

# **RESEARCH SUMMARY ON RESETTLED REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN CANADA**

**JENNIFER HYNDMAN PHD  
CENTRE FOR REFUGEE STUDIES  
YORK UNIVERSITY  
TORONTO, CANADA  
JHYNDMAN@YORKU.CA**

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## **Executive Summary**

This paper represents an overview and meta-analysis of existing research on refugee integration in Canada. The terms of reference for the work include three main components: 1) a summary of key research findings in sectors indicative of integration in Canada, such as labour force participation and income, housing careers, official language ability, and social links and practices; 2) the identification of research gaps related to refugee integration, especially as they pertain to age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM); and 3) proposed areas of potential inquiry for UNHCR in future studies based on the findings.

The salient findings pertinent to these terms of reference are listed below.

- According to CIC's (2010b) most recent analysis of government-assisted refugees (GARs), post-IRPA GARs are younger, on average, than GARs from the 1990s, with about 60% (compared to 50%) under the age of 24.
- Likewise, GARs arriving today have less education than those who arrived in the 1990s.
- CIC (2010b) observes no major shifts in the economic outcomes for pre- versus post-IRPA refugees. However, a decline in earnings does correspond to declines in educational attainment and lower ages at time of landing.
  - African GARs from Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and Congo achieve above average economic performance in the 2000s compared to below average outcomes in the 1990s.

- CIC (2007) reports that “[t]he key difference between PSRs and GARs is that PSRs become self-supporting far more quickly than GARs: a higher percentage of PSRs had employment earnings during the first three years after arrival, than was the case for GARs....” However, median incomes for PSRs as reported in the same study are substantially lower than they are for GARs. In-kind economic supports are not counted in the study, but the disparities are notable, given that GAR income support rates already fall below Canada’s low-income cut-off.

PSRs may become self-supporting more quickly than GARs, but this may be due to PSRs being pushed into the labour force more quickly, out of necessity. PSRs are reporting incomes that are between 29% and 45% of Canada’s low income cut off for a family of four (Statistics Canada, 2007).

- Government data show that GARs have the highest overall uptake of settlement services (87% in 2008) of all refugee groups, followed by PSRs (69%), and refugees landed in Canada (LCRs) and their dependants (37.5%) (iCAMS data, n.d.). Separate research shows that LCRs are more likely than GARs and PSRs to access social assistance, although this varies by province. This raises the question of whether the uptake of settlement services is inversely correlated with rates of social assistance utilization.

- In Vancouver, Hiebert (2009a) finds that refugees fare better, on average, than business class principal applicants in income earnings overall. This does not mean that refugees are necessarily doing well economically, but that they are not the lowest income earners. Analysis of other major Canadian cities is in progress, and these results will be interesting to read, given that Vancouver has the lowest proportion and number of refugees as a subgroup of immigrants across the Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver axis.

- The vast majority of refugees stay in the province to which they were originally ‘destined’. In the 2006 tax year, refugees who settled in Ontario and Alberta between 2000 and 2006 were most likely to remain there (more than 90%). BC and Quebec also retained 80% or more of refugees resettled there (Okkony-Myers, 2010).

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## **GLOSSARY OF CANADIAN TERMS**

<b>CIC</b>	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
<b>ELSA</b>	English Language Service for Adults
<b>IRB</b>	Immigration and Refugee Board
<b>IRPA</b>	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
<b>GAR</b>	Government-Assisted Refugee
<b>LCR</b>	Landed in Canada Refugee
<b>LSIC</b>	Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada
<b>PSR</b>	Privately-Sponsored Refugee
<b>RAP</b>	Resettlement Assistance Program

# INTRODUCTION

If refugee “resettlement is protection plus” (UNHCR, 2009), then integration is settlement plus. Refugees who are resettled in safe third countries like Canada are provided with a ‘durable solution’ to their protection needs, including legal status in their new host country. Feeling at ‘home’ in these places of settlement and becoming full-fledged participants in economic, social, and political activities are quite another matter. Where they occur, such relations of interaction and connectivity in a new country point to ‘integration’ and a path to full citizenship, one aim of refugee resettlement.

This paper represents an overview and meta-analysis of existing research on refugee integration in Canada. The terms of reference for the work acknowledge the interest of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in learning more about *how* refugees are integrating and the benchmarks used to measure integration (see also Appendix A). The terms also include three main components: 1) a summary of key research findings in sectors indicative of integration in Canada, such as labour force participation and income, housing careers, official language ability, etc.; 2) the identification of research gaps related to refugee integration, especially as they pertain to age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM); and 3) proposed areas of potential inquiry for UNHCR in future studies based on the findings in 1 and 2. This paper also attempts to analyze existing studies in original ways, comparing, where possible, the outcomes for government assisted refugees (GARs), privately sponsored refugees (PSRs), landed in Canada refugees (LCRs) who make successful claims at a Canadian port of entry, and other immigrant classes.

I begin by contextualizing refugee resettlement to Canada, especially since the passage of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2001. In this first section, definitions and debates around ‘integration’ are also included, from UNHCR, government, and academic perspectives. Second, the substantive summaries related to refugee integration in Canada are presented and analyzed, noting the gaps in current research and underscoring insights revealed by juxtaposing existing studies. Finally, future areas for research and rationale for these are provided, along with an extended bibliography of some existing resources.

Obviously, a single analysis of ‘what we know about refugee integration in Canada’ cannot adequately capture the entire range of published research, but it does represent a preliminary step toward identifying gaps and prioritizing particular questions for research on refugee integration in Canada. Entire research careers are devoted to refugee housing strategies and outcomes in a particular place, for example, so representing fully such careful work in a meta-analysis such as this is simply not possible. Identifying the knowledge at hand, and the questions it raises in theory, policy, and practice, however, can strengthen these projects in the future in Canada and other geographical contexts.

# 1: REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN CANADA AFTER IRPA: CONTEXT

Refugees make up roughly 10% of immigrants to Canada in any given year, if one combines all refugee categories: government-assisted refugees (GARs), privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs), and landed in Canada refugees (LCRs). In 2009, 22,846 refugees immigrated to Canada, compared with 24,397 in 1999 and 36,854 in 1989 (CIC, 2010a). At first glance, this suggests a downward trend in refugee settlement overall, but masks the backlog of inland refugee claims and large volumes of applications processed *in Canada* through the newly formed Immigration and Refugee Board in the late 1980s. The catch-all category 'refugee' represents one 'immigrant class', the others being economic and family class immigrants, but also aggregates the three aforementioned groups of refugees into one: government-assisted refugees (GARs), privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs), and landed in Canada refugees (LCRs).<sup>1</sup> The first two groups together make up 'resettled refugees', those chosen from abroad to come to Canada permanently.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, a good deal of the national data available on refugees is not broken down by group, creating analytical blinders to differences among groups. The integration of *resettled* refugees constitutes the focus of this paper.

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<sup>1</sup> The Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program provides protection for refugees based outside of Canada who are deemed in need of protection. These resettled refugees are divided into two main categories, as noted above: a) government-assisted refugees (GARs); and b) privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs). GARs receive income assistance provided by the federal state for one year (unless a federal-provincial supercedes this arrangement), after which they are eligible for social assistance should they not be able to find employment. PSRs, on the other hand, are either wholly supported by citizen groups, churches, mosques or other organizations, or jointly sponsored in concert with government where responsibilities are shared. Under Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS), government-funded support can extend for 24 months while private sponsors provide emotional and social support for up to 36 months (Orr, 2004). Private sponsorship started in 1978-79 when assistance was extended to Indochinese refugees. Sponsors must submit an application and plan to government in order to bring a refugee to Canada, and the refugee applicant must meet Canadian eligibility criteria. Several dozen organizations across the country hold 'sponsorship agreements' that make private sponsorship possible. For example, the United Church of Canada holds one such agreement but any subsidiary church may submit an application through this agreement. In 2007-08, some 3,300 PSRs came to Canada. GARs receive federal support from the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), delivered by 23 designated centres across Canada (excluding Quebec, which has its own settlement programs). Funding for RAP has remained unchanged since 1998, though increases were announced as part of the refugee reform package in 2010 as well as major changes in resettlement selection criteria and refugee protection legislation, a point that I return to below. GARs and PSRs are less likely to speak one of Canada's official languages, English and French, but all allophone immigrants are eligible for official language training upon arrival in Canada.

<sup>2</sup> More information on Canada's immigration policy and the three main categories that define eligibility are addressed later in the paper.



While old news, the number of resettled refugees in both the US and Canada fell dramatically at the end of the Cold War, at least in terms of government-assisted refugees (see Table 1<sup>3</sup>).

**Table 1: Annual Resettlement Ceilings for Government-Sponsored Refugees**

	<u>1992/93</u>	<u>1993/94</u>	<u>1994/95</u>	<u>1995/96</u>
• Canada	13,000	11,000	7,300	7,300 <sup>4</sup>
• USA	142,000	121,000	110,000	90,000

While Canadian numbers of GARs have remained relatively constant since this time (7,300-7,500 per year), an increase in resettled refugees overall was announced recently. In 2010, Canadian Parliament passed new immigration legislation that increased the number of GARs to Canada to 8,000 (from 7,500) and the number of PSRs by 2,000. Nonetheless, these levels remain significantly lower than they were in the early 1990s.

The source countries of refugees resettled in Canada have changed since IRPA's implementation in 2002. CIC (2010b) reports that close to 50% of refugees who came to Canada between 1993 and 2001 were from the post-Yugoslav states. Since IRPA's implementation, more refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, Somali and Congo have made up a larger proportion of the total (approximately 25%), with another 15% coming from Colombia. Throughout the period 1993-2006, a regular flow of about 30% of refugees have come from West and Central Asia (Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan).<sup>5</sup>

### **1.1 IRPA and the Paucity of Post-IRPA Refugee Data**

At the end of 2010, not enough is known about the re/settlement outcomes of government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees selected to come to Canada post-IRPA. The new legislation decreased the emphasis for refugee selection on an 'ability to establish' and weighed more heavily protection-related concerns (Hiebert and Sherrell, 2009). In so doing, Canada *expanded its* humanitarian commitment to assisting refugees who need protection most at a

<sup>3</sup> Sources: U.S. Department of State, Department of Justice, & Department of Health & Human Services. "Report to the Congress on Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 1996", July 1995. Pre-publication copy; "Report to the Congress on Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 1995", September 1994. Canadian totals are announced every November 1st; they come from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and were confirmed for the purpose of this table by the Immigrant Services Society of B.C.

<sup>4</sup> Canada's refugee numbers have actually fallen in comparison to 1994/95 targets. In 1994/95, special programs for a category of '3-9' refugees from the Former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan were counted separately from the CR-1 (government-sponsored) refugees listed above. For the year 1995/96, these 3-9 refugees have been reclassified as CR-1 refugees and included in the 7,300 total. While this decrease is invisible in official statistics, the total number of refugees *other than* members of these particular groups has dropped.

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Debra Pressé at CIC for sharing this document before its formal publication.

time when terms like 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' could not be less popular. Bill C-11, the precursor to IRPA, had its third reading in the House of Commons on June 13, 2001, well before the politically charged events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent 'war on terror' was launched. It was not given its last reading in the Senate, however, until October 31, 2001.<sup>6</sup>

In the wake of IRPA, refugees from protracted situations – such as the Karen from Myanmar in Thailand and Bhutanese refugees (the Lhotshampas) in Nepal – were then identified as in need of protection and designated as priority cases for resettlement to Canada for group processing.

