



# THE PROMISE OF MIGRATION

A Companion to the International  
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*Editor:*  
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## Table of contents

<b>Part 1: The Settlement Sector .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Immigrant Artists: Reframing Vocation and Vision .....	1
2. Responding to the Settlement Needs of Newcomers: Community Organizations in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada .....	9
3. The Third Sector, Settlement, and Social Inclusion in Canada and Germany.....	18
<b>Part 2: Policy and New Policy Directions .....</b>	<b>27</b>
4. Building Relationship between Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples.....	27
5. Private and Government Sponsorship in the Resettlement Experiences of Chinese- Vietnamese Refugees in Canada .....	35
6. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program: A Gender-Based Analysis.....	43
<b>Part 3: Identity &amp; Integration .....</b>	<b>52</b>
7. Can I Integrate with this Veil? Examining Cultural and Social Integration through Voices of Veiling Muslim Women in Canada.....	52
8. Being Canadian and Ahmadi Muslim: Exploring Identity Formation of Young Women.....	60
9. Afros, Activism, and Affinity: The Politicization of Natural Black Hair, Racism, and Sense of Belonging in Multicultural Greater Toronto Area .....	67
<b>Part 4: Inter- and Transnational Perspectives.....</b>	<b>75</b>
10. The Transnational Experiences of Canadian Snowbirds in Mexico .....	75
11. Defying Classification: The Migration of Unaccompanied Children from the Northern Triangle of Central America .....	83
12. Framing Migration Crises: A Comparative Analysis of Media Texts on the Venezuelan Collapse.....	91



# Introduction

Harald Bauder & Enrico del Castello

Migration is shaping societies around the world. It has long defined settler countries, such as Canada; it is affecting communities of departure and return, ranging from the Azores to Zimbabwe; and it is increasingly impacting countries that have traditionally not considered themselves as major immigrant destinations, like many European countries. Meanwhile, individual migrants and their families experience departure, migration, and arrival differently than the communities shaped by them. From both societal and individual perspectives, we can ask whether migration accomplishes what it promises to achieve. Does migration contribute to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of societies? Do migrants and their families find a pathway to security, achieve social and economic upward mobility, and gain opportunities to participate in the political and cultural life of their arrival communities? *The Promise of Migration* addresses these questions through a critical lens.

This compendium was specifically developed as a companion to the International Metropolis Conference 2019—held in Ottawa and Gatineau, Canada, from June 24 to 28, 2019 and organized in collaboration with [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#) (IRCC). The International Metropolis Project is an international forum for bridging research, policy, and practice on migration, integration, and diversity—and the International Metropolis Conference is the largest annual meeting of experts representing academia, government, and civil society in these fields.

This year, the International Metropolis Conference returns to Canada after 14 years. Since its inception in 1996, Canada has been very active in the annual Conference, which is an essential forum for promoting international knowledge-sharing among stakeholders and providing an opportunity for interactions between representatives from all levels of government, the settlement sector, business and non-governmental organizations, as well as university-based researchers and students. Delegates from around the world will gather together to discuss issues related to migration, contributing to the diversity of ideas through plenaries, workshops, and many other initiatives spearheaded during the International Metropolis Conference.

In this spirit of collaboration, IRCC and the Graduate Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS) at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada, have worked in partnership to produce *The Promise of Migration*. IRCC and ISS have a history of successful collaboration. Over the last 15 years, many ISS students have gained valuable experience in internships and placements at IRCC. In 2017-2018, the two institutions developed and piloted a student paper challenge that served as model of a National Essay Challenge launched in 2018 to promote innovative, policy-relevant graduate student research.

ISS was launched in September 2004 at Ryerson University in Toronto as Canada's first Master of Arts program devoted to the advanced study of migration-related policies, services, and experiences. A defining feature of ISS is that it closely connects education with cutting-edge research conducted by more than fifty affiliated Ryerson faculty members and the Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement. These faculty members and students represent a wide variety of interdisciplinary academic interests and backgrounds, contributing a breadth of perspectives, experiences, and research opportunities. ISS prepares students not only for academic and research-related careers but also for professional employment in government, the

immigrant and settlement service sector, and private industries seeking to attract immigrant talent and acquire best practices related to diversity—as well as encouraging and supporting students in their pursuit of grassroots activism.

These two core features of ISS—academic excellence and practical relevance—provide the context for *The Promise of Migration*. This compendium to the Conference is intended to promote students' work in the wider field of migration and, most importantly, to foster the participation of graduate students who bring their own perspective to the International Metropolis Conference in Canada. Students are tomorrow's leaders and their ideas and perspectives will shape the future of newcomer inclusion, economic opportunity harnessed from migration, and corresponding global cooperation. Ultimately, their ideas and perspectives will help migrants and societies to achieve the most from the promise of migration.

All chapters were co-written by recent graduates of ISS (who are listed as first authors) and their faculty supervisors (second authors). The chapters are based on the students' Major Research Papers (MRPs). The instruction given to participating students and supervisors was to make the text accessible to a variety of audiences, including academics, policy makers, and civic leaders. The contributors were encouraged to discuss the policy relevance of their research, include policy recommendations, and avoid academic jargon. Readers who are interested in further details can access the full MRPs free of charge through [Ryerson University](#), where we keep the remarkable collection of every MRP written by ISS graduates since 2005.

The twelve chapters of this compendium are organized into four parts, each containing three chapters. Part 1 addresses issues related to the 'settlement sector,' which is a particularly Canadian term that refers to structures and organizations that deliver services to newcomers, ranging from immediate assistance at arrival and adapting in a new environment, to language training and career development. Part 2 deals with policy and innovative policy directions—in particular, in relation to settlement policies and immigrant selection programs in Canada. Part 3 focuses on identity and the roles of religion and practices of racialization on processes of 'integration.' Finally, Part 4 discusses international and transnational perspectives that link Canada to other parts of the world.

## **DISCLAIMER**

Contributions to this publication were written in the spirit of critical reflection, independent thought, and academic freedom. They do not necessarily represent the views of the International Metropolis Conference, the International Metropolis Project, IRCC, or ISS.

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# Part 1: The Settlement Sector

## 1. Immigrant Artists: Reframing Vocation and Vision

Eva Hellreich & Myer Siemiatycki

### Abstract

Despite Canada's rich cultural and creative landscape, little research has been done to examine the experiences of immigrant artists. As Canada's urban areas continue to experience population growth largely fueled by immigration, the majority of research on immigrant integration uses quantitative data to analyze the economic integration of economic migrants and refugees. However, the experiences of immigrants working in the creative sector are not captured by this data. This chapter has two purposes: 1) to give a platform for the immigrant artists interviewed for this study to share their experiences integrating into Canada's creative economy, and 2) to explore how experiences of migration, identity shifts, and acculturation are reflected in immigrant art—through a frontline, face-to-face method that quantitative data alone cannot capture.

**Keywords:** immigrant artists; creative economy; storytelling; integration

### Introduction

The City of Toronto is Canada's largest and most diverse city racially, linguistically, and religiously—internationally known for the cultural makeup which contributes to its vibrant character. According to the 2016 census, 51.25% of the City of Toronto's residents identify as a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2016). The diverse makeup of Toronto's residents is reflected in the wide range of cuisines, religious institutions, cultural events, celebrations, and art available in Toronto. Such cultural and creative amenities contribute to Toronto being an appealing and viable option for immigrants looking to resettle. As Canada's population continues to evolve alongside immigration patterns, it is important to determine the barriers that immigrant artists face and how they are being overcome—which will help federal and provincial governments, as well as service providers, to grasp a deeper understanding of how immigration impacts Canada's creative economy.

A significant amount of Canadian-based migration research seeks to understand settlement patterns and issues by using an economic lens to assess integration into the Canadian labour market and economy. As such, much immigration research is conducted quantitatively through national surveys, polls, and assessments of household income. This approach has undoubtedly contributed to a valuable body of research which helps identify and respond to systemic inequalities which immigrants confront. However, little research exists on how immigration influences immigrant artists and the work they produce, or the barriers that immigrant artists face when attempting to live as working professional artists after migrating. This chapter examines the experiences of immigrant working-professional artists living in Toronto through a case study supported by a brief literature review, concluding with research findings and policy suggestions.

While historically associated with fiction and entertainment, storytelling has recently been incorporated into various disciplines. As a research tool, storytelling has “taken on new prominence in psychology, philosophy, semiotics, folklore studies, anthropology, political science, sociology, history, and legal studies” (Davis, 2002, p.3). This is in part due to an increasing awareness of the importance of acknowledging ‘subject agency’ through recognizing the subjectivity of the human experience. In the book *Stories of Change: Narrative and Social Movements* (2002), Davis argues that stories not only have the capacity to shed light on the ‘plot’ and ‘characters’ of the stories themselves, but can also offer insight into the context in which the story is reproduced for an audience. How societies tell and honour stories holds a mirror to the society engaged in the particular research at hand, as it illuminates who is invited to participate in storytelling, and how social inclusion is navigated by marginalized groups (Razack, 1993). Immigrant artists are a marginalized group who have a particularly close tie to using storytelling for social change and reflection. Yet despite immigrant artists’ use of creative mediums as a form of political participation, identity exploration, and financial means, little research has been done on immigrant professional artists in Canada. The lack of research on the intersection of migration and Canada’s creative economy has resulted in minimal policies or services being created to support the professional and personal integration of immigrant artists into the Canadian creative economy and broader society. The following section outlines immigration pathways which immigrant artists can use to enter Canada.

## Immigration Admissions Policy

There are three (legal) immigration streams which prospective migrants can use to obtain Permanent Residency (PR) and citizenship in Canada: Refugees, Family Class, and Economic Class. Typical pathways to permanent residency and citizenship for immigrant artists under the Economic Class include immigrating as a *Self-Employed Person – Cultural Worker*, under the condition that they “intend and are able to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of Canada” (Government of Canada, 2018). A ‘significant contribution’ may refer to financial contributions from creative work, or general creative contributions to Canadian culture in a broad sense.

## Support Programs for Immigrant Artists in Toronto

Toronto is home to a small handful of non-profit organizations that support immigrant artists’ professional and personal development. In addition to settlement support organizations available to immigrants, Toronto has three organizations which specifically cater to the professional needs of immigrant artists: Neighbourhood Arts Network (NAN), Airsa, and Paralia.

NAN is a non-profit initiative of the Toronto Arts Foundation founded in 2010, and was partially created to recognize and service the unique needs and barriers that immigrant artists face when entering the Canadian creative economy through engaging with community art from a front-line approach. One component of NAN’s programming and mandate includes helping immigrant artists personally and professionally settle in Toronto. NAN provides various award programs, mentorship opportunities, and complimentary workshops that give information pertaining to navigating the creative sector and how to leverage creative opportunities and networking in a Canadian context. NAN also offers complimentary translation and accessibility-support services.

Airsa Art & Thought Association is a relatively young Toronto-based non-profit art organization that was officially registered in December 2015. Airsa’s mandate is to “support internationally

educated artists who are new to Canada through training, events, and community art initiatives to create a context for them to thrive and adapt to the new society, Toronto” (Airsa, n.d.). The founder and director of Airsa is a visual artist who migrated to Toronto in 2013 and initially received funding from NAN. During our interview they noted that when they had recently arrived in Toronto, they felt overwhelmed by the lack of support for immigrant artists. Once they obtained some funding and networked in Toronto, they opened Airsa to help fill this gap. Currently, Airsa hosts and facilitates workshops on a variety of subtopics relative to entering the creative economy as a newcomer, as well as networking sessions and assisting newcomer artists with accessing studio space and other relevant needs.

Paralia Newcomer Arts Network is a non-profit “collective that supports and promotes newcomer artists in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area as well as provides resources and information on current opportunities” (PNAN, n.d.). They do this through resource sharing, professional development, art-based workshops, networking sessions, one-on-one consultations, and discussion series. Paralia was started by a newcomer arts administrator who struggled to find work in Toronto and was motivated by her experience.

## Methodology

This section outlines the methodology used for the qualitative research portion of this chapter, which focused on immigrant artists in the performative and visual arts. Searching for literature on immigrant, refugee, and illegalized artists in Canada drew minimal publications. Consequently, the methodology underlying this chapter is grounded in semi-structured narrative interviews conducted individually with immigrant artists in Toronto.

Eleven immigrant artists who had received either the Newcomer and Refugee Artist Mentorship (NRAM) -- a partnership with Toronto Arts Council, where NRAN’s role is to match 15 newcomer professional artists with an established professional artist mentor -- RBC Arts Access Award, or a combination of the two programs provided by NAN were interviewed. The research completed for NAN was intended to produce impact analysis, so that NAN could understand the accessibility and effectiveness of their newcomer programs that support personal and professional development. Space constraints and thematic restrictions have limited the ability to include findings from all interviews here. The four participants to be discussed in this chapter are included due to the variety of immigration streams, creative practices, age, gender identity, and countries of origin that their stories and art represents. Their real names are used at request of the participants, in hopes of highlighting their stories and work as artists. The Ryerson Ethics Board approved use of real names in this research.

## Findings

In May 2017, interviews were conducted with four recipients of NAN’s funding and support programs. NAN defines a ‘newcomer’ as a legal migrant who has resided in Canada between one to seven years. While conducting primary research for this chapter, it became apparent that there are various restrictions which complicate the ability of immigrant artists to access funding and support services. These include hurdles of language, low income, and migration status, among other factors. Despite such barriers, many newcomer artists continue to pursue their paths as artists in Canada. The following section presents some interview findings, illuminating how migration influences artists, their work, and the broader arts community. In the process, immigrant artists often reframe their creative vocation and vision.

Maria Perez is a Peruvian sculptor and painter who specializes in the Indigenous Peruvian art form of 'retablos,' which are three-dimensional sculptures that have historically been created by men to tell Indigenous Peruvian folklore and resist narratives imposed by colonialism (Stein, 2005). The fact that, as a woman, Maria is trained and continues to create retablos is a form of resistance in itself. When discussing what her art means to her, Maria stated:

It's part of my identity. My city, Ayacucho, is where [retablos] originated. When I was a kid, I felt I wanted to do it but only guys make it in my city. When I started, I was the only woman in my school. Most of this kind of work is done by men while the women can't spend this kind of time on it—because they have other responsibilities. But here, I have more help and different responsibilities.

Being a migrant and diasporic can disrupt the limitations imposed in the culture of the origin country on how art is, or can be, done. Maria is expressing an experience suggesting that the altered terrain of diasporic existence can open up new artistic pathways.

When asked if she feels her art is political, Maria replied that during her first year in Canada she was very lonely. Upon arrival, Maria realized she lacked a Peruvian, or even a broad Latin American, community in Toronto. While alone and awaiting citizenship, Maria began learning about Canada's history and was immediately interested in Canada's Indigenous histories. Maria expressed the shock she felt when she learned of Canada's treatment of Indigenous people, and felt that Canada's contemporary reputation excludes Indigenous history and the ongoing impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities. Maria's identity as an Indigenous Peruvian led to feelings of solidarity with Canada's Indigenous people. While retablos are traditionally used to depict Latin American folklore, Maria has created retablos that depict Indigenous Canadian history and folklore. In addition to using traditional Peruvian art methods to advocate for the rights and recognition of Indigenous people, Maria's art reflects how migration has altered her hybridized identity through acculturation. How Maria's use of retablos has changed—and her reflection on how immigration has changed her use of retablos to recognize and share the stories of marginalized and underrepresented groups—demonstrates that alternative forms of storytelling can be used as a tool of empowerment and solidarity for the artist, subject, and communities who engage with the piece.

Filmmaker Alice Il Shin also commented on how the stories told in her art has shifted since settling in Toronto. Il Shin, who currently promotes her films under her chosen "Canadianized" name 'Alice Il Shin,' is a filmmaker originally from Korea who was formally trained in Japan. During our interview she noted that following her second migration, her films primarily discuss migration and relationships. When asked how she feels her films have changed since moving to Canada, Alice replied:

I used to make more family dramas. One film on my website is about a Korean girl who lost her mother and found out she's part Japanese. She goes and tries to find her family in Japan; it's about identity and family. Another film is a Korean father-son story. But this time, it's more [about] friendship. It probably reflects me. It's about a Japanese immigrant girl who has her first day in a Canadian school and can't understand the language. She meets a Canadian girl who may become her friend. This immigrant life story reflects my own life. In Asia, you use different language for addressing different people. But in English it's more saying the same kind of thing. This might be why I started looking at friends instead of family. In this language, it reflects how everyone can become friends.

Alice uses her films to connect with others while processing her own experiences in a way that recognizes the loneliness of settlement, while simultaneously celebrating the beauty of forging new friendships. This positioning does not frame the immigrant character as meek, or in need of a gracious Canadian to extend friendship. It instead recognizes how immigrants develop hybrid identities and build a chosen family in the host country. In response to being asked whether her art is a vessel for self, or a vehicle for her immigrant political participation, Alice paused before thoughtfully responding that although film sets are often stressful,

When the camera movement is perfect, when the band is singing—it's those tiny moments that make me content to stay in film. It's these small moments in life, too, which are also surrounded by suffering, which make you continue. I like my work to reflect this.

In the case of Alice's work, art intentionally and blatantly imitates life. Through juxtaposing suffering and joy—loneliness and forging meaningful connections—her own story and fictional adaptations offer a humanized narrative of how some young immigrant women artists experience settlement. While Alice's films recognize how stories of migration are often wrapped in heartbreak, the stories of immigrants are also about strength, identity, and acculturation. This echoes Hall's (1996) and Tuck's (2009) theories on cultural exchanges being most effective when they are collaborative and mutually beneficial, as this approach recognizes the agency of the immigrant. Alice's film also depicts immigrants as complex individuals; a representation that steps outside of the mainstream portrayal of immigrants, helping audiences unlearn stagnant social constructions of immigrants.

The migration stream 'refugee' is a migration status that has a particularly interesting relationship with public representation and social constructionism. Actor Ahmed Moneka uses his theatrical works to play with common (mis)perceptions of refugees settling in Canada. Ahmed Moneka commented on the particular uniqueness of 'becoming' a refugee while visiting Canada for work as an actor in the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Ahmed's story embodies 'refugee-ness' as an emotionally-charged migration category which is put upon an individual by the host country's immigration system. In addition to the creation of 'the refugee' through immigration policy, refugees are often constructed as the exotic or violent other in popular migration discourse. This discourse is reproduced in public, legal, and media discourses, and ultimately "creates and reinforces the position of forced migrants as different, as not belonging" (Grove & Zwi, 2006, p. 1931). Despite the economic, political, and creative contributions that refugees make to the development of their communities in the host country, popular discourse and government policy often essentializes immigrants as either the vulnerable or violent 'other' (Said, 1978). Refugees are rarely portrayed as complex and resilient individuals who are capable of contributing to their new communities (Grove & Zwi, 2006). Ahmed's work as an actor and musician challenges this representation in multiple ways, including the care used when navigating casting calls. When asked if he feels his art is a form of political participation, Ahmed replied:

I am addicted to theatre. I will continue it, but I will be pickier with Arabic [roles]. Many agents look at me like a terrorist. They typecast me because I am black and speak Arabic. My thing is [that] love is the reason for a great future. I will be the first Canadian-Iraqi actor to win an Oscar. Because of this, I have to be careful with what I do—my vision, journey and target.

Landing a spot in a casting room is one thing, but the roles which are offered to him are another barrier due to racist tropes popular within the entertainment industry. While Ahmed is eager to continue exploring a variety of roles and building his portfolio, he is mindful of how as an actor he has the potential to contribute to the representation of Muslims and racialized men in a xenophobic world. Here, Ahmed defies the social construct of the refugee through being conscious of how the arts contribute to the world that the next generation will inhabit; in other words, emphasizing how much the type of cultural representation matters.

On representation, Ahmed spoke to the importance of the hybrid music genres his Toronto-based band plays, noting that “despite everything happening in our countries, we have amazing culture and amazing life. I want to reflect all these kinds of art through street festivals which provide a bridge between cultures.” Despite the ascribed identities which refugees are socially assigned in the host country, many refugees participate in transnational and diasporic art. Art created by refugees recognize the complex and unique identities of artists, and also works to foster and demonstrate resiliency through the creation process. Art is one method of sharing differing stories of refugee migration; reminding the local population that despite how refugees are socially constructed, there is not one homogenous refugee experience. It also reflects the valuable contributions which refugee artists make to Canada’s art and culture sector.

Ahmed noted that his music and theatre work has adapted to life in Canada, which coincides with how he feels received in Toronto by the greater community, saying: “It’s been interesting to see the shift in how people embrace me as one of ‘them’—going from being ‘a refugee from Iraq’ to ‘Ahmed the artist.’ Eye contact was difficult at first, but two years and eight months later, Toronto is my home.” Interestingly, after being asked when he felt that this identity switch from ‘refugee’ to ‘Canadian-Iraqi artist’ occurred, Ahmed quickly replied it was the day he was granted citizenship. In his forthcoming theatre project, he is experimenting with the concept of hybrid national identity as an immigrant through ‘place-making,’ which explores what it means to lose your home and build another. This project will delve into the theme of national identity in an immersive fashion to help educate migration scholars and Canadian-born citizens on the contemporary Canadian settlement experience.

Despite migrating as an economic migrant, Padideh had a similar experience to Ahmed—with settlement workers and professional musicians trying to put her in a box based on her country of origin. Padideh Ahrarnejad is a professional tar player originally from Iran and is currently in an orchestra called *Kune: Canada’s Global Orchestra* that is garnering national attention. Kune, which translates to ‘together,’ consists of 12 musicians from 12 different countries. Their songs are hybrid creations collectively written with the intention of disrupting traditional methods of approaching culturally-specific instrumental folklore, e.g., playing Brazilian music on the Iranian tar. In addition to disrupting notions of conventional art and gendered associations with sending countries, Padideh also disrupts assumptions of Iran in interviews when provoked to confront the main dominant media narrative of Iran:

Interviewers always ask my opinion of Iran. I come from a country that has complicated politics and I hate relating my music to it. I wrote a song for the Kune called *Moment of Silence*. In the orchestra, everyone talks about their piece before it’s played. I always say the first year I was here, I felt nothing in my mind—only silence—which is not positive or negative. I want music to be for pleasure and expressing myself, my feelings, and to communicate.

Padideh's use of the physical stage to share the stillness and neutrality of her settlement experience is particularly meaningful. When depicting immigrant women in a positive light, migration discourse and the social construction of the immigrant often positions immigrants as victims who are extremely grateful to the host country for saving them from their 'uncivilized' country of origin. While Padideh did note the gratitude she feels for being able to raise her children in Canada, she disrupts the single story of the 'vulnerable' immigrant Iranian woman through being vocal about her life as a strong and independent woman, mother, and highly regarded tar player.

Playing sold-out shows in a diverse and international city demonstrates how Padideh is both financially profiting for herself as well as benefitting Toronto's economy through the amount of tickets sold to Kune's performances. However, the journey to having sold-out shows was long and tedious. Padideh noted it was difficult finding out about auditions due to the lack of information that settlement agencies and employment centers have about the creative sector. She also found it shockingly difficult to convince Canadian musicians and theatres that she is qualified and experienced with considerable success in Iran.

I was very busy and famous in Iran. It's hard to work in Iran as a woman musician, but I worked very hard and achieved many things. But as an immigrant mother [here] I couldn't... people didn't believe I had so much experience, because they think Iran is so oppressive to women, so there's no way I had that opportunity or experience. Many people don't know what happened in Iran. Even telling people that I was allowed to play music at home shows that Iran doesn't forbid everything. It helps show there is not a single story.

Interestingly, Padideh's rebellion against assumptions of what an Iranian-Canadian musician should look and sound like extends to the more wide-ranging, hybrid repertoire she now performs.

In my country, I played traditional music. The tar is one of the most famous and traditional Persian instruments. My friends would [think] what I'm doing with tar now, with international musicians, untraditional and 'wrong.' But I love it, that I'm now thinking outside the box. These days I play traditional Persian and modern music—I play in the Iranian community and in the Iranian ensemble—as well as with other groups where I don't use Persian techniques or songs. Now, I play everything.

## Conclusion

This research has illustrated and confirmed the value of studying artists as a distinct immigrant cohort. These findings enrich our understanding of art, acculturation, hybridity, transnationalism, creative cities, and migration. There are many, many more stories to be told in this vein. Each artist interviewed conveyed a distinct narrative derived from their personal migration experience. At the same time, several common themes emerged. First, frustration often occurred over the lack of settlement support specifically tailored to newcomer artists. Secondly, as we have seen, each immigrant artist identified ways in which their artistry has changed as a result of migration in both form and content; their "Canadian-ness" is now manifested in the art they produce and perform.

This research highlights the need for more arts-based newcomer services and supports. Policy recommendations to better support newcomer artists and their integration into the creative economy, as well as Canadian society, include: 1) increasing arts funding in the forms of grants available to emerging immigrant artists, and 2) developing settlement service programming specific to artists and the creative sector. These interviews have illuminated how the artist after migration is not the same as the artist before; as migration impacts their art, immigrant artists alter the contemporary Canadian art landscape. Overall, further research on the needs, experiences, and values of immigrant artists is needed to improve their settlement process.

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## 2. Responding to the Settlement Needs of Newcomers: Community Organizations in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada

by Erica Wright & Henry Parada

### Abstract

This chapter analyzes the role of grassroots organizations in the Greater Toronto Area supporting newcomers to Canada. A qualitative thematic analysis with staff from three grassroots organizations and two key informants seeks to: 1) gather practical knowledge from these organizations about the actions needed to improve settlement outcomes for newcomers, and 2) learn about the challenges that grassroots organizations face in continuing and expanding their services, and how they can be supported in this work. These specific grassroots organizations do not provide direct government-funded settlement services, but work more independently towards goals of long-term immigrant success and integration. These research findings identified the need for more responsive and culturally-relevant programming among settlement organizations, revealed challenges with attaining funding, and demonstrated the importance of partnerships among related institutions. These actors have valuable insights into newcomers' current settlement needs and can make important knowledge contributions to the settlement sector.

**Keywords:** immigrants; settlement and integration; public services; grassroots organizations; Canada

### Introduction

This chapter analyzes the vital role of community and grassroots organizations working in the Greater Toronto Area to support newcomers to Canada. While there is a wide body of literature on the Canadian settlement sector, there is less research available on the contributions of grassroots and community-level organizations, which are not part of the formal settlement sector. Formally, their work is less influenced by immigration and settlement policy, but instead by direct observation of the needs in their local communities. Community-level actors have direct contact with newcomers and are often first in understanding the dynamic and complex situations on the ground and in different communities. These actors have valuable insights on practical solutions to newcomers' current settlement needs and can make necessary contributions to the settlement sector.

A qualitative thematic analysis was used to study these community organizations and initiatives. The goal was to seek out practical solutions to newcomer settlement needs by considering the potential role of community organizations and institutions outside of the formal settlement sector, thus contributing to knowledge-sharing in the sector. This chapter explores the impact of staff at these community-based organizations, the challenges they face, and the kinds of supports and policy changes they desire to help grow their initiatives.

## Context

### The Canadian Settlement Sector

In 2016, Canada welcomed more than 296,000 permanent residents, with projected increases up to 360,000 in 2020 (Government of Canada, 2017). With a growing and dynamic immigrant population, it is crucial that Canada can provide support to newcomers settling into cities. Particularly, literature has noted some barriers to newcomers' economic integration (Banerjee & Phan, 2014). Settlement sector challenges have included limited infrastructure in urbanizing areas, limited and competitive funding, and bureaucratic inefficiencies (Mukhtar, Dean, Wilson, Ghassemi & Wilson, 2016). The current settlement model places non-governmental service provider organizations (SPOs) at the front of service delivery, with programs primarily funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This model uses private sector strategies, which emphasize low programming costs and a push towards immigrant self-sufficiency (Evans & Shields, 2014). SPOs are funded through short-term contracts based on specific programs and measures dictated by funders, while often relying on voluntary and charitable contributions to fill service gaps (Shields, Drolet & Valenzuela, 2016). Challenges arise when funders may be out of touch with the realities of organizations working on the ground or unaware of current client needs, and SPOs often lack the flexibility to act outside of program guidelines (Mukhtar et al., 2016). Scholars have also noted challenges with eligibility criteria, which limit the types of programs that are funded and the clients who can be served, based on their citizenship status and length of time in Canada (Mukhtar et al., 2016).

