNHCR and who are matched with a private sponsor in Canada. The government provides up to six months of income support for them while private sponsors provide another six months of financial support.

[2] Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Canada, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp

IOM's Role in Refugee Resettlement and Integration

Pindie Stephen (Sr. Migrant Training Specialist/Integration Focal Point, IOM Geneva)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been actively engaged in facilitating the orderly transfer and integration of resettled refugees since the early 1950s. In the last decade alone, IOM has organized the resettlement for over 1 million refugees from some 186 locations around the world. I spent twelve years working in East Africa, where I oversaw the pre-departure cultural orientation programmes for refugees bound for Australia, Canada, Norway, the US and the UK, among others. We believe that IOM's pre-departure resettlement services contribute to humane and well-managed migration, and ensure that refugees are informed, empowered and well-prepared for third-country resettlement. This is done primarily through the delivery of a tailored pre-departure orientation by providing practical information on the country of destination, while at the same time helping to develop the skills and attitudes refugees will need in order to success in their new communities. IOM believes pre-departure orientation is an integral component of successful resettlement programmes and is most effective when linked closely to domestic settlement services.

Addressing integration along the Migration Continuum

Integration must be understood as a *continuum*: the process of integration begins long before a migrant leaves his or her country of origin, and continues well past their arrival as they forge new connections and begin to make sense of their new communities. There is a growing consensus on the value of providing migrants, including refugees, with support at the *earliest* possible stage of the migration process. In recent years, a number of innovative approaches have been used to strengthen the linkages between overseas and domestic orientation. These include the preparation of cultural profiles of new refugee populations designed to help settlement service providers better understand and plan for potential integration challenges, as well as information sessions designed to facilitate the effective and often very practical exchange of information regarding the customs, behaviors, experiences and values which new arrivals bring. This can include background information on various aspects including refugees' history of persecution, education and employment, religious and cultural practices, and potential integration challenges.

In the UK, IOM has developed a two-fold model of cultural orientation in which refugees are presented with a realistic picture of life in the UK and UK values prior to arrival, and local community members, including local authorities, support workers, and health and education bodies have some basic knowledge of the background, experiences, culture, and values of arriving refugees.

Between 6 May and 31 July 2016, IOM delivered fifteen sessions in twelve locations throughout the UK. Through these sessions, IOM has delivered key cultural and historical information on Syria to approximately 417 participants. IOM coordinated with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to determine how best to meet local authority needs, and establish contact with target groups through the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (RSMP) network, and confirm the content of the sessions. The information sessions are conducted by invitation from RSMP leads and local authorities, with each session tailored to the needs and interests of those authorities. –These information sessions provide a platform to collaboratively discuss and plan for the arrival of refugees into their

communities. Managing the expectations of both refugees and the governments undertaking to receive them requires close consultation with *all s*takeholders. IOM has learned this through its work with various destination countries, including Norway.

IOM has been closely engaged with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration and Diversity (IMDi) for over ten years now, and in 2015 we provided 38 separate refugee country information meetings attended by over 1600 refugee service providers working in 50 local municipalities across the country. Participants in these all-day seminars make up a cross-section of local community and settlement service providers, including teachers from primary and secondary schools, health care workers, and representatives from refugee offices, NGOs, employment and social welfare programs including child protection services. Drawing on the importance of understanding refugees' unique culture and customs, representatives from the police and fire departments along with law enforcement authorities have also been included so as to better engage them in working with these new populations, bearing in mind that figures of authority, including those public servants in uniform, are often perceived in a threatening rather than in a welcoming, "public servant" manner. Developing intercultural competencies and helping these communities become more welcoming and inclusive have knock-on effects that ultimately develop long-standing successful models for future generations.

Critical Importance of Labour Market Integration

Although meaningful employment has been recognized as one of the most important contributors to integration and long-term economic growth, many refugees continue to face significant barriers integrating into the labour market. Some of the challenges we've recognised include lack of language proficiency, difficulty accessing education and vocational training, lack of knowledge about how to access labour market support, discriminatory hiring practices or employment policies, limited social and professional networks, and difficulties with qualifications and skills recognition.

Increasingly, IOM has been focusing on improving refugees' prospects for labour market integration, and devotes a significant portion of the pre-departure orientation to building refugee's confidence, preparing them for interviews, identifying transferable skills, and inculcating a desire to pursue both language and vocational skills training after arrival. Research has found that early integration support can also have positive impacts on the labour market outcomes and on migrants' capacity to actively contribute to the development of their countries of origin. Skills2Work is one such project that is looking at how to improve conditions for early and successful labour market integration of refugees. This project, currently being managed out of the Netherlands, aims to promote labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection through improving early validation of both formal and informal skills and competences. In addition to carrying out a review and assessment of various approaches and practices regarding migrant skills recognition, recruitment and retention, IOM is also collecting success stories from migrants and businesses on strengthening skill validation and early job-matching. We are also working on an interactive online tool which will serve as a virtual platform for three key target groups: Reception officials and integration service providers; asylum seekers and refugees, and potential and actual employers – with the purpose of facilitating information exchange on European labour market and access for migrants.

Addressing Myths, Misperceptions and Unrealistic Expectations

On a recent trip to Lebanon, we observed an orientation class being held for Syrian refugees bound for the UK. One of the first activities taking place involved the trainer asking the refugees to share questions they had regarding what they already knew about the UK or what they were curious about

knowing. Their questions were both telling and insightful, revealing both the extent to which misinformation and rumours can contribute to a lack of clear understanding, as well as the degree to which unrealistic expectations can shape their early experiences and cast a negative light – especially as we learned that most of the information they had was gained from unreliable sources.

- *Can we walk around freely or are there places reserved only for refugees?*
- *We heard that people paint the front doors of homes where refugees live in red.*
- *Will our kids be put into mainstream schools? Are they allowed to study?*
- *How soon can we work?*

One of the values of pre-departure orientation is to provide an open, non-threatening environment where refugee participants can feel free to ask questions and raise concerns about their new country of resettlement. IOM's cadre of skilled cultural orientation trainers bring years of cross-cultural experience in dealing with a variety of refugee populations. These multilingual, multi-ethnic trainers are well positioned to help refugees anticipate integration challenges and guide them through the integration process. Trainers may, themselves, be previously resettled refugees, and are often intimately familiar with several cultures, having gained a linguistic and cultural understanding of the refugee populations they are working with as well as the destination countries they are preparing them to soon join. These cross cultural mediators serve as credible and authoritative role models and draw on the first-hand experience gained through having successfully navigated the often unfamiliar, complex political, social and cultural norms of a new country and culture themselves.

IOM's training methodology is based on a learner-centered, interactive, participatory approach designed to increase participants' retention of new information. Custom-made sessions assist refugees of all ages to develop realistic expectations and prepare them for their initial resettlement period.