Beginning in 2003, when the first post-IRPA GARs landed in Canada, the profile of GARs has included more multi-barriered individuals, including those with 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 exposure to formal education (Hiebert and Sherrell, 2009: 35).

As noted, the Government of Canada in 2010 decided to increase the *size* of its resettlement program significantly, by 2,500 spaces in both the government-assisted and privately-sponsored categories.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Parliament of Canada (2002) Legislative History of Bill C-11 (the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act); accessed December 19, 2010 at [www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/LegislativeSummaries/Bills\\_Is.asp?lang=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&ls=C11&source=Bills\\_House\\_Government](http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Sites/LOP/LegislativeSummaries/Bills_Is.asp?lang=E&Parl=37&Ses=1&ls=C11&source=Bills_House_Government)

<sup>7</sup> Resettled refugees comprise two groups: Convention refugees abroad and humanitarian-protected persons abroad (CIC, 2011). A **Convention Refugee Abroad** is any person who:

- is a Convention refugee;
- is outside Canada;
- is seeking resettlement in Canada;
- does not have a prospect of another durable solution, within a reasonable period of time, that is:
  - cannot return to his or her country of nationality or habitual residence;
  - cannot integrate in the country of refuge or the country of first asylum; and
  - does not have another offer of resettlement from a country other than Canada;
- will be privately sponsored or assisted by the government or has adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

A member of the **Country of Asylum Class** is a person:

- who is outside his or her country of citizenship or habitual residence;
- who has been, and continues to be, seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict or who has suffered massive violations of human rights;
- for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his or her situation within a reasonable period of time; and
- who will be privately sponsored or who has adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

A member of the **Source Country Class** is a person:

- who resides in his or her country of citizenship or habitual residence;

How and why did Canada agree to *increase* protection for refugees through resettlement during the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 when many governments in the global North introduced stricter controls on migration and especially in relation to asylum seekers? In 2000, UNHCR launched its Global Consultations on International Protection to revitalize the international refugee regime. Throughout the 1990s, resettlement had fallen to the bottom of the preferred list of UNHCR's durable solutions (the other being voluntary repatriation and local integration). These consultations led to the publication of the *Agenda for Protection*, which listed resettlement as an important solution and called on states to 1) increase their settlement numbers; 2) diversify the kinds of refugee groups accepted for resettlement; and 3) introduce more flexible criteria in order to secure more options for durable solutions, especially for refugees from protracted situations (Pressé and Thomson 2007).

In 2009, UNHCR referred more than 128,500 refugees for consideration by resettlement countries - the highest number in 16 years and 6 percent above the 2008 level. The main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programs were refugees from Iraq (36,067), Myanmar (30,542), and Bhutan (22,114) (UNHCR, 2010b).

The idea of 'strategic resettlement,' whereby resettlement can be used to leverage other forms of protection or solutions among states, was also raised during this period (Van Selm, 2004). Unlike other forms of immigration, Canada's refugee resettlement program is explicitly a *humanitarian* rather than *economic* endeavour. While Canada selects most immigrants based on their 'ability to establish', refugees after the passage of IRPA are now selected mostly on their need for protection (Yu et al., 2007). As such, the language literacy of refugees shows that they have the lowest Canadian Language Benchmark Achievement (CLBA) scores overall, but this is to be expected since refugees are not selected on the basis of prior language knowledge and formal education.<sup>8</sup>

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- who has been and continues to be seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict;
  - who has suffered serious deprivation of his or her right of freedom of expression, right of dissent or right to engage in trade union activity and who has been detained or imprisoned as a consequence;
  - who fears persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion;
  - for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his or her situation within a reasonable period of time;
  - who resides in a country that has been designated as a source country (refer to Schedule 2 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations); and
  - who will be privately sponsored or assisted by the government or who has adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Vesna Radulovic at CIC for providing this document and analysis. The reference document for CLBA scores is available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/research/language-benchmark/index.asp>.

The most recent Canadian census data are from 2005 and capture a few, but not many, of the post-IRPA refugees resettled after 2002. The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) began collecting data from new immigrants for its first wave in April 2001, thus precluding post-IRPA refugees; LSIC also undercounts refugees in its sample and lumps those who have successful claims in Canada with those who are resettled refugees. Therefore, the best dataset relating to refugees, despite some problems of undesirable aggregation among GARs, PSRs, and LCRs, is the Longitudinal Immigration Database that combines LIDS data (landed immigrant data system) with tax returns that report income but not assets.

## **1.2 Defining Integration**

Integration is a fraught concept in relation to refugee status and settlement in Canada and elsewhere. On the one hand, in global terms it may refer to two of the three durable solutions advocated by UNHCR: permanent settlement in a first safe country known as ‘local integration,’ or ‘overseas resettlement’, in which integration is one of the downstream objectives that imputes belonging and participation in a safe third country of residence, such as Canada.

Furthermore, it is defined differently by different actors in the resettlement process, such as UNHCR, CIC, and the academic research community. Most current variations suggest that ‘integration’ is a mutual process between new home society and newcomers, though some models do assume a more assimilationist process of adaptation on the part of refugees. A very brief definition of terms and existing understandings of ‘integration’ is in order.

### ***UNHCR***

In *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*, the UNHCR defines ‘integration’ as,

a mutual, dynamic, multifaceted and on-going process. From a refugee perspective, integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one’s own cultural identity. From the point of view of the host society, it requires a willingness for communities to be welcoming and responsive to refugees and for public institutions to meet the needs of a diverse population (2002, p. 12).

### ***UNRISD***

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), meanwhile, comments on the enigmatic character of ‘social integration’:

Social integration is a complex idea, which means different things to different people. To some, it is a positive goal, implying equal

opportunities and rights for all human beings. In this case, becoming more integrated implies improving life chances. To others, however, increasing integration may conjure up the image of an unwanted imposition of conformity. And, to still others, the term in itself does not necessarily imply a desirable or undesirable state at all. It is simply a way of describing the established patterns of human relations in any given society (UNRISD 1994, p. 4).

While 'social integration' here implies "equal opportunities and rights for all human beings" in general and not necessarily in the context of refugee migration, it reflects the way 'integration' is used when discussing refugee and immigrants' relation to receiving societies (UNRISD, 1994, p. 3).

Canada has agreed, at least implicitly, to provide "the appropriate reception and integration of resettled refugees" under the UNHCR's Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement (Pressé & Thomson, 2007, p. 96). What 'appropriate' is exactly remains an open question.

## **CIC**

The federal department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) takes integration seriously as a policy goal. In its *2010–2011 Report on Plans and Priorities for Citizenship and Immigration Canada*, CIC lists its 'Integration Program' as one of seven program activities with the stated outcome that "newcomers contribute to the economic, social and cultural development needs of Canada" (CIC, 2010c). Spending for the program in 2010-2011 exceeds \$1 billion – almost twice the amount of the other six departmental programs combined (Brunner, 2010). The report contains the following description:

Canada's approach to integration is one that encourages a process of mutual accommodation and adjustment by both newcomers and the larger society. Newcomers' understanding of and respect for basic Canadian values, coupled with Canadians' understanding of and respect for the cultural diversity that newcomers bring to Canada, is fundamental to this approach. As well, the cooperation of governments, stakeholders and other players, such as employers and volunteers, in providing newcomers with the support they need for successful economic and social integration helps Canada realize the full benefits of immigration (CIC, 2010c: 29).

Canada recognizes the "mutual accommodation and adjustment by both newcomers and the larger society," setting it apart from 'assimilation' and 'incorporation.' Yet it also expects newcomers to respect "basic Canadian values" without stating explicitly what those values are (Brunner, 2010).

Successful refugee 'integration' could be more explicitly defined in Canadian legislation and policy (Pressé & Thomson, 2007). Yu et al. (2007: 17) contend that "most scholars and policy makers in Canada and elsewhere agree" with the UK Home Office's 2003 description of refugee 'integration' as a "dynamic, multi-faceted two-way process which requires adaptation on the part of the newcomers, but also the society of destination."

The barriers post-IRPA refugees face in securing and maintaining adequate employment, housing, education, and language are well-documented (for example, see Yu et al., 2007; Sherrell & ISSofBC, 2009; Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). The economic measures of refugee 'integration' show lower incomes than the Canadian average (Hiebert, 2009), poorer housing conditions (Sherrell & ISSofBC, 2009), and less competence in English or French.

And yet CIC (2010b) reports that in terms of economic performance, no major shifts were identified between pre-IRPA government-assisted refugee arrivals and those who came from 2003 to 2006. Employment earnings for this group increase considerably over time, and decreases in earnings are correlated with declining educational attainment and lower average age at time of landing. As discussed later, the news that African GARs arriving in the 2000s are faring better than average in terms of economic outcomes, is an improvement from the 1990s when refugees from this continent earned below average incomes.

### ***Academic literature***

Despite its frequent usage, there is "no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration" (Castles, Korac, Vasta, & Vertovec, 2002, p.114; van Tubergen, 2006). This contributes to the "great deal of disagreement about what constitutes integration, how one determines whether strategies for promoting integration are successful, or what the features of an integrated society are" (Atfield, Brahmhatt, & O'Toole, 2007, p. 12).

In part, this conundrum exists because measurement of 'integration' is difficult: does one measure the impact of settlement services on refugees? And how so without a 'control group' that does not receive settlement services? Does one compare the settlement outcomes among refugee groups who received the same services and try to ascribe outcomes to factors in countries of origin or first asylum? In academic circles, the *de facto* indicators of integration include employment status and earnings, official language abilities and educational attainment, legal or health status, and housing careers.

The term 'integration' attempts to signify a break with assimilation, particularly in a Canadian context where the Multicultural Act and the federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms "institutionalize not only respect for difference but also the rights of being different" (Ley, 2005, p. 7). To Kivisto and Faist, multiculturalism is in itself "a mode of incorporation" and thus "an approach to inclusion that either constitutes an alternative to assimilation, a complement to it, or a new version of

assimilation” (2010, p. 163). According to Yu, Ouellet, and Warmington (2007, p. 17), “most [Canadian academics and policy makers] generally accept that ‘integration,’ as opposed to one-way assimilation, outright marginalization, or segregation, is desired.” In the Canadian context, geographer David Ley (2005, p. 7) notes that multiculturalism has been eroded:

The federal and provincial governments have downsized, and in some cases closed multicultural offices, settlement benefits for immigrants have been cut back, and government rhetoric has moved from multiculturalism towards a normative language of social cohesion and integration, positions that could easily blend into a disguised assimilationism....Even in the nation where [multiculturalism] was first enunciated and most fully institutionalized, multicultural policy is on the defensive (2005, p. 7-8).

While new funds for programming have since emerged for settlement, Ley makes a subtle critique of ‘social cohesion’ and ‘integration’ as tools of a state agenda of assimilation.