IRCC funds the majority of formal services for immigrant support, including: needs assessment, orientation, language training, employment services, and peer support, as well as support services which help immigrants access programs. IRCC also funds programs geared toward research, staff training, and capacity-building in the sector, such as Local Immigration Partnerships. Projects operate on three-year funding contracts after a national call for proposals and are available to permanent residents of Canada (IRCC, 2017).

The provinces also provide support for settlement services. Ontario funds bridge training programs, language interpretation, and more—e.g., the provincial Newcomer Settlement Program, which supports newcomers up to five years after arrival and includes refugee claimants, permit holders, permanent residents, and citizens (Ontario, 2012). Federal newcomer programs, on the other hand, will pay for those who have been in Canada for less than three years with legal status other than citizenship. Foundations and the private sector also provide funding support to immigrant-serving organizations.

A 2017 evaluation of the IRCC settlement program noted that desired outcomes had been largely met, although it also identified several areas that needed improvement, including its ability to cater to different demographics and individual needs such as mental health issues. While roughly 39% of newcomers accessed IRCC-funded settlement services in their first two years in Canada, the need to facilitate new ways of connecting newcomers to mainstream community services was noted—due to a significant number of clients who identified “non-IRCC program needs,” who in some cases were referred to other available community services. Interviews of settlement staff indicated that vulnerable populations (i.e., those experiencing trauma, mental health needs, isolation, or language barriers) had a greater need for services (IRCC, 2017).

## Newcomer Inclusion and Economic Integration

The goal of supporting newcomer integration is to allow full engagement of newcomers in the social, economic, political, and cultural life of Canada (IRCC, 2017). Supporting integration means removing barriers caused by attitudes or systemic problems, which impede an individual's ability to participate (City for All Women Initiative, 2015). It also means acknowledging individual needs when providing services, and enacting policy that will make the labour market more accessible to newcomers.

A 2012 study by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) provides a comprehensive review of settlement needs and services in Ontario. Over 2,500 newcomers were surveyed—including permanent residents, refugees, claimants, and migrant workers—while interviews were held with service providers. Employment was identified as the highest concern, first on the list for 62% of respondents. Service providers also emphasized that newcomers' overall success in their settlement is closely related to their employment prospects, and suggested there was room for improvement to newcomer employment services. Only about 32% of newcomers who used the service said that IRCC employment and skills training helped them find employment. Twenty per cent said the service helped them find work that matched their education, with another 20% stating that it helped them get their credentials recognized (OCASI, 2012). While OCASI emphasized barriers to accessing services (e.g., transportation costs), outcomes for those who did access services suggests a need to reassess the programs themselves.

High poverty rates among immigrants, particularly visible minorities, remains a concern in and around major Canadian cities (Burstein, 2010). A 2017 Statistics Canada report noted that while the low-income rate decreased among the Canadian-born during the 1990s, the rate increased among newcomers overall. The low-income rate for recent immigrants was 1.4 times higher than that of the Canadian-born in 1980, 2.5 times higher in 2000, and 2.7 times higher by 2010 (Picot & Lu, 2017). Also, economic integration may be even more difficult in cities that attract immigrants, such as Toronto, even with a strong economy (Picot & Lu, 2017).

Looking at education, in 2012 there was minimal difference in chronic low-income rates by education level at landing (Picot & Lu, 2017). Somerville & Walsworth (2009) note the greatest difference in low-income rates between the Canadian-born and recent immigrants was among university graduates, particularly in typically high-paying professions like engineering and applied sciences. The pervasive requirement for Canadian certification puts immigrants at a disadvantage—thus, skilled immigrants in regulated professions experience more significant occupational downgrading upon migration than those in unregulated work (Banerjee & Phan, 2014).

Studies also show that racialized immigrants experience worse employment outcomes (Banerjee, 2009). Controlling for differences in education level, English proficiency, region of residence, and years in Canada, 'place of birth' accounts for 75% of the difference in low-income rates among immigrants (Picot & Lu, 2017). Many low-wage business sectors, such as taxi-driving, have become niche employment sectors for racialized immigrants (Couton, 2014). There is a prevailing issue of underemployment among immigrants, attributed to lack of credential recognition, discrimination, and structural barriers to labour market entry (OCASI, 2012). Poor economic outcomes for immigrants lead to more barriers to integration, suggesting a need to assess employment supports for new immigrants as well as Canadian labour market policies and practices.

## Methodology

This chapter contains research about grassroots and community organizations in the Greater Toronto Area, asking them about the limitations and gaps in available public services for newcomers, and what specialized knowledge could improve immigrant outcomes. A qualitative thematic analysis research approach was used, and data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with six participants from three grassroots organizations: Newcomer Kitchen, Neighbourhood Arts Network, and Culture Bridge Initiatives. Two key informants participated, who both have similar roles with similar organizations: a member of the Social Planning Council of York Region, and a staff member working for Newmarket Recreation and Culture. Participants were staff, managers, or founders of these organizations. Each organization provided unique services to newcomers and none were funded by IRCC—rather, through a mix of sources including provincial and municipal grants, private sponsors, and fundraising. Participants and their organizations granted permission to name the organizations, which was approved by the Ryerson Ethics Board.

‘Settlement services’ is defined here as a diverse range of supports designed to help newcomers settle into life in Canada, including those administered by settlement and employment agencies, community centers, schools, faith-based organizations, and grassroots organizations. The term ‘newcomers’ (as opposed to ‘immigrant’) is broadly used to encompass recent permanent residents, naturalized citizens, refugees, and those without status in Canada.

## Findings and Analysis

### Institutional Limitations to Providing Culturally-Relevant Programming

The primary insight gained from this study was that these organizations were able to fill gaps, where available “formal” services fell short in supporting newcomers. Participants expressed the need, first, for services that are flexible enough to address the immediate needs of newcomers as they come up; and second, to invest in long-term integration supports.

Newcomer Kitchen—a program hosted by the *Depanneur*, a culinary venue in Toronto—began in 2015 and serves the Syrian refugee community in Toronto. The *Depanneur* extended an invitation to the newly arrived Syrian community who were staying in hotels for long periods of time, without kitchens of their own. The program allowed them to use the kitchen to make familiar food, and to share meals with their family and friends. It eventually expanded, adapting to their new challenges once they were settled into homes. Newcomer Kitchen began catering the meals they made and the program then became a way for Syrian refugees to make money as well as participate socially in their new Toronto communities. The project to date “has 75 women participating and has put over \$100,000 into the pockets of the Syrian refugee families in just over two years” (Newcomer Kitchen participant, June 19, 2018). It is one of the few programs in Toronto—if not the only one—that is built on the value of what the Syrian refugees, and the women in particular, have to offer.

The money [that the Syrian cooks receive] is incredibly validated and dignified... also the opportunity for community building, reconciliation, peacemaking, language skills, job skills, confidence-building, and all of this happens very powerfully, in real time, in the kitchen led by women... all we have to do is hold the space for it to happen. We don't sit them in a classroom and tell them [how to be] an entrepreneur; we just got rid of the barriers so that they can do what they're already good at. (Participant from Newcomer Kitchen)

Neighbourhood Arts Network (NAN) began programming for newcomer artists as a result of a two-year study of artists in Toronto neighbourhoods. It eventually got in contact with settlement organizations, knowing that there was limited capacity there in terms of providing relevant, updated information to artists. NAN currently provides funding and resources to artists in Toronto, including newcomer artists, through a number of programs. Through one initiative—the Toronto Newcomer and Refugee Artist Mentorship Program—newcomer artists receive funding and are matched with an established artist as a mentor to help them better integrate into the Toronto art scene.

It's great to see how passionate the newcomer artists are in getting back to their art. So now we're starting to see some of the outcomes from last year's mentorship and it's really great to see them going back into their practice and happy again, doing what they love, and feeling more at home here in Toronto. (Participant from NAN)

This organization serves newcomers of all immigration statuses, who have been in Canada for a range of periods. Participants identified several specific needs of their clients. For NAN, mentorship was identified as an invaluable resource. Newcomer artists also need support with navigating the business side of practicing in Canada, particularly art terminology that is not taught in general English language classes. Cultural barriers and individual issues also pose a challenge for newcomer artists.

For example, a female artist said she didn't feel comfortable to pitch her work to a curator because where she came from, as a female, that's not what you do. Because we're seeing people from all parts of the world, it's also understanding their culture and how they have to negotiate what they can or cannot do. (Participant from NAN)

The same participant provided insight into some of the mental health challenges experienced by some recent newcomer artists, expressing concern that clients may not have any mental or emotional support while dealing with the personal challenges of settling in a new country.

We have support for art-making or finding a job but after that one year there is no other means of support around mental health, or someone they can talk to...while waiting for the refugee claim to come through, stuff like that, that's not necessarily related to their art as a profession. (Participant from NAN)

Participants residing in York Region identified two major concerns there: the absence of culturally-relevant social programming, and newcomers' unawareness of available services. They suggested that much of existing programming is Western-centric in structure, while regulations around eligibility have excluded some of those needing support.

I'd like to see some of the centres—the library, this cultural centre, the municipal offices— do a better job of making individuals welcome. I think it's more of a limited, practical resource that's offered [at the settlement provider organizations]. But to really feel part of community, you need to be celebrating who you are within that community. (Participant from Newmarket Recreation and Culture)

In response to limited social space and diverse events, Culture Bridge Initiatives' main focus has been the delivery of cultural events and programming. They believe that providing space for ethnic minorities to share their culture is essential in fostering community and combatting prejudice (Participant from Culture Bridge Initiatives).

## Challenges Posed by Restrictive Program Funding

Obtaining adequate funding was the greatest challenge identified. Participants noted an absence of core funding, the bureaucracy of funding applications, and narrowly defined program streams. The benefit to corporate or donor contributions, noted by some participants, was the elimination of bureaucracy associated with strenuous government funding applications, and in some cases fewer restrictions in terms of how the money is used. However, the downsides to private donations are precariousness and the unpredictability of private partner goals. The most common source of funding for participants was provincial funding through the Toronto Trillium Foundation.

So we have an offering that's unique and meaningful and creates opportunity for the community... we've found innovative ways to sustain the program [but] despite our best efforts over two years, we haven't received any funding... Only the established players in the industry fall under the criteria, and so new players, you realize once you get to the table that you don't qualify. (Participant from Newcomer Kitchen)

You get funded for say three years then you may lose your funding, or your sponsor changes their priorities... or if we have new people in government with different priorities. Even though we have really strong partnerships, we never know what's going to happen... [The artists] want to see the program grow, as their needs change. And sometimes you can't respond quickly or consistently. I want to do that but I just don't have the capacity. (Participant from NAN)

Participants also noted barriers to people accessing programs. Partnerships between sectors and meaningful collaborations with volunteers and community workers was noted as a strong solution to raising awareness about programs.

So we've created more of a reputation for ourselves, and trust in the [artist] community, but also with different settlement organizations. They have the ability to [tell newcomers to] contact Neighbourhood Arts Network or the Toronto Arts Council... We work closely with [the city], the Local Immigration Partnerships, and with the employment and service centers. So we're building a bit of a support network of administrators. (participant from NAN)

Participants noted that newcomers to the area may be hindered from accessing services by language barriers, lack of information, or financial constraints. In these cases, it is important that various actors in the community have the information to let newcomers know what services are available, and that lesser-known organizations might be able to provide support that newcomers cannot get from formal service centers.

We're talking about a time when even people who are just low-income and have perfect English can have a hard time accessing services. People don't have that social capital and that's different than the language. That's knowing what to get, when to get it, and having a sense of advocacy for yourself... and so I think in those first months and years [in Canada] we have to be as absolutely accessible as possible. (Participant from the Social Planning Council of York Region)

With many grassroots initiatives relying on volunteers and donors, the need for funder investment in communities was emphasized. There was a call for significant financial investment and core funding to support the people working on the ground.

Community partnership roles are not very well understood. So funders are saying, “Well, we don’t have to have people on the ground, we have programs.” But people need people. Not just the people who are providing a program, but... [individuals and organizations] on the ground having those face-to-face conversations, helping people move into their homes, and doing very real, basic, practical things that people need when they move into a new community. (Participant from the Social Planning Council of York Region)

The same participant expressed key insights into the realities of funding for these types of programs:

When funding comes to you, and you have to report it down to the nickel and dime, it’s like there’s no trust that people know how and what to do... But when we have \$25,000 for a year to do things with, it’s unbelievable how much small organizations who are able to be nimble and can respond to the community can achieve with that kind of money. (Participant from the Social Planning Council of York Region)

## Discussion and Conclusion

The participants stated that they were driven to provide unique service offerings to newcomers because they saw gaps and limitations in the available formal services. The primary limitations to institutional programming identified were: 1) the tendency for settlement agencies to be out of touch with the realities on the ground, and 2) the inflexibility of some larger agencies to respond to client needs as they arise. The data suggests a number of issues specific to newcomer communities which require service workers to be closer in touch with their needs and have the autonomy to respond to them. The participants in this study directly or indirectly referred to their work as divergent to the “direct” or “formal” services provided by settlement agencies, and emphasized grassroots solutions as providing more holistic support for newcomer integration.

Every participant placed primacy on understanding the unique cultural and contextual needs of newcomers, seeing integration as a continuous process beyond financial security. They challenged institutional methods of programming which could lack cultural sensitivity, and in some cases exclude the most vulnerable. Formal programming was seen as Western-centric and economically-focused, with social and cultural considerations as a secondary concern. The current program-based funding structure assumes that decision-makers in government or foundations know how best to address the needs in communities, but our findings bring this assumption into question. Participants attributed their success to being responsive to their clients and providing direct sources of income to refugees and newcomers, while also ensuring that the work was meaningful, dignified, and built upon the skills and talents of their clients.

Participants noted that excess bureaucracy with applications, program restrictions, and inadequate funding causes challenges with building capacity and growing their programs. The lack of core funding throughout the public service sector was noted as a particular concern, putting strain on this sector’s ability to respond to immediate basic needs, to adjust programs as required, and to invest in long-term integration supports.

The non-profit organizations we examined are responding to the growing immigrant populations in their communities and the need for additional support services, and using innovative and effective methods. However, despite initiatives that are providing meaningful and dignified work to newcomers or supporting their social integration, these organizations often receive no settlement funding and very limited funding overall—with many of those involved working in a volunteer capacity. The success of some participants in being able to partner with settlement agencies is an important lesson in the mutual value that can be gained from these connections. The literature on multiservice agencies has noted the downfalls of “essentializing” immigrant groups (Sadiq, 2004) and how different cultural and individual contexts are sometimes missed in program planning. In response to this persisting situation, the organizations in this study are offering diverse services for a wide variety of newcomers such as artists, cooks, and families, as well as acknowledging newcomers as community members—not simply as migrants to be prepared for the labour market.

Opportunities for further research include examining the processes of how similar organizations function, such as details on costs and funding, as well as other models used for successful partnerships. More insight into how strong grassroots initiatives have been able to grow and maintain operations could be a valuable contribution to organizations doing similar work in Canada and beyond.

This study has explored community organizations and informal supports, which provide important contributions to supporting newcomer integration in the Greater Toronto Area, acknowledging the diverse needs of newcomers as well as their individual strengths. Although the number of clients they can reach may be less than some SPOs, these community organizations have proven to be much more nimble, responsive, and innovative in their settlement approach. Invaluable lessons can be gained from their work.

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### 3. The Third Sector, Settlement, and Social Inclusion in Canada and Germany

by Riley Bushell & John Shields

#### Abstract

As major immigrant- and refugee-receiving countries of the Global North, both Canada and Germany rely on large and diverse third sectors as key providers of settlement services. This chapter critically examines Canadian and German third-sector initiatives in newcomer social inclusion, particularly in the context of contemporary neoliberal federal policy and the retreating welfare states in both countries. Its objective is to identify key themes such that a range of stakeholders in settlement can benefit from a better understanding of best practices and common challenges. More broadly, it aims to strengthen knowledge transfer between Canada and Germany by filling a noted literature gap—particularly, in the context of increased asylum-seeking in both countries and the emergence of anti-immigration political platforms around the world.

**Keywords:** third sector; neoliberal public policy; settlement; newcomer social inclusion

#### Introduction

Newcomer settlement is etched deeply and distinctly into the social, political, and cultural geographies of Canada and Germany. In Canada, recent developments include Prime Minister Trudeau’s welcoming of 25,000 Syrians in 2015, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s new plans to admit almost one million immigrants and refugees over the next three years (IRCC, 2017). In Germany, though Conservative politicians long insisted that the country was *Nichteinwanderungsland* or “not an immigration country,” recent legislation including the 2005 *Immigration Act* has signaled new recognition of immigration as vital to economic growth (Bauder, 2011). Today, Germany is at the vanguard of refugee movement in Europe, processing over 722,000 asylum requests in 2016 and maintaining high rates of asylum recognition (Eurostat, 2017). For newcomers in both countries, migration does not conclude after the journey across land and sea but continues throughout the long process of resettlement. This study will examine third-sector organizations as key agents of settlement and social inclusion in Canada and Germany.

Settlement is a complex, uneven, multi-generational, and individual process that is often divided into three stages. After short-term information and referral, language, and training needs are met, access must be gained to appropriate long-term employment, housing, and education. Finally, “newcomers develop some sense of attachment or belonging... without giving up their ethno-racial identities and ties to the homeland” (Richmond & Shields, 2005, p. 515). Valenzuela et al. (2018) similarly describe phases of “1) adjustment 2) adaptation and 3) integration” (p. 68). Social inclusion—described as capacity for “full and equal participation in the economic, social and cultural and political dimensions of life”—is gained in this final stage (Richmond & Omidvar, 2003, p. 1). This is “both a process and a goal,” requiring “investments and action” from a range of stakeholders including national and other governments as well as the third sector (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003, p. 2).

For Salamon and Sokolowski (2016), the concept of institutions beyond the state and market is “probably one of the most perplexing... in modern political and social discourse” (p. 1515). With mandates unrelated to capitalist profiteering, such institutions are called “civil society, non-profit, voluntary or charitable sector, social economy, social enterprise and many more” (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016, p. 1521). They share principles of “philanthropy, altruism, charity, reciprocity, mutuality” (Shields & Evans, 2000, p. 3). In a “multilayered” relationship with government, Dennis Young (2000) defines the third sector as a) a supplement to the state, “fulfilling the demands for public goods,” b) a complement to the state via service-delivery contracting, and c) an adversary engaged in mutual accountability (p. 168). Yet as Corry (2010) notes, the third sector is also “part of power technologies through which a certain kind of governance is achieved” by national governments through “an interconnected system of discourse, techniques or institutions” (p. 16).

As immigrant-receiving countries with multi-tier governments, Canadian settlement policies are often posed as a blueprint for Germany (Bauder et al., 2014). Yet, Richmond and Shields (2005) warn against exporting a “romantic and idealized model” (p. 522) without critically examining the Canadian third sector amidst contemporary neoliberal policy. Like Bauder et al. (2014), this work also considers “what Canada can learn from Germany’s vast experience” in settlement (p. 3). Many authors have noted a literature gap in examining the third sector in settlement (Menz, 2011; Siemiatycki & Triadafilopoulous, 2010; Garkish et al., 2017). In the context of modern refugee movement, misunderstanding the “systematic relationship” between the third sector and “the many faces of migration” shapes “the capability of politicians, practitioners and organizations to implement adequate solutions” (Garkish et al., 2017, p. 1842). This research seeks to fill this gap and enrich knowledge transfer by examining settlement in Canada and Germany from a third-sector perspective.

## Methodology

For Bloemraad (2013), comparative studies demonstrate that destination societies critically affect social inclusion, “even more... than the characteristics of those who move” (p. 33). Shields (2016) adds that such research “illuminates larger structural and political factors” that help policymakers learn from “innovative policies from elsewhere” (p. 24). An integrative critical literature review helps scholars use this comparative lens while “presenting and summarizing the current state of knowledge on a topic,” highlighting central themes and avenues for further research (Neumann, 2006, p. 112).

Recent international comparative studies (Garkish et al., 2017; Shields et al., 2016) note limited availability of English-language information regarding the German third sector in settlement. Though Russell (2005) warns that such an omission “could affect the... information about the relationships between variables under study” (p. 12), Bloemraad (2013) suggests that researchers navigate such “pitfalls” by considering how each case study “advances the project” at hand (p. 30). The aim of this research is not to evaluate settlement policies, but instead to identify, discuss, and contrast emergent themes through the lens of the third sector. Below, we present key findings of an integrative literature review conducted in the summer of 2018. It examined English-language books, journal articles, government documents, and third-sector gray scholarship. Information retrieval methods included Ryerson University Library and Archives, Google Scholar, and the Institute for Migration and Intercultural Studies Library at the University of Osnabrück, using key search terms including ‘migration,’ ‘settlement,’ and ‘integration’ in combination with ‘third sector’ and ‘non-profits’ in Canada and Germany.

## Key Findings

### Neoliberalism, New Public Management, and “Shadow States”

Canada’s federal government has funded the third sector to deliver settlement services since the 1970s. In the 1990s, budget deficits and global competition were met by the implementation of neoliberal public policy, in part through the “cutting of public expenditure” in social service funding (Morris, 1997, p. 25). The 1995 *Settlement Renewal* policies devolved responsibilities to Canadian provinces, which instituted their own funding cuts. New Public Management (NPM) governance—defined by Lowe et al. (2017) as the “transmission belt” of neoliberalism in Canada’s settlement sector—was also implemented at this time. In contrast to formerly comprehensive and flexible core funding, NPM regulates third-sector services through lean, competitive, short-term government contracts and strict accountability measures (Baines et al., 2014). Today, the sector is characterized by austere “market-based contracts and managerialist outcomes structures” (Evans et al., 2005, p. 88).

Literature notes a similar shift to neoliberal public policy in Germany in the early 1990s, as the conservative government used welfare state retrenchment to offset the financial burdens of global competition and reunification with East Germany (Friedrichs & Klöckner, 2009). Amidst funding cuts in settlement, Germany’s third sector appears to have undergone NPM restructuring, as third-sector organizations “increasingly become more business-like, introducing management and marketing techniques... replacing social workers with managers” (Zimmer, 1999, p. 45).

Canada’s third sector in settlement is referred to as the “shadow state” (Sadiq, 2004; Shields & Evans, 2000), in which “services and care previously provided by the state are being increasingly downloaded onto the local government, non-profit providers, communities and families” (Lowe et al., 2016, p. 19). Literature reveals similarities in the German third sector, particularly in the context of service-provision to non-status migrants (Castañeda, 2007; Badikyan, 2014). This phenomenon has been credited to minimal government attentiveness to postwar guest workers, as well as more recent neoliberal policy to “reduce government provision” in the welfare state (Friedrichs & Klöckner, 2009, p. 104).

The German shadow state also encompasses civil society more broadly. The “vast, polyphonic” efforts of German volunteerism (Funk, 2016, p. 292) and increased engagement of Muslim ethnic minorities (Bock, 2018, p. 12) peaked in 2015, as nearly one million people took part in aid activities related to increased asylum-seeking. On one hand, this provides an optimistic counternarrative to the visible growth of Germany’s far right; however, many argue that continued subsidization of state responsibilities increases the permanence of the shadow state in German civil society (Karakayali & Kleist, 2014; Hinger, 2016). For Badikyan (2014), this also reflects “wanted versus unwanted migrants and hence selective investment” by Germany’s federal government (p. 35). In Canada, too, scholars link neoliberal government policies to a binary of “deserving” and “non-deserving” newcomers based on their perceived economic and social burden (Arat-Koç, 1999; Barrass & Shields, 2017).

### Precarity in a “Two-Tier” Settlement Sector

Canada’s settlement sector is being made “precarious” (Baines et al., 2014; Richmond & Omidvar, 2003; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Lowe et al., 2017) and “expendable” (Acheson & Laforet, 2013, p. 598) due to neoliberal government policy. For Baines et al. (2014), poor pay, overwork, burnout, eroded job security for settlement workers, and limited funding for sectoral development reflect

badly on organizations in terms of institutional memory and growth capacity, inducing cycles of “vulnerability, instability, marginality and temporariness” within the third sector and its client communities (p. 75). In a “struggle to survive,” “organizations will try to take on too many programs” to pursue funding contracts, creating a vicious circle of overwork and underfunding (Neudorf, 2016, p. 103). In Germany, too, the third sector depends on “humanitarianism and good will, rather than... adequate funding” (Neudorf, 2007, p. 285). The parallel is noted by Bauder and Jayaraman (2014), who examine employment precarity among racialized and immigrant women composing the majority of Canadian and German settlement sector staff.

In Canada, larger multi-service agencies “possess an enhanced capacity” to attain government contracts due to their greater administrative resources and skills (Sadiq, 2004, p. 6), and due to long-term relationships with the federal and other governments they are often perceived as preferred partners in service provision (Shields et al., 2014; Acheson & Laforet, 2013). Yet smaller, ethno-specific organizations are widely praised for cultural and linguistic compatibility with clients who are “hard to reach and service through more standard service bodies” (Shields et al., 2014, p. 23). Similarly, in Germany, large religious-affiliated welfare associations have “withstood the test of New Public Management... in realizing economies of scale”—due to extensive global infrastructure as well as strong government relationships under Germany’s “subsidiary system,” which had formerly guaranteed their funding (Friedrichs & Klöckner, 2009). Bauder and Jayaraman (2014) note that “bottom tier” agencies are often the smaller, newer agencies and migrant-led organizations (MOs), which lack infrastructure and political connections (p. 181).

Both the Canadian and German third sectors might be characterized as “two-tier” in terms of intersecting financial dependencies (Sadiq, 2004). Larger multi-service or mainstream organizations—themselves dependent on government—provide a “buffer, funneling resources to mono-ethnic organizations” through shared activities, partnerships, and sponsorship (Acheson & Laforet, 2013, p. 607). Inter-agency collaboration is “a coping strategy” to “provide needed services that are ignored by the state and the market” (Trudeau & Veronis, 2009, p. 1127). The Canadian government supports these efforts, which mitigate “risk for the funder” in contract agreements (Neudorf, 2016, p. 101). However, smaller partners identify concerns surrounding competition, co-optation, and unequal power dynamics in interagency collaboration (Sadiq, 2004; Mukhtar et al., 2016). In Germany, small non-profits and MOs similarly partner with larger welfare associations (Bauder & Jayaraman, 2014). However, asymmetrical power dynamics are also identified in these partnerships as large welfare agencies direct the mandate and mission of shared projects through “special sort of bossism” (Thränhardt, 1989, p. 15).

### **State Funding and Third Sector Autonomy**

In Canada, government funding contracts rarely recognize advocacy initiatives such as migrant rights or anti-racism campaigning, which are seen as “‘special interest’ activities” (Baines et al., 2014, p. 79). Evans and Shields (2014) note that third-sector organizations become “hesitant to bite the hand that funds them” in terms of political opposition (p. 125), contributing to a phenomenon referred to as “advocacy chill” (Evans & Shields, 2014; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Acheson & Laforet, 2013). In Germany, too, lack of third-sector political autonomy is linked to funding dependency, particularly for smaller MOs and those working with non-status migrants (Badikyan, 2014, p. 43). Ultimately, advocacy chill in both Germany and Canada aligns third-sector services with political and economic prerogatives of funders, rather than the needs of newcomer clients themselves.

