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Finding a New Job in a New Home: The Labour Market Experiences of Government Assisted Refugees in Canada

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FINDING A JOB IN A NEW HOME: THE LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTED REFUGEES IN CANADA

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Abstract

This paper explores the labour market experiences of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in Canada by utilizing social capital theory and identifies the areas for future research. Data was collected from an in-depth literature review but very little literatures are available to measure the labour market experiences of GARs specifically. The lack of research is particularly prominent in the area of GARs' economic outcomes and earnings through social capital framework. Changes to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) in 2002 have shifted the selection of GARs which has implication for their economic integration once in Canada. The results of this paper indicate that social capital is a significant component in impacting labour market integration of GARs because of the loss of academic, occupational and other forms of human capital.

Key Words: Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), Social Capital, Labour Market Experiences, Resettlement, Refugees, Integration

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Glossary

AAMHCS	Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CS	Community Sponsors
ESL	English as a Second Language
G5	Groups of Five
GAR	Government Assisted Refugee
IMDB	Immigration Data Base
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
IRPR	Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
LSIC	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OCASI	Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
PSR	Privately Sponsored Refugee
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holder
SPO	Service Provider Organizations

SRDC   Social Research and Deconstruction Corporation

UN   United Nations

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WGCS   Wood Green Community Services

1. Introduction

1.1.   The Research Context and Questions

Canada currently admits more than 225,000 new immigrants a year who come from around the globe (Beiser, 2009).The first and the largest group were economic migrants, chosen because they processed skills and abilities that should allow them to integrate and contribute to Canada's economic prosperity. Their selection is based on many factors including; level of education, work experiences, employment ability, language skills and age. The second largest group of immigrants is based on family reunification, and the third broad category is based on humanitarian grounds known as refugees. Refugees have consistently made up over 10 percent of the annual flow of newcomers to Canada in the last decade (Yu et al., 2008; Beiser, 2009).

The refugee protection system in Canada is guided by two major categories: the refugee and humanitarian resettlement program and the in-Canada refugee protection system (CIC, 2011). The resettlement program involves the selection of refugees from overseas under the assistance of the Canadian government or refugee supported by voluntary groups. These groups are known as Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), which refers to refugees who are entirely supported by the Government of Canada, and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), which includes refugee resettlement, is supported by groups of Canadian individuals or volunteers' organizations. In partnership with international agencies, including United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), Canada selects refugees in accordance with the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) and regulations (CIC, 2011). Persons making claims after arriving in the port of entry of Canada are referred to as 'refugee claimants' (Yu et al., 2005).

This paper will largely be focused on the humanitarian group of refugees, particularly GARs, which contains the largest percentage of sponsored refugees (Beiser, 2009). By considering social capital as assets in networks, the paper will discuss some issues that exist in available literature on labour market experiences of GARs, in their attempt to attain employment and also compare the economic outcomes of GARs and PSRs. Both of these categories of refugees are selected for humanitarian reasons from outside of Canada (CIC, 2011) and in this respect are comparable.

More specifically, the research seeks to elaborate on the following three questions: (1) what are the challenges commonly faced by the Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in securing employment in Canada? (2) What are some common and successful strategies enabling refugees to integrate into the Canadian labour market? (3) How does social capital influence the labour market experiences of GARs compared to PSRs?

1.2.   Organization of the Study

This research is presented in seven sections. The first section is an introduction containing: the research context and questions, refugee resettlement in global and Canadian context; description of the GARs selection and resettlement process; and an analysis of the resettlement assistance program and source county selection. The second and the third sections describe the research methods and the theoretical framework, explaining social capital theory in the labour market. Section four is a critical review of the available literature. Section five deals with research findings and discussions on the labour market experiences of GARs and compare economic outcomes of GARs with PSRs, strategies for refugees in obtaining employment. Section six provides a conclusion of this research and the seventh section discusses future research.

1.3.   Refugee Resettlement in Global and Canadian Context

Every year, millions of people leave their country of residence for various reasons. The World Bank estimates that there are more than 215 million people (or 3 percent of the world population) living outside their country of origin - some voluntarily, and others not (The World Bank, 2011, p. ix). These official numbers do not include millions of illegal or undocumented migrants around the globe. Migration refers to the movement of people from one place in the world to another, for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary.

The contemporary refugee resettlement programs trace their origins to the consequences of the Second World War, when tens of thousands of people affected by conflict in Europe were offered refuge in countries across the globe (UNHCR, 2002). Many people were living under the threat of various kinds of persecution and would not be protected, if left to the mercy of the governments of their countries of citizenship. In response to human rights problems, a number of international legal institutions were established around the world. As a result, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created in January 1951, with a mandate to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions to their plight (UNHCR, 2002).

According to a widely recognized UNHCR definition, refugee is 'a person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to gain himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to

return to it' (UN General Assembly, July 28, 1951). All signatory countries to the United Nations Convention have a legal responsibility to protect who seeks protection.

Canada also signed the 1951 *Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 Protocol which has shaped Canada's humanitarian traditions and international commitments to protect refugees (SRDC, 2002). As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Refugees along with the country's *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA), Canada undertakes the responsibility to resettle a number of refugees who require settlement in a safe third country. The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* came into force in June 28, 2002 by replacing the *Immigration Act* of 1976, which made many of changes in refugee protection system.

According to Section 2 of the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* some of the objectives are to: (a) recognize that the refugee program is in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted; (b) fulfil Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees and affirm Canada's commitment to international efforts to provide; (c) offer safe haven to persons with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, as well as those at risk of torture or cruel and unusual treatment or punishment; and (d) establish fair and efficient procedures that will maintain the integrity of the Canadian refugee protection system, while upholding Canada's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all human beings. Similarly, section 3 (e) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* seeks to promote the successful integration of permanent residents (immigrants and refugees) into Canada while recognizing that integration involves mutual obligations for new immigrants in Canadian society

(Department of Justice, 2012). These resettlement objectives relate to those who seek protection from outside Canada and refugee protection claims from within Canada.

Globally, there are an estimated 10.5 million United Nations designated refugees living in refugee camps and urban slums. Countries with refugee resettlement programs resettle about 100,000 refugees from abroad each year (UNHCR, 2002). Canada has a long history as a tolerant, compassionate and humanitarian nation, and lives up to these values through the refugees program (CIC, 2010). So, Canada annually resettles 10,000 to12, 000 or one out of every 10 refugees resettled globally through its GAR and PSR program. This number does not include 'refugee landed in Canada'.

Figure 1: Refugee Granted Permanent Residence in Canada

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Female	12,995	11,881	12,192	15,715	17,214	15,813	13,672	10,853	11,254	12,090
Male	14,921	13,232	13,791	16,971	18,561	16,687	14,282	11,005	11,596	12,606
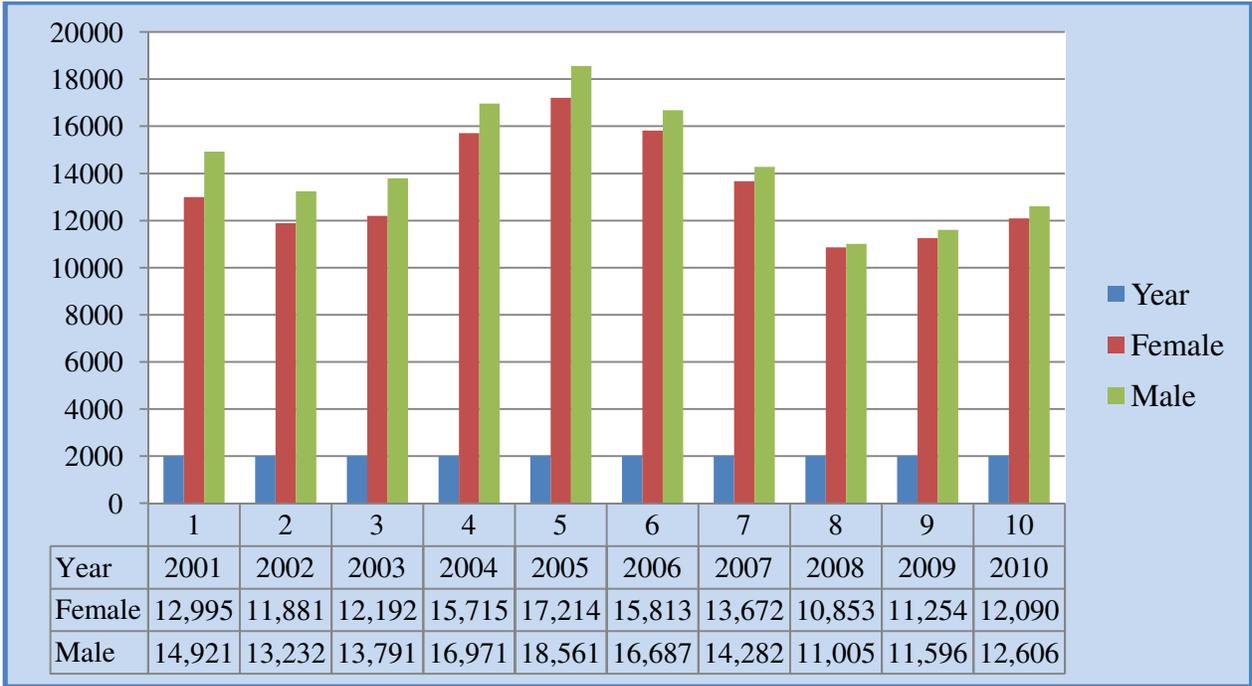
Source: CIC, 2011

Figure 1 shows that 277,331 refugees were granted permanent resident in Canada between 2001 and 2010, which shows the male refugees are slightly higher than that of female refugees.