A useful conceptual distinction that describes integration in contrast to ‘in-group’ behaviour is Ager and Strang’s (2008) foil between social *bonds* (connections linking members of a group) and social *bridges* (connections between groups) when measuring ‘integration.’ Their research shows the maintenance of ethnic identity through connections with ‘like-ethnic groups’ (social bonds) “in no way logically limit[s] wider integration into society” (p. 186) and is instead associated with “various benefits contributing towards effective integration” (p. 178). Although social bridges are also usually positive, in Ager and Strang’s words, “involvement with one’s own ethnic group (bonding capital) influence[s] ‘quality of life’ independently of involvement with the local community (bridging capital)” (p. 178).<sup>9</sup>

In a slight variation on this theme, Sherrell et al. (2004) attempt to discern whether transnational connections among socially bonded Kosovars in Canada and Kosovo/a contributed to or detracted from social bridges, or social cohesion, within the context of Canadian society. While they acknowledge the methodological difficulties of ascribing causality, they did ascertain that unstable political conditions in the country of origin contributed to clarity on many Kosovars desire to stay in Canada and obtain citizenship.

In the British context, “popular attitudes and policies often seem to be based on the assumption that integration *is a one-way process*” in which “migrants are expected to integrate into the existing culture or society without any reciprocal accommodation” with the “connotation of assimilation in which immigrants are expected to discard their culture, traditions and language” (Castles et al., 2002,

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<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to Lisa Brunner for this insight; see Brunner 2010 for further discussion.

p. 113, emphasis in original). These authors suggest that integration is more “top-down” and problematic (p. 114).

Castles et al. (2002: 114) note that there is little discussion and virtually no research on how and how well different communities adapt and reach out to integration newcomers. Writing in the British context, they identify their key question as “‘integration into what?’ Are we referring to integration into an existing ethnic minority, a local community, a social group, or British society?” Appendix B outlines a glossary of terms associated with integration, adapted from Castles et al. (2002), a report commissioned for the British Home Office, entitled “Integration: Mapping the Field.”

### **1.3 Identifying Acts of Integration: A Note on Policy Irrelevant Research**

Before embarking on an overview of ‘what is known about refugee integration in Canada’, I want to underscore the case for ‘policy irrelevant’ research made by Oliver Bakewell, a researcher concerned with refugee issues and protection largely in Africa and in contexts of first safe countries of asylum adjacent to refugees’ countries of origin. Bakewell (2008) contends that researchers tend to study aspects of human migration that are measurable, accessible, and available. In the case of ‘self-settled’ refugees in urban areas of Southern Africa, he observes, there is a paucity of research despite estimates that upwards of 50% of the worlds refugees live in urban areas (UNHCR, 2011). Refugees in camps are easier to study, count, and access, creating a bias in the extant body of refugee research.

He notes that policy-based research does not always ‘see’ what may be important, but only what is captured by the dominant categories of data collection. So, problems affecting refugee youth, for example, may be overlooked if they are not integrated into all data collection practices and policy agendas. This is one reason that age, gender, diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) is important, but not simply as a stand-alone project. Each of these sets of social relations is part and parcel of all the indicators analyzed below.

Gender and diversity are normally not ‘things’ to be measured or observed directly, but point to relationships between or among different groups of people, differentially positioned. The different sections below refer to studies that are indicators of integration, yet they are somewhat artificially separated from one another merely for the sake of organization and clarity. Furthermore, there is a “danger of falling into the trap of assuming that a certain set of problems or experiences are the exclusive domain of refugees” (Bakewell, 2008: 445). Brunner et al. (2010) call this ‘refugee-centrism’, a bias that this paper attempts to avoid.



Likewise, one cannot assume that governments will always fund and take charge of integration as part of a nation-building project. As Hiebert and Sherrell (2009) note, Canada's settlement policy for immigrants, including refugees, and that of the provinces could be configured in a number of ways that include but are not limited to state-funded services. They outline four scenarios: first, "[n]ewcomers could be entirely responsible for their own settlement and integration.... There could be no government involvement on this issue" (5). Second, a single branch of government might also be tasked with provided settlement and integration services; these services could be delivered directly by government or by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Third, the aim of integration could be so vital that it is adopted throughout government, often called a 'whole of government' approach, whereby services are coordinated across departments and jurisdictions. A final scenario might involve cultivating and reproducing societal expectation that encourages integration more fully as a two-way process so that civil society (neighbourhoods, communities, voluntary agencies, parent groups, sports organizations, etc.) adjusts itself to accommodate newcomers.

Evidence that civil society actors in Canada are themselves changing to include newcomers may well be an indicator of integration not yet documented in the research literature.

## **2: INDICATORS OF REFUGEE INTEGRATION (BY SECTOR)**

UNHCR (2009) identifies six thematic indicators of integration: demographic characteristics of refugee groups; (official) language assistance and abilities; access to secure and affordable housing; employment and training; welcoming communities; and overall feelings of settlement. Canadian policymakers have identified a “gap in research exploring ‘social indicators’ of [government assisted refugee] success” and argued that “more empirical studies of the impacts of protracted refugee situations are needed to guide future engagement of Canada’s Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program” (Pressé and Thomson, 2007, p.52). In a post-IRPA context, the dynamics of group processing, the influence of long-term detention on refugees before resettlement, and the interplay of trauma and integration are all issues that remain relatively unexplored themes in refugee research. Having said that, I summarize below selected findings that explore refugee integration in Canada, according to generally accepted indicators across governmental and non-governmental sectors.

### **2.1 Economic Indicators**

The main message in this section is that there are no “definite shifts in pre- and post IRPA economic outcomes” and that employment earnings for government-assisted refugees increase considerably over time in Canada (CIC, 2010b: 2). CIC analyzed data on GARs who landed in Canada between 1993 and 2007 by country of birth and found that the economic outcomes of post-IRPA refugees are at the lower end of the scale, but that the most dramatic decline in outcomes for GARs occurred between 1991 and 2001, before IRPA was implemented.

In the early 2000s, economists began to trace the decline in immigrant earnings for recent newcomers to Canada and to question this trend. Green and Worswick (2002) note that one possible explanation for “poor immigrant performance in the 1990s” was that it was not unique to them. Native-born Canadians were experiencing a similar drop in earnings. The authors concluded that 40% of the decline could be accounted for by general declines among all new labour market entrants, with another 40% being attributed to a combination of shifting composition of source countries among immigrants (not specifically refugees) and declining returns on foreign experience. I rehearse these old observations because they were affirmed in the 2005 census data and serve to contextualize refugee earnings as reported more recently by Hiebert (2009a) and CIC (2010b).

Hiebert’s (2002, 2009b) analysis of IMDB data in British Columbia is instructive. Using tax return data linked to immigrant landing cards, Hiebert (2002) shows that pre-IRPA refugees fared better than might be expected. While economically marginalized in a general sense, refugees did better on some measures of

employment earnings than did family class immigrants, especially in the first nine years of settlement in Canada. Hiebert notes that earnings rise steeply for people who enter Canada with the ability to speak one of Canada's official languages, French or English. But, he attributes the economic achievement of refugees, in particular, to the enriched set of social services available to them – and not to other immigrants to the same extent - in the year after their arrival in Canada. Like Yu et al. (2007), he acknowledges the gap between the average earnings for all immigrants and those who came as refugees, but notes that it is smaller than might be expected given the widely held view that refugees are faring poorly in the labour market and drawing heavily on social assistance. More broadly, Hiebert points to the potential of the state in establishing the conditions for successful immigrant integration in Canada.

In his more recent study, Hiebert (2009b: 64) uses a special tabulation of 2005 data from the longitudinal immigration database linked to tax returns in the same year, and generates a surprising set of findings when he compares four categories of immigrants: refugees (all types), family class, skilled principal applicants, and business principal applicants (principal applicants are the family members assessed under the points system in Canada; their family members are included in the same category but not assessed by the points system). In Vancouver, he finds that *refugees* fare better, on average, than business class principal applicants in income earnings overall. Only one third of male business class immigrants reported any earnings income at all in 2005, a finding that begs the question of whether immigration policies targeted to recruit them are effective and whether underreporting of foreign income skews these statistics.

In comparing the employment earnings of men across the variables of immigration admission class, official language ability, and level of education in Metropolitan Vancouver in 2005, Hiebert finds that a skilled worker with no official language ability and less than high school education reports roughly equal income as a refugee with the same characteristics; in fact, a refugee in the same situation but *with* official language ability earns *more* than the skilled immigrant. In a similar vein, a refugee with or without English and a university degree reports significantly greater income than a business immigrant with the same profile. However, refugees, as a category, earn less across all variables. In short, refugees are not the immigrant class reporting the lowest earnings. While business immigrants may have invisible streams of income that are not reported, refugees earn more than some skilled workers.

The finding that official language ability dramatically shapes earnings for all four categories of immigrants *except* refugees (for whom the differences are minimal; see Hiebert, 2009b: 68) is interesting. The data suggest that people from the category 'refugees' exhibit resilience in the labour market. They do well, next to other immigrant class counterparts, even when they do not have English or French upon arrival. Access to official language learning classes in year one, which is also free to other allophone immigrants, may also shape refugee

incomes in subsequent years, building on Hiebert’s (2002) observation about the enriched set of settlement services for refugees as an advantage over other immigrants. This leads me back to the conundrum of whether resettled refugees are given enhanced protection (and services) upon arrival in Canada or admitted as second-class immigrants, without the skill sets, assets, or connections of other immigrant groups. Hiebert is currently preparing a more national portrait of these findings that will include Montreal and Toronto. Still, only a few post-IRPA refugees are captured in the 2005 data on which the study is based.

As Devoretz et al. (2004) do for earlier refugee arrivals, Hiebert (2009) also shows that skilled workers (3.8%) and business class immigrants (1.3%) are far less likely to access social assistance than the Canadian population (6.7%). Family class immigrants (7.9%) and refugees, both those resettled as GARs and PSRs, and those who are landed in Canada (LCR), exceed the Canadian average in their reliance on the welfare state (see table 2).

**Table 2: Social Assistance Utilization Among Immigrants Arriving 1989 – 2004 by Admission Class, Canada, 2005 (Percent)**

Immigrant Category	Canada
• total (Canadian) population	6.7%
• principal applicants	
- skilled worker	3.8
- business class	1.3
• spouses and dependants	
- skilled worker	2.1
- business class	1.0
• family class	7.9
• refugees	16.9
- refugee – GAR & PSR	14.9
- refugee - LCR	20.7

**Source: Hiebert, 2009b: 74, based on Statistics Canada Immigrant Database (IMDB)**

In relation to refugee integration in the Canadian context, the most pressing question that table 3 raises is, “what drives the higher utilization rates of social assistance by landed in Canada refugees, as compared with resettled refugees?” By disaggregating the national average, one observes that the disparity in rates is greatest in Montreal where rates for all refugees groups are above the national average. Given Quebec’s autonomy in developing and implementing refugee selection and settlement policy, these differences beg further study.

**Table 3: Social Assistance Utilization Among Refugees Arriving 1989-2004 (percent)**

Refugee group	Canada	Vancouver	Toronto	Montreal
GARs and PSRs	14.9	9.5	14.2	18.8
LCRs	20.7	8.3	18.5	27.2

Adapted from Hiebert (2009a: 31)

Linking immigrant class to social assistance utilization rates is one way to compare economic independence and, by proxy, integration. Another is to look at the relationship of settlement service uptake and these same rates.

### ***Comparing GARs and PSRs***

CIC (2007) compared the settlement success of privately sponsored refugees to that of government-assisted refugees. It observed “no noteworthy differences in the success of PSRs and GARs in terms of having needs met or sizeable differences in employment income after three years.” “The key difference between PSRs and GARs is that PSRs become self-supporting far more quickly than GARs: a higher percentage of PSRs had employment earnings during the first three years after arrival, than was the case for GARs....” The evaluation cites a 2004 RAP evaluation finding that “privately sponsored refugees tend to become more self-sufficient sooner and are less likely to go on to social assistance.”