## Localized Strategies to Strengthen the Third Sector

In both Canada and Germany, despite the challenges of a neoliberal policy environment, settlement agencies gain resilience through key partnerships within and beyond the sector. In Canada, umbrella coalitions—often described as “a collective voice”—coalesce to pool resources, coordinate service provision, share best practices, and lessen advocacy chill by amplifying sector-wide concerns to upper-tier policymakers (Acheson & Laforet, 2013; Evans & Shields, 2014; Stasiulus et al., 2011; Lowe et al., 2017, p. 36). Beyond the sector itself, Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) unite multi-tier governments, the third sector, and other actors in a collaborative council tasked to address local issues. By activating local expertise, LIPs construct responsive, localized policies and signal a broader shift towards more “cross-sectoral collaboration and input” in Canadian settlement governance (Stasiulus et al., 2011, p. 113). Germany’s settlement sector, too, has amplified its capacity through sector-wide partnerships. Through umbrella organizations, agencies pool resources, knowledge, and support for “a common rights approach” to settlement. Turkish and Muslim MOs additionally form their own unique coalitions (Bokert & Bosswick, 2011, p. 118). In 2000, the Süßmuth Commission relied on third-sector coalition testimony to rethink “a more inclusive and universalist” settlement framework (Schneider & Scholten, 2015, p. 85). In 2006, the National Integration Summit and German Islam Conference also enabled third-sector and MO umbrella organizations to engage with upper-tier government in policy development and implementation (Musch, 2012, p. 75).

As home to the vast majority of Canada’s newcomers, cities “deal with the fallout” when they encounter social exclusion (Rose & Preston, 2016, p. 30). Though many link neoliberal cutbacks to “unfunded mandates” in service provision for Canadian cities (Good, 2007; Mwaringa, 2002), others note cities’ “active, intensified involvement” (Stasiulus et al., 2011) in settlement. This involvement is visible in the 2005 *Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding* as a landmark tripartite agreement in settlement governance (Rose & Preston, 2016). In Germany, municipal governments focused on newcomer settlement “long before the issue reached the national agenda,” and actively strengthen third-sector consultation through local-level immigration advisory boards (Hinger, 2011, p. 118). Schmidke (2014) examines local-level government in Germany and Canada as “laboratories” for “strengthening of place-based approaches” in settlement (p. 93). However, Canadian municipalities are constrained by “limited jurisdictional and fiscal powers” and subject to provincial oversight, while in Germany local initiatives are emboldened by European Union funding and support (Schmidke, 2014, p. 94).

## Centralization of Policymaking Power in Settlement

As Sadiq (2004) notes, Canada’s governments exercise “social control” in the third sector as their contracts specify which organizations will be funded (p. 4). This system of “centralized decentralization” is characterized by devolution of services to local level while upper-tier governments remain “at the centre and apex” of key decision-making processes (Shields & Evans, 2000, p. 16). Ultimately, “the benign language of partnership” thus “hides a steeply hierarchical and centralized relationship of power” (Evans et al., 2005, p. 78). For example, LIPs are unfunded in the implementation of community projects (Bradford & Andrew 2010). Meinhardt et al. (2016) suggest that such decisions are based on an “an economic and accountability perspective” that favour neoliberal frameworks over long-term social inclusion (p. 292). Overall, Stasiulus et al. (2011) find that the Canadian third sector requires “greater responsiveness and democratic openness to more localized voices in settlement policies” (p. 133).

In Germany, funding cuts and the implementation of mandatory integration courses since the early 2000s signify “a shifting... from the welfare policy context to one of control” (Bokert & Bosswick, 2011, p. 116). Third-sector voice appears unheeded in government policymaking. For example, Schneider and Scholten (2017) note that the Süßmuth Commission report—guided by the expertise of third-sector advocates—“ended up playing barely any role at all ... with the main actors retreating to their ‘old’ frames on immigration and integration,” and that the resulting 2005 *Immigration Act* failed “to break with the exclusionary model of immigrant integration” (p. 85). Similarly, MOs’ involvement in policy formation is “rather symbolic in nature” (Musch, 2012, p. 86) and municipal integration advisory boards ultimately comprise “a limited, consultative role” in policy (Schmidke, 2014, p. 90). Menz (2011) notes that the German state has been “remarkably successful” (p. 458) in shielding national policy from supranational regulation, and that partnerships between the EU and third-sector organizations have had limited opportunity to implement social inclusion initiatives.

## Conclusion

In Canada and Germany, welfare state erosion since the 1990s has forced municipalities, newcomer communities, and the settlement sector to be increasingly self-reliant. At the same time, funding cuts and NPM governance has constrained third-sector capacity to respond to social exclusion through direct services and political advocacy. Neoliberal policy particularly affects new, small, ethno-specific, or migrant-led organizations, whose key mandates in outreach are made particularly precarious. The Canadian and German third sectors meet client needs by entering into coalitions internally and with government, particularly at the municipal level. The German third sector has also relied on the volunteerism of civil society and, to some extent, support from the European Union. As right-wing, nationalist, and anti-immigrant political voices strengthen in both Europe and North America—and in light of increasing numbers of asylum-seekers in Germany and at Canada’s border with the United States—effective third-sector representation of newcomer communities is more important than ever. Unfortunately, in both countries, upper-tier governments maintain centralized settlement policymaking and thus limit the third sector’s ability to translate valuable community-based knowledge into policy.

This review identifies the shared challenges in the third sector that are linked to funding cuts, but more broadly to power dynamics that favour senior-level governments’ economic priorities over long-term social inclusion initiatives. Meaningful investment in Canada and Germany’s third sectors requires structural reconsideration of settlement governance as well as the broader neoliberal policy context. This chapter aims to inspire further research, as well as policy and program reforms—particularly by incorporating the voices of those with lived experience of resettlement. It is not just the third sector, but arrival societies themselves that stand to benefit when social inclusion can be more effectively realized among newcomers.

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# Part 2: Policy and New Policy Directions

## 4. Building Relationship between Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples

by Rachel Reesor & Harald Bauder

### Abstract

In Canada, multiculturalism continues to integrate newcomers into a national identity that excludes Indigenous people. In this context, how can the principles underlying treaties between settlers and Indigenous peoples—peace, unity, and respect—become foundational to Canada’s national present-day identity? For instance, if Indigenous people became the “welcomers” of newcomers to Canada, could this be a step forward in including Indigenous people alongside settlers and newcomers within Canada’s national identity, as well as in future policy development? The purpose of this chapter is to explore how settlement services could build relationships with Indigenous people and organizations in order for newcomers to become better informed about Canadian history and Canada’s Indigenous people. Empirical research involving semi-structured interviews examines six settlement organizations that have begun building such relationships, and explores the corresponding benefits and challenges as well as possible next steps for moving forward with these relationships. The research also offers policy recommendations.

**Keywords:** Indigenous people; newcomers; settlement services; settler colonialism; multiculturalism

### Introduction

Historically, European settlers displaced and attempted to eradicate Indigenous people to gain control over resources and land, and to exclude Indigenous people from the communities they built in Canada (MacDonald, 2014). Although we live in an era of heightened rhetoric of reconciliation, colonialization continues to this day (Lowman & Barker, 2015).

In this chapter, we suggest framing Indigenous people, rather than settlers, as the “welcomers” of newcomers to Canada. We focus, in particular, on the role of settlement services provider organizations. The empirical study examines organizations that have begun to work alongside Indigenous organizations and people, to create opportunities for newcomer and Indigenous people to build relationships. The guiding research questions are: how can settlement services or non-profit organizations work alongside Indigenous organizations and people; and what are the benefits and challenges of building these relationships?

Below, we first present our approach and methodology, followed by a description of the case study organizations and their activities. We then present an analysis of interviews related to the benefits, challenges, and possible next steps, and end with recommendations and conclusions.

## Approach and Methodology

This chapter applies a decolonization and Indigenous resurgence framework to the issue of immigrant settlement. Colonialism is ongoing within Canada's society (Wotherspoon & Hansen, 2013), reflected in racism and violence against Indigenous people, the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, discrimination in social services, police brutality, exclusion from policy-making, and the continued dishonouring of treaties (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 3). Decolonization would require the return of material resources, a shift in power and wealth, and the reconfigurations of political power (Alfred, 2017; Coulthard, 2014; Green, 2016; Palmater, 2017). Yet this notion of decolonialization seems incompatible with multiculturalism, which has been criticized as obscuring the injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples and perpetuating settler colonialism (Lowman & Barker, 2015; Bannerji, 2000). Multiculturalism "undermines the autonomy of Indigenous communities... [and] seeks to assimilate diversities into a singular Canadian identity" (Walia, 2012, para. 15). Thus, the assimilation of newcomers into multiculturalism may perpetuate settler colonialism (Stanley, Arat-Koç, Bertram & King, 2014).

Conversation, dialogue, and the inclusion of Indigenous voices and perspectives in leadership and decision-making are key to establishing equal relationships between settlers and Indigenous groups, and thus to decolonization (Kasparian, 2012; Gooder, 2017; TRC, 2015; Chung, 2012). When Pakistani-Canadian Sadia Rafiquddin joined Innu elder Elizabeth Penashue during the 250-km walk from Labrador to Elizabeth's birthplace inside Mealy Mountains, she learned the value of building such a relationship. Rafiquddin (2017) explains:

over 250 kilometers, she and I and her family shared so much. We talked about our languages, our communities, where we came from, what the experience of being forcibly removed from one's homeland has on a sense of well-being for a person. She says it's important to make such a connection because coming together will ultimately make Canada a better country. We need to hear about our common humanity. We need to... think more about all of us being together and building a better country (para. 8-9).

Another example is the conversation between Basel Alrashdan, a 13-year-old Syrian refugee, and Charlotte Morris, a Mi-Kmaq grandmother and residential-school survivor. They connected because they were both taken from their homes but in very different ways. In a CBC segment, Basel states: "It's very interesting and very important to know. All people should know about what happened to Indigenous people" (Tremonti, 2018). He explained how he was welcomed with warmth and respect when he arrived to Prince Edward Island and was saddened to hear that this was not the case for Charlotte, who was taken from her family and deprived of her culture. Charlotte said in the interview that she has gained a lifelong friend after meeting and speaking to Basel; Basel intends to respect the treaties when he gets Canadian citizenship.

The role of treaties can be illustrated through one of the Southern Ontario-specific treaties: the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee, which emphasizes the importance of sharing the territory and protecting the land in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. There are over 300 treaties across Canada; therefore, all newcomers have been invited into these treaties, making the principles of the treaty applicable to everyone living on this land encompassing Canada (Kang, 2017).

In this chapter, we suggest that an important step towards decolonialization is that the settlement of newcomers begins with learning about this land and who it belongs to, while acknowledging the histories of settlement, genocide, displacement, and the treaties. Newcomers often come to

Canada with little or highly distorted knowledge of Indigenous people (Suleman, 2011; Ghorayshi, 2010; Walker & Garcea, 2014). For a successful process of decolonialization to unfold, these newcomers must be included in the process of decolonialization.

Below, we present the results of a qualitative study that first identifies several case studies where settlement services and non-profit organizations collaborated with Indigenous people or organizations. After acquiring background information on these case studies from library and online resources, personal semi-structured interviews with participants in leadership positions at these organizations were conducted. When reporting the results, we gave each participant a pseudonym.

## **Case Studies**

This section examines the extent and nature of the work of six different organizations that are currently helping to establish relations between Indigenous people and newcomers.

### **Ka Ni Kanichihk (KNK)**

KNK is an independent Indigenous organization located in Winnipeg's inner city. It provides a culturally safe environment that builds on the strength and resilience of Indigenous people. Its programming focuses on topics such as the HIV crisis, employment assistance and mentorship, sense of belonging, Medicine Bear counselling, and elder services program (KNK, 2017). In 2010, KNK started cooperating with settlement service providers to raise awareness among newcomers of Indigenous peoples and to facilitate cultural exchanges between the two groups. In this context, KNK delivers Aboriginal Awareness workshops, Youth Peace Building Gathering Programs, and anti-racism training to enhance cross-cultural relations. The Aboriginal Awareness workshop is provided once a month to newcomers as a way to introduce them to Indigenous history and culture, become knowledgeable about the land they are living on, and correct misperceptions they may have about Indigenous people. The Youth Peace Building Program is a week-long summer camp that allows Indigenous and newcomer youth aged 13-16 to come together and talk about themselves and their culture. Many of the youth who participated in this summer camp found confidence and pride in their culture, developed lasting friendships, and changed their opinions of other cultures and people (Gyepi-Garbrah, Walker & Garcea, 2014).

### **Vancouver Dialogue Project**

The Vancouver Dialogue Project was developed in 2010 and funded mostly by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, while Vancouver's Social Planning Division collaborated with 27 community partners to implement the project (Suleman, 2011). There were nine dialogue circles where Indigenous people and newcomers met three times weekly to share stories, experiences, and perspectives on the past and present, and on building future relationships (Wong & Fong, 2012). In many cases, these Dialogue Circles were the first time Indigenous and newcomer participants had ever tried to understand each other. The main themes that emerged through the dialogue were: 1) understanding each other's history and knowledge; 2) racism, as it affected all participants; 3) learning about each other; 4) land and belonging; and 5) reconciliation and identity. A community research project consisted of a review on the amount of Indigenous information available to newcomers—which found limited information and often not from an Indigenous perspective (Suleman, 2011; Wong & Fong, 2012). In response, the City of Vancouver created a Newcomer's Guide focusing specifically on Indigenous people. In addition, it conducted an online community survey that revealed: only 39% of respondents felt

that Vancouver was welcoming to Indigenous people, while 73% felt Vancouver was welcoming to newcomers. Furthermore, a one-on-one interview survey revealed negative stereotypes of Indigenous people (Suleman, 2011). There also were twelve cultural exchanges between Indigenous and newcomer communities, e.g., visits to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Britannia Community Centre, First Nations and Aboriginal Health practitioners, and the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. Other programs included: the youth and elder program focusing on intergenerational dialogue circles, interviews with newcomers and Indigenous people in the context of a legacy project titled 'Our Roots,' a book launch for the Legacy project, youth dialogue sessions, a youth summit, and the development of Vancouver's newcomers guide (Suleman, 2011; Wong & Fong, 2012).

### **KAIROS Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives**

KAIROS is a non-profit organization comprised of 10 religious organizations that work towards faithful action to ecological justice and human rights (KAIROS, 2018). The organization was founded in 2001 and spans across Canada, with the two main offices in Toronto and Ottawa. It focuses on programs in relation to ecological, gender, Indigenous, and migrant justice (KAIROS, 2003). Three programs involve Indigenous people and newcomers: 1) the blanket exercise, 2) Youth Exchange, and 3) reconciliation events.

The blanket exercise is an interactive teaching and learning tool that was developed with Indigenous elders to teach Canada's shared history. Everyone participating in the blanket exercise became First Nations, Inuit, and later Metis people as they stepped onto the blankets laid on the ground that symbolized the land. As the narrative progressed from pre-contact and treaty-making, to colonization and resistance, blankets were taken away or folded to symbolize the removal of land from Indigenous people. Participants were asked to leave the blankets and sit down to symbolize Indigenous deaths from such cases as smallpox or the high suicide rate amongst Inuit people. At other moments during the exercise, participants were asked to step off the blanket and stand at a distance from others, symbolizing how Indigenous people were removed from their homes and placed in residential schools. The blanket exercise is conducted in schools, workplaces, and other organizations.

The Youth Exchange took place in the summer of 2017 and involved Guatemalan youth coming to Canada, as well as Indigenous and settler youth from Canada going to Guatemala. The program emphasized the importance of sharing the colonial history and assuming collective responsibility (KAIROS, 2018). Finally, in March 2018, reconciliation events were held across Canada to build and strengthen relationships between newcomers and Indigenous people through the use of cultural performances, workshops, and gatherings. These events were developed in consultation with an Indigenous Rights Circle, which includes both Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous KAIROS members (KAIROS, 2018).

### **Canadian Roots Exchange (CRE)**

CRE is a non-profit organization that focuses on strengthening relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, up to the age of 29. It promotes respect, understanding, and reconciliation. The main programs are exchanges, a Youth Reconciliation Initiative, and youth conferences. The exchanges aim to: 1) build face-to-face relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth; 2) develop intergenerational relationships with elders, adults, and children; and 3) share these experiences with their exchange community. The Youth Reconciliation Initiative places youth at the forefront of reconciliation and offers training for

organizing monthly events for youth to discuss what reconciliation means. They share their learning experiences at an annual conference that takes place in a different city across Canada every year. These conferences are facilitated by youth for youth, and provide ample opportunities for dialogue (CRE, 2014).

### **Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)**

OCASI is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 to advocate for Ontario's immigrant-serving agencies. In June 2017, OCASI published the document *A Commitment to Truth, Justice and Reconciliation*, which acknowledges the continuing injustices and harm experienced by Indigenous communities and outlines OCASI's commitment to reconciliation through building respectful relationships between Indigenous peoples, communities of colour, and others inhabiting Canada (OCASI, 2017). As the joint voice for settlement agencies, OCASI pushes for funding and resources for settlement services, aiming to provide additional programming toward reconciliation and learning about Indigenous people and their history. OCASI is currently developing connections with the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre to provide cultural-competency training for OCASI staff members.

### **COSTI Immigration Services**

COSTI is a community-based multicultural settlement-service agency with 18 locations in the Greater Toronto Area. It is at the beginning stages of developing relationships with Indigenous organizations and people (COSTI, 2017). COSTI realizes that it has a role to play in the process of reconciliation with Indigenous communities and in educating newcomers about Indigenous peoples and their histories. The first step for COSTI is to educate its staff, and the second step is to explore how to integrate Indigenous information into different aspects of its work in consultation with Indigenous communities and leaders.

## **Benefits, Challenges, and Next Steps**

Interview participants were asked about the benefits and challenges of next steps for building relationships with Indigenous organizations and people, in order to develop appropriate programming and information for newcomers.

### **Benefits**

Most participants agree that developing relationships between newcomers and Indigenous people within organizations is beneficial to foster learning and understanding, and as the first step to decolonization. "Learning from one another is the only way we can have meaningful relationships and hopefully we can understand one another," said Andrew (pseudonym), "we are doing the settling, we are settlers—so we need to understand that role in that relationship." Bob explained: "we need to rectify wrongs from the past, it's not just rectifying those wrongs by saying 'you know we need to do things differently.' We need to understand Indigenous communities." Learning, in this context, means unlearning settler-colonialist practices. Mary remarked that for newcomers, "a lot of it is shock, or unlearning and relearning and reimagining their new homeland."

Historically, Indigenous people were the welcomers of settlers on their land, and they performed this role with pride and generosity. Jim explained that it is important to educate newcomers about the generosity that Indigenous peoples extended towards settlers. By working towards developing relationships with Indigenous peoples and organizations, settlement services can help to make Indigenous people the welcomers of Canada again.

## Challenges

An ongoing challenge for organizations is the lack of funding and resources. Andrew said: “there is so much interest out there, but we just do not have the time or resources.” Bob remarks that without proper funding and resources, it is difficult to integrate Indigenous knowledge and history and develop relationships. Andrew explains: “there should be resources available for settlement organizations to hire Indigenous leaders and educators to work with them. Not to bring them on a volunteer basis, which is not only a challenge but a problem.” It is a mistake to assume that Indigenous people will volunteer their time simply because they are committed to reconciliation and building relationships. In fact, this assumption is detrimental to building relationships and to reconciliation.

The exposure that the TRC has received seems to have contributed to this challenge. Bob suggested:

The Indigenous community is inundated with requests. And I think that maybe the TRC has created, you know, a huge interest. Which is what I’m glad to see, that is what should have happened, but I think that everybody is probably going to the same people and... I’m talking to people who say well the earliest I could do anything for you is like January, February next year.

In other words, many organizations we spoke to find it hard to develop relationships with Indigenous communities that are often overwhelmed with requests.

A related challenge is the lack of recognition of the importance of building relationships between newcomers and Indigenous peoples by the state. Andrew explained: “there is no political will in our elected officials in every level: municipal, provincial, federal. There is no political will to support this kind of relationship program because they don’t see it as a priority.” This lack of political will manifests itself in little funding being allocated to the development of programs that connect Indigenous people and newcomers. Settlement service providers generally do not have the resources to independently create opportunities for interactions between newcomers and Indigenous people.

Lastly, newcomer and Indigenous communities have their own challenges, which can make building relationships difficult. Mary explains that “[both] communities are dealing with a lot within their own communities and on their own—there is a healing process and things they need to do within themselves.” Recognizing the multi-faceted issues within each community is important before building relationships outside of these communities.

## Next Steps

Building relationships between Indigenous people, newcomers, and other non-Indigenous people is an ongoing process. Jim stressed the importance of ongoing events that enable a continuing dialogue between Indigenous leaders and newcomers to develop their relationships. Several interviewees noted the importance of creating “true” partnerships. Andrew explained that this means,

not to do things when I want and [when the organization] wants, it is to do things when people are ready. That to me is the true spirit of partnership. Otherwise, it would be... exactly the same thing that has been done for centuries, which is to impose things and we can’t do that.

All participants stressed that Indigenous people’s involvement must be comprehensive to ensure that all programming is developed with an Indigenous perspective. Andrew explained: “if we are working on Indigenous rights issues, we need to have Indigenous people on staff. We need to work more with Indigenous people, constantly consult with them, constantly collaborate with them.” Similarly, Bob emphasized,

the involvement of... [the] leaders within the Indigenous community to ensure that what we are doing is not our perception of what we should be doing, but ensuring that they feel: yes, this is what I would want newcomers to know about us.

One participant explained that their organization has several Indigenous people on payroll, which is a significant step in terms of offering beneficial opportunities that do not exploit volunteer-based Indigenous labour.

Finally, each country, province, city, and town will have different organizations, different treaties, and different Indigenous groups. Therefore, it is essential for settlement services and non-profit organizations to make local connections. Mary said: “making those connections to have groups come in locally to talk about specific treaties or history—having those educational opportunities are really important.” Local links and connections will make relationships and programs unique and meaningful to that region.

## Recommendations and Conclusions

The involvement of Indigenous people and organizations in developing programming for settlement services and their delivery is critical. In this regard, government plays an important role in providing funding and resources. Too often are Indigenous people asked to volunteer, or they are only hired for one day or for a special event, rather than providing opportunities for permanent employment. This type of employment opportunity would be important, however, to fully include Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in a comprehensive manner.

Newcomers and Indigenous people are highly diverse groups with a wide range of viewpoints and experiences, and not all Indigenous people and organizations agree with the TRC or would want to be the “welcomers” of Canada. Through conversation at the local level, settlement services can grapple with this complexity, contribute to decolonialization, and work on ways to place Indigenous people and their needs at the forefront of Canada.

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## 5. Private and Government Sponsorship in the Resettlement Experiences of Chinese-Vietnamese Refugees in Canada

by Belinda Ha & Vappu Tyyskä

### Abstract

While there has been much research conducted by Canadian government researchers and academics regarding the cost-benefits of private sponsorship, there remains a need for more in-depth comparative analyses of the sociocultural and economic adaptation of refugees as a result of sponsorship type. Through five intensive and semi-structured interviews conducted in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), this chapter examines possible causal links between types of sponsorship in relation to the level of integration as experienced by Chinese-Vietnamese refugees, a group that has been neglected by researchers. It was observed that privately-sponsored refugees—who mostly arrived in Canada between 1979 and 1980—emphasized the instrumental role their benefactors played in assisting their successful resettlement, whereas those who were government-sponsored were compelled to work at forming their own social support systems. Given the resurgence of private sponsorship since 2015, these results are valuable in suggesting that sponsorship type crucially impacts long-term resettlement.

**Keywords:** Chinese-Vietnamese refugees; resettlement; Canada; social support network; private sponsorship

### Introduction

Current efforts to resettle Syrian refugees in Canada have been much in focus, both in media and scholarly research. However, there is a historical precedent from a mass Indochinese refugee movement 40 years prior, in which direct participation by civil society proved essential for the resettlement of 60,000 refugees fleeing the Vietnam War (Beiser, 2003). The first influx of 5,608 political refugees arrived in the country between 1975-6, after the fall of the Thieu regime in South Vietnam. They were mostly from the upper echelons of society—army officers and professionals who were middle to upper class (Dorais, 2000). At that time, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) appealing for countries to significantly increase their intake of these so-called ‘boat people,’ the Canadian government turned to private sponsorship by individuals and groups of citizens as an innovative way of addressing the humanitarian crisis (Lam, 1996). While there has since been research conducted by Canadian government researchers and academics regarding the cost-benefits of private sponsorship, there remains to be more in-depth comparative analyses of the refugees’ long-term adaptation tied to sponsorship type.

Through five intensive and semi-structured interviews conducted in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in August 2013, this article examines possible causal links between types of sponsorship in relation to the level of integration as experienced by Chinese-Vietnamese refugees. To start, a section detailing the historical background of the Vietnam War will be provided to contextualize the creation of Southeast Asian refugees in the late 1970s. Particular attention is given to explaining the political situation affecting the Chinese-Vietnamese at the time. An overview of Canada’s response will then be provided, outlining how the increasing severity of the refugee crisis compelled the country to open its doors. A background to public and private sponsorship in Canada follows, with a subsequent detailed discussion of study results and policy recommendations.

## Historical Background

Following the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, there was a mass exodus of Vietnamese and Chinese-Vietnamese refugees fleeing the country's reunification under new communist rule (Willmott, 1980). Providing insight into the scope of migration which captured global attention, it is estimated that of the approximately two million people who fled Vietnam, more than 500,000 died trying to escape (Snodgrass et al., 1993). Those of Chinese origin represented the bulk of the second wave of refugees in late 1978, having faced comparatively more adverse conditions coming out of the war with their status as undesirable minorities. In 1979, the outflow from Vietnam of ethnic Chinese was estimated at between 60 to 85 per cent of the total (Lam, 1996). Ethnic Chinese accounted for over 80 per cent of Hong Kong's refugee population (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1982). CBC News reported that under the new Vietnamese administration, 1.5 million ethnic-Chinese were relocated to new economic zones in the countryside to perform agricultural labour with scarce food provided (Willmott, 1980). Ron Atkey, Canada's Minister of Immigration at the time, went so far as to proclaim acts of genocide against the Chinese entrepreneurial class living in Vietnam (Csillag, 2017).

### Canada's Response – "Haven for the Homeless"

In total, Canada agreed to admit 60,000 refugees from Southeast Asia between 1979 and 1981 with a combination of government and private sponsorships (Beiser, 2003). Together, this constituted about 15 per cent of the country's total refugee intake since the end of the Second World War in 1945 (Lam, 1996). It also served as the largest per capita reception of boat people by any country, with a ratio of 1:324 (Beiser, 2006). A federal act of 1976 permitted any non-profit organization or group of five or more Canadian citizens to sponsor a refugee family, provided they had the resources to provide clothing, food, and housing for the first year (Vo, 2006). They were to also help the newly-arrived to find work or enroll in school, in addition to paying health insurance premiums. From 1979 to 1980 alone, more than 7,000 sponsoring organizations volunteered their help. The UNHCR ended up awarding the people of Canada its Nansen Medal for having openly welcomed such a large influx of refugees from Indochina, as numbers had reached 200,000 by that point (Vo, 2006).

## Literature Review

To encourage private sponsorship as allowed by provisions in the Immigration Act of 1976, the Canadian government promised to match every privately-sponsored Southeast Asian refugee with another one sponsored by the country. Initial projections indicated that 25,000 refugees would enter under private sponsorship, while the remaining 25,000 would be sponsored by the government to match numbers (Beiser, 2003). As it turned out, public response by Canadians far exceeded expectations. Between the years 1979 and 1981, forty thousand refugees from Southeast Asia were admitted under private sponsorship while another 20,000 were admitted under government sponsorship (Beiser, 2003).