Recent Successes

We recently learned through a report shared by one of the local authorities here that a Syrian refugee family had produced a photograph which showed them proudly displaying the certificate they received at the conclusion of their 2-day UK Cultural Orientation course. This suggested the pride they felt in having attended one of the free orientation courses provided by IOM to all departing Syrians through our offices in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq or Turkey. Another heart-warming story came in to us regarding the recent arrival of a charter flight IOM had organised from Lebanon which happened to take place on a Friday afternoon. Local authorities had made arrangements for the refugees to say their prayers at the airport by bringing along prayer mats which were greatly appreciated. Though not all new arrivals were Muslim, this small act of cultural sensitivity and preparation would pave the way for a welcome that will stay with these refugees forever.

Refugee Resettlement in Context: Labour market integration and wellbeing

Eleanor Ott (Oxford University)

This week it was announced that 10,000 Syrian refugees were resettled in the United States of America (USA) this fiscal year. This number has been splashed across the headlines in USA and abroad, from the *New York Times* to *CNN* to UNHCR press release. It is noted as a political triumph of the Obama Administration and an important note of solidary. But, what does this number really mean in context of resettlement globally? How well are resettled refugees faring in terms of their labour market itegration and wellbeing? And, how can we help improve their outcomes?

The fact is that less than 1% of refugees are resettled. There are 5.8 million Syrian refugees globally, predominately hosted in neighboring countries. And while Syrian refugee resettlement has been at the forefront politically, refugees have been and continue to be resettled from around the world. In 2015, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that 28 countries had resettlement programs associated with them, and they resettled almost 82,000 refugees. The USA has resettled more than 3 million refugees since 1975 and resettled over 52,500 in the 2015 calendar year. Of this number, less than 2,200 were from Syria, but over 5,500 were from Bhutan. In the last decade, over 85,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in the USA – and it is from this population that I drew on for my primary research with resettled refugees. After the politics of arrivals, there are questions of: How are resettled refugees faring? And, are domestic policies meeting their goals of improving refugees' lives, which is most often framed in terms of domestic goals of improving economic outcomes or labour market integration?

There is limited systematic data on resettled refugees, but there is clear message in the international literature that there is a labour 'refugee gap' in that resettled refugees often initially perform poorer in the labour market than native-born residents and other immigrant groups. However, this gap closes over time, and with subsequent generations. Refugees become part of the fabric of countries.

In order to gain a better picture, I undertook qualitative research with Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh, USA, and a representative survey of 145 randomly-selected (response rate 93%) individuals in this population 2012 and 2013. I looked at their reported levels of self-sufficiency and wellbeing. In doing so, a complex picture emerged. Some individuals struggled and others have done well. Their labour force participation rates were on par with local and national averages, but the population had higher unemployment rates and lower wages. Only 6% of families used any cash assistance, but 72% used government food assistance. By-and-large Bhutanese adults have thus become part of the American working poor.

Similarly, the physical and mental health wellbeing of the Pittsburgh Bhutanese population as measured by the 12-Item Short Form Health Survey (SF-12) scored roughly average to the general population, with a lower percentage at risk of a first stage positive screening. Nonetheless, individuals and families shared stories of hardship and struggles. Often, mental health well-being was linked with ideas of income and physical health wellbeing. One woman in a focus group explained that, 'It's been four years that I've been in the US. I have sweating problems [probably diabetes], and I don't have a bedset and am sleeping on the floor. We've been bearing it for four years. My husband is physically weak. We have no communication skills in English. We receive SSI [Social Security for the elderly] income from my husband so we are just able to pay the bills.' Nonetheless, many expressed sentiments of the wellbeing of a vibrant community or positive comparisons to nearly two decades in the refugee camps. One Bhutanese community leader summed it up as, 'There are families that are struggling, some that are prospering, some that have bought houses.' The numbers and stories of successes countered the dominant media narrative of mental health concerns and high suicide rates for the Bhutanese population. Over 30 years ago, a

mental health focus was charged as 'sometimes unintentionally promot[ing] the erroneous impression that a great majority of refugees are fraught with serious mental health disorders.'[i] This criticism may well hold true today. It may also be that official measures do not account for the lived experience of wellbeing, the stigma of mental health, or the Bhutanese ethno-psychology,[ii] which may be better captured in subjective accounts and participatory research.

Given the struggles of some community members, we should ask: how can we help resettled refugees? Do interventions designed to improve resettled refugees' economic self-sufficiency and wellbeing accomplish their objectives and in what contexts? I looked at this through a systematic review of prospective, controlled studies examining economic integration or quality of life. A total of 9,260 citations were screened, but no studies met the inclusion criteria. Excluded studies touted a variety of promising approaches, such as more individualized casework, but more rigorous research is needed to know what approaches best help resettled refugees, and evidence is insufficient to determine if programs affect resettled refugees' economic self-sufficiency and wellbeing.

Although we may not have the answers to what helps resettled refugees, we do have different predictive statistical models, which can help us target those in need and look at what may help improve outcomes. The models presented in my research with Bhutanese refugees reveal matrices of different correlations: between being male and being employed and earning more; between having a larger household and being less likely to be employed and more likely to earn less; between having higher education and earning more; between being Christian and being less likely to always have enough money to pay bills; and between time in country and having higher wages and having enough money. All of the models and findings need to be interpreted with caution as they are correlations, and the sample size was not robust to detect small variations. Nonetheless, the models broadly show diversity within what is often lumped as 'one Bhutanese community' and support the broader literature that the 'refugee gap' closes with the time in country.

Given our moral obligations towards refugees as well as the investments of money and political will, I believe that we have an obligation to better understand how resettled refugees are faring and how to assist them to meet their goals and improve their wellbeing. We should look beyond the news headlines to the individuals who have fled for their lives from a well-founded fear of persecution. These may be Syrian refugees or they may be Bhutanese refugees stuck in camps for nearly two decades. Resettlement only takes a small number of refugees globally, but it offers opportunities for individuals to rebuild their lives in third countries, and governments resettling refugees should continue to examine the needs of the populations and the effectiveness of their domestic resettlement programming. Or, as one focus group participant stated, 'Government should understand the nature of the refugees arriving and put us with jobs that… allow the life to sustain.'

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[i] Starr, P. D., & Roberts, A. E. (1982). Community structure and vietnamese refugee adaptation: The significance of context. *International Migration Review*, 597.

[ii] Chase, L. E., & Bhattarai, D. (2014). Making peace in the heart-mind: Towards an ethnopsychology of resilience among bhutanese refugees. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research, Special Issue on the Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Experience*, *43*(Autumn-Winter 2013), 143-166.