At face value, this finding suggests accelerated integration among PSRs ahead of GARs. However, the evaluation also examined the level of financial support provided to PSRs compared to GARs over a 12-month period. The disparities between the two groups are dramatic. Table 4 is cut and pasted directly from the report posted on the CIC website and shows that GARS, who receive an income on par with provincial social assistance rates, report income almost twice what PSRs receive.

**Table 4: Income Support Provided to PSR and GAR Refugees**

Size of Family	PSR (median)	GAR
Family of 1	\$ 5,000	\$ 9,500
Family of 2	\$ 7,500	\$ 15,200
Family of 3	\$ 10,000	\$ 19,300
Family of 4	\$ 10,000	\$ 22,400

Source: CIC (2007) Available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/psrp/psrp-summary.asp#s4>

These findings show that private sponsors provide substantially less direct financial support to PSRs than the government provides to GARs.<sup>10</sup> What is not counted in these data are the in-kind contributions and unofficial cash transfers that may be made by sponsors of PSRs. Nonetheless, the levels of income support recorded raise concern for the author of this report. Further research in a post-IRPA context is needed.

So the finding that “PSRs become self-supporting more quickly than GARs (i.e., within 6 months upon arrival)” may remain true today, but this may be due to PSRs being pushed into the labour force more quickly, out of necessity. PSRs are reporting incomes that are between 29% and 45% of Canada’s low income cut off for a family of four (Statistics Canada, 2007).<sup>11</sup> PSRs may be more likely to work immediately upon arrival in Canada than to attend official language classes that improve their longer-term incomes and other indicators of integration. Such low incomes leave little if any choice.

Yu, Ouellet and Warmington (2007) find that refugees have lower economic outcomes than other categories of immigrants, though their performance is not that different from family class immigrants. The table above also shows that refugees also do not have comparable human capital to economic migrants, so the lower incomes of refugees are expected. A shortcoming of this analysis is that it contains few post-IRPA GARs and PSRs. A study comparing pre- and post-IRPA GARs and PSRs would sharpen existing profiles of refugees in Canada.

### ***For Further Research***

One more comparison among PSRs, GARs, and LCRs could be done to ascertain if there is a correlation between settlement service uptake and reliance on social assistance. Government data show that GARs have the highest overall uptake of settlement services (87% in 2008) of all refugee groups, followed by PSRs (69%), and refugees landed in Canada (and their dependants) (37.5%) (iCAMS data, n.d.). More specifically, GARs were most likely (49.6%) to access basic Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), followed by PSRs (42%) and LCRs (19.5%). Given the higher rates of social assistance access by LCRs, according to Hiebert’s data above, one explanation might be found in the levels of settlement service uptake, including official language instruction.

If one compares uptake rates for settlement services and compares them with social assistance utilization rates, there is an inverse correlation. That is, it

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<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Eden Thompson at CIC who shared the documents that assisted in forming this analysis.

<sup>11</sup> The median income for a single PSR is even lower, falling between 28 and 43% of LICO’s defined by Statistics Canada based on where people live (i.e. 28% represents income in a large city over 500,000 and 43% represents the low income cut off for a person living in a rural area).

appears that the more services refugees access, the less likely they are to use social assistance support. This is not, however, a strict comparison using a single data set, but points to an area where more research is needed to understand this relationship.

### ***A Note on Elderly Immigrants (Including Refugees) to Canada***

Using data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB) Dempsey (2005) investigates the demographic characteristics of elderly immigrants in an attempt to highlight differences that may affect income. She divides the elderly immigrant population into three groups: long-term elders who landed in Canada aged 40-49 years, short-term elders who landed aged 50-59 years, and immediate elders who landed aged 60 years or older. The analysis shows that immediate elders who are refugees and have landed in Canada within five years fare far worse than any other immigrant class. The average real annual income for elders in this group is roughly \$2000 per person annually. One might assume such elders are living in extended households, but clearly more research in a post-IRPA context is needed to ascertain how these refugee elders are faring in Canada.

### ***A Note on Lone Parent Refugee Families***

Among all immigrant classes, lone parents and unattached individuals have the “least favourable income situations” (Dempsey, 2006). For refugees, this hardship is exacerbated by two conditions: 1) the repayment of transportation loans is more onerous because there is only a single potential earner in the household; and 2) if there is a second parent elsewhere awaiting sponsorship, that person may also require support from his/her spouse, putting further strain on the income of the refugee household in Canada. Qualitative research to document the coping strategies of lone parent families would be valuable, given the quantitative data that point to their low economic status.

## **2.2 Official Languages**

CIC (2010b) reports that 80% of GARs arriving in Canada report only limited ability in English or French. One might expect refugees from Europe to be more conversant in one of Canada’s official languages than other source regions, but Devoretz et al. (2004) show the opposite: 25.5% of refugees from Europe who arrived between 1980 and 2001 spoke English or French whereas 43.1% of refugees from other regions spoke at least one official language. In the post-IRPA context, far fewer European refugees are resettled in Canada. But this does not necessarily mean that refugees will have higher levels of official language abilities, especially given the decreased emphasis on ‘ability to establish’ in IRPA in relation to refugee selection. Nonetheless, more research in this area would be welcome.

Dempsey et al. (2009) report that of 4000 clients per year taking LINC, refugees' share of those who met LINC levels and completed LINC courses was comparable with other immigrant classes. That is to say, 94.5% of refugees met or exceeded LINC level in their performance, compared with 93.4% of family class immigrants, 95.1% of skilled workers, and 94.6% of other economic immigrants. These data are not, unfortunately, refugee-specific. Women account for the majority of completions during 2005-2008, with roughly 70 percent (123,000) of the total. As table 5 (from Dempsey et al.'s study) illustrates, the gender composition also indicates that immigrant women appear to have spent more time in class to complete a LINC course than their male counterparts.

**Table 5: Average Hours Taken to Complete a LINC Course by Gender and Age Group, 2005-2008**

<b>Gender/Age</b>	<b>Average hours</b>
Male	240
Female	302
<b>Age Group</b>	
15-24 yrs	226
25-44 yrs	266
45-64 yrs	360
65/+ yrs	448

**Source: Dempsey et al. (2009)**

Derwing et al. (2010) show that the language literacy of refugees is below average for all immigrants. This group does have the lowest scores on the Canadian Language Benchmarks, but this is to be expected since the criteria for selecting refugees are not based on 'ability to establish' as they are for skilled immigrants.<sup>12</sup>

### ***A Note on the New Official Language Requirement for the Citizenship Test***

In 2010, *The Globe and Mail* (Beeby, 2010) reported that immigrants were failing Canada's citizenship test in record numbers. The new test was introduced on March 15, 2010. It included far more facts to memorize, and required 75% to pass, up from 60% earlier. A CIC in-house survey of 35 testing centres across Canada carried out between April 19 and June 24, 2010 showed an average of one in four people were failing. Government officials said education levels rather than mother tongue proved as a significant factor. This resulted in a revamped test introduced October 14, 2010.

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<sup>12</sup> Thanks to Vesna Radulovic for pointing me to these resources.



## 2.3 Education

As noted above, post-IRPA GARs are younger, on average, than GARs from the 1990s, with about 60% (compared to 50%) under the age of 24. Likewise, GARs arriving today have less education than those who arrived in the 1990s.

“Approximately 80% of recent (2002-2006) GAR landings had an education level of secondary school or less whereas this was the case for roughly 60% of landings during the 1990s” (CIC, 2010b: 2). This means that appropriate testing, placement and access to Canadian education upon arrival will be more important than ever and key to refugee youth’s later success in the labour force.

CIC (2010b) also observes that the education level of GARs over 20 years of age has declined since the 1990s. GARs who arrived during the 1990s were more likely to have a university degree or other post-secondary certificate.

DeVoretz et al. (2004) made a similar observation across space rather than over time. They showed that of refugees from Europe between 1980 and 2001 50% had secondary education or less. Refugees from other regions, however, were far more likely to have low levels of education, with 80% having secondary school or less. Of those GARs who arrived between 2002 and 2006, 80% had an education level of secondary school or less, whereas this was the case for only 60% in the 1990s.

Educational achievement, for example, varies considerably among the category ‘refugee’, with landed-in Canada refugees more likely to have a university degree than either government-assisted or privately-sponsored refugees (see table 6).

**Table 6: Level of Education at Arrival by Category, Refugees and Immigrants Aged 15 Years and Older Who Were Granted Permanent Residence in 2005**  
Category of Immigration

Years of Education	LCRs	GARs	PSRs	Family Class	Skilled Workers Principal Applicants	All Refugees and Immigrants
<b>0-9</b>	19%	48%	36%	20%	8%	14%
<b>10-12</b>	30%	26%	37%	23%	9%	16%
<b>13 +</b>	13%	7%	7%	10%	6%	8%
<b>Trade Certificate /diploma</b>	19%	7%	12%	17%	14%	16%
<b>University Degree</b>	19%	12%	7%	29%	63%	46%
<b>Total</b>	16,950	4,642	2,217	63,352	52,266	<b>204,633</b>

Source: *Facts and Figures 2005*, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Yu, Oullet, and Warmington (2007).

### ***Integration at the Neighbourhood Scale: Public Schools***

Education serves not only as human capital, but a site where integration may

take place. While refugee 'integration' may be the language and aim of Canadian governments at various levels, finding a place in Canadian society and a sense of belonging among refugees is happening more locally at the scale of neighbourhoods. Communities based on neighbourhood association and common schools foster integration, albeit within parameters adopted by the Canadian multicultural state (Basu, 2011).

Ranu Basu (2011) recasts integration and explores how communities "redefine meanings of integration that are locally specific. Within planned and unplanned spaces, social and cultural differences are explored, negotiated, and compromised in multiple ways." Basu contends

practices of multilingualism within schools are producing different spaces of integration (*unidirectional, reciprocal, and multifarious*); that schools are not just sites of social provision but processes of social relations; and more broadly, recognize the power of immigrants as not just passive recipients but active agents of city building itself (Basu, 2011: 10).

Based on her research conducted in Toronto, Basu shows how integration in schools can be seen as a *cyclical* process. It requires incentives be initiated by schools in its capacity as a public institution, but instead of integration being a one-way path to joining the mainstream, or an act of reciprocity between newcomer and native-born, it is a *multifarious* form of integration that explores the cosmopolitan cultural capital of other newcomer groups, by taking language lessons in other tongues and exploring "a rich interplay and exchange of cultural diversities" (p. 18). Multifarious multiculturalism, as Basu calls it, may well be another indicator of refugee integration in the Canadian context.

## 2.4 Housing

Secure and affordable housing is a vital piece of the settlement and integration process in Canada. Unsurprisingly, the high rents and low vacancy rates in Canada's two largest and most expensive cities, Vancouver and Toronto, have given rise to a spate of studies that trace the housing careers, but also struggles that refugees face in these tight markets (Murdie, Preston, and Logan, 2009; Mendez, Hiebert, and Wyly, 2006; Hiebert and Mendez, 2008).

The third wave of data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) show that refugee households experience crowding at home at a rate three times greater than economic class immigrants (Hiebert and Mendez 2008). Four years after arrival, one in five refugees in Vancouver continues to spend upwards of 50% of monthly household income on housing.