In Beiser's (2003) study on sponsorship and resettlement success, successful resettlement was measured by examining the variables of employment, English language fluency, and general health. Using longitudinal data from the University of Toronto Refugee Resettlement Project (RRP)—which was based on 608 cases interviewed at three points in time between 1981 and 1991—Beiser concludes that the type of sponsorship affected long-term success, even after controlling for the effects of ethnicity, as well as predisposing and enabling factors. Private

sponsorship predicted successful integration, whereas government sponsorship was more likely to predict the opposite. Neuwirth and Clark (1981) suggest that private sponsors tend to expose refugees to a broader range of services than government settlement workers and volunteers are able to (as cited in Beiser, 2003). In addition, “sponsors act, as it were, as the direct representatives of the new society: apart from providing material help, they ideally should guide the refugees in their initial social and cultural adjustment” (as cited in Beiser, 2003, p. 213). The authors write that in some cases, private sponsors not only act as partial or complete ambassadors of Canadian society, but as outlets preventing the sponsored from feelings of isolation.

Quite on the contrary, Woon’s (1987) survey results show that half of all privately sponsored refugees and almost all the government-sponsored think that government sponsorship is preferable. Her research was based on a systematic comparison of 11 government-sponsored and nine privately-sponsored Vietnamese refugees in Victoria, British Columbia, before and after their first year in Canada. Woon (1987) writes that there was a great deal of ambiguity about rules governing the relationship between private sponsors and refugees, since many refugees admitted that the program had never been fully explained to them even after their arrival in the country. For that reason, most of them did not know how long the sponsors were legally bound to them, nor did they know the financial obligations attached to sponsorship. More importantly, although many were touched by the generosity and warm hearts of their sponsors, there is no actual parallel in Vietnamese culture that explains the idea of private sponsorship. This type of charitable act where one would help a complete stranger was unheard of, as the norm in Vietnam was to only receive the help of family or close community members.

As perceptively noted by Chan and Lam (1983), analysis of the intricate interpersonal dynamics of sponsor-refugee relationships undoubtedly reflects the master-dependent component in which a party provides and another party is provided for. Thus, despite the possibility of an affective bond formed between the two parties, there is always an underlying economic and status difference which can be a major source of discomfort. Paradoxically then, the very effectiveness of the instrumental role provided by private sponsors seemed to reduce the effectiveness of their socially supportive role. The perhaps overly-central role of private sponsors can be demonstrated by the fact that nearly all rental units occupied by privately-sponsored refugees were found by their respective sponsors. By contrast, only half of the residences were found by the Refugee Aid Centre for the government-sponsored sample, as the refugees themselves or members of their social network found the others.

An examination of the literature regarding private versus government sponsorship noticeably reveals a lack of consensus among researchers on the topic. The rather confusing discord of views pertaining to sponsorship type merits further study, especially given the dated nature of previous research.

## **Study Background**

Through five intensive and semi-structured interviews, this qualitative study examines the role that social support networks may or may not have played in facilitating the resettlement experiences of Chinese-Vietnamese refugees living in Canada after the Vietnam War. Participants were asked to describe their experiences at the refugee camp(s), their initial resettlement, possible obstacles encountered, and resources turned to in times of hardship. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as opposed to unstructured interviews because they permit guidance in maintaining the topic focus, while also allowing the respondent to reply in detail in accordance with their interpretation of the question (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009). Participants

were between the ages of 40-65 and lived in the GTA at the time of interview for a face-to-face meeting. All participants arrived in Canada between 1976 and 1980.

## Findings

Three of the five participants were privately-sponsored while the other two were government-sponsored. Everyone who was privately-sponsored emphasized the instrumental role their benefactors played in assisting their successful resettlement in Canada. In contrast, those who were government-sponsored were compelled to adopt a more independent mindset of creating their own social support systems.

### Public Sponsorship

While Thalia, Mike, and Steven were the three study participants privately-sponsored either by a church or a hospital, Ty and Janet were government-sponsored. Any emphasis or mention of support from individuals in the government sector is noticeably absent in Ty and Janet's interviews. In their transcripts, mention of the government is always as an institution, as if there are no individuals who constitute government. After mentioning that the government put his family in a hotel in Toronto to stay for a month, Ty said they then looked for housing themselves. While the privately-sponsored sample would emphasize the support provided by their benefactors, Ty's account focuses more on the individuals of Toronto who he found helpful: "sometime the church people come to visit. Bring us some used clothes, food. I have to say it's amazing—even the housekeeper, they are really helping us. Those housekeeper know we aren't ordinary guests—they feel sorry." Ty found a manufacturing job through Manpower. With a wage of \$3.00 an hour at the time, this is less than half of the \$6.39 wage received by Steven at a cleaning job arranged by private sponsors. When it came to Ty's second job in Canada after he quit the previous one, he said he got the job through one of the Vietnamese refugees he had met on the street who had arrived to the country before him. The impact of this individual on the life of Ty is evidenced by his response to the question of whether there was anyone in particular who he found helpful in his resettlement:

I would say that guy—Vietnamese refugee came a year before us. He look at me and know I'm from Vietnam. He introduce me to the steel company to work there. I would still talk to him. And he was so nice, even after twenty years we see him I still respect him.

As was noted in the literature about the government-sponsored refugees, the lack of prolonged contact with government representatives led to Ty forming personal social networks of his own, which would in turn facilitate his resettlement in Canada. Whereas the privately-sponsored sample often reflected on their spare time being spent with the networks of their sponsors, the lack of personal contact meant that Ty was left to fend for himself and his family. He was given no choice but to be independent and in doing so, he was exposed to the support provided by strangers.

Today, Ty attributes his success to the support he receives from contacts he formed while working at his father's grocery store in the 1980s. A lot of the regulars in Chinatown got to know him over the years and have been steady clients since the opening of his store. From his experience in Canada, where it was upon him to form his own networks of support, he has learned lessons he perhaps may not have had he been privately-sponsored.

## Private Sponsorship

As indicative of the prolonged support provided by volunteer private sponsors, Thalia, Mike, and Steven report keeping in contact with their respective sponsors long after the legal requirements of one year. Since moving away from Nova Scotia, Thalia says there have been various times when she and her siblings have gone back to visit them. The couple that Thalia spent the most time with as a child are now in their late 80s or early 90s. She states that the last time she and her brothers were in contact with this couple was when her brother visited Nova Scotia two years ago. When asked when he last had contact with his church sponsors, Mike revealed that he had dinner with the wife just the night before the interview. Now 87 years old, her husband passed away not too long ago. As for the sponsor's son, whom Mike would often play with as a child, he says he sees him occasionally. He admits to seeing his sponsor more over the past two years, about once every two months, because he can see she is getting weaker after her husband passed away. Although Steven moved away from Fredericton before the one year of sponsorship was up, he says he still has the hospital phone number of his sponsors and calls them sometimes. Now around the age of 80 to 85, he would call the people still at the hospital just to say hello and update them about his life. There was one instance where he went back to visit them 20 years ago. In comparison, Ty and Janet, who were government-sponsored, did not have any prolonged contact with any government workers after the one-year sponsorship ended.

Steven happened to be one of three single young men sponsored by a hospital in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Describing his arrival in January 1979, Steven shared his feelings regarding his benefactors:

They are very nice—you know, the doctor, driver, nurse, and secretary, they all donate the money from hospital. And they give us the house for living—share together. No pay rent. And one week ten dollar for us. At that time, ten dollar's very big. Cigarette pack I think only one dollar. But they come pick us, come once a week to go to the grocery store. And they pay for food. And they send us to English school for three months.

Employment-wise, Steven said the sponsors helped all three men find jobs, but that he was the luckiest one with his cleaning job. He would work there for the next nine months, with the pay of \$6.49 an hour being significantly higher than the average pay received by government-sponsored refugees (\$3.20 to \$6.00 an hour). It was only around summertime when lack of employment at the university led him to ask his sponsors if he could relocate to Toronto. According to him, his sponsors supported his decision:

My sponsor it's say up to me. If I cannot find a job and go back, they welcome. Because they sponsor me one year, that time wasn't even one year, only nine months. They still have responsibility for me. I say to my sponsor, the doctor—"thank you but I cannot stay here, too quiet." They say "why, beautiful here!" I say, "not for me (laughs)."

I take the train. They pay for that. They give me some money, give me a watch, give me a pen. They so nice! And they write letter for me from [place of employment], say if you cannot find a job, go back there we hire you.

There is thus evidence of his sponsors wanting to ensure he had steady employment wherever he decided to go. Also, while some of the literature about private sponsors notes their increased tendency for invasiveness, Steven's sponsors allowed him the freedom to choose where he wanted to live. They also helped form the foundation for his successful economic integration in

Toronto. Because he had already worked as a cleaner, he was easily given a cleaning job on his second day living in the city. They even paid him 50 cents more than his previous job.

Steven's accounts are significant in that they contradict Chan and Lam's (1983) study as well as Woon's (1987), both of which noted refugees' distrust of sponsors due to the unfamiliar concept of sponsorship in Vietnam. When asked whether the reason he still calls the hospital is related to his gratitude, Steven responded:

Because people helping you, you understand you cannot just forget about. You keep touch because they very nice to helping you to begin your new life! You have to appreciate. They happy you doing well. They know I'm doing well, they don't worry about me.

### **Private sponsors and wonderful childhoods**

What was interesting in the testimonies of both Thalia and Mike was the emphasis they kept placing on the instrumental role their private sponsors had in ensuring they had a self-described "wonderful" childhood. The couple who sponsored Mike helped provide clothing for his entire family, as well as bringing them out for fun activities on the weekend. He remembers going with her to church a lot, being taken to the movies, and even being invited to her cottage:

She'd invite us up to her cottage often in Barrie. She had a son very late in her marriage—he was a couple years older than me and we got along pretty well. She also had a farm. We used to horse around at the farm, dig holes and traps. The whole family would go, our parents would help out at the farm and us kids would just mess around (laughs).

Education-wise, with him and his siblings enrolled in school, the wife would help with their homework. Mike's parents were always working at this time, as they entered the workforce less than a year after taking English language classes. As a result, he said he didn't spend much time with his parents. When asked what role the couple played in his life, Mike stated simply: "I consider her like a second mother to me." While both the sponsoring husband and wife were influential in his life, he said he was closer to the wife: "she was more mothering. She considered me like her son. She used to kiss me goodnight. The difference was me and her son got along so well and that made our family special." It is because of this strong bond that Mike said he now tries to visit more often in light of her deteriorating health condition, to make sure she is taken care of. He said it is difficult to see her in that position.

In the case of Thalia, who lived in Pictou, she also described her church sponsors in a positive light that indicates her gratitude:

They were *really* incredible people. They all took turns coming to our house every night to teach us English. They took us out all the time, especially on weekends, to get us whatever we needed like clothes and food, or to go to individual houses for parties. We were basically never alone.

They were without a doubt wonderful—beyond awesome. I had a great childhood because of them. And our sponsorship didn't just end after one year, which was their responsibility. It continued—anytime we needed help, someone was there.

Thalia said that since she was the youngest of the family's nine siblings, and significantly younger than the others, she ended up spending a lot of time under the sponsors' care. Because her five older brothers who arrived with her were old enough to be her father, their primary concern was finding employment, which the sponsors helped them with. They were also interested in finding life partners for marriage. Being at a different stage of life that didn't permit them to take much care of her, Thalia said she considers the private-sponsorship couple who she spent the most time with as her second parents. This is reminiscent of Mike's comments.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Results from this study indicate that the type of sponsorship greatly determined the level and source of social support received by the refugees. Accordingly, Antonovsky (1973) suggests that one's extent of profound ties to others and to the total community represent two key "resistance resources" in one's attempt to deal with life crises:

On the simplest level, a person who has someone who cares for him is likely to more adequately resolve tension than one who does not. Even without employing the resources of others, simply knowing that these are available to one increases one's strength. (as cited in Chan, 1977, p. 96)

This is consistent within the interactionist framework whereby one's response to stress and social losses is dependent on the perceived availability of support in one's social environment, which includes the kinship system and peer groups (Chan, 1977). While those sponsored by private groups credited their benefactors for providing instrumental support, those sponsored by the government were quickly forced to develop an independent approach whereby they either formed their own social networks of support or relied on family members. A theme of resiliency was present in the accounts of how these refugees slowly worked their way into Canadian society after the traumatic experience of forced migration (Boyd, 2006). Chan (1977) attributes the ability to endure as a family in the face of socioeconomic deprivation to the many years of wars, political prosecution, and poverty in Southeast Asia.

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Indochinese refugees participated in Canada's first Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (Molloy & Simeon, 2016), resettlement policies have evolved. Nevertheless, insights from the Indochinese experience certainly informs and foreshadows the adaptation of recent and subsequent arrivals in Canada. Considering the impactful role that private sponsors have in shaping the economic and social integration of refugees, future studies should examine how these sponsors can be further supported. Though private sponsors are generous in their commitment of time and energy, they would likely benefit from educational and informational resources related to the specific backgrounds of the particular groups of refugees they are dealing with. Such supports would enhance the refugees' settlement experience and make the process less arduous on the sponsors.

There have been some new developments since this study was completed. The Canadian government, in partnership with the UNHCR and the Open Society Foundations, launched the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative in December 2016 (Hyndman, Payne & Jimenez, 2017). This was an effort to help other countries adopt its private sponsorship scheme that was lauded as a model to emulate. Both Australia and Britain are currently developing their own private sponsorship schemes. One downside to Canada's example pertains to a seeming reliance on private sponsorship to fulfill the government's resettlement obligations. Notably, when Trudeau was unable to fulfill his pledge of welcoming 25,000 government-sponsored Syrian refugees by

the end of 2015, private sponsorship was enlisted to help meet a revised deadline. Nearly half of almost 40,000 Syrian refugees who arrived in Canada by the end of January 2017 were wholly or partly admitted through private sponsorship (Hyndman, Payne & Jimenez, 2017). As it becomes clear that private sponsorship will be increasingly used to fulfill humanitarian obligations, governments should be mindful—particularly given the dominant neoliberal ethos of our times—that private sponsorship should complement and not substitute government assistance.

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## 6. The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program: A Gender-Based Analysis

by Lorelle Juffs & Myer Siemiatycki

### Abstract

After 20 years of operation, the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) is regarded as one of the most successful provincial economic immigration programs in Canada for its attraction, retention, and integration of immigrants. Within the MPNP today, more than one third of all nominees are female, yet literature on the program to date reflects limited analysis or representation of these female nominees. In response to the lack of substantial gender-based analysis in MPNP literature, this chapter presents a preliminary assessment: focusing on female principal applicant nominees' experience and positionality under the MPNP using a feminist policy analysis theoretical framework. This assessment revealed that MPNP streams and recruitment practices continue to be gendered and racialized, contributing to the gender gap among principal applicants within the MPNP.

**Keywords:** The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program; female principal applicants; economic class immigrant; Canada; feminist policy analysis.

### Introduction

The year 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP), with Manitoba government websites proudly proclaiming: “MPNP 20: Canada’s first Provincial Nominee Program celebrating 20 years of welcoming newcomers and growing through immigration.” In 1999, its inaugural year, the MPNP admitted 422 newcomers, with women comprising 16.6% of principal applicants (Government of Canada [GC], 2018). So began Manitoba’s immigration program, the design of which seeks to address Manitoba-specific labour market gaps and increase the provincial population to compensate for low birth rates, ageing populations, and high inter-provincial out-migration (Carter et al., 2010).

Over the subsequent 20 years, both total intake numbers and the proportion of female principal applicants under MPNP have risen dramatically. In 2014, for instance, Manitoba admitted a total of 12,187 provincial nominees, with women comprising 44% of all principal applicants (GC, 2018). Yet despite the high proportion of female nominees<sup>1</sup> in the MPNP today, literature on the program to date reflects limited substantial gender-based analysis or representation of female nominees—especially for female principal applicants. Information on female nominees is often limited to statistical data, such as the age and proportion of female nominees within the program, or is inferred from research which solely focuses on male nominees. For instance, when reporting on the MPNP, Tom Carter and colleagues (2010) explicitly excluded female nominees from their discussion, stating “we estimated the models including only male immigrants,” despite one third of all admitted nominees at the time being female immigrants (p. 14). Subsequently, discussions presume that nominees’ experiences within the MPNP are shared equally, irrespective of gender. As a result, female nominees remain overlooked in research, and their particular settlement experiences or needs under-examined.

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<sup>1</sup> While cognizant of the variety of genders that nominees may identify as, we use the term “female nominee” because MPNP applications follow the male/female binary when recording the sex of nominees.

Limited gender focus is a serious limitation in MPNP literature, as “gender differences arise from subordinate status of women in society which acts as a ‘filter’, gendering structural forces and influencing the experiences of men and women differently” (Dobrowolsky & Tastsoglou, 2006, p. 17). According to Statistics Canada (2016), the significance of acquiring data and research on gender is that it informs policy changes to address the “evolving needs of societies and economies” and seeks to understand the “gender-specific policy impacts on women and men before making decisions on policies, legislation, and programs” (p. 143).

This chapter presents an assessment of female principal applicant nominees’ experience and positionality under the MPNP. The structure of this chapter, in meeting this goal, is as follows. We begin by outlining the theoretical lens adopted in this chapter, drawing from feminist policy analysis theory in the context of gender and migration. Next, we describe the formation, policy, and process of the MPNP, as well as Manitoba’s current settlement service institution. Consequently, this informs our research recommendations in the following section. In concluding, we reflect on the importance of this research, its shortcomings and limitations, and potential future trajectory.

## Theoretical Framework

Feminist policy analysis is an emerging field which examines the “regionalization and globalization of policy formation and gender politics” (Gottfried & Reese, 2008, p. 3), in which “gendered policy research understands gender as a system of power that is both a consequence of policy outcomes and a determining force in its creation” (Cichowski, 2001, p. 108). Applying feminist theory to migration, immigration policy, and settlement studies is important because it: a) emphasizes women’s agency and resiliency, and b) reveals significant power dynamics operating at all levels. “The gender focus sheds light on changing relationships between and within families, states and markets, and highlights attendant public policy implications” (Gottfried & Reese, 2008, p. 4).

The premise of feminist policy analysis is to examine policies through a gendered lens, “regardless of whether it specifically mentions women or not,” to analyze how it impacts women and whether “it fits with the goals and values of feminist ideology” (McPhail, 2003, p. 42). These goals, according to Beverley McPhail (2003), are to make women visible in policy:

Making women visible has many facets, including how men and women are treated differently or the same; the underlying assumptions and stereotypes of women embedded in policy; and how women’s lives and roles are regulated and constrained by policy.  
(p. 43)

The ultimate goal is to change policies to eliminate the oppression and disadvantage of women and other marginalized groups (McPhail, 2003, p. 45).

However, the application of feminist policy analysis to migration and settlement studies varies. Heidi Gottfried and Laura Reese (2008) argue that most gender-comparative research in immigration studies focuses on welfare and policy, thereby neglecting gender comparisons of experience in the workplace and employment. Of notable absence is a focus on the outcomes of policy formation and administration for female immigrants, particularly in the workplace (Gottfried & Reese, 2008). Alternatively, Yidan Zhu (2016) claims that feminist policy analysis on settlement issues has been preoccupied with federal-provincial-municipal governmental relations, the history of organizational and institutional change, funding allocation, and delivery

of settlement services—but does not “examine immigration settlement policies and practice from a feminist perspective” (p. 143).

Taken together, these authors reveal the complexity of feminist policy analysis in its application to migration and settlement studies. There are numerous approaches, scopes, institutions, and policy types that can be examined. This chapter aims to examine the gender politics embedded in MPNP policies and practices, and in Manitoba settlement. Feminism provides a lens which enables readers to better understand how subjects’ positionality—the multiple facets of their identity, experiences, and life circumstances—contribute to their subjugation to institutional arrangements. Therefore, while gender is the guiding demographic feature of focus in this chapter, we actively consider female immigrants’ positionality alongside immigration policies and settlement service provision, as well as the influence this has on the outcomes of female nominees’ decision-making and integration processes.

## **The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program: Context and Process**

The first pilot provincial and territorial nominee programs were proposed in 1998 and came into effect in 1999, with British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan as the trailblazers (Flynn & Bauder, 2015). The main objectives have always been to: 1) distribute newcomers across the country, away from the three gateway cities, Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal; 2) meet the labour market needs specific to the province or territory; and 3) retain immigrants in the province or territory in which they are selected. The nominee programs are managed by the respective department of labour, education, or immigration, and applicants apply directly through the province or territory (Carter et al., 2010; Dobrowolsky, 2013).

Summarizing the MPNP application process is complex, as it includes multiple selection streams—each unique in its admission criteria and application process. All pathways have different Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB)/ Niveaux de Compétence Linguistique Canadiens (NCLC) requirements, corresponding to the language required for the pathway’s assessed National Occupational Classification (NOC). Furthermore, every year the streams and criteria are adapted to Manitoba’s labour market needs, as determined by Manitoba’s In-Demand Occupations List—a “regularly updated listing of which occupations qualify as ‘in-demand’ in Manitoba” that is informed by a combination of labour market information, labour forecasts, and employer consultations (Government of Manitoba [GM], 2018). Manitoba’s top current in-demand occupations reach into all sectors of the provincial economy, including: business, finance and administration, health occupations, social science, education, sales and service occupations, trades, transport and equipment operators, farming management, and manufacturing and utilities (GM, 2018). Correspondingly, the current MPNP pathways are divided into four streams to be implemented by 2019:

1. Business Investor Stream (Entrepreneur Pathway and Farm Investor Pathway);
2. International Education Stream (Career Employment Pathway);
3. Skilled Worker in Manitoba Stream (Manitoba Work Experience Pathway and Employer Direct Recruitment Pathway); and
4. Skilled Worker Overseas Stream (Manitoba Human Capital Pathway and Manitoba Express Entry Pathway) (GM, 2017b, p. 4; GM, n.d.).

The MPNP streams above do not appear gendered, or even gender-preferential. Yet upon examination, the streams are unintentionally gender-preferential, inadvertently prioritizing certain demographic groups based on each stream's admission criteria. This can be traced through the MPNP's history of gendered occupational streams and in-demand occupations.

When Manitoba-federal government agreements were first negotiated in 1996, Alexandra Dobrowolsky explains, “[the MPNP] began with a pilot program aimed at attracting sewing-machine operators from Winnipeg’s garment industry” to become permanent residents (2013, p. 85). This pilot project began with the Government of Manitoba negotiating a deal with the federal government to settle 200 temporary foreign garment workers in Manitoba, who were primarily female immigrants from the Philippines (Baxter, 2010, p. 19). The same practices were characteristic of ensuing MPNP streams, whereby employers sponsored temporary foreign workers (TFWs) for permanent residency through skilled or semi-skilled streams because of their desire for TFWs to continue working past their initial visa expiration (Flynn & Bauder, 2015).

Jamie Baxter’s (2010) work suggests the reason that men outnumbered women as principal applicants could be traced back to early MPNP employers’ discriminatory recruitment methods:

Preconceived stereotypes about the social gender roles lead employers to choose women and men for specific jobs. Likewise, employer beliefs that individuals from certain countries of origin are better able to perform this or that job create racialized profiles within particular sectors and industries. Left to the sole discretion of employers, the effects of nominee selection processes in this area will likely be to ossify and entrench aspects of race and gender discrimination as part of Canada’s economic immigration system. (pp. 41-42)

Dobrowolsky’s comparative study of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba provincial nominee programs also emphasized gendered and racialized elements in the streams and pathways offered: “... in the three PNP [Provincial Nominee Program] cases examined here, we also see evidence of immigrants from particular source countries being streamed toward certain PNP subcategories” (2013, p. 88). Prioritizing recruitment from particular source countries, as Baxter and Dobrowolsky have demonstrated, has a significant influence on the racialized demographic from source countries, as well as on the gendered demographic of the occupations.

There also appears to be a gendered skill-bias when recruiting from certain source countries. From the time the MPNP first began in 1998 until 2013, the streams offered were open to low-skill, low-education, and low-language admissions (Leo & August, 2009). In recent years, however, the in-demand occupations and corresponding MPNP streams have been markedly more demanding in their admission criteria, requiring principal applicants to be skilled or high-skilled, and demonstrate their adaptability to Manitoba society.

Each of the top source countries to the MPNP come with their own cultural and gender practices, which may make it difficult for women to apply to the MPNP as primary applicants. As Sedef Arat-Koç (1999) explains, regions of the world where there are more rigid gender inequalities or gender roles in the family often restrict women’s access to education and language training that men are afforded (p. 210). When recruiting from these countries, the men are more highly skilled, educated, and trained than the women, and therefore men are more likely to be nominated and account for a greater percentage of principal applicants in the MPNP.

The MPNP may also disadvantage female principal applicants with its high monetary threshold. For instance, the Entrepreneur Pathway requires applicants invest \$250,000 if opening a business in the Winnipeg region, have a net worth of \$500,000 Canadian dollars, a minimum CLB/NCLC 5, and NOC 0 or C (GM, 2017b, p. 13). According to Dobrowolsky (2013), these requirements act as a “barrier for women who are less well endowed in terms of capital/human capital” and those possessing skills and credentials that are less recognized (p. 87).

## The Manitoba Settlement Institution

As the MPNP developed over the course of 20 years, Manitoba’s settlement institution has been largely shaped by policies, legislation, and settlement services designed specifically for Manitoba provincial nominees. Robert Vineberg (2014) claims that when the provincial nominee program was first created, “Manitoba developed a vision that the [provincial nominee program] and settlement delivery went hand in hand” (p. 6). As the program grew, Vineberg explains, “change came iteratively as immigration driven by the [provincial nominee programming] increased and settlement funding followed” (2014, p. 6). This remains true today, as the majority of service consumers are provincial nominees, accounting for 71.6% of all newcomers to Manitoba in 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

While few settlement services are exclusively offered to nominees, the settlement institution has been developed to meet nominee-specific needs based on the pathway in which they enter and integrate into Canada. For instance, pre-arrival services are especially crucial for nominees entering through the Skilled Worker Overseas stream, because they reside outside of Canada during the nomination process and use this time to prepare for life in Manitoba. The 2016-2017 Manitoba Education and Training report states: “Manitoba has developed pre-arrival initiatives for Provincial Nominees and other immigrants destined to Manitoba so that they can begin planning for labour market success prior to arriving in Manitoba” (GM, 2017c, p. 149). This is supported by Lori Wilkinson and colleagues (2014) study, which states the pre-arrival services reported as needed most in Manitoba were “skills training to help... obtain appropriate employment in Canada” (44.3%), “connections with possible employers” (42.5%), and “assessment of... international education and experience” (40.9%) (p. 25).

Simultaneously, the importance of female immigrants is highlighted at every level of Manitoba’s settlement institution. For instance, the federal government states:

IRCC recognizes the significant contributions that newcomer women make to the economic, social, civic and cultural life of Canada, and their key role in the settlement and integration of the family unit once they have arrived here. Migration to Canada can bring many opportunities for women, but it can also include distinct and multiple challenges, such as navigating a new language, work transitions, child-care responsibilities, developing new networks and shifts in family dynamics. To address these challenges, considerations for gender, age, identity, and circumstances of migration are included in the design and delivery of Settlement Program policies. (GC, 2017a)

To serve the specific needs of female immigrants, IRCC funds settlement services with gender-specific programming. These include women-only employment opportunities, women-only or online language training, and gender-based violence prevention support (GC, 2010, p. 61; GC, 2017a). IRCC also funds support services such as “child-minding and transportation services... to ensure that mothers—who may be primarily responsible for child care and feel unable to physically attend meetings or courses—are able to access these services” (GC, 2017a).

The Manitoba government also addresses female immigrants' needs when designing and promoting settlement services. Based on the 2013 report by Gérald Clement and colleagues, most women-specific services provided in Manitoba were community- and neighbourhood-based services designed for “isolated women” in the home—either as spouses, homemakers, or women living in rural areas (p. 39). Most of the services offered were information and orientation, language training, and community connections, trying to encourage these women to participate in the broader community. To a lesser extent, women-specific employment services were available, which delivered “part-time English for specific purposes, language training for employment preparation and improved employability” (Clement et al., 2013, p. 94).