The experiences of resettled refugees in Belgium

Ilse Derluyn & Frank Caestecker, Ghent University, Belgium

Background

Resettlement is one part of an entire migration policy, in which resettlement aims to give refugees who live in another country, a country where they first have fled to, the possiblity to build a new life in another country. While many refugees have been resettled over the years, little research has been carried out about these processes, and these studies have mostly focussed on the resettlement process itself, while the perspectives and lived experiences of the resettled refugees themselves are relatively absent.

This research therefore aims to gain insight, from a longitudinal perspective, into the experiences and current living situation of resettled refugees in Belgium, hereby also questioning their evaluation of the support provided to them.

Following research questions were put forward:

- How did resettled refugees experience the entire process of resettlement?
- How is the current living situation of resettled refugees and how has this evolved over the years?
- How have these resettled refugees been supported troughout their trajectory to and in Belgium, and how do they evaluate this support?

Methods

In this study, we included two groups of resettled refugees: In 2009, 47 refugees originating from Iraq, who had fled to Syria and Jordania, were resettled in Belgium. These refugees were selected on basis of their need for protection and on basis of their level of vulnerability (mainly single women with medical problems and/or with children). In 2011, 25 refugees out of Eritrea and DRCongo resettled in Belgium. They had first fled to Libya, but fled further to a refugee camp in Tunesia in 2011. This resettlement operation to Belgium was thus mainly an asnwer to an urgent humanitarian crisis.

First, we wanted to gain insight into the process of resettlement itself, both the selection and preparation processes, as the support given to the refugees when living in Belgium. Hereto, we carried out several interviews with key actors in the resettlement process.

Second, as as main part of the research, we did several interviews with refugees who were resettled in 2009 (Iraq) and 2011 (Libya) and followed them for about three years (2013 – 2015). Yet, because we only started with the research in 2013, we could not question the refugees while still being in their first phase of their resettlement process. Via the NGOs involved and further snowball-sample, we tried to reach as many refugees as possible, whereby we mainly aimed at interviewing the heads of family, next to some of their children. Of the 23 resetteld refugee families and single persons from Irak (2009 (total number of resettled refugees was 47), we reached 14 families/single persons (with an underrepresation of the single persons). Of the 15 resettled refugee families and single persons out of Libya (Eritrean and Congolese nationality), we reached 9 families. In total, we carried out 20 interviews with resettled refugees out of 2009 (14 heads of family, 6 children) and 13 interviews with refugees from 2011 (9 heads of family; 4 children).

Before starting the interview, we explained the aims of the study and the study conditions (anonimity, confidentiality, no impact on ongoing or future procedures and support,…); all interviews were held on the location of the participant's choice, and an interpretor was present if needed.

The participating refugees have been interviewd two to three times, over a period of three years, each time focussing on their lived experiences, during the resettlement process, in their current living situation and on the received support.. All interviews have been transcribed literally and have been analysed systematically via thematic analysis.

Some results

Before their coming to Belgium, the refugees from Iraq were selected by a Belgian mission in the country where they lived, and they also received a first cultural orientation there. This meeting with Belgian representatives provided an opportunity of personal contact with the country to which they would be resettled, and they mainly kept the message that they were very much welcome in Belgium. The cultural orientation session, as a moment of information giving, added to the refugees' idea that they had chosen for Belgium on a positive basis. It sometimes even gave them the possibility to rephrase their resettlement as a well-thought individual decision. The warm welcome for the refugees from Iraq at the airport in Belgium by some members of the selection mission was also much aprreciated. This presence of 'known' people made this transition process smaller.

In contrast, the refugees from Eritrea and DRCongo (2011) had been selected on basis of their file and so did not share this experience. They came to Belgium mainly unprepared and without any contact with Belgian representatives.

The resettled refugees had high expectations for their future when arriving in Belgium. All hoped that they could move as fast as possible into an own house, after which they and their children could focus on education to prepare themselves for a successful integration in the Belgian society. Yet, in contrast, after their arrival in Belgium, they first had to stay in a large-scale asylum centre, sometimes even two or three months, an approach that almost all interviewees judged as a negative part of their resettlement process. After this inital period, all moved to private housing, yet most participants were rather negative about their housing situation, up till present, but their financial resources did not allow them to look for a higher standard of housing.

Participants' expectations that they and their older children would have a relatively easy economic integration also encountered many challenges. All experienced several problems to enter the labour market, problems that are quite similar to those of other refugees: their long-term precarious housing situation, the difficult process of language acquisition, the difficult access to language courses, the lack of information about educational possibilities and other skills trainings, the medical problems, and the shortage of jobs related to their specific labour profiles made their access to the labour marked very difficult or even non-existent, leading to a long-term financial dependency from social welfare benefits.

Only a minority of the resettled refugees currently had a job, mainly in precarious job systems. For some, these temporary systems were a step towards a more fixed job status. Yet, for many, their precarious labour situation and the hereto related difficult financial situation (also leading to a precarious housing situation) sharply contrasted with their past living situation in their home country. This might even have contributed to their sometimes large disappointment with their level of participation to the Belgian situation and their financial situation. These findings on the resettled refugees' economic participation are not that different from many other newcomers, and

considering that these resettled refugees are often ‘vulnerable’ (single parents, older persons, medical and/or mental problems,…), not really surprising.

In contrast, most children of the resettled refugees did find it much easier to find their way to education and labour. Resettlement programmes therefore could be seen in a long-term perspective, as also the resettled refugees do: resettlement is often much more the creation and realisation of a ‘better’ future for their children, much more then for themselves.

Yet, all resettled refugees exhibited large efforts to participate to the Belgian society and to realize their future in Belgium, for example through following language courses for a long period of time. Despite these efforts, many stories revealed a large difference between their great need for a social network and the concrete reality of having a very limited social network.

Many resettled refugees also experienced problems in their psychosocial wellbeing, because of a variety of stressors (e.g., contrained housing, limited financial resources, little social network,…), and because of their longing for their family members and their (life in the) home country.

All participates indicated that they were generally happy about the support they had received throughout the entire process. Yet, most refugees indicated that the extra support they had received from NGOs (only provided to resettled refugees) during the first year of their stay in Belgium is too short and should have been extended. The experiences with the support they received from the mainstream organisations was more differentiated, with some being very happy about this suport, and others very negative (difficulties in access, communciation problems,…).

For all interviewed refugees, the resettlement to Belgium clearly formed the beginning of a new ‘settlement’ phase that ended the ongoing situation of ‘being on the move’. Yet, this does not equal a life in Belgium without challenges: the resettled refugees do find themselves in many life domains, in particular regarding labour, income and housing and social network, in relatively precarious situations, which indicate clear areas in which the resettlement programme and the overall support for refugees and newcomers can be ameliorated importantly, such as the preparation phase in the country of departure, a more differentiated and individualised support that also can be extended if needed, more and longer support to find appropriate housing, the involvement of volunteers and other refugees in the support programmes to extend the refugees’ social networks, and a continuous and long-term monitoring, via qualitative and quantitative methods of new groups of resettled refugees to increase our insights about their lived experiences and views.

