

**How do the Relationships Present in the Canadian Refugee
and Humanitarian Resettlement Program Affect the
Settlement and Integration Prospects of Government
Assisted Refugees?**

By

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INTRODUCTION

As a state party to the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees, Canada participates in efforts to address refugee situations worldwide; one way in particular is through resettlement. Refugees that are resettled in Canada are offered Permanent Resident (PR) status, after which they may apply for full citizenship. This naturalization process is one of the highlighted features of Canada's resettlement program, as it offers refugees a chance to become full Canadian citizens. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is the federal government body responsible for immigrant and refugee-related programs and services designed to provide the supports required to ensure that all newcomers have the resources they need to establish themselves in Canada. This federal program is referred to as the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program (RHRP), and is designed to meet the needs of Canada's humanitarian objectives, one of which is being able to facilitate the settlement and integration of refugees. This program, and its ability to facilitate integration, will be the focus of this paper.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is responsible for the protection of the world's refugees. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as

Any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (article 1A(2)).

The definition, although originally created to identify refugees in the aftermath of WWII, is now used globally to describe any person that is being persecuted for any number of reasons. For example, sexual and gender-based violence is now considered a viable

reason to be seeking refugee status (UNHCR 2008), which was not the case during the initial refugee selection process immediately following WWII.

Resettlement is the third durable solution the UNHCR is mandated to implement and is defined as follows:

Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against *refoulement* and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependents access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country (UNHCR 2011, 9).

Canada's resettlement program is one of the largest in the world (CIC 2010/11, 26). The RHRP has grown in size and relevance since 1978, when it was first introduced, and is now responsible for funding and overseeing each stage of the refugee re/settlement process. As outlined by CIC (2011), the RHRP is governed by four core principles: “(1) a shift toward protection rather than ability to establish; (2) family reunification; (3) accelerated processing of urgent and vulnerable protection cases; and (4) closer relationships between CIC and its partners”. Although it is the fourth principle in which I am primarily interested, an understanding of the other three principles will be integral to ensuring an accurate depiction of the RHRP.

The RHRP can be separated into two sections: (1) selecting refugees for resettlement in Canada and (2) the services provided to the selected refugees once they arrive in Canada. These services and programs are provided by independent service provider organizations (SPOs) that are responsible for offering a variety of settlement services funded by CIC. The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) is responsible for satisfying immediate and financial needs of refugees. Other newcomer programs funded by CIC are the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP), Language

Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), and the Host program. These programs, with the exception of the RAP, are available to all newcomers, refugees and immigrants alike, but their relevance only to the settlement and integration process of refugees will be the focus of this paper.

This paper seeks to answer the following two questions: What are the relationships present in the Canadian Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program? How do these relationships facilitate or inhibit the immediate settlement needs and the longer-term integration prospects of refugees? There are several actors involved in the resettlement and integration process of refugees that warrant to be examined as interdependencies. I will argue that their cooperation is essential to the successful resettlement and integration of refugees.

In order to better understand how these actors work together, this paper will be guided by *relational theory*, which stresses the importance of relationships between people, organizations, and institutions. For the purposes of my analysis, the institutions under scrutiny are international and national in nature, and comprise a host of legal and political obligations within themselves. For example, the federal department of Citizenship and Immigration will be one of the institutions under analysis. Martha Fineman (2004) illustrates the state as “a complex of coercive legal and institutional relationships that situate individuals, as well as complex societal organizations such as the family, in relation to one another” (p.xiv). This illustration of the state as an institution worthy of analysis based on its relationships with individuals and other organizations is exactly the type of analysis I will employ for this paper.

Relational theory is also concerned with relationships of power and power dynamics that drive processes and shape people's understanding of the status quo. Furthermore, relational theory takes into account that no person or institution acts on his/her/its own, but is influenced, and in turn influences, the practices of other people and institutions. Refugee policy can benefit from a relational analysis, as it will highlight the important relationships between the actors involved at the various stages of refugee resettlement and integration. Several players are involved in this process, and yet they do not always work together in a cooperative fashion, acknowledging each other's importance and capabilities. Instead, they often act as isolated pieces to this larger puzzle, unable or unwilling to acknowledge their ability to work interdependently, as is needed to provide refugees with the necessary means for settlement and integration.

This theory will help the reader to appreciate how the relationships within the refugee resettlement program either promote or inhibit refugees' resettlement and integration into society, and how acting interdependently, as opposed to independently, is required if integration potential is to be maximized. The relationships that will be analyzed consist of those between the state (CIC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the state and service provider organizations (SPOs), SPOs between each other, the state (CIC) and refugees, and settlement service workers and refugees.

The main argument I am putting forth is that healthy, cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships between the actors involved in refugee resettlement are necessary for the establishment and integration of refugees into Canadian society. Relational theory is a methodological tool with which to study the relationships within the RHRP, in order

to understand the refugee integration process from beginning – at the first stages of resettlement – to the end – several years after a refugee has established him/herself in Canada. Currently, several of these necessary relationships are damaged by unequal power relations, distrust, and animosity or are breaking down from exhaustion, a lack of communication, and strained resources. In order for Canada to be able to take full advantage of what refugees have to offer, and for refugees to have the best possible chance of finding a new and exciting life in Canada, with new opportunities they were not afforded in their home country, the status of these relationships must be evaluated as a whole, as opposed to the more common approach, which is to look at them in isolation from each other.

In order to provide a comprehensive picture of the resettlement process, I have drawn on a variety of literature from academic journals, research institutions, international and community organizations, and government reports that have provided analysis to the varying pieces to this larger puzzle. My justification for this research paper rests on the notion that the relationships present during the integration process will prove to be critical to the overall success of refugee establishment in Canada, and to one's integration into Canadian life.

My hypothesis is the web of relationships present within the RHRP is structured as relationships of dependency, ensuring the state maintains control over each stage of the RHRP. This structure is negatively affecting the condition of these relationships by stifling organizational and individual autonomy, thus having negative consequences for refugee integration. I would like to highlight that my concern rests solely with how these relationships are fostered and managed, with the intention of showing that significant

improvement can occur without increasing funding, but instead, by building healthier relationships between the actors who implement the RHRP.

Although an environment filled with cooperative relationships built on mutuality and interdependency may sound too idealistic, it can, however, act as a tool of assessment that is able to uncover how poor relationships between institutions, organizations, and people in one area can cause problems elsewhere throughout the refugee integration process. Efficiency gains based on healthier relationships will also be highlighted throughout the paper. This is important to note, because I am not suggesting that CIC designate more resources to the RHRP in order for integration prospects to improve. I am simply looking at how these resources are currently being distributed, and how they could be better arranged if the relationships within the RHRP were better managed.

CONCEPTUALIZATION & OUTLINE OF PAPER

The paper will be organized as follows: (1) an explanation of key concepts, (2) a current profile of refugees in Canada, (3) an overview of relational theory and how it will be applied to analyze the RHRP, and a detailed analysis of the relationships within (4) the Canadian refugee selection process and (5) the accompanying settlement service programs. Sections 4 and 5 will be focusing on how the relationships within the RHRP either facilitate or inhibit the refugee resettlement and integration process, but each will take a different approach in achieving this goal. The sub-sections within section 4 will examine each relationship worthy of analysis separately. The sub-sections within section 5 will examine each program, and will look at the relationships present in each program collectively.

In order to understand the conceptualization of the paper, one must appreciate the importance of autonomy to my analysis. The definition of autonomy that I adopt for the purposes of this study is one of relational autonomy, which is to say

develop[ing] not in isolation but out of enabling social relations... By autonomy, I mean the capacity for 'self-government'... an acquired set of capacities to lead one's own life – that is, acquired in the context of our various relationships... The capacities associated with autonomy do not merely emerge naturally, but must be developed through various processes involving educational, social and personal resources” (Elizabeth Ben-Ishai 2012, 2-3).

She argues that the state is required to ensure individuals have the ability to become autonomous, and she sets out to conceptualize how this process should occur through the delivery of social services. Thus, adopting her argument for the purposes of this paper, the RHRP would have a duty to ensure that refugees were able to reach full autonomy.

One of the necessary conditions of autonomy, however, is integration, which ensures that one has the necessary resources to make choices and has the capacity to realize one's goals. I want to argue that the state does have a duty to not obstruct refugees' ability to achieve autonomy. To do so, the state has a responsibility to structure its resources in a way that allows refugees to achieve integration. For example, a refugee from Istanbul who is a doctor will not have the same qualifications as a doctor in Canada. This refugee made a choice to become a doctor, and Canada has a responsibility to facilitate the integration of this refugee by ensuring s/he has access to the resources required to become qualified as a doctor in Canada (or a justifiably equivalent medical practitioner). Giving this refugee the resources to choose to continue as a doctor or to choose another profession guarantees his/her autonomy. The role of autonomy in the RHRP will be clarified throughout the paper.

Resettlement refers to the immediate needs of refugees once they have arrived in Canada, and are met by the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). *Settlement* refers to

the short-term needs of refugees, and are met by the Immigrant Settlement & Adaptation Program (ISAP) and by Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (LINC). Canada provides additional assistance with building a sense of belonging through its Host Program. In its Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, CIC (2011) understood the difference between settlement and integration as follows: “Settlement refers to the short-term transitional issues faced by newcomers, while integration is an ongoing process of mutual accommodation between an individual and society” (p.26). Although resettlement, settlement, and integration carry with them different connotations, they are undoubtedly closely tied together, where analyzing the effect on one, will arguably impact the other two as well. This paper will be focusing on RAP, LINC, ISAP, and Host as the settlement programs under analysis. Together, these programs seek to promote resettlement, settlement, and integration inclusively.

INTEGRATION

The definition of *refugee integration* refers more to the ongoing and longer term process of establishment that refugees undergo once they arrive in Canada. Beiser (2009) defines integration as “a balancing of the competing tendencies to retain the values, practices, and beliefs a refugee has when he or she comes to a new country versus the tendency to adopt the norms and behaviours of the new society (p. 547). Beiser notes that behavioural science theory has proven that “people who retain their own cultural identity while incorporating elements of the new are more likely to be successful than people who choose to assimilate completely to the new, or who retreat to the familiar while rejecting the new” (p.546). This understanding argues that between integration, assimilation, and

seclusion, integration is the option with the best health and wellbeing outcomes for the individual, but also the best socio-economic outcomes for society.

Although CIC does not specifically state the government's responsibility regarding integration, the RHRP was designed with this purpose in mind, given that the policies of the RHRP facilitate the integration process in many respects. For example, one policy in particular, called the "One-Year Window" facilitates the resettlement of a refugee's family members originally identified on his/her application, but who were unable to initially come to Canada with the rest of the family. This policy is directly in line with the fact that rapid family reunification is a significant contributor to one's mental health wellbeing and integration capacity (CIC Evaluation Division 2011).

Integration takes many forms, and looks different for each newcomer to Canada. This leads one to question what an "integrated person" looks like and how one comes to be "integrated". Several scholars – as discussed below – have spent a considerable amount of time on this exact question, and have focused on breaking down its varying elements. Some authors focus on its quantification, and others focus on its conceptualization. Furthermore, some authors are primarily concerned with refugees' economic integration, focusing on factors such as employment and annual income. Other scholars are more interested in the factors that promote social integration, focusing on one's ability to gather social capital and build social networks. Policymakers are more often concerned with outcomes and indicators of integration, disregarding the processes and inter-relationships involved. Ironically, this is often a false distinction, as the means to achieving integration can also be the outcomes to integration. This section will attempt

to draw a distinction between statistical/conceptual and economic/social, but will address the outcomes and processes of integration as one.

It is widely understood that as soon as a state welcomes refugees for resettlement, it has a responsibility to facilitate their integration. The responsibility, however, is mutually shared between newcomers and the state. One way to understand this mutual arrangement is to recognize the country of settlement as having the responsibility to make the transition for the newcomer as painless as possible, understanding its role as laying down the foundation on which newcomers can build. Refugees, in turn, have the responsibility to take full advantage of the settlement programs offered by the settlement government, understanding their role as becoming contributing citizens to Canada's prosperity. Lo, Wang, Wang & Yuan (2007) define integration as "a gradual process by which newcomers become active participants in the economic, social, civic, cultural and spiritual affairs of their new homeland, such as they become part of the social, cultural, and institutional fabric of the host society" (p.1). This definition provides a solid framework for how integration will be interpreted throughout the paper.

Statistical reports try to measure integration by identifying its indicators and making correlations between variables, attempting to better understand how integration can be measured, so that one may be able to better facilitate it through the enhancement or reduction of certain factors. CIC has chosen a select few performance indicators of integration on which to measure its success. In its Report on Plans and Priorities 2010-11, CIC selected the labour market participation rate as its measure of economic integration. It selected income after five years and ten years and levels of volunteerism and donations as measures of social integration. Watson (2006) chose to measure variables such as

income, language ability, education, and employment history, and found that proficiency in English was negatively correlated with income assistance, leading him to suggest that CIC invest in language training for refugees while they await departure to Canada.

Alternatively, Hiebert (2009) observed that human capital characteristics such as language proficiency in English or French did not have an effect on labour market participation. Although these findings do not directly conflict with one another, they do illustrate how difficult it can be to clearly and concisely explain how refugee integration can be measured.

The distinction between social and economic integration is purely constructed, and not practical for policy development. For example, meaningful employment would require a refugee to be working in the field in which he/she was trained. Thus, overcoming the barriers to foreign credential recognition is a significant factor in determining one's capacity to achieve economic integration, but also one's ability to achieve social and mental health wellbeing. Ager & Strang (2008) have crafted a typology of socio-economic integration that acknowledges there is a "dynamic interrelationship of factors shaping integration processes" (p.590). To them, some of the most important elements include nationhood and citizenship, belonging, social connection, and reciprocity and trust in social relations. Elements such as trust could have a large impact on one's ability to integrate, but its subjectivity makes it more difficult to observe or measure. Nonetheless, it could be just as important as language acquisition or employment. Simich, Hamilton & Baya (2010) discovered that feelings of powerlessness may affect one's ability to integrate more than one's exposure to premigration trauma (which could include torture, persecution, etc.). Findings like these provide additional

layers to a multi-dimensional concept like integration, and urge policymakers to take them into consideration when deciding how best to facilitate refugee integration.

Ager & Strang (2010) build on the theory of social capital, which traditionally consists of bonding and bridging capital. Bonding capital, which refers to relationships with people who are like you, is of integral importance to integration. Bonding capital primarily occurs with friends and family, or with other people who share one's ethnic, cultural, or religious identity. Bonding capital provides information and material resources, emotional resources by way of enhanced confidence, and capacity building resources (p.597). The emotional value of bonding capital also provides a "ready-made sense of belonging", giving refugees the support required to develop bridging capital, which refers to building relationships with people unlike oneself. However, bridging capital may be just as important to integration as bonding capital.

In their typology of social capital theory, the authors include a third type of social capital – social linkages – which refers to the relationships that one builds with organizations and institutions. This form of social capital is critical to my interpretation of integration, and also to the purpose of my paper. Forging healthy relationships with organizational entities is critical to one's process of integration. Trust, for example, must not exist solely in a relationship between people, but can also exist between a person and an organization. For example, refugees often come from states that either cannot protect them, choose not to protect them, or willingly inflict persecution upon them. Such people will be less inclined to trust the state of a resettlement country. They must be given reason or proof to trust an institution they have become used to fearing, and subsequently, any programs or services offered by that institution. One way to begin breaking down this

barrier is through “widened social networks [which would] allow the development of trust in institutions and governance” (Ager & Strang 2008, 599). The importance of social linkages to a more inclusive interpretation of integration can lead one to understand the breadth and depth of the relationships embedded within a program like the RHRP.

Integration on an individual level involves a negotiation between one’s sense of identity prior to resettlement, and after: “it is multi-dimensional in the sense that it involves the forming of relationships across people with multiple and overlapping identities... [and is] a process of negotiating new identities... [and] that it makes no sense to define a refugee community as belonging to either ‘here’ or ‘there’; it is in fact a space where new identities are forged” (ibid, 602). This type of negotiation will vary for each person, but Ager & Strang point out that this transition can be a very sensitive time, and too rapid a change of identity could be damaging, with mental health problems resulting from someone struggling to deal with the grief of the past without a secure sense of the future.

To summarize the concept of refugee integration, I will borrow a quote from Ager & Strang (2010):

Rights and citizenship are signalled as a ‘foundation’; language and cultural knowledge and safety and stability as ‘facilitators’; various forms of social capital as providing ‘social connection’; and finally, reinforcing bi-directionality, factors such as employment, housing, education and health are noted as both ‘markers and means’ of integration. The nature of such dynamics is, however, poorly understood.

Regarding settlement service provision, the different programs that comprise the RHRP serve to facilitate integration through offering refugees temporary income assistance, meeting their immediate needs for shelter, food and clothing, providing them with employment and housing assistance, offering them language training, and assisting them

in the creation of social networks. Thus, the RHRP serves to support integration on several fronts, and is, arguably, doing a thorough job. As will be mentioned, the UNHCR has commended Canada on its comprehensive refugee resettlement program that is going far beyond that of many other developed countries.

Immigrant and Refugee Integration – A Comparison

Still, the integration prospects of all immigrants (including refugees) seem to be particularly dependent upon one's education level, employment history and pre-arranged employment, and official language abilities. Currently, refugees come to Canada with significantly lower levels of education and language ability than economic immigrants. This may be no surprise, as refugees have often not had the same opportunities in their home countries as did other classes of immigrants living in Canada. Phillip O'Connor (2010) writes about what he terms the "refugee gap", and why refugees are not establishing themselves as well as economic immigrants. He begins by making two distinctions between refugees and economic immigrants that dictate their ability to successfully establish in Canada. First, refugees do not voluntarily leave their country, which emphasizes the importance of autonomous decision-making when determining what makes integration successful. Secondly, economic immigrants have the ability to take "intentional steps" prior to migration to ensure a more successful adaptation, whereas refugees rarely have this option (p. 377). A 2005 Statistics Canada survey cited by Carter, Polevychok, Friesen & Osborne (2008) reported that more than 85 percent of refugees had no savings upon arrival in Canada, while more than 90 percent of economic immigrants did.

In addition to O'Connor's interpretation of why refugees are less likely to succeed in their country of resettlement, refugees experience a number of pre- and post-migration stressors. Wilson, Murtaza & Shakya (2010) noted the pre-migration stressor of torture is the strongest predictor of PTSD and is a common refugee experience (20%). Leaving family and community behind have a series of emotional impacts on refugees before and after departure (p.47). Stressors during the resettlement process could include delays in processing applications, errors in paperwork, delays in family reunification, lack of information, and having little to no input into which province a is chosen as their new home. Post-migration stressors refer to the barriers faced by refugees once they reach their country of resettlement. The most common barriers include labour market challenges, poverty, linguistic barriers, adaptation to a new culture, and discrimination. These pre- and post-migration stressors affect refugees in a variety of ways. For example, trauma has a negative effect on people's concentration, memory, and ability to learn a new language. In order for refugees' to integrate, their pre- and post-migration stressors must be addressed in ways that encourage refugees to work through the trauma they have faced.

What may be surprising is that refugees, despite their already poorer health, are twice as likely to experience a decline in their health within four years of arrival, as compared to economic immigrants (Newbold 2009, 331). He attributes this disparity to their being a "vulnerable population with multiple health risks shaped by the refugee experience and the resettlement process... [and] the relative economic security amongst economic immigrants granted by access to jobs, education, and other skills, enhances and protects health status" (p.331).

Refugee integration was further impacted in 2002, when the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) replaced the outdated Immigration Act, and introduced a shift in refugee selection from “ability to establish” to a more humanitarian approach, where establishment criteria – like education level, employment history, language ability, and health status – became less important. This change in the selection process of refugees has led to the resettlement of refugees with less education, employment options and English language ability than prior to 2002 (CIC Evaluation Committee 2011, vii). Comparing the years 2009 to 2000, refugees faced more obstacles to integration in 2009, demonstrated by the percentage increase in the proportion of refugees with no official language ability (+14%), no formal education (+26%), and those 65 years of age or older (+150%) (ibid, viii). Additionally, the IRPA encourages the acceptance of more ‘high needs’ refugees, including those with low literacy levels in their original languages, significant mental and physical health issues, as well as increased numbers of single parent headed households. Further, more refugee children are growing up in refugee camps with limited exposure to formal education (Sherrell 2009).

Refugees continue to report financial difficulties as their greatest obstacle to initial settlement, and after three years in Canada, the unemployment rate was 40 percent in 2003 and over 70 percent in 2009 (GoC 2003, Wilson, Murtaza & Shakya 2010). Consequently, refugees are more likely to rely on social assistance than other groups of newcomers.

Connor (2010) found that non-refugee immigrants made on average \$17.66 per hour whereas refugees made \$11.71. English language ability and physical health are also lower among refugees compared to other immigrants (p.382). Refugees are more likely to

remain separated from their family and to worry about their safety on a regular basis (p.383). Both of these factors greatly influence one's mental health and economic capabilities, thus limiting one's ability to focus on successful integration. Although each author has his or her assumptions regarding which factors are more or less likely responsible for the disparities between immigrant and refugee integration, it is clear that a disparity does exist, most likely due to a combination of these reasons.

This paper does not set out to quantify how effectively the RHRP facilitates integration, or how integration is best achieved. Research in this area does not yet exist (Hyndman 2011), since the definition of what constitutes integration, and what impacts it, is extremely inclusive, and thus hard to quantify (CCR 2011, Ager & Strang 2008). This paper, rather, is solely seeking to provide some perspective on how the relationships that make up RHRP could be impacting the integration process of refugees. For this purpose, what defines integration can be as straight forward as annual income, to as nuanced as one's personal feelings of belonging and acceptance. To this end, I will explain what defines a healthy relationship in the context of the RHRP through the lens of relational theory, and why they are so important to ensuring refugee integration. I will do this by pointing out the healthy and unhealthy relationships between the different actors present throughout the RHRP, because as it stands, some of these relationships are well cultivated, or on their way to being well cultivated, and other have plenty of room for improvement.

CURRENT PROFILE OF REFUGEES IN CANADA

In 1976, the Canadian Immigration Act formally distinguished between refugees and immigrants. Since then, a wealth of government, community, and scholarly research

has been published underlining the differences and similarities between the two groups of newcomers. The document *Canada Facts and Figures* (2010) is published annually by CIC, and documents the numbers of permanent residents living in Canada by category: economic immigrants, family class, and refugees. CIC further disaggregates its data so that the refugee category is broken down into three separate groups, representing the three ways a refugee may become a permanent citizen. Landed in Canada Refugees (LCRs) declare asylum once already in Canada, and are subject to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) determination process. If the IRB determines that a refugee claimant is, in fact, a refugee, they gain refugee status and are categorized as an LCR. If a refugee claimant is not found to be a refugee by the IRB, they are not granted refugee status and are subject to removal. CIC also has a Private Sponsorship Program (PSR), which allows groups of individuals and non-profit organizations to sponsor refugees for whom they become financially responsible for up to one year. Sponsors can either request to sponsor a particular refugee, or they may sponsor a refugee upon the request of CIC. Often refugees with special needs – like refugees with special medical needs – are only eligible for resettlement through the PSR. CIC may assist a sponsor financially under the Joint Assistance Program (JAP) if the refugee is a particularly high needs person. Refugees that are selected by the government to resettle with government financial assistance are categorized as Government Assisted Refugees (GARs). They arrive in Canada entitled to all the services funded by the RHRP.

These different categorizations are helpful, because the relationships involved in each category are different. Anecdotal evidence collected from several authors concludes that each group is subject to varying degrees of integration, which is directly related to

the programs available to them, and the relationships embedded within them. Scholars interested in refugee well-being argue that all research on refugees should differentiate between these three groups (Hyndman 2011, Hiebert 2009). This paper is primarily concerned with the integration of GARs, and how each part of the RHRP either facilitates or inhibits this process. Thus, reference to ‘refugee’ refers to the specific category of GAR during the following analysis of the selection process, but refers to all refugees during the analysis of settlement service delivery.

Canada Facts and Figures information is a useful tool when looking at the number of refugees from each category, because it is sufficiently disaggregated by gender, age, country of origin, etc. Although it does not include refugees that have not yet obtained permanent resident status, refugees normally obtain permanent status within 180 days of arriving in Canada or after having received refugee status from the IRB. Therefore, the numbers within this document are still a good approximation.

In 2010, the total number of refugees was 24,696 or 8.8 percent of all permanent residents¹. Between 1986 and 1992, this percentage hovered around 20 percent only to be reduced by half in 1993. Between 1993 and 2003, this percentage fluctuated between 9 and 13 percent, but as of 2004, it has been steadily declining. It is possible that the Government of Canada’s interest in expanding its economic immigration program became of prime interest, thus diminishing the percentage of the immigration quota available to refugees.

The percentage of GARs in particular has been consistently declining since 2007, from 3.2 percent to 2.6 percent. The number of GARs, however, has been declining since 2002 (p. 6). Hyndman (2010) speculates this decline is a direct cause of the growing

¹ family class was at 24.6% and economic class was at 66.6% (p. 5)

backlog of inland refugee claims waiting to be processed by the IRB, which was created in the 1980s. Sadly, as the UNHCR (2010 & 2011) continues to strongly encourage countries to expand their resettlement programs so as to offer durable solutions to the other 90 percent of refugees in need of resettlement globally, Canada continues to accept roughly the same number of GARs year after year, while continuing to expand its other immigration programs.

The gender disaggregated data tells a more heartening story. In 1986, the first year this data was collected, 23.2 percent of male permanent residents had been refugees, and only 15.5 percent of female permanent residents had been refugees. This gap began to close around 1993, which is the year the IRB began recognizing persecution based on one's gender as an acceptable ground for refugee status (CCR nd). Over the years, this gap continued to close, and by 2010, the percentage difference between male and female refugees was less than one percentage point (0.8%), and since 2008, slightly more female GARs than male GARs (~200) are being accepted for resettlement, signifying a great achievement in gender equity in CIC's selection process.

RELATIONAL THEORY

Relational theory focuses on the importance of relationships in human development. Relational theory is foundational for the argument put forward in this paper, because I am focusing on how relationships of dependency within the RHRP perpetuate negative states of vulnerability for the actors involved in the process, and this in turns negatively affects refugees' ability to achieve autonomy, and to then integrate into Canadian society. Thus, relational theory will be used to evaluate and analyze the relationships to which refugees are exposed throughout the resettlement process, and

other important relationships between organizations that affect refugees during this process, and ultimately, their capacity to integrate.

Christine Koggel (1998b) provides a definition of relational theory that will help to drive the analysis of the RHRP, since her understanding focuses on the trouble found in relationships of dependency and unequal power structures.

A relational approach is contextual rather than abstract: it allows us to attend to the details of the lives of those who are affected by unequal and oppressive relationships that are in turn shaped by particular social practices and political contexts (249).

A brief comparative understanding of relationships between organizations and people will help the reader to understand how both relationships are prone to becoming one of dependency and limited autonomy. Three different types of relationships can come out of this combination: (1) two individuals, (2) an individual and an organization, and (3) two organizations. Two individuals is the most straight forward relationship, where mutual trust, dependency, and connection can help improve self-esteem and autonomy for both individuals. On the other hand, negative relationships of dependency can form, where one individual holds power over another, and exploits this power to the detriment of the more vulnerable being. A parental example could invoke the images of either relationship. The second relationship involves an individual and an organization, and can incorporate many of the same characteristics as the relationship between two individuals. Just as with people, organizations can hold extreme power over the ability of individuals to exercise their autonomy. Mutual trust is critical, and if this does not exist, relationships of dependency and limited autonomy can develop. A relationship between two organizations can, surprisingly, have the exact same features as the previous two relationships. Although, unlike people, they do not have feelings, people make up the

organizations, and so the feelings of the people running the organization can come through quite strongly, as will be described.

This section will give an overview of what relational theory consists of and how it will be used to help understand the relationships involved in the refugee selection process and the provision of settlement services. This section is intended to clearly demonstrate how relational theory can contribute to the analysis of how the relationships within the RHRP help or hinder refugee integration.

Koggel also emphasizes the absence of relationships within liberalism as troubling, thus placing importance on our interactions with each other and organizations as an undeniably necessary feature to the make-up of any public sphere. She (1998b) acknowledges the important role that liberal traditions have played in formulating our understandings of equality and rights, which focuses on the autonomous individual. She challenges liberal ideologies as ignoring core human functions, such as the need to build relationships with other people. Liberal traditions begin their understanding of equality and justice with the individual, and fail to recognize that no one exists in a bubble, and that understanding the interactions between people is a necessary component to the creation of any institutional structure, such as the relationships that underpin the RHRP.

Relational Autonomy

Relational theorists have reconceptualised individual autonomy, as it has been studied by leading liberal political philosophers, into a version more sensitive to reality, referred to as relational autonomy. Catriona MacKenzie and Natalie Stoljar (2000) have dedicated a whole publication to deconstructing relational autonomy and how it is best

promoted and achieved. In its simplest form, all perspectives that adopt the term relational autonomy share the conviction that

persons are socially embedded and that agents' identities are formed within the context of social relationships and shaped by a complex of intersecting social determinants... an analysis of the characteristics and the capacities of the self cannot be adequately undertaken without attention to the rich and complex social and historical contexts in which agents are embedded" (p.4 & 21).

Thus, no one can achieve autonomy on his/her own, but does so through the relationships within which one finds him/herself. This is important, because relational autonomy centralizes the importance of healthy, mutually beneficial, and empowering relationships as key to achieving autonomy. The authors also highlight that autonomous actors are not only "rational beings" as classical liberals understand them to be, but also "emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling" (p. 21). Christine Straehle (2012) adds to this conception by highlighting the importance of self-respect in a relational definition of autonomy and the importance of being recognized by others; "Recognition constitutes a positive sense of self that allows for inter-dependence and the web of relationships in which autonomy is fostered" (n.p).

Relational Dependency

Relationships of dependency are not, in and of themselves, bad. In fact, relationships of dependency are viewed as an important part of relational autonomy, stressing that dependency can exist within an autonomous being; "Autonomy [should] be reconceptualised so that it is not defined in opposition to femininity and to relations of dependence and connection" (MacKenzie & Stoljar 2000, 10). My concern is with the darker and dangerous side of dependency; what MacKenzie & Stoljar refer to as "oppressive social relationships", which "can impede autonomous agency" at three levels: "the process of formation of an agent's desires, beliefs, and emotional attitudes...

the development of the competencies and capacities necessary for autonomy... [and] an agent's ability to act on autonomous desires or to make autonomous choices" (p.22).

Their conception of relational autonomy argues that oppressive relationships can occur at any stage of one's search for autonomy, underlining the fact that it could be stifled at any point during the integration process of a refugee. The authors further stress that oppressive relationships can occur in many forms. "Relational approaches are particularly concerned with analyzing the role that social norms and institutions, cultural practices, and social relationships play in shaping the beliefs, desires, and attitudes of agents in oppressive social contexts" (p.28). Perhaps I should clarify that I am not implying that the relationships within the RHRP are relationships of oppression, but that are, instead, relationships of dependency. MacKenzie & Stoljar's typology of what is an oppressive relationship and how/when/where it could manifest is a comparable understanding to that of a relationship of dependency, but in less of a severe form.

Vulnerability

Koggel (1998a) develops the concept of "moral personhood", a self whose identity is structured in relation to others (p.99). Refugees arriving in Canada will be more strongly impacted by their first set of relationships given their initial state of vulnerability. Refugees are vulnerable during the resettlement process because they need extensive help in learning how to manoeuvre a new set of institutions, within which they have very few tools to do so on their own.

Vulnerability is critical to understanding the context within which refugees are selected for resettlement, are settled in Canada, and are integrated. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations do differentiate between the degree to which refugees

find themselves in precarious situations. “Vulnerable” refugees are defined as being in “greater need of protection than other applicants for protection abroad because of the person’s particular circumstances that give rise to a heightened risk to their physical safety” (p.156). Additionally, the Regulations define “urgent need of protection” as also being a distinct category made up of refugees whose “life, liberty or physical safety is under immediate threat and, if not protected, the person is likely to be” killed, tortured, imprisoned, or returned to their former country of residence (ibid).

A theory of vulnerability is more concerned with the variations in which one may find him or herself vulnerable, and what implications for one’s autonomy it may have. One may suspect that to be vulnerable, such as to be in a relationship of dependency, is inherently debilitating and a restriction on one’s autonomy. As mentioned in the case of dependency, this is not necessarily the case. For one to understand the concept of vulnerability, one must appreciate the different forms in which it may come. For this distinction, I will draw upon the typology of Christine Straehle (2012), who has begun to unpack the different notions of vulnerability in an attempt to show that there is “a morally significant link between vulnerability and autonomy” (n.p).

Vulnerability in its most general terms could be understood as “fac[ing] a significant probability of incurring an identifiable harm while substantially lacking ability and/or means to protect oneself” (Schroeder & Gefenas 2009, 177 as quoted by Straehle 2012). “[Vulnerability] is thus essentially a ‘relational notion’ that designates relationships of dependence” (Straehle 2012, n.p). What constitutes an ‘identifiable harm’ will vary depending on one’s circumstances. In the case of refugee resettlement, an identifiable harm could refer to one’s inability to meet basic needs, such as food and

shelter. However, one could think of several identifiable harms that refugees are more at risk of incurring than others; inability to communicate in an official language, inability to access appropriate healthcare services, discriminatory practices, and social exclusion are a few of the harms more easily identified. Staehle argues that “some kinds of vulnerability challenge the basis of autonomy... [and that] vulnerability is morally problematic because it challenges the basis of self-respect and thus challenges the possibility to be autonomous. To be vulnerable in the sense I have in mind then means unable to be autonomous” (n.p) as I am arguing is the case for refugees.

Much like an understanding of dependency, Straehle distinguishes between positive and negative forms of vulnerability. Negative forms of vulnerability “disable conditions of autonomy”, and affect one’s sense of self. Circumstantial vulnerability “derives from the fact that their set of skills is estimated as low compared to different sets of skills sought after by many developed countries. This affects the choices they make about how to realize their self-set goals” (n.p). Her typology begins to lay the groundwork required “to formulate a positive duty to provide for conditions of non-vulnerability as a duty of justice” (n.p). Similar to Ben Ishai’s argument of relational autonomy and the duty of the state, the Government of Canada, then, does have a duty to ensure that refugees do not fall victim to circumstantial vulnerability. CIC attempts to fulfill this duty by ensuring that successful settlement programs offered through the RHRP provide refugees with the tools to integrate into society, mitigating their possibilities of becoming circumstantially vulnerable.

Relational Equality

The concept of equality is another defining characteristic of liberal thinking. Koggel (1998b) is very critical of the dominant liberal interpretation of equality. She argues that inequality cannot solely be measured by the level of wealth distribution within an economy. “Inequality is as much about issues of powerlessness, loss of dignity and respect, and exclusion from one’s community and meaningful participation in it as it is about having less wealth” (p.260). This interpretation of inequality will be adopted for the analysis of the RHRP.

Koggel (1998b) also criticizes the widely accepted ideal of “equality of opportunity”, which stipulates that if people are given an equal opportunity to succeed, for example, then one’s failure to succeed is solely his or her fault. She points out how one’s network of relationships will greatly impact one’s ability to succeed, more so than whether both individuals had an ‘equal opportunity’ (p.249). This argument can transfer to settlement service provision in many ways. All refugees may, in theory, have access to settlement services, but the particular needs of each refugee could be significantly different depending on their network of relationships. The ability of those involved in the refugee selection process and in settlement service delivery to capitalize on these networks would greatly benefit refugees’ ability to succeed in opportunities that come their way.

Relational-Cultural Theory

Relational theory can be complemented by a more micro-level understanding, which will be used mostly to illustrate what a healthy work environment among SPOs could look like, and how authentic relationships between their workers and refugees are

integral to one's ability to integrate. Referred to as Relational-Cultural Theory, RCT emphasizes the importance of authentic relationships with clients and between co-workers, and highlights tensions that can exist between service providers and the state.

RCT is concerned with how engagement in supportive relationships throughout one's life enhances development and strengthens resilience (Hartling & Sparks 2008). The goal of RCT is to "increase the ability to create, sustain, and deepen connection and foster relationships with others" (Duffey et al. 2009, 87). Like Koggel, RCT is concerned with relationships of power and inequality. "By taking a relational-cultural approach, we are committing ourselves to critically analyzing and transforming the system of power, domination, and stratification that impede the health, growth, and development of all people" (ibid, 166-67). This type of cultural transformation would include challenging the "social/cultural/political devaluation of relational skills, which is manifested in our society as low salaries for mental health and social service employees, inadequate funding, and unrealistic demands on service providers" (Hartling & Sparks 2008, 182). RCT is important to the analysis of settlement services, because it will also help to explain the relationships between the state and settlement service providers.

SELECTION PROCESS

Ager & Strang argue that the effectiveness of integration begins not with the acquisition of citizenship, but is influenced by experiences from the moment of arrival in a new country (p.595). I am taking this argument further, suggesting that the effectiveness of integration begins once one is informed that s/he has been selected for resettlement. This section seeks to highlight a number of relationships that are present within the refugee selection process, which is the first phase of the RHRP. The

relationships with which I am concerned are characterized by dependency, power struggles, mis/trust and mis/communication, and are between (1) the UNHCR and CIC officers, (2) CIC officers and refugees destined for Canada, and (3) CIC officers and SPOs. These relationships are present in the initial phases of resettlement, and so are critical to determining the ease with which refugees are able to establish themselves in Canada.

One of the responsibilities of the UNHCR is to find durable solutions for refugees. *Voluntary repatriation* to one's country of origin is the solution that is most desirable, and it is also the solution more favoured by refugees themselves (UNHCR 2010). If repatriation is not possible in the foreseeable future, the next desirable option is *local integration* into the country of asylum. If this option is also not possible, *third country resettlement* is the remaining solution. It is the responsibility of the UNHCR to determine which option is best for each refugee. This paper is only concerned with the last option, resettlement, and how well Canada's resettlement process and accompanying settlement services successfully facilitate the integration process of refugees.

Purpose of Resettlement

Resettlement is often described by UNHCR as a "responsibility sharing mechanism" that allows countries that do not regularly receive large influxes of asylum seekers to share the responsibility of refugee protection that is frequently bourn by neighbouring, less developed countries, which is where refugees initially flee when faced with persecution.

Resettlement is a voluntary act in which states engage as a way to contribute to global refugee protection. Therefore, UNHCR must work with the "generosity" of states,

and cannot require any state to resettle refugees, nor how many. For the year 2012, UNHCR estimates that 172,196 people will be in need of resettlement, while the total number of resettlement places will be 80,000 (ibid, 2). Sadly, as UNHCR becomes better skilled at identifying refugees in need of resettlement (often women-at-risk and women head of households who are more difficult to identify), countries with resettlement programs continue to accept the same number of refugees, not accounting for the growing number of refugees identified as in need of resettlement. This disconnect in the number of refugees in need of resettlement and the actual number of refugees resettled is referred to as the resettlement gap (ibid). The UNHCR is also concerned about long waiting periods for refugees to have their submissions considered by the officers of each country. UNHCR encourages states to readily accept the refugees it identifies for resettlement, but many countries re-screen refugees and apply additional selection criteria.

Fortunately, more states are agreeing to resettle small numbers of refugees. Between June 2008 and July 2010, twelve new countries indicated their readiness to receive a limited number of resettlement submissions from UNHCR, and seven announced the establishment of resettlement programs, bringing the number of resettlement countries up to 24 (UNHCR 2010, 7). In 2010, Canada remained in second place for resettling the most refugees (6,706), after the United States (54,077), and before Australia (5,636) (UNHCR 2011a, 4).

UNHCR and CIC

According to the UNHCR, Canada has always been an active participant in refugee resettlement. In 1986, “the people of Canada” received the Nansen Refugee Award in recognition of outstanding service to the cause of refugees. It is one of the most

prestigious awards in the United Nations system. Canada has since gained a assumed the position of “world leadership” in refugee and immigration affairs (Beiser 2009), and continues to resettle the second largest number of refugees, as it has been doing so since its official resettlement program was established in 1978. CIC continues to modernize the RHRP so that new and evolving refugee circumstances can be properly addressed. For example, CIC established a “women-at-risk” program once the UNHCR recognized gender-based persecution as a sufficient criterion for refugee status (Spencer-Nimmons 1994). CIC has also begun “group processing” as an efficient selection process that allows for the large-scale movement of refugees with similar socio-economic characteristics. CIC is currently using group processing for Bhutanese and Iraqi refugees (CIC Evaluation Division 2011, vi). The relationship between the UNHCR and CIC is one of partnership, yet power relations are, nevertheless, still present. Given the voluntary nature of resettlement programs, CIC is acutely aware of its ability to tailor its resettlement program to suit the needs of the Government of Canada (GoC).

CIC has acknowledged that UNHCR is an “extremely important partner” in Canada’s resettlement program. “Solid working relations between Canadian visa officers and local UNHCR offices are vital to the success of the program.” CIC emphasizes how important it is for local UNHCR offices to understand how the RHRP works, primarily the selection process and to “be proactive in requesting referrals of appropriate cases” (CIC 2009, 28). Although this relationship is relatively strong, it is not without its challenges.

Canada has broadened its definition of a refugee, so that it now accepts a wide range of people traditionally not represented under the 1951 Convention definition, but

who are in “refugee-like situations”, and allows these people to access refugee status and resettlement. The UNHCR has praised Canada for this (CIC 2011). However, Canada has always required refugees to “show potential to become self-sufficient and to successfully establish within a 3 to 5 year time frame” (CIC 2009, 22). Although documented differences in refugee characteristics prove that integration criteria is no longer as important as it was prior to the IRPA, it is unclear why it was kept in the IRPA if refugee selection was to be driven solely by humanitarian objectives. In the 1978 Immigration Act Regulations, it mentions that refugees who possess social networks and financial capital should be given preference. The opinion of the visa officer regarding one’s ability to establish was also a valid consideration (p.8-9). Similar to the 1978 Regulations, the 2002 Regulations accompanying the IRPA state:

(1) ...

(g) if the foreign national intends to reside in a province other than the Province of Quebec, the foreign national and their family members included in the application for protection will be able to become successfully established in Canada, taking into account the following factors:

(i) their resourcefulness and other similar qualities that assist in integration in a new society,

(ii) the presence of their relatives, including the relatives of a spouse or a common-law partner, or their sponsor in the expected community or resettlement,

(iii) their potential for employment in Canada, given their education, work experience and skills, and

(iv) their ability to learn to communicate in one of the official languages in Canada

(2) Paragraph (1)(g) does not apply to a foreign national, or their family members included in the application for protection, who has been determined by an officer to be vulnerable or in urgent need of protection (p.158).

To be clear, this last paragraph exempts refugees deemed “vulnerable” or “in urgent need of protection” from the regulatory requirement to “successfully establish” (CIC 2009). It remains unclear, however, how this discretion is used by CIC visa officers,

and what kind of importance it now plays compared to pre-2002 (UNHCR 2000 & 2011c). The UNHCR has argued strongly against using criteria assessing a refugee's "ability to establish", since this is in complete contradiction with the purpose of resettlement, which highlights protection as the main objective (UNHCR 2000 & 2011). The UNHCR continues to explain how integration should be understood – as a primary responsibility of the state to have adequate operations and institutions in place in order to bring about integration – and although CIC has openly agreed with this understanding, it continues to maintain "establishment criteria" as a tool that could be used to refuse the selection of a refugee. CIC's continued use of establishment criteria has caused tension between the UNHCR and CIC in the selection process, unnecessarily damaging an otherwise healthy and mutually respectful relationship.

CIC and UNHCR both interview refugees destined for Canada; first UNHCR submits applications to CIC visa offices, who are then responsible for interviewing the refugees suggested by UNHCR. Although UNHCR expressly states in its 2011 Report that it would prefer countries do not waste their resources re-evaluating their refugee submissions, CIC strongly feels as though the responsibility of who is accepted into Canada should rest solely with Canada, not an international organization. However, the UNHCR and CIC have negotiated some arrangements where this process is not necessary, mostly in unsafe areas, where CIC officers cannot access refugees for an interview. In such cases, the CIC has agreed to admit refugees into Canada upon the recommendation of UNHCR. This agreement is not only beneficial for the refugee, but has created an environment of trust between UNHCR and CIC selection officers, and has

led to an acceptance rate of over 90 per cent of UNHCR submissions for a selected number of case study sites visited (CIC Evaluation Division 2011).

One area in which CIC and UNHCR officers may disagree when determining who should be eligible for resettlement involves cases where a refugee has committed a criminal act. Differences may arise where one party (usually UNHCR) feels the crime should not preclude their selection for resettlement, and the other party (usually CIC) would disagree. Some discrepancies remain, however, between UNHCR criteria and CIC criteria, but this issue is acknowledged by CIC, who expresses its interest in making sure UNHCR offices are regularly updated with CIC selection criteria information, and presently feels as though Canada clearly communicates to local UNHCR staff the criteria they use to assess refugee applications (ibid).

UNHCR does, however, specialize in selecting refugees for resettlement. Their staff are specially trained at identifying refugees for resettlement and have the necessary tools at their disposal. Thus, Canada could benefit from leveraging this skill so that they may free up some of their resources spent on selection.

CIC Officers and Refugees

The initial relationship between CIC officers and refugees destined to Canada is one of dependency, as refugees are reliant on CIC officers for information regarding the resettlement process, and accompanying orientation services provided by Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA). The purpose of the COA is to inform refugees of employment, rights and responsibilities, and Canadian culture and life, among other things. Simich et al. (2006) commissioned a study across seven cities to determine if Sudanese refugees' expectations of life in Canada affected their mental health. They

found that refugees who had been given accurate information about life in Canada had better mental health than those who had distorted or unmet expectations of life in Canada, meaning they were more likely to experience mental distress. Concerning unmet expectations, 75 percent of the refugee study group had unmet expectations regarding employment and training opportunities, 76 percent did not expect the high cost of living, 73 percent did not expect to need 'Canadian experience' to get a job, and 85 percent had more difficulties than expected finding housing (p.429). The authors found a correlation between unmet expectations and mental distress, documenting that "a greater proportion of those who reported experiencing constant strain, unhappiness and depression also reported that Canada was not what they expected" (p.430). A particularly interesting finding was that refugees who possessed marketable skills like education and language ability were among the majority who experienced mental distress due to unmet expectations