While women-specific programming is available, a body of research suggests that significant barriers prevent women from accessing these services. For instance, Wilkinson and colleagues (2014) found that in Manitoba, provincial nominees were the second highest immigration class to not use settlement services at 34.1%, behind the Family Class at 40.0% (p. 19). Interestingly, 43.1% of those reporting not using settlement services indicated it was not a matter of need but a lack of information or awareness (23.4%), confusion on who to seek for help (12.4%), and lack of local community services (7.3%) (Wilkinson et al., 2014, p. 23). Additionally, Wilkinson and colleagues report that in Manitoba, female immigrants overall were “the most likely to need and not get services,” citing the same reasons as above (Wilkinson et al., 2015, p. 33). Further research is needed to determine why these women and nominees are among the least likely to seek needed services.

In recent years, Manitoba's provincial nominees have encountered adverse labour market experiences. They have especially struggled in finding a job or work commensurate with their human capital. A study conducted from 2010 to 2015 by the IRCC revealed that Manitoba had the highest rate of nominees' first jobs being incommensurate with the skill level of their intended occupation, at 40.7% (Statistics Canada, 2018, p. 28). In general, job-skill mismatch has been a well-documented issue in Canadian immigration research, impacting both men and women. A 2010 study by Rene Houle and Lahouaria Yssaad reveals the gendered and racialized undertones of credential recognition:

... partial recognition of foreign work experience tended to be higher for female immigrants and people who were part of a visible minority group. Also, refugees and Filipinos were the most likely to receive partial recognition for their credentials, compared to newcomers selected as skilled workers—who fared the best in this respect. Immigrants who earned their highest degree or whose last permanent residence was in the United States or the United Kingdom were the least likely to receive partial recognition for their credentials and work experience since the credentials and work experience for the majority of them had been fully accepted. (p. 30)

Dobrowolsky's work on female dependents in the MPNP affirms these findings, as she found “the most dramatic fluctuations in women's class positions across both space and time were typically the result of intersection forms of gender and racial discrimination” associated with assumptions about skill, knowledge, and capacity (2013, p. 93). The results, she claims, are “financial and emotional costs” on women trying to gain credential recognition, stating that despite the MPNP providing an “opportunity to ‘fast track’ immigration... most women noted that many years of planning and family coordination had been involved” (2013, p. 90).

Manitoba has seen more skill-based in-demand occupations and higher NOC and CLB/NCLC requirements for MPNP streams, which may contribute to higher levels of discrimination based

on gender—specifically at the intersection of gender and racial-minorities. Not only is women’s care work not recognized by the point system, but their credentials and education are routinely less recognized than their male counterparts—all of which contribute to the continued gender gap between principal applicants in the MPNP.

## Moving Forward

Further research, policy, and program development all have a role in advancing women’s experience and success through the MPNP. Deeper qualitative research is required to better understand the dynamics of gender and other identity markers. Special attention should be given to the gender-differential experience of female and male nominees, as well as to the intersectional impacts of class, race, ethnicity, religion, and other categories. The decision-making process of nominees and their spouses, as to who applies as the principal applicant to the MPNP, could be especially helpful in explaining the continuing gender gap of male to female principal applicant admittance.

In consideration of the feminist policy analysis on the MPNP, future research would be best advised to investigate the following:

1. Explore potential reasons underlying the continued gender gap between male and female principal applicants in the MPNP;
2. Examine further the gendered and racialized occupations in Manitoba’s current In-Demand Occupations List, and the extent to which these influence gender- and/or racial-discriminatory selection in the MPNP nomination process; and
3. Review the policies and practices of various mainstream organizations in their servicing newcomers, particularly women and minority groups.

Interestingly, female principal applicants, in all economic immigration classes, are on the rise. Across Canada, “in 2016, a full 42% of total principal applicants from the Economic Class were female, compared to 33% in 2006” (GC, 2017b, p. 38). In the MPNP, 30% of total principal applicants were female in 2007, compared to 40% in 2017 (GC, 2018). Female principal applicants continue immigration to Manitoba, and their contributions to Manitoba’s economy and society is reflected in the reduced MPNP gender gap among principal applicants over time.

These gendered trends are especially important, as it is predicted there will be “a labour shortage of over 20,000 skilled workers” in Manitoba by 2020 (GM, 2017a). Therefore, increased recruitment of immigrants through the MPNP’s skilled worker pathways and increased numbers of female principal applicants can be expected. In the next 20 years of the MPNP, gender parity of principal applicants would be a worthy goal, with settlement services attuned to newcomers’ needs and pathway-specific immigration. After all, the goal is not to only retain nominees, but also to place them in the best possible position to flourish in their new home.

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# Part 3: Identity & Integration

## 7. Can I Integrate with this Veil? Examining Cultural and Social Integration through Voices of Veiling Muslim Women in Canada

by Sunbal Mohammad & Cheryl Teelucksingh

### Abstract

Numerous studies have examined discrimination against Muslim women, but very little research looks at the cultural and social integration of Muslims. This chapter investigates the cultural and social integration of Muslim women who veil in Canada, which was measured through several factors, namely: belonging, participation in institutions, celebrations of festivals, and friend circle. Six in-depth interviews were conducted with Canadian-born Muslim women who veil. The findings were analyzed from post-colonial feminist intersectionality and orientalism approaches. The results highlight that Muslim women in Canada use their own strategies to culturally and socially integrate into Canada while also practicing their faith. Muslim women have different experiences due to intersectionality that need to be addressed, as several factors—such as race, gender, socio-economic status, and immigration history—play a vital role in belonging and integration.

**Keywords:** Cultural integration; social integration; veiling Muslim women; identity; Canada

### Introduction

Whether it be a news channel, an article, or a political debate, the argument surrounding the Muslim veil somehow always seems to make headlines. Fatema Mohammadi (2018) writes that “the Hijab is an issue that feminists criticize, anthropologists interpret, religious authorities prescribe and politicians and activists promote or oppose” (p. 6). Even with the multicultural reputation it celebrates, Canada is not immune to the discrimination of Muslims. In particular, the Muslim veil is used as a political strategy to create a rhetoric that Islam oppresses women to further marginalize Muslim communities (Nagra, 2018).

Canada has long embraced multiculturalism and diversity, and has upheld an international image of being an accepting and tolerant country (Nagra & Peng, 2013). While this image is true to a high degree, there are many debates surrounding the social integration of Muslim communities (McCoy, Kirova & Knight, 2016). Integration and discrimination are closely tied together because of the belief that certain individuals cannot integrate into Canadian society, which often leads to discrimination and even hate crimes. It is assumed that Muslim women cannot socially integrate into Canadian society because of the gender inequality perceived in Islam by others (McCoy et al., 2016). Thus, the purpose of this research is to critically reflect upon the choices, experiences, and difficulties of veiling Muslim women in Canada through the following question: How are veiling Muslim women in Canada redefining the notion of cultural and social integration? Veiling in this study includes the Hijab, Niqab, and Burqa. The Hijab is a Muslim head covering, the Niqab is an Islamic garment that covers the face and only reveals the eyes,

and the Burqa is a long outer garment (usually black) that extends to the feet. The Burqa is used differently in various countries and cultures, with some using it to refer to the covering of the face (Guindi, 1999).

## Literature Review

### Integration and Multiculturalism

Immigrant integration consists of various aspects and has no universally accepted definition. Economic integration by far has been the focus of immigrant integration and rightfully so, as immigrants must be economically integrated into their destination country to live a stable life (Wilkinson, 2013). However, other forms of integration must also be addressed as they are intertwined and greatly influence each other. Wilkinson (2013) describes the process of integration as:

a reciprocal process where newcomers are incorporated into a new society. During the process, both the newcomer and host society change as a result of interaction with one another. This change is mutually beneficial; the immigrant makes alterations to their behaviour to “fit in” while the host society changes as a result of the incorporation of newcomers. The passage of time ensures that the newcomers and their children begin to adapt and reconcile their cultural practices, language and religion towards the prevailing culture of the host society. (p. 1)

This definition places responsibility on both immigrants and the host society to collaboratively ensure that immigrants are provided with the required resources to integrate. The multicultural approach to integration suggests that immigrants are not expected to give up aspects of their own cultures to live in Canada, but can in fact continue embracing their cultural values and norms (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012). Nevertheless, there are two sides to the multiculturalism debate and the integration of immigrants in Canada. On the one hand, immigrants integrate quicker in Canada than in countries without any multicultural policy, and have higher rates of citizenship and political participation than other western democracies (Nagra & Peng, 2013). On the other hand, “Razack and Thobani note that multicultural policies celebrate white tolerance of racialized others by erasing colonial white settlement, the historical displacement of First Nations communities and the mistreatment of early immigrant groups” (Nagra & Peng, 2013, p. 608). As Arat-Koç (2005) suggests, multiculturalism is based on the inequality between those who “tolerate” and those who are “tolerated.”

Another critique of multiculturalism is that racialized and religious minorities are not treated as ‘real Canadians’ or as equal partners with the white dominant-group, despite the claims of equality of all cultures by multiculturalism (Mann, 2014). Critics also raise the point that if multiculturalism is used to manage diversity, it does not actually encourage integration; rather, it encourages divisions amongst ethnic groups, further enabling the domination of Anglophone Canadian political elite (Mann, 2014). This raises the question of whether immigrants can successfully “integrate” by following a multicultural approach.

It can be challenging to look at the integration of Muslim immigrants due to the intersectional identities amongst the Muslim population. For example, social integration of religious minorities is often determined more by their racial backgrounds than their religious affiliation (Reitz et al., 2009). Two explanations can be given to this: 1) race played a major role politically following the surge of non-European immigration and the use of the term “visible minority,” i.e., race was

a more visible marker of discrimination and religion at that time was not a big concern (Reitz et al., 2009); and 2) among visible minorities, blacks are the most disadvantaged and yet the majority are Christians, thus underscoring the lesser influence of religion (Reitz et al., 2009). However, one study found that Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus do face employment disadvantages primarily due to their religion and are considered lower in status (Model & Lin, 2003). Thus, multiculturalism remains controversial: for some, it is seen as a promoter of integration where immigrants are welcome to embrace their own culture, while others continue to question the mismatch between the political foundation of multiculturalism and the practical implementation of it (Nagra & Peng, 2013).

Wilkinson (2013) argues that despite success in economic integration, one must also consider social and cultural integration. Economic integration is influenced by the unfair treatment of Muslims in employment and housing, as well as the implementation of anti-racist policies that foster inclusion and belonging (Moghissi, Rahnema & Goodman, 2009). Measuring social and cultural integration is not an easy task because it is hard to find indicators which will truly capture successful integration. Cultural integration is closely tied with social integration and includes cultural habits, values and beliefs, religion, and language (Algan, Bisin & Verdier, 2012).

Jeffrey Reitz (2009) defines social integration as “the extent to which individuals become vested in the core institutions of society, participate in those institutions and experience a sense of satisfaction” (p. 21). This definition recognizes the significance of institutions and participation from immigrants but does not include a sense of belonging, which is a vital aspect of social integration—unless immigrants feel that they belong to a particular community or country, they may not fare well in their lives. Muslims have historically been categorized as being the ‘other’ (Said, 2007) and assigned characteristics defined by the occidental or dominant white groups. For example, findings from the 2007 Environics survey show that 57% of non-Muslims believed that Muslims wanted to remain distinct from the Canadian culture (i.e., Canadian beliefs and values); yet only 23% of Muslim-Canadians endorsed this belief (Lichmore & Safdar, 2014). In response to gaps in terms of how social integration has been defined in the literature, this study measures social integration in relation to both institutions and belonging.

## **Islam and Veiling**

One of the most common questions that Muslim women find themselves addressing is “why do you veil?” Clothing is an important social institution in which ideological and non-verbal communication unfold (Mohammadi, 2018). Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the clothing pieces of Muslim women such as the Hijab, Niqab, and Burqa. A predominant assumption is that the behaviours and opinions of Muslims are strongly and exclusively tied to their religion, which means that to understand the behaviours of Muslims, Islam needs to be understood (Kazemipur, 2016). This becomes especially true for women who veil, as their actions and behaviours are associated with their veil and they often become representatives of their Muslim communities—stereotyped as backward and anti-Western (Mohammadi, 2018).

There have been many arguments amongst Muslim women regarding the commandment of veiling in the Quran (Bakht, 2008). According to the Quran, the covering of the head has been instructed by God for Muslim women for the purpose of modesty. It further relays that not merely the head is to be covered but also the bosom (Chapter 33: Verse 60, p. 495). The Quran also states that Muslim women should cover their faces, as this is the highest rank amongst Muslims in the eyes of God. Thus, from these verses it can be seen that the Hijab is deemed mandatory, while the face covering known as Niqab has been granted the highest rank in the

eyes of God; however, the covering of the face is not mandatory in Islam. This helps explain the confusion often arising regarding the Niqab in Canada and particularly in Quebec, where some argue that the Niqab is not a part of Islam (Bakht, 2008). An important point to note is that modesty is also prescribed to men in Islam (Chapter 24: verse 31), countering the notion of women being oppressed in Islam due to the hypervisibility of the veil (Siddiqui, 2015).

While many Muslim women veil to obey to the commandments of God, others veil for their own personal reasons. One study found that 67% of women in United States wear the Hijab because they view it as a religious obligation and expression of piety and chastity (Taylor et al., 2014), whereas others reported wearing it to show obedience to their faith and a way of empowerment (Siraj, 2011). This finding is interesting because it challenges the arguments that veiling represents oppression by men. Muslim women make their own decisions when it comes to veiling, and the Hijab symbolically represents different things for Muslim women around the world.

In the west, Islamic values are repeatedly labelled as incompatible with democracy and seen to clash with civilization (Siddiqui, 2015; Razack, 2004). However, to the surprise of many, such beliefs are contradictory to Islamic values. For instance, one of the most controversial issues is the rights of women in Islam—yet Islam gave women the right to vote, the right to own property, and the right to marry and divorce by their own choice 1400 years ago (Pathway to Paradise, 2014). Natasha Bakht (2008) argues that Muslim women are seen in need of protection because the assumption is that Muslim women cover their faces as a submission to males; hence, the veil is seen as a symbol of oppression associated with a “backward” Islamic culture. Nagra (2018) found that many Muslim women stated how people expect them to be a certain way (putting family first, rather than being career-oriented, and having a quiet nature) simply because they wore the Hijab. Moreover, a study analyzing online comments regarding the Hijab found that 51.75% of comments were “against” veiling, 39.88% were “neutral,” and 8.37% “for” veiling (Rahman et al., 2016). Muslim women who veil also face economic challenges due to their veil and this can negatively influence their cultural and social integration. Nagra (2018) found that many Muslim women have difficulties in finding employment because of their status as veiling Muslim women, and that they often face economic discrimination due to perceptions of incompetence to fulfill their occupations effectively (Nagra & Peng, 2013). An important issue to consider here is that denying employment to Muslim women can reinforce patriarchy, as only then do they truly become dependent on the males in their households. If Canada truly embraces multiculturalism, it needs to shift the conversation of the veil and the integration of Muslim women in Canadian society, as well as finding ways to provide equal work opportunities for Muslim women.

## Methodology

This study<sup>2</sup> employs a post-colonial and anti-racist feminist approach to intersectionality. Intersectionality means that gender and sex must always be looked at in relation to how they intersect with other social and cultural categories such as ethnicity, class, race, age, disability, nationality, and more (Lykke, 2010). Post-colonial and anti-racist feminism recognizes the privilege of western, white, middle-class women feminists’ voices, and the need to consider issues of race and ethnicity as they relate to minority women (Lykke, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> As this research involved interaction with human participants, it was reviewed and approved under the Tri-Council Policy statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Beings (TCPS) by the Ryerson Ethics Board at Ryerson University.

For this study, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with Canadian-born Muslim women. The interview questions involved asking why Muslim women decided to veil (i.e., their influences), experiences of discrimination, celebration of holidays, and sense of belonging in Canada. The goal was to recruit participants that represented diversity in terms of age, race, and sect of Islam. Three participants were black Somalian Muslim women who belonged to the Sunni sect of Islam, while the remaining three participants were brown Pakistani Muslim women belonging to the Ahmadi sect of Islam. The participants ranged from 19-28 in age. All the six participants wore the Hijab, two wore the Niqab, and five wore a Burqa/Abaya.

## Findings

Four out of the six participants stated that their mother had an influence on their decision to start wearing the Hijab, while only one participant said her father pushed her to wear it. Interestingly, all six participants started to wear the Hijab, Niqab, and Burqa/Abaya at different ages in their lives. The different factors influencing the decision to veil also included: religious beliefs, cultural influence, family influence, empowerment, and personal growth as a Muslim. These findings are imperative as they demonstrate that, contrary to Western assumptions, Muslim women have control of their own lives and choices.

Five out of the six participants noted some discrimination due to their veil, while the sixth participant knew friends who had negative experiences, but never experienced discrimination herself. Consequently, the participant who did not face any discrimination had a more positive opinion about Canada and a stronger sense of belonging as well. The most common experience of discrimination was being called a terrorist: five out of six participants had been called a terrorist at least once with their veil. One participant reported that when she went for a job interview, even after a friend had assured her that she had the job on reference, the manager said, “oh you’re Muslim” and she never heard back. This experience indicates that some Muslim women do have employment challenges because of their veil.

The participants were asked: “what does it mean to be Muslim and Canadian?” Many of the participants took pride in the fact that they were Canadian and truly loved their country, while also recognizing that Islam is not necessarily received well by everyone in Canada. Three participants further explained that there were actually similarities between Islam and Canadian values. Two participants also pointed out that loyalty to one’s country is actually obligatory in Islam.

## Intersectionality and fitting into Canadian culture

As expected, there were differences in the experiences of Pakistani Muslims and Somali Muslims in all aspects. The three black Muslim participants all expressed more negative experiences of discrimination and isolation within educational institutions and Canadian society in general. The desire to fit in and be a part of Canadian society was expressed by two black participants, but barriers such as race, gender, and religion make it that much more difficult. The Muslim women recognized that their religion was not the only factor in their experiences of discrimination, but also race and gender. One participant noted:

[Because] as much as Canada is considered to be a multicultural country, the society is not. There is an expectation to be a certain way, especially when you’re a woman, right? Being a woman, then being a woman of colour, and then on top of that being a Muslim; that’s three barriers right there. And Canadian society still has male dominance.

These references to being female, a person of colour, and Muslim are examples of inequalities of intersectionality (Lykke, 2010). Attributing everything to religion completely overlooks the issues that these women face resulting from socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, or migration history (Nagra, 2018). Even feminists who are working genuinely in this space, but do not take culture into consideration, can unfortunately end up reproducing colonial legacies of ‘the helpless woman of the east’ (Lykke, 2010). As Nagra (2018) explains, this allows people to stereotype and marginalize these women as being racialized others in Canadian society.

### **Cultural and Social Integration and Belonging**

When talking about cultural and social integration, the style or type of veil they wore was important for the Muslim women in the study. For example, the Muslim women talked about the modernization—or in their words, the “Canadianization”—of the Hijab, Niqab, and Burqa/Abaya to practice their faith while living in a western society. The three Pakistani Muslim women said the veil they wore was not the traditional veils they would have chosen in their origin countries, e.g., one of the women who wore the Niqab mentioned that it was not a traditional Niqab. Other participants also noted that instead of a Burqa they would wear something else that was more modernized in the Canadian context but would serve the purpose of a Burqa.

Besides Canada Day, the participants did not celebrate the majority of the other national holidays, because many are Catholic holidays celebrated from a religious stance such as Christmas and Easter, which did not align with their religious beliefs. Two participants questioned the notion of Canadian holidays and what that means in relation to multiculturalism, when the official calendar continues to prioritize Christian-Catholic holidays.

Belonging in this study was defined by whether the participants felt they were Canadian or not, even though they were born in Canada. The last question in the study asked whether the participants had friends outside their cultural and religious circle. Overall, all six participants noted that they had friends outside both their religious and cultural circle. This question was used to measure integration, as social integration typically looks at social interactions between immigrants and the people of the host society (CIMI, 2018). The Canadian Index for Measuring Index (CIMI) was helpful and informed how social integration was measured among study participants. However, the CIMI had no cultural integration dimension for immigrants in Canada; as such, this study was able to redefine the notion of cultural and social integration together.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

This chapter examined the social and cultural integration of veiling Muslim women in Canada through six in-depth interviews with young adult Muslim women. Ironically, when Muslim women are told by “Canadians” how to dress or act, their autonomy is taken away from them. The images of Muslim women as helpless, oppressed, and victimized continues to reinforce colonial legacies which allow “Canadians” to treat them as they please (Nagra, 2018). Muslim women’s intersectionality relating to race and gender are also ignored. As a result, larger inequalities present in Canadian society—such as racism and patriarchy, and how they intersect with religious oppression—are not adequately addressed (Lykke, 2010). The findings of this study show that when veiling Muslim women face discrimination, it negatively influences their sense of belong in Canada, which further hinders their social and cultural integration.

All six participants in the study said they wished that more people could learn about Islam. One participant raised an important point: that although there is an increase in research about Muslim women in academia, their voices are still missing from other sources such as articles published in newspapers and on social media. This study also found that negative views about Muslims came mostly from the uneducated and the older generation—an observation found in a previous study as well (Wilkins-Laflamme, 2018). More education, as well as positive images and representations of Muslims, are necessary to counter negative views.

Black Muslim participants had significantly more negative experiences, which is consistent with intersectionality theory. This serves as a reminder that different identities and forms of oppression are significant in Muslim women's everyday experiences. Such a relationship between discrimination and sense of belonging is not new and has been found in other studies with not only Muslim women, but also immigrants in general (McCoy et al., 2015). This means that Canada as a country needs citizens to work together to address the injustices present, without placing the blame on immigrants' cultures and religions.

This chapter highlights that Muslim women face difficulty with social and cultural integration because they are not considered "Canadian" despite being born here. Muslim women in this study regarded social and cultural integration as important, and also recognized that integration is closely tied to success in society. Their personal choices to veil exemplify how some Muslim women in Canada take steps to integrate themselves into Canada culturally while also practicing their faith. Muslim veiling women in Canada are redefining notions of cultural and social integration by making concerted efforts to fit in. For further research in this area, hopefully this study can encourage more scholarship looking at the relationship between social and cultural integration, as well as economic integration, in regard to immigrants' sense of belonging.

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## 8. Being Canadian and Ahmadi Muslim: Exploring Identity Formation of Young Women

by Aisha Mohammad & Mehrunnisa Ahmad Ali

### Abstract

This chapter explores the questions: how do young Canadian Ahmadi Muslim women self-identify and what influences their identifications? Responses from nine young women collected through semi-structured interviews show that they have multiple, overlapping, sometimes-conflicting identifications. The women noted family, institutional affiliation, and residential location as the most influential factors on their identity formation, which mediated the influence of friends, peers, and the media. Implications for future research are presented.

**Keywords:** Identity; Ahmadi Muslim women; identity formation; Canadian

### Introduction

Canada is home to people from many different backgrounds. Hamdon (2010) acknowledges that while it is not uncommon for new immigrants to feel out of place, “what is unusual is that Muslims have been in Canada for over 100 years and are still struggling to find their place” (p. 39). Although the event of 9/11 led to difficult times and the labelling of Muslims as ‘terrorists,’ their lifestyles have always distinguished them from other Canadians. For example, “things such as dating and premarital sex, drug and alcohol use, which are common practices among many youth in North America, are strictly forbidden in Islam” (Zine, 2001, p. 399). Although similar prohibitions have been endorsed by other religions, Muslim youth tend to take them much more seriously than Canadian youth of other religious affiliations.

This study will investigate how young Canadian Ahmadi Muslim women self-identify and what influences their identifications. Ahmadis are a minority Muslim group, usually included among mainstream Muslims in the literature even though they are commonly discriminated against by dominant Muslim populations. Ahmed-Ghosh (2004) states that “while a number of studies on Muslims in North America have been conducted... some minority Muslim communities have not received adequate attention; the Ahmadiyya community is one of these” (p. 73). We selected this group because: 1) voices of young Canadian Muslims are often not represented in the public discourses (Wong et al., 2017); 2) Muslim women face more discrimination than men; 3) Ahmadis also face discrimination from other Muslims; and 4) one of the authors of this chapter is a Canadian Ahmadi Muslim woman.

### Theoretical Framework

Identity is a complex notion. According to Erikson, identity refers to a “a well-organized conception of the self that defines who one is, what one values, and what directions one wants to pursue in life” (Berk, 2012, p. 600). Burke and Stets (2009) claim that “through a social comparison and categorization process, persons who are similar to the self are categorized with the self and are labelled the in-group” (p. 118). Internal identity reflects an integrated sense of self based on a feeling of security, autonomy, and comfort. External identity relates to the social, cultural, and political world in which the individual seeks recognition and acceptance (Fukuyama, 2018). The ‘negotiation’ between the internal and external realities can: 1) change

external environments or one's own beliefs and values, or 2) result in a conflict which is either actively engaged—which often happens during adolescence (Berk, 2012)—or simply accepted as a 'difference.'

Kroger (2007) identifies five approaches towards an understanding of identity, which are not mutually exclusive but overlapping categories with shifting emphases. The historical approach recognizes historical relativity; the sociocultural approach focuses on the impact of social contexts; the structural approach recognizes the influence of social, economic and political structures that shape lives; the narrative approach focuses on how identities are constructed through one's life story; and the psychosocial approach addresses the biological, psychological, and societal influences on identity.

Writing about the contemporary context of migration, Sicakkan (2005) claims that: *mobility of bodies*, especially through migration, changes the spaces of interactions; *mobility of boundaries* shifts individual territorial, political, cultural, economic, and social spaces; and *mobility of minds* allows for shifting 'belongings' between different references of identification. This is important to keep in mind when exploring identities of immigrants whose backgrounds may be quite different from the dominant cultures in their destination countries.

In the study described below, we draw upon social identity theory that focuses on people's claims of membership in various groups. To examine how some Canadian Muslim women categorize and label themselves, we need to first describe the contexts in which they live.

## Context

Although often represented as a single entity in the Western imagination, Muslims are not a homogenous group. Their beliefs and practices vary a great deal depending on their interpretations of Islam, influences of their families and communities, and their personal propensities. Ahmadi Muslims are a sub-category of Muslims—the name of the sect is 'Ahmadiyyat' (also called *Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at*) and its members consider it to embody the revival of Islam by the Promised Messiah. It was founded in 1889 by Imam Mahdi ('The Guided One'), Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in a small village called Qadian, in Punjab, India. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a devoted follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Zirvi, 2010). Two major differences distinguish Ahmadi Muslims from other Muslims, they believe that: 1) Jesus Christ died a natural death, therefore the second advent of Jesus is a spiritual occurrence rather than a physical return to earth; and 2) Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad fulfilled the prophecy of the second advent of Jesus and is both the Messiah and the Mahdi (Zirvi, 2010).

Ahmadis are against violence and promote the motto, "love for all, hatred for none." However, Ahmadi Muslims have been persecuted in Pakistan and other countries due to differences between the dominant Sunni Muslims and Ahmadis' positions regarding the religious status of Imam Mahdi. Ahmadis were formally declared as non-Muslims by Pakistan's state legislature in 1974, and not allowed to practice their faith openly—their places of worship have been attacked, and many have been murdered because of their religious identification. This has led many Ahmadi Muslims from Pakistan to flee to other countries such as Canada.

According to a recent survey, 83% of Canadian Muslims say they are very proud to be Canadian, whereas only 73% of non-Muslim Canadians make the same claim (EnviroNics Institute, 2017). Despite their apparent identification with Canada, many Muslims experience discrimination. Several researchers (e.g., Tiflati, 2017; Beyer et al., 2013; Hussain, 2004; Litchmore & Safdar, 2014) have found that many Muslim youth living in Canada face discrimination and harassment.

Women who wear the hijab are in particular targeted more often due to the hypervisibility of this garment. Litchmore and Safdar (2014) conducted a quantitative study to investigate if perceptions of discrimination among Muslim-Canadians were related to levels of religiosity, ethnic identity, and gender. They found higher levels of perceived discrimination among women than men, and a positive relationship between religiosity and perceptions of discrimination.