Rethinking Refugee Integration through the experiences of resettlement in Latin America

Marcia Vera Espinoza (University of Sheffield)

In January 2014 I was interviewing Diego[1] in a warm summer afternoon in the South of Brazil, when I asked him what he understood by integration and when he thought he might stop being a refugee. He went quiet for a long time before he told me:

“I never thought about that before... I say that I will stop being a refugee when I stop having all these worries, instability and insecurity and all that. Right now, I feel that I will always be a refugee, who know for how many years? Maybe I will die being a refugee. Even if I have the right papers […] So

when would I stop being a refugee? I do not know. Maybe when all the fear disappears from my life, or when I feel part of this place and people trust in me and I trust them. Or it may be the case that I stop being a refugee, but I will always be a foreigner here." (Diego, Colombian refugee resettled in Brazil)

Diego is one of the 80 participants that I interviewed while conducting fieldwork in Chile and Brazil between 2012 and 2014, as part of my PhD research. Data was collected through in-depth semi structured interviews, a survey and participant observation. The aim of the project was to explore how resettled refugees from different origins (Colombian and Palestinian) experience integration in Chile and Brazil, in order to understand the extent and ways in which third country resettlement is lived and implemented in Latin America.

Diego's answer to the question of integration illustrates one of the main findings of the research: refugees from both communities in both countries experienced integration as a process of 'unsettlement', characterised by uncertainty, translocality and agency. The findings of the research revealed the multiple actors and complex scales whereby integration was negotiated.

While the research reviewed some of the multiple dimensions of integration based on some of the indicators identified by Forced Migration literature, the recent and still weak structure of refugee protection in Chile and Brazil demanded a bottom up approach that went beyond 'counting' refugees' experiences. For instance, the research explored the tensions that emerged from the negotiations between refugees and other resettlement actors, demonstrating that both refugees and the resettlement organisations created a set of expectations that sometimes turned into claims of 'unfulfilled promises'. The tensions that emerged between resettlement actors and refugees showed that in the case of resettlement, integration does not necessarily start upon arrival, and instead, starts from the moment refugees receive resettlement information in the first country of asylum or in the refugee camp.

The research also showed that the process of refugee integration in both countries was marked by translocal belongings, with constructions of belonging existing simultaneously in the resettlement country and in the material or symbolic representations of 'home'. The experiences of resettled refugees in both study sites revealed that 'belonging' ranged from personal accounts of 'place-belongingness' influenced by relational attachments, cultural factors and identity reformulation, to everyday experiences of negotiation of difference and resistance to social dynamics of inclusion/exclusion. Finally, the research showed that refugees' integration experiences were also influenced by the degree of formal membership granted by the host states and the citizenship claimed by the resettled refugees. Both processes revealed the multiple scales of refugee citizenship. Colombian and Palestinian resettled refugees in Chile and Brazil are unsettled citizens who are constantly negotiating their formal membership in the resettlement country across multiple sites.

By exploring resettled refugees' experiences of belonging, citizenship and the politics of resettlement, it is possible to better understand integration as an 'umbrella term', that allows us to explore the micro and macro dynamics and the multiplicity of linkages, actors, scales and dimensions that encompasses the resettlement experience.

While refugee integration is a contested concept, some common understandings suggest that integration is a two-way multidimensional process. The 'two-way approach' places the dynamics of integration within the nation-state by identifying two main broad actors: 'them' (the refugees) and 'us' (the receiving country). The research problematized this approach since it does not account for the diversity among refugees and the different rationales of the other actors involved in the process.

The research findings showed the need to expand this analysis by including the scales and spaces where the integration experiences take place, as well as the multiple actors and power dynamics involved. At the same time, by exploring experiences as 'unsettled' (as a result of uncertainty, instability, precarity and translocality), the research invites us to re-think what we understand by refugee integration. While indicators and dimensions of integration are extremely relevant both for policy and theory formation, they are based on certainties and a functionalist approach to refugee integration. By focusing on unsettlement, it is possible to understand refugee integration as a dynamic and fluid process and as a constant negotiation, and not only as a target or necessarily as the end of the displacement's consequences. These understandings allow grasping the complexities of the process, which can also lead to better design and implementation of resettlement programmes.

The task of understanding the refugee experience in Latin America is more urgent than ever. While governments, policy makers, service providers and academics are discussing how to deal with the current refugee crisis, integration has been mostly absent from the debate. At the same time, most of the discussion has been focused on Europe, while thousands of refugees are crossing borders within their regions of origin or other southern regions. Refugees' displacement not only has global implications, it also has regional, local and intimate ones that go beyond the emergency of taking refugees out of the camps or dangerous zones. Thinking and planning long-term solutions, which include and understand the refugee experience, means to create solutions that are durable, but also 'liveable'. Exploring the 'unsettled' experiences of resettled refugees in Latin America allows further understandings of refugee integration, while contributing to policy debates around this durable solution in emergent resettlement countries.

[1] The name of the interviewee has been changed to a pseudonym.

The role of community development in refugee resettlement work

Lisa Doyle, Refugee Council

When most people think about the support resettled refugees need to integrate, the immediate things that spring to mind relate to practical matters such as housing, English language, health, education and employment. These are all crucial in helping refugees rebuild their lives, but there are other elements to integration that need to be considered. The Refugee Council has long argued that integration is a two-way process that places demands on both the receiving society and refugees, so it follows that consideration has to be given to working with communities in which people are resettled. As we believe that integration is not assimilation, then refugees need to be able to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose their own cultural identity, and host societies need to accept refugees as equals and ensure they have the same access to resources and decision-making processes.

At the Refugee Council, we have been involved in delivering the Gateway Protection Programme for the last twelve years. We currently provide integration support for refugees arriving through that programme in Sheffield and Hull, and even though both areas have welcomed refugees for over a decade, we have continued to ensure that community development is a dedicated part of this work,

with staff roles specifically focused on this. Over the years we have witnessed the benefits that can result from making efforts to bring existing and new communities together.

There are two elements to our community development work: one with the emphasis on increasing understanding and interaction with receiving communities and the other that focuses on refugees' needs.

Effective service delivery is often predicated on understanding the needs of the end user. In areas where there are low numbers of refugees, there is a strong possibility that people will not understand the circumstances people have fled or that there will be little understanding of the systems and processes in the UK. Most refugees who have arrived through the Gateway Programme will have lived in refugee camps for many years, which will have impacted on their experiences of education and employment, and thoughts about the future. During their first year in the UK they will receive individual support to help them become self-sufficient, but to use that time most effectively, making links with key services providers to increase their understanding of refugees' needs is time well spent. We organise 'insights' sessions with key players so they have an understanding of resettlement and the specific issues that may be experienced by particular nationality groups.

