“Is this called home?”
Resettlement of refugee children and youth in Canada

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Immigrants to Canada 2006-2017

Source: IRCC, 2018

- All Other Immigrants
- Refugee claimants
- Resettled Refugees
- Sponsored Family
- Economic immigrants
All People entering Canada, 2006-2017

Source: IRCC, 2017

CANADA FACTS
Population 2017: 36.9 million
Proportion immigrant: 23.8%
Proportion 2nd generation: 17.7%
Proportion racialized: 22.2%
Indigenous: 2.1 million (6.2%)
Geographic distribution of refugees 2017

- Does not account for secondary migration between provinces
- Some provinces host proportionately high numbers of refugees (AB, MB, QC)
- Refugees make up 1% of the total pop.

IRCC, 2018
Source Region, Refugees 2006-2015

Source: IRCC 2017
Refugee Claimants Canada, 1999-2017

REFUGEE FACTS
Between 46 & 57% of all asylum seekers are deported
Recent increases are in “normal” range

CIC Facts and Figures, 2008; CIC Facts and Figures 2015; IRCC Open Data, 2018
Inland Refugee Claimants by Province 2011-2017

The “US Border Walkers”

Figures excludes airport & legal land border crossings)
IRCC, 2018
Age at Arrival 2006-2015

- 0 to 14 years of age: 20%
- 15 to 24 years of age: 3%
- 25 to 44 years of age: 13%
- 45 to 64 years of age: 14%
- 65 years of age or more: 50%

Source: IRCC, 2017
Facts and Figures
Canadian History of Refugee Resettlement

- 1956-57: over 37,000 Hungarians
- 1979-1980: 50,000+ Vietnamese
  - Accounted for 25% of all immigrants that year; arrived during an economic recession; were settled outside of MTV
- 1992-1994 11,000+ Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian
- Airlifted 5,000+ Kosovars in 1999 in 6 weeks
- Resettled 4,000+ Karen from Thailand in 2006
- Quietly settled 25,000 high needs Iraqi 2009-13
Creating Genuine Partnerships

- Genuine partnerships with refugee resettlement and language training organization
- Good track-record with government (federal and provincial)
- Contact with ethnocultural organizations (or gatekeepers)
**Characteristics of refugees at arrival**

- Average length of conflict/war: **17 years**
- Average time in refugee camps: **7 years** (higher for some regions)
- 1/3 are privately sponsored, 2/3 are government sponsored
- 30% know *some* English or French upon arrival
- Average education is lower than other immigrants—but higher than people born in Canada (36% of privately sponsored refugees have university degrees; only 16% of GARs had high school education)
- Ontario, Quebec and BC the biggest settlement areas
- About **8% have physical or developmental problems** (very few people with severe health problems survive the war or flight)

Various sources including IRCC 2017a; IRCC 2017b; Lethbridge Family Services, 2017; Wilkinson, 2017
Prevalence of Vulnerability among refugees

- Rates of psychotic disorders **three times higher** than the Canadian population!
  - Children and youth are more likely to develop mental health problems
  - Males 4.0X and Females 2.75X higher than Canadians
  - **Overall risk of developing a mental health problem among refugees is only 2-3%**
- Most predominant disorders are **anxiety** and **depression**
  - **Most develop 6-24 months POST arrival**
  - **Exceptional group is recently arrived Yazidi (as they arrived direct to Canada)**
- The most common physical health concerns of arriving Syrian refugees
  - Inadequate or no **vaccinations; dental issues; pregnancy; complications from the flu**
- About 1/3 have lived in a refugee camp
  - Long period of **unemployment** for adults
  - Prolonged **gaps in education** for children
  - **Sexual assault**, physical assault
  - Higher rates of mental and physical health problems
- Government assisted refugees have higher rates of vulnerability given the selection process

Wilkinson and Ponka, forthcoming 2017; Cantor-Graae and Selten, 2005; Holander et al. 2016; Kirkbride, 2014; Anderson et. al., 2015; Bourque et al., 2011; Close et. al., 2016
Theoretical Models of Refugee Children and School Outcomes

• **Mainstream adaptation models** suggest the integration experiences of refugee youth are largely unproblematic and they are very likely to successfully integrate into Canadian society (Feagin and Booher Feagin, 1998).

• **Underclass absorption models** argue that the immigration experience may adversely influence the subsequent schooling and employment experiences of children (Portes, 1995; Driscoll, 1999).
## Educational Outcomes of Refugee Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On-track</th>
<th>High school only</th>
<th>Behind or dropout</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yugoslavians</strong></td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghan, Somali, Ethiopian,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish, Vietnamese</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents in refugee camp</strong></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents not in refugee camp</strong></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                                |           |                  |                   |       |
| **Mean age**                   | 17.2      | 19.6             | 18.2              |       |
| **Mean months in Canada**      | 35        | 30               | 32                |       |
Education Trajectories by Immigration Class

L. Wilkinson et al. (2012) Labour Market Trajectories of Immigrant and refugee youth
University completion rate of Canadian children and youth, 2016

Hou and Boniskowska, 2016
School Integration

A 21 year old Afghani Female’s Perspective

“Did you have difficulties while in high school?”

*During the first year it was a nightmare because I felt like I didn’t fit in and I didn’t have friends and I couldn’t speak English properly.*

Unsolicited Comment later in the Interview:

“I’m just glad to be here, even if it is stressful. It’s nice to be living in a peaceful country, better than the way it was back home.”
### Perceptions of ESL Students by Sex and Visible Minority Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Yugoslaviant</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think teachers treat ESL Students differently?</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>(37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think other students treat ESL students differently?*</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>(37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*χ² significant at P=0.10 for visible minority status
On Treatment by Teachers

Some teachers don’t value my work as they would if I were “Canadian”

(A 16 year old female from El Salvador on her experiences at high school)

It was a good opportunity for me because if I was still back home, I would not be able to go to school

(A 17 year old female from Afghanistan)
Social Integration

Two Perspectives

Although at first you’ll feel isolated, in time you will make friends

(A 20 year old female from Vietnam on her advice to other refugees)

(I love) my friends. I love this school. I have always wanted to go there. There are people from my background so it is easier to make friends

(A 16 year old female from Bosnia-Hercegovina on why she likes school in Canada)
Child/youth has been bullied in the past year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All immigrants Wave 1</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All immigrants Wave 2</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees Wave 1</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees Wave 2</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Canadian-born 20-30% are victimized
- Britain: 57% are victimized
- US: rates for immigrants are 10% higher than for US-born

Observations: refugees less likely to be victimized by bullying; Rates decrease as age increases—similar to Canadian population

Wilkinson et al 2008; New Canadian Children and Youth Study
## Type of Bullying-class and wave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 Immigrants</th>
<th>Wave 1 Refugee</th>
<th>Wave 2 Immigrants</th>
<th>Wave 2 Refugee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion or race</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance or speech</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit, kicked, slapped, etc.</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened, sworn at</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumors or lies</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual jokes</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen or broken things</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canadian-born at age 13: 5%

Canadian-born at age 17: 21%
Who bullies you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All immigrants</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One boy</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One girl</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group of boys</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A group of girls</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys and girls</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilkinson et al. 2008
Child/youth has bullied someone else

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All (wave 1)</th>
<th>All (wave 2)</th>
<th>Refugees (Wave 1)</th>
<th>Refugees (Wave 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per week</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilkinson et al 2008
28% of youth Living in Calgary, Edmonton, & Winnipeg have been bullied

Frequency of Bullying by Ethnic Group

for Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg only

Canadian Total: 26.7%
Latin American: 18.5%
Vietnamese: 31.2%
Kurdish: 23.1%
Filipino/Filipina: 35.6%
Hong Kong Chinese: 43.6%
Mainland Chinese: 41.6%

Importance of Maintaining Culture

According to Parents

According to their kids

Wilkinson et al., (2010)
I Feel like a “Real” Canadian by Sex and Visible Minority Status

- Female: 44% Disagree, 27% Neutral, 29% Agree
- Male: 30% Disagree, 30% Neutral, 30% Agree
- Other: 33% Disagree, 27% Neutral, 39% Agree

Yugoslavian:
- Female: 40% Disagree, 33% Neutral, 27% Agree
- Male: 39% Disagree, 27% Neutral, 39% Agree
- Other: 39% Disagree, 28% Neutral, 28% Agree
Are you a “real” Canadian?

You become a real Canadian when you get your citizenship

(A 20 year old Afghani male on the importance of obtaining citizenship papers)
Subjective Citizenship

I would be Canadian. I will be partly Bosnian and partly, well mostly, Canadian always”

(A 19 year old female from Bosnia-Hercegovina when asked about her identity)
Meaning of Canadian Citizenship

- Peace and Freedom: 7%
- Proud to be Canadian: 20%
- Be accepted by others: 2%
- Learn the language: 1%
- To have rights: 10%
- Better jobs: 5%
- Just a piece of paper: 2%
- Nothing: 7%
- Other instrumental reasons: 5%
- Don't know: 7%
- Not returning home: 1%

Canadian passport: 33%
Mainstream Adaptation or Underclass Absorption?

• A bit of both.

• Underclass absorption: only a minority of youth felt they fit in. A majority were concerned about integration and their future in Canada; about 20% experienced extreme difficulties in school

• Mainstream adaptation: feel that preservation of culture is important and possible in Canada, though most cited instrumental reasons for acquiring citizenship
Coping after trauma-in Canada

- Programs to encourage **host society to interact with refugees**
  - Starts with school aged children but continues into adulthood
- Programs that **link GARs with host society** members to help with initial resettlement, enhance sense of belonging, create networks of support
- Provide information to the non-immigrant services about **knowledge gaps** of newcomers—especially in school system
- **Maintenance of cultural traditions** mitigates physical and mental health problems
- Translation support, particularly at arrival
- Continued support of **English and French language training**—especially advanced levels to assist in labour market and educational integration
  - Youth aged 16-17 often ineligible for programs if they are not in school
- Train refugee service providers **Narrative Exposure Therapy**: is helpful as refugees wait for appropriate psychological care
  - **PTSD Coach**: an app that provides education, a personalized emergency plan, self assessment and 25 techniques to regulate stress

Wilkinson, 2017; Abbot, 2016; Ayoughi et al. 2012; Ertl et al., 2011; Unger 2016; George et. al, 2015; Hansen and Houston, 2016; Wilkinson and Ponka, 2018
What else can we do?

- Resolve provincial/federal jurisdictional issues over refugee children and youth schooling
- Provide different instruction for the lower 20%
- Provide options for 15-17 year old dropouts
- Don’t treat groups of people like they are a problem to be solved
- Community policing works
- Recognize the good work of others
- UMOJA, after school programs at IRCOM, NEEDs Centre
- Volunteer
- Focus on educating youth
- Be a friend and ally
Forthcoming Projects

Resettlement of Refugees to Canadian Prairies (longitudinal)

- Syrians, Yazidi, Afghan, South Sudanese, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia
- Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
  - Yazidis in Toronto and London also included
- Funded by federal government
- SRS (with government providing contact information) of about 4,000 at time one; Two annual follow-ups until 2020
- Themes: employment, language acquisition, settlement service use, child’s education, ‘well-being’, and civic participation
- Advisory panel from community, settlement organizations, academics and federal/provincial government partners
- Initial contact by settlement organization in the area
  - Contact in first language, asked about language preference for survey Face-to-face
- Children and Youth Refugee Research Coalition-SSHRC
- Secondary migration of refugees-SSHRC
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**Resettlement of Refugees to Alberta Study:** Citizenship and Immigration Canada-Western Region Headquarters
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