Kathy Sherrell and the Immigrant Services Society of BC (2009) conducted research on refugee settlement in Surrey, BC and found that repayment of transportation loans incurred by GARs arriving in Canada created a precarious financial and housing situation for many. "For many, the desire to repay loans as quickly as possible arises from a fear that they will not qualify for Canadian citizenship and/or travel documents if they are in default of their loans" (2009: 21). The report quotes one former GAR as saying, "It is a way of surviving. If you do not repay [your loans] it may affect your status, so you have to starve and pay" (ibid.). Another respondent who has repaid the loan in full noted that "it was the most difficult loan I have ever experienced ... the government wants refugees to begin paying [the loan] back after one year, even though the money we make is very minimal". They "bring people here to give a better life, but it is opposite. People put them in debt" (2009: 22). Income, debt, and housing are all intricately linked for resettled refugees upon arrival in Canada.

McLean et al. (2006) explore the housing strategies among GARs from Aceh one year after arrival. Doubling and tripling up were common strategies among single men who did not see sharing arrangements as 'crowding' in the Canadian sense of the word. Married men, however, tended to live in separate quarters with their families. No women lived alone, in part because all were married. Five years on, the family households have increasingly moved from Vancouver to Surrey, while single men are still more likely to live in Vancouver along the Skytrain routes.

In Toronto, refugee housing strategies have received considerable attention, though the news is consistently not very positive (Teixeira, 2008; Murdie, 2003, 2005). These authors chronicle the experiences and housing careers of refugees, noting the common thread of lack of affordability for the vast majority. Hidden homelessness is probed by Preston et al. (2009) who examine immigrant housing in the suburban York Region in Toronto. This study does not disaggregate refugees specifically, but points to unexpected patterns of housing stress in suburban contexts.

A number of other studies focus on housing issues among refugees in Canada. Sarah Wayland (2007) outlines the housing needs for refugees and other immigrant groups in Ottawa. Rose and Ray (2001) focus on refugees in Montreal, and Rose has a distinguished record in analyzing immigrant housing patterns in that city. Tom Carter (2009) focuses on the role of housing in the settlement process in Winnipeg. And Danso and Grant have examined the adaptive strategies of various African immigrant groups, including refugees, in the Calgary context.

Much, much more could be said about refugee housing, but the main message appears to be that affordability of housing in the most expensive Canadian cities puts resettled refugees at the economic and social margins of society. A pan-Canadian study commissioned by Government of refugee and other migrant housing is currently underway (led by Hiebert, Murdie, Preston, Rose and others)

and should prove to be the most comprehensive housing analysis to date once available.

## **2.5 Social**

The importance of social ties as mechanisms for support and integration during initial settlement in Canada is well documented (Simich, 2003). Compared with other classes of immigrants arriving in Canada with existing human and/or financial capital, “one of the few resources available to most refugees is social capital in the form of social support networks” (Lamba & Krahn, 2003, p. 336). Yet for many post-IRPA GARs to Canada, they come in small numbers without a pre-existing group of people from the same nation or nation-state. When they first arrived in Canada, Karen (Myanmarese) refugees from Thailand and Bhutanese refugees who lived in Nepal for years had no reference group, or ‘community’ to welcome them, facilitate settlement in informal ways, and connect them to the people, jobs, and resources they know and use. In short, they lacked social support networks and the social capital often implicit in these (Hyndman & McLean, 2006).

Canada piloted post-IRPA group resettlement in 2003 with 780 Sudanese and Somali refugees from Kenyan refugee camps not only to reduce processing time but also to “create ready-made support systems for arriving refugees” (Labman, 2007, p. 42). The same program brought approximately 1,000 Afghans from Central Asia in 2004, and 810 Burmese refugees from Thailand were resettled in late 2006 and early 2007 (Labman, 2007). Refugees from Aceh, Indonesia were also settled as a (small) group, but only to one city, Greater Vancouver. Again the idea was that the members would have each other for support and solidarity, rather than be dispersed a few families at a time across the country. One might surmise that there is an ‘economy of scale’ here with respect to settlement services, given that the group size was initially just over one hundred people.

Nonetheless, these refugees - who were all GARs at the time of their arrival - lacked the social capital to which a more settled community would have access. As Brunner et al. (2010) found, successful integration was enigmatic for the Acehnese on several fronts, including official language acquisition and employment after the economic recession in 2008. In an effort to measure refugee integration qualitatively among the Acehnese, researchers asked, “with whom do you spend time daily or often?” Of all refugee respondents, 47% reported that they spent time with ‘co-ethnic friends’; 26% mentioned ‘family outside household’; 21% said ‘other Canadian friends’; and another 21% mentioned neighbours (Brunner et al., 2010).

Compared with those from other immigration admission classes, education and official language proficiency are already lowest among immigrants arriving as refugees (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). Still, post-IRPA GARs in particular are more

likely to face multi-barriers to settlement, including low literacy levels in their original languages, physical and mental health issues, larger households, single-headed households, and youth with limited exposure to formal education (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). The specificities of long-term exile, trauma (i.e. PTSD), and torture also have implications for the 'integration' process.

### ***Feelings of Satisfaction about Settlement***

Comparing the resettlement success of PSRs and GARs, data from LSIC showed little difference between the two in terms of the level of satisfaction with the Canadian experience six months after arrival (CIC, 2007). The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction with their experiences in Canada. Eighty-four percent of PSRs and 80 percent of GARs were either satisfied or completely satisfied with their experiences.

Two years after arrival, survey participants were asked whether their level of satisfaction with their experiences in Canada was higher, lower or about the same compared to six months after arrival. Both populations indicated that their level of satisfaction was higher. PSRs were more likely to rate themselves as more satisfied at two years (77 percent) than GARs (69 percent).

A recent analysis of the longitudinal immigration database (IMDB) that combines CIC immigrant landing records with income tax returns suggests that social capital in the form of the presence of a 'co-national' community in Canada on arrival may have a positive effect on economic performance. CIC (2010b) notes that government-assisted refugees from African countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, and Congo who arrived in the 1990s had below average earnings compared to cohorts from the same countries that arrived after 2000. While the reasons behind the improved economic performance are not stated by CIC, one hypothesis is that the social networks provided by people 'from home' may assist in finding (better) jobs more quickly.

Wu et al. (2010) contend that insufficient research attention has been directed toward the integration of immigrant children or the characteristics of the communities (neighborhoods) in which they settle. Combining such research with the work of Basu (2011) noted above seems prudent, given that much of children's integration may well occur in school settings.

### ***A Note on Social Integration and Transnational Relations***

In the U.S. context, Alba et al. (2003) contend that refugees and other migrants do not intentionally try to become part of the host society, but instead pursue strategies that respond to their specific needs at the household scale which can often be traced back to the social and cultural environment of either the host country or location of last refuge. This points to transnational relations among refugees from the same host country or last site of asylum.

Transnational processes are most commonly defined as those “by which immigrants and refugees forge and maintain multi-stranded social relations that link together their places of origin and places of settlement,” called transnationalism by Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc “to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (1994, p. 7, 27). Associated with these processes, Basch et al. argue (1994), are the concepts of increased mobility and subsequent deterritorialization, particularly of the nation state. Since Basch et al.’s initial book, transnationalism has grown as a field of study. The field necessitates various ways of conceptualizing its emerging intricacies: Glick-Schiller (1997) identifies three separate streams of transnational cultural studies, transnational migration studies, and transnational communities studies, while Mahler (1998) makes a distinction between transnationalism from below and transnationalism from above.

The relationship between ‘integration’ into the Canadian state and transnationalism is not straightforward. As geographers Hiebert and Ley write,

Whereas the American research identifies transnationalism as a form of integration, if not assimilation, our Vancouver results locate membership in a transnational field among immigrants who are weakly connected to the Canadian nation-state. For this group, at least at present, transnationalism is not a subset of integration but an alternative to it. Their place of origin remains more central than their place of residence to their sense of self (2006, p. 89).

Although their argument is mainly centred around economic ‘integration,’ Hiebert and Ley make a clear distinction between ‘integration’ and transnationalism as separate, incompatible processes, calling their stance “closer to the original anthropological representation of transnationalism as an alternative to social and economic integration” (p. 89).

A review of all the transnationalism literature is precluded here, though that which focuses on refugees in Canada has generated important insights (Nolin, 2006; Sherrell et al., 2006; Hyndman, 2010). The main thrust of this research is to highlight the ways that resettled refugees in Canada are socially integrated and connected to geographical sites outside of Canada. Just as Bakewell (2008) calls for ‘policy-irrelevant’ research, studies to ascertain integration *in* Canada should also look at strong social bonds that traverse international borders. One example that I highlight briefly below is the phenomenon of transnational marriages between refugees, where one partner is in Canada and the other is abroad.

Kasia Grabska (2010) writes about refugee marriage practices and gender asymmetries among young Sudanese men resettled to Canada, Australia, and the US and Sudanese women in Kenyan refugee camps. These marriages,

sometimes performed by cell phone at considerable distance, meet the familial obligations that first sons have to their families living in the camps or in South Sudan (subsequent brothers cannot marry until they do, according to Nuer custom). And yet resettlement inflates the normal 'bride price' that is paid, often putting refugees in North America into tremendous debt. Grabska records bride prices paid by Sudanese men abroad in North America at roughly US\$40,000 each. One man went in to deep debt to pay \$85,000 to the bride's family.

This skews gender relations in an unexpected way. The Sudanese grooms who now live in North America have a very high status because they earn dollars, although often not high incomes. Yet this status generates high bride prices. Their status also allows them to court the most desirable women of higher status families, many of whom want a chance to get out of the camps. However, once paid, there is almost no chance that the bride's family could possibly pay back the sum once spent, should something go wrong in the marriage. Normally, if a marriage does not work out, or if there is domestic violence, the bride's family can return the bride price to the groom's family and the union can be broken. But the amount of these bride prices could not possibly be earned in an entire lifetime in the camps, so women who do marry into bad relationships are stuck. Grabska shows that many wait years for their grooms to bring them to their new homes.

In a similar vein, Lisa Brunner (2010) traces the marriage preferences and practices of male Acehnese GARs, now permanent residents and citizens, who want to marry women from Aceh, Indonesia. Brunner shows how social exclusion, or at least the inability to create meaningful social bonds with non-Acehnese women in Vancouver due to poor English skills and different gender expectations, reinforces the desire to marry someone from 'back home.' The extended wait that these men experience in trying to realize this aim is not uncommon; other refugees experience considerable waits to sponsor a fiancée, but for the Acehnese, this is complicated further by the cost of return, the need to work extra jobs and thus forgo English language training, and the perceived need to have a Canadian passport in hand before returning to Aceh to propose.

In this study, employment took priority over English learning, especially upon arrival when the Acehnese felt they had to work to pay off their transportation loans before they became interest-bearing loans (as observant Muslims, they cannot pay interest on a loan). And yet, their lack of English skills inhibits their ability to meet Canadian women. For many of the single male refugees interviewed, the prospect of starting a family takes priority over learning English, at least for the time being.

Taking seriously one's belonging to other places and people beyond Canadian borders remains an important part of refugee research on integration. Those with dual citizenship and/or with responsibility for family members abroad in effect have transnational households moored in Canada, but not solely. Integration may be occurring in more than one country.

## 2.6 Legal/Citizenship

According to CIC, newcomer naturalization rates in Canada rank among the highest in the world at 85%. For refugees, the rate is even higher, as they have, in effect, been unable to access the protection of the government of their country of original citizenship. A Canadian passport is their assurance and insurance that such events will not transpire again.