Some of the preparation work we do with service providers is applicable to all communities, but some will be tailored to specific groups or individuals. In advance of arrivals, UNHCR will provide our team with information about the people who will be arriving. This information will sometimes indicate that there will be a particular need, for example, a specific medical issue. Our staff can then make contact with the relevant health practitioners so they are prepared to support those who are arriving. Once refugees have arrived in their new homes, and we have worked with them to develop a plan which identifies their specific priorities in terms of their integration and independence, we then sometimes identify local community groups that will help to meet their needs. This process may involve Refugee Council staff making contact in advance with those groups to ensure that they have an awareness of the specific needs of resettled refugees.

As receiving communities get to know about the presence of refugees in their communities, there are many examples of individuals, groups and services approaching us to find out how they may be able to work with the groups that are arriving in their cities. For example, in Hull we have made links with a local bakery where they run a baking course that has both social and therapeutic elements, and we work with a community garden which is a warm and calming place which helps individuals to make a connection to their new environments.

We work to increase refugees' understanding of their new communities through joint working, like some of the examples described above. It is also important that refugees gain an understanding of their rights and entitlement in the UK, and the role of public services. To this end, we organise information sessions delivered by public services such as the police – this can be particularly important to help to explain their role and address fears held by some refugees for whom police officers enforced the rules of an oppressive state.

Our teams support resettled refugees to form their own Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) where there is a wish to do so. Refugee Community Organisations can play key role in helping communities to maintain their cultural identity through activities such as music, dance, and cooking, which in turn can provide an interesting medium in which to bring receiving and refugee communities together. RCOs can play an essential role in serving, involving, uniting and advocating on behalf of their communities.

In Hull, we link the RCOs we have supported to a local umbrella body Humber All Nations Alliance. In Sheffield, in 2007 our community development worker established the Sheffield Gateway Refugee Communities Forum which is a Refugee Community Organisation open to refugees of all nationalities who have been resettled through the Gateway Protection Programme. The Forum offers many services, including sharing knowledge and experiences, providing support networks, promoting community cohesion, and building relationships with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in a city that many now call home. The community groups that initially contributed to the formation of the Sheffield Gateway refugee Communities Forum included: Liberians, Burmese, Congolese, Bhutanese, Iraqis, Somalis, Sudanese, Ethiopians, Eritreans, Karen, Oromo and Syrian. The forum now has 10 nationalities, 16 activity groups, 4 Established RCOs and 6 community associations.

All of the work I have outlined does not happen by magic. There is a real need across the board for refugee integration to be properly resourced and funded to help create sustainable futures for refugees who are rebuilding their lives here.

Refugee Resettlement to Japan

Naoko Hashimoto, University of Sussex

The Government of Japan announced its decision to launch a pilot refugee resettlement project in December 2008. The decision positively surprised many national and international observers since Japan was long considered as *the least likely case* to even consider resettling refugees. How can the resettlement decision be contextualized in traditional migration and asylum policies of Japan? How have the refugees been resettled and integrated in Japan? Does the Japanese resettlement project present any implications for refugee and migration policies in a wider sense?

Migration and Asylum Policies of Japan

Japan is a highly homogeneous and strictly non-immigration country with rapidly shrinking and ageing population. As of the end of 2015, the Japanese population was approximately 127 million, of which 26% were 65 years old or older, and the total fertility rate was roughly 1.4%. The country has not been reproducing itself for more than 40 years and the trend is unlikely to be reversed. In terms of economy, Japan has the third largest GDP (after the U.S. and China) and the unemployment rate as of April 2016 was 3.2%, which is considerably lower than those of many other industrialized countries. Given the shrinking and ageing population, many experts have consistently warned that Japan should accept a significant number of migrants for the country to maintain its economic and social infrastructures. However, the official policy of the Government has always been that only highly-skilled migrants are encouraged to enter, stay, work, and settle in Japan, despite the fact that so-called low-skilled migrants have continuously come and work in Japan under various names such as 'nikkeijin', spouses of Japanese nationals, and trainees. The number of long-term foreign residents in Japan as of the end of 2015 was 2.17 million (or about 1.7% of the population), half of whom are originally from China and Korea. The latest official position announced by the Liberal Democratic Party under Prime Minister Abe states that 'intake of foreign labour should *not be misunderstood as an immigration policy*', which hardly makes any sense.

As regards asylum policy, Japan accepted 11,319 Indo-Chinese refugees between 1978 and 2005, *outside* the regular asylum process, mainly due to strong diplomatic pressure from the U.S. In

1981, the Government acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Although the number of asylum applications lodged in Japan remained considerably low for the first two decades, the number started to soar in 2006 and reached the record high at 7,586 in 2015 (see Tables 1 and 2). In the same year, 27 asylum seekers were granted official refugee status, which brings so-called 'refugee recognition rate' to 0.35% (although the concept of 'refugee recognition rate' has fundamental methodological flaws). In place of a full-fledged refugee status, humanitarian protection has often been granted to several hundreds of asylum seekers, who have been allowed to stay and work legally in Japan, *sans* any particular integration assistance. In terms of financial contributions, meanwhile, Japan has always been one of the top donor countries for UNHCR, and the financial contribution committed for 2016 is USD158 million. The combination of the restrictive asylum policy and the provision of a large amount of financial contribution for UNHCR's operations abroad can be regarded as a typical 'refugee containment strategy'. The combination has also led some observers to criticize the Japanese asylum policy as 'burden-shifting' rather than 'burden-sharing'.

Thus, Japan was traditionally regarded extremely unlikely to ever join the resettlement club. The 2008 decision to launch resettlement generated puzzles in the refugee sector. (The author is currently conducting a separate research project to analyse reasons why the Government of Japan adopted refugee resettlement.)

Pilot Refugee Resettlement Project (2010-2014)

The official resettlement decision by the Government of Japan was announced in the form of a 'Cabinet Agreement' in December 2008. It was initially a pilot project for five years from 2010 to 2014 to admit annually up to 30 Myanmar refugees taking refuge in so-called 'refugee camps' in Thailand. In early 2014, it was decided to extend the pilot project as a regular programme beyond 2014 and to start accepting urban refugees in Malaysia from 2015.

Major selection criteria are twofold: (a) those individuals recognised as refugees and recommended by UNHCR for the Government of Japan to consider admitting; and (b) those individuals who demonstrate 'adaptability' to Japanese society (equivalent to 'integration prospect'). In addition, it was publicly announced that the Government prefers nuclear families with younger children and those who are fit and healthy enough to be self-sufficient (as for adults) and to attend schools (as for children).