Beyer and Ramji (2013) examined the religious identities of 200 Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu men and women between the ages of 18 and 27. The 58 Muslim women who participated in the study expressed a stronger individual religious identity, rather than a strong association with their religious communities. They found that “Their religious identities were not shaped or nurtured primarily or all that directly by their religious communities, but a significant number of the most highly involved youths considered themselves deeply religious” (p. 120). They also noted that “many expressed an inner struggle to balance their lives as Muslims and Canadians: to maintain a Muslim identity while at the same time fully participating in Canadian culture” (p. 113-114). As Hamdon (2010) states, “Muslims living in Canada are struggling to make sense of their identities, to come to term with differences within their community(ies), while at the same time attempting to interrupt oppressive discourses which have constructed Muslims as alien, and even dangerous, to the West” (p. 12). Lacking in the literature is a study examining the self-identification of Ahmadi Muslims in Canada.

## Methodology

The first author of this study is an Ahmadi Muslim Canadian who wears the hijab. She recruited nine women between the ages of 19-26 from the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding region using snowball sampling. The women were all born in Canada and had parents who immigrated from a South Asian country (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh). Because of the researcher’s identity, she was easily able to recruit participants and build rapport with them. The participants were quite open with her because they assumed she would understand their perspectives; however, it remains possible that some participants may also have censored their thoughts and attuned their responses to her identity. In addition, the researcher’s interpretations of what the participants said may be partially influenced by her own beliefs and affiliations.

This study used a qualitative approach and narrative construction of identity as a strategy. Face-to-face unstructured interviews were conducted with nine Canadian Ahmadi Muslim young women, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Questions related to the women’s parents’ immigration histories, where they lived, experiences of discrimination, and identity influences were asked. Data were analyzed using a grounded theory approach, starting with open, then axial, and finally selective coding.

## Findings

When asked how they self-identify, most of the women talked about being ‘Canadian,’ being ‘Muslim,’ and being ‘Ahmadi’ (and two added additional labels i.e. ‘Pakistani’ and ‘a student’). Probed further, they explained what the three major categories meant to them.

### Being Canadian

Seven participants compared Canada to their parents’ countries of origin, appreciating the former for freedom of expression, security, acceptance of differences, diversity, and multiculturalism. They were proud to be Canadian but acknowledged that Islamic and Canadian values sometimes

conflicted. Although they proudly claimed their Canadian identity, neither they themselves nor others necessarily thought of them as ‘fully’ Canadian. For example, they talked about how much they enjoyed hockey but could not participate in ‘the hockey culture’ which belonged only to ‘real’ (i.e., White) Canadians. Some said that going for a drink after work was a typical Canadian way to build relationships, but they could not do so because alcohol is forbidden in Islam, and had to find other ways to socialize with co-workers.

Several participants said they were often subtly reminded of their differences in social groups and settings. Two of them described instances when a professor and a peer apologized to them specifically after swearing in their presence because of their perceived Muslim identities. Another likened her experience of being a Canadian to her memory of her Catholic high school, where she felt like an outsider because she did not dress like other girls, watch specific television shows, or use particular social media platforms like them.

### **Being Muslim**

The women suggested that their Islamic identity was an individual religious identity, which was different from their communal Ahmadi identity. Being Muslim was associated with personal religious practices such as praying five times a day, fasting in the month of Ramadan, reading the Quran, and dressing modestly. Six of the nine women wore the hijab and were thus visibly Muslims. However, even the women who did not wear the hijab said that they dressed modestly to display their Islamic values and identity.

Most participants reported low levels of discrimination, which they had expected to face because of their Muslim identity. Those who did not wear the hijab felt that discrimination was also based on cultural and racial differences, or other indicators of their religious identity such as Islamic names.

The participants said that their Islamic values and practices were reinforced by their Ahmadi identity but added that their communal identity also distinguished them from other Muslims. Three of the women added that they had faced discrimination from non-Ahmadi Muslims. They believed there was a negative view about Ahmadis held by other Muslims, even among those who were born and raised in Canada. They were thus hesitant to tell other Muslims that they were Ahmadi because they were not sure how they would react.

### **Being Ahmadi**

To all nine women being Ahmadi meant having a community (Jama‘at) in Canada and around the world. The women claimed that the Jama‘at’s structure offered them specific roles and responsibilities, making them feel fully accepted. It was also a major component of their Ahmadi identity as it guided their life on a daily basis. Their bond with the current leader of the Jama‘at was maintained through sermons, classes, and letters, and their communal relationships were reinforced by frequent community prayers, social events, and activities.

Nevertheless, two participants had also felt discrimination against them within the Jama‘at because of the way they dressed. One of them, who did not wear a hijab, had stayed away from the community for this reason when she was younger. However, the participants attributed this attitude to the *cultural* rather than *religious* beliefs of those who discriminated against them, because of people who practice the same religion but live in different countries can have very different norms about women’s attire. Yet Muslims can also defend their sartorial choices in the name of religion rather than culture: the participants noted how Pakistani women typically do not

wear jeans, t-shirts, or dresses, and would therefore deem the participants as “falling short” in their Islamic values because they did wear such garments.

### **Managing Multiple Identities**

At this stage of their lives, all the women felt either no or little internal identity conflicts. One participant insisted that she had absolutely no internal conflict because she had guidelines from her parents and was never really attracted to “all that stuff” (referring to ‘Canadian’ cultural practices) because she knew who she was from a young age. However, others had faced conflicts regarding use of alcohol, dress style, and restrictions on their social life during high school or early post-secondary education, but had learned to manage them. Many attributed their earlier difficulties to a lack of understanding of why they were told to do, or to avoid, certain practices. Once they were able to understand the logic behind what they were told, it was easy to accept those values. One of them said that she had matured and now understood she could choose to drink alcohol or not, and decided she was not going to do so. Others said they could live like Ahmadis, Muslims, and Canadians at the same time because people have “different faces” depending on the context.

### **Influences on Identity**

The women identified family, institutional affiliation, and residential location as the most influential factors on their identity formation, which mediated the influence of friends, peers, and the media. All nine participants identified family as the first and foremost contributor to their identity. The women believed in their parents’ teaching of Islam and Ahmadiyyat from a very young age, and the values they modelled provided clear guidelines for them to follow. Mothers and sisters were the most significant role models. These women said that the strongest influences on their decisions, such as choosing to wear the hijab or not, came from their mothers and sisters as opposed to any male figures. Only one participant mentioned her father as an influence on her religious identity and practices.

A major influence on the women’s identity was involvement in the Jama‘at, which offered a support system and other Ahmadi women as role models. The women’s involvement in the community also shaped their social life, which reinforced their Ahmadi identity as they were able to learn a lot from attending community events and grow as individuals. For example, one participant stated:

My mom, and how she was involved in the community, and what she wore was something that I looked upon. Then growing up, I went to my religious school where I found friends who were also within the community. So I had a good general sense of who I was... like [a member of] a community, and where I fit into that over there. (Participant 7, Vaughan)

Another influence was the women’s residential location. The three participants who lived in ‘Peace Village’ (a 35-acre, Ahmadi-owned neighbourhood in Vaughan, Ontario) said it was important to be close to the mosque and have Ahmadi neighbours who affirmed their values and lifestyles. Some participants noted that non-Ahmadi friends who accepted them for who they were helped them to develop stronger identities without feeling ‘othered.’ Several participants said that their friends had no influence on them, because they made their decisions based on their own values and parents’ teachings. However, one participant noted that the fashion media had a

huge impact on her identity formation as she was growing up, and she had trouble meeting the conflicting expectation of the Ahmadi community and her Canadian peers.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter confirms other works that suggest that identity is neither singular nor fixed. All the women in this study claimed three or more ways of identifying themselves. The participants found an overlap among these identities but also acknowledged some conflicts, which they were seemingly able to manage.

The women's identities were invoked by the contexts they encountered. Some aspects of their identities were 'fixed' in such encounters—such as their perceived religion, race, culture, and gender—and the interpretation of these by their interlocutors. However, the women could also choose to conceal other aspects of their identities. For example, some of them chose not to reveal their Ahmadi identity among other Muslim women for fear of being excluded from their group. Furthermore, in some cases they could also choose how to interpret others' responses—e.g., the apology from the professor for swearing, which can be interpreted either as an exclusionary gesture, or as a marker of respect towards a Muslim woman.

The participants remained partly included but also partly excluded in groups they identified with. They were proud to call themselves 'Canadian' but did not think of themselves as 'fully Canadian.' They were born in Canada but did not think they were entitled to think of themselves as Canadians; instead, they were grateful for being able to live in Canada rather than in their parents' countries of origin. This may be due to the common belief among immigrant families that only people with English and French heritage are truly Canadian. The participants loved hockey yet believed they could not fully participate in 'the hockey culture' because it belonged exclusively to White Canadians. Similarly, they practiced Islam more staunchly than many other Muslims but often did not feel accepted by the larger Muslim community. While the women felt most fully accepted by the Ahmadi Jama'at, transgressions against community norms, such as not wearing the hijab, also led to feelings of exclusion for a few. Membership in groups and group identifications are thus partial and contingent for these participants—linked to both historical and current factors—rather than being fixed and permanent.

Families, strongly-structured religious communities, and neighbourhoods wield a strong influence on identity development and mediate the influence of other factors. When all three factors are aligned with each other, they collectively foster a consistent sense of self. Women in the family and the community have a stronger influence on young women—not only by teaching particular norms and values but also modeling them. Religious communities that offer opportunity not only for communal religious practices, but also for social engagement, strengthen communal bonds and group identities. And neighbourhoods reinforce these identities by reflecting commonly-held beliefs and shared practices. However, we don't yet know whether the comfort and security of a single dominant identity comes at the cost of exclusion from other groups. The labelling of people has led to 'othering,' discrimination, and sometimes harassment. Perhaps it is time to question the notion of identity itself—as Appiah (2018) suggests—since multiple, complex and shifting identifications are becoming more common. Perhaps it is time to abandon the search for comfort and affirmation, and instead to seek allegiance with those with whom we have nothing in common.

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## 9. Afros, Activism, and Affinity: The Politicization of Natural Black Hair, Racism, and Sense of Belonging in Multicultural Greater Toronto Area

by Jasmine Homer & Cheryl Teelucksingh

### Abstract

This research study explores the natural hair textures of six Black/mixed-race women in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), where natural Black hair continues to be discriminated against in public and private spheres. While all six women experienced racism in the GTA, intergenerational knowledge from family played a larger role in shaping their negative perceptions of their own hair, and how members of the dominant group may perceive their hair. Their experiences were assessed alongside their opinions on Canada's *Multiculturalism Act* (1988), which seeks to preserve and enhance multiculturalism. While all six women believe that cultural celebrations (e.g., Caribana, Taste of the Danforth, etc.) are demonstrations of the *Multiculturalism Act* in play, they all find that *The Act* is ineffective in bridging the gap between ideology and practice, and therefore does not facilitate social inclusion between members of the dominant group and racialized 'others.'

**Keywords:** Racism in Toronto; natural hair; Multiculturalism Act; social inclusion

### Introduction

When Canadians are asked to unpack what it means to be 'Canadian,' the term 'multicultural' is often used. Compared to their neighbours to the South, Canadians are considered more tolerant to racial and cultural differences and therefore offer a more welcoming attitude towards immigrants whose appearance and norms differ from the Anglo-Saxon dominant group (Paris, Apr. 27, 2018). However, as Melissa Gismondi (Aug. 18, 2017) says, "Canadians have a tendency not to be less racist than Americans, but less loud about it" (par. 1). Racism in Canada tends to be more subtle and insidious, often disguised as ignorant or insensitive comments. Considering that Canadians continue to praise their culture of tolerance that has been enacted into federal legislation via the *Multiculturalism Act* (1988), it may seem hypocritical that racialized people are routinely discriminated against for displaying and wearing cultural symbols in highly multicultural cities like Toronto.

One indicator of cultural and racial difference that continues to be the target of racism in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is the natural hair textures of Black women. As insignificant as hair may seem to some Canadians, Black women who wear their hair in its natural state (i.e., free from chemical straightening agents) regularly experience racism and/or prejudice against their hair. Based on centuries of racism and oppression, the natural hair of Black women is still largely considered to be less professional and generally less appealing than Eurocentric styles and textures.

This chapter explores instances of racism faced by six Black/mixed-race Black women who live in the GTA and wear their hair in its natural state. Their opinions towards their hair as a symbol of resistance, and how they believe natural Black hair is perceived in the GTA, are analyzed alongside their opinions of Canada's *Multiculturalism Act*. The major themes that will be explored in this chapter are: natural hair, racism in the GTA, and social inclusion. The primary research question is: do racist events experienced by Black women with natural hair influence their opinions on the legitimacy of the *Multiculturalism Act* as a facilitator for social inclusion?

## Literature Review

### History of Hair Alteration

Scholars of colonialism, starting with Frantz Fanon, have recognized that a sense of shame towards ones' physical appearance has been deeply internalized and has permeated Black consciousness around the globe (Barnett, 2016; Bellinger, 2012; Donaldson, 2012; Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016; Robinson, 2011). A common practice of Europeans during the enslavement process of Africans was to shave the heads of slaves—both male and female—thus stripping them of their identities, culture, and individuality. In African culture, hair is an important symbol that conveys information about a person including tribal heritage, marital status, social rank, age, and more (Bellinger, 2007). Given the intense social and cultural significance of hair to Africans, the process of being scalped was dehumanizing and therefore a useful tactic to break slaves' spirits and facilitate subordination (Bellinger, 2007). The shame felt through the loss of their hair was coupled with a devaluation of other physical characteristics—Blackness thus became the antithesis of beauty.

Because lighter-skinned slaves were considered to be more physically appealing and were given preferential treatment over those with darker skin, a shade-based hierarchy was reinforced (Donaldson, 2012). Mixed-race women who had naturally straighter and softer-looking hair possessed what came to be known as “good hair,” while darker-skinned women who had shorter, more tightly-coiled hair had “bad hair” (Barnett, 2016; Bellinger, 2012; Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016; Johnson, 2016; Johnson & Bankhead, 2013; Robinson, 2011; Rock et al., 2009; Rosette & Dumas, 2007). Over time, hair straightening and assimilating to White European female beauty standards became normalized in the Black community.

It was not until the end of the 19th century that products specifically designed for the hair of Black women came into existence. The Black hair-care industry became a multi-billion-dollar industry supplying Black women with a plethora of products and tools designed to straighten and lengthen coiled, kinky hair. Using chemical relaxers continues to be one of the most popular ways of attaining straightened hair, even though the health risks of using such products are well-known to health and beauty experts and the Black community (Rock et al., 2009).

In *The Good Hair Study* (Johnson et al., 2017), one in five Black women reported feeling social pressure to straighten their hair for work or other professional events—twice the number of White women. The psychological effects of anxiety towards the presentation of Black women's hair is well documented (Bellinger, 2007; Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016; Harris-Britt et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2017; Johnson & Bankhead, 2013; Robinson, 2011). Black women continue to face social pressures to assimilate into North American, Eurocentric society, and their natural hair remains heavily politicized and potentially divides the Black community regarding: 1) a critique of White privilege, 2) gendered and racial notions of beauty, and 3) a sense of authentic Black identity (Barnett, 2016; Donaldson, 2012; Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016).

### The Politics of Black Hair and Anti-Black Racism in the GTA

Canada has a deep, often silenced history of anti-Black racism. While free Blacks had settled in Canada prior to the American Revolution, the Canadian government did not remove racist restrictions based on country of origin to its immigration policy until 1967. The political stigma ascribed to natural Black hair heightened during the Black Power era in the US and Canada between the 1960s and 1980s. The afro became a symbol of militancy and resistance to White supremacy and Eurocentric beauty standards, which Black men and women were pressured to

follow to assimilate into White North American society (Bellinger, 2007; Johnson & Bankhead, 2013). By blatantly choosing to embrace what society deemed as “bad hair,” those who wore their hair in an afro were taking back their Black identity and challenging racial prejudice against Blackness (Saint-Louis, Aug. 26, 2009).

As the Black Power era came to a close, the symbolism of the iconic afro reversed from a sign of black pride to an indicator of delinquency (Bellinger, 2007). Once again, natural Black hair was shunned by the Black community, as the need to assimilate and secure employment remained dependent on looking presentable and professional to a predominately White audience (Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016). Straightened hair once again became a popularly conceived necessity for Black women throughout North America (Bellinger, 2007). By the early 2000s, however, attitudes towards natural Black hair began to change. The contemporary Natural Hair Movement took hold in the US and Canada, aiming to create a positive image of natural hair and beauty within the Black community, thus encouraging acceptance (Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016).

While there is greater acceptance today within the Black community for natural, healthy hair—and less tolerance for racism and prejudice against Blackness—many Black women continue to straighten their hair or wear wigs and weaves. Rosette and Dumas (2007) found that Black women in the workplace use hairstyles to differentiate their social class. Middle- to upper-class Black women were more likely to wear their hair straightened as it conveys a more professional image, while Black women of lower rank were more likely to embrace their natural hair and resist conforming to society’s preference for relaxed hair. Assuring economic security is one popular reason identified by Donaldson (2012) as to why Black women feel the need to alter their hair.

In a study by Gilkinson and Sauvé (2012), all visible minority groups indicated experiencing some discrimination and racism in Canada, and the Black population reported experiencing the highest number of racist incidents and the lowest sense of belonging to their province, region, and to Canada on a national scale. Anti-Black racism remains a huge problem even in the most multicultural cities. A number of recent incidents of discrimination towards natural Black hair have been featured in the news media. In some instances, women were sent home from work and made to feel embarrassed by their natural hair because it supposedly violated the company dress code (CBC News, Mar. 10, 2016; Lee-Shanok, Apr. 8, 2016). Another incident involved a teacher equating a young Black student to a comical, gun-wielding, fictional male Black character who shared a similar Afrocentric hairstyle (Marychuk, Jun. 4, 2018).

These examples of news stories of anti-Black racism in the GTA shed some light on the reality that Canada is not the polite, inclusive, anti-racist country that many politicians would have citizens believe (Bell, 2016)—even with the formal legal frameworks set in place to enshrine the rights, freedoms, and multiculturalism of all Canadians. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Section 15(1), states:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (Constitution Act, 1982)

Furthermore, the federal *Multiculturalism Act* (*The Act*) has encouraged Canadian citizens and politicians to proclaim that Canada is one of the most diverse and inclusive countries in the world (Perry, 2015). While Canada’s presence on the world stage and international commitments to fight against injustices like genocide, human trafficking, and inequality suggests Canada’s

status as a more welcoming country than others—and to a certain degree, this evidence supports that it is—the claim that Canadians are welcoming to all races and cultural backgrounds is widely blown out of proportion. Racism and discrimination plague the nation just like any other, as is demonstrated by instances of prejudice against natural Black hair.

This study explores the claim that Afrocentric or natural hairstyles worn by Black women are a marker of race, ethnic origin, and/or colour covered under The Act, and tests the notion that since the inception of The Act in 1971, “there remains a deep divide between the ideology and practice of multiculturalism” (Perry, 2015, p. 1641).

## **Intersectionality and Critical Race Theory**

Intersectionality is a core tenant of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which takes an anti-racist perspective and “advocates for social justice for people who find themselves occupying positions on the margins [of society]” (Crichlow, 2015, p. 188). CRT theorists see race as “a modern, socially constructed concept” (Carney, 2016, p. 185) and consider oppression and resistance as oppositional forces constantly at play in race and racism. CRT is a tool used to “challenge the colour-blind notion [and] the neutrality of law; subtle forms of racism... and to suggest how law can be used as a tool to challenge racism” (Crichlow, 2015, p. 187).

CRT considers the neoliberal policy of “colour-blindness” to be particularly problematic, as it has given way to a new form of racism that turns a blind eye to the structural and systemic forces that perpetuate the marginalization of racial and ethnic minorities in contemporary Western society—wrongly blaming the victims for the hardships they face (Carney, 2016). The intersectional aspect of CRT has grown tremendously in scope and academic scholarship to account for all people who face multiple marginalizations in Western society, thus rendering both theories useful in examining the social and political implications of natural Black hair in the multicultural GTA.

## **Methodology**

Interviewed participants consisted of six Black (and mixed-race/bi-racial) women between the ages of 21 and 65+ who live in the GTA. As a criterion for inclusion in the study, all participants self-identified as being Black/mixed-race/bi-racial women who wear their hair in its natural state. ‘Natural hair’ was defined as hair that was not chemically or thermally straightened and with no wigs and weaves. Prior to the semi-structured interviews, participants were given a demographic questionnaire that asked about their racial identity, gender identity, age, citizenship status, level of education, current profession/student status, and current annual income range. Participants selected their own pseudonyms by responding to the question, “in a word or a short phrase, how do you define your hair’s identity?”

## **Results and Analysis**

While their demographics varied, all six women identified the significant role that intergenerational education played in forming their own opinions about natural Black hair and perceptions on how it may be perceived by the wider public of the GTA. They learned from family members—particularly their mothers—that kinky hair was considered “bad hair” and looked unprofessional, unkempt, and was not accepted in Canadian society. This informal education had a significant impact on how these women viewed their own hair, and the self-esteem of most was negatively affected.

All six women were made to feel negatively about their hair at some point in their lives—either by family members, peers, and/or co-workers, which influenced their decision to continue straightening their hair or wearing Eurocentric weaves/wigs, even though they were unhappy doing so. One woman—‘*Strength and A Mystery*’ (SAM)—did not internalize the negativity expressed towards her natural hair as a child, unlike the other participants who only learned to ignore such comments later in life. The emphasis on intergenerational education about hair textures confirms that European standards of beauty have transcended generational boundaries and are a major contributing factor for its continued permeation within the consciousness of the general Black community (Donaldson, 2012; Johnson & Bankhead, 2014; Barnett, 2016; Ellis-Hervey et al., 2016).

One important aspect of wearing one’s hair naturally, as expressed by the participants of this study, is as a form of resistance—not only against Eurocentric beauty standards that marginalize Black women, but also against the prejudices against natural hair found within the Black community. By choosing to embrace what their families and society has deemed unprofessional and unappealing, these women are taking back their Black identity and undermining the legacy of slavery that has rendered Blackness the antithesis of beauty.

### **Racism in the GTA**

When asked to define racism in the context of the GTA, all six women described it similarly as insidious, subtle, and most often in the form of ignorant comments. ‘*Explosive*’ and ‘*Intricate*’ also saw it as “intolerance to any race that’s not your race.” ‘*Defiant*’ considers racism to be a “huge problem” in the GTA and ‘*A Mind of its Own*’ (AMIO) considers it to be less blatant than in the US, but “it’s definitely there ... you can feel it.” All six women have been at the receiving end of racial microaggressions, most often in the form of unnerving looks from non-Black people while out in public and insensitive comments. However, only Defiant could confidently say that she was denied economic opportunities because of her natural hair. Two other women—AMIO and SAM—received negative comments about their hair in a professional setting, and the remaining three were unable to separate instances of discrimination towards their hair from more general racism. Negating intelligence and qualifications, ascription and assumption of criminality, and a dismissal of the experiential reality of Black women were the most cited instances of subtle racism that the participants have faced in the GTA. Their shared experiences are far too common among Black women in the GTA, as is demonstrated by the heightened awareness and discussions about Black issues that are currently dominating the media.

### **Social Inclusion – the Multiculturalism Act**

When asked for their understanding of the term ‘social inclusion,’ all six participants mentioned the ability for everyone to be included in society. In Canada, the federal *Multiculturalism Act* (*The Act*) is considered to be a marker of social inclusion. However, participants also raised comments that reflected the divide between the ideology and practice of multiculturalism, as noted by Perry (2015). All six participants mentioned that *The Act* does not affect the day-to-day lives of racial minorities in the GTA.

‘*Freeing*,’ *Explosive*, and *Intricate* explained that even with *The Act*, segregation of different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups continues to characterize the GTA and keep people divided along those lines. *Freeing* considers this segmentation to be “one of the disadvantages of [*The Act*].” Likewise, *Intricate* and *Defiant* referred to multiculturalism in the GTA as “a myth” because of ongoing racial, ethnic, and cultural intolerance. While *Defiant* sees some benefit to

*The Act*, in that it “opens up conversations about multiculturalism,” she considers conversations to be “a small win” that are insufficient to produce positive change. Explosive and AMIO also refer to the intolerance that is present in the everyday interactions of people (i.e., microaggressions) as evidence that *The Act* is ineffective.

SAM shared these same sentiments but has also seen *The Act* employed effectively at different points in history where new immigrants are concerned. She explained, “it has opened doors in different spots. I know for my parents, multiculturalism opened doors and they’re happy because they were able to come here.” That being said, she still sees racism permeating the GTA with People of Colour being unfairly targeted by police officers, and educational programs for youths of colour “not necessarily being in place or getting funded”—and therefore considers *The Act* to be “a catch.” Based on their collective opinions on *The Act*, all six women who have experienced racism and/or discrimination towards their natural hair do not consider *The Act* to have effectively built a truly inclusive society.

According to the *Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 2016-2017*, 85% of Canadians indicated that they “believe that ethnic and cultural diversity is a value that Canadians share to a great or moderate extent” (Government of Canada, 2018). Furthermore, the national identity of Canadians largely rests on “celebrating our differences, and welcoming and building communities through mutual respect.” While two of the primary objectives of *The Act* are 1) “to build an integrated, socially cohesive society” and 2) “to improve the responsiveness of institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population,” the fact that Black women continue to face prejudice towards their natural hair in the public sphere indicates that these objectives have yet to be fulfilled. The rise of concerns about racism and hate-motivated crimes against Black people can be attributed to a number of national and international factors, but the inefficiencies of *The Act* to mediate hatred towards racial and cultural differences cannot be ignored.

Perhaps the most obvious demonstration of *The Act* in play is in the number of cultural celebrations that take place in the GTA year-round, such as Caribana, Afrofest, Taste of the Danforth, and so on. Although these celebrations bring people of all different nationalities and cultural backgrounds together—thereby facilitating social inclusion and potentially educating cultural outsiders on other cultures—the participants of this study expressed mixed feelings towards them. These celebrations may successfully bring different groups of people together and satisfy some of the objectives of *The Act*, but only for a short period of time. If more education would be provided about the political and historic contexts behind these events than they currently do, then these events may help to alleviate the ignorance about ‘others’—a factor that each study participant has blamed for the culture of racism that plagues the GTA.

All six participants believe that ‘social inclusion’ and ‘feeling of belonging’ where they live are important factors that influence happiness and success, which is the underlying plight of most people who experience discrimination, as well as the high-level goal of *The Act* in Canada. Although the participants all recognize the vast structural inequalities that drive discrimination, they collectively agree that there is some obligation on the individual level to make people feel welcomed in society—as Intricate explained, this can be demonstrated by offering a smile to a stranger, or actively attempting to alleviate forms of racism. Social inclusion can be a powerful tool used to drive policy change, and vice versa, says Defiant.

## Conclusion

Demonstrated by the unique experiences and opinions of the participants of this study, it is impossible to come to one coherent conclusion to the question: do racist events experienced by Black women with natural hair influence their opinions on the effectiveness of the *Multiculturalism Act* in Canada? All participants have experienced discrimination based on their natural Black hair, yet having this hair certainly qualifies as a marker of race, ethnic origin, or colour that qualifies for protection under The Act.

Due to the intersectional nature of their lives, it is not clear if participants' opinions on *The Act* were influenced specifically by these racist experiences. Even though some of them experienced similar forms of racism, their opinions towards *The Act* varied. Nevertheless, all six participants believe that social inclusion is vital to happiness and success, and that *The Act* is ineffective in achieving its goal of facilitating social inclusion. Improvements to The Act's transferability from ideology to practice are necessary to create a community that values and welcomes cultural and ethnic differences in the GTA.