This number includes all categories of documented refugees such as government assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada and refugee dependents. In 2008, Canada was second to the United States among all industrialized countries for providing protection to refugees from abroad and at home (CIC, 2010).

1.4.   Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) are defined as individuals who are selected from overseas to resettle in Canada under the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) on the recommendation of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organization for Migration. Canada has supported a relatively consistent number (7000-7500 per year) of GARs during the past decade (Handman, 2011). The Figure 2 shows the GAR population who are granted permanent resident in Canada between 2001 and 2010.

Figure 2: GARs Arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2010
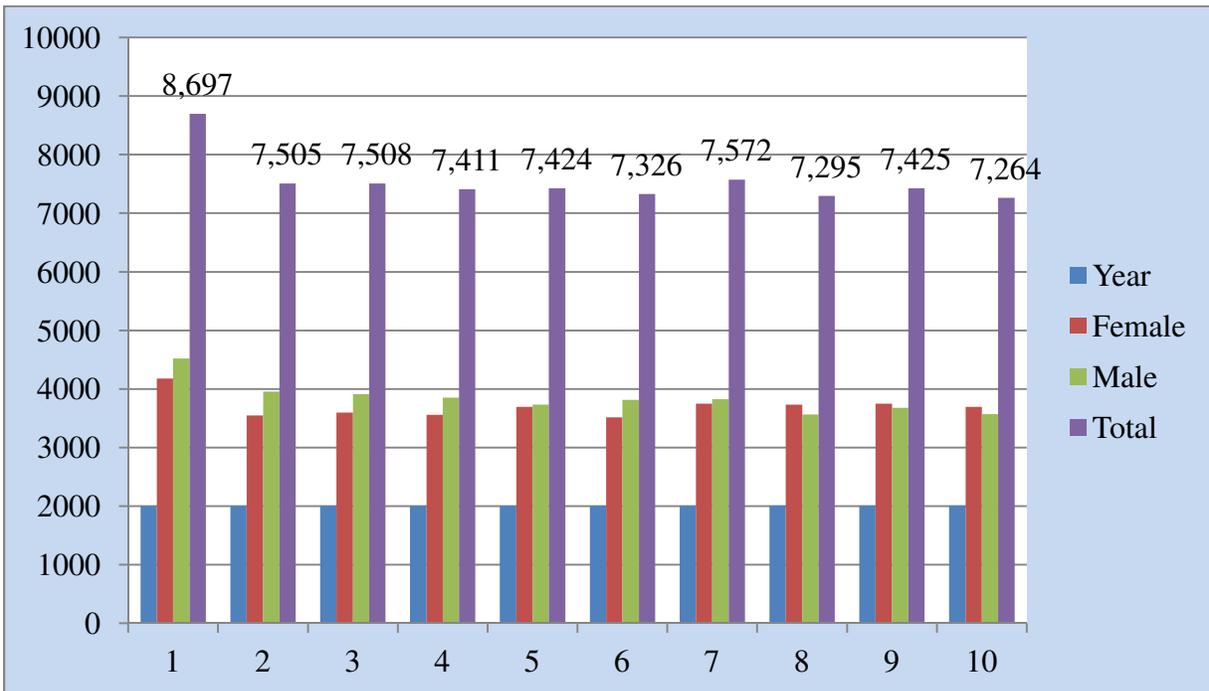
Source: CIC, 2011

There are three subcategories of Government Assisted Refugees who may be admitted to Canada as permanent residents on humanitarian grounds. The *Convention Refugees Aboard Class* includes people who leave their country and have a well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular group (Elgersma & Dolin, 2008). The second category is the *Countries of Asylum Class which* is defined as those persons seriously and personally affected by: civil war, torture, armed conflict, or massive violations of human rights (DeVoretz et al., 2004). And the third category is the *Source Country Class*, the specified criteria for which states such persons must be seriously and personally affected by civil war or imprisoned as a result of legitimately expressing themselves or exercising their civil rights (Elgersma & Dolin, 2008).

1.4.1. GARs Selection and Legal Process

In 2002, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* introduced significant changes to Canada's refugee resettlement program by redirecting Canada's GAR selection criteria to place more emphasis on protection needs and less on settlement potential. This humanitarian change resulted in Canada selecting GARs from more critical refugee camps, who have experienced more traumas, and with no hope of resettlement within their home countries. With its emphasis on protection, the implementation of IRPA had a direct impact on the source camps and source countries that Canada selected for the resettlement assistance program, resulting in a large increase in refugees arriving in Canada with a number of long-term special needs.

Canada accepts a limited number of refugees from abroad who are referred to as Convention refugees by the UNHCR. The UNHCR has a mandate to lead and coordinate

international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. However, the

UNHCR's referral alone is a not a guarantee that refugees will be admitted to Canada. After

refugee selection made by the UNHCR for resettlement to Canada, a Canadian visa officer

decides whether or not a person meets the requirements of Canada's refugee resettlement

program and if the person will be admitted to Canada. They must demonstrate an ability to

eventually re-establish their lives in Canada although refugees are not chosen according to the

more specific integration criteria by which other classes of immigrants are assessed (Krahn et al.,

2000).

In general the prioritized eligibility criteria include such factors as family reunification,

health and medical factors (individuals with communicable diseases or mental illnesses may be

excluded), clear criminal conviction or possible security risk, an ability to integrate such as

education, employment and language skills (Gray, 2008). And, refugees must not have another

long-term solution within a reasonable time period. In addition, previous education and

occupation can indirectly influence the selection process (Krahn et al., 2000). Once the refugees

are selected for the resettlement in Canada, they are granted an immigrant visa by the Canadian

visa officer and these individuals become permanent residents upon arrival in Canada. The

Canadian visa officer chooses a city in Canada to which selected refugees are sent for

resettlement (Simich, 2003).

1.4.2. Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

The Federal Government of Canada provides resettlement assistance to the GARs through the

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). This program became a national program in 1998 and

operates in all provinces except Quebec. RAP provides some immediate and essential services during the initial weeks in Canada, as well as basic income support during the first year after landing, or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient (CIC, 2011).

More specifically, this program provides support to GARs in two ways. First, the Federal Government provides funding to service provider organizations for direct services. Upon arrival in Canada, GARs are eligible for airport reception, orientation and assistance in finding temporary or permanent accommodation, navigating new community and other basic life skills, in addition to temporary financial assistance to cover basic needs of life (Simich, 2003; Yu et al., 2005). The second component consists of income support that provides orientation respecting employment in the Canadian labour market (Yu et al. 2005; Elgersma & Dolin, 2008). The employment services often involve workshops on resume writing and interview skills, and job search techniques. Similarly, official language skills are essential not only for obtaining employment, but for social and cultural integration, are provided from the service providers. Other programs such as bridge-to-work programs and volunteer programs to gain Canadian work experiences are part of the larger resettlement program (Yu et al., 2005). In addition, prior to arriving in Canada, GARs are eligible to attend Canadian cultural orientation abroad sessions which cover labour market, rights and responsibilities, social and cultural life in Canada.

The purpose of the resettlement assistance program is to facilitate the core aspects of settlement of newcomer immigrants and refugees in Canada, who intend to settle in Canada permanently. This program is primarily a one-year federal income assistance program designed to assist GARs as they settle and find work in Canada. The program supports may be extended for an additional year in special circumstances (Siggner et al., 2007). The program aims to enable

refugees to become full-fledged participants in economic, social, and political activities in their new society (SRDC, 2002).

1.4.3. GARs Sources Countries and their Resettlement

Refugees have been an ever present component of the human migration process. In the past, groups of people facing religious or racial persecution would often move to a more peaceful and tolerant region. One of the major factors determining the push toward migration is the ongoing circumstances of the home country regarding such issues as political and social instability, wars and other types of crises. The source countries from which GARs come from in Canada have varied over the years.

The list of countries is found in the schedule to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* (IRPR). For example, examining country of birth at landing, GARs who landed between 2005 and 2009 most commonly came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar (Burma), Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Sudan, Iran, Thailand and Somalia (CIC, 2011). Similarly, in 2000, the top ten source countries from where GARs came from were Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Iran, Columbia, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan and Zaire respectively (SRDC, 2002).

Handman (2011) and Okkony-Myers (2010) report that, the vast majority of refugees resettle in the province to which they were originally 'destined'. In 2006, refugees who settled in Ontario and Alberta between 2000 and 2006 were most likely to remain there (more than 90%). British Columbia and Quebec also retained 80 percent or more of refugees who resettled there. Overall, the majority of GARs (approx. 67%) between 1980 and 2000 were sent to urban centres

across Canada, mainly Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary, Quebec, Winnipeg and Hamilton (SRDC, 2002).

1.5.   Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

The Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) program assists refugees abroad to build new lives in Canada through various sponsoring groups. These groups include Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), Groups of Five (G5s) Community Sponsors (CSs). Under this program, sponsoring groups agree to provide the refugees with care, lodging, settlement assistance and support for the duration of the sponsorship period (CIC, 2007). The refugees are processed by Canadian visa officers and on arrival in Canada are welcomed by their Canadian sponsoring groups. Canada accepts about 3500 refugees per year under this category. The Figure 3 shows that the PSRs population granted permanent resident in Canada between 2001 and 2010.

Figure 3: PSR Population in Canada from 2001 to 2010
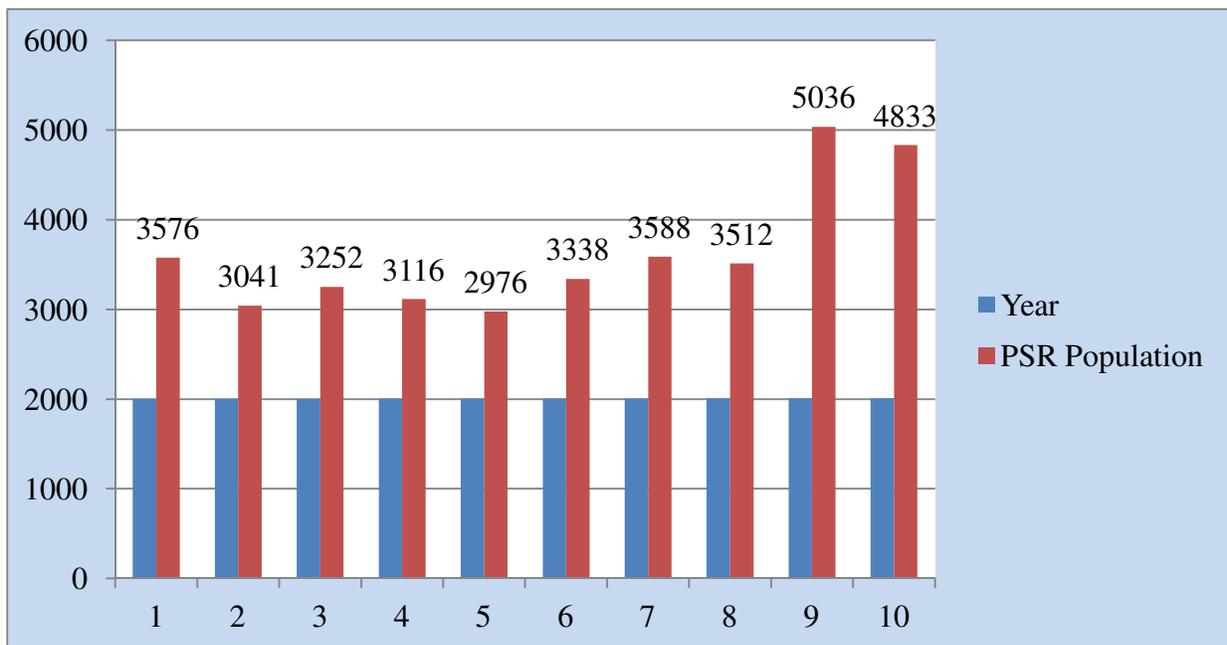
Source: CIC, 2011

Currently, more than 90 Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) such as religious organizations, ethno-cultural groups and other humanitarian organizations are working to provide sponsorship across Canada. Over two-thirds of PSRs are sponsored by this group. Any group of five or more individuals who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents, of at least 18 years of age and who live in the community where the refugees are expected to settle, can join together to sponsor one or more refugees. And, the third potential sponsoring group is formed by any organization, association or corporation with adequate financial capacity and ability to provide resettlement support can sponsor refugees to settle in the community where they are based (CCR, 2006).

2. Research Methods

This Major Research Paper (MRP) is based on an in-depth review of the available literature. By utilizing social capital theory, I systematically conducted a review of the secondary scholarly writing as found in journal articles, books, book chapters and discussion/working papers, and also non-academic sources such as government reports and grey literature. The critical analysis of secondary information helps to explore the labour market experiences of Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) in Canada.

This literature review made use of the academic research databases at Ryerson University. The search strategies began through the Immigration and Settlement portal, and then Academic Search Premier to discover related journal articles. The following keywords were searched to identify relevant articles and used in different combinations: government assisted refugees, social capital, newcomers, refugee, resettlement, Canada, immigration, settlement, integration, multicultural and diversity. The majority of items reviewed were journals articles that focused on refugee resettlement process in Canada. Some of the reviewed journals are *Canadian Journal of Public Health, Journal of International Migration and Integration, Refugee, International Migration, Compare, The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, Journal of Immigration and Refugee Studies, The Canadian Review of Sociology, The Journal of Intercultural Studies,* etc. It excludes the articles written in other than the English language.

Non- academic sources that I examined included government reports and previously conducted surveys. Using government generated data ensures large sample sizes and date quality. Specially, I have used the websites of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Statistics Canada. In addition, some of the important information also carried out from the

reports of international development agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).

I also used Google Scholar and websites of non-profit organisations. The grey literature, such as community-based research conducted by the service providers, was also valuable sources for this study. The website of community-based organizations such as Social Research and Deconstruction Corporation (SRDC), Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (AAMHCS), Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and Wood Green Community Services (WGCS) provided sources source of the lived experience of restructuring and policy changes on the ground, through detailed and empirical evidence of policy relevant evidence-based research.

3. Theoretical Framework

This paper will analyze the labour marker experiences of GARs utilizing the concept of social capital theory. Social capital theory attempts to account for the differential access to job-related information that workers have recognizing that possessing more or superior information led to labour market advantages (Aguilera, 2002). Workers not utilizing personal networks may miss job opportunities only available through these networks.

The concept of social capital has become a very popular term in the area of social sciences during the last two decades (Lin, 2009). The term social capital in social science generally refers to networks of social relations which are characterized by norms of trust facilitating collective actions for common benefits (Xua, 2008; Thomas, 2011). This represents the connections with people that create an opportunity to accomplish desired goals. According to Chou (2006) and Iyer et al. (2005) in Xua (2008), the term social capital in the eyes of economists emphasizes the contribution of social capital to economic growth and performance, for individuals, communities and the aggregate economy. This is also a concept which refers to the value of social relations and the role of cooperation and confidence in order to gain collective or economic results. However, social capital is not straightforward to measure. In this way, measures of social capital are similar to measures of networks.

Further, social capital is the value of social networks. "Bonding social capital" refers to family and friends, relatively homogenous groups whereas "bridging social capital" refers to friends and acquaintances belonging to different religions, ethnicities and language grouping, comparatively heterogonous groups. Lastly "social networking" can take on forms such as membership to various institutions (Nanavati, 2009; Galabuzi & Teelucksingh, 2010). Social

capital is created through one's relationships with other people whose economic value can be quantified (Aguilera, 2002). Social capital is an individual's personal network of contacts that is often drawn from the particular ethnic community of the individual that continues to play a crucial role in finding employment (Xua, 2008; Thomas, 2011). As Hatala (2010) suggests social capital is the relationships that include the people with whom they are very close, such as family and friends. These contacts are considered 'strong ties'. Other relationships are comprised of individuals with less contact are commonly referred to as 'weak ties'. Immigrants and refugees face barriers to accessing services due to inadequate informal support from small and weak social networks (Stewart et al., 2008).

Social capital theory has been utilized to address a wide variety of phenomenon such as improving labour market outcomes and economic development. Social capital plays an important role in helping individuals to find employment in the Canadian labour market, and comes from expansion of social networks (Xua, 2008). The structure and level of social networks include its size, diversity and content. The size of networks can be measured by the number of friends or relatives, and the number of types of groups or organizations a person is involved with. The diversity of networks is measured by the relative numbers of co-ethnic members and other members in a person's network (Lin, 1999; Xua, 2008; Phythian et al., 2011). The content of networks is defined by the amount of social involvement and social support such as frequency of contact, and contribution to the relationships (Xua, 2008). Another perspective is focused on social capital at the group level, with discussions dwelling on how certain groups develop and maintain more or less social capital as a collective asset, and how such a collective asset enhances group members' life chances (Lin, 1999).

4. Literature Review

The Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in Canada comprise a small portion of newcomers compared to all immigrant classes. The social construction of the refugee experiences begins with physical displacement from the home country, but the experience does not end inside the borders of countries where refugees resettle and adapt (Simich, 2003). The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) indicates that refugees as a group, including GARs, are less likely to have relatives or close friends already in Canada willing to provide support as compared to other newcomer immigrants. In addition, the survey reveals that refugees have significantly lower levels of education than other immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2005). So this group of immigrant faces considerable resettlement challenges including obtaining employment in the Canadian labour market.

GARs are one of the most vulnerable groups because they have experienced traumatic events and difficult living conditions. This increases their range of needs during the resettlement process. The most common needs are recognized as employment, language, housing, income and social support and health care, to learning about the culture, rules and regulations of the receiving society in addition to the need to deal with psychological trauma (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). A recent study entitled *Making Ontario Home: A study of Settlement and Integration Services for Immigrants and Refugees* conducted by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) surveyed over 2500 newcomers to Ontario representing 158 countries. They report that the top four settlements and integration challenges for newcomer as reported by survey respondents were: finding employment 62 percent; limited English language

skills 33 percent; social isolation 27 percent; and 23 percent reported finding affordable housing (OCASI, 2012).

Employment is universally considered to be an essential aspect of immigrant and refugee integration among scholars, settlement service providers and policy makers (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). Employment provides a core economic foundation necessary to improve standards of living of refugees. However, refugees including GARs face challenges in obtaining employment in Canada with a reasonable wage and career advancement potential (Carter & Osborne, 2009).

The common challenges in finding employment are related to: devalued international credentials (Bauder, 2005), lack of Canadian work experience and work references (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009), lack of work related language skills (Carter & Osborne, 2009; Handman, 2011), limited work-related social networks (Xua, 2008), limited knowledge of Canadian labour market dynamics and job search skills (Shields et al., 2006), racism and systemic discrimination (Galabuzi & Teelucksingh, 2010), poor labour market outcomes which contribute to mental health issues (Simich, 2003; Beiser, 2009), lack of accurate information before migration to Canada (WGCS, 2011), cultural differences (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007) and challenges with licensing requirements (Alboim & McIssac, 2007). These issues contribute to immigrants and refugees, including GARs poor economic performance leading to high unemployment and poverty (Hiebert & Sherrel, 2009).

GARs in Canada are temporarily assisted by the government and must recreate social support networks among family, friends and diasporas in order to resettle properly (Simich, 2003; Cagnon et al., 2007). The rhetoric surrounding Canada's refugee resettlement program emphasizes humanitarian values, rather than economic principles of selection, based on their

need for protection (Yu et al., 2005). Many refugees enter Canada with limited opportunities to apply the skills or livelihoods that they had developed in their country of origin (Lamba, 2003). A significant number of refugees have relatively low levels of education compared with other immigrants and the Canadian-born population (Bauder, 2005; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). Increasingly, GARs arriving today have less education than those who arrived in the 1990s (Handman, 2011). As a result, their labour market performance is lower than other cohorts; more specifically, refugees show a markedly lower employment rate and lower employment earnings (Yu et al., 2005).

Drawing on 2008 government data, Handman (2011) reports GARs have the highest overall uptake of resettlement services in Canada (87%) of all refugee groups and other immigrant classes. However, their labour force participation and level of income is below the average of refugees. They often experience downward occupational mobility because of their weak social capital and lack of networks. Social capital is important to newcomers, especially in the resettlement process for finding accommodation, gaining employment, accessing education or training and receiving other services (Thomas, 2011). According to Dhari et al. (1997) as cited in Stewart et al. (2008), refugees face particular struggles in obtaining social support in their host country. The quality of social networks depends on the size, diversity and density which are determined from the number of people or units such as kinship, friends and organizations within a relative proximity from one another (Xua, 2008).

Kinship and friendship relations within the immigrant receiving community are generally supportive and this is often the most readily available resource to access labour. These ties can be understood by considering two types of social capital, namely bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital reinforces specific reciprocity by mobilizing internal solidarity

19

within groups, while bridging social capital links one social group to external assets and information through social network ties (Yan et al., 2009). However, the social capital of a family is not the sole attribute affecting the labour market experience of members of newcomer families, including GARs. It is because, they provide shelter, which might lead to postponement of job search, and this reveals a path to economic self-sufficiency (Nanavati, 2009).

The majority of newcomers depending on informal services and employed in their own ethnic group in their initial years of landing, due to the poor quality of their social networks, tend to be economically marginalized in lower-paying positions within the labour market (Kunz, 2005; Galabuzi & Teelucksingh, 2010). A recent study entitled *Social Capital and the Labour Market Process among New Generation Youth from Visible Minority Immigrant Families* by Yun et al. (2009) also supports this argument. As noted by one Chinese respondent: "Let's say my dad or my mom will help me find a job. They will find a Chinese place. And I don't want to work with Chinese people. Because they will rip me off, I don't know. You know they always give you less hours or less wages and stuff like that so I don't like them introducing me to Chinese people" (p. 17). Pendakur and Pendakur (1998) also found that an ethnic enclave in Canada is primarily composed of immigrants with lower levels of schooling and skills (as cited in Lamba & Kharn, 2003).

The source country of immigrants is another major determinant of the level of social capital one has. The social capital of newcomers, particularly from those countries with a short history of migration flows to Canada, often lack the links needed to attain well-paying employment in the mainstream economy (Phythian et al., 2011). Newcomers from the United States and European countries are assumed to possess more social capital than those from non-traditional source countries such as Asia and Africa, and they have comparatively little trouble

gaining access to the higher skilled employment sector, whereas refugees from Africa and Southeast Asia have performed poorly (DeVoretz et al., 2004; Phythian et al., 2011). Literature shows that the education attainment levels for European refugees are generally on par with that of skilled Canadian immigrants. Refugees from non-European sources were the least educated of all immigrant classes: 80 percent had no more than a secondary level of education (DeVoretz et al., 2004; Lanphier, 2007).

The economic integration and economic outcomes of refugees may ultimately be linked to how they entered Canada. Each refugee gate reflects a different degree of sponsorship or support mechanism available upon arrival in Canada. As DeVoretz et al (2004) identify in their study, there are earning differentials associated with each of these refugee entry gates. Sponsored refugees have better economic performance than "in Canada" asylum seekers class due to the support mechanisms in place. GAR and PSR programs are aligned with the Government of Canada's and CIC's objectives of upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition in the resettlement of refugees and providing protection of those in need (CIC, 2007). This program helps to fulfill Canada's international legal obligations and its commitment to refugees (Department of Justice, 2012).

In comparing GARs and PSRs in terms of labour market integration, GARs have higher unemployment and underemployment. The reason may be that private sponsors have more time or motivation than the regular social system to help refugees find first jobs related to their qualifications (DeVoretz et al., 2004). This kind of social support may provide information and employment contact opportunities that are relevant to successful employment entry (Hatala, 2007). However, refugees may be considered dependent on the goodwill of sponsors; the regular and recurrent interaction pattern provides an important linkage to the established community into

which the refugee family will settle (Lanphier, 2007). This indicates a higher level of social capital for this cohort.

The establishment of economic self-sufficiency through employment is important for the success of the refugee resettlement program in order to reduce the dependency on state welfare and achieve favourable public opinion (Codell et al., 2011). However, the results of the *Evaluation of Government-Assisted Refugees and Resettlement Assistance Program* suggests that GARs arriving in Canada are having difficulties in meeting basic needs based on current income support levels provided through the resettlement assistance program. This program is not able to meet current minimum requirements of refugee needs. More specifically, more than one-half (57%) of GARs reported using food banks to meet their basic food needs and that one-third (29%) reported that their income support did not cover basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing), and 61percent reported having difficulties in repaying their CIC's transportation loan. Much of the issue of insufficient income is based on CIC's use of provincial social assistance rates as the level of income support provided to GARs (CIC, 2011).

The wide-range of changes came about to the selection of GARs when the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* came into practice. This change has given those in need of immediate protection priority rather than the earlier emphasis on those able to establish themselves. In the post-IRPA period, GARs landing in Canada experienced severe trauma, torture, and long periods of malnutrition leaving them with a range of health problems that lead to anxiety, depression, grief, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorders, and loss of personal and cultural identity (Carter & Osborne, 2009). They also faced various challenges such as, low literacy levels in their original languages, and significant physical and mental health issues, as well as increased numbers of single-headed households, large households, and a much

higher number of children and youth who were born and raised in refugee camps with limited

formal education (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). In addition, once in Canada, GARs faced

potentially disruptive and stressful experiences such as discrimination within the labour market,

linguistic, cultural and intergenerational conflicts (Beiser, 2009).

The GARs successful integration is an essential for social cohesion and requires the

establishment of welcoming communities and workplaces. The government has limited ability to

facilitate immigrants and refugees' full integration. Local communities need to play a key role in

this process by creating pathways for community engagement. A recent study entitled *The*

Integration and Inclusion of Newcomers in British Columbia by Hiebert and Sherrell (2009)

advise the promotion of knowledge development and exchange, community partnership, public

education, and the creation of demonstration projects. These kinds of initiatives promote

sustainable partnerships among stakeholders; facilitate cross-cultural understanding and develop

public awareness.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, nearly 60 percent of newcomers to

Canada arrive prior to their 30th birthday. A large part of the lives of this group are spent in the

labour force (CIC, 2010). From the social and economic standpoint, understanding the

integration of immigrants into the labour market is a key to the long-term economic

sustainability in Canada (Bucklaschuk & Wilkinson, 2011). The Longitudinal Survey of

Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) for 2005 found that the majority of principal applicants, arriving

as skilled immigrants were more likely to face downward mobility (Alboim & McIssac, 2007).

Access to employment and mobility for career development has been shown to be facilitated

through social networks. However, GARs have limited access to the available social networks in

their neighbourhoods because of cultural, religious, language and gender barriers (WGCS, 2011).

Information necessary to navigate services is another factor to obtaining employment for refugees. In Canada, as data with information on employment, wage and detailed social network structures are relatively rare; most studies focus on a specific group of immigrants and use networks-based job search methods as a proxy for social capital (Xua, 2008).There is a service gap between what is currently offered and what should be offered. A study by Green Wood Community Services (2011) confirms that, services are not being accessed effectively largely because "learning where to go for what" is difficult given a confusing, fragmented service sector. Refugees are being shuffled around from one service provider to the next, spending precious time looking for vital information, rather than receiving actual services. The problem of information deficits is a contributing factor to many newcomers' difficulties in finding suitable employment and in successfully integrating into Canadian society (Shields et al., 2006).

Moreover, the majority of newcomers do not use the "formal" services available to them for their settlement process and are more drawn to "informal" services. The formal services are provided by public institutions and funded through governments. And, the informal services may involve reliance on a family member, a friend, a local community leader. A recent study by Wood Green Community Services found the reasons for not using the formal system are: lack of knowledge about the system, inability to distinguish between formal and informal resources, inability to navigate system, dissatisfaction with the formal system, over-confidence in the capacity of the informal processes, and/or cultural, religious, language and gender barriers (WGCS, 2011).

In contrast, a recent study the Ontario Council for Agencies of Serving Immigrants found that for the majority of those utilizing formal services were satisfied with how general settlement and integration services were delivered. More specifically, 81 percent were satisfied with the

welcoming nature of the environments in which the services were provided, 75 percent were

satisfied with the level of staff understanding of their needs and 72 percent were satisfied with

quality of the information received (OCASI, 2012, p. 63). Relatively fewer respondents (66%)

were satisfied with the speed at which their needs were met, while 16 percent specifically stated

they were unsatisfied. They reported that transportation and distance to services were the biggest

problem in accessing settlement and integration services.

5. Findings and Discussions

Refugee resettlement in Canada is guided by a humanitarian tradition and its commitment towards reducing the refugee crisis in the world. It is assumed that a host country provides the GARs with legal and physical protection, including access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals (UNHCR, 2011). Re-establishing one's livelihood does not necessarily mean regaining one's former occupation (Codell, 2011). However, satisfactory resettlement can be defined as securing an employment fitting to one's qualifications, skills and previous work experience (Torezani et al., 2008).

Literature shows that, GARs integration into the Canadian labour market is slower and less successful than other classes of immigrants. They often experience lower economic outcomes and downward occupational mobility than immigrants (Lamba & Kharn, 2003; Bauder, 2005; Yu et al., 2005). For example, a study by Stewart et al. (2008) documented the downward mobility of Somali and Chinese refugees in the Canadian labour market and, similarly, Wooden (1991) identified the employment difficulties faced by refugees in the Australian case as well (as cited in Krahn, 2000).

Based on this analysis, the findings can be organized into the following three broad categories: a) labour market experiences of GARs; b) labour market outcomes of GARs compared to PSRs and; c) the most common strategies for obtaining employment in Canadian labour market. The study further organized the labour market experiences of GARs in the following six sub topics; settlement and integration support services, issues of resettlement location choice, foreign credentials and Canadian work experiences, official language ability, discrimination and acculturation, and navigating services through informal social networks.

5.1. Labour Market Experiences

5.1.1. Integration Support Services

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) is provided to the GARs through the designated services provider organizations (SPOs) across Canada (Siggner et al., 2007; Handman, 2011). However, the current RAP support rates are insufficient to meet the basic necessities of GARs. A study on *Refugee Integration in Canada: A Survey of Empirical Evidence and Existing Services* by Yu et al. (2005), RAP focus group respondents identified a gap between the support provided for rent and the actual amount they pay. Many respondents stated that they were using funds that were originally allocated for food and basic needs to meet rent and utility payments. Further, a *Study of Income Support Benefits offered to Government Assisted Refugees under the Resettlement Assistance Program* which interviewed152 GARs who arrived in British Columbia between 2003 and 2005, revealed that 54 percent were spending 50 percent or more of their income on housing (Siggner et al., 2007).

In contrast, the 2011 evaluation of the GAR and RAP programs revealed that the majority of GARs confirmed that RAP is meeting their immediate and essential needs. In the focus groups GARs also noted that service provider organizations addressed their initial needs in a comprehensive and helpful manner and that the services provided were relevant to their situation (CIC, 2011). In addition, a study on *Economic Integration of Former GARs and Refugee Claimant* identified that RAP has provided special opportunities to re-establish their lives by adapting to their surroundings (Taraky, 2011). Her study also found, RAP provided former GARs with timely information, referrals to other agencies and facilitated their contact with

various ethno-cultural and religious organizations. Taraky (2011) quotes an Eastern Europe

former GAR as saying,

> Government sponsored programs of any kind are extremely helpful for GARs
> because they provide that initial financial support...GARs who come through that
> program, because of trauma and all of that stress... because they come mostly from
> wars or living in a camp...or refugee like camp...overseas...they go through many
> different issues and emotional issues and they would not really be ready for work
> right away so that program gives them a little ...like a cushion time so they can
> recuperate like emotionally (p. 43).

Based on the argument above, this study confirms the immediate resettlement support

provided by the government creates an avenue to GARs which assist and promote the early stage

of integration. However, this program should not be seen as a long-term solution of securing

livelihood for GARs. A long-term solution includes creating access and opportunities for labour

market integration. This relieves the economic burden to governments and enhances GARs self-

sufficiency and self-esteem. Therefore, government of the host country can play the important

role to facilitate labour market integration of GARs by developing and implementing effective

plans and policies.

5.1.2. Issues of Resettlement Location Choice

Analyzing labour market integration through the lens of social capital theory adds various

insights into the process. Newcomers choose to settle in Canada where they have relatives or

friends who may provide settlement assistance and social supports. Social support may facilitate

the settlement process such as housing, employment, school and accessing health services, and

long-term integration services such as fitting into Canadian society, joining community groups

and feeling sense of belonging (Statistics Canada, 2005). However, a recent work by Handman

(2011) entitled *Research Summary on Resettled Refugee Integration in Canada* indicate, refugee

as a group, including GARs have less likely or no relatives or friends already in Canada. The

lack of social networks coupled with neighbourhood characteristics that include safety and

security issues, the presence and absences of services, the proximity of friends and family and

people of the same ethno-cultural group who can provide social support, might play a restrictive

role in determining their labour market integration (Carter & Osborne, 2009). In addition, GARs

after arriving in Canada are sent to a particular location decided by the Canadian visa post

officials (Simich, 2003). For instance, a study about the *Settlement Experience of GARs in*

Hamilton Ontario: A critique of Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program

provides an example:

> They (Canadian officers) said that you are going to Winnipeg. I did not know where
> it is or anyone there. I only stayed in Winnipeg for twenty days. I did not know any
> one there. No Afghan. I called my friend in Hamilton. He said come to Hamilton,
> Hamilton is good (Navaratna, 2006, p. 29).

The program evaluation of GAR and RAP also highlighted approximately one-fifth (18%)

of GARs reported moving away from their desired community, echoed by results from the

Immigration Date Base (IMDB) indicating that 22 percent of GARs moved away from their

province of destination two years after initial relocation. Service provider organizations reported

that relocation was generally associated with reunification of family or friends, to find work, or

to access programs or services not available in the destined community (CIC, 2011). This often

results in precarious situations such as low wages and holding multiple jobs that lead to low

income and poverty. For this reason, most GARs apply for social assistance after they have

exhausted their twelve months of income support from resettlement assistance program (SRDC,

2002; Carter & Osborne, 2009). This also shows that, the presence of social support such as

member of the same ethno-cultural community, religious or extended families are very important to their immediate settlement experiences.

5.1.3. Foreign Credentials and Work Experiences

Non-recognition of foreign credentials and work experiences acts as a barrier for GARs. The discrepancy between qualifications and the actual performance of immigrants in the Canadian labour market is well documented, and this is also true for GARs. For example, the result of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) indicate that, immigrants, including GARs, who applied for credential assessment, only 56 percent were fully accepted, 19 percent were partially accepted, 15 percent were still in process and 11 percent reported that their credentials were not accepted (Statistics Canada, 2005, p. 52). A Winnipeg-based longitudinal study shows that, 38 percent arrived in Canada with some university education, one-quarter had college or trade certificates, however, 80 percent were still working in sales and services in the third year of landing, 15 percent in construction and manufacturing and only two employees were in professional positions (Carter & Osborne, 2009).

> A trained and certified aircraft engineer arrived in Canada as a GAR. Although he was very grateful for the support and help from the government to start a new life here, he was never able to work in his profession as an aircraft engineer. The assistance he received from the government did not include any information about how to resume his career. He did not know the path he had to take to get to his goals. He knocked on all the doors he could think of, he went to the airport, he went to the colleges, he went to airlines and to aircraft manufacturers but he had no luck. Transport Canada would not give him a license to practice. He supported his family and sent his children to school by working as a taxi driver. His children are all graduated (WGCS, 2011, p. 20).

Many newly arriving refugees and immigrants suffer from a devaluating of their skills and education in Canada and are unable to apply these effectively in the labour market (Bauder, 2003). Similar to Shields et al. (2006) and Xua (2008) work, the research findings indicated the common job barriers confronted by foreign migrants to Canada, such as lack of Canadian experience and a failure to recognize educational and skills credentials obtained abroad. Shields et al. (2006) provides an example, a respondent noted "... most of the time ... they [employers] always ask you for the experience. [They] ... ask you for three or five years minimum. [They] didn't give people a chance to work, like to gain experience, where [are they] going to get the experience? That's the whole problem" (p.13). This shows that, newcomers including GARs face a conundrum in that they can't get a job because they do not have Canadian experience; they can't get Canadian experience because no one will give them a job.

5.1.4. Official Language Ability

Official language ability is considered a key factor in the settlement process necessary to facilitate effective communication with other cultural groups, employers, and service providers. Effective language skills promote stronger earning levels for all categories of newcomers (Stewart et al., 2008; Handman, 2009). The literature reveals that, the major factors affecting level of integration are associated with a newcomers' county or region of birth, period of arrival in Canada settled gender, age, immigration class, and level of education before arrival in Canada (CIC, 2011). A longitudinal survey on *Housing and Neighbourhood Challenges of Refugee Resettlement in Declining Inner City Neighbourhood: A Winnipeg Case Study* by Carter and Osborne identifies that 39 percent of the respondents who had looked for work during year three

of landing in Canada still reported difficulty in finding a job because of their poor language

ability, lack of Canadian work experience or references, and credential recognition problems.

Respondents who got a job were often dissatisfied because the pay was poor, and they lacked job

security, benefits or opportunities for career advancement (Carter & Osborne, 2009). About one-

third (33%) of all respondents in the *Making Ontario Home* survey reported having limited

English language ability (OCASI, 2012).

> [Chinese newcomer] I'm very capable, but if I can't communicate effectively and
> interpersonal relationships [are] not dealt with properly, I think that even if you're
> hired, but maybe you will be out of the job really soon…if language support is not
> emphasized, other type of support will hot help to improve the situation (Stewart et
> al., 2008, p. 133).

Similarly, a study entitled *Voices from the Margins: Visible Minority Immigrant and*

Refugee Youth Experiences with Employment Exclusion in Toronto by Shields et al., (2006)

found the importance of language proficiency in the Canadian labour market. One respondent in

their study noted that, "I think my most difficulty in Canada is my communication skills. I found

many jobs they need fluent English speaking, but I'm a newcomer, I can't speak fluent. I think

this is my most difficult to find a job" (p. 26).

The evaluation of GAR and RAP also identify that the majority of adults (68%) and minors

(78%) entering Canada self-report that they have no knowledge of either of Canada's official

languages (CIC, 2011). In addition, GARs who arrived in Canada over the past five years, on

average, experience an unemployment rate of 25 percent and their earnings remained fairly low.

However, a study by Wood Green Community Services (2011) found there are still gaps in

language instruction service delivery. So, only 20 percent of newcomers participate in the

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, although a vast number of

immigrants participate in English as a Second Language (ESL). This shows that language ability

is a critical challenge for newcomers, including GARs to obtain employment, undertake education or training, seek information and services independently, interact with other Canadians, employers and understand life in Canada.

5.1.5. Discrimination and Acculturation

Discrimination, prejudice and racism were root causes of major challenges such as employment and housing. A study on *Multicultural Meanings of Social Support among Immigrants and Refugees* by Stewart et al. (2008) found that refugee participants (Chinese and Somali respondents) experienced discrimination as a result of visible minority status, skin color and accent that stigmatized them in Canadian society. Similarly, an Australia-based study by Colic-Peisker (2009) determined that refugees felt like second-class citizens because of experience with long-term unemployment, which remains one of the paradigmatic situations of social exclusion. Labour market discrimination affects one's financial outcomes, family relations, status in the ethnic and wider community and also one's self-respect. A significant loss of occupational and consequently social status in host country can also be described as marginalization.

Many refugees who arrive in Canada also face issues of acculturation. Acculturation refers to the process of adapting to a new social environment which often involves changes in identity, values, behaviour, thoughts, attitudes and feelings. As Macleod (1995) and Schissel (1998) as cited by Wilkinson (2008) explain, in order to function in everyday life in Canada, newcomers and refugees must at least superficially adopt the dominant culture. Failure to do so results in the feeling of uncertainty, anxiety and depression, and marginalization with the accompanying result

of high unemployment. This phenomenon is termed acculturative stress. In particular, GARs may have experienced trauma or torture before arriving in Canada, and/or post-traumatic stress disorder which inhibits acculturation and developing a connection with the new community, i.e. no one to assist them in the early stages of settlement (SRDC, 2002; Yu et al., 2005; Handman, 2008). This demonstrates that, discrimination and acculturation related stress reinforce poor labour market integration, inadequate social support services, stigmatization and isolation where social network can reduce the level of acculturation.

In addition, GARs in Canada experience systemic barriers and/or discrimination such as the financial burden associated with the CIC travel loan. For example, a study on *Impact of Transportation Loan Repayment Requirement on GARs in Toronto* by Access Alliance (2008) found Afghan, Karen and Sudnese refugees have a hard time because of this loan. Canada is one of the few countries that ask refugees to repay the cost of their medical and transportation to their resettlement country (CIC, 2011). GARs experiencing a precarious financial situation also contend with a desire to pay off their travel loan as quickly as possible for fear that they will not qualify for Canadian citizenship and or travel documents if they have not repaid loans. The study quotes one GAR as saying: "people told us that if we cannot pay off the loan within three years, it can complicate our citizenship application process...when I heard that if makes us a worry a lot" (Access Alliance, 2008, p. 2).

This suggests GARs are pressured to repay their loan but not able to get employment. The burden of repaying the transportation loan is one of the major sources of financial stress and increasingly puts them at risk of poor integration. In turn, these stressors can compound and enhance their vulnerabilities, mental health risks, economic insecurities, and social stigma.

5.1.6. Navigating Services through Informal Social Networks

Individuals seeking employment read newspapers, go to employment agencies, browse the web and utilize their social capital within networks of friends and relatives. GARs barriers to accessing services are made worse due to inadequate informal social support or weak social networks. Significant empirical research found that about half of all jobs are filled through contacts (Calvó-Armengol & Zenou, 2000). As cited by Beaman (2011), studies from the 1930's onwards report that between 30 percent and 60 percent of jobs are found in the United States through informal social network contacts (Bewley, 1999; Ioannides & Loury, 2004). Social capital of personal contacts mediates employment opportunities which flow through word-of-mouth and, in many cases, constitute a valid alternative source of employment information (Calvó-Armengol & Zenou, 2000).

> I only had one friend in Canada whom I initially knew due to our cultural patterns he was able to introduce to me a lot of other important and useful people in the Somali community in Toronto. My network started growing within the community a[s]. [A]fter six months I started building networks, getting to know many kinds of people in the [Toronto] community. I [also] attended different community functions, forums and cultural events (Stewart et al., 2008, p. 140).

The *Final Report of Toronto East Local Immigration Partnership* of Wood Green Community Services found the majority of newcomers do not use 'formal' services. Often times, decision makers and researchers focus on formal service provided by the government and non-profit agencies. This study found that informal support is important in helping immigrants and refugees meet needs, especially during the resettlement period. The informal services are more accessible, congruent with shared norms, stable, equal, adaptable to individual's needs and more flexible. In contrast, the program and services through formal channel are not always adequate, accessible or preferred (WGCS, 2011).

This shows that, navigating information is important for entering the Canadian labour market. Utilizing social networks can enable access to information on settlement and integration and other essential services in the welcoming society. This web of connections ultimately contributes to successful refugee resettlement. In addition, social capital can provide integral information such as where to look for jobs, how to present oneself to employers, how to behave on the job, what wages to ask for, etc. Therefore, it is argued that, newcomers not utilizing social networks may lose employment opportunities available through personal networks.

5.2. Labour Market Outcomes of GARs Compared to PSRs

One of the major components of a successful refugee integration strategy is the ability to enter the Canadian labour market. Poor integration results in various undesirable impacts such as costs to society in the form of underutilized labour and increased expenditures on income support, and costs to refugees in the form of lost earnings. The literature shows that, the network of support provided by the sponsoring groups helps refugees settle more quickly. The Canadian Council for Refugees found that Privately Sponsored Refugees have a better track record in settlement; undoubtedly because sponsors offer personalized local support that the government is not able to provide (CCR, 2006).

The PSR program assists refugees abroad to build new lives in Canada. The sponsoring groups are agreeing to provide the refugees with care, lodging, settlement services and support for the duration of the sponsorship period (CIC, 2007). This sponsorship scheme has created a widespread sense of networking that includes refugees as participants in their own resettlement. The study by Centre for Refugee Studies (2001) on Kosovo refugees in Ontario, expressed satisfaction with the role that sponsors played in connecting them to needed services in their respective communities (Lanphier, 2007). However, sponsors suggested that their biggest challenges are in meeting any unexpected needs of refugees, and finding adequate and affordable housing (CIC, 2007).

Private sponsorship does not rely on public resources, but rather taps the energy and funds of faith communities, ethnic groups, families and other community associations. However, there is a three-way partnership among sponsoring groups, the government and the refugees themselves. Private sponsors help to sponsored refugees to create diverse and strong social

networks. They also help in bringing refugees into mainstream public spaces such as community forum and workplaces. This kind of community engagement support enables refugees to become more familiar with daily routines and cultural values in their new welcoming community that makes refugees more capable to get into Canadian labour market (Lamba & Krahn, 2003). This shows that, PSRs are integrating faster than GARs in Canadian labour market because of the nature of their social support form sponsors.

In terms of having their immediate needs met, there are no remarkable differences in the success of government assisted and privately sponsored refugees. There are also no sizeable differences in incidences of employment earnings over time (CIC, 2007). The Immigration Data Base (IMDB) however shows that earnings for GARs and PSRs were similar; PSRs reached this earning level considerably faster than GARs. Thus at one year post landing, 76 percent of PSRs declared employment earnings as compared to only 45 percent of GARs. While GAR incomes and the proportion of GARs who had employment earnings rose faster than that of PSRs, after 5 years in Canada, the proportion of GARs who reported employment earnings was still 8 percentage points below that of PSRs (CIC, 2011). One of the reasons is PSRs being pushed into the labour force more as quickly as possible when they arrived to Canada so a higher percentage of PSRs had employment earnings during the first three years after landing in Canada (Handman, 2011).

This demonstrates that sponsors are valuable sources of social networks for sponsored refugees, offering not only a means to escape from their home country, but essential services and support in the early stages of resettlement in Canada. GARs do not have the social and community supports that individuals already residing in Canada will have acquired (Handman, 2011). In addition, the educational levels between these two categories of refugees differ, adult

GARs more often have less education at landing (18% vs. 9%) and while 20 percent of adult

GARs arrive in Canada with post-secondary education; almost 80 percent have either no

education or secondary school or less (CIC, 2011). This is another important factor in

determining labour market integration and economic outcomes of government assisted refugees.

5.3. Strategies for Obtaining Employment

The above discussions amply demonstrate that researchers have documented the importance of social networks for successful refugee integration in the labour market. Refugees' social capital can take precedent because their financial capital is frequently lost or left behind and human capital such as educational credentials, work experiences and other skills are often unrecognized or undervalued in the host country (Lamba & Kharn, 2003). Having social networks with high levels of multiplexity can provide a wider range of information and proper links to find employment (Aguilera, 2002). Therefore, developing strong social capital is one of the most essential strategies for entering the labour market (Tran et al., 2005; Xua, 2008). Unfortunately, research on GARs in Canada is scare, but the small numbers of studies have been conducted reveal that this group of immigrants faces considerable challenges while attempting to integrate into the Canadian society.

Although refugees successfully escape from war-torn regions, they have to face various struggles in the resettlement process in their host country (Codell et al., 2011). They have little knowledge about support services and have weak social networks. Supporting refugees in their social interaction with a community by ensuring participation in their new welcoming society can create vital social networks. Community engagement events organized from public institutions (schools, recreational centers and libraries), are able to help diminish the social distance between groups and open the door for sharing across cultural and ethnic boundaries (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). These initiatives also provide opportunities to bridge and link social capital channels, access language skills, cultural knowledge and resources and also reduce discrimination through increasing contact between dominant and minority groups (WGCS, 2011). As Hiebert and Sherrell (2009) provide an example, "A Story to Tell and a Place for the

Telling" is a dialogue series organized by the Red Cross of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver, featuring refugee stories and panel discussions on refugee issues. The objective of this program is to promote community understanding of the challenges faced by refugees.

Among the various job search strategies, internet searching is ranked the most popular, followed by looking through newspapers, seeking help from friends and family, and contacting employers directly (Statistics Canada, 2005; Xua, 2006). The result of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) shows the strategies in which immigrants searched for jobs varied by immigration category. For example, the majority (64%) of skilled workers reported searching the internet, followed by looking in newspapers (58%) while 48 percent of refugees asking friends and relatives about job prospects were the most common way they tried to find a job (Statistics Canada, 2005, p. 57).

Evidence from the study demonstrates that newcomers utilize a wide range of strategies to overcome the barriers they face in the labour market and to achieve employment. Social capital, often in the form of ethnic networks, contributes to providing help in the job search process, affecting selection of occupations, enhancing upward mobility on the job ladder and increasing earnings for immigrants (Bauder, 2005; Nanavati, 2009). Ethnic networks are defined as networks of kinship and friendship, help to connect in finding employment that provides an important avenue for integration. The network is beneficial because they can share their common values and cultural practices each other that ultimately reduce the social isolation (Tran et al., 2005). Therefore, South Asian immigrants developed ethnic networks to overcome labour market barriers, while immigrants from the former Yugoslavia were reluctant to use personal ties as a job search channel (Bauder, 2005).

Newcomers, including GARs have realized that they must enhance their knowledge of the Canadian labour market rules and regulations, hiring processes and other requirements. They find that the rules of the Canadian labour market differ from the rules they were familiar with back home. The mandatory certification process for practices in some occupations may appear strange to many immigrants (Bauder, 2005; Alboim & McIssac, 2007). Therefore, immigrants register with employment agencies and attend job search workshops, career fairs and recruitment events to update their knowledge of the rules of recruitment and the interview process. This strategy helps to upgrade their credentials and skills, move into other occupations different from their previous work, and develop networks with a diverse community.

In Canada, all provinces offer various types of pre-employment programs to ensure that appropriate skills are in place to sustain employment (Siggner, 2007). Newcomers, including GARs use traditional job search methods that include: updating resumes, internet searches, job posting boards, etc.; obtaining accreditation and equivalency for foreign credentials and experiences; approaching potential employers directly; volunteering; developing social network, attending job fairs; adapting to the Canadian labour market through temporary agencies (Access Alliance, 2011). In addition, strong references or validity of personal references is important in getting employment, so newcomers engage in volunteerism with community-based organizations. Having Canadian work or volunteer experience provides familiarity with workplace expectations and helps them integrate in the labour market of the host country (Codell et al., 2011). This shows that understanding and adapting labour market search strategies can provide GARs with opportunities to enter the labour market.

There is a debate on whether volunteerism is a good way to build social networks, include Canadian experiences on their resume, and get entry level employment, but this strategy did not

necessarily lead to long-term and stable employment because many employers will not consider volunteer positions as legitimate work experiences (Access Alliance, 2011). A study by Shields et al., (2006) also supports this argument by providing an example where volunteering as a strategy to secure employment is of quite limited utility.

People who seek employment should utilize both long-term and short-term strategies. The short-term strategies include visiting with employers (even outside their fields of training) and dropping off their resumes, and using such bodies as temporary employment agencies to find shorter term work. These approaches may lead to employment that can address immediate financial needs. However, the majority of temporary agency jobs result in low paying and insecure employment, not sustainable employment opportunities needed for the longer run. A study by Access Alliance (2011) found that temporary agencies reinforce precarious, exploitative and insecure employment conditions for racialized people including GARs. Also problematic is the growing tendency of many employers, including large companies like reputable banks and businesses, to hire through temporary agencies to (re)produce a surplus of disposable low-cost temporary workers that can be readily hired and fired to maximize profits. These kinds of practices result in precarious employment and low level of earnings, Government can be of some assistance in developing and enforcing employment standards aimed at preventing the more extreme forms of exploitation that may results from this kind of employment.

The long-term strategies involve investing in education and training. This includes developing workplace related communication and language skills, pursuing Canadian diplomas or degrees and becoming part of bridging and internship programs. However, these kinds of programs and services are often not readily accessible to newcomers due to higher investment in resources, costs and time requirement, and the restrictive inclusion criteria that in often required

43

for access (Access Alliance, 2011). Many newcomers including GARs become trapped into survival jobs as a consequence. Finally, if we think inter-generationally providing support for newcomers children's education is critical to the labour market success of the second generation while not ideal success in the Canadian job market if often effectively limited to the children of immigrants (Shields et al., 2006).

As the literature review suggests, GARs face problems in receiving coherent settlement services due to fragmentation of services, lack of knowledge and access issues. In recognition of the challenges faced by refugees in Canada, the 2011 evaluation of GAR and RAP program identifies that refugees develop close links with service providers. Key informants felt that it would be important, where feasible, to establish a 'one stop shopping' for GARs whereby they could access a broad range of health, social and housing related services in one location. More specifically, where possible it would be useful to establish service hubs by various service providers from one location. Consistent with this message was the concept of providing dedicated case management services for GARs (CIC, 2011). This kind of coordination can ensure effective support services and reduce the duplication in programming that ultimately helps for better integration of GARs.

The stakeholder partnership is important in the designing and delivering career focus programming to GARs (WGCS, 2011). This could be a possible strategy to provide better integration services. This includes creating intergovernmental engagement initiatives that enable government staff from all levels of government to exchange ideas on welcoming communities (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). More specifically, a necessary stakeholder includes post-secondary educational institutions that provide skills assessment, language training or bridging programs. Similarly, credential assessment services that recognize qualifications obtained from outside

Canada and the occupational regulatory bodies which provide licensing for some professions. Stakeholders also include community-based organizations, whom deliver government programs and services to the newcomers (Alboim & McIssac, 2007).

6. Conclusions

This study has offered a discussion of the labour market experiences of GARs in Canada. The GAR program is found to be a relevant tool that Canada uses to meet international commitments with respect to refugees. It has demonstrated the role of government and analyzed the complexities of a program that is an important part of Canada's humanitarian commitment. Given the multidimensional nature of the issues faced by GARs, there are several factors to consider regarding better support for economic integration. It is challenging to develop effective and efficient regional immigration policies at the national level that allow refugees to receive the social and economic benefits of immigration.

The importance of social capital in the job search has been widely recognized in the literature, but little attention has been given to develop GAR's social networks. A network of services and assistance that is collaborative and innovative is an approach that helps to ensure a coordinated, holistic mechanism that provides a continuum of social support. It is necessary to organize community engagement meetings on a regular basis among ethno-cultural and culturally diverse people to develop refugees' networks - linking social capital. This initiative helps to develop both the bonding and bridging the social capital that ultimately enhances social networking and which improves labour market integration.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that support provided by the government is helpful for the integration of GARs but these services as they currently stated not necessarily resulting in full long-term economic integration of GARs. The career focused programs such as internships, bridging programs; mentorships and Canadian post-secondary education are considered to be effective in building long-term employment security. Therefore, it

is necessary to retain collaborations among government, non-for-profit service providers, private business and employers leading to practical, on the job training, paid internships and apprenticeships programming that tend to lead to long-term decent work in one's area of expertise. Government should also encourage the private sector to provide their own programs of internships and professional mentorships to skilled newcomers, including GARs.

The study has identified that the lack of information of existing program and support services, and how to utilize them, negatively affects the ability of GARs to achieve employment. For the most part existing programs and services have been designed and implemented independently resulting in problems of coordination between service providers and duplication in programming. Each immigrant group has particular challenges and may require special interventions that address the barriers they face, so they need appropriate and individualized training and linkages to potential employers. Area specific needs assessments are helpful to identify gaps between existing services and actual requirements. The needs assessment prior to designing and implementing programs and services would be helpful to identify the priority areas among the various refugee groups.

Individuals with personal experiences in dealing with particular issues (e.g. receiving social assistance) should be hired by the government to help people who are in need. Refugees related policy should work in partnership among all three levels of government, services providers and employers that need to come together to deal with the foreign credentials recognition problem. They could be given some role in the credential equivalency process or in assessment of certificate. Assessment fees act as barrier for already marginalized individuals so they should be eliminated wherever possible. In addition, the employers should be more receptive recognizing the value of understanding regarding Canadian work experiences

recognizing previous work experience and education credentials obtained elsewhere are valuable and are need of recognition.

This study further identifies that many newcomers face language barriers even while they may have the right skills for the job. Employment supports need to adequately address the issue of language barriers. This includes the issue of business language skills. Similarly, the problem of racism and discrimination remain as a major issue and reality for many minority groups, including GARs. They face discrimination and racial exclusion in many forms such as lack of knowledge of cultural differences and systemic barriers that negatively affect their experiences within the Canadian labour market.

Additionally, information (rules, criteria, eligibility, etc.) should be made to be available in different languages. More resources should also be allocated towards acquiring professional interpreters for meetings and other communication sessions with GARs.

GARs are experiencing the negative consequences of their lack of Canadian experiences and devaluation of foreign credentials. These are critical factors in obtaining employment. In order to address the gap there needs to be more work placements in skilled jobs. This used to help with the acculturation and the skills adaptation process. While people are on internship, they should continue to receive adequate public benefits. GARs need to connect with good employers who are able to offer meaningful employment opportunities and link people to the right jobs. As this study notes, while volunteering is one of the strategies to build social capital and links to the Canadian labour market, it does not result in job success and is not a replacement for other programming such as internship and mentorship programs.

Privately sponsored refugees tend to find jobs faster, have more networking opportunities, more follow-up form the sponsors, and more emotional and community support. Given the age

48

of many GAR's, they could potentially be better integrated into the labour market. To do so, the

employment training component of the resettlement program needs to better reflect current

labour market analysis to retrain refugees in areas of needs for the Canadian economy.

7. Future Research

Some areas of further research have been highlighted throughout this work. The role of social capital in labour market integration among refugee categories is a relatively unexplored issue and requires more attention. The study has identified the lack of awareness of existing programs and support services and how to utilize them. Therefore, it is suggested that, more research is required to better understand accessibility and quality of services, how refugees decide on which strategies and service to use for employment and the benefits of informal networks.

Refugees have limited information sources and access on the available social networks in their neighbourhoods because of cultural and religious practices, gender and language levels. Further research could be directed toward how to enhance diverse social networks with culturally varied communities. Social networks can provide opportunity to interact socially with Canadian residents and other newcomers (beyond one's ethno-cultural group), and provide emotional and social support networks for GARs. The connection with family and friends is not enough to help fully GARs integrate into the Canadian labour market because bonding social capital can lead to low-paying jobs in comparison to bridging social capital, which provides a much wider scope in the job search and increased opportunities.

In addition, this study has focused on the positive impact of social capital for labour market integration; future research (both qualitative and quantitative) should also examine the potentially negative effects for refugees of their being embedded in extensive familial and ethnic-community networks. Each strategy has both positive and negative sides. Therefore, exploring the negative aspect of social capital can reinforce and add perspective to the positive aspects of economic outcome of GARs.

I have discussed the importance of both formal and informal support services throughout this paper and found both are important for labour marker integration. It is necessary to study and identify the positive and negative impacts of both strategies in relation to securing livelihoods in Canada for GARs.

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