Operational procedures are tightly and meticulously controlled. Japanese government officials conduct in-person interviews with refugees in Thailand (and later in Malaysia) between February and April, followed by comprehensive health assessment conducted by IOM physicians throughout the pre-departure period. Pre-departure cultural orientation and language training by IOM take place a few weeks before the scheduled departure date. Usually, adult refugees attend a three-day cultural orientation, children attend a two-day cultural orientation, and those above five years old attend 10-15 day language training. During the cultural orientation for adults, importance of self-sufficiency is underlined and some training of household budget planning is offered. The language training is aimed at helping refugees familiarized with the shapes of Japanese characters and feeling confident in greeting in Japanese immediately upon arrival. Exit and entry procedures are fully taken care of by IOM in close coordination with authorities in the countries of first asylum and in Japan. All refugees are supposed to travel together to Japan between late September and early October. A particularly huge media crowd received the first group in 2010, which gave the refugees impression that they were invited by the Government of Japan 'as special guests'.

In terms of legal status, long-term residential permit is automatically granted upon arrival at the airport. No formal refugee status determination (RSD) is re-conducted by the Japanese government authority.

Upon arrival, a local integration agency ('Refugee Headquarters') conducts a six-month intensive integration course in a central part of Tokyo. The course consists of 692 hours of orientation and language training. Two case-workers (one Japanese social worker and one cultural and linguistic interpreter) are assigned to each of the refugee families, and very careful assistance is provided for nearly 24 hours seven days a week. Virtually everything is provided during the initial six months.

Once the integration course finishes in March, refugees are to move out to suburban or rural areas of Japan and start an independent life. The integration agency ensures that employment, housing, and schools are securely arranged for individual refugees, but little onsite support is provided. This contrasts with the full-fledged support provided during the initial six months, although some part-time supporters in local areas are appointed and the integration agency remains available when needed. Their progress in Japanese language acquisition continues to be assessed regularly by qualified 'Japanese as Second Language' teachers.

Integration Progress and Challenges

During the pilot project phase between 2010 and 2014, 86 refugees were resettled from Thailand, and another 19 Myanmar refugees in Malaysia in 2015. They were supposed to follow a typical model that 'all male adults work full-time; all female adults work part-time; and all children below 18 go to school'. Any deviation from this model was regarded as a failure. Fortunately, almost all male adults are ably employed for full-time in sectors such as agriculture, construction, shoe factory, and recycling, among others. Some female adults continue working in garment factories for part-time, but others eventually quit the job. They found it extremely challenging to manage both part-time jobs in a completely different cultural environment on the one hand, and child-rearing without close support by extended families, relatives, and friends, which they used to enjoy in the camp setting, on the other. As regards children, unsurprisingly, younger children are doing well at schools, and even some refugee children who came to Japan in their high teens have managed to be enrolled in high schools.

Conclusion: Implications for General Refugee and Migration Policies

While this paper focuses only on Japan's resettlement policy, some concluding observations are worth being highlighted as they may have some wider implications.

First, the Japanese resettlement programme has been conducted as an extremely rigidly controlled, managed, orderly migration scheme.

Second, the resettlement route has become one of the major alternative routes to access protection in Japan, partly due to the restrictive RSD standard in Japan (see Table 2).

Third, resettlement has allowed the Government to *bypass* the RSD procedure, since the refugees were already granted mandate refugee status by UNHCR prior to their entry to Japan.

Fourth and finally, logics, motives, and incentives which managed to convince the least likely case (namely Japan) to embark upon resettlement should be vigorously investigated and widely disseminated. It will be also interesting to analyse if/how the Japanese resettlement decision had 'a regional spill-over effect' on the Republic of Korea to start resettlement several years after the Japanese decision.

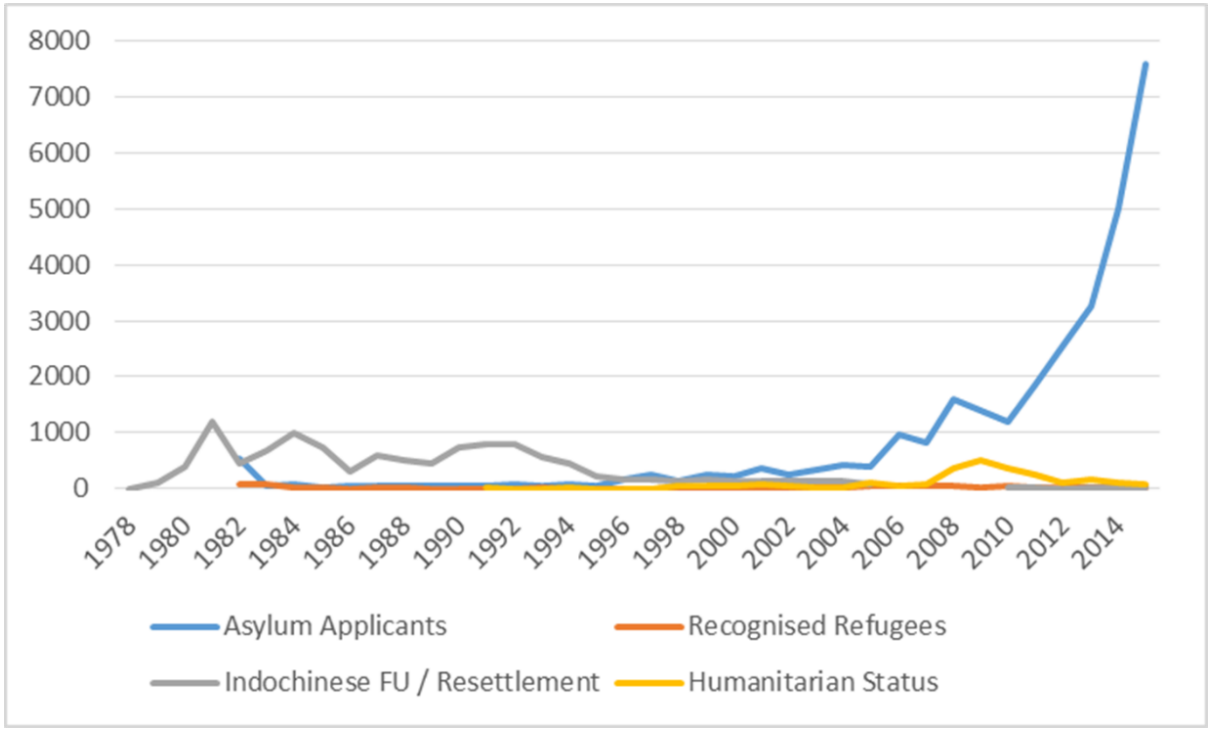

Table 1: Numbers of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Japan 1978-2015

	Asylum Seekers	Recognised Refugees	Resettlement
2004	426	15	(Indo-Chinese FU) 144
2005	384	46	(Indo-Chinese FU) 88
2006	954	34	--
2007	816	41	--
2008	1,599	57	--
2009	1,388	30	--
2010	1,202	39	27
2011	1,867	21	18
2012	2,545	18	0
2013	3,260	6	18
2014	5,000	11	23
2015	7,586	27	19
			Source: Japanese Immigration Bureau

Table 2: Numbers of Asylum Seekers, Recognized Refugees, and Resettlement in Japan

‘Good’ refugees’? The Syrian VPR scheme in Scotland – policy and practice

Alison Strang, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, Independent Chair, ‘New Scots’ Strategy

“Say it loud, say it clear: Refugees are welcome here!” We have recently seen another September weekend of marches/rallies across the UK where thousands of new and established residents have demonstrated their commitment to living in a country that recognises the legitimacy of refugees and makes them feel welcome.