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# Part 4: Inter- and Transnational Perspectives

## 10. The Transnational Experiences of Canadian Snowbirds in Mexico

by Adriana Espinosa de los Monteros Romo & Myer Siemiatycki<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

Much has been written regarding global migration to Canada, with particular recent attention to its transnational implications. Yet relatively little research has been devoted to the other side of the fence. Every year, thousands of Canadian ‘snowbirds’ escape from the cold weather during winter season. This chapter portrays the life experiences of seven Canadian snowbirds to Mexico through the lens of transnationalism. The chapter sheds light on this growing phenomenon for a better understanding of this Canadian transnational behaviour. It explains how this seasonal migration has developed in the life of the snowbirds; reflected in their mobility, identity, social networks, political awareness, as well as their cultural and economic practices. In the process, it clarifies themes of seasonal diaspora, ageing, and migration.

**Keywords:** Canadian snowbirds; Mexico; transnationalism; seasonal migration

### Introduction

Every year, thousands of Canadians make their annual trip down to Mexico. They travel to the south as the monarch butterflies do, fleeing from the harsh weather in Canada. The so-called ‘snowbirds’ spend most of the winter months in Mexico and return to Canada during the springtime. They take the best of both countries by enjoying warm weather all year round, knowing a new culture, expanding their social network, engaging in volunteer work, and enjoying a more affordable lifestyle.

Migration studies have usually paid more attention to the flows of people moving from the Global South to the Global North. Little interest is taken in those moving North to South, whose primary purpose of travel is not associated with working, an escape from wars, or adverse political and economic conditions; indeed, their non-racialized, affluent status casts them as ‘privileged migrants’ (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009; Lizárraga, Mantecón, & Huete, 2015). Similarly, migration research has focused on Canada as a receiving country, overlooking it as a sending country (Hayes, 2015). A piece of investigation is missing regarding Canadians migrating to the South—much has been written of the Mexicans migrating to Canada, mainly as temporary workers, but very little on the reverse seasonal flow.

The seasonal migration of Canadian snowbirds in Mexico is a growing, under-researched phenomenon in the migration field, given that it has mostly focused on Canadians in the

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American Sunbelt (Desrosiers-Lauzon, 2011; Bjelde & Sanders, 2012). According to Northcott and Petruik (2011), "apparently, the seasonal migration of elderly Canadian snowbirds to southern destinations remains a greatly underestimated and understudied phenomenon" (p. 317). Despite the fact that some interest has emerged about this theme, Gustafson (2001) affirms that "little attention has been given to the migrants' experiences of mobility, to their dual and sometimes multiple place attachment, and to their strategies for managing cultural differences between their home countries and the countries to which they migrate" (p. 373). Therefore, there is a gap in the research that needs to be addressed.

The objective of this chapter is to fill this gap. We explore snowbirds' attraction to Mexico, and how their seasonal migration impacts their identity and attachments. The chapter blends transnationalism theory with the voices of seven snowbirds themselves through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Snowbirds were selected according to the definition provided by Happel, Hogan and Choi (2004): living in Mexico at least three to four months in each of the last three years. The chapter is organized into three sections and the concluding remarks. The first section provides a general overview of the literature about snowbirds. Next follows a discussion of some transnational theories that will be used as the main lenses of analysis of this research. The third section explores snowbirds' experience in Mexico from interviews conducted. Concluding thoughts resulting from the work performed for this investigation close the chapter.

This is the first study of its kind, as there is no research that has probed the lived experiences of Canadian snowbirds in Mexico. It is necessary to add that this is not a case study of a specific community or location in Mexico—but instead, an analysis of the broader phenomenon across Mexico, given that Canadian snowbirds are not a homogeneous diaspora in Mexico.

## **Snowbirds: Seasonal migrants or long-term tourists?**

The term 'snowbird' has evolved since its emergence. In the 1920s, it was used to refer to the migrant labourers who could not stand the cold weather and headed south seeking refuge. As of the 1960s, this name was used for the temporary migrants travelling to Miami and its surroundings, usually for leisure purposes, to avoid cold winters (Desrosiers-Lauzon, 2011). In recent years, it is not only used to refer to those going to Miami but also to other destinations. Coates, Healy and Morrison (2002) define them as "warmth-seeking seasonal migrants" (p. 433) who escape from the cold weather during the winter season—fleeing from the extreme cold, snow shovelling, and the short and dark days. Happel, Hogan and Choi (2004) not only refer to the climate but also to the age and occupation, defining the typical snowbird as "a retired/semi-retired individual 55 and older who stays at the seasonal residence one month" (p. 5).

Furthermore, snowbirds are characterized as being mostly baby boomers who: 1) have enough retirement income to travel and reside in another country; 2) have a longer life expectancy; and 3) use technology and communications that allow them to be in touch with their family and friends while they are away (Bjelde & Sanders, 2012). According to Statistics Canada projections, people aged 65 years or older will make up 25.5% of the total population by 2061. These generally retired people, whose lifestyle goes through changes with retirement, contemplate migration; as they don't feel any attachment to their work or to a specific area of residence (as cited in Edmonston & Lee, 2014).

In his book, *Florida's Snowbirds*, Desrosiers-Lauzon (2011) explains the complexity of this phenomenon:

They are tourists because they are sightseers, they are visitors because they interact with Florida and Floridians, they are migrants because they settle in the state, and are seen as outsiders; yet they are residents because they elect to live in dwellings officially defined as permanent residences albeit in a unique, semi-permanent fashion. Finally, snowbirds are community builders, through their unique lifestyle — leisurely but not quite like tourists, with homeownership but unlike permanent residents — and their practice of sociability and mutual help. (2011, p. ix-x)

Snowbirds' mobility is a response to satisfy different needs, desires, and a dearth of social, cultural, or economic advantages that their country cannot offer them. In that continuous search, snowbirds are somewhat compelled to always live an “in-betweenness.”

## Transnational Experiences

In the globalized world where we have all been living in the last few decades, different groups of people are linking their lives and interacting with persons not only from their homelands but also beyond borders and nation-states (Satzewich & Wong, 2011). The emergence of transnational studies changed the perspective of the study of migratory movements. Transnationalism assumes multiple affiliations to different localities, moving away from the idea of studying migration solely from the perspective of the place of origin or the new place of residence (Vertovec, 2001).

Gustafson (2008) suggests that migration is not a single permanent movement, but an ongoing process that involves repeated movements between the country of origin and the host country. Similarly, studies on transnational ageing are prevalent amongst the research related to snowbirds in the United States, since one of the characteristics of the snowbirds is that they are at the age of retirement. Transnational ageing then, as stated by Schweppe and Horn (2015), is “the process of organizing, shaping, and coping with life in old age in contexts which are no longer limited to the frame of a single nation-state” (p. 7). Studies about transnational ageing touch on topics related to snowbirds, underscoring how their dual residences and pendular migrations make them develop transnational behaviours and ties to sending and receiving countries (Witter et al., 2015; Balkir & Böcker, 2015).

While the snowbird phenomenon has been studied from several different perspectives, approaches, and dimensions—such as ageing and retirement (Schweppe & Horn, 2015; Balkir & Böcker, 2015); leisure or lifestyle (Bantman-Masum, 2013, Casado-Diaz, 2012); privileged migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Croucher, 2012); determinants of their mobility (Edmonston & Lee, 2014); and migration patterns (Coates, Healy, & Morrison, 2002)—this chapter analyzes the phenomenon through the lens of transnationalism.

## Canadian Snowbirds in Mexico: Transnational Life Experiences

According to Rodriguez and Cobo (2012), the first groups of Canadian retirees began coming to the coasts of Mexico in the 1980s. Records of the first Canadian snowbirds in Mexico date back to the 1990s, when their migration expanded further from the American Sunbelt region as they realized the weather was warmer and the cost of living was much cheaper in Mexico than in the U.S. (Coates et al., 2002). Moreover, the enactment of the North American Free Trade

Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 increased not only commerce and investment, but also enabled the movement of people (especially from north to south). According to the Canadian Embassy in Mexico (2017), Mexico is one of the top sun-travel destinations for Canadians, ranked in second place just behind the U.S., Mexico receives annually 1.9 million Canadian tourists and it is stated that “tens of thousands are estimated to be snowbirds” (Government of Canada, 2017).

The influx of snowbirds differs considerably from the migratory movements of those immigrants who are fleeing from war, poverty, or environmental issues. Weather and economic advantages are the main reasons for the Northern migrants to move, on a seasonal basis, to countries with warmer climates (Gustafson, 2008), as in the case of Mexico. Accordingly, participants confirmed that their motives were to move to a place where they could enjoy higher temperatures that allow them to perform outdoor activities and improve their health and lifestyle. They also typically cited the lower cost of living in Mexico as another inducement to relocation.

Two themes continuously came together from the interviews with snowbirds: weather and ageing. During the wintertime, snowbirds have enough time to perform numerous activities, but the weather does not allow them to participate in those due to their age and reduced cold endurance. “I feel a lot younger and I am active during the winter months,” a participant said. Retirement provides them with the economic means and time to travel. Also, most of them related to Canada and its winters with boredom, whereas in Mexico their life was more joyful and active. Therefore, weather and ageing boost snowbirds’ mobility to Mexico, providing them with what they lack back at home, while also having the necessary technological means to maintain their relations with family and friends back home during the wintertime. It is important for them to keep this contact to reintegrate in their regular homes and lives once they are back in Canada in spring or summer.

Moreover, Coates et al. (2002) stated that beyond the cheap cost of living in Mexico, the improvement in the Mexican transportation infrastructure and the increasing interest in Mexican culture are other factors for snowbirds to “winter” in Mexico. Although responses from participants coincided somewhat with the reasons cited by Coates and his colleagues, other motivations were the proximity and accessibility to similar products and services as those offered in Canada. Mexico is a country with hundreds of years of aboriginal and colonial history and traditions, different traditional foods, and diversity in natural environments—all within reach to snowbirds. Mexico has the advantage of being economically more accessible than Canada and other countries where they may have travelled before, allowing them to continue with their seasonal mobility while maintaining their Canadian social networks.

Snowbirds use transnational strategies to cope with different difficulties that can be faced in Canada after retirement. The Coates et al. (2002) study found that snowbirds from Canada come from different economic backgrounds and classes, and therefore, despite the limited incomes of some, their funds are more than enough to have a comfortable life in Mexico. Furthermore, Northcott and Petruik’s (2011) research on the mobility of elderly Canadians suggests that snowbirds’ seasonal migration lasts up to 6 months for fear of losing their provincial health care. In contrast, studies by Coates et al. (2002) have shown that Mexico becomes a medical tourism destination, where treatments are much cheaper than in the U.S. and Canada with good results for the patients. Participants explained that one of the reasons to choose Mexico for staying for prolonged periods of time is the good health care service provided there. One of the interviewees said, “we’ve had great experiences with Mexican health care. In fact, outstanding care!”

Moreover, participants reported their appreciation of Mexican culinary delights (“food is another reason for going there, the cuisine is outstanding”); archaeological sites (“we went around all the archaeological sites and travelled a lot in Mexico”); and surprisingly, even security (“I feel safe there and my husband, he agrees, he feels very comfortable in Cancun”). In sum, many participants portrayed Mexico as a country of contrasts (“I enjoy the country very much, I like the culture, I love the people, it is a beautiful country. Also, it is interesting the struggle that Mexico faces, developed and undeveloped Mexico living side by side”).

Some of the participants expressed interest in Mexican politics, even though they knew they could not participate in it, given that Article 33 of the Mexican constitution refrains them from doing so. They want to know how the country is going to be run if some political tensions arose. They were also concerned about corruption and the well-being of their Mexican communities. Some of them followed the election in July 2018 and expressed their hope for a better government in Mexico. A participant recounted how she took part in photojournalism during a protest in Mexico. She remembered how she ran away from the police and mingled among the locals to go unnoticed. In contrast, some other participants said they are aware of Mexican politics, but they do not get involved because they want to be law-abiding in order to not get in trouble—and they know that whoever rules the country, they cannot change it.

A number of the interviewed snowbirds have developed a solidaristic attachment to their Mexican community and contribute volunteer labour to promote its well-being. One participant supports a theatre in Puerto Vallarta, selling tickets and answering clients’ inquiries, and also spends time with her work colleagues there. Another interviewee is part of a ceramic “colectivo” in Oaxaca City, helping them with translations, editing, and curatorial work. She is also part of a horticulture project. Another participant made a bicycle ride from Toronto to San Miguel de Allende as part of a snowbird-led organization’s fundraising efforts in Canada (Amistad Canada) on behalf of the Mexican town, raising \$25,000 CAD to support community projects there. Snowbirds’ seasonal migrations have clearly forged tangible ties and various commitments of Canadians to their winter home community.

Snowbirds’ annual trips to Mexico have changed their lives in subtle ways. Some of the participants never imagined they would learn Spanish, yet they all speak “un poquito” (a little bit) now. Moreover, they expressed interest in improving their language skills to be able to better understand the Mexican economy, politics, and culture. They admire not only the country’s natural beauty but also its people: “[my Mexican friends] speak [the Mexican dialect] Zapotec, Spanish and English. I do communicate with them in English. That’s unfortunate, I really want to change that.” When talking about their experiences in Mexico, the snowbirds often refer to places and activities by naming them in Spanish: “I like to go down to the ‘jardín’ (garden),” or “I am part of a ‘colectivo’ (artist collective)”—showing how they (un)intentionally “become more Mexican.”

Mexico is a country of contrasts that appeals to people from all over the world, snowbirds included. From traditional food to politics, it is a country exotic enough to be attractive while still keeping enough similarity with the ways of living of North America. The mobility of snowbirds is shaped by Mexico’s accessibility, which allows them to maintain contact with their homeland not only by communicating with their family and friends back in Canada, but also by having the opportunity to acquire goods and services with the “Canadian touch.” Furthermore, snowbirds find different ways to engage with the local politics through arts, journalism, and their awareness and hope for the country that hosts them every year. They are exposed to politics, culture, and mobility that converge during their daily lives in Mexico— all this is brought back

with them to Canada when they take home parts of Mexico like pottery bought from an artisan, photos and memories, and even opinions and discussions about Mexico shared with their friends or relatives.

It can thus be said that snowbirds live in a constant “in-between,” taking the best from both countries. According to Krumme (2004), sometimes the sense of attachment and belonging to a country “cannot be classified as ‘either-or’ but as ‘both-and’” (as cited in Balkir & Böcker, 2015, p. 127). Some participants refer to both countries as their home: “Well, we call Mexico our second home, but for sure, yes, Canada is still our home.” Another participant stated: “Definitely, anywhere in Mexico could be home, I love a lot of things there.” Çağlar pointed out that people who live transnational lives develop “complex attachments and multiple allegiances to issues, peoples, places, and traditions beyond the boundaries of their resident nation-states” (as cited in Vertovec, 2001, p. 580). From this study, it is clear that participants also developed multiple attachments that cannot be limited to their own country or city, but rather expand to their winter home.

## Concluding Remarks

Snowbirds’ seasonal migration is a relatively new phenomenon that is gaining more and more importance as its numbers expand due to the baby boom impact and the increase of the ageing Canadian population. As stated by Katz (2005), ageing people are making decisions on how and where they want to live—new places of residence where their identities will be reshaped. Snowbirds have been coming to Mexico for no more than 30 years, and it seems that their presence has not drawn much scholarly attention, as little research has been conducted on their migration to Mexico. However, it is important to begin addressing this gap and encouraging more research on the topic.

This study has shown that snowbirds are indeed transnationals with attachments to both Mexico and Canada. They find identification in both places and feel compelled to return to each place for different reasons. While Mexico provides them with warm weather, an active social life, and a more attractive lifestyle, Canada remains important because of their family ties, time spent there, and the memories they have from the past. Also, Mexico offers a variety of towns and cities where snowbirds can establish themselves for the winter season: from warm, artsy, and colonial towns to small, isolated beach towns as well as larger cities. As such, Canadians with different backgrounds and various interests will go to several places where the seasonal migration experience can be entirely different.

Thus, snowbirds are making a belated transnational life while discovering the best of two lifestyles. They develop a dual loyalty while maintaining their roots and families in their homeland, discovering new societies and sometimes integrating into totally different groups that they never imagined could be part of their lives. As suggested by Balkir and Böcker (2015), this social phenomenon goes beyond the dichotomy between permanent and seasonal migration. Different factors such as health, economy, family issues, and accessibility to various services (e.g., internet, banking, and health care) are essential to deciding to move permanently to a new country or to maintain a pendular migration. However, these decisions are developmental, confirming that migration is an ongoing process as discussed by Glick-Schiller et al. (as cited in Lizárraga et al., 2015), rather than an overnight decision and one-time commitment.

This initial attempt to better understand the social phenomenon of Canadian snowbirds in Mexico was analyzed through transnationalism. However, there are a myriad of lenses through

which to analyze this group of people. A more elaborate study would involve surveying the experiences and the insights of Mexicans themselves as they adjust to the influx of foreign nationals. What do the Mexicans think about their shared lifestyle? Are the snowbirds improving or hindering their economic, social, and cultural situation? Are retired people in Mexico able to have a less stressful life and enjoy the country, or individual Mexican cities, as much as Canadian snowbirds do? A more exhaustive study of the topic would include an analysis of the entire scope of this social phenomenon from the perspective of both Mexico and Canada.

There is still much to discover about snowbirds in Mexico. The intention of this chapter has been to provide an opening into an area ripe for further study and analysis by immigration scholars. Snowbirds have found an attractive way of life by moving back and forth between Canada and Mexico. Something about the “in-betweenness” of their annual pendular migration has altered not only their style of living, but also their perceptions of the wider world and their sense of social belonging. They have two homes now—the one granted through accident of birth, and the other consciously chosen.

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# 11. Defying Classification: The Migration of Unaccompanied Children from the Northern Triangle of Central America

by Lidia-Gabriela Jarmasz & Francis Hare

## Abstract

This chapter presents findings of a scoping review of English- and Spanish-language sources examining the drivers of the migration of unaccompanied children from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA). While politicians in the United States debate whether this migration flow has been caused by violence or economic conditions, our review concludes that both sets of factors play an important role and that neither can be deemed the primary driver based on the available evidence. We also contend that, in this case, violence and economic factors form a vicious cycle that could be thought of as a complex driver of migration. The migration of unaccompanied children from the NTCA therefore challenges traditional models of migration that assume a dichotomy between voluntary and forced migration.

**Keywords:** unaccompanied child migrants; Northern Triangle of Central America; forced vs. voluntary migration; gang violence; economic factors

## Introduction

The causes of recent sustained levels of migration from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA)—composed of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras—have been vigorously debated and especially by politicians in the United States, the primary destination country. In particular, each new wave of arrivals is met with the question of whether their journey was motivated by violence or economic factors in the region of origin (e.g., O’Reilly, 2018).

This chapter contributes to this debate by reporting the findings of a scoping review of the literature on the drivers of the migration of *unaccompanied children* from the NTCA. Drawing upon different types of evidence from a variety of sources, we conclude that this migration is not only motivated by both violence and economic considerations, but also that these two sets of factors are so intertwined that they could be conceptualized as a complex driver.

The body of the chapter is divided into five sections. The first section describes the population of interest and the country conditions, as well as highlighting research contesting the traditional dichotomy between economic migration and migration driven by violence. The second section delineates the methodology of our scoping review. The third and fourth sections present evidence for the role of violence and economic conditions, respectively, in triggering this migration. The fifth section considers the relative importance of these two factors as a complex driver of migration from the NTCA.

## Background

### Unaccompanied child migrants from the NTCA

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines an unaccompanied child as an individual “under the age of eighteen years... who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so” (1997, p. 5). This label includes children who are travelling by themselves, as well as those who migrate with

an adult other than a parent or habitual guardian. Since 2011, the migration levels of unaccompanied child migrants from the NTCA to the United States—typically operationalized as the number of apprehensions by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (USCBP)—have been rising, as shown by the absolute numbers given in Table 1. Partway through 2018, unaccompanied children from this region—the majority of whom are 16 or 17 (Jones, 2017)—represented 76.4% of all apprehended unaccompanied minors in the United States, up from 24.5% in 2011.

**Table 1. U.S. apprehensions of unaccompanied children from NTCA countries, 2011-2018**

Country of origin (self-reported)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*
<b>El Salvador</b>	1,394	3,314	5,990	16,404	9,389	17,512	9,143	4,769
<b>Guatemala</b>	1,565	3,835	8,068	17,057	13,589	18,913	14,827	22,583
<b>Honduras</b>	974	2,997	6,747	18,244	5,409	10,468	7,784	10,724
<b>Total (all countries)</b>	16,056	24,481	38,759	68,541	39,970	59,692	41,435	49,859

Sources: Consejo Nacional de Población (2016, p. 23) for 2011–2012; USCBP (2017) for 2013–2017; USCBP (2018a; 2018b) for 2018.

\*Annualized from August 2018 year-to-date figures.

### Country conditions in the NTCA

The NTCA is known for its high homicide rates. For example, in 2016, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) there were 27.26 homicides per 100,000 in Guatemala, 56.52 in Honduras, and 82.84 in El Salvador—far exceeding the world average of 6.2 homicides per 100,000 people (UNODC, 2014, p. 21). In addition, much violence is blamed on youth gangs, the largest of which are Mara Salvatrucha (also known as MS-13) and Barrio (or Calle) 18 (Casa Alianza Honduras, Pastoral de Movilidad Humana, & Catholic Relief Services, 2016, p. 13-14).

The economic conditions are equally grim: according to a 2011 World Bank study, “more than 60% of Hondurans, more than 50% of Guatemalans, and 30% of Salvadorans live below the poverty line” (as cited in U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2015, p. 2). Adolescents as young as 12 leave school in order to help support their family (Kennedy, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, the region has been afflicted by drought since 2014, which has caused widespread food insecurity (United Nations World Food Programme & International Organization for Migration [WFP & IOM], 2016, p. 18).

### Forced and voluntary migration

Conventionally, migration to seek protection from “persecution, violence, war, severe human rights violations, and other threatening situations” (Lorenzen, 2017, p. 745) is equated with ‘forced migration,’ and is assumed to be clearly distinct from ‘economic migration,’ which is conflated with voluntary migration. A growing body of research, however, disputes the forced/voluntary dichotomy. Indeed, forced and voluntary migrants may use the same migratory channels (Betts, 2013) and individuals may have multiple reasons for migrating—some of which would qualify them as forced migrants, and others as voluntary migrants (Lorenzen, 2017). Further, as observed by Castles (2007) and illustrated by the NTCA region, “Countries with weak economies, increasing inequality and widespread impoverishment tend also to have

tyrannical rulers, weak state apparatuses, and high levels of violence and human rights violations” (p. 26). Following in this line of thought, this chapter will demonstrate that unaccompanied children from the NTCA defy clear-cut compartmentalization as either protection seekers or economic migrants, and thus challenge the forced/voluntary dichotomy.

## Methodology

The objective of the scoping review was to identify and analyze sources in English and Spanish, presenting a wide range of claims on the drivers of this migration. The sources selected—comprising scholarly publications, newspaper articles, and NGO and policy reports—were primarily identified via the Ryerson University Library and Archives catalogue in the spring of 2018, with supplementary materials identified through bibliography mining, suggestions from scholarly databases, and Google Scholar. We limited the timeframe of the study to sources published in or after 2010 in order to match the period of increased migration of unaccompanied children from the NTCA. We *included* sources presenting an original analysis or empirical data on the drivers of this migration. We *excluded* sources that primarily described the migration journey or experiences in the destination country, including integration as well as navigation of the asylum system.

Following standard scoping review principles (e.g., Daudt, van Mossel & Scott, 2013), we aimed for comprehensiveness in the English-language subsample. We do not, however, make any claims to comprehensiveness for the Spanish-language materials, because of limited access to resources due to our geographic location. We stopped adding sources when the sample had reached saturation (i.e., additional sources did not provide novel data). The final sample is composed of 58 sources: 37 in English and 21 in Spanish.

In the following sections, we synthesize the empirical data on violence and economic factors presented by the sources in our sample. We triangulate “correlative evidence”—a loose label we apply to any statistical test, including correlations and regression analyses, of relationships between migration levels and indicators of various country conditions—with data collected directly from migrant children (through interviews, surveys, and narrative techniques).

## Violence as a driver of migration

A statistically significant relationship between homicide rates and the migration rates of unaccompanied children was detected across the NTCA at the level of the municipality of origin (Clemens, 2017; Orozco & Yansura, 2014) and in Honduras at the level of the department (i.e., the major territorial subdivision) of origin (Jones, 2017). The link between violence in society and migration is corroborated by child migrants themselves, who cited this as a cause for their migration in numerous sources (e.g., UNHCR, 2014a, p. 25-26; UNHCR, 2014b, p. 43). Children identified multiple categories of aggressions by gang members: attempts at forcible recruitment involving threats of physical assault (Kennedy, 2014); extortion (Kandel, Bruno, Bruno, Meyer, Seelke, Taft-Morales & Wasem, 2015); attacks against children who live in a rival gang’s territory (UNHCR, 2014a); and the murder of a relative (Jaimez, 2017). The quotation below, from a 17-year-old Honduran girl, illustrates many types of gang violence:

The gangs in Honduras threatened me, and because of the gangs, my 17-year-old brother died three years ago... The gangs also threatened to kill me if I didn’t join them. (as cited in Cao, 2017, p. 16)

Recruitment attempts also affect children’s ability to attend school. It is often their classmates who try to recruit or extort them, while teachers and other authorities look on helplessly (e.g., Jaimez, 2017; Kennedy, 2014). More generally, the power of the gangs over authorities, including the police, translates into a lack of state protection against violence (UNHCR, 2014b).

## **Economic factors as drivers of migration**

Unaccompanied children also identify economic factors—including a “lack of meaningful opportunity” (UNHCR, 2014a, p. 24) related to employment and education, and a desire to support their family with remittances (Khashu, 2010)—as drivers of migration. Some children explained that their parents had died or were sick, or that they were being raised by grandparents who were too old to work (Khashu, 2010). Others indicated they had migrated to secure “stable housing” (Becker Herbst, Sabet, Swanson, Suarez, Marques, Ameen & Aldarondo, 2018, p. 253). Many pointed specifically to food insecurity as the cause of their migration (e.g., Casa Alianza Honduras et al., 2016). Some articulated a desire to provide for their siblings and to finance their education, as exemplified in this quotation from a participant in Becker Herbst et al.’s (2018) study, who expresses a desire to financially support their family:

The reason that I immigrated is because my father is very sick in his stomach, and my siblings want to keep studying and we don’t have a good income in order to send them to school; they cry because sometimes we do not have food to eat, in a few words I immigrated because of the necessity of helping my family. (p. 255)

The correlative evidence of a link between the migration of unaccompanied children and economic conditions in the NTCA is inconsistent. On the one hand, Jones (2017) found no correlation of migration rates with the open unemployment rate or the proportion of the population living in poverty. Similarly, Orozco and Yansura (2004) detected only a weak and inconsistent correlation with the Human Development Index (a measure combining life expectancy, education, and income indices). On the other hand, Amuedo-Dorantes and Puttitanun (2016) found that growth of the GDP per capita was negatively related to migration, suggesting that an improvement of economic conditions in the NTCA led to a decrease in migration. In addition, these researchers found that migration rates from the NTCA significantly corresponded with increases in the weekly median income in the United States, but that they were negatively related to a rise in the unemployment rate in the US—a result confirmed by Jones (2017).

## **Are unaccompanied children fleeing violence, or are they economic migrants?**

### **Relative importance of violence and economic factors**

The importance of both violence and economic factors in driving the migration of unaccompanied children from the NTCA is well substantiated by the sources in our sample. It is more difficult, however, to ascertain the relative importance of these two sets of factors, although some sources did attempt to do so in quantitative terms. Two studies provided correlative evidence of the relative contribution of violence and economic factors. Jones (2017) found that homicide rates were a better predictor of the migration of unaccompanied children (with a correlation coefficient of +0.611) than the unemployment rate (correlation coefficient of +0.273)—but only at the departmental level in Honduras. Overall, the national homicide rates in the NTCA countries declined as migration rates continued to rise. Further, although not statistically significant, the migration rates more closely

matched the employment levels in the United States than either set of factors in the NTCA (Jones, 2017, p. 349). Clemens (2017) contributed by using regression analysis to test the relative importance of the homicide rate, poverty rate, and income per capita across the NTCA. He concluded that the homicide rate, on its own or in combination with economic factors, accounted for roughly as much of the migration (37.5%) as the economic indicators alone (35.3%).

Additionally, some studies reported the proportion of unaccompanied child participants who had provided a particular response, which can also be used as an indicator of the relative importance of factors. Two studies reported that violence was the most frequently identified cause for migration. In a UNHCR (2014b) study conducted in Mexico, 48.6% of the participants cited violence as a cause for their migration, and 29.2% named economic factors. Likewise, Casa Alianza Honduras et al. (2016) revealed that 58% of deported Honduran children named violence in society, while only 22% named poverty and a lack of opportunities. Conversely, three studies place economic factors on top. In Lorenzen's (2017) study, 57.7% of unaccompanied children surveyed stated that they had migrated for economic reasons, and only 24.9% named violence in society. Likewise, the Mexican National Population Council, CONAPO (2016), reported that economic factors were by far the reason named most often by participants surveyed in Mexican shelters, representing 59.2% of responses, with only 3.8% of answers citing violence. Finally, the vast majority, or 70%, of Khashu's (2010) participants cited factors related to economic considerations, while only 6.5% named violence.

On the basis of this quantitative data, therefore, neither violence nor economic factors emerge as the primary driver of this migration.

### **The interrelatedness of violence and economic factors**

This migration flow from the NTCA embodies objections raised by scholars against the traditional forced/voluntary migration dichotomy. First, this has proven to be a mixed migration flow: several studies report that Guatemalan children more frequently named economic factors as the main cause of their migration, while violence in society played a bigger role for children from Honduras and El Salvador (e.g., Lorenzen, 2017). Second, a single child may have multiple reasons for migrating: 31.1% of Lorenzen's (2017) participants named two or more motives, including both violence and economic factors. Many child migrants cannot, therefore, be neatly compartmentalized as either 'economic migrants' or 'protection seekers.'

Violence and economic factors do not simply coexist in the same migration flow; they are "inextricably linked" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 62). Indeed, poor economic conditions create a favourable environment for violence in several ways. For example, in the absence of decent employment opportunities for youth, or in contexts of widespread food insecurity, gang membership and the sources of income it offers—such as extortion, robbery, kidnapping, and trafficking—may become an attractive option (WFP & IOM, 2016). A 17-year-old Salvadoran participant quoted in Schmidt (2017) verbalizes this relationship: "Gangs are increasing because of the economy, because there aren't enough jobs. Kids think it's better to rob and steal because they don't see any other way to make money" (p. 64). Consequently, children suffering from economic deprivation are vulnerable to being recruited by gangs (Jaimez, 2017). In addition, Schmidt (2017) contends that youth who neither work nor study are likelier to join gangs "due to idle or unsupervised time" (p. 64).

Economic factors also lead to violence in more indirect ways. For example, the economic migration of *parents* turns children into targets of violence. Parental absence constitutes, on the

one hand, a risk factor for gang membership (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014); and on the other, a cause for extortion, because children who receive remittances from parents are perceived as being better off (Kandel et al., 2015).

Moreover, the relationship between violence and economic factors is reciprocal: violence also degrades economic conditions. Violence is reported to inhibit economic growth and opportunity creation (Clemens, 2017) and to disfavour foreign investment (GAO, 2015). Gang members target small business owners for extortion (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014) and aggravate food insecurity by assaulting people for their food stamps, as well as attacking customers and sellers at public markets (WFP & IOM, 2016).

Ultimately, poor economic conditions and violence form a vicious cycle in which they breed and compound each other. Unaccompanied children are thus not migrating in response to either violence or economic factors in isolation; they migrate because of violence that is produced by poor economic conditions, and because of economic conditions that have deteriorated due to violence. We therefore propose that, in the case of unaccompanied children from the NTCA, violence and economic conditions should be understood as a complex cause for migration.

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented evidence, drawn from a scoping review, that both violence and desperate economic conditions in the NTCA play important roles in motivating the migration of unaccompanied children. Moreover, violence and economic conditions are indissociable: poor economic conditions foster violence, and widespread violence degrades economic conditions. The departure of unaccompanied children from the NTCA therefore challenges models that compartmentalize economic migration (i.e., assumed to be synonymous with *voluntary migration*) and migration driven by violence (i.e., *forced migration*).

Furthermore, although a full discussion of this issue is outside the scope of this chapter, we submit that this migration flow also disputes the assumption that migration for purely economic reasons is always voluntary. Indeed, some of the children interviewed in these studies described situations of inadequate housing and rampant food insecurity in which they were obligated to become their household's main breadwinner, despite being minors. In other words, they crossed borders in order to secure basic subsistence for themselves and their families. As first argued by Jaimez (2017), this scenario coincides with Betts' (2013) concept of *survival migration*, in which "persons [find themselves] outside their country of origin because of an existential threat [i.e., a threat to their basic rights] for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution" (p. 23). This form of "economic/survival migration" can thus be understood as an involuntary solution to deprivation.

Paradoxically, even survival migration appears to require a minimum of financial resources. Indeed, some families have taken out loans (Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014) or handed over the title of their property to lenders (Cao, 2017) in order to pay the services of smugglers and facilitate the migration of their children. Further, Clemens (2017) discovered a curvilinear relationship between migration, income, and the poverty rate: migration rates of unaccompanied children were low not only in municipalities where the average income was high, but also in municipalities where the average income was extremely low or where the poverty rate was extremely high. Poverty and low income may thus prevent people from using safer means of seeking survival elsewhere. Short-term solutions to this migration should, therefore, include more pathways for safe migration and resettlement.

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## 12. Framing Migration Crises: A Comparative Analysis of Media Texts on the Venezuelan Collapse

by Berti Olinto & Dana Osborne

### Abstract

This chapter explores mainstream and diasporic media coverage and discourses surrounding the Venezuelan economic and political crisis, from late March 2017 until early May 2018. A comparative content analysis was applied to a total of 256 news articles, editorials, and stories from the *Toronto Star* (one of Canada's largest newspapers) and from *La Portada Canadá* (a Spanish-language Latin American newspaper in Toronto). The results demonstrated diasporic media's appropriation of journalistic biases such as human impact, dramatization, and national interest, as well as the reframing of dominant discourses from international news agencies about the Venezuelan economic crisis. Whereas there are significant similarities between both media's content regarding the crisis, *La Portada Canadá* stressed the transnational component of the Venezuelan diaspora through discourses about political and civic engagement in Canada. The *Toronto Star* focused more on the economic and political components of the crisis, which are closely linked to the country's national agenda.

**Keywords:** diasporic media; media coverage; media discourses; international crises; Venezuela

### Introduction

Media outlets produced by and for immigrants, often referred to as 'diasporic media,' have become powerful tools for enacting cultural identity, political participation, and civic engagement in the destination country. Their relevance in terms of political participation hinges on their ability to provide alternative discourses to mainstream media and to include other voices in response to the dominant discourses promoted by international news agencies (Georgiou, 2005; Ogunyeni, 2017). Diasporic media is becoming a powerful tool for the discussion, representation, and portrayal of international conflicts and migration crises that regularly have no place in mainstream media and international news agencies (Georgiou, 2005). The role of diasporic media in framing migration crises—particularly conflicts related to the diasporic communities—remains to a certain extent unexplored (Ogunyemi, 2017).

Based on this premise, this research focused on analyzing the ways in which diasporic newspapers in Toronto, Canada, framed the political and economic crisis in Venezuela between March 2017 and May 2018, and how these newspapers provided alternative discourses to Canadian media narratives through stories about the Venezuelan diaspora's political engagement, as well as international solidarity within Latin American immigrant communities.

Through this exploration of media coverage and narratives, this chapter asks the following research questions: how have Toronto's Latin American diasporic and mainstream media constructed discourses and narratives of the migration crisis in Venezuela? And how have the diasporic media reframed dominant discourses promoted by mainstream media and/or international news agencies?

The relevance of exploring these issues focuses on the potential attributed to diasporic media in North America, in contributing to the resolution of international conflicts (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2006) and in providing new spaces for democratic dialogue about international crises that are often excluded in Canada's national and political agenda (Yu, 2018).

## Recent Economic and Political Developments in Venezuela

Since January of 2016, Venezuela has faced an unprecedented economic and political crisis (Felter & Labrador, 2018). Critics of current President Nicolás Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chávez, have denounced Venezuela's economic issues as the inevitable result of more than 18 years of financial mismanagement. On the other hand, President Maduro's supporters blame plummeting oil prices and the actions of the country's business elites (Corrales, 2016; Felter & Labrador, 2018; Rapoza, 2018).

Hugo Chávez—a former military officer who launched a failed coup d'état against Carlos Andres Pérez in 1992—was elected President of Venezuela in 1998 with the support of the *Movimiento Quinta República* (Fifth Republic Movement), a socialist platform that had 56% of the electorate preference (Ore, 2013). As a candidate, Felter and Labrador (2018) claim that Chávez railed against the country's elites for widespread corruption and pledged to use Venezuela's vast oil wealth to reduce poverty and inequality. Chávez remained President until his death in 2013 and was praised by other socialist governments in Latin America for “expropriating millions of acres of land and nationalizing hundreds of private businesses and foreign-owned assets, including oil projects run by ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips” (Felter & Labrador, 2018, p. 1).

Felter and Labrador (2018) suggest that the lack of reinvesting in the oil industry in lieu of expending for his socialist agenda in South America is one of the key elements that gave rise to the current economic crisis. Venezuela's dependence on oil exports, and the drop in oil prices in 2014, plunged the country into a severe economic crisis marked by soaring inflation and shortages of food and medical supplies (Felter & Labrador, 2018; Johnson, 2018). By 2018, international observers have characterized the situation in Venezuela as a “humanitarian crisis” and as a “migration crisis” (Baddour, 2017; Chandran, 2018; Rendon & Schneider, 2018). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 600,000 Venezuelans emigrated in 2017, particularly to other South American countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru (IOM, 2018).

The political turmoil resulting after the country's Supreme Court took over the opposition-led legislative powers of the National Assembly on March 30, 2017 prompted street confrontations between opposition supporters and the country's National Guard in Caracas and other cities (Chinae & Polanco, 2017). This in turn intensified the severe economic crisis and accelerated the international migration of Venezuelans due to the political and economic collapse generated by hyperinflation and food and medicine shortages.

Venezuelan migration has had implications in Canada. In fact, due to the number of Venezuelan citizens claiming refugee status in Canada and settling in cities such as Toronto and Montreal, the crisis has been on the radar of both the House of Commons and Senate (Keung, 2017a) and has also been framed by Canadian media as a “humanitarian crisis” (Keung, 2017b; Lowrie, 2017).

However, according to different reports from Canadian media, Venezuelans have claimed that “few Canadians seem to realize Venezuelans are dying from food and medicine shortages” (Lowrie, 2017). It has been reported by Venezuelan communities in Canada that the crisis in their country and its economic implications are rarely featured in Canadian media (Lowrie, 2017). Therefore, Venezuelans are using social and diasporic media to “ask Canadians to take notice of the escalating political and humanitarian crisis in their homeland” (The Canadian Press, 2017, para. 3). The question remains: how is the Venezuelan diaspora in Canada using media outlets to call for international solidarity? What are the discourses promoted by these diasporic media? Has this use of diasporic media had a real impact in terms of Canadian international policies regarding the conflict?

## Literature Review

The importance of media coverage of migration crises is closely linked to the influence attributed to media in the resolution or escalation of international conflicts (Ogunyemi, 2017). Historically, media coverage of humanitarian and migration crises has focused on so-called “news values” (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015), which include: 1) the human interest and impact, 2) the profitability of the crisis in terms of rating or readership, and 3) the national interests of the countries in which media operate (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Johnston, Friedman & Sobel, 2014).

On the other hand, media framing—or the ways in which these values are considered to construct discourses or narrative frames in a given context—is a determining factor in the coverage of international and migration crises (Evans, 2010). According to Steele (2016), the notion of media framing is based on a ‘sensemaking phenomenon’ that can create and structure the understanding and interpretation of deliberate political action in mediated conflict situations. Therefore, authors such as Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) have argued that media framing has had a significant impact on how audiences and governments react to certain crisis.

International news agencies play a major role in both media framing and coverage (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). According to Toledano and Ardevol (2013), the media that rely on international news agencies (particularly in the Western world) tend to simplify and reproduce the discursive patterns of news agencies of global influence, in which conflicts and crises are normally “packaged” according to Western interests (Milojevich & Beattie, 2018; Van Gorp, 2007).

Rafeeq and Jiang (2018) have stated that international news agencies were considerably affected by the international economic crisis of 2008; thus, these agencies no longer have the resources to be the main force in terms of media setting and discourses. Following this change, academic research over the last 10 years has tended to be limited in focus: often on the extent to which economic and budget constraints on international news agencies have impacted the coverage of international crises which were already of little interest to the media (Toledano & Ardevol, 2013).

Ogunyemi (2017) has argued that one of the possible results of news agencies’ economic constraints is the increase in the consumption of online diasporic newspapers and news sites. On the one hand, diasporic media tend to include sociocultural aspects of diasporic communities and minorities that are often neglected by mainstream media (Georgiou, 2005). On the other, many diasporic groups have manifested distrust towards international news agencies and news corporations (Ogunyemi, 2017). Furthermore, diasporic media have the potential to elaborate alternative narratives that are not commonly found in the mainstream media, and to develop closer insights into international crisis—through which diasporic media engage with ethnic communities and minorities.

Along with family remittances, diasporic media are considered an important part of the “transnational reality” of many diasporic communities, and it is argued that transnational and diasporic communities stay much more politically engaged in the host country by following local and national news streamed from their homeland (Ogunyemi, 2017). Salojärvi (2017) posited that diasporic media enable members of the community to construct their own meaning about the conflicts and events that take place in the origin country, and participate as political actors by engaging through these narratives.

In light of these observations, this chapter investigates: 1) how diasporic and mainstream newspapers have framed the political and economic crisis in Venezuela; 2) how this framing

opposes, challenges, or reproduces the narratives from mainstream media and international news agencies; and 3) the possible impacts of these narratives on Canadian politics.

## Methods and Methodology

In this study, a total of 256 news articles that focused on the Venezuelan migration crisis were analyzed. Of the articles selected, 201 were published in *La Portada Canadá*, an established Latino newspaper in Toronto, and 55 articles were published in the *Toronto Star*. All articles were published between March 29, 2017 (when the government of Venezuela stripped the opposition-held parliament of its legislative powers) and May 20, 2018 (when Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was re-elected in a process that some international media and foreign powers defined as an “electoral fraud”). According to China and Polanco (2017), the events that occurred in this period intensified the international migration of Venezuelans, which had a relevant impact on refugee claims from Venezuelans in Canada (Keung, 2017b).

From the data collected, quantitative and qualitative content analysis were applied to explore media coverage of the Venezuelan crisis in both newspaper types. The key aspects of the analysis were: the number of published articles related to the crisis and their classification according to the source of information (i.e., international news agencies or original content), and the frequency in which certain topics were mentioned as key elements of the crisis (e.g., Venezuelan diaspora, policy implications, international relations).

Qualitative analysis was useful in terms of analyzing the narratives. The key element was evaluating the terms used by both media outlets to categorize discourse patterns regarding the crisis in Venezuela. In this sense, the ways in which the crisis was described by both mainstream and diasporic media were deemed essential in understanding how diasporic media discourses co-exist with mainstream and/or dominant discourses.

## Results and Discussion

In analyzing the media coverage and discourses in relation to the migration crisis in Venezuela, the prevalent themes included: the humanitarian crisis elements of the stories; the need for stronger measures to support Venezuelan refugees; the importance of international/Canadian solidarity; and the political engagement of the Venezuelan diaspora in Toronto.

### Humanitarian Crisis and Migration

The *Toronto Star* included the terms *humanitarian crisis* and *migration crisis*—as referred to by international organizations and NGOs such as Caritas Venezuela and Human Rights Watch—in which the narratives focused more on statistics from international organizations regarding the effects of the crisis on vulnerable populations. While the human impact is an important element of these narratives, the political, demographic, and economic effects of the crisis are the relevant components. *La Portada Canadá*, on the other hand, used narrative elements that are more likely to be based on the dramatization bias, which mainly linked the human impact/interest as a news value. The *suffering* (*sufrimiento*), *isolation* (*aislamiento*), and *hopeless condition* (*desesperanza*) of the Venezuelan population and their diasporas in other countries in South America were significant aspects of the discourse.

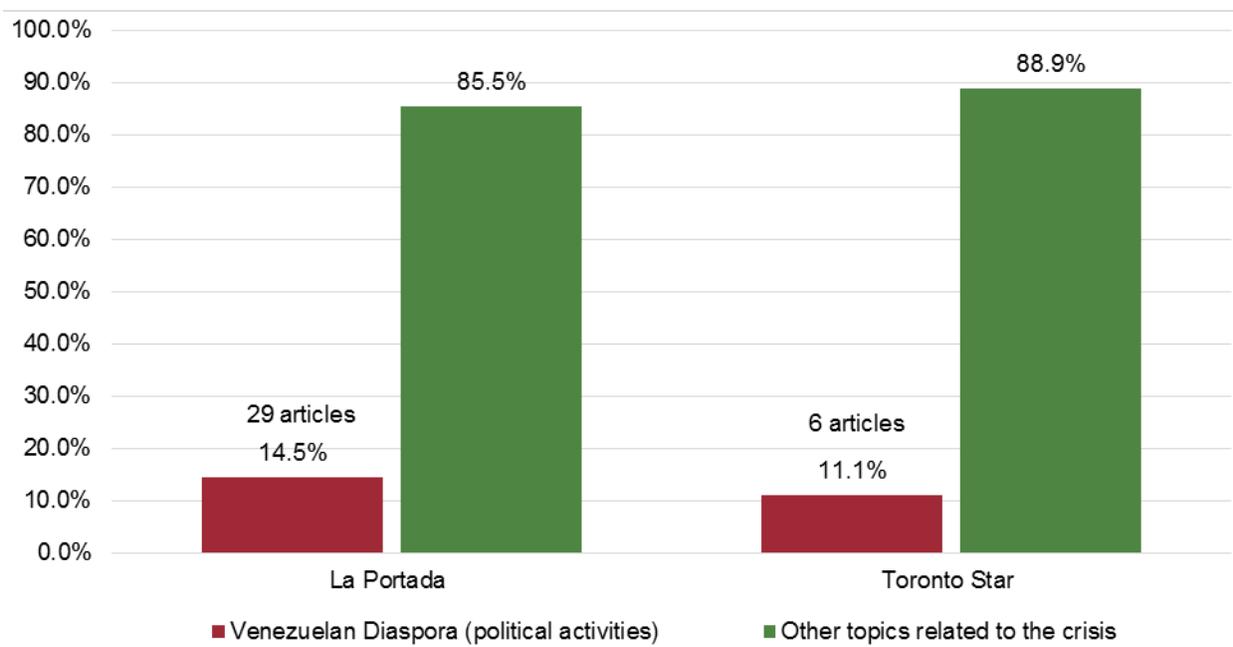
*La Portada Canadá* highlighted the solidarity from the Canadian government and other South American countries and called for more effective assistance measures from the international community. The idea of a Latin American community in Canada based on the diasporas’

involvement and participation is present in all the narratives, in which the political factor is definitive. In many cases, the Venezuelan crisis is portrayed as a regional crisis in which the notion of “home” is portrayed as a community of countries that call for international solidarity in Canada. In this sense, the Latin American community is portrayed as comprising political actors whose cooperation and participation are needed to support other members of the community. As Dufoix and Rodarmor (2008) asserted, the influence of diasporic media on immigrant communities’ cultural identity and political participation has given a new perspective to the notions of solidarity in the host country.

### The Venezuelan Diaspora in Toronto

A relevant aspect in terms of media discourses was how mainstream and diasporic media framed the civic engagement of Venezuelans in Toronto. Figure 1 shows that 14.5% of the 201 articles of *La Portada Canadá* focused on the Venezuelan diaspora in Toronto and its political engagement as a direct result of the migration crisis. Similarly, 11.1% of the 55 articles from the *Toronto Star* included the diasporic community aspect as a key element in the coverage of the crisis.

Figure 1. Venezuelan diaspora (political activities)



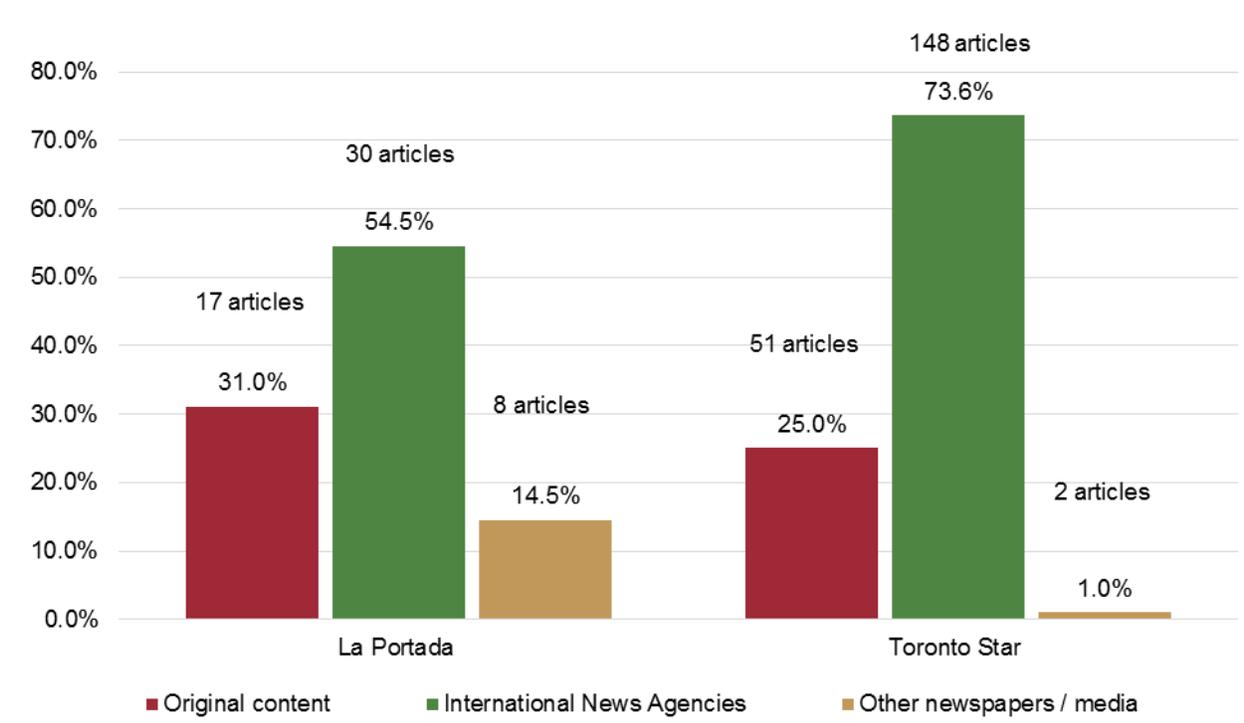
As an example, *La Portada Canadá*’s narratives reported the marches and public demonstrations by Venezuelan political leaders in Toronto’s Queen’s Park—the site of the Ontario Legislative Building, which houses the Legislative Assembly of Ontario—and Dundas Square, considered to be the central hub of the city’s downtown.

Conversely, the interests of the *Toronto Star* have focused on the hardships of Venezuelan refugees in Toronto, a group labelled as “forgotten refugees” due to the priority given to other refugee communities. The transnational aspect of the Venezuelan community was crucial only regarding its impact on refugee statistics in Toronto. The newspaper published three articles containing interviews with Venezuelan refugees and representatives of NGOs supporting new Venezuelan refugee communities in Toronto—an aspect that was not included in any of the *La Portada Canadá* articles.

## Media Discourses: The Role of International News Agencies

The (re)construction of unique narrative frameworks and framing elements from major international sources is, according to Lamb (2009), one of the most distinctive elements of diasporic media and narratives. In this sense, a relevant aspect in terms of *La Portada Canadá's* coverage of the Venezuelan migration crisis is how the newspaper adapted and reframed newswires from international news agencies (likely to make them more appealing for its Latin American audience in Toronto), which constituted 73.60% of *La Portada's* articles (Figure 2). This adaptation implied the reframing of newswires from international news agencies such as Reuters and EFE, for which the inclusion of narrative elements that accentuated the diasporic elements of the crisis in Toronto and their sociocultural impact in Canada was a distinctive aspect of *La Portada Canada's* discourses.

Figure 2. Information Sources.



## Media Discourses: The Crisis in Context

In terms of the media discourses about the migration crisis in Venezuela, the lack of sociocultural context in the stories is also present in the narratives from both *La Portada Canadá* and the *Toronto Star*. In this regard, the simplification implicit in the media's framing of international conflicts—likely aimed at facilitating audiences' understanding—is a key factor in analyzing how both newspapers framed the Venezuelan crisis.

Only two of the 201 articles (1%) from *La Portada Canadá* provided the audience with an analysis of the political, historic, and cultural background of the situation. Instead of contextualizing the crisis using its privileged access to the diasporic perspectives and knowledge of the conflict, *La Portada Canadá* opted for more personalized news—which, according to Bennett and Townend (2009), focus on the journalistic bias that gives preference to individual actors and human-interest angles in events over larger institutional, social, and political contexts (p. 14).

In the case of the *Toronto Star*, six (7.2%) of the 55 articles included the historic, political, and/or economic context and geopolitical implications of the situation. These analyses emphasized the economic context of Venezuela as a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and how the crisis has impacted other OPEC members' oil industries, which is content chosen for its relation to Canada's national agenda/interests. On the other hand, the historic background—particularly in regard to the Bolivarian Revolution of 1999 and the relevance of the late President Hugo Chávez in Venezuelan politics—was only deemed relevant in two of these articles.

Lastly, most of the descriptions about the Venezuelan crisis were presented through in-situ news, in which terms such as 'violent place' and 'daily confrontations' were common elements in the *Toronto Star's* articles, while 'human rights violations,' 'repression,' and 'anarchy' were crucial in *La Portada Canadá's* narrative.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrated that in the coverage of international and migration crises, diasporic media may replicate or reproduce decontextualized and/or dominant discourses from international agencies and media corporations. However, diasporic newspapers have the potential to develop their own narrative approach by including transnational elements of the crisis that aim at engaging with their diasporic audiences.

In the case of the migration crisis in Venezuela, the transnational approach of *La Portada Canadá* focused on the political and civic engagement of Venezuelans in Toronto, and the struggle of this growing community to legitimate their political cause in Canada. The newspaper's approach toward the crisis focused on calling for more effective measures from the Canadian government in terms of political support for Venezuelan refugees and against the Venezuelan government.

Traditional news values, such as focus on the national interest, can have alternative implications in diasporic media. In their coverage, the Venezuelan crisis was approached through the lens of the destination country's national interest—but also from the national/diasporic interests of the individual Latin American countries that constitute the readership of newspapers such as *La Portada Canadá*. Terms such as 'international solidarity' and 'community' are key elements in the ways in which the Venezuelan diaspora was portrayed by the diasporic media outlet selected for this study.

The local-transnational input in diasporic media coverage of migration crises could be a crucial element in future analyses on the role of Latin American diasporic media in Canada. In particular, the ways in which the Venezuelan migration crisis was constructed by mainstream and diasporic media might also be relevant in evaluating the measures adopted by the Canadian government as a result of the political pressure exerted by the Latin American diaspora.

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