

**Finding Housing for Resettled Refugees: Accounting for the Tangled Politics of Care in  
Canada's Private Refugee Sponsorship Program**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project examines private sponsors' experiences with finding and securing housing for privately sponsored refugees (PSR) in Ottawa prior to Operation Syrian Refugee (OSR) (before November 2015); during OSR and the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative (SRRI) (from November 2015 to January 2017); and after the SRRI (from January 2017 to December 2019). Although the PSR program has proved efficient in resettling newcomers in Canada, there has been little recognition of the real cost to sponsors; yet the significant amount of unpaid work these sponsors perform provides the very foundation of the program. I conducted interviews with eight private sponsors and one settlement worker between January and March 2020 to understand the challenges they face, and the social/personal networks on which they rely when navigating the housing market in the city. I also completed a literature review of publicly available information on Immigrant Serving Agency websites in Ottawa to use as a benchmark when comparing sponsorship programs approaches to housing. I demonstrate that sponsors' deeply caring, but unpaid, voluntary work during their initial housing search often leads to significant overwork. This unpaid caring labour not only represents the very foundation at the basis of the PSR program, but it is also an outcome of the PSR program structure itself. I argue that without more of a structure of support in the PSR program – such as, better guidance or more intervention on the part of the government – sponsors' feelings of overwork will continue unabated.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

**BVOR** – Blended Visa Office-Referred Program

**CCB** – Canada Child Benefit

**CCI** – Catholic Centre for Immigrants

**CMHC** – Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

**GAR** – Government Assisted Refugees

**IRCC** – Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada

**ISA** – Immigrant Serving Agency

**OSR** – Operation Syrian Refugees

**PSR** – Privately Sponsored Refugees

**RAP** – Resettlement Assistance Program

**REB** – Research Ethics Board

**RSTP** – Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

**SAH** – Settlement Agreement Holder

**SRRI** – Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative

**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER**

### **1.1. Introduction**

In 2015, 65.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide because of persecution, human rights violations, conflict, and widespread violence in their home countries (UNHCR, 2015). This mass displacement was particularly acute in the Mediterranean region, with millions of people attempting to reach Europe from West Asia and North Africa. By the end of 2015, the number of displaced people worldwide had reached the highest level since the aftermath of the Second World War (UNHCR, 2015). Of these 65.3 million people, 16.1 million were under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate as registered refugees. Yet only 107,100 people – or 0.66% of these registered refugees – were resettled by the end of 2015 (UNHCR, 2015). In many Western nations, news of these growing numbers of refugees was met with xenophobic backlash, leading to incidents of violence, closed borders and anti-refugee policies. Canada responded differently. While xenophobic rhetoric also exists in Canada, communities and civil society mobilized to help the country open its doors to those fleeing oppression, famine, and conflict.

Canada's response was largely directed towards the massive displacement of over 5.6 million Syrians resulting from the civil war in their country, which began in 2011 (UNHCR, 2018). Opposition parties and civil society organizations argued that the incumbent Conservative Party of Stephen Harper had not resettled a sufficient number of refugees, leading more Syrians to death and displacement (Walton-Roberts et al., 2019). The October 2015 federal election led to a shift in power. Within a matter of weeks, the newly-elected Liberal government of Justin Trudeau had followed up on its electoral platform promise and launched Operation Syrian

Refugees (OSR), with the goal of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada by year's end (IRCC, 2019). This goal was achieved a few months later, by February 2016 (IRCC, 2019). OSR was followed by the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative (SRRI), a continued commitment to resettle Syrians who were fleeing war in their home country. By December 2016, over 39,600 Syrian refugees were resettled across Canada (IRCC, 2019). Of these newcomers, 45% (nearly 17,840 people) had been resettled through Canada's unique private sponsorship of refugees (PSR) program, which relies entirely on the contributions of unpaid (volunteer) sponsors.

Although private sponsorship has proved to be an efficient program for resettling large numbers of newcomers across Canada, there has been little recognition of the financial, emotional, and labour costs borne by sponsors as they navigate the process of helping newcomers resettle into a new country. In this thesis, I examine private sponsors' experiences with the process of finding and securing housing for PSRs. In Canada, there are three streams of refugee sponsorship. First, the PSR program, relies entirely on support and engagement from civil society actors. In this case, groups of five or more individuals (Canadian citizens or permanent residents) sign on with a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH) organization<sup>1</sup> to sponsor refugees, accepting the full financial and emotional responsibility of resettlement for one year after the refugees' arrival, with minimal support from the associated SAH (Canada, 2019). Second, in the government-assisted refugee (GAR) program, the Canadian government (or the Province of Quebec<sup>2</sup>) assumes the full financial cost of resettlement for one year after arrival

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<sup>1</sup> SAH organizations have signed agreements with the Canadian government to sponsor refugees. They can sponsor refugees themselves or also work with other local community members to sponsor (Canada, 2019). Many of these organizations are religious, ethnic, community, or humanitarian oriented and vary greatly between cities and local contexts.

<sup>2</sup>Quebec, through the Canada-Quebec Agreement (Canada, 1991) has more autonomy than the other provinces and territories when deciding on the quotas of newcomers it will admit and specific selection criteria for refugees. Quebec has sole jurisdiction over their resettlement programs for both the PSR and GAR program service delivery (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020b).

(Canada, 2016). GARs have access to monthly allowances through the federally funded Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), along with assistance from settlement workers at designated Immigrant Serving Agencies (ISAs), to help with housing and other needs. Lastly, in the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program, the federal government supports six of the twelve months of the financial cost of resettlement, while private sponsors are responsible for the other six months of funding and all the emotional costs involved (Canada, 2016). Both PSRs and BVORs are eligible for other (non-RAP) settlement services, which ISAs provide to all newcomers. In this study, I focus on the GAR and PSR programs.

Over the past decade, and especially since 2015, Canada's unique refugee resettlement model has played a key role in resettling a significant number of refugees from Syria and beyond (Agrawal, 2018; Hamilton et al., 2020; Lenard, 2016; Molloy & Simeon, 2016). Yet the existence of this resettlement model was not the sole factor to account for the arrival of this important number of Syrian (and other) refugees. Over the past four decades, groups of Canadian citizens/permanent residents, civil society groups, and non-profit organizations have been actively involved in resettling privately sponsored refugees (Hyndman et al., 2017). Indeed, the Trudeau government's goal of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in a matter of months was achieved only because of the significant contributions from private individuals, civil society groups, and non-profit organizations. Well before the Liberal government's launch of OSR, civil society groups across Canada had already stepped up to privately sponsor Syrian (and other) refugees (Hyndman et al., 2017).

Regardless of the sponsorship stream, securing adequate and affordable housing for recently arrived refugees acts as a springboard for these newcomers to begin the complex process of resuming everyday life (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Brown, 2017; Carter et al.,

2009; Francis & Hiebert, 2014; Murdie, 2008; Shier et. al, 2016). Securing housing is the responsibility of settlement workers and private sponsors for GARs and PSRs respectively, and represents a crucial first step in the resettlement process. Over the past three decades, however, a lack of government investment in affordable housing has continually priced low-income families out of the housing market (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020), including newcomers such as refugees (Rose & Charette, 2017). According to Whitzman & Desroches (2020), about one in eight Canadian households are currently living in unaffordable and below-standard homes. The Liberal government's 2019 pledge to invest \$55 billion in affordable housing across the country is still not enough to fill the housing gap (Lang, 2019). Given this context, the task that private sponsors face in finding adequate housing for newcomers is a complicated and challenging endeavour.

#### 1.1.1. Research objectives and research questions

While a recent study (Rose & Charette, 2017) investigated the housing strategies of RAP agencies responsible for GARs, less is known about the roles and experiences of private sponsors in this process, including the strategies they develop, the challenges they face, and the information networks upon which they rely. The main goal of this research is therefore to examine private sponsors' experiences with finding and securing housing for PSRs. Specifically, I examine how sponsors' labour during their housing search is deeply caring work that is embedded within the broader structure of the PSR program. I adopt a geographical approach to the concept of care ethics to illustrate how sponsors' work during their housing search is a political project that reveals their personal values and structure of power relations embedded in the PSR program. My investigation of the PSR program ultimately aims to shed light on the often under-researched work sponsors perform.

The empirical focus of this research is on Canada's capital city, Ottawa, which is a designated refugee resettlement destination for GARs as well as a major reception location for PSRs (Walton-Roberts et al., 2019). With a population of approximately 935,000 people, Ottawa is a mid-sized city that ranked sixth amongst the top destination cities where newcomers settle in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). To complete the project, I adopted a qualitative approach. First, in fall 2019, I reviewed and analyzed the available literature on ISAs in Ottawa to establish a benchmark for comparisons between the PSR and GAR program structures and their strategies for housing newcomers. Then, in early 2020, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight private sponsors and one settlement worker with the aim of understanding how sponsors navigate the rental housing market to secure suitable housing for PSR families. Temporally, the focus of my study was on how private sponsors navigated the Ottawa rental housing market during three distinct periods: prior to OSR (before November 2015); during OSR and the SSRI (from November 2015 to January 2017); and after the SRRI (from January 2017 to December 2019).

In this project I ask: how does the PSR program structure differ from, or compare to, the GAR program structure in terms of the tasks, networks, challenges, and successes involved in sponsors' and settlement workers' labour during their search for housing? How does the notion of care ethics in geography help to shed light on the costs of sponsors' labour in the PSR program? What are the positive and negative impacts to sponsors because of the PSR program structure's reliance on unpaid work?

### 1.1.2. Research Arguments

Although the PSR program has proved efficient in resettling newcomers in Canada, there has been little recognition of the real cost to sponsors; yet the significant amount of unpaid work

these sponsors perform provides the very foundation of the program. Existing studies have shown that the private sponsorship program produces inherently complex and unequal relationships between sponsor and newcomer. On the one hand, sponsors provide financial, social, and emotional support for newcomers under dynamics of paternalism (Kyriakides et al., 2018; Macklin et al., 2020). Newcomers sometimes struggle to reclaim their “eligibility to exist, and authority to act” within the framework of their pre-refugee status identities (Kyriakides et al., 2018, pg. 38) or feel indebted to their sponsors during the resettlement period (Arnault & Merali, 2019). Yet on the other hand, sponsors have a multitude of complex motivations to become sponsors that are not related to notions of paternalism – such as empathy, a manifestation of their faith, a sense of responsibility, civic duty, humanitarian solidarity, or personal histories with immigration and resettlement. Sponsors actively work to negotiate their relationships with newcomers and afford them the space to make decisions, while also acting as their guide throughout the resettlement process (Macklin et al., 2020). Sponsors’ diverse and compassionate motivations to support newly-arrived refugees not only helps to dismantle the inherent (unequal) power dynamics involved in private sponsorship, but they also illuminate the autonomy of newcomers.

Sponsors’ willingness to perform unpaid care work is the foundation of the PSR program structure. Yet this unpaid work can be strenuous for sponsors; in particular, the stress of having to solve unpredictable challenges, various administrative hurdles, and navigating an increasingly precarious affordable rental market in a short amount of time. I will demonstrate that the deeply caring, but unpaid, voluntary work that sponsors perform during their housing search often leads to significant overwork. My findings reveal that sponsors sometimes encounter unanticipated financial and emotional challenges during this search that ultimately led to feelings of burnout. I

argue that without more of a structure of support in the PSR program – such as, better guidance or more intervention on the part of the government – sponsors’ feelings of overwork will continue unabated, which could lead to fewer individuals taking on private sponsorship. Ultimately, sponsors will continue to feel burnt out if measures are not taken – for example, by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) – to ensure that sponsors are supported and do not become overworked during their housing search (and beyond). My objective is not so much to comment on the future of the PSR program, but rather, to shed light on the number of structural shortcomings within the program that are related to sponsors’ caring labour. For this reason, I draw on geographies of care as a conceptual framework to underline the significance of the structural shortcomings of the PSR program.

### 1.1.3. Thesis outline

This thesis follows the article-based format and is divided into three parts. Part 1 serves as an introduction, Part 2 presents the main findings and is formatted as an article, and Part 3 offers a discussion on the findings and main contributions of the thesis. In Part 1, I begin by providing the context of Ottawa’s unique history with welcoming refugees that, while encouraging private sponsorship, has added strain on the already unaffordable and inaccessible local rental market. I then provide an overview of the existing literature on refugee housing security during OSR and the SRRI, as it relates to the structures of the GAR and PSR programs, and the landscape of rental housing in Ottawa. For the conceptual framework of this research, I take a geographical perspective on the notion of care ethics to explain how the Canadian settlement sector is rooted in care work that is relational, emotional, and embedded within larger structures of power. Finally, I present and discuss the methodology of the project, its research limitations, and conclude with a summary of Part 1.

Part 2 of the thesis is an article that has been written to the specifications of *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*. This chapter presents my research findings and detailed analysis of the interview data, including quotes from participants, to demonstrate the ways in which sponsors worked to navigate the housing market during and after the OSR/SRRI in Ottawa. To conclude the thesis, Part 3 comprises of a discussion on how the Canadian settlement sector is implicated in a structure of care in GAR and PSR programs. Furthermore, I provide recommendations drawing from my findings, outline my main research contributions, and discuss possibilities for future research avenues.

## **1.2. Context**

### **1.2.1. Ottawa's unique history of welcoming refugees**

As a response to the media portrayals and urgency of Syrian refugee 'crisis' during the spring and summer of 2015, similarly to other communities across Canada, Ottawa residents began to mobilize in order to assist refugees (Walton-Roberts et al., 2019). Even before the Liberal's launch of OSR in late 2015, civil society organizations, community groups, and engaged citizens began contributing to the resettlement of Syrians; key in this process were local histories of community support towards refugees (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a). In Ottawa, especially important was the history of "Project 4000": in 1979, Ottawa's Mayor Marion Dewar began an initiative to resettle 4000 Indochinese refugees, which later became known as Project 4000 (Carrière, 2016; Powell, 2014; Veronis, 2019). That year, due to an unexpected outpouring of support from the public, Ottawa's city council announced \$25,000 to launch Project 4000, which was later established as a non-profit organization that assisted new private sponsors in the city (Carrière, 2016; Powell, 2014). Fast-forward to 2015, when OSR was launched, Ottawa

residents saw the past success of Project 4000 as a “rallying point” for community mobilizing in support of refugees that could be used again – since it had served to “channel energies” for private sponsorship in 1979 (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a, pg. 252). Local histories and responses to Project 4000 not only shaped the existing settlement sector partnerships in Ottawa (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a), but it continues to shape how many sponsors involved in ongoing sponsorships are motivated to sponsor.

As Walton-Roberts et al. (2020a) explain, the galvanized response for Syrian resettlement support in Ottawa (and other parts of the country) has roots in a history of local refugee support. Following the announcement of OSR and the SRRI, there was, among other things, a surge in volunteer offers, new community initiatives for mobilization and coordination of efforts to assist in refugee resettlement (e.g., the creation of Refugee 613<sup>3</sup>; Veronis, 2019), as well as cooperation from landlords in Ottawa (CCI, 2016). For example, Ottawa’s only RAP-serving agency, the Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI), helped resettle 1,200 Syrian GARs in a three-month period, whereas previously they served about 500 GARs annually (CCI, 2016). Further, between November 2015 and September 2018, Ottawa received a total of 3,310 Syrian refugees, nearly 45% of who were PSRs and BVORs; this is unlike other cities of similar size, such as Hamilton where only about 22% of refugees were sponsored through PSR and BVOR programs (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a). By drawing on past histories such as Project 4000, Ottawa

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<sup>3</sup> Refugee 613 (2020) is an Ottawa based “communications hub that informs, connects and inspires people to welcome refugees and build strong communities.” As a response to the increase in community mobilization around refugee sponsorship, in 2015, Refugee 613 began as a coalition of over 30 partners (consisting of ISAs, private sponsorship experts, health care professionals, lawyers, education specialists, faith groups, refugee shelters, and volunteers). The organization is still currently offering a variety of services for both newcomers and the sponsors/volunteers who support resettlement initiatives in Ottawa (see references for a link to their website).

residents mobilized and organized in preparation for the arrival of refugees during the OSR/SRRI, including to sponsor unprecedented numbers of families among them.

I now turn to a number of challenges relating to Ottawa's rental market. Here, I explain how I measure affordable housing for this study, changes to the rental market before, during, and after the OSR/SRRI, and the present situation of the affordable rental market in Ottawa.

### 1.2.2. The OSR/SRRI and Ottawa's rental market

Presently, there is no coherent definition of what constitutes 'affordable housing' in Canada (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC, 2018), housing is 'affordable' when a household spends less than 30% of its pre-tax-income on housing. For the federal government, 'core housing need' is measured by affordability (households spending more than 30% of their income on housing), the size of the dwelling in relation to the size and make-up of the household, and the adequacy of the dwelling itself (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). For the purposes of this study, affordable housing is used to mean the average rent-to-income ratio for households. Specifically, I am interested in how the average rental costs in Ottawa compare to the housing allowances newcomers receive from the government (the RAP rates and shelter stipends) or their sponsors.

Between November 2015 and September 2016, Ottawa received the second highest number of Syrian refugees in Ontario after Toronto (Rose & Charette, 2020). Prior to the start of OSR, in October 2015, Ottawa's average vacancy rate for a three-or-more-bedroom apartment was 5.7% (CMHC, 2020). The surge of Syrian newcomers during the OSR/SRRI (as I will show below), contributed to putting more stress on the housing market. Based on rent-to-income ratios, before the OSR/SRRI, the housing market in Ottawa was relatively stable and affordable. From

2010 to 2015, the vacancy rates for a three-or-more-bedroom apartment never fell below 2.2% and the average cost only saw an overall annual increase of 5.9% (CMHC, 2020). The case of Ottawa thus provides a unique opportunity to examine how a mid-sized city successfully managed some of the highest numbers of refugees during the SRRI (and beyond). Despite Ottawa's increasingly constrained rental market, sponsors from across the city continue to work within the local market to secure housing for newcomers.

In Ottawa, as elsewhere in Canada, the population is not resistant from shortages of affordable housing. For example, in 2018, evictions and demolitions took place in the Herongate community (a neighbourhood with affordable housing located south of the downtown core) for new luxury condos (Crosby, 2020; Rockwell, 2018). Further, the median price per square-foot of property in Ottawa rose by 17.9% from 2018 to 2019 (Royal LePage, 2019), making it the city with the fastest rising property prices across the country (Lord, 2019). As of 2016, 42.3% of Ottawa renters were spending 30% or more of their income on housing. Meanwhile, the limited affordable housing that is available is monopolized by a few private corporations, such as Timbercreek, Capital Towers, Osgood, and Minto. At \$85,981, Ottawa's median household income is 22.24% higher than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2016). However, the proportion of the overall households in Ottawa that are considered very-low income (households that have an income of less than 20% of the Area Median Income) is much higher than similar sized cities, which suggests that there is an upward pressure on rents in the city (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020).

As mentioned, during the OSR/SRRI, Ottawa residents began to mobilize a variety of resettlement resources by drawing on the local histories of private sponsorship (Carrière, 2016; Veronis 2019). As a result, Ottawa received high numbers of GAR and PSR Syrian newcomers.

Although many of the Syrian families who arrived at this time had large family sizes, GARs were 52% more likely than PSRs to have a household of 4 to 6 family members (IRCC, 2019). The larger family sizes of GAR newcomers made it especially hard for settlement workers to “convince landlords to rent units to people with four and five children” (Rose & Charette, 2020, pg. 205). For sponsors, many of the PSRs arriving during the SRRI came as a single person household (IRCC, 2019). While in late 2015 (when OSR began), vacancy rates for a one-bedroom apartment were approximately 3%, by 2017 they had dropped to only 1.4% (CMHC, 2020). The influx of newcomers during the OSR/SRRI, undoubtedly caused stress on an already precarious affordable housing market in Ottawa. As many sponsors participating in this study explained (as will be shown in Part 2), there was a stark difference in the availability and affordability of units (for one bedroom and multiple bedroom units) during as compared to after the OSR/SRRI, with the latter period presenting a much more challenging market than the former.

### **1.3. Literature Review**

Securing housing for refugees is an important concern regardless of the stream of sponsorship (Agrawal, 2018). A lack of meaningful government investment in establishing affordable housing across Canada (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020) has left many low-income households, including newcomers such as refugees, without access to quality, sustainable housing in recent years (Rose & Charette, 2017). Early research on refugees and housing examined refugees’ satisfaction with accommodations, their relationships with landlords, and the affordability of rental units (Carter et al., 2009; Francis & Hiebert, 2014; Murdie, 2008). Much of this earlier work focused on individual case studies (either groups of refugees by country of

origin, refugee streams, or those who were resettled in specific cities); but it does not tackle the structural underpinnings of different refugee resettlement programs.

In what follows, I first present the literature on refugee housing precarity in relation to the OSR/SRRI. Next, I discuss the GAR and PSR program structures as they relate to housing precarity among refugees. Finally, I address the recent phenomenon of financialized landlords – landlords who are responsible for accelerating gentrification through investing in a city’s rental market and extracting value from units (August & Walks, 2018) – that control the housing market in Ottawa, (and elsewhere in Canada). Ultimately, the ways in which GAR and PSR newcomers access housing is primarily based on the ways in which settlement workers and sponsors, respectively, navigate a tight rental market during the housing search.

#### 1.3.1. The OSR/SRRI and challenges with refugees’ housing security

Recently, scholars have examined how refugees’ experiences with precarious housing can be attributed to the structures of GAR and PSR programs, rather than refugees’ individual situations and actions (Agrawal, 2018; Hyndman et al., 2017; Lenard, 2016). Following the OSR/SRRI in 2015-2016, a number of studies (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Kyriakides et al., 2018) highlighted limitations of the GAR and PSR program structures by focusing primarily on Syrian refugees’ experiences with resettlement. Several researchers (Agrawal, 2018; Hyndman et al., 2017; Lenard, 2016) have undertaken research about the efficacy of the GAR and PSR models as they relate to employment, social integration, and economic success. Fewer studies, however, examine how the GAR and PSR programs shape newcomers’ housing experiences. Newcomers, especially refugees, are using an unsustainable portion of their income for over-crowded, precarious, and inadequate housing for many years

after arrival (Silvius et al., 2017). Moreover, after the 12 months of required sponsorship funding expires (for both GAR and PSR programs), the phenomenon known as ‘Month 13’ begins (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Rose & Charette, 2017). On the thirteenth month after arrival, sponsored refugees are expected to be financially autonomous, and to pay for all their own costs, often resulting in jeopardized housing situations. Month 13 also coincides with the federal requirement to re-pay transportation costs from refugees’ initial travel to Canada. This factor not only takes many families by surprise, but also further contributes to financial stress, and in turn to unstable housing situations (Arnault & Merali, 2019). Although the federal government canceled the requirement to pay back transportation costs for Syrian refugee arrivals during the height of OSR in late 2015 (O’Neil, 2015), today, any refugee resettled in Canada is responsible for re-paying the transportation costs associated with their resettlement travels (CIC, 2020).

### 1.3.2. GAR program structures and challenges to housing security

Although GARs and PSRs face similar issues with regard to housing, specifically related to affordability after the first year of funding, their housing situation is somewhat different. A recent study by Rose & Charette (2017) sought to learn how RAP-serving organizations went about finding housing for GARs during the SRRI. During winter and spring of 2017 (following the end of the SRRI), they conducted interviews with settlement workers in 13 different cities across 7 provinces and found that in many cities, long-standing relationships between RAP agencies and local landlords provided an entry point for GARs into affordable housing (Ottawa included). Generally, GAR households were often overcrowded for their large families, were located on city outskirts and in suburbs (where transportation caused major access issues), and

beyond walking distance from community ties and places of worship (Rose & Charette, 2017, 2020).

Across the country, most settlement workers use similar approaches to find housing for refugees, and often rely on groups of volunteers, established networks with landlords, and other information networks (Agrawal, 2018; Kyriakides et al., 2018; Rose & Charette, 2017). For GARs, the transition to Month 13 turned out to be more manageable than initially feared; this was mostly due to the fact that RAP agencies were able to negotiate initial rent levels, add funds for subsidizing rents beyond the 12 months for those in need, and encouraged GARs to change to a month-to-month lease with their landlords (Rose & Charette, 2017).

### 1.3.3. PSR program structures and challenges to housing security

In 1976, the Government of Canada refined its Immigration Act to contain “provisions for the private sponsorship of refugees alongside government-assisted refugee resettlement,” which would act as a secondary mode resettlement (Labman & Pearlman, 2018, pg. 441). The program was not initially successful. However, three years later, the government introduced the ‘matching’ principle of settlement (which is no longer in place), whereby for every family resettled under the PSR program, the government would resettle another (Neuwirth & Clark, 1981). As a result, private sponsorship drastically increased. In 1979, about 100 individuals were resettled under the PSR program. By 1980, that number increased to nearly 34,000 (Labman & Pearlman, 2018). These stark increases in numbers have also been tied to the emotional resonance of refugee ‘crises’ with Canadians. Images of the ‘Napalm Girl’ from the Vietnam War in 1972 to Alan Kurdi’s body washing up on the beaches of Turkey in 2015, have tugged on the heartstrings of Canadian citizens and simultaneously promoted private sponsorship of

refugees (Hyndman et.al, 2017). Resettlement under the PSR program, however, is not without issues, and in particular sponsors face many challenges to secure suitable housing for newcomers.

Even though housing acts as the springboard for refugees to begin the complex and challenging process of resuming family routines and building a new life (Arnault & Merali, 2019; Carter et al., 2009; Shier et. al, 2016), relatively little research has examined the role of private sponsors in shaping or influencing refugees' housing experiences. Private sponsors, who are responsible for providing housing, sometimes have less experience than RAP workers, no or fewer networks to rely on for resettlement work, and are often not aware of Month 13. A study conducted in Edmonton (AB) shows that two of the most common reasons for homelessness for PSRs were sponsors abandoning the family and sponsors setting up housing that newcomers could no longer afford after Month 13 (Arnault & Merali, 2019). At times, sponsors cannot provide enough help in language training, employment opportunities, and administrative support, which can lead to housing precarity (Arnault & Merali, 2019; Wood et al., 2011). Furthermore, sponsors (although often well-intentioned) may not always have the refugees' best interests in mind. Sponsors avoid looking for affordable housing far away from their sponsorship group's neighbourhoods of residence (in order to easily coordinate volunteer support); yet they fail to consider that newcomers may prefer to live in neighbourhoods with people from the same cultural background (Beiser, 2009; Wood et al., 2011). Although they generally want the best for the PSRs, at times sponsors may put the newcomers in vulnerable positions.

Along these lines, the housing situation of refugees during the OSR/SRRI suggests that PSRs are often more vulnerable than GARs because their pathways to service delivery are not as standardized and inter-connected through various service sectors compared to those who go

through RAP agencies (Arnault & Merali, 2019). In some cases, PSRs have limited opportunities to report poor situations with their sponsors due to feelings of indebtedness and lack of access to services that enable them to report inadequate behaviour (Agrawal, 2018; Beiser, 2009). The question of PSRs' agency is deeply implicated in the complex power and emotional dynamics between sponsors and the sponsored. As Kyriakides et al. (2018, pg. 60) and Brücker (2017) have discussed, persons navigating refugee status must navigate structured notions of 'refugeeness'; a "contested position of existence in which the figure of the refugee is constructed by policy practices and media representations." Notions of 'refugeeness' are reinforced through the PSR program; whereby the concern is to make engaged and active citizens out of marginalized newcomers (Kyriakides et al., 2018). Specifically, in the case of pervasive political discourse around the 'Syrian refugee crisis,' private sponsors tend to associate the construct of passive victimhood onto their sponsored families, often exacerbating refugees' already-vulnerable positions (Kyriakides et al., 2018).

Whether refugees arrive in Canada as GARs or PSRs, the conditions relating to acquiring their first home are determined by the type of support they receive: experienced settlement workers at RAP agencies, or private sponsorship groups with uneven knowledge and abilities to navigate the housing market. Unlike settlement workers, private sponsors do not have standardized networks with landlords to secure housing (and often are not knowledgeable about many aspects of the resettlement process), and thus they often struggle, even more so due to constrained housing markets, Ottawa being no exception.

#### 1.3.4. Challenges relating to financialized landlords reforming the Ottawa rental market

It is important to comment on the key changes that have transformed the Ottawa rental market to understand the challenges sponsors face when they search for housing. Although there exists little exploration on sponsors specific challenges with finding affordable housing, there is a burgeoning area of literature that examines changes to the affordable rental market in Ottawa. Recent research around the emergence of the financialization of rental housing has shown that poorer renters are being increasingly displaced from the inner-city into suburban, post-war high-rises (Paradis et al., 2014) that are farther away from centralized access to services (August & Walks, 2018; August, 2020; Crosby, 2020). After decades of neoliberal divestment from affordable (and/or public/social) housing across the country, rental units are in the hands of private financialized landlords (August & Walks, 2018). These landlords are responsible for accelerating gentrification by monopolizing a city's rental stock and notoriously applying various investment strategies to extract value from their buildings, such as gradually squeezing value from properties by adding ancillary fees to rental costs and applying for rent increases above the provincial guidelines (August & Walks, 2018). Reinvestments in older buildings are transforming the rental sector into an unaffordable space (August, 2020). In Ottawa, Crosby (2020) writes, the 'demoviction' that took place in the Herongate neighbourhood, was an investment strategy by Timbercreek to make considerable profit by remodeling their properties as new luxury condominiums. Across Ottawa, private financialized landlords are replacing once-affordable housing (Crosby, 2020; Herongate Tenant Coalition, 2020) and developing new, unaffordable condominiums (Sali, 2020).

Given the recent increases in luxury rental stock in Ottawa (Crosby, 2020), the upward pressures on rents in the city (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020), and decreasing vacancy rates

(CMHC, 2020), both settlement workers and private sponsors are navigating an increasingly unaffordable housing market in Ottawa. Nonetheless, this market presents a disproportionate challenge for sponsors as they work to secure housing for newcomers. Unlike settlement workers, sponsors often do not have established networks with landlords; they therefore often have to perform a much more labour-intensive and taxing housing search for newcomers than what they may initially anticipate (as I will demonstrate in Part 2).

The intensity of sponsors' labour demonstrates a key issue with the PSR program — that it relies on care by members of society who perform enormous amounts of unpaid labour (even more so when they lack experience). Private sponsorship appears to “be shaped by who the sponsors know, rather than what they know” (Agrawal, 2018, pg. 19). From its roots following the third Indochina war in the mid-1970s, Canada's PSR model acts as an alliance between the government and private sponsors. Yet, this public-private ‘partnership’ has been paradoxically fraught with both criticisms (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Wood et al., 2011) and praise (Blain et al., 2020; Walton-Roberts, et al. 2020b) regarding its effectiveness in shaping refugee experiences. The existing literature on the outcomes of the GAR and PSR programs is sparse and conflicting. Nevertheless, academics generally agree that the composition of each stream of sponsorship leads to different outcomes for refugees to Canada (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Labman & Pearlman, 2018; Rose & Charette, 2017). It is therefore useful to unpack how the structures of the GAR and PSR programs may be contributing to differences in refugees' housing outcomes. Rather than focusing solely on the outcomes of the OSR/SRRI in Ottawa, I take a more systematic approach to examine how the structures of the GAR and PSR programs may lead to housing precarity amongst sponsored refugees. I will now discuss how the notion of care ethics and geographical conceptions of care labour illuminate the

intricate relationships, unequal power dynamics, and individual agencies of sponsors and newcomers embedded within the PSR program structure.

#### **1.4. Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this project is rooted in the complex relationships and activities that exist between the volunteer labour involved in supporting refugee resettlement in Canada and the political projects involved in care ethics. The notion of care ethics works to shed light on the unequal distribution and practice of care, while accounting for the political, social, and economic contexts in which this care work is performed (Fisher & Tronto, 1990; Kaufman-Osborne et al., 2018; Tronto, 1993). Care ethics from a geographical perspective serves to show that care work is not abstract, but rather is embedded within specific sites and locations, spaces of social relationships, and structures of power that produce the need for care work (Massey, 2004; Lawson, 2007). My goal in using the concept of care ethics as an analytical framework is to underline the social and political value of care labour (Williams, 2018) on an individual level, specifically in the very personal and emotionally intensive labour sponsors perform for newcomers.

In this section, I begin with an introduction to feminist approaches to care ethics as an analytical framework. Next, I present the literature on the geographies and spaces of caring that are relevant to understanding the care labour that forms the basis of Canadian refugee sponsorship. Finally, I explain the specific aspects of refugee sponsorship that are based on care labour. Here, I argue that the work private sponsors (and other volunteers) perform in refugee resettlement is based on their caring labour. By using a care ethics approach to understand the spaces of care in sponsorship, I not only show that care in refugee resettlement is a political

project, but also that the concept serves to reveal the individual values (be their civic duties, faith, humanitarianism, solidarity, or support for the well-being of others) and agencies of both sponsors/volunteers and newcomers during the resettlement process.

#### 1.4.1. Care ethics as an analytical framework

The notion of care ethics draws from many decades of work by feminist theorists who challenged dominant ontologies of morality and rights-based ethics (Askins, 2016; Bartos, 2018; Tronto, 1993). Tronto's (1993) seminal work *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* called our attention to the political contexts in which care labour is performed. In this work, Tronto makes the argument for breaking down the moral boundaries that we often associate with a gendered view of the private-public dichotomy. Traditionally, this dichotomy not only separated women's work in the home from men's role in the public (often political) sphere, but it also devalues the work that women perform and excludes them from participating in more public spheres. For Tronto, care work (whether preformed by women or men) should be valued.

Historically, women's work in the private sphere has been associated with the social reproduction of a certain population (Fraser, 2017). The fundamental insight of social reproduction theory is unpacking and scrutinizing the ways in which the traditionally unrecognized labour involved in reproducing 'people' works (Bhattacharya, 2017; Fraser, 2017). Not only is the (often voluntary) labour that is at the heart of reproducing society frequently swept under the rug (Bhattacharya, 2017), but it is also often undervalued. As a practice, care work involves actions that "maintain, contain, and repair our 'world' so that we can all live in it as well as possible" (Fisher & Tronto, 1990, pg. 40). Both as a practice and process, Tronto

(1993) explains that care labour involves four principles: caring about, taking care of, caregiving, and care receiving. These four principles of care are interrelated and interdependent insofar as humans always exist in relation to one another (Tronto, 1993; Kaufman-Osborne et al., 2018). Put differently, in one form or another, everyone has been a recipient of care work at one point in their lives. However, much of this care work is not (re)distributed equally. Feminist care ethics, therefore, pays close attention to how gender, class, and race influence “who cares and in what ways” (Tronto, 1993, pg. 112), and how often those in higher socioeconomic positions pass caring work onto others (Kaufman-Osborne et al., 2018).

Care is not only personal, but is constantly situated in wider political, social, and economic structures that exist in relation to one another (Tronto, 1993). By distinguishing the four principles of care, we begin to note that the practice of care serves as an ideological function and that, in turn, shows that care work is relational and bound-up in structures of power. Moreover, power hierarchies are central to caring relations, especially in the caregiver and care receiver relationship (Tronto, 1993). However, care relationships are also fluid and dynamic (Askins, 2015; Bartos, 2019) and ebb and flow over time, contexts, and spaces. Conceptualizing care ethics as relational, allows for an interrogation of the “permanent background of social relations that structure inequality and injustice” (Lawson, 2007, pg. 6). An examination of the ways in which care work is situated in broader social and political structures serves to break down previously held notions of the gendered public-private dichotomy and to expose the value in care work. Ultimately, care work is a political project that inherently involves emotions, cements power divisions in different caring agencies, and exposes the asymmetry in caring relations (Bartos, 2019; Lawson, 2007). In private sponsorship, the care work that forms the basis of program structure is also inherently unequal. The PSR program gives rise to dynamics of

paternalism in that sponsors are cast in a role of providing guidance, financial advice, and personal support to newcomers over the course of a year (Macklin et al., 2020). However, as I will show below, sponsors negotiate these power structures within a variety of spaces that reveal a fluid and dynamic relationship between sponsor and newcomer.

#### 1.4.2. Geographies of care

The landscape of care ethics is being continually transformed (Milligan & Conradson, 2011). Starting in the 1980s, social care policies saw the erosion of state-run institutions that provided care and the emergence of ‘community care’, a new social policy whereby the care recipient would take up an active role in their own communities (Park & Radford, 1997; Power & Hall, 2018). However, as Power & Hall (2018, pg. 306) explain, many policy makers at the time saw this ‘community care’ to mean that care would be “completed *by* the community, rather than *in* the community,”<sup>4</sup> and as a result, care work was deinstitutionalized. Early work by Jennifer Wolch (1990) conceptualized the voluntary sector that performed much of this care work as a ‘shadow state’. According to her, the voluntary sector was being co-opted by the state to provide essential care services. In this early research, community services that provided care were understood as a “mixed economy” (Power & Hall, 2018, pg. 307) of care that included a range of volunteer workers, charity organizations, and private sector companies.

Other geographers then began to turn their attention to an understanding of care ethics that sees spatial formations as the product of continual social relations (Massey, 2004). For Massey (2004), global patterns of inequality are produced by social relations at both local and global scales. More recently, geographers have focused on the commodification of care during

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<sup>4</sup> Emphasis in original text.

cuts to welfare services (Clarke, 2012; Cox, 2013; Green & Lawson, 2011; Power & Hall, 2018). Others have turned their attention to the home as a site of care (Askins, 2015), particularly when it comes to shifting meanings of the home as a space to care for elderly people (Power, 2008) and as a space of social reproduction during childcare (Valentine et al., 2012). Valentine et al. (2012) further explain that by foregrounding the negotiations involved in everyday care spaces, we can begin to centralize family dynamics and social reproduction in geographical theory. It is the behaviours and experiences of all those involved with care labour that is shaped by the social relationships beyond traditional spaces of caring (such as the household, drop-in centres, or soup kitchens) and on a variety of scales; from the micro-level of body care, to the household level, to the community or city, to the society or nation, or to a global scale (Bowlby, 2012; Hall, 2019).

Geographers have a long history of researching the power relations embedded in care ethics. Many scholars in the discipline examine how the notion of care ethics is central to the emotions involved in social relationships and understandings of the world (Cloke, 2002; Lawson, 2007; Massey, 2004). Studying care ethics in a variety of spaces affords geographers “a richness of possibilities through which to engage critically with a range of politically charged discourses” (Atkinson et al., 2011, pg. 563). An ethics of care allows us to “think of space as actively and continually practiced social relations – where we make choices that matter and connect us to the lives of others” (Lawson, 2007, pg. 6). Care ethics in geography, therefore, contributes to making visible interdependent and exploitative relationships and leads us to question how inequality is produced through various spatial and temporal scales (Atkinson et al., 2011; Lawson, 2007; Power & Hall, 2018). It what follows, I explain three distinct spaces of caring that are relevant to understanding care ethics in Canadian refugee resettlement.

### 1.4.3. Care in neoliberal spaces

Rollbacks in state-run welfare provisions since the 1990s has led to neoliberal restructuring policies in many Western nations (Milligan & Conradson, 2011). Tronto (2017) explains that emerging neoliberal paradigms of care understand care ethics in three distinct ways. First, care is seen as a personal responsibility. Second, since markets are expected to meet needs if needs exist, then market solutions should exist to meet care needs. And third, family should be the proper locus of care, and therefore, if individuals cannot afford market solutions for care, they then ought to enlist family (or friends, or charities) to meet care needs. However, since feminist care ethics considers care as a collective responsibility that involves relational actors, care is more than a commodity that can be bought and sold on the market (Barnes et al., 2015; Green & Lawson, 2011; Tronto, 2017).

There is no doubt that a long history of neoliberal restructuring policies has made caring work more precarious in many western nations (Barnes et al., 2015; Lowe et al., 2017; Power & Hall, 2018; Shields, 2014; Tronto, 2017). As a result, geographers have begun to examine how new spaces of care are unfolding due to austerity measures, such as funding cuts to state care provisions in many countries across the globe (Power & Hall, 2018). As Lawson (2007) explains, the notion of care ethics foregrounds the public character of care, and as such, challenges neoliberal market logics that frame care as a personal responsibility. An outcome of neoliberal policies on care provisions has been the “precarious, community-led geographical patchwork of provision, raising questions of equality, sustainability, responsibility and where care should happen” (Power & Hall, 2018, pg. 309).

#### 1.4.4. Care in social services

Community-led voluntary organizations are increasingly being co-opted by the state to fill the gaps (often caused by neoliberal restructuring policies) in care work in many western societies (Power & Hall, 2018). The voluntary sector is defined by its engagement with volunteers and consists of “organizations that are formal, non-profit distributing, constitutionally independent of the state and self-governing” (Milligan & Conradson, 2011, pg. 3). From the 1990s onwards, the voluntary sector was considered as a public-private ‘partnership’ that has been recognized by the state as bearing the brunt of neoliberal policies and austerity measures, including cutbacks to social support programs and the downloading of public service responsibilities onto communities and individuals (Labman & Pearlman, 2018; Macmillan & Townsend 2011; Wolch, 1990; Wood et al., 2011). However, there has been some debate concerning the impacts this decentralization of public services has on the voluntary sector’s ability to serve communities (Milligan & Conradson, 2011; Veronis, 2019). Although some scholars have demonstrated that welfare state retrenchment and ongoing austerity policies have contributed to the disempowerment and loss of autonomy of the communities they serve (Herbert, 2005; Wolch, 1990), more recently, geographers have begun to conceptualize the ‘relational turn’ of voluntary sector as a series of systematic relationships (DeVerteuil et al., 2019; Hall, 2019).

A relational view of the voluntary sector considers the sector as not fully a ‘shadow state’ that relies on volunteer’s labour to implement welfare services, but as one that contains a set of “relational, affective and material networks of relationships and connectivities” (DeVerteuil et al., 2019, pg. 921). The voluntary sector cannot be understood as simply a tool of neoliberal policies, but rather, the sector acts as more of a space of encounter and mediator of urban change

(Milligan & Fyfe, 2003). As many geographers have noted, impacts of neoliberal restructuring have been felt differently based on the context of various spaces (Wolch, 1990; Milligan & Conradson, 2011). Voluntary care organizations are often more dispersed than their organizational setting may imply. For example, care in the form of friendships (Askins, 2015) or peer-support groups (Power & Hall, 2018) is increasingly taking place in local mainstream settings (such as in parks or in museums), rather than in more formal voluntary sector organizations (DeVerteuil et al., 2019). Individuals work in the voluntary sector because of their own personal values, beliefs, and motivations that bring them to choose to participate in the sector. The voluntary sector therefore acts as an important space for the performance of individuals' care labour (Askins & Blazek, 2016; DeVerteuil et al., 2019).

#### 1.4.5. Care in everyday spaces

Considering space as relational shows how spaces (like social identities and relationships) are made through interactions with others (Hall, 2019; Massey, 2004). In this way, studying relational geographies offers the possibility to study the everyday practice of care. Sarah Hall (2019) describes the geographical implications of austerity policies as bleeding into the everyday spaces in which people live and work. She argues for a relational approach in order to understand how 'everyday austerity' both involves paying close attention to questions of inequality and addressing the social relationships that are configured by interactions in everyday spaces (Hall, 2019). Within everyday spaces and interactions, family relations, individual identities, and social values are being formed (Valentine et al., 2012).

Lawson (2007) reminds us that while studying care ethics in practice, we should not ignore the emotions involved in making social connections as they are often sites of power

differences. Since care ethics relies on the interconnections within social relationships, and social relations are produced through emotion, emotional connections are also sites of power. Although emotional connections exist on many scales, one in particular is the relational nature of the social processes involved in forming friendships (Hall, 2019). For example, Askins' (2015) participatory action research investigates how a 'befriending scheme' in North East England brings refugees and asylum seekers together with local residents. She pays close attention to how the spaces of encounter between residents and newcomers in this program fosters intercultural social relationships and friendships. However, acts of befriending and volunteering with newcomers are not, void of the quiet politics involved in asymmetric acts of care (Askins, 2015). Since caring involves active giving and compassion, "the receiving other" is often "pitied and thus passive" (Askins, 2015, pg. 471). But, just as care ethics is a relational ontology, so too are the spaces in which caregivers and care receivers enact their agency. As shown in the work of Kyriakides et al. (2018), the relationship between sponsor and refugee is constantly being challenged and reconfigured. In what follows below, I will explain in more detail that resettlement is not only a space of social reproduction, but also an 'existential zone of transition' that is shaped by the experiences, agencies, and actions of newcomers and sponsors alike (Kyriakides et al., 2018).

#### 1.4.6. Canadian refugee resettlement is care work

The Canadian settlement sector is unique in that it is funded through federal and provincial governments (Hamilton et al., 2020), but the actual labour of resettlement is performed by small local non-profit organizations, larger multi-service agencies, municipal services, faith-based organizations, regional schoolboards, and community health clinics (Veronis, 2019). The settlement sector is not a passive victim of neoliberal austerity measures

(Shields, 2014; Veronis, 2019); however, it is engaged in localized immigration policies that are characteristic of neoliberal restructuring (Walton-Roberts, et al. 2019). Since the late 1990s, for the most part, the settlement sector has experienced budget cuts, changing accountability requirements, and increasing problems with precarious employment (Shields, 2014; Veronis, 2019). Under Stephen Harper's Conservative government (from 2006 to 2015), the settlement sector suffered even further with a decline in the diversity of services offered, increased accountability to funders, restrictions on family reunification, and less of a state commitment on supporting refugee resettlement (Barrass & Shields, 2015; Lowe et al., 2017). Following the election of a Liberal government in late 2015, a shift occurred, from many years of divestment in the settlement sector to one that restored a more balanced approach to supporting newcomers, especially refugees (Lowe et al., 2017); yet precarity within the settlement sector still exists (Bushell & Shields, 2018). Settlement workers, who are largely from an immigrant background themselves, (Türegün, 2012; Veronis, 2019) are compelled (and often expected) to contribute extra unpaid time, which leads to employee demoralization and burnout (Shields, 2014). For example, during the SRRI, settlement workers at CCI underwent an “overwhelming” amount of preparation for securing housing for GARs and were tasked with work beyond their regularly paid hours (CCI, 2016, pg. 11).

The capacity of the Canadian settlement sector continues to be limited by restrictive neoliberal policies that regulate ISAs through increased administrative reporting and financial dependence on government contracts (Bushell & Shields, 2018). However, settlement sector actors have also formed “deep-seated networks of support, solidarity, and trust” (Veronis, 2019, pg. 403) based on local contexts, to effectively act as the foundation of resettlement. This construction of new relationships between sectors often enhances mutuality and well-being

amongst stakeholders, and is increasingly important to consider in the wake of neoliberal restructuring (Lawson, 2007). These partnerships and networks amongst settlement sector actors form the foundation of the settlement sector (Walton-Roberts, et al. 2019), and prove critical to newcomers' resilience (Bushell & Shields, 2018).

Given this context, the GAR program is based on settlement workers' commitment and a reliance on the additional work they (voluntarily) perform that stretches well beyond their regularly paid working hours (Veronis, 2019; Walton-Roberts et al., 2019). For private sponsors, work during the resettlement process is deeply caring and directly tied to individuals' goodwill, commitment to social justice, religious beliefs, and financial means (Blain et al., 2020). Although the Canadian settlement sector does not solely rely on voluntary labour to complete resettlement efforts, volunteers work within the GAR program for ISAs (Veronis, 2019) and are also the foundation of the PSR program. The OSR/SRRI was possible, in large part, because of the care and goodwill of civil society and countless volunteers (Walton-Roberts et al., 2019). Historically, volunteers from religious organizations have significantly contributed to refugee resettlement in Canada (Ritchie, 2018). Much of the work in the settlement sector is still being performed by citizens of good will, charities that have evolved from community organizing (like that of Project 4000), and religious organizations (Blain et al., 2020; Powell, 2014; Ritchie, 2018).

The leading role that volunteers take in Canada's refugee resettlement efforts (particularly in the PSR program) implicates them in care work and caregiving actions. These caregiving actions involve an asymmetrical relationship between the caregiver and the care receiver, which is created on the basis of a compassionate, active, and engaged caregiver performing acts of care upon the receiving 'other' (Askins, 2015). Since private sponsorship is inherently unequal (Macklin et al., 2020), we must account for the role that sponsors' power

plays over newcomers during resettlement. Interestingly, scholars have recently turned their attention to how volunteers take part in private sponsorship based on a diverse range of personal motivations (Blain et al., 2020). These studies both speak to the relationality of caregiver and care receiver relationships and break down previously held notions of asymmetry in private sponsorship (Kyriakides et al., 2018). As mentioned above, Askins' (2015) study on the 'befriending scheme' in England, conceptualized the power imbalance between caregiver and care receiver. However, Askins (2015, 2016) also explains that the caregiver and care receiver dichotomy is not fixed, but rather is dynamic and changes over different contexts and spaces. For example, Askins (2015) explains that personal relationships and friendships develop between newcomers and local residents in the 'befriending scheme', whereby newcomers would invite residents into their own home and cook for them, thus reversing the role of caregiver and care receiver. It is, therefore, important to consider how caring acts in the PSR program as a political project that is often asymmetrical, emotional, and relational.

Sponsorship allows for the establishment of "unique relationships, bounded by friendship, attachment, and trust" (Blain et al., 2020, pg. 233) and is a fundamentally emotional and voluntary process. An ongoing study by Macklin et al. (2020) investigates refugee sponsorship from the perspective of sponsors (mostly those involved with the SRRI) using data from an online survey of 530 individual sponsors. The authors argue that sponsorship is a structurally unequal relationship that can give rise to dynamics of paternalism; yet they note that familial relationships are also embedded into the PSR program structure (Macklin et al., 2020). Although sponsors take an active role in providing social, financial, and personal guidance to newcomers, they do not act as 'parents', but rather, sponsors actively negotiate the tensions between providing guidance and respecting the autonomy of newcomers (Kyriakides et al., 2018;

Macklin et al., 2020). Just as a care ethics approach suggests that interdependency and relationality break down the caregiver and care receiver dichotomy (Askins, 2015; Barnes et al., 2015; Bartos, 2019; Tronto, 1993), the relationship between sponsors and newcomers is also relational and constantly under negotiation.

Not only does a care ethics approach help to dismantle the caregiver and care receiver dichotomy, but it also illuminates any power differentials within caring relationships that may be hidden (Barnes et al., 2015; Lawson, 2007). In private sponsorship, the voluntary work sponsors perform is no different. As Macklin et al. (2020, pg. 13) explain, “inequality of social, economic, legal, linguistic, and political status is not a provisional feature of sponsor-refugee relations; it is the premise of the [private sponsorship] scheme.” It is not necessarily the relationship between sponsor and newcomer that is unequal, it is the PSR program structure itself. Notions of community, citizenship, and belonging are reinvigorated through acts of volunteering (Doidge & Sandri 2018; Florian et. al, 2019; Milligan & Fyfe, 2005), and in Canada, since the OSR/SRRI, these notions have increasingly been expressed through participating as private sponsors and/or volunteering for settlement agencies. As Lawson (2007) explains, care work often involves people’s most personal and intimate emotions. In resettlement, both GAR and PSR program volunteers directly attribute their reasons for participating in voluntary resettlement work to a sense of ‘meaningfulness’ (Belkhodja, 2020; Blain et al., 2020). This sense of ‘meaningfulness’ implicates sponsors and volunteers in care work, while also working to disassemble the paternalism involved in the PSR program structure.

By specifically focusing on sponsors’ experiences with sponsorship, we are offered a “unique opportunity to explore perceptions and experiences of an encounter... that is both highly personal and constituted and mediated by the state” (Macklin et al., 2018, pg. 36). Not only are

individuals' (both sponsors and newcomers) emotions embedded within these encounters, but they are also negotiated within various spaces of care. For refugee resettlement in particular, these spaces occur on three levels. First, in a neoliberal context where austerity policies have reformed the spaces in which care is provided. Here, we see how resettlement work is being transformed into sectoral partnerships that rely on voluntary care-based labour. Second, we see the space in which this voluntary labour occurs as one that is relational and embedded with complex meanings around friendships (and in some cases kinship as well). Finally, care in resettlement occurs on an everyday personal level in that the relationships between newcomers and sponsors is continually under negotiation. Sponsors and ISA volunteers both perform unpaid work because of their own individual motivations, but also work within the larger structures of resettlement in the country. Unpacking the structures that exist within the PSR program and its interconnections between a relational view of voluntary sector and care labour in Canadian resettlement, provides for a more nuanced understanding of how care can influence refugees' housing situations. I examine how sponsors' work during the housing process is directly tied to the individualized sense of meaning they receive from the deeply caring and unpaid labour they perform.

### **1.5. Methodology**

To minimize harm in research projects, it is important to refrain from the over-research of certain populations. This research therefore focuses on the less researched settlement sector and private sponsors responsible for service provisions to refugees in Ottawa. For my methodology, I adopted a qualitative approach in order to grasp the experiences of private sponsors in the process of finding housing for refugees in Ottawa. My research began with an application to the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Ottawa in October 2019 (see Appendix A for a

copy of the approval letter). Following REB approval in January 2020, I undertook 8 semi-structured interviews with private sponsors (PS1 through PS8) and one semi-structured interview with a settlement worker (SW1). Since the fieldwork for this project was cut short due to the quarantine restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, instead of interviewing more settlement workers, I decided to supplement my research with a literature review of the publicly available information on ISAs in Ottawa.

The methodology is divided into three sections. First, I discuss the qualitative interviews with the private sponsors and the one settlement worker. I present my rationale for using semi-structured interviews and for the design of interview questions, participant selection criteria, the recruitment procedure, an overview of the interviews, participant profiles, and BVOR considerations. Next, I explain the specifics on the ISA literature review. In the final section, I present the analysis processes used for the interviews and for the literature review, my positionality, and the limitations of my research methodologies.

### 1.5.1. Semi-structured interviews

#### 1.5.1.1. Rationale

To capture individuals' complex meanings associated with migration and place, it is important to locate participants' narratives at the forefront of research methodologies (Findlay & Li, 1999). I therefore chose to complete semi-structured interviews with sponsors as the central aspect of my methodology. Semi-structured interviews are open ended but also involve clear direction through an established interview guide (Bernard, 2011). These types of interviews allow for a professional environment that is not constricted by formality and an entirely structured setting. As Bernard (2011) explains, semi-structured interviews are ideal when

researchers will not have more than one chance to interview participants because they allow for both structure and the space to follow leads participants may note during the interview.

#### 1.5.1.2. Interview questions

Interview questions varied slightly between the interviews with sponsors and the one with the settlement worker (see Appendix B for complete interview guides). For each set of interviews, I focused on five main themes: a general introduction and understanding of the participant's role in the settlement sector, the strategies they (and/or their group) used to find and secure housing, any challenges they faced during the housing search and the housing market in general, the networks and actors involved in the housing process, and their perspectives on their role in the PSR/GAR program compared to the other types of sponsorship programs. For the interviews with sponsors, I also had a sixth theme that involved a series of questions concerning their outlooks on the PSR program structure and dynamics within their own sponsorship group. Since the sponsors' experience was the focus of my thesis, interview questions with sponsors sought to investigate their individual motivations for becoming involved in refugee resettlement, their roles in the sponsorship and resettlement processes, and their perspectives on challenges and experiences with private sponsorship.

The focus of the interview with the settlement worker was on how their role differs from that of private sponsors when it comes to finding housing, how they navigate their networks of volunteers, how they work with landlords to find housing for refugees, and the extent to which they rely on the voluntary sector for their work.

#### 1.5.1.3. Selection criteria

Participation criteria included being a private refugee sponsor living in Ottawa or being employed in the settlement sector (as a settlement worker or otherwise) and having directly been involved in searching for housing for sponsored newcomers for any amount of time. All participants were over the age of 18.

#### 1.5.1.4. Recruitment

Participants were recruited through previously formed relationships with ISAs in Ottawa, personal and professional networks, as well as snowball sampling (see Appendix C for the snowball sampling process). Contacts with settlement agencies provided an important opportunity for securing private sponsors as participants. Many settlement agencies (such as CCI and the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization) and local networks (Refugee613 and The Refugee Hub) provide training and information sessions for private sponsorship groups and offer support as many groups prepare for the arrival of the sponsored families. Through previously established relationships between my supervisor and employees at these ISAs and local networks, I reached out to agencies that then posted my recruitment message (Appendix D) to their networks of private sponsors. The settlement worker interview was established through a connection made by my supervisor.

To recruit new participants, I asked all individuals towards the end of the interview if they know of anyone who may be interested in participating in the project. If so, I asked them to provide potentially interested people with my contact information and recruitment message (Appendix D). Due to this snowball sampling, several private sponsors (see Appendix C for details) were recruited from sponsorship groups within the same religiously affiliated SAH

organization (the limitations of this will be discussed below). Nevertheless, participants in the sample show a diverse range of motivations for becoming involved in refugee sponsorship, their many different housing challenges, and varied narratives on their role in resettlement.

#### 1.5.1.5. An overview of the interviews

All interviews were approximately 45 to 90 minutes long and focused on participants' role in the PSR program structure (or GAR program for the SW1 interview) and their experiences with the process of finding housing for refugees. Interviews with all the participants were completed at places of their choosing, ranging from individuals' private homes, to places of work, to cafés, to over the phone. Interviews were conducted between January and March 2020; participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous. With the signed and informed consent of each participant, the interviews were recorded using a digital audio-recorder and later transcribed verbatim solely by myself. All participants were anonymized using alpha-numeric values (PS1 to PS8, and SW1) during transcription, analysis, and for the final dissertation.

Before each interview I verbally reviewed the consent form with participants (see Appendix E for a copy) and confirmed with them that they should refrain from disclosing any identifiable information (be it country of origin, names, ages, personal situations, etc.) of any member of the refugee families they were sponsoring or of any other members from their sponsorship groups/personal networks. Participants generally did not disclose any identifiable information of refugee families or people in their networks; however, for the few times that participants did disclose this type of information, I did not transcribe this information, nor did I include it in any form of analysis. In addition, access to the transcripts and identity of the research participants was secured and restricted from the public (except for me), as well as

secured in a locked room for the duration of this project. Once the research is submitted and accepted I will securely and permanently delete the identity of participants, the original transcripts, and audio recordings.

#### 1.5.1.6. Participant profiles

Participant's demographic profiles, motivations for becoming involved in sponsorship, and length of sponsorship times were quite diverse. Akin to similar studies (Blain et al., 2020), the sponsors in this research were mostly motivated through the OSR/SRRI, commitments to social justice, their faith, moral responsibilities, and long personal histories with immigration and refugee resettlement.

**Table 1.1: Detailed Sponsor Profiles**

| Sponsor | Profile                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PS1     | A woman who has been a sponsor since 2015. She initially became involved in sponsorship when Syria was in the media in early 2015 when her church began to mobilize resources for BVOR sponsorships. PS1 cites being retired as a reason she was able to be heavily involved in sponsorship.          |
| PS2     | A woman who has been involved in sponsorship for well over 30 years and was part of a grassroots group that was keeping up the momentum of Project 4000 during the early 1980's. PS2 is affiliated with a religious SAH, is retired, and spends much of her free time working with refugee newcomers. |
| PS3     | A woman who is associated with a charity that is partially affiliated with a church network as well as with the public. She has been a sponsor for nearly 10 years and currently works as a minister for one of the churches in the charity.                                                          |
| PS4     | A woman who is affiliated with the same charity as PS3 and first became a sponsor in 2005 when she was highly motivated by the conflict in the Democratic Republic of                                                                                                                                 |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | the Congo. PS4 drastically increased her participation in her sponsorship group in late 2015 after Syria was in the media.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| PS5 | A man who is part of a religiously affiliated SAH and has been involved in sponsorship since 2015. PS5 cites being retired as a reason he spends much of his free time participating in sponsorship.                                                                                                                                                 |
| PS6 | PS6 is a woman who heard about refugee sponsorship in 2015 during OSR and was interested in being involved as one of her co-workers at the time was a previously sponsored refugee. She cites funding as a previous impediment to sponsorship, so began sponsoring in 2018 because of the BVOR fund (see next section) initiated by the Refugee Hub. |
| PS7 | A man who first was involved in Project 4000 in 1979 and has been committed to sponsorship ever since. He is currently retired, chairs a refugee working group at his religiously affiliated SAH, and is involved in ongoing sponsorships.                                                                                                           |
| PS8 | A man who has been involved with sponsoring two Syrian families since late 2015. PS8 is part of a religiously affiliated SAH and was highly motivated by media images of the Syrian conflict and his own faith.                                                                                                                                      |

#### 1.5.1.7. BVOR considerations

Recently, the Refugee Hub in Ottawa is increasing their BVOR initiative and offering to cover the cost of some of the sponsors' settlement expenses through the Shapiro Foundation (Ghania, 2019). Although the main goal of this project was to recruit sponsors involved in the PSR, two participants (PS1 and PS6) who responded to my recruitment posts were involved in a BVOR program sponsorship. For the purposes of this study, I categorized them as private sponsors primarily because in the BVOR sponsorship, similarly to the PSR program, the responsibility for the entire process of searching and securing housing falls on the sponsors (along with half the financial cost in the case of BVOR). Indeed, PS6 said that she sees her role as a BVOR sponsor to be the "same in terms of actual sponsorship" given that much of the work

they perform is the same as those involved in the PSR program. Consequently, for all intents and purposes they are considered private sponsors in the context of this study.

### 1.5.2. ISA literature review

Initially, I planned to complete 5 interviews with settlement workers to use as a benchmark for comparison of PSR and GAR program structures and their approaches to housing. However, due to the onset of COVID-19 (in March 2020) at the height of the recruitment process, I was only able to interview one settlement worker at a local ISA. Since I was unable to directly evaluate and compare the experiences of settlement workers with those of private sponsors, I relied on existing and publicly available grey literature from the settlement sector in Ottawa to complete the comparison. This ISA literature review drew from a project I previously completed during the summer of 2019 on publicly available CCI material as part of the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities Partnership (BMRC-IRMU, 2020)<sup>5</sup>.

To supplement my one interview with a settlement worker, I sought an interview that was already completed as part of Rose & Charette's (2017) research project on GAR housing. This was an interview with a settlement worker at CCI responsible for housing GARs in Ottawa during the height of the OSR/SRRI. I obtained REB approval (in April 2020) for using this interview, however I decided to not include the data in my final research. Although this interview did inform my research on ISAs and the RAP services, I did not include any mention of this settlement worker in my final research since I found much of the information was

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<sup>5</sup> This literature review was completed during a research assistance position that I held with Dr. Luisa Veronis as part of the SSHRC-funded Building Migrant Resilience in Cities Partnership. The research examined how notions of resilience shape the settlement sector in Ottawa. This literature review was completed by coding annual reports, monthly newsletters, and descriptions on service programs that were published on the CCI website. The research team coded keywords related to resilience and resilience proxies (such as notions of adaptations and overcoming challenges).

duplicated in the ISA literature review. Ultimately, the data I collected from the ISA literature review and the information in the interview from Rose & Charette (2017) complemented and verified the information from the SW1 interview.

I used my knowledge from this analysis to inform how housing is managed by settlement workers at CCI. As many academics have previously noted (Lowe et al. 2017; Shields, 2014), settlement workers are often overworked in the already precarious settlement sector. By triangulating the findings from the literature review completed with the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities Partnership with the secondary interview from Rose & Charrette's (2017) research, I mitigated stress on settlement sector employees.

### 1.5.3. Analysis and limitations

#### 1.5.3.1. Analysis process for semi-structured interviews

The examination of the semi-structured interviews largely involved an interpretive analysis (Bernard, 2011) that focused on the stories of participants and the unique themes individuals spoke about during their interviews. Before transcribing the interviews, I began with two high-level coding trees that captured the two main categories of my research study; the PSR program structure and housing experiences (see Appendix F for more detailed coding trees). The PSR program structure category included two themes, sponsors experiences with sponsorship and sponsors' motivations for becoming involved in the PSR program. The housing experience category also had two main themes – strategies sponsors used for searching for housing and challenges sponsors had during their housing processes. I then began reading the transcripts of the interviews, coded these 4 main themes using Nvivo 12 Plus, and took note of emerging

subthemes in the texts. Next, I undertook a second round of coding using the new subthemes that surfaced from the content of the interviews.

The original and new themes were triangulated across interviews and assessed in order of reoccurrence. Key differences and patterns between the interviews with private sponsors and the settlement worker regarding the strategies they use to secure housing, the challenges each faced, and the support networks each used were analyzed. This form of inductive and comparative coding involves a great deal of interpretive analysis (Bernard, 2011) that informed how themes were organized.

While completing the analysis, I also supplemented the interviews with basic statistical data from Statistics Canada and housing cost data from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Researching the average rents, vacancy rates, along with housing data for Ottawa was a way to complement the information participants noted about the rental market in Ottawa.

#### 1.5.3.2. Analysis process for the ISA literature review

I began the analysis process for ISA literature review (completed in summer 2019) by first identifying the important publicly available data on the CCI website. These included annual reports from 2014 to 2019, newsletters from June 2017 to January 2019, and the descriptions of each program CCI offers. These three types of data provided for both a broad overview of the work CCI completes and detailed information on their daily activities. I then compiled statistics found in the three types of documents identified. I searched each of the documents for key terms (resilience, volunteer(s), adapt, sector, partnership, etc.), examined changes in the number of volunteers, funding resources, staff compensation, and inter-sectoral partnerships at CCI during and after the SRRI.

The work I completed as part of the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities project informed the key documents I reviewed more thoroughly for this project. These records included two CCI annual reports from 2015-2016 and 2018-2019. I then reviewed these two reports and compared them to the settlement worker interview I completed and the interview from Rose & Charette (2017). By adopting flexible research practices (Findlay & Li, 1999), my methodology both allows for the recognition of the multiple motivations among sponsors for participating in sponsorship and a robust analysis of settlement worker experiences with housing.

#### 1.5.3.3. Positionality and critical self-reflexivity

Feminist approaches to working with multiple qualitative methods seeks to avoid traditional epistemologies through situating positionalities and self-reflexivity (Schwanen & Kwan, 2009). By acknowledging and assessing possible biases as a researcher, I aimed to approach my methodology critically and analytically. As the daughter of an immigrant from former Czechoslovakia and a Canadian-born settler, I am a white Canadian-born settler. Although technically a second-generation immigrant, my whiteness, fluent English, middle-class upbringing, and resulting privilege situates me outside many of the racialized newcomers whose housing I will be studying.

Being someone who was born in Ottawa and spent most of my upbringing here, I have seen for myself how housing markets and pathways to access have changed over the years. Growing up in Ottawa may cloud my objectivity during interviews and analysis, since my spatial knowledge of the City may cause me to generalize aspects of certain neighbourhoods. To combat possible biases and previous knowledge of neighbourhoods across the city, I acknowledge my background as an Ottawa resident and work towards not generalizing my experiences onto the

settlement worker and private sponsors who were interviewed. As with any research project and despite my best efforts, my positionality has influenced each step of the research process and analysis.

#### 1.5.3.4. Methodological limitations

One of the main shortcomings of this research is the small and homogeneous sample size of participants. COVID-19 prevented me from completing settlement worker interviews and cut-short my recruitment for private sponsor interviews. As a result of the snowball sampling there is a degree of homogeneity in the sample. As Bernard (2011) notes, snowball sampling does not produce a statistically representative sample in a large population. Since there are thousands of people involved in sponsorship across Ottawa, relying on data captured from individuals who are part of the same SAHs and those who are part of similar networks does not provide for a diverse sample. For example, two sponsors in this study were both part of the same SAH and involved in the on-going sponsorship of the same newcomer family, and had many of the same experiences during their housing search process. Generalizing about sponsors' experience with housing acquisition and their individual motivations as sponsors is therefore not possible from my research. Further, I did not account for the role sponsors' race, class, or gender played in their capacity to provide housing for newcomers. Considering all the sponsors were white, educated, and middle to upper-middle class individuals who had spare time to spend searching for housing, not accounting for this homogeneity is a major limitation to this study.

Further, as I did not seek out interviews with BVOR sponsors, I am not in a position to discuss or evaluate the BVOR program. Given the recent encouragement of the BVOR program,

not specifically seeking out BVOR sponsors is a limitation to this project. Future research could examine the BVOR program in more detail.

### **1.6. Summary**

The focus of my study is on the lived experiences of private sponsors in their work to search for and secure housing for refugees and the role of the PSR program structure in this process compared to the experiences of settlement workers in the GAR program structure. Based on the findings of qualitative data collection, I highlight how sponsors navigate the rental housing market in Ottawa to find suitable housing for PSR families. Since private sponsors do not have standardized networks with specific landlords in the city (unlike settlement workers), they often face a difficult housing process because of the increasingly unaffordable housing market in Ottawa (as is the case elsewhere in Canada). Sponsors' overly challenging housing process acts as a tool to examine the intricacies of caring labour embedded within the PSR program structure. This program structure is not only engaged with neoliberal policies influencing the Canadian voluntary sector more broadly, but it is also underpinned by sponsors' multitude of caring motivations. Thus, researching sponsors personal values, emotions, and social networks that motivate them choose to become private sponsors shows the ways in which notions of civic engagement, care ethics, and acts of caring are entangled in the voluntary labour that forms the basis of PSR program structure.

The following section (Part 2) consists of an article co-authored with Dr. Luisa Veronis. We argue that although the PSR program has proved efficient in resettling newcomers to Canada, there has been little recognition of the real cost to sponsors: the significant amounts of unpaid work they perform that is the very foundation of the PSR program. As Clark-Kazak

(2017) argues, an important part of ethical analysis is to share findings with research subjects and non-academic partners during research involving people who have forcibly been displaced. Along these lines, once the project is complete, Luisa and I aim to publish the article in *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, since it is one of the only non-profit, open-access, and peer-reviewed Canadian journals that focuses on migration experiences. Freely disseminating the findings of my research will hopefully produce similar research projects that take into consideration my research limitations to produce more generalizable results.

## **PART 2: ARTICLE CHAPTER**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Since 2015, Canada has made significant contributions to global refugee resettlement (UNHCR, 2019). In November 2015, responding to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war, the newly elected Liberal Government of Justin Trudeau followed through on its electoral platform and launched Operation Syrian Refugees (OSR) with the goal of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada by year's end (IRCC, 2016). In 2016, OSR was followed by the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative (SRRI), a continued commitment to resettle Syrians. By December 2016, over 39,630 Syrian refugees were resettled across Canada (IRCC, 2019). Of these newcomers, 45% (nearly 17,840 people) had been resettled through Canada's unique private sponsorship of refugees (PSR) program, which relies entirely on the contributions of unpaid volunteers.

Although private sponsorship has proved to be an efficient program for resettling large numbers of newcomers across Canada, there has been little recognition of the financial, emotional, and labour costs borne by sponsors during their resettlement work. In Canada, there are three streams of refugee sponsorship. First, the PSR program relies entirely on civil society. Groups of five or more individuals sign on with a sponsorship agreement holder (SAH) organization to sponsor refugees and take on the full financial and emotional responsibility of resettlement for one year after arrival with minimal support from their associated SAH (Canada, 2019). Second, in the government assisted refugee (GARs) program, the Canadian Government assumes the full financial cost of resettlement for one year after their arrival (Canada, 2016). GARs have access to monthly allowances through the federally funded Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) along with assistance from settlement workers at designated Immigrant Serving

Agencies (ISAs) to help with housing and meeting other needs. Lastly, in the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program the federal government supports six of the twelve months of the financial cost of resettlement while private sponsors are responsible for the other six months of funding and the entire emotional cost involved (Canada, 2016). In this paper, we focus on private sponsors' experiences with finding and securing housing for PSRs.

Regardless of the sponsorship stream, securing adequate and affordable housing for recently arrived refugees acts as a springboard for these newcomers to begin the complex process of resuming everyday life (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Shier et. al, 2016). Securing housing is the responsibility of settlement workers and private sponsors for GARs and PSRs respectively, and represents a crucial first step in the resettlement process for recently arrived refugees. But securing affordable and adequate housing is a significant challenge across most Canadian cities due to a notably tight and expensive rental market (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). While a recent study (Rose & Charette, 2017, 2020) examined the housing strategies of RAP agencies responsible for GARs, less is known about the roles and experiences of private sponsors in this process, including the strategies they develop, the challenges they face, and the information networks on which they rely. The main goal of this study, therefore, is to examine private sponsors' experiences with finding and securing housing for PSRs, focusing on the case of Ottawa, Canada's capital city. Specifically, we examine how sponsors' labour during their housing search is deeply caring work that is embedded within the broader structure of the PSR program. Our investigation of the PSR program, ultimately aims to shed light on the under-researched issue of the work private sponsors perform.

First, we provide contextual information and a review of the relevant literature on housing challenges for GARs and PSRs. Next, we describe Ottawa's experience of the

OSR/SRRI and its precarious housing market. After, we explain how unpaid labour and care are deeply involved in Canada's resettlement programs, and we present our qualitative methodology – which mostly consisted of in-depth interviews with private sponsors. In the results section, we discuss the structural differences between the GAR and PSR programs. In turn, we examine the various stages in private sponsors' housing acquisition process – the initial housing search, securing housing, and the situation after the 12 months of funding. Temporally, we focus on how private sponsors navigated the Ottawa rental housing market during three distinct periods: prior to OSR (before November 2015); during OSR and SSRI (from November 2015 to January 2017); and after the SRRI (from January 2017 to December 2019). Our findings reveal that private sponsors often encountered unanticipated financial and emotional challenges during the housing process that ultimately led to feelings of burnout. These feelings of burnout were particularly prominent during the period after the SRRI, when landlords were no longer cooperative, vacancy rates decreased, housing costs increased, and (in some cases) volunteers took less of an active role in their sponsorship groups. As such, we argue that without additional supports in the PSR program, sponsors' feelings of overwork will continue unabated, which may possibly lead to fewer individuals taking on private sponsorship.

## **2.2. Context**

Over the past three decades, the lack of overall investment in affordable housing has continually priced low-income families out of the housing market (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020), including newcomers such as refugees (Rose & Charette, 2017). Currently, approximately one in eight Canadian households live in unaffordable and below standard homes (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). Finding adequate, affordable housing for resettled refugees represents a significant hurdle regardless of the sponsorship stream (Agrawal, 2018). Experiences with

precarious housing among resettled refugees are attributed to the structure of each program (Hyndman et al., 2017). GARs' pathways to service delivery are standardized under the RAP, whereby settlement workers have relationships with networks of landlords and access to volunteers (Rose & Charette, 2017). PSRs are often more vulnerable than GARs regarding their housing situation (Arnault & Merali, 2019) because their experience varies considerably based on their sponsors' knowledge, experience, commitment levels, and personal/professional networks (Agrawal, 2018).

After the 12 months of required funding (for both GAR and PSR programs), housing precarity is often exacerbated by what is known as Month 13 (Rose & Charette, 2017): the moment when sponsored refugees are expected to become financially autonomous. Settlement workers are aware of the transition to Month 13 and take into consideration refugees' limited financial resources when searching for housing. For GARs who arrived during the SRRI, the issue around Month 13 was more manageable than initially feared because RAP agencies were able to negotiate initial rent levels and add funds for subsidizing rents beyond the one year for those in need (Rose & Charette, 2017).

The process is different in the case of PSRs insofar as it is the private sponsors who are responsible for finding housing and they sometimes have less experience, no or fewer networks, and are not aware of Month 13. A study conducted in Edmonton (AB) shows that one of the most common reasons for homelessness amongst PSRs was sponsors setting up housing that they could no longer afford after Month 13 (Arnault & Merali, 2019). Further, sponsors (although well intentioned) may not have the refugees' best interests in mind. Sponsors avoid looking for affordable housing far away from their own neighbourhoods (to easily coordinate volunteer support); yet they fail to see how newcomers may prefer to live in places with people from the

same cultural background (Wood et al., 2011). The fact remains that one key issue with the PSR program is that it relies on significant levels of care by members of society who perform enormous amounts of unpaid labour – even more so when they lack experience.

As a designated refugee reception centre with a long history of engaged community mobilizing, Ottawa has a well-established settlement sector that rapidly organized in preparation for OSR, and later the SRRI (Carrière, 2016; Veronis, 2019). Ottawa's only RAP-serving agency, the Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI), helped resettle about 1,200 Syrian GARs in a three-month period, whereas previously they served about 500 GARs annually (CCI, 2016). At a total of 1,275 people, Ottawa received the second highest number of Syrian refugees in Ontario between November 2015 and September 2016 (Rose & Charette, 2020). The case of Ottawa provides a unique opportunity to examine how a mid-sized city successfully managed some of the highest numbers of newcomers during the OSR/SRRI (and beyond).

Like many other Canadian cities, the Ottawa rental housing market is strained (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). At \$85,981, Ottawa's median household income is 22.24% higher than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2016). However, the proportion of the overall households in Ottawa that are considered very-low income is much higher than similar sized cities, which suggests that there is an upward pressure on rents (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). Before the OSR/SRRI, Ottawa's housing market was relatively stable and affordable. From 2010 to 2015, the vacancy rates for a three or more-bedroom apartment never fell below 2.2%, and the average cost only saw an overall 5.9% annual increase (CMHC, 2020). Table 2.1 shows the significant rise in average rents that took place from 2015 to 2019. These data indicate that settlement workers and private sponsors were navigating a precarious local housing market at that time (CMHC, 2020).

**Table 2.1: Ottawa rental prices and vacancy rates (Adapted from CMHC, 2020)**

| Size         | Vacancy Rate<br>(Oct. 2015) | Average Cost<br>(Oct. 2015) | Vacancy Rate<br>(Oct. 2019) | Average Cost<br>(Oct. 2019) |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Bedroom    | 3.0%                        | \$972                       | 1.7%                        | \$1,178                     |
| 2 Bedrooms   | 3.8%                        | \$1,174                     | 1.9%                        | \$1,410                     |
| 3 + Bedrooms | 5.7%                        | \$1,390                     | 1.9%                        | \$1,819                     |

As of 2016, 42.3% of Ottawa renters were spending 30% or more of their income on housing, and in 2019 the annual ratio of new social or affordable housing per household was only 1 in 8,773 units (Statistics Canada, 2016; Whitzman & Desroches, 2020). Furthermore, the median price per square-foot of property in Ottawa rose by 17.9% from 2018 to 2019 (Royal LePage, 2019), making it the city with the fastest rising property prices across the country (Lord, 2019), and what once was affordable housing is being replaced by unaffordable luxury condos (Crosby, 2020). New unaffordable housing developments coupled with the ever-increasing cost of living produces a space of housing vulnerability for low-income residents and newcomers to the city.

### **2.3. Refugee Resettlement is Care Work**

Canadian refugee resettlement programs are unique. Although funded through federal and provincial governments, the settlement work within each stream of sponsorship is performed by local non-profit organizations and unpaid volunteers (Veronis, 2019). Based on Canada's long history of refugee resettlement and unique private sponsorship model (Molloy et al., 2017), the OSR/SRRI was possible in great part because of the care and goodwill of civil society and countless volunteers (Walton-Roberts et al., 2019). ISAs typically rely on a strong volunteer force that supports the work of settlement workers, including the resettlement of GARs.

Meanwhile, in the PSR model, the entire resettlement process is completed through sponsors' unpaid work.

The voluntary work that forms the basis of the Canadian settlement sector is rooted in care (Trudeau and Veronis 2009; Veronis, 2019). This settlement sector is part of the broader voluntary sector that consists of individuals working because of a range of motivations bounded in discourses around citizenship, civic engagement, and performing acts of care, ethics, and belonging (Askins, 2016; DeVerteuil et al. 2019; Ritchie 2018). Volunteers who become involved in refugee resettlement act within their own personal agendas and are deeply tied to individual meanings and caring motivations (Blain et al., 2020; Macklin et al., 2020). In the GAR stream, although settlement workers are paid, the support they provide is still deeply caring work – albeit settlement work is somewhat less formalized than other non-profit and social work (Türegün, 2013) and tends to be more precarious (Lowe et al., 2017). The sponsors' work within the PSR program is deeply caring and based on individuals' goodwill. Often sponsors see their role as extending beyond their 'work' as a sponsor and some consider their sponsored families as friends or even as family (Blain et al., 2020; Macklin et al., 2020).

## **2.4. Methodology**

We adopted a qualitative approach to grasp private sponsors' experiences with finding housing for refugees in Ottawa. Following REB approval, we completed 8 semi-structured interviews with private sponsors (PS1 through PS8) from January to March 2020. In addition, we interviewed one settlement worker (SW1) employed at a local ISA in order to be able to take into account differences in the structures of the GAR and PSR programs regarding the housing process. Our recruitment efforts, however, were cut short due to the confinement measures

imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. As a result, our sample is smaller than anticipated. To remedy these circumstances, we relied on existing grey literature from ISAs in Ottawa to be able to compare and analyze the role of GAR and PSR program structures.

Recruitment criteria included a) being a private sponsor living in Ottawa and having directly been involved in searching for housing for PSR newcomers or b) be employed as a settlement worker and responsible for housing GARs. Participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous. Following informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Interview questions sought to investigate sponsors' motivations for becoming involved in refugee resettlement, the strategies and challenges faced when navigating the housing market in Ottawa, and their perceived roles in the sponsorship and resettlement processes. Participants were recruited through previously formed relationships with ISAs in Ottawa, personal and professional networks, and snowball sampling.

Due to the results of our recruitment strategy, several participating sponsors were recruited from sponsorship groups within the same SAH organization (see Appendix C for the links between participants in our snowball sample), and as a result, there is a degree of homogeneity among participants. Nevertheless, participants in our sample show a diverse range of motivations for becoming involved in sponsorship, faced many different housing challenges, and offered varied narratives on their role in resettlement. Table 2.2 shows that sponsors' demographic characteristics and motivations for becoming involved are distinct. Akin to similar studies (Blain et al., 2020), the sponsors participating in our research were mostly motivated through the OSR/SRRI, commitments to social justice, faith, moral responsibilities, and personal histories with immigration and resettlement.

**Table 2.2: Sponsor Profiles**

| Sponsor        | Motivating factors                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PS1<br>(woman) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Syria in the media</li> <li>- Mobilized by her church</li> <li>- Retired</li> <li>- Sponsor since 2015</li> </ul>                                                                                     |
| PS2<br>(woman) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family history of sponsorship</li> <li>- Affiliated with a church</li> <li>- Retired</li> <li>- Sponsor for over 30 years</li> </ul>                                                                  |
| PS3<br>(woman) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affiliated with a church</li> <li>- Sponsor for about 10 years</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             |
| PS4<br>(woman) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affiliated with a church</li> <li>- Congo in the media in 2005</li> <li>- Increased participation after 2015 because she was mobilized by her church</li> <li>- Sponsor for about 15 years</li> </ul> |
| PS5<br>(man)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being retired</li> <li>- Mobilized by his church</li> <li>- Began sponsoring in 2015</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |
| PS6<br>(woman) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal connections with sponsorship</li> <li>- BVOR fund from Refugee Hub</li> <li>- Sponsor since 2016</li> </ul>                                                                                  |
| PS7<br>(man)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retired</li> <li>- Recent encouragement from church</li> <li>- Sponsor for over 30 years</li> </ul>                                                                                                   |
| PS8<br>(man)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Syria in the media</li> <li>- Religiously motivated</li> <li>- Sponsor since 2016</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |

While our focus was on sponsors in the PSR program, two participants (PS1 and PS6) were involved in the BVOR program. We categorized them as private sponsors primarily because in a BVOR sponsorship, similarly to the PSR program, the responsibility for searching and securing housing falls on the sponsors (along with half the financial cost). PS6 said that she sees her role as a BVOR sponsor to be the “same in terms of actual sponsorship” given that much of the work they perform is very similar to those in the PSR program. For all intents and purposes, we consider them as private sponsors.

## **2.5. Results**

We first describe and compare the GAR and PSR programs to show that the former is more standardized, while the latter is based on private

sponsors' personal motivations, including a sense of care that shapes most of their labour. Then, we turn to a discussion on the PSR housing process, which we have broken down into three distinct stages: (1) the 'housing search' refers to the strategies settlement workers and sponsors adopt to find suitable housing for refugee newcomers; (2) steps taken to 'secure housing'; and (3) 'Month 13' focuses on the measures adopted to provide stable housing that holds up after the end of the official sponsorship period.

We examine the similarities and differences between the strategies that settlement workers and sponsors used during the first two stages of the housing process to demonstrate that sponsors navigated the housing market and worked to provide housing that would lead to a successful transition to Month 13. Next, we discuss the strategies settlement workers and sponsors developed to search and secure housing during and after the OSR/SRRI. And finally, we highlight how the first two stages of the housing process ultimately influence the outcomes of the third stage, Month 13.

#### 2.5.1. GAR and PSR program structures

Although settlement workers and sponsors face the same constrained and unaffordable housing market, housing outcomes for GARs are often considered more stable (Rose & Charrette, 2019). Settlement workers are limited in the levels of support they can provide newcomer clients, and often can only offer the necessary RAP rates and referrals to settlement sector services. As a result of the impacts on the settlement sector due to state restructuring from the 1990s onwards – including budget cuts and increasingly precarious employment conditions (Lowe et al. 2017; Trudeau & Veronis 2009; Veronis 2019) – settlement workers often contribute additional unpaid work that leads to demoralization and burnout (Shields 2014).

Concomitantly, ISAs rely on volunteers to fulfill some tasks and projects (Trudeau & Veronis 2009), but these volunteers often operate with little supervision while continually being relied upon for significant projects and tasks (Shields, 2014).

Although the government requires private sponsors to provide newcomers with the equivalent of the RAP rates, sponsors can offer much more personal and financial support than settlement workers. Sponsors can arguably offer more financial support for newcomers by fundraising among their sponsorship group or within other networks. Sponsors are motivated by a wide range of factors, but ultimately share a common value: care. Our research participants' motivations represent only a small portion of the overall motives that structure the voluntary sector. Yet, they echo the findings of other studies (e.g., Blain et al., 2020; Macklin et al., 2020) whereby sponsors characterize their participation in sponsorship as a moral responsibility, a commitment to social justice, and a manifestation of their faith. We found that sponsors can “spend a lot of time” (PS7) and are not “bound by work hours” (PS5) when they are looking for housing because many are retired and have access to various social networks on which to rely. Furthermore, participating sponsors explained that caring for others is bound up in their own personal caring religious beliefs: “we are of the Jewish faith and we went through a period where Jews were not taken as refugees...so we kind of have a sense of what they might be going through. And an obligation to help those who are in similar situations” (PS8). As such, the PSR program is based on sponsors' deeply caring motivations that in turn lead them to perform countless hours of unpaid labour and to deploy the power of multiple networks of individuals who work together to secure housing for newcomers

### 2.5.2. The housing process

According to participants, at the beginning of the OSR/SRRI, housing was more abundant, settlement workers and sponsors had stronger housing search networks, and landlords were more cooperative than the period that followed the OSR/SRRI. Following the initial SRRI period, vacancy rates in Ottawa decreased significantly, landlords became less willing to cooperate, and housing costs increased largely out of the RAP rate budgets. Sponsors were becoming increasingly financially liable for securing housing because of the constrained post-SRRI Ottawa housing market, uncooperative landlords, and changing expectations from SAHs and the federal government. That is, sponsors' consistently worked above and beyond the capacity of settlement workers. Our findings bring a novel perspective on the differences that GAR and PSR programs have on refugees' resettlement experiences. Whereas existing research suggests that GARs are generally in a better position than PSRs with regard to their housing situation by Month 13 thanks to the more standardized service provision they receive from settlement workers through the RAP (Arnault & Merali, 2019; Rose & Charette, 2017), many of our participating sponsors in Ottawa (PS1, PS3, PS3, PS6, and PS7) argued that PSRs were "luckier" (SW1) than GARs because sponsors could provide more support and adopted a number of more caring practices that ensure a successful housing situation for Month 13.

#### 2.5.2.1. Strategies for the housing search

Overall, settlement workers and sponsors employ relatively similar housing search methods for refugee newcomers. Settlement workers generally rely on long-standing relationships with local landlords (Rose & Charette, 2017), and sponsors use common Internet searches (i.e., Kijiji, Padmapper, Facebook Marketplace) and/or call on their sponsoring

networks and local community organizations (i.e., a parish, church, or social network) to help with the housing search. Next, when creating a budget for rent, both parties use the provincial RAP rates as a baseline for what housing may be affordable for sponsored newcomers. However, the RAP rates are clearly not in-line with a livable wage in Ottawa (see Tables 2.1 and 2.3). Although first month start-up allowances range from anywhere between about \$3,000 to \$16,000 (RSTP, 2020), the RAP shelter allowance is nowhere near the cost of rent in Ottawa. Often, both PSRs and GARs will rely heavily on the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) to supplement their income and be able to afford their rent each month (Rose & Charette, 2017). Generally, sponsored refugees receive installments for their CCB payments about three months after arrival (including retroactive payment of first three months). Since settlement workers do not have the same capacity as sponsors to provide additional financial and in-kind support beyond the RAP and CCB, in those first three months of sponsorship, GARs are only receiving their initial start-up payment and their RAP allowance, much of which they often use entirely towards rent payments (Rose & Charette, 2017).

**Table 2.3: Ontario RAP Rates (Adapted from RSTP, 2020)**

| Household Composition       | Basic Needs Allowance | Shelter Allowance | Other - (communication, housing supplement, and transportation) | Monthly Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Single Adult                | \$343                 | \$390             | \$349.5                                                         | \$1,082.5     |
| Couple                      | \$494                 | \$642             | \$469                                                           | \$1,605       |
| Single parent, one child    | \$360                 | \$642             | \$349.5                                                         | \$1,351.5     |
| Single parent, two children | \$360                 | \$697             | \$349.5                                                         | \$1,406.5     |
| Couple, one child           | \$494                 | \$697             | \$469                                                           | \$1,660       |

|                                      |       |       |         |           |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|
| Single parent, three children        | \$360 | \$756 | \$349.5 | \$1,465.5 |
| Couple, two children                 | \$494 | \$756 | \$469   | \$1,719   |
| Single parent, four children         | \$360 | \$815 | \$349.5 | \$1,524.5 |
| Couple, three children               | \$494 | \$815 | \$469   | \$1,778   |
| Single parent, five children or more | \$360 | \$844 | \$349.5 | \$1,553.5 |
| Couple, four children or more        | \$494 | \$844 | \$469   | \$1,807   |

Although sponsors have the capacity to support newcomers beyond the RAP and CCB, some of our participants (PS3, PS4) explained that they refrain from supplementing newcomers' rental budgets and do their best to search for housing within the RAP and CCB. Arnault & Merali (2019) explain that sponsors sometimes find housing outside of the RAP budget that the newcomers can no longer afford housing after the year of sponsorship is over. Unlike Arnault & Merali (2019), our study found that some sponsors (PS3, PS4, and PS7) explain they purposely avoid housing that the newcomers are “not going to be able to maintain after the sponsorship period is over” (PS3).

For PSRs, like for GARs, the CCB helps to subsidize their rental budget. Yet unlike the GARs, the sponsors can support the newcomers' rental budget in many more caring ways. Among our participants, 5 of the 8 sponsors specifically mentioned that they took into consideration the CCB when creating the budgets for rent and ensuring that they were only looking for housing within that limit. Nevertheless, two sponsors (PS3 and PS4) explained that even after taking into consideration the CCB, rental prices were so high that they could not find housing within their initial budget and had to increase their housing budget significantly. Even

when sponsors took the CCB into consideration, their housing budgets were not inline with the Ottawa rental market. As such, a long-time sponsor (PS7) at one of the largest SAHs in Ottawa noted that sponsors are encouraged to advance the first three months of CCB, and they are further advised to not ask for the money back once the provincial benefit begins. Not only do the SAHs recognize that the provincial RAP rates are not in-line with a livable wage, but also the structures of the PSR program put pressure on sponsors to provide financial and in-kind supports that go beyond the capacity of the GAR program.

The division of labour within groups allows sponsors to perform the housing search with multiple social and professional networks that arguably are not available to settlement workers. Sponsors can go beyond the capacity of the settlement workers to search for housing mainly because of how sponsorship groups are organized internally. Many sponsors (PS1, PS3, PS4, PS7, and PS8) explained that different people in their group take on different roles based on their individual abilities. For example, PS1 explained that someone in her sponsorship group had an extensive knowledge of the school system, so they were responsible for education while PS1 searched for housing. Others explained that during the housing search there are often three or four people from their group constantly on the lookout for housing (PS4, PS7). PS4 explains, that while others in her group were searching for housing using online services (i.e., Kijiji or Padmapper), one person in the group was able to attend housing workshops put on by an ISA. The division of labour in the PSR structure allows sponsors to perform more work for newcomers. Sponsorship groups were able to mobilize different networks so to cover the different aspects of resettlement.

The internal organization of sponsorship groups not only provides more networks that support the housing search, but also promotes a structure of care that helps newcomers well after

the sponsorship period is over. When searching housing for newcomers, a significant responsibility that settlement workers and private sponsors share is to ensure a smooth transition into Month 13 – when the period of financial support comes to an end. Rose & Charette (2020) explain that settlement workers provided on-going case management services for newcomers throughout their sponsorship year as a commitment to limit the impact of Month 13. But GARs' relationship with settlement workers is effectively over after 12 months. Meanwhile, for PSRs, sponsors perform additional labour well beyond the first 12 months that results in PSRs having greater success in integrating into Canadian society and becoming financially independent after the sponsorship year (Lenard, 2019). All 8 participating sponsors explained that they provided individualized support for newcomers well after the required 12 months of sponsorship. Ultimately, the added acts of care during the initial housing search set the newcomers up for a smoother transition after the first year.

#### 2.5.2.2. Strategies for securing housing

Unlike with the housing search, settlement workers and sponsors use especially different methods at the stage of securing the housing. Settlement workers rely on standardized networks that form the basis of their housing search. Upon arrival in Ottawa, GARs are usually housed in a temporary residential facility called the Maison Sophia Reception House (see below for a more detailed explanation) (CCI, 2020). Meanwhile, settlement workers work directly with families to secure housing. Newcomers stay in these accommodations until a suitable home is found. This standardized approach to securing housing is only characteristic of the GAR program.

For sponsors, we identified four distinct methods for securing housing that were based on sponsors' previous experiences with sponsorship and the circumstances of the housing that they found from their initial search. In the first method, two sponsors found a place and signed a lease

before newcomers' arrival. Second, one sponsor found a place for the newcomers before they arrived but were in contact with them throughout the process and were showing them potential housing options. In the third method, two sponsors spoke about how these were family-link cases, and newcomers were staying with family members who had been previously resettled as refugees themselves but were already in Ottawa for a few months. And in the fourth method, three sponsors had prepared 'soft landings' for the newcomers – when a member of the sponsorship group hosts the newcomer family in their own home until they secure a permanent home for the newcomers. In all but the first method, sponsors generally did their best to involve the newcomer family in choosing their permanent accommodation.

There are many ways sponsors support the type of landing that PSRs receive. PS2, a long-time sponsor, explained that their SAH often encouraged them to welcome the newcomers with a soft landing. PS7 explained that a soft landing is important because it “provides a chance to bond” with the newcomer family, so that they will be able to form a personal relationship with the newcomers right from the onset of the sponsorship. In addition, the government expects the newcomer family to be able to choose their own accommodation once they have landed (PS3, PS4). This is rather challenging because housing costs are high and vacancy rates are low; as such, when sponsors found housing and the landlord was willing to rent to them, they secured it immediately by signing the lease on the newcomers' behalf. Considering that PSRs often arrive with 7 to 10 days notice, and sometimes they do not arrive at all, signing a lease on the newcomers' behalf can be an additional and unexpected cost for sponsors. In one case, PS8 spoke about how he and his sponsorship group raised funds amongst themselves to bear the additional cost of rent for several months when the newcomer family did not arrive when they initially anticipated. This additional labour – that the SAHs and government are encouraging – is

further cementing the unpaid care work sponsors perform during the housing process. Now, we turn to discuss the different conditions sponsors faced while searching and securing housing during the OSR/SRRI and the period that immediately followed.

#### 2.5.2.3. The housing search during the OSR/SRRI

The media representation of the Syrian refugee ‘crisis’ during summer 2015 combined with the launch of OSR and the SRRI promoted cooperation between landlords, ISAs, and sponsors, thus enabling greater access to more affordable rents for both GARs and PSRs. During the SRRI, Ottawa experienced a surge in people volunteering for CCI, offers from both corporate and private landlords providing discounts on rents increased (CCI, 2016), and CCI launched a website to connect sponsors with willing landlords (Duffy, 2016). Settlement workers’ housing search was supported by an agreement that CCI’s director established with Capital Towers to set aside 150 units for Syrian families in two rental buildings on Donald Street at a discount rate; nearly 400 GARs were resettled in these apartments by May 2016 (Miller, 2016). Yet even during the OSR/SRRI, when cooperation supporting housing was strong, GARs often relied on a variety of public services that PSRs did not need to use because of the three-month delay in the CCB payment (Rose & Charette, 2017). For example, despite the rent break at the Donald Street apartments, the Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard reported that as of April of 2016, there were 80 new Syrian families from the Donald Street apartments and surrounding areas that used the food bank (CBC News, 2016).

For sponsors, even if most of their housing search relied on their social and sponsorship group networks, they benefitted from the pathways that CCI paved to encourage landlords to cooperate and rent to newcomers. Six among the eight sponsors relied on some form of network. For example, PS5 mentioned that his group “established a rapport” with one of the property

managers at Minto near their parish, which was how the group generally searched for housing for their sponsored families. Other sponsors explained that someone in their sponsorship group was a realtor and knew first-hand of apartments available to rent (PS1) or that one member of their group was able to give them a contact for someone who worked at Minto (PS8).

We also found that networks between sponsorship groups contribute to the housing search. PS6 explained that during the OSR/SRRI communication between different sponsorship groups successfully led them to housing: “there was an information session on housing... that really was helpful. But [what] was helpful was actually the other sponsors that were there that had gone through it before, and who gave us the tip to try and use Minto” (PS6). An increase in community mobilization during the OSR/SRRI, provided more opportunities for sponsorship groups to find support for their housing search by developing networks with other groups. The surge in volunteer participation from Ottawa residents, workshops put on by local ISAs, the City of Ottawa, and other stakeholders (i.e., Refugee 613, the Refugee Hub), and cooperation from landlords all created helpful conditions that facilitated sponsors’ housing search experience. These new networks with other sponsorship groups and ISAs were especially useful to groups new to sponsoring, providing a basis to learn from more experienced groups.

Although sponsors have always relied on their social and intergroup networks to search for housing, these networks were strongest during the OSR/SRRI. For example, PS3 mentioned that in 2016 their most successful lead for an apartment was through a private landlord who “had heard about the Syrian crisis and they are people of faith and they had decided together that they wanted to do something or contribute something” and then offered a reduced rent to the newcomer family. Further, PS4 noted that it would have been much harder to find housing if they did not come across a landlord who “very intentionally wanted to be helpful.” The

OSR/SRRI brought together religious communities that are held together by a sense of caring and were willing to go the extra mile to support newcomers. The OSR/SRRI context provides an example of how refugee resettlement was “urgent,” and people were thus “more willing” (PS8) to be involved in sponsorship.

#### 2.5.2.4. Securing housing during the SRRI

The cooperation between landlords, ISAs, and sponsors that successfully supported the housing search process continued while settlement workers and sponsors secured the housing that they did find. The 96-bed capacity at the Maison Sophia Reception House at CCI was not enough to support the nearly 1,200 GARs arriving in Ottawa from January to March 2016 (CCI, 2016); thus, many GARs were accommodated in three local hotels (Veronis, 2019). They were offered the same services as GARs at the Maison Sophia and stayed for approximately 26 days before settlement workers found suitable housing (CCI, 2016). Settlement workers at CCI underwent an “overwhelming” amount of preparation for securing the transportation of GARs to the temporary accommodations at hotels because of last minute changes to their arrival times (CCI, 2016, pg. 11).

Sponsors also often worried about the arrival times of their families. SAHs in Ottawa often encourage sponsors to only sign leases and secure housing once they receive both the notice of arrival and travel itinerary of the sponsored family. Yet, during the OSR/SRRI, many apartments sat empty for months (Miller, 2016). PS8 explained that they did not want the newcomers to “be stuck having to stay in a hotel or live with a family... So [they] took the decision that [they] would rent the apartment, and if it had to stay vacant for a month or two, [the sponsorship group] would bear that cost.” Although sponsors willingly take on financial risks by becoming a sponsor, for PS8 and his group, bearing this additional cost was an “issue with the

group.” In this case, the sponsorship group did not foresee the added cost of a vacant apartment but still chose to assume that cost because they wanted “to be sure to have an accommodation for [the newcomer family].” Despite an outpour of support during the OSR/SRRI, settlement workers and sponsors both found it difficult to secure housing because of the uncertain arrival times of newcomers. As such, the OSR/SRRI provides an important example of cooperation that facilitated networks and partnerships for both settlement workers and sponsors that ultimately led to the successful housing of newcomers. Nevertheless, it is important to note that even with the support of networks, settlement workers were still “overwhelmed” (CCI, 2016, pg. 11) by the housing process and sponsors were liable for unpaid rents.

#### 2.5.2.5. The housing search after the SRRI

The circumstances, however, changed after January 2017: vacancy rates declined, rental rates were up, and landlords became less cooperative. This new context affects more private sponsors than settlement workers who can continue to rely on their established relationships with landlords and the Maison Sophia Reception House for initial reception.

Although sponsors explained that their various networks still formed the backdrop of their housing search, since the end of the OSR/SRRI they must put significantly more work into the housing search than anticipated. By 2019 average rents (for three or more bedrooms) increased by nearly 31% since 2015, and vacancy rates decreased from 5.7% in 2015 to 1.9% in 2019 (Table 2.1). According to sponsors (PS6, PS7, and PS8) it was easier to find housing during the OSR/SRRI and until January 2017; but after that, landlords were no longer cooperative and no longer offering rate cuts, while their units became unaffordable. For example, PS6 explains that Minto was once very “supportive and helpful and understanding and had processes in place for sponsors”; but by June 2019, when their sponsorship group was once again looking for

housing, Minto's housing prices had surpassed their budget and the rental company was no longer accommodating.

#### 2.5.2.6. Securing housing after the SRRI

Since vacancy rates are so low and (recently) only a limited number of landlords are willing to cooperate, sponsors are having to increasingly “stick their neck out” (PS7) and be liable for a lease before newcomers arrive. One sponsor who has yet had to sign a lease believed that they are getting “to the point where it’s just going to have to be somebody signs a lease on behalf of [the newcomers], someone who has the financial stability that the landlords are looking for. And that is a lot to ask of a volunteer” (PS4). Compared to the atmosphere of welcome and solidarity during the OSR/SRRI, more recently, half of the participants (PS5, PS3, PS4 and, PS7) spoke about how landlords are insisting on sponsors co-signing a lease so that they will be responsible for a lapse in rent. Taking on this financial responsibility is not always possible for sponsors and places a significant liability on them; therefore, many opt for allowing the sponsored family to choose their housing. The latter strategy presents concerns of its own.

Unlike the generally supportive and accommodating environment during the OSR/SRRI, following the SRRI, many sponsorship groups are often fraught with concerns about potential overwork and stress. According to PS1, the negative part of sponsorship is “that not everybody is conscientious in the work that they are supposed to be doing. And so, [she] feel[s] [she] ended up carrying a bit more of the work than [she] had anticipated.” Similarly, PS2 claimed to “work full time [but] just [doesn’t] get paid for it.” As the initial interest in the OSR/SRRI waned, not only did landlords stop providing cheaper rents, but volunteer support also faded. For example, PS8 shared: “there is refugee fatigue right now, in the sense that there are other issues that are more pressing.” Sponsors sometimes felt “overwhelmed” (PS8) by the sponsorship process because of

the loss of volunteers over the year and a lack of support from landlords. PS6 opined that by late 2016 the Syrian rush had “stretched a lot of resources, stretched the housing market, and also burnt people out” (PS6). Of the eight sponsors, four (PS1, PS2, PS6 and PS8) shared how they specifically saw a decline in volunteer support (within and outside of the sponsorship groups) after the SRRI.

During the OSR/SRRI, there undoubtedly was an influx in both volunteers donating their time and money to support newcomers. But volunteer support started decreasing around early 2019, both for ISAs such as CCI (CCI, 2019) and private sponsorship groups. According to PS1 at the beginning of the OSR/SRRI there “was this groundswell of support, there was about 60 [sponsors], and at the end of the day there were about maybe 10.” Following the initial first few years of the support during the OSR/SRRI, the “interest waned” because it was “a novelty” (PS7) that many supported, but eventually tired. Not only does this speak to sponsors feeling “burnt out” (PS6, PS7) following the OSR/SRRI, but also suggests that a surge in volunteer support was only temporary. Although generally sponsors have the capacity to provide more care and support for newcomers than settlement workers, over the years since the initial OSR, sponsors have (for the most part) become overworked *because* of the additional support they provide.

#### 2.5.2.7. Month 13

The strategies settlement workers and sponsors employ to search and secure housing for newcomers is intended to set newcomers up for a smooth transition into Month 13. Since the housing process for GARs is standardized – regardless of the welcoming atmosphere during the OSR/SRRI that prompted many volunteer and landlord supports or the less hospitable environment following the SRRI –, it does not seem to impact GARs transition to Month 13. However, all our participants acknowledged that PSRs tend to be set up with a greater advantage

compared to their GAR counterparts. For example, SW1 describes an instance whereby a GAR family had a bedbug infestation so bad that they were forced to throw away their furniture and without a direct support system, did not know how to contact their landlord about the infestation; they were living without furniture for weeks. Without any direct support, and because of language barriers and cultural differences, GARs do not have any resources for communication with their landlords (SW1) and are more vulnerable to their housing situation being precarious after Month 13.

In the PSR program, individualized support from members of the sponsorship group can go well beyond 12 months, in contrast to the GAR system. As PS4 explains, “there is a much higher level of support in terms of people power” in private sponsorship that ultimately makes the program successful. PS4 spoke about how it is a “big adjustment for [the refugees] at the end of sponsorship”; but, sponsors are still always on “the other end of the phone” when the newcomers inevitably do need some type of support. Put differently, even after that first year of support, sponsors are still performing acts of care. Sponsors and newcomers form lasting friendships (SW1, PS1-PS8) that contribute to a level of personal support that is not possible within the GAR program because of the notorious underfunding and overwork of settlement workers (Bushell & Shields, 2018). However, this added support sponsors provide also contributes to their overwork.

Even though the care work that forms the basis of the PSR structure is willingly provided by sponsors, it is often putting a strain on them individually. As PS1 remarked: “[sponsorship is] a lot of work. We would definitely encourage people to do it with their eyes wide open and to understand that the first year is really tough for [the newcomers] and they need extra support in the first year, but just because that first year is over doesn’t mean they don’t need support.”

Although they are only responsible for 12 months, sponsors still feel responsible for newcomers' long-term wellbeing (Lenard, 2019). This feeling of responsibility is coupled with (in some cases) financial liabilities. With having signed a lease for 12 months, PS7 notes how they “didn’t want to be responsible” if something were to happen and the newcomers would no longer be able to make their rent after the year of funding finished. Sponsors are often tangled within the housing systems that bound them to leases because landlords are no longer willing to cooperate following the OSR/SRRI, while also feeling personally responsible for the wellbeing of the sponsored families. Ultimately, sponsors’ commitment to refugee newcomers often goes “over and beyond” (PS8) the required year of support. Indeed, every participating sponsor mentioned that they continue to be in contact with newcomers well beyond the first year.

## **2.6. Discussion and Conclusions**

The level of care and support refugees receive from their sponsors is entirely dependent on their existing social and personal networks, unlike settlement workers who work within established relationships with landlords across the city. An analysis of the OSR/SRRI clearly demonstrates that volunteers, landlords, communities, and corporations are able (and willing) to come together to support resettlement (see Walton-Roberts et al. 2020a); however, this cooperation is often short-lived. For example, landlords generally hold a significant amount of power over whom they choose to rent to (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020), whether they are a newcomer or otherwise. In our case, some landlords used their power to choose to support newcomers during the OSR/SRRI (PS2, PS3, PS8), while others used more discretion when renting to newcomers after the height of the OSR/SRRI (PS3, PS4, and PS6).

Our findings shed light on the ways the GAR and PSR programs are heavily influenced by similar external forces that impact their efficacy in providing housing to newcomers: an overall lack of investment in affordable housing, rising housing costs, decreasing vacancy rates, changes in landlord cooperation during and after the OSR/SRRI, and provincial funding of the RAP rates. Despite these challenges, every newcomer to Ottawa during the OSR/SRRI was eventually housed (CCI, 2016). Although sponsors are successful in securing housing for newcomers because of the extra mile they go, the unpaid care work that they perform goes well beyond the capacity of settlement workers. Private sponsorship therefore acts as a double-edged sword. Every sponsor in this study spoke about their positive experiences with sponsorship, but many of these experiences did not come without their challenges. As PS6 revealed, she would “definitely recommend [sponsorship] to others”; but she is deterred from sponsoring again because of difficulty her sponsorship group had with fundraising and administrative hurdles that prevented their newcomer family from arriving at their scheduled time. Landlords are less willing to support newcomers without incentives to do so, and volunteer support within sponsorship groups declines over time. To compensate for lack of support from landlords, ISAs, and volunteers, private sponsors adopt caring practices to secure housing that (in some cases) may lead to their overwork and feelings of burnout. Four out of eight sponsors (PS1, PS2, PS6, and PS8) directly expressed feelings of burnout (particularly after the SRRI), and they expressed that this was the case only after the OSR/SRRI.

Although sponsors are independently motivated from the structures that encourage sponsorship, the care work that they perform perpetuates the broader project of creating Canadian citizens through economic and social integration (Haugen et al., 2020). The fact that refugee resettlement in Canada relies on the structures of unpaid care labour entrenched in the

PSR program reinforces sponsors' overwork. Sponsors are vulnerable to the financial and personal liabilities involved with securing housing when initial surges of volunteer and corporate cooperation from global 'crises' situations drop. Without accounting for the real significant unpaid care work that forms the basis of refugee resettlement, there may be arguments to suggest that the PSR program is not as successful in resettling newcomers as many have previously suggested.

## **PART 3: DISCUSSION CHAPTER**

### **3.1. Introduction**

In this concluding chapter, I will first discuss the main findings of my study. Specifically, I will show how care is embedded within the PSR program structure and in turn contributes to sponsors' overwork especially so during the housing process. I will explain why Ottawa is an important case study for examining the role of sponsorship structures in the housing process and how the PSR program is based on sponsors capacity to perform unpaid care labour. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the care embedded in the PSR program structure is based on sponsors' personal values, meanings, and motivations. To illustrate the significance of sponsors' care labour, I advance that the notion of care ethics serves to bring out the nuances of this labour that help us better understand the work that sponsors perform during the resettlement period (and beyond). By interpreting sponsors work in resettlement as a relational process, we can begin to see the limitations within the PSR program structure that reinforces sponsors' over-work and eventual burnout. On the one hand, sponsors participate in refugee sponsorship because they have the financial and social means, and can afford the time to perform unpaid work. While on the other, sponsors perform this work because of their personal values, emotional ties to support the well-being of others, and personal connections to resettlement efforts. Following the discussion on the research findings, I will provide recommendations to help improve the support structures of the PSR program for sponsors in order to prevent their burnout, in particular with regard to the housing process. Lastly, I conclude with a presentation of my thesis' main research contributions and directions for future research.

### **3.2. Interpretation of findings and conceptual implications of research theories**

#### **3.2.1. The case for researching sponsors' experiences with the housing process**

During the recent Syrian refugee resettlement efforts known as OSR and the SRRI (2015-2016 and beyond), communities from across Canada mobilized resources by drawing upon local histories to shape their response to refugee resettlement (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a).

Communities in Ottawa were no different. In 1979, Ottawa residents mobilized to support Project 4000 and took on private sponsorship (Powell, 2014). As previous research has shown (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a; Veronis, 2019), sponsors in Ottawa trace their involvement in the PSR program to Project 4000; this was confirmed again by participants in my study (PS2, PS7). During the OSR and SRRI, Ottawa's history with welcoming refugees helped pave the way for the outpouring of support from many different stakeholders, not only private sponsorship groups, but also local landlords and volunteers (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020a) and provided the backdrop of this research project; the main goal was to investigate private sponsors' experiences and strategies with the housing search and assess the role of the PSR program structure in this process.

Over the past few years, Ottawa's rental housing market has become increasingly inaccessible to many low-income households, with financialized landlords squeezing poorer tenants out of previously affordable housing (Crosby, 2020), continuous upward pressures on rents (Whitzman & Desroches, 2020), and decreasing vacancy rates for larger units (CMHC, 2020). These market forces are outside the control of settlement workers and private sponsors, yet they dictate how each group navigates the housing process in refugee resettlement. Sponsors are more vulnerable to these external forces because their role in the housing process is not

standardized, placing sponsors under increased pressure to secure housing for newcomers settling in the city. An examination of the extensive labour sponsors provide during the housing process represents an important empirical focus to analyze and understand the role of PSR program structures, insofar as navigating Ottawa's strained affordable rental market involves more intensive labour than sponsors initially anticipated.

### 3.2.2. The role of PSR program structures in the housing process

The PSR program structure is based on the financial and emotional commitment of a group of sponsors (that have some levels of knowledge and expertise, but are not necessarily experienced), who put in countless hours of unpaid work to resettle newcomers. These groups also have (and rely on) a number of networks that support their housing search. Networks are external to the sponsorship groups (i.e., meetings with other sponsorship groups or workshops put on by ISAs/local stakeholders), from individual sponsors' personal/professional groups (i.e., connections with people from their faith groups, or sponsors' knowing someone from their work), and from the division of labour within the sponsorship group (as will be explained below). My research findings show that during the housing search process there were many differences between the methods sponsors used to secure housing. Each sponsor, however, seemed to rely on some form of network to search, secure, and complete the housing process. Sponsors spoke about how their personal and professional networks outside of their sponsorship groups, and the ways in which their own sponsorship group decided to divide the labour involved in the housing search, contributed to the success of their housing process. The division of labour within sponsorship groups demonstrates that the PSR program structure allows for an efficient and organized housing process. Six of the eight sponsors (PS1, PS3, PS4, PS5, PS7, and PS8) discussed how different members of their sponsorship group would take on a 'job' – be it a

housing search, health care, education, or financial advice – for which they are qualified based on their own professions, personal inclinations, talents, and/or hobbies. The PSR program structure is rooted in both the sponsors’ individual capabilities and their (personal) networks and as members of sponsorship groups.

Another important factor in sponsors’ success during the housing process was their varying abilities to dedicate significant (unpaid) time to sponsorship and their capacity to take on financial risks – in other words, sponsors’ power to enact their resources as established Canadian citizens/permanent residents. In their study on the PSR program following the surge of private sponsorships during the OSR/SRRI, Macklin et al. (2018) surveyed over 500 private sponsors and found that participating in private sponsorship requires access to robust social networks from a sustainable sponsorship group. Furthermore, they found that nearly three quarters of the respondents were women, more than a third were retired, and were mostly upper-middle class (Macklin et al., 2018). Similarly, in my research, every sponsor actively relied on networks both within and outside of their sponsorship group, and half were retired (PS1, PS2, PS5, and PS7); thus they were able to spend days (or sometimes weeks) searching for housing without worrying about their own financial stability.

Sponsors’ financial stability plays a role in their ability to participate in private sponsorship (Macklin et al., 2018). For example, PS8 and his sponsorship group were able to raise funds amongst themselves and take on extra financial costs for an apartment sitting vacant while their group was waiting for the newcomers to arrive. For other sponsors, the type of additional financial responsibility that PS8 described was not an option (PS3, PS4, and PS6); however, many explained that they were expected to accrue other, more covert financial responsibilities. PS4, PS5, and PS7 spoke about how uncooperative landlords were coercing

them to either fully sign, co-sign, or act as guarantors on leases before newcomers would arrive, to provide assurance that rent would be paid for the full year. The PSR program inherently requires sponsors to accept various levels of responsibility (IRCC, 2016), so by making the decision to become a sponsor, people willingly take on financial risks. However, some sponsors and their groups have the economic means to provide additional support (e.g., PS8), while other sponsors and sponsorship groups may struggle financially and rely solely on fundraising efforts to support newcomers (see Blain et al., 2010; Silvius et al., 2017). Not only does this divide suggest that some PSRs may be receiving more support than other PSRs and GARs (Agrawal, 2018), but it is also adding strain on the sponsors themselves.

The ways in which sponsors use their networks, manage their sponsorship groups, and coordinate their resources to support newcomers shows that sponsors are performing the voluntary and caring labour that forms the basis of the PSR program structure. However, as I will demonstrate below, a deeper analysis into the theoretical implications of sponsors' caring labour illustrates that sponsors' care is not only the basis of the PSR program, rather, and more crucially, it is also an outcome of the PSR program structure.

### 3.2.3. Refugee resettlement and care ethics

Feminist notions of care ethics serve to shed light on the importance of valuing care work in various contexts and spaces (Atkinson, 2011; Lawson, 2007). Care work is often undervalued even though it is key to ensuring individuals' and societies' well-being, and therefore should be acknowledged (Tronto, 1993); it is more than a commodity that can be bought and sold on the market (Lawson, 2011; Tronto, 2017). With regard to refugee resettlement, the implementation of neoliberal policies over the past few decades (Bushell & Shields, 2018; Lowe et al., 2017) has

shifted and reformed the various spaces (e.g., RAP agencies like CCI and local stakeholders like Refugee 613 or The Refugee Hub) in which care is provided. However, these policy reforms have also produced a space of solidarity amongst volunteers and settlement sector stakeholders. Despite the settlement sector experiencing a decline in the diversity of services they offered before 2015 due to cutbacks and restructuring (Lowe et al., 2017), the OSR/SRRI experience has shown that settlement workers successfully took on additional work and managed case overloads (Walton-Roberts et al., 2020b). For example, the relationships among settlement sector actors provided the groundwork for arrangements like the one between CCI and Capital Towers for their buildings on Donald Street, designated for housing GAR newcomers during the height of the OSR/SRRI. Even with the additional influx of GAR newcomers during the OSR/SRRI, settlement workers successfully housed and resettled more newcomers than initially anticipated (CCI, 2016). The resilience of the settlement sector and individual settlement workers during the OSR/SRRI demonstrates that the sector is not a passive victim to neoliberal policies – as Veronis (2019) argues – because the sector is able to mobilize and act together as a coordinated network of partners and volunteers whose purpose is to care for newcomers.

Part of this broader landscape of settlement in Canada, under the larger structure of volunteer support we find private sponsorship, under which all the labour currently rests on unpaid sponsors. As discussed in Part 1, a geographies of care approach to understanding the spaces of care in private refugee sponsorship can help to uncover the agency of individual sponsors and to show how sponsors' labour is more than a necessity born out of neoliberal divestment. Sponsors' labour is directly tied to the individualized sense of meaning they receive from their caring (and unpaid) labour. Sponsors have a diverse range of motivations for becoming involved in sponsorship. Similarly to the findings of other studies on private refugee

sponsorship (Blain et al., 2020; Macklin et al., 2018), sponsors in this study cited a number of motivating factors for becoming involved in sponsorship, including: a long history of sponsorship (PS2, PS7), their religious beliefs (PS3, PS8), media images of persecuted Syrians (PS1, PS4, PS5), and their own personal commitments to social justice (PS6). Whatever the specific motivation to becoming a sponsor, they all involve emotions, values, goals, and personal beliefs, which in turn, leads to a structure of caring labour in the PSR program.

#### 3.2.4. The relational spaces of care work in the PSR program

Feminist thinking around care ethics has stressed the potential to challenge dominant powers and (re)make local spaces in new, more inclusive ways (Askins, 2015; Bartos, 2019; Lawson, 2007; Tronto, 1993). As Tronto (1993) has shown, the relationships that exist between caregiver and care receiver are often embedded within structures of power. Instead of seeing the care labour in private sponsorship as an asymmetrical relationship between the caregiver and care receiver, a care ethics approach emphasizes the relationality of these relationships. There are two implications of the care (and voluntary) labour in the PSR program structure. First, care labour is a process of social reproduction that is produced through everyday spaces and contexts (Askins, 2015; Bhattacharya, 2017; Kallio & Hakli, 2019; Valentine et al., 2012). Sponsors' caring work is a form of social reproduction that informs how newcomer refugees (re)make their lives in Canada. Here, care is a political project because sponsors' past experiences with sponsorship, their personal and social networks, and their own financial means contribute to their capacity to provide resettlement support to newcomers. Sponsors commit to facilitating newcomers' integration into Canadian society (Lenard, 2019; Macklin et al., 2018), and by so doing, they are also participating in the social reproduction of PSRs' new lives in Canada. Whether sponsors specifically see their role in resettlement as social reproduction – just as

sponsors' financial capacity affords them the ability to sponsor – their personal history shapes how they work to resettle newcomers.

The second implication of care labour in the PSR program transcends the implications of social reproduction, because of sponsors' own individual motivations for becoming involved in sponsorship. As Middleton & Samanani (2020, p. 11) recently argued, care ethics is not only a series of practices tied to social reproduction, but it also “reimagines the relationship between observation, analysis, commitment, and responsiveness as a single, entangled process within research.” Along these lines, we cannot see care within private sponsorship as a single act that reproduces ‘Canadian values’ onto newcomers (Kyriakides, et al., 2018), but as grounded and influenced by sponsors' individualities, their resources, and access to networks. Just as refugees “cannot be homogenised through refugeeeness, neither is it valid to deny the capacity for relationally autonomous thought and action on the part of sponsors” (Kyriakides, et al., 2018, p. 71). Sponsors participate in the PSR program because of their personal emotions towards resettlement (Blain et al., 2020; Kyriakides, et al., 2018; Macklin et al., 2018), and as such, sponsors have varying degrees of agency that dictate their reasons for becoming involved in refugee sponsorship. This more nuanced understanding of sponsors' agency within the caring labour they perform also speaks to how sponsors negotiate their relationships with newcomers.

The ways in which sponsors develop intricate relationships with newcomers over the required 12 months of sponsorship suggest that many sponsors are cognisant of their positions of power. Recently researchers have begun to examine the relationships between sponsors and refugee newcomers to show that kinship relations are embedded within the institutional structure of the PSR program (Macklin et al., 2020). Sponsors actively work towards negotiating ‘friendships’ and ‘familial’ relationships with newcomers during the sponsorship period to both

overcome negative implications involved with their position of power and because they respect the autonomy of newcomers. For example, sponsors said that befriending and building trust with newcomers was an essential first step in sponsorship (PS3 and PS4), while others referred to sponsored newcomers as ‘friends’ or ‘family’ (PS2, PS6, PS8). This place of trust between the sponsor and newcomer illustrates that the caring labour forming the basis of the PSR program structure goes well beyond sponsors only supporting newcomers’ resettlement; it develops into personal relationships. Although other research has shown that newcomers are more vulnerable to the whims of their sponsors than GARs are to the work of settlement workers (Arnault & Merali, 2019), my findings suggest that sponsors consciously negotiate their relationship with their sponsored refugee families to prevent newcomers from being placed into vulnerable positions, showing yet another level of the care labour involved in the PSR program structure.

Seeing care as *both* the basis and the result of the PSR program structure provides a new way of conceptualizing care labour in refugee resettlement that accounts for the real work behind the PSR program. Sponsors’ care is the foundation of the program that works to resettle newcomers despite the overwork and challenges sponsors face during the housing process (and beyond). However, care is also the result of the private sponsorship structure since sponsors cannot participate in the PSR program without having the ability and privilege to care. In order to be a private sponsor, individuals require a certain level of financial stability to be able to take on unexpected costs, can afford the spare time to perform unpaid work, and the substantial social and personal networks that support the housing process. Further, sponsors also require adequate support for private sponsorship to work from all three levels of government, and encouragement from local settlement sector organizations to promote and support sponsors’ involvement in the PSR program. For example, even though the Syrian civil war began over four years before the

image of Alan Kurdi went viral, catalyzing global attention to the mass exodus of Syrian refugees, sponsors in this study (PS2, PS5, PS8) noted that they began seeking families to sponsor only once the story of the boy's death became widespread in Canadian media. Media portrayals of refugee 'crises' and local programs support private sponsorship and encourage participation in the PSR program. Just as images of mass flight from conflicts in Southeast Asia in the 1970s inspired Project 4000, global media depictions of Syrian refugees in the 2010s directly influenced local groups to take on private sponsorship. Ultimately, the success of the PSR program is contingent on government, other stakeholders' support, as well as on sponsors' capacity to provide unpaid caring labour.

### **3.3. Recommendations**

Private sponsorship is a public-private partnership that retains a significant role from the government, but also depends on the unpaid work of volunteers who take on the sponsorship responsibility (Labman & Pearlman, 2018; Macklin et al., 2018). On the one hand, the federal government is responsible for regulating the annual number of PSRs admitted to Canada, governing who is admitted as a PSR, funds settlement services and local ISAs, and organizes refugee newcomers' travel itineraries to Canada (IRCC, 2019; Macklin et al., 2018). On the other, sponsors are responsible for raising funds and providing all the work involved in resettlement. Nevertheless, sponsorship groups are becoming increasingly responsible for leases after the end of the official period of sponsorship (PS4, PS5, and PS7) and for unpaid rents when newcomers do not arrive at their initial arrival times (PS8). As many sponsors in this study expressed, this (often unexpected) liability was not only contributing to their overwork, but for one sponsor (PS6) was also a cause for discouragement from sponsoring in the future. But many of these liabilities for sponsors are caused by issues beyond their control. For example, sponsors

have little notice as to when newcomers will arrive (and sometimes they do not arrive at all), they do not control provincial RAP rate budgets, and the affordable rental market is constantly fluctuating.

I suggest that, instead of having sponsorship groups bare these unanticipated costs, each level of government ought to take a more active role in the PSR public-private partnership. All the sponsors in this study expressed their wish to continue working as sponsors; yet many expressed challenges during their housing search that contributed to their overwork. Recommendations from this research project therefore relate to the existing PSR program structures, and the ways in which IRCC, the provincial and municipal governments, and landlords can contribute more pro-actively to supporting private sponsorship (or private sponsorship groups).

### 3.3.1. Landlords' lack of cooperation with sponsors

Sponsors frequently spoke about landlords not wanting to rent to refugee newcomers because of their lack of employment history, proof of employment, and character references. Since tracking down this information is nearly impossible for sponsors, many times they did not hear back from landlords (PS3, PS4, PS6). To compensate, sponsors frequently acted as guarantors and co-signed leases to secure housing. The IRCC can play a more active role in this regard by ensuring refugee newcomers' needs are met and sponsors face lesser financial risks during the sponsorship period.

Although the IRCC funds local ISAs who in-turn work to resettle GARs, currently, they do little to support private sponsors in securing housing for PSRs. As a first step, the IRCC ought to develop/implement measures to wave various background checks landlords usually require for

non-newcomer tenants. Alternatively, to relieve stress off the sponsors and their associated SAHs, IRCC could provide a letter of reference for all refugee newcomers in lieu of these background documents, and/or act as guarantors for leases in the first year of sponsorship.

### 3.3.2. Landlords' lack of cooperation with newcomers

Currently, larger landlords in Ottawa with which many of the participants rented (specifically Minto and Capital Towers) do not have a system in place to communicate in languages other than English (and sometimes French). As SWI and PS1 suggested, these landlords ought to facilitate communication with newcomer families. Since many of the newcomers who arrive have limited English, clearly communicating the terms of leases, tenant rights, and landlord responsibilities directly with newcomers would be useful.

Given this context, this communication is mostly under the responsibility of private sponsors. Although the Province of Ontario website has a guide to lease templates in 21 different languages (Ontario 2020), the government does not actively encourage landlords to use these templates; it could put more pressure on landlords to provide leases in both English and the mother tongue of newcomer tenants. In addition, more resources ought to be made available for sponsorship groups so they can ensure newcomers clearly understand the terms of their leases. For example, multiple levels of the government can fund more access to translating services for newcomers, provide infographics that explain the terms of leases and tenant rights, and encourage landlord cooperation.

### 3.3.3. Precarious housing search process

Refugee 613, a local stakeholder (see footnote 3 in Chapter 1), launched a Housing Task Force that partners with local housing advocates, settlement agencies, landlords, and the City of Ottawa to support newcomers' housing security. Although this program does not directly support private sponsors' housing process, on its website it calls on private landlords to rent to newcomer tenants at lower than market costs (Refugee 613, 2020). This type of work should continue and could even extend to reaching out to sponsors. As this study has shown, sponsors have a multitude of social and personal networks that support their housing search, and bringing all these networks in one central database could serve to support sponsors' housing process.

Other than standard housing search methods (Facebook Market place, Padmapper, Kijiji) there is no centralized space for sponsors to consult when looking for housing. PS6 spoke about the usefulness not only of the housing workshops that ISAs organized, but also connections she made with other sponsorship groups at these workshops. Promoting more group message platforms (such as Whatsapp or Facebook groups), or online/in-person discussion groups so that sponsors can make more connections between different groups could open more possibilities for sharing information on various housing struggles. Sharing the challenges sponsors face (such as where different bedbug infestations are in the city or calling out particularly predatory landlords) would also provide for information sharing and knowledge gathering that supports sponsors housing process.

### **3.4. Research Contributions**

In Part 2, I introduced the concept of the housing process as the initial housing search (1), securing housing (2), and newcomers' housing situation at Month 13 (3). Looking at the ways

settlement workers and sponsors work at each of these stages is an important step forward for similar projects. As every sponsor in this study noted (in one way or another), the housing process is challenging, labour intensive, and demoralizing. Although sponsors' housing process is dependent on the state of the housing market at any given time, by seeing the housing process as these three stages, sponsors can begin to standardize how they perform the housing process. As seen with the GAR examples in housing (Rose & Charrette, 2017; 2020), standardization of the housing search was the key to successful housing processes and outcomes. Ultimately, the study of housing stages in the PSR program structure opened up new possibilities of researching the nuances involved with the deeply caring labour that is the root of the PSR program.

Currently, little research exists on how sponsors are involved in the housing process. Although there is an extensive body of research on private sponsorship as it relates to sponsor-refugee relationships (Blain et al., 2020; Kyriakides et al., 2018), PSR situations after Month 13 (Agrawal, 2018; Arnault & Merali, 2019; Lenard, 2019), and the role private sponsorship played with the OSR/SRRI (Brücker 2017; Hyndman et al., 2017; Lenard, 2016), less attention has been paid to the labour behind private sponsorship. While the structural make-up of the PSR program is relatively well understood (Hyndman et al., 2017; Lenard, 2016; Silvius et al., 2017), less is known about how these structures create strong demands in terms of unpaid care labour on sponsors. By examining the ways in which sponsors complete one of the hardest tasks of their sponsorship responsibility – securing housing in an overly tight and unaffordable rental market – this study has brought to light a number of the problems with the PSR program structure. Further, this project contributes to better understandings of sponsorship group dynamics, challenges sponsors face during the housing process, and sponsors' motivations for becoming involved in sponsorship. By understanding the networks and interpersonal relationships that form

the PSR program structure, academics, policy makers, and front-line workers can develop more advice and guidelines for proven strategies that sponsors can adopt in the housing process.

### **3.5. Future Research Directions**

The research objectives and time restrictions of this project prevented me from investigating the ways in which sponsors develop their relationships with newcomers in more depth. Although there is a growing body of literature that specifically focuses on the sponsor/sponsored relationships (Blain et al., 2020; Kyriakides, et al., 2018; Macklin et al., 2020), a study has yet to be seen on the contributions that the notion of care ethics and care labour can make to understanding how care is embedded within these sponsorship relationships. Although part of the aim of my research was to showcase a relational view of private sponsorship in order to offer a new perspective on the labour involved in private sponsorship, there were not enough data to produce generalizable comments on the larger structures of the PSR program. It would also be useful to include newcomers' perspectives on their relationship with sponsors during the housing process to shed light on the inequalities and the relationships between both parties. Such a perspective will further contribute to understanding the mode of care ethics within the PSR program structure. Understanding the autonomy and agency of both sponsors and sponsored newcomers can show the different ways care is intertwined within the PSR structure. Along these lines, taking on a more comprehensive comparison between settlement workers and private sponsors by speaking with more settlement workers would add value to subsequent projects.

In this project, I was able to only get a glimpse of how private sponsors who are retired were able to spend much of their free time searching for housing, thereby positively influencing

the housing process of newcomers' overall resettlement. Sponsors in this cohort were all white, educated, and middle to upper-middle class individuals who were either retired or had significant amounts of spare time to spend searching for housing, let alone all the other work involved in resettlement outside of the housing process. This project only provided a glimpse into how sponsors' various resources both drew them into sponsorship in the first place and positively influenced the process of the housing search. A more thorough analysis on the role played by sponsors' class, race, and gender as a whole, and specifically with regard to their networks and their capacity to provide adequate housing would be useful for further research. Overall, future research ought to include a larger and more diverse sample of sponsors who are sponsoring through a diverse range of SAHs or part of a group of 5 sponsorship in Ottawa (and in other cities/contexts). Taking on a larger scale project would also provide for more robust and generalizable results, including the potential to better evaluate the influence of private sponsors' class, faith, ethnicity, race, and gender has on the PSR program structure.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

There are many positive aspects to private sponsorship. Refugee newcomers are introduced to their new lives in Canada with personal support from caring citizens who actively work to ensure their success in the first year of sponsorship and beyond. Despite the strains on the rental market in Ottawa (and other cities) and the unexpectedly high numbers of Syrian newcomers, housing was found for all GARs and PSRs during the OSR/SRRI (CCI, 2016). For settlement workers, the process of searching for housing was relatively stable during and after the OSR/SRRI since they relied on extant network relationships. For sponsors, the housing process varied greatly between each sponsorship group because of differences within their networks and individual sponsors' capacity to provide support over the required RAP rates.

Individuals who have been involved in sponsorship for many years and those who began sponsoring in the last few years all rely on social, professional, and religious networks to support their housing search.

The notion of care ethics offers an approach to dismantle the boundaries between private-public dichotomies (Tronto, 1993). In the PSR program, the public-private partnership is inherent (Macklin et al., 2018). The unpaid care work sponsors perform forms the basis of the private equation. However, the government plays a significant role, in that sponsors can only participate in private sponsorship because of the government bodies that allow them to do so. Sponsors take on resettlement work willingly because of a multitude of emotional connections and personal motivations, and receive little hands-on support from the federal government. However, without adequate support from the government, sponsors are often left to the whims of external pressures (i.e., uncooperative landlords or unaffordable rental market) that eventually lead to their burn-out.

The fact that the PSR program relies on the structure of unpaid labour reinforces sponsors' overwork. Sponsors are vulnerable to the financial and personal liabilities involved with securing housing when there is less corporate cooperation and a drop in volunteer involvement depending on geopolitical circumstances. Yet, even with the added labour, burnout, and overwork many sponsors experience, sponsors in this study spoke about how they willingly continue to sponsor refugee newcomers and enjoy the work that they perform. I therefore do not wish to suggest that the PSR program should be disbanded; however, an improved support structure from the government will lead to a more resilient PSR program. The PSR program structure relies on the willingness *and* financial capacity of individuals to provide care. Especially in this new era of COVID-19, where it seems every aspect of people's lives is

changing, it will be increasingly important to reassess the real amount of care work behind the PSR program structure. For many, COVID-19 has already led to financial instability, uncertainty, and strain to personal circumstances. Since the very foundation of the PSR program structure is currently based on unpaid care labour – with the increasing global uncertainty – it is more important than ever to reassess the efficacy of relying on individuals' capacity to provide care for others in need.

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## APPENDIX A: REB Approval Letter

04/12/2019

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CÉR) de l'Université d'Ottawa, opérant conformément à l'*Énoncé de politique des Trois conseils* (2014) et toutes autres lois et tous règlements applicables, a examiné et approuvé la demande d'éthique du projet de recherche ci-nommé.

L'approbation est valide pour la durée indiquée plus haut et est sujette aux conditions énumérées dans la section intitulée "Conditions Spéciales ou Commentaires". Le formulaire « Renouvellement ou Fermeture de Projet » doit être complété quatre semaines avant la date d'échéance indiquée ci-haut afin de demander un renouvellement de cette approbation éthique ou afin de fermer le dossier.

Toutes modifications apportées au projet doivent être approuvées par le CÉR avant leur mise en place, sauf si le participant doit être retiré en raison d'un danger immédiat ou s'il s'agit d'un changement ayant trait à des éléments administratifs ou logistiques du projet. Les chercheurs doivent aviser le CÉR dans les plus brefs délais de tout changement pouvant augmenter le niveau de risque aux participants ou pouvant affecter considérablement le déroulement du projet, rapporter tout événement imprévu ou indésirable et soumettre toute nouvelle information pouvant nuire à la conduite du projet ou à la sécurité des participants.

The University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, which operates in accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (2014) and other applicable laws and regulations, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above-named research project.

Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and is subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions or Comments". The "Renewal/Project Closure" form must be completed four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval or closure of the file.

Any changes made to the project must be approved by the REB before being implemented, except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) only pertain to administrative or logistical components of the project. Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes that increase the risk to participant(s), any changes that considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project or the safety of the participant(s).

Germain ZONGO

Responsable d'éthique en recherche / Protocol Officer

Pour/For **Barbara GRAVES** Président(e) du/ Chair of the Comité d'éthique de la recherche en sciences sociales et humanités / Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board

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[www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie](http://www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie) | [www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics](http://www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics)

## **APPENDIX B: Interview Guides**

### **Semi-Structured Interviews with Private Sponsors**

| Theme                          | Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Introductions                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long have you been a private sponsor? How many refugee families has your group sponsored? Have you previously been involved in the settlement sector as a volunteer and/or an employee? In what capacity?</li> <li>• What motivated you to become a sponsor?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Strategies for finding housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you find housing for refugees? What are the tools available to you? What is your experience working with those tools and the housing market in Ottawa?</li> <li>• Where (generally) do you think you found housing for those you've sponsored?</li> <li>• What are the most important needs that you try to meet: affordability, location, size, etc.?</li> <li>• Do you feel prepared to find housing for those you've sponsored? In what ways?</li> </ul> |
| Housing challenges             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of the main challenges you face with housing? Are there specific barriers?</li> <li>• Has the housing market changed over time?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Networks /Actors               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the most relevant parties/partners in your work: private landlords, the city of Ottawa, volunteers, religious organizations, others?</li> <li>• How has it been working with landlords to secure housing? What are the challenges and/or benefits of this system?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| PSR program structures         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your general experience with being a sponsor?</li> <li>• Are there any risks associated with sponsorship?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

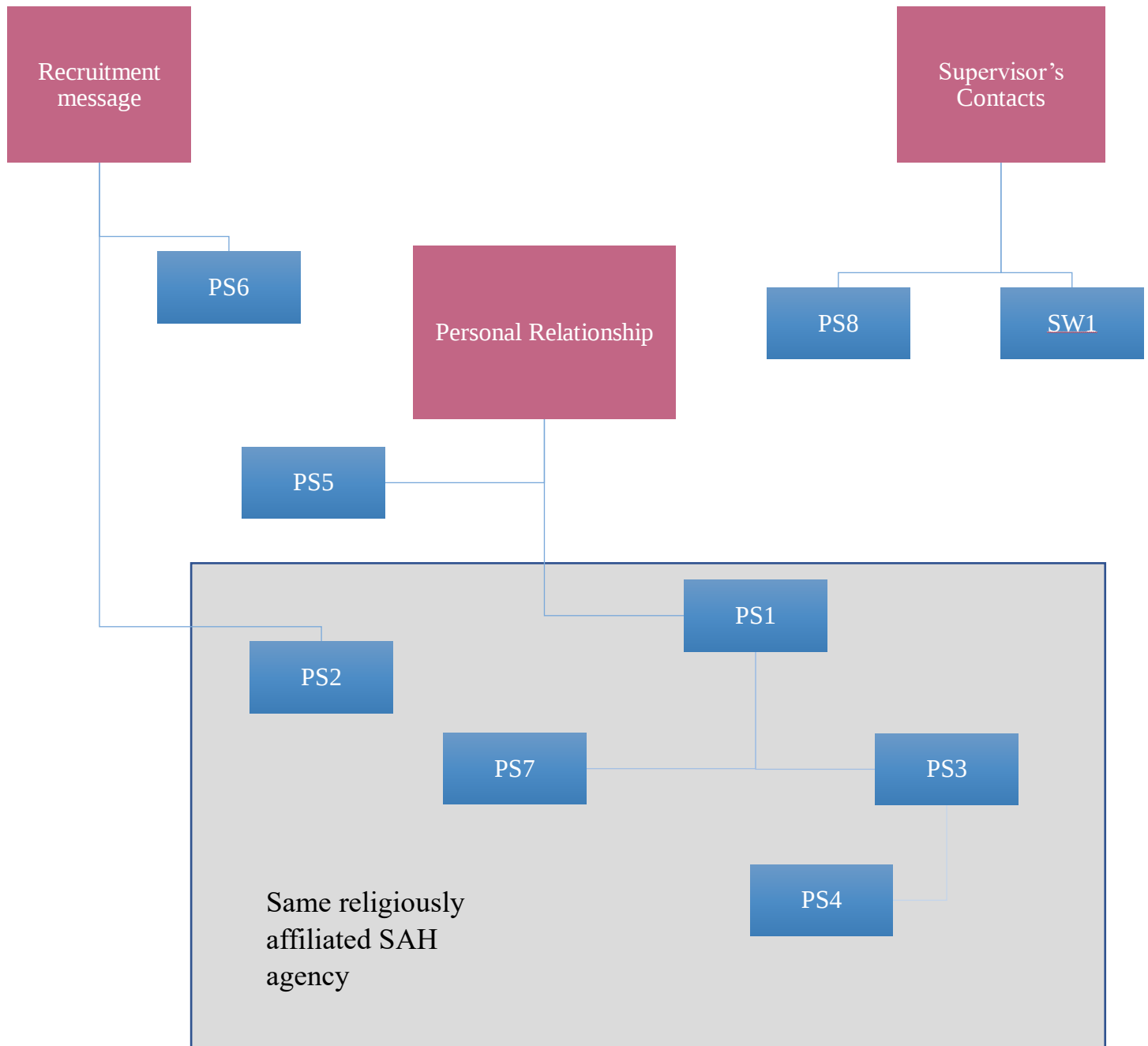
|                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you think your experience relates to other private sponsors you may know? How do you see your role as a sponsor within the larger picture of refugee resettlement in the city? What do you perceive your role as sponsor to be in relation to those who are sponsored?</li> <li>• What are the dynamics like within your group of sponsors? How do you decide who is responsible for finding housing?</li> </ul> |
| Other types of refugee sponsorship and housing                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your work differ from that of settlement agencies? Do you know how the settlement workers find housing? Do they come to you and/or do you help them?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Conclusion                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything else that you wish to add relating to finding housing for resettled refugees or on sponsorship more generally?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Thank you for your time and for your interest in participating in this study. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### Semi-Structured Interviews with Settlement Workers

| Theme                          | Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Introductions                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you become involved with this settlement agency? How long have you worked there? What has your role been in this company? Has it changed/evolved? In what ways?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |
| Strategies for finding housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you find housing for refugees? What are the tools available to you? What is your experience working with those tools?</li> <li>• Where (generally) do you think you found housing for refugees?</li> <li>• What are the most important needs that you try to meet: affordability, location, size, etc.?</li> </ul> |
| Housing challenges             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of the main challenges you face with housing? Are there specific barriers?</li> <li>• How has the housing market changed over time?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                              |

|                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Networks /Actors                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the most relevant parties/partners in your work: private landlords, other SPOs/NGOs, the city of Ottawa, volunteers at your organization, others?</li> <li>• How has it been working with landlords to secure housing? What are the challenges and/or benefits of this system?</li> <li>• Are there any partnerships with other settlement agencies or organizations that play a role in housing for refugees?</li> <li>• What capacity do volunteers have in the agency you work for? What role do they play? Did you volunteer before getting involved in this agency?</li> </ul> |
| Other types of refugee sponsorship and housing                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does your work differ from that of private sponsors? Do you know how private sponsorship groups find housing? Do they come to you and/or do you help them?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Conclusion                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything else that you wish to add relating to finding housing for resettled refugees?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Thank you for your time and for your interest in participating in this study. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## APPENDIX C: Snowball Sampling Method



#### **APPENDIX D: Recruitment Message**

My name is Cecilia Scoles and I am a master's student at the University of Ottawa. I am currently conducting a study that examines how the private refugee sponsorship program works to find housing for refugees across Ottawa. My research is primarily interested in the experiences of private sponsors, the tools they use, and social networks they have that help them secure adequate housing for their sponsored refugee families across the city.

I am conducting interviews with both settlement workers and private sponsors to discuss their experiences with finding housing for sponsored refugees across Ottawa. The project consists of one interview that will last approximately 45 to 90 minutes and will take place at the time and place of participant's choosing. Any settlement worker and/or private sponsor that is responsible for securing housing for sponsored refugees in Ottawa and is over the age of 18 is eligible to participate. Interviews will be completely voluntary and anonymous.

If you are interested in participating or have any further questions, please email me at: \*\*\*\*\*

This project is under the supervision of Dr. Luisa Veronis (\*\*\*) at the Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics at the University of Ottawa. If you have any ethical concerns with this study, please contact the officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 at (613) 562-5387 or at Email: [ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca).

## **APPENDIX E: Consent Form**

Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

### **Consent Form**

**Title of the study:** Finding Housing for the (Re)settlement of Refugees in Ottawa: the tangled politics of the voluntary sector and neoliberalism

**Researcher:**

Cecilia Scoles

University of Ottawa,  
Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography  
Email: \*\*\*\*\*  
Phone: \*\*\*  
Office: \*\*\*

**Supervisor:**

Luisa Veronis

University of Ottawa,  
Faculty of Arts, Department of Geography  
Email: \*\*\*

**Invitation to Participate:** I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Cecilia Scoles and supervised by Luisa Veronis.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to investigate how the private refugee sponsorship and the government assisted refugee sponsorship programs work to find housing for refugees across Ottawa. The study is interested in the experiences of private sponsors and settlement workers, the tools they use, and social networks they have that help them secure housing for their sponsored refugee families across the city.

**Participation:** My participation will consist of one interview for approximately 60 to 90 minutes that will be recorded using an audio recorder. The interviews are scheduled at my convenience and at the location of my choosing. During the interviews, I will be asked to answer questions regarding my experience with finding housing for sponsored refugee families, some challenges/barriers I face in the housing markets, relationships with private landlords, information on relevant partners/parties/volunteer organizations/NGOs I am involved with in Ottawa, the capacity volunteers have in the organization I am affiliated with, and the ways and reasons I became involved with refugee sponsorship.

**Benefits:** My participation in this study will advance a wider knowledge of the challenges to finding housing for sponsored refugees across Ottawa. By participating and sharing experiences, others who are similarly finding housing for sponsored refugees may learn of new avenues to explore when finding housing that will be a direct benefit to sponsored refugees.

**Confidentiality:** I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents of the interviews will be used only for analysis for the research project and that my confidentiality will be protected through the non-disclosure of personal information and the physical security of transcripts of interviews in a locked cabinet only the researcher (see above for contact information) will have access to. I have received the invitation from the researcher to not disclose any personal information about the

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Canada



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refugee family(ies) I am affiliated with. If I happen to disclose the names and/or personal identifiable information about these refugees, the researcher will ensure this information is completely removed from the project. The data from this interview will be used as part of the Master's thesis of the Researcher (Cecilia Scoles).

**Anonymity** will be protected in the following manner: using pseudonyms during the transcription and dissemination process, the non-disclosure of place of employment and/or organizational affiliation, and the security of identifiable information as only accessible to the researcher, which will be secured in a locked cabinet.

**Conservation of data:** Following the interview, the data collected on the audio recorder will be promptly transferred onto a password protected computer and an encrypted external hard drive that only the researcher will have access to and be promptly deleted from the recorder. Transcriptions will be completed on a password protected Microsoft Word document and later printed and kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. All data with any personal identifiable information will only be accessible to the researcher at any point in time. The original transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews will be kept for 5 years after the completion of the thesis project on the password protected computer and encrypted external hard drive, unless I state otherwise.

**Voluntary Participation:** I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will not be used, unless I explicitly tell the researcher that I would like my interview included in the research project.

**Acceptance:** I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Cecilia Scoles of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Ottawa, which is under the supervision of Professor Luisa Veronis.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5  
Tel.: (613) 562-5387  
Email: [ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca)

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:

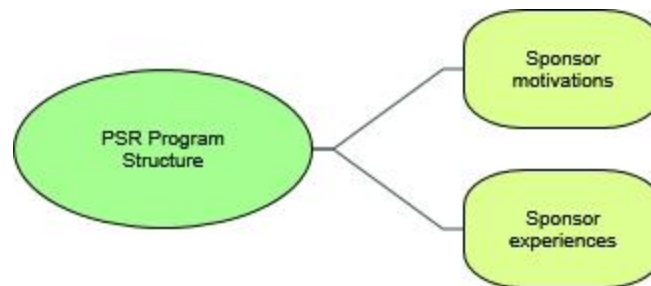
Date:

Researcher's signature:

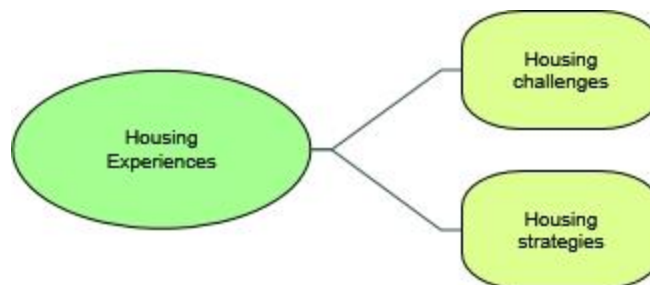
Date:

## **APPENDIX F: Coding Trees**

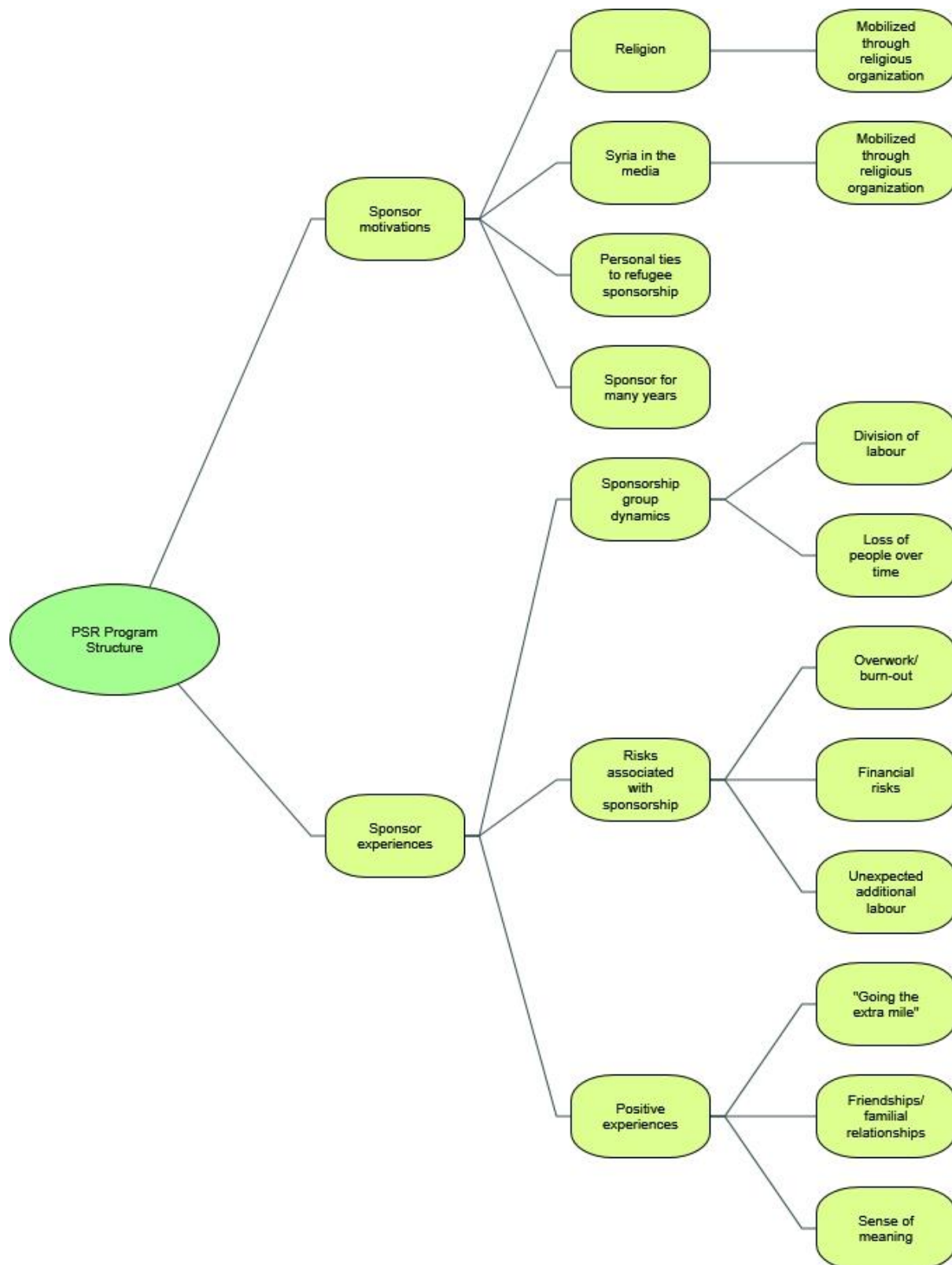
### **Category 1 – The PSR Program Structure: Original Themes**



### **Category 2 – Housing Experiences: Original Themes**



## Category 1 – The PSR Program Structure: Emerging Themes



## Category 2 – Housing Experiences: Emerging Themes