In September 2015 things came together in such a way as to stimulate a surge in public sympathy with the plight of migrants trying to cross Europe as well as a – not unrelated – surge in the numbers of people attempting to make the dangerous and precarious journey. By the end of September 2015 the UK government had pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrians in Britain over the next five years. Beneficiaries would come directly from refugee camps through an extension of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) scheme already established in partnership with UNHCR.

By September 2016 the number of arrivals under this scheme stands at around 2,800.

Resettlement in Scotland

In August this year Scotland proudly announced the welcome of the 1,000th Syrian refugee to arrive through the UK VPR scheme. To date, roughly 40% of the Syrian refugees who have arrived in the UK through the extension of the VPR scheme have come to Scotland, a country that accounts for 8% of the UK population. So what lies behind the apparent enthusiasm of the Scots? Some answers can be found in the demographics. The population of Scotland fell every year from the mid-1990s until 2000 when it reached a low of 5,062,940. Since 2001 the trend has turned around and the population has been growing steadily, reaching 5,373,000 by mid-2015 (ONS https://www.ons.gov.uk/) . One of the contributory factors in these changes has been the adoption of Glasgow as a ‘dispersal city’ for asylum seekers to the UK (Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999. Iit is estimated that by 2013 there were about 20,000 refugees living in Scotland (SRC, 2013), and since then at least another 1,885 more people have received refugee status in Scotland (SRC, 2016).

Further understanding of Scottish enthusiasm to receive refugees can be found in the political context. In 1999 the Scottish Parliament was opened with devolved responsibility for domestic policy, but not for external policy such as immigration. Successive Scottish Governments have sought to emphasise the distinctiveness of Scottish social policy from the rest of the UK. A policy of welcome and inclusion of migrants not only supports the opportunity for population growth, but also creates a clear contrast with current policy rhetoric of the UK Parliament at Westminster.

Scotland’s policy response

Scotland’s response to the extended Syrian VPR scheme has been characterised by high level political engagement. The First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, Nicola Sturgeon, called a Refugee Summit in September 2015 and set up a taskforce with ministerial leads and participation by key stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sectors. From the outset there was a very positive response from Local Authorities, and to date 28 out of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities have signed up to receive refugees through the VPR scheme. Members of the public have been keen to find ways to help refugees, and a volunteering web page set up by the Scottish Refugee Council very quickly logged many thousands of offers of help.

The mobilisation of the response was facilitated by the fact that there already existed a policy process which brought together the key players. The 'New Scots' Strategy sets out priorities for refugee integration policy and practice 2014 to 2017 (http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00439604.pdf). So when the Refugee Taskforce came together there was already a shared understanding that successful resettlement requires a holistic approach to the needs of refugees. Drawing on the 'Indicators of Integration' framework (Ager & Strang, 2008), the 'New Scots' strategy sets out priorities and actions for employment and welfare benefits; housing; health; education and language learning; communities and the needs of dispersed asylum seekers.

Experiences of arriving refugees

The first families to arrive under the VPR scheme came to Scotland at the end of September 2015. Whilst the wet and windy weather may have been unwelcome, there was a strong sense of celebration as the receiving local authorities greeted the newcomers at the airport. Generally new refugees were initially transported directly to temporary housing. Thanks to a concerted effort by local authorities, the Home Office and the Department for Welfare and Pensions biometric data was gathered promptly and delays in receiving welfare benefits were minimised. Over the course of the past year, Syrian refugees have been housed across Scotland in both urban and rural areas. Many have been fast-tracked through the housing system and offered long-term housing contracts within a few weeks of arrival. In general, publicity has been tightly controlled as there was a concern to protect the arriving families from media attention in their early days in the country, and a fear of negative local repercussions.

Policy & Practice coordination

It was clear that the high profile of the Syrian VPR scheme led to the engagement of more senior gatekeepers. This in turn enabled decisions to be made more quickly and opened doors to policy change. A notable success was the swift allocation of National Insurance Numbers for new arrivals. New protocols have been developed by DWP, and the intention is to extend the benefits to refugees arriving through the asylum route.

At times however, there were legitimate fears that parallel structures would be set up, one to address the needs of refugees arriving through the Syrian VPR scheme and the other, 'New Scots', to address the needs of those arriving through the asylum process. Some public rhetoric has implied that those arriving through the resettlement scheme are more deserving, they are 'good' refugees because they have been selected direct from refugee camps in countries neighbouring the conflict. On the other hand those fleeing from the same conflict, but who have made their own way across Europe are less deserving because they have breached international boundaries 'illegally'. Yet both sets of refugees have had their claim for refuge scrutinised and have been accepted as deserving of sanctuary. It is therefore indefensible that some are received with better conditions than others.

Yet in the past year in Scotland, and probably in other parts of the UK and Europe, we have seen differences in the experiences of resettlement and asylum route refugees. For example;

- Resettled refugees are welcomed on arrival in the country. Those claiming asylum on arrival in the country experience an ethos of distrust and disbelief until they are able to prove that their claim is valid.
- Resettled refugees are able to move directly into temporary accommodation, and have been offered long-term accommodation relatively quickly. Those receiving leave to remain after

claiming asylum are being directed to the homelessness services after their 28 day 'move-on' period has expired, and some are turned away by homelessness services without being offered any shelter.

- Resettled refugees have received National Insurance Numbers and access to benefits within the first week to two weeks of arrival. Successful asylum seekers wait on average 40 days after receiving status before receiving Job Seekers Allowance (other welfare benefits take longer) which means that the average person experiences 12 days without support following the cessation of the asylum support (SRC, 2016).

The events of 2015 captured public imagination, public sympathy was ignited and politicians across Europe engaged. One of the biggest challenges ahead is to maintain and build on public engagement and support. The swift response has, to some extent, been delivered at the expense of engagement and transparency. Whilst national and local government and statutory agencies have been effective in their involvement, it has been much harder for the voluntary sector to access and shape policy decisions. There has been little opportunity to hear the voices of those most directly affected: the voices of the arriving refugees and also of the communities with whom they are settling. It has been challenging to match up the offers of help from the people of Scotland with the needs of refugees. Interestingly the desire to minimise publicity to avoid negative reactions from some sectors of the population may have also reduced the opportunity for sharing goodwill.

It will take a long time to assess experiences and garner learning from this recent episode of refugee resettlement. However, the experience of Scotland demonstrates value of bringing together key stakeholders, building relationship and developing shared understandings. The priorities going forward must be to widen engagement and transparency, promote a welcome for all refugees irrespective of how they arrive, and support for sustainable and integrated lives across our communities.

"Nobody gets a visa": Findings from the MEDMIG Project

Katharine Jones, The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University

In 2015 an estimated 1,011,712 people crossed the Mediterranean to Europe in search of safety and a better life. 3,770 are known to have died trying to make this journey, according to data published by IOM. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for International Development (DfID), the MEDMIG project examines the dynamics, determinants, drivers and infrastructures underpinning this recent migration across, and loss of life in, the Mediterranean (www.MEDMIG.info). Researchers from the universities of Coventry, Birmingham and Oxford, along with colleagues at ELIAMEP, FIERI, Yasar University, People for Change Foundation conducted 500 interviews with refugees and migrants arriving into Greece, Italy, Malta and Turkey, and more than 100 interviews with a range of stakeholders. We also observed 'the crisis' as it unfolded, including political and policy responses at the local, national and international levels. While not focused on resettlement per se, this research offers insight into those who were not able to access resettlement schemes, highlighting the scale of the challenge for involved in planning or advocating for resettlement.

There was a significant shift in the patterns of boat arrivals to Europe during the course of 2015. Whilst most people crossed to Europe via the Central Mediterranean from Libya to Italy in 2014, the vast majority (84%) of those arriving by boat in 2015 crossed the Aegean from departure points dotted along the Turkish coast. In the last five months of 2015 the story of Europe's 'migration crisis' – which had been dominated by the stories of hundreds of people drowning in the Mediterranean seas between Libya and Italy earlier in the year – came to be dominated by images of thousands of people arriving every day in Greece. By autumn 2015, 200,000 were arriving on the Greek islands of Lesvos, Kos, Chios and Samos, every month.

Our key findings from Research Brief No. 2 (H. Crawley, F. Duvell, K. Jones, D. Skleparis) include:

1. The vast majority (88%) of those interviewed in Greece (N=215) told us they were forced to leave their home countries or the countries in which they were living due to **conflict**, **persecution, violence, death threats and human rights abuse.** This highlights the scale of protective solutions required for those who were travelling across the Mediterranean last year and into 2016. More than a quarter (28%) of respondents said that a significant factor in their decision to leave were the **activities of Islamic State (IS)**, particularly in Syria but also in Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen. For Eritreans, Syrians and Afghans (living in Iran), the risk / fear of **forced conscription** into the government army, militia or rebel force was a major factor underlying the decision to leave.

2. For the majority of respondents **the most important priority was to reach a country in which they felt safe**. The **presence of family members or other social contacts (friends, acquaintances)** was the most important factor for nearly two thirds (59%) of those who mentioned an intended destination. This was particularly evident among Syrian respondents, many of who maintained almost daily contact with relatives and friends (by telephone, Facebook, Whatsapp and Viber), but could also be seen among Afghans (travelling both directly from Afghanistan and Iran) and Iraqis. Relationships with family and friends living in specific European countries meant that some people were sent resources for the journey and that others felt more confident about what would happen to them on arrival.

3. Our respondents' **inability to obtain a passport / and or visa to enter a country of protection through a resettlement scheme meant that they had no alternative other than to engage the services of a smuggler to get to Greece, and engage in quite risky journeys.** Because of the lack of safe and legal routes, all of our respondents engaged the services of a smuggler for at least one stage of their journey to Greece. One in ten of our interviewees told us that they had tried but failed to migrate legally, for example, through applying for a work or student visa, UN resettlement or family reunification. Others considered this option but decided it was unlikely to be successful. But for the most part, at the time of departure there were no operating embassies or consulates from which our respondents could seek a visa or apply for a resettlement scheme. For instance, there are currently no Western embassies operating in Syria, and Syrians are only able to apply for visas from embassies in Beirut (Lebanon) or Amman (Jordan).

"I didn't try to apply for visa. There are no embassies in Raqqa, and we were not allowed to go to the areas controlled by the regime. Also, women were not allowed outside their house. And I was avoiding exiting the house because I was scared. In Turkey they told me that it was hard to get a visa from the embassies there." **(Young woman, travelling with husband and small children)**

In other cases, applying for a passport would have been dangerous as this would alert the authorities to an intent to leave, for instance from Eritrea. Several interviewees directly expressed a

wish that they could have been able to obtain a visa, and therefore not needed to hire a smuggler. For instance, this respondent:

"I didn't try to apply for visa. Nobody gets a visa. I wish we could pay the embassy instead of the smuggler in order to come here" **(Syrian man travelling alone)**

4. Moreover, contrary to what is often assumed, **the services of smugglers were as frequently engaged by individuals to help them leave their homes, as they are to avoid border controls and enter a country irregularly.** This is either because the government or authority in control forbade departure or otherwise imposed travel restrictions (e.g. parts of Syria, Eritrea, Iran), or because travelling was dangerous and personal security was required personal security (e.g. Syria, Eritrea). Almost half (43%) of those interviewed in Greece had used a smuggler in order to escape the country in which they were living. This included over a third of Syrians (including Palestinian Syrians) who had used a smuggler in order to leave Syria. Interviewees paid individuals to smuggle them out of areas of conflict or under siege (e.g. Aleppo, Daraa, Homs), or cities under IS control from which it was forbidden to leave (e.g. Deir Al-Zor, Raqqa). All the Afghan nationals we interviewed who had been living in Iran prior to their departure started their journeys with smugglers, usually from Tehran and often in the boot of a car. This was because it is illegal for Afghans to travel from city to city within Iran, making internal travel within the country dangerous. Smugglers guided Afghan interviewees past the Iranian army who are believed to shoot those trying to exit Iran through the mountains into Turkey. Similarly, all but one of the Eritrean men and women we interviewed paid smugglers in order to escape Eritrea, either because they had fled army conscription and / or it is illegal for to cross the border out Eritrea. Eritrean interviewees also specifically referred to hiring smugglers to help them avoid the risks of being kidnapped, extorted or murdered on the border between Eritrea and Sudan.

These findings lead us to a number of reflections on the applicability and utility of resettlement schemes in large migration flows such as that occurred across the Mediterranean in 2015-2016:

- The lack of legal, safe alternatives led to expensive, risky journeys for our respondents in which smugglers were a necessity
- For our respondents, the practicalities of getting to a place from where they could apply for a resettlement place, should they even have been available, were enormous.
- The vast majority of those who crossed the Eastern Mediterranean in 2015-2106 was in need of protection and would have potentially fitted the criteria for resettlement. However, then and now, the broader politics of EU policymakers were firmly about preventing irregular migration into the EU. Can research such as this usefully be used to challenge the politics of containment?