According to a 2005 study based on the 2001 census (jointly conducted by CIC and Statistics Canada), there are differences in immigrant citizenship take-up rates based on admission class at time of landing. The study shows that “refugees who arrived between 1991 and 1995 (6 to 10 years in Canada in 2001) recorded a citizenship take-up rate of 85%; those who landed in 1996 or 1997 had a take-up rate of 59% by 2001,” while “family class immigrants — who tend to be older at the time of landing than other immigrants — recorded the lowest citizenship take-up rates: 60% among those who have lived in Canada for 6 to 10 years and 30% among the newly eligible” (Tran, Kustec, & Chui, 2005, p. 12).

Overall, the 2001 census shows an average citizenship take-up rate for all immigrants at 68% (among those who arrived between 1991 and 1995) and 39% (among those who landed in 1996 or 1997). The authors argue that “the differences in take-up rates by admission class can be explained in large part by the source countries, the circumstances leading to immigration, and age at admission. For instance, the vast majority of refugees come from developing countries, and are most likely to become naturalized Canadians” (Tran, Kustec, & Chui, 2005, p. 12-13). Based on data from the Census of Population, “newly eligible immigrants from Africa or Asia are more likely to become Canadian citizens than those from Europe and the United States” since “38% of those who were born in the United Kingdom and 48% of those born in the United States who had arrived in Canada in 1996 or 1997 were citizens by 2001, [increasing] to about 50% after 6 to 10 years of residence” while “immigrants from China were more likely to have taken up Canadian citizenship by 2001: 62% of 4- to 5-year residents and nearly 90% of 6- to 10-year residents” and “64% of newly eligible immigrants from African countries and 86% of 6- to 10-year residents were Canadian citizens” (Tran, Kustec, & Chui, 2005, p. 11-12).

One large-scale qualitative study involving 616 interviews with refugees in Alberta between 1992 and 1997 probed citizenship acquisition. The study found that, when asked whether or not they had taken out citizenship, “45% said that they had not been in Canada long enough. Of the remaining individuals, 26% reported that they had obtained citizenship, and another 48% had already applied. [The study] asked all of these individuals if it had been a difficult decision to apply for Canadian citizenship; 95% said that it had not. When the 26% of eligible individuals were questioned as to why they had not applied, nearly half of



them (46%) said that they did not have enough money to pay the fees...Another 16% of those who had not applied for citizenship reported that they had not had enough time to do so; and 21% said that there was no reason in particular for not applying...[The eligible respondents] listed many reasons for becoming Canadians, including the following (in rank order from most often cited): this is my home now; I need a passport; I don't have a home country; I want to be Canadian/feel Canadian; there is more security/safety here; I want the same rights as other Canadians" (Abu-Laban, Derwing, Krahn, Mulder, & Wilkinson, 1999, para. 1-3).

There are, of course, other measures of political participation beyond naturalization. Civic participation of immigrants compares favourably with their native born counterparts. Levels of volunteering, voting and charitable giving among newcomers are comparable or greater than native born Canadians (CIC, 2010d)

## **2.7 Health**

Health is a dynamic process of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being. Health is not possible without peace, shelter, education, food, income, a healthy and sustainable physical environment, social justice and equity. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the object of living. (*Saskatchewan Provincial Health Council – 1994 and Ontario Ministry of Health – 1993*)  
(cited in CCR, 2006, p. 97)

### ***Physical Health***

Anecdotal evidence suggests that refugees from protracted situations, who make up a significant portion of resettled refugees to Canada, have more health issues than those who arrive from urban contexts where access to health care is better. However, documentation of this in a statistically acceptable way does not yet exist. Given Canada's humanitarian focus on refugees from Myanmar, Bhutan, and other sites or prolonged displacement in a country of first asylum, such research would be a welcome addition to extant studies.

A large national study examining the mortality patterns among 369,936 Canadian immigrants (including both refugees and non-refugees) between 1980 and 1998 found that although "both non-refugees and refugees are overall at lower risk of death as compared to the general Canadian population," (DesMeules et al., 2005, p. 225). However, "mortality rates differed by region of birth, and were higher among refugees than other immigrants" (p. 221). The study attributes the higher mortality rates among refugees to "the process of self-selection for immigration, which is clearly different among refugees and non-refugee immigrants" and the "exemptions regarding medical testing [which] may occur among refugees" (p. 226). Among non-refugee immigrants, "the risk of death

increased with time in Canada, and...the health status of immigrants appears to diminish in the years following immigration;" however, refugees showed no pronounced change (p. 226). The study also noted that it is one of very few examining the health of refugees specifically (see also Simich et al., 2005).

### ***Focus on HIV***

Since 2002, Canada requires mandatory, routine immigration-related HIV antibody testing for immigrant applicants (including all regular applicants for permanent settlement and refugees), temporary residence applicants from designated countries (including some migrant workers, students, and long-term visitors), and 'irregular' applicants (refugee claimants). Although this "immigration medical examination is required by law to assess inadmissibility to Canada on medical grounds: danger to public health, danger to public safety, and excessive demand on health and social services," Canada permits "assessment exemptions on excessive demand for defined members of the family class category, refugees defined by Convention, and others who were deemed to be in need of protection (Zencovich, Kennedy, MacPherson, & Gushulak, 2006, p. 814).

Between 2002 and 2003, "790,180 individuals underwent Canadian immigration medical assessment; of those, 634,958 were 15 years old or over and were tested for HIV" and "of the applicants who were 15 years of age or older, 932 were HIV-antibody-positive (146 per 100,000 applicants)" (Zencovich et al., 2006, p. 814). In terms of immigration category, "refugees represented 332 of the HIV-seropositive diagnoses (36%)," followed by refugee claimants (with 318 HIV-seropositive diagnoses, or 34%), and family class applicants (with 145 HIV diagnoses, or 16%). In other words, "rates per 100,000 applications show a predominance of refugees at 1301/100,000, followed by refugee claimants in Canada at 490/100,000 and the family class at 143/100,000" (Zencovich et al., 2006, p. 814). While a very clinical analysis, these data point to the reality that a significant number of refugees who settle in Canada must live with HIV or AIDs as a chronic, auto-immune disease on top of the challenges of integration that refugees who do not have HIV/AIDs face.

### ***Mental Health***

This is an area of major concern among GAR service providers (see Appendix C) and one that both clinicians and social scientists have explored in some detail (Beiser, 2006; Simich, 2003; Khanlou, 2005). Refugees may experience trauma or torture before arriving in Canada, and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) once settled in Canada. Diagnosis of such mental health issues can be made more challenging by language barriers, refugees' reluctance to discuss 'private' matters in public settings with a physician or counsellor. Access to services may also be an issue, given that resettled refugees are 'destined' to communities across the country, not just Canada's large centres where specific

resources to deal with torture, for example, are available. These issues are taken up in more detail in the areas for future research (see also Hyndman and Friesen, 2010).

The stress of settlement is itself a potential source of mental health issues, as refugees manage a new language, culture, education system, and labour market. Based on a research project among Afghan, Karen, and Sudanese GARs in Toronto, “the burden of the transportation loan is a major source of mental health and economic stress on GARs” (Access Alliance, 2008, p. 4).

### ***Gender and Health: AGDM considerations***

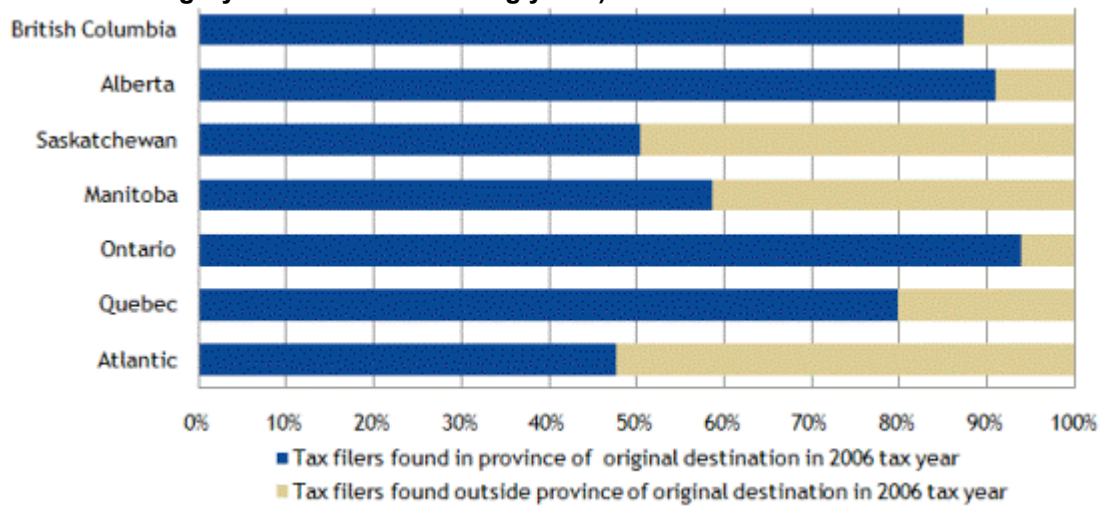
The case for gender-disaggregated analyses of immigrant and refugee health is made by Mary Ann Mulvihill, Louise Mailloux and Wendy Atkin (2001). This report raises questions about how variables such as country of origin, age, gender, circumstances of migration, lifestyle changes and economic status impact health. The researchers note that women’s primary role as informal caregivers also requires special consideration in the design and delivery of community-based health care and home care.

The report (CCR, 2006, p. 94) asks specific questions that approach health as social science rather than as medical science: “[h]ow does migration to Canada affect health by gender? ... How are the experiences of displacement and settlement related to health experience? How do changes in family structure and gender roles affect physical and mental health of immigrants? What are the health issues and needs of specific gender, age, and socioeconomic groups?” In so doing, the report aims to get at intersecting inequalities related to gender, immigrant status, ethnicity/race, age and ability. This intersectional analysis is key to age, gender, diversity mainstreaming.

## **2.8 Secondary (Interprovincial) Migration Among Refugees**

Okonny-Myers (2010) provides an excellent portrait of the secondary migration patterns of refugees once after they initially settle in Canada. This fascinating study finds that the vast majority of refugees stay in the province to which they were originally ‘destined’. In the 2006 tax year, refugees who settled in Ontario and Alberta between 2000 and 2006 were most likely to remain there (more than 90%). BC and Quebec also retained 80% or more of refugees resettled there. Meanwhile, refugees destined to the Atlantic provinces and Saskatchewan were most likely to move elsewhere, with 48% to 50% remaining in the original province of destination. Figure 1 below is cut and pasted from the CIC report.

**Figure 1: Filers landed under the refugee category found in destination province vs. those found outside destination province (based on those landed under the refugee category - 2000 to 2006 landing years)**



Source: Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB).

Source: Okonny-Meyers (2010) available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/research/interprov-mobility/section3.asp#sub6>

Why exactly these refugees move and why others stay is a good question. The longitudinal survey of immigrants to Canada (LSIC) shows that the most persuasive factor in shaping people’s initial decisions about where to settle in Canada is the ‘presence of family and friends’ (Hyndman et al., 2006). Hence, the size of the settlement city will be a factor in shaping ‘the presence of family and friends.’ Larger centres will hold allure for refugees and other immigrants because of this. Still, further research to identify direct motivations for moving would be helpful and a study to disaggregate the interprovincial mobility of GARs, PSRs, and LCRs would be useful.

## 2.9 AGDM

Age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming considerations have been integrated throughout this report, albeit they have not been the focus of any one section. Women and girls make up 49% of refugees (CIC, 2010d); gender balance in refugee intake has become more equitable in the 2000s. In the 1990s, more men than women came to Canada in the refugee class. As noted above, gender and diversity are normally not ‘things’ to be measured or observed directly, but point to relationships between or among different groups of people, differentially positioned. As noted in section 2.8, AGDM demands an analysis of intersecting inequalities and vulnerabilities related to gender, immigrant status, ethnicity/race, age and ability. This intersectional analysis is critical to avoiding stand-alone analyses of AGDM.

The number of resettled refugee youth has expanded. More recent cohorts of GARs are younger than those who arrived in the 1990s (CIC, 2010); approximately 60% of GARs who arrived 2003-06 were less than 24 years of age while the same figure for the 1990s was just under 50%.

### ***LGBTQ refugees***

The Canadian Council of Refugees (2006) created a gender-based analysis of settlement among immigrants to Canada, with various sections similar to those in this report (education, employment, health, etc.). The report obviously highlights the importance of disaggregating issues by sex and gender, but also raises questions around sexuality and transgender that both characterize a segment of all populations, but are also grounds for making refugee claims where persecution of individuals takes place. What additional barriers LGBTQ refugees face remains an important issue, and this is doubly true for refugee youth for whom there is a paucity of age-specific services already.

In 2008, UNHCR published its 'Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity' giving more explicit attention to sexuality and gender-based claims that have been made in Canada since the early 1990s. Canadian legal scholar, Nicole LaViolette (2010), has written a critical commentary on the guidelines while welcoming its recognition of sexuality-based persecution in text. Aside from some unpublished but excellent pieces of original, Canadian-based scholarship on LGBTQ refugees (Lidstone, 2006), there is a lacunae of research in this area.

### 3: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Throughout this paper, I have signalled areas and questions that demand further inquiry. Based on this literature review above, a number of salient directions for future research emerge:

- What are the economic outcomes for PSRs based on longitudinal immigrant database in comparison to GARs? The data for GARs is out (CIC, 2010b) and represents one of the sharpest pictures of how resettled refugees are doing. Research on comparable PSR outcomes would complement this analysis.
- Careful and comprehensive research into the initial income levels of PSRs and their more rapid transition to employment than GARs should be probed as soon as possible. CIC's data on PSRs' median incomes upon arrival are pitifully low, though these may mask other in-kind contributions (such as free room and board on a short-term basis) that make income comparisons between GARs and PSRs impossible.
- Is there a relationship between uptake levels of settlement services among refugees and their access to social assistance? If an inverse correlation could be made with reference to specific settlement services (i.e. LINC, ISAP), this could be a powerful policy tool in guiding where public funds should be directed to help resettled refugees access the labour market after their initial period of adjustment.
- What are the health needs of refugees from protracted situations, who make up a significant portion of resettled refugees to Canada? Do they have more health problems, on average, than other resettled refugees, or not? If so, do these higher levels even out over time?
- While national datasets and analyses are invaluable in showing improvements over time, comparison between or among groups of refugees, or disparate outcomes in labour force participation, they often cannot explain 'why' this is the case. Mixed methods that combine quantitative and qualitative research are best suited this purpose and should be considered in any future research.

This list is, of course, just a beginning. Most of the research cited has been produced by government and/or academics working in collaboration, though a significant number of studies have also been produced by or in partnership with refugee-serving agencies themselves. This report has not been able to survey all of this literature, as much of it remains unpublished. Nonetheless it represents a valuable resource and a compilation and review of this grey literature would reveal a great deal more than I have managed to cover here.

In December 2010, Hyndman and Friesen released the compilation of a 'refugee research agenda' based on nation-wide consultations in the summer of 2010 with all agencies that provide the 'Resettlement Assistance Plan' (RAP) for GARs, including those in Quebec. I conducted the individual consultations with RAP providers with a view to creating a relevant, timely and applied research agenda that would attend both to the demands of academic scholarship but especially to the research needs of the settlement sector. This agenda is attached here as Appendix C and highlights some important research questions identified by staff at agencies who provide settlement services for resettled refugees. Of course, this begs the question of PSRs: what are the research questions stemming from services for them, or issues affecting them?

Hyndman, Friesen, and Sherrell (forthcoming) also canvassed RAP providers to ascertain what data they collect on GARs that they assist. The findings of this national research project are yet to be published, but the preliminary analysis shows a great range of data collection practices that make national comparisons among RAP agencies impossible at the current time. Some agencies have sophisticated databases with dedicated staff to run them; others simply use paper forms that are required as part of the RAP reporting protocol. Many find a happy medium in between, customizing Excel spreadsheets according to their information needs and collection practices.

According to my consultations on data collection practices among RAP agencies, conducted at the same time as the research agenda questions, the most promising data source for future research is the Client Support Services Program (CSS). Currently, CSS is operating in Ontario and comprehensively tracks the needs and services accessed for each client, in detail. According to RAP agencies that settle GARs, CSS has improved the quality of data collected, of reporting, and most importantly the ability to advocate for refugee clients whose needs exceed the basic provisions. If such data can be code for privacy and implemented on a broader scale, they would be invaluable as a basis for longitudinal research, pan-Canadian comparisons, and more nuanced refugee integration research that disaggregates PSRs, GARs, and LCRs in all cases.

Returning to Bakewell's (2008) case for 'policy irrelevant research', there is much more data on GARs because they are settled by the Canadian government, whereas the state can 'see' less in relation to PSRs because their support and integration is managed by sponsors and in the communities in which they are destined. More attention and resources may well need to be directed towards PSR-focused research, or even better comparative research between GARs and PSRs, so that integration issues can be better understood.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Terms of Reference for Integration Consultancy

#### Purpose and Scope

The Consultant will draft and finalize a research paper entitled “Research Summary on Resettled Refugee Integration in Canada” for UNHCR Representation in Canada to assist it in its resettlement monitoring and future activities surrounding refugee integration in Canada.

The consultancy will begin at the signing date of the consultancy and end on 31 December 2010. The paper will:

- Summarize key existing research findings on the integration of resettled refugees;
- Identify gaps in research relating to refugee integration;
- Highlight information or gaps as they relate to age, gender and diversity;
- Propose areas of possible inquiry appropriate for UNHCR to pursue in the future.

When examining integration, the focus will include legal, economic and social integration of resettled refugees. In particular when examining areas of integration outcomes, the study should be guided by the thematic areas relating to the reception and integration of resettled refugees set out in the handbook, *Refugee Resettlement: A Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*.

Within the research where possible the paper will focus on findings relating to the integration of resettled refugees since the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Findings that are national in scope are preferred. In addition the information in the paper will be appropriately referenced. Findings are to be disaggregated where possible including concerning gender and age differences as well as regarding the experience of government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees.

**Measurable Outputs:** An outline for the paper, relevant sources and working draft for submission to the Resettlement Officer.



## **Appendix B: Glossary of Integration-related terms**

(from Castles et al., 2002, pp. 115 to 118)

Note: This list is *quoted verbatim* from the Castles et al. 2002 document; it offers an idea of meanings attached to specific terms in current social scientific literature on immigration and integration. The authors point out that terms have more than one meaning and rarely a consensus on the precise meaning of terms. The British context in which the report was written is also noteworthy.

### **Integration**

Usage 1: The process through which immigrants and refugees become part of the receiving society. Integration is often used in a normative way, to imply a one-way process of adaptation by newcomers to fit in with a dominant culture and way of life. This usage does not recognise the diversity of cultural and social patterns in a multicultural society, so that integration seems to be merely a watered down form of assimilation.

Usage 2: A two-way process of adaptation, involving change in values, norms and behaviour for both newcomers and members the existing society. This includes recognition of the role of the ethnic community and the idea that broader social patterns and cultural values may change in response to immigration.

- Problem with the concept: the concept is vague and slippery and seems to mean whatever people want it to.

### **Assimilation**

The imagery associated with this term implies bringing immigrants and refugees into society through a one-way, one-sided process of adaptation: the newcomers are supposed to give up their distinctive linguistic, cultural or social characteristics, adopt the values and practices of the mainstream receiving society, and become indistinguishable from the majority population. Sometimes this process is expected to take more than one generation. The state tries to create conditions favourable to this process through dispersal policies, insistence on use of the dominant language and attendance at normal state schools by immigrant children. The emphasis is on the individual immigrant, who 'learns' the new culture and gives up the culture of origin through a process of acculturation. Assimilation has been the prevailing approach in many immigration countries, including the UK, the US, Australia and Canada until the 1960s, and is still important in some European countries, notably France.

- Problems with the concept: (1) assimilation devalues the cultures and languages of minority groups, and thus contradicts democratic principles of diversity and free choice. (2) It pre-supposes that a receiving society is willing and able to offer equality of rights and opportunities to immigrants who assimilate; assimilation fails where there is discrimination. (3) It is based on an

individualistic model, and ignores the importance of family and community in social life. (4) It gives little attention to the possibility of diverse paths followed by immigrants.

### **Segmented assimilation**

A term coined by US sociologists (Portes and Zhou, 1993) to indicate that immigrants sometimes do not become active members of society as a whole, but rather become assimilated into specific parts of it, defined on the basis of race or ethnicity and class. Thus Mexicans in the US are said to 'become assimilated as blacks' (i.e. into a disadvantaged and discriminated part of society), while Koreans 'become assimilated as whites' (i.e. into the dominant group). The focus of research under the concept of segmented assimilation is thus on the processes that stigmatise or privilege certain groups when they enter US society, and on the ways migrants – especially members of the so-called second generation – direct their strategies of adaptation toward specific ethnic communities and economic niches.

- Problem with the concept: it is in danger of losing sight of broader or multiple patterns of integration.

### **Structural or functional assimilation**

Recognition that immigrants may participate successfully in some spheres of activity (for instance, in the labour market or education system) while they remain highly discriminated against or excluded from other spheres (such as neighbourhood life or the political system).

- Problems with the concept: it may suggest that certain domains are sufficient for integration on their own. This approach may fail to observe important linkages between spheres of activity.

### **Acculturation**

The process through which immigrants are expected to learn the language of the country of immigration, as well as its presumed dominant cultural values and practices.

- Problem with the concept: it seems to pre-suppose that the receiving society is mono-cultural and that immigrants have to give up their own ethnic group cultures.

### **Adaptation**

The selective and often conscious attempt to modify certain aspects of cultural practice in accordance with the host society's norms and values. The idea may coincide with a view that 'public' behaviour should conform with UK culture, while 'private' activities may continue in line with society and culture of sending country.

- Problem with the concept: assumes the onus is wholly on the immigrant to ‘do something’ to make himself/herself ‘fit in’. Public/private divide very artificial in reality and may propose that assimilationism is appropriate for the public sphere while multiculturalism is pertinent only to the private sphere.

## **Incorporation**

Usage 1: Incorporation of immigrants is seen by some social scientists as a fairly neutral term to refer to the overall process by which newcomers become part of a society. It is seen as avoiding the normative implications of such terms as assimilation, integration and insertion. Comparative studies then speak of ‘modes of incorporation’.

Usage 2: Incorporation is used by other observers to refer to a broadly defined political sphere alongside integration in the social sphere. That is, incorporation is conceived as becoming part of a polity – that is, gaining access to rights and privileges (including those of citizenship), participating in a society’s legal, organisational and political structures, and policy measures to assist this (such as encouraging membership in work councils and trade unions, supporting the creation of ethnic associations, establishing forums for consultation, and so forth).

- Problem with the concept: it may lead to an overly rigid conceptualisation of legal/political and social/cultural spheres.

## **Inclusion**

The process whereby immigrants or refugees become participants in particular sub-sectors of society: education, labour market, welfare system, political representation etc. The emphasis is on active and conscious processes: that is policies of public agencies or employers, as well as on the role of the newcomers themselves. This is seen as the antithesis of exclusion or social exclusion.

- Problem with the concept: like ‘integration’, the term is so broad and vague that it can be over-used and invoked without any attempt to establish relevant indicators.

## **Exclusion**

This can refer to denial of access to certain rights, resources or entitlements normally seen as part of membership of a specific society. Immigrants are often included in some areas of society (eg. labour market) but excluded from others (eg. political participation). This leads to the notion of *differential exclusion* as a mode of immigrant incorporation. *Social exclusion* pertains to a situation in which an individual or group suffers multiple types of disadvantage in various social sectors (eg. education, employment, housing, health). *Cumulative exclusion* means that people are largely outside mainstream economic, social and political relationships, and lack the ability to participate which is crucial to full citizenship.

Social exclusion affects nationals as well as immigrants. However, specific types of exclusion experienced by immigrants and refugees such as lack of political rights, insecure residence status and racism – increase their vulnerability to social exclusion. The socially excluded tend to become concentrated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which are often characterised by poor services and amenities, social stress, crime and racial conflict.

- Problems with the concept: (1) inclusion has normative undertones suggesting that newcomers should change their values and behaviour to ‘fit in’ with the existing society, rather than society adjusting its structures to accommodate the newcomers. (2) It also seems sometimes to imply that there is just one way of becoming part of a given society.

### **Insertion**

The process through which immigrants and refugees are brought into various social sub-sectors. The term originates in the French Republican Model of individual assimilation of immigrants, and carries the implication of being inserted into an unchanged social institution – in other words that the immigrant has to assimilate to existing structures.

- Problems with the concept: Like assimilation, insertion neglects the collective dimension of societal belonging. The role of the ethnic community is ignored.

### **Settlement**

Another attempt to find a relatively general and neutral term for the process whereby immigrants and refugees become part of society. The term is widely used in countries of permanent immigration like Australia and Canada, where the emphasis is on the role of government services in the process. However, much sociological research on settlement emphasises the active role of the immigrants and the ethnic community. Settlement is also used with reference to geography and spatial patterns and residential trends.

- Problem with the concept: settlement is mainly used in the context of policy models, and tends to define the process in top-down or social engineering terms.

### **Denizenship**

A term coined by Swedish sociologist Tomas Hammar, to indicate that some immigrants in European countries who do not have full formal citizenship still have a legal claim to important rights that are normally seen as part of citizenship, for instance local voting rights (in Sweden and the Netherlands), the right to permanent residence in a country, and social rights.

- Problem with the concept: denizenship appears to contradict the liberal-democratic principle of full inclusion of all permanent residents as full members of society and above all as active participants in the political system.

## **Citizenship**

Refers either to formal membership of a polity (eg. having a British passport) or to having *de jure* and *de facto* enjoyment of a set of rights (eg. civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights). Citizenship is sometimes seen as a mark of full integration into society.

Problem with the concept: People who have formal citizenship may not enjoy full access to important rights, as a result of racism or social exclusion. In such cases, citizenship may be seen as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for full integration.

## **Race relations approach**

The idea that group identities based on race or ethnicity play an important and enduring role in structuring relationships between immigrant or minority groups and the majority population. The central concern for policy in this model is to deal with discrimination and racism and to ensure equal opportunity across the various racial or ethnic groups. This approach has been most significant in the UK, the US and the Netherlands.

Problem with the concept: race relations approaches may ascribe unitary identities which ignore the diversity within groups on the basis of gender, social status, cultural differences and individual preferences.”

## Appendix C: A Sector-Based Research Agenda: Issues Affecting Government-Assisted Refugees in Canada

November 15, 2010

### I. Introduction and Context

Chris Friesen (ISS of BC) and Jennifer Hyndman (Centre for Refugee Studies at York U) undertook a project to establish a research agenda focusing on government-assisted refugees (GARs) assisted by Resettlement Assistance Service Providers (RAP SPOs).<sup>13</sup> Between mid-May 2010 and mid-June 2010, the research team spoke to 28 people at 20 RAP SPOs across the country, including 2 in Quebec. We would like to have included research needs related specifically to privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs) in the study, but our consultation was limited by its modest resources and short timeline. Many of the issues raised, however, will be pertinent to PSRs.

Participants were asked to identify research needs and priorities of RAP agencies across Canada and research areas, questions, and issues of concern to their organization. In September 2010, preliminary findings and emerging themes were circulated and feedback was invited. We thank those who provided feedback and additional input which has now been incorporated into this document. Below, we summarize the issues raised, their importance to Service Providers, and the feedback from RAP agency staff.

Our larger goal is to share these research questions and needs with a broader audience, both at universities across the country but also among foundations and other funders that support applied research that can improve settlement services and the process of 'making Canada home'. The research questions and issues will be posted online at the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University and on the Refugee Research Network (RRN) online at [www.refugeersearch.net](http://www.refugeersearch.net). We will also approach provincial umbrella organizations whose members include refugee-serving agencies, i.e. AMSSA, OCASI, to see if they can also post the document. Our objective is to mobilize research based on these themes and issues among faculty and graduate students *in partnership with* refugee-serving agencies that include but are not limited to serving government-assisted refugees.

All identifying information has been removed, so to understand **where** particular issues are pertinent, please contact Jennifer Hyndman at [jhyndman@yorku.ca](mailto:jhyndman@yorku.ca) for more information.

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<sup>13</sup> The facilitators of the Agenda would like to thank Ms. Tanya Zayed and Ms. Irmis Hutfless for their valuable research assistance on this project.

In addition to the research themes below, RAP SPO representatives spoke about the need for a code of ethics for service delivery for settlement workers as well as a code or protocol to set standards for language interpretation provided by RAP agencies. Respondents relayed that many interpreters used in RAP service delivery are not trained or accredited to perform an interpreting duty, at times resulting in inadequate or inappropriate personnel for things like medical appointments or family counselling.

## **II. Emerging RAP Research Themes, Questions, Issues**

### **A. Issues and questions mentioned *most frequently***

#### **GAR youth:**

- How well are GAR youth settling in Canada over time? How do family and integration-related factors/needs impact GAR youth's settlement and high school completion rates?
- How do single (or lone) parents raising refugee youth who have daycare needs and are attending regular school fare?
  - o Longitudinal studies to follow youth progress over time are needed.

#### **RAP (Resettlement Assistance Program) funding:**

- Does the limited RAP funding structure reflect the different needs of refugees, especially the (perceived) higher medical requirements of government-sponsored refugees (GARs) who arrived after the new refugee selection criteria were implemented in 2002 under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)? Is there a way to allocate settlement resources that corresponds to different levels of need for post-IRPA refugees?
- How effectively does RAP income support settlement and integration of GARs (does it set them up for failure)? Cost-of-living or livelihood studies would be helpful. In large cities where costs are higher, a large study that documents food bank access would be relevant.

#### **Settlement outcomes:**

- What are the settlement outcomes for refugees (labour market participation, or not; percentage of GARs on provincial income support, impact of language requirement for citizenship, impact of religion)?
- What factors contribute to barriers/successes and how can longitudinal settlement outcomes be measured? How do refugees find their first job?

#### **Family reunification:**

What is the impact of delayed family reunification on refugees? How do family dynamics change (including gender relations), and how does this impact settlement, if at all?

- How do delays in reunification affect single/lone parents who face the double stress of raising children alone and supporting a spouse abroad?

**Pre-arrival info-sharing:**

- How effective is pre-departure training for refugees? Does it make a difference to settlement outcomes?
- What gaps, if any, exist in pre-arrival orientation and information-sharing, and how can they be filled? A critical content analysis of orientation abroad materials would be valuable.

**Destination policy:**

- What factors should be considered in destining refugees? Which factors drive secondary migration? Retention?
- How many refugees from one ethnic/national group should be destined to a specific location in order to maximize retention? How can better matches be created between destination and refugees' needs?

**Transportation loans:**

- How does refugees' repayment of transportation loans impact settlement outcomes of refugee families and youth (employment, language acquisition, high school completion rates)?

*B. Issues and questions mentioned often*

- **Mental health:** What are the mental health issues of GARs and what treatment models/approaches are culturally appropriate?
- **Protracted situations:** What are settlement needs and outcomes, especially health and mental health (i.e. PTSD), of refugees from protracted situations compared to people from shorter term displacements?
- **Discrimination/stereotyping:** How can discrimination, stereotypes of refugees and prejudice be addressed in host communities? What tools can be created to educate Canadian communities to dispel stereotypes and help prepare for arrival of newcomers?
- **Spirituality:** What is the role of spirituality in settlement and integration of resettled refugees?

*C. Issues and questions mentioned by respondents at least once*

- Are refugee ghettos forming (links between poverty, geographical concentration, refugee status)?



- How do refugees **themselves** define successful integration? Could an index of life satisfaction be created (apart from official data i.e. language attainment etc.)?
- Are there differences in income support for GARs and PSRs and how does this affect settlement outcomes? Are settlement outcomes different for GARs/PSRs/LCRs? <sup>14</sup>
- What difference does timing of health check ups and availability of medical services, interpreter have on settlement outcomes? What difference does having a health clinic inside the service organization have on facilitating settlement and integration, if any?
- To what extent do GARs send remittances and what is the impact on households in Canada?
- How does availability of public housing options impact refugees' housing stability, settlement/labour market attachment and home ownership?
- How useful is iCAMS?
- What is the role of a communal dining room for all GARs during the first weeks in facilitating settlement and integration? Is this a 'best practice' in contrast to sending people grocery shopping?
- What should settlement agencies do to assist hard-to-house groups such as Roma?
- How are GAR seniors faring and what methods can be used to get a candid picture of their life in Canada?
- How can orientation and diversity training for school teachers and principals be enhanced so schools take ownership for learning about new cultures and engaging differences?
- What are the average waiting times for accessing French language instruction in smaller Quebec cities/rural areas (as compared with larger cities), and what impact, if any, does this have on social and economic inclusion?
- What impact does getting paid for attending language classes versus obtaining free language classes have on overall language acquisition and longitudinal settlement outcomes?

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<sup>14</sup> GAR: Government-assisted Refugee, PSR: Privately Sponsored Refugee, LCR: Landed Convention Refugee

- How do services for GARs in smaller communities compare to those in the bigger cities and how does this impact on settlement outcomes?
- How are refugee children assessed for placement in school grades? What impact does this have on the child's education and risk of dropping out?
- Planning for optimal delivery of settlement services for GARs is difficult without good information and advance notice of their arrival, their profile, and special needs. The 'feast or famine' cycles of GAR resettlement are less than optimal for RAP agencies who face either no GAR arrivals or a plethora of people all at once. What impact do such cycles have on the delivery of settlement services?
- What are the needs of resettled refugees with disabilities, and what could a systematic, structured approach to serving them look like?

The French language version of this document is available upon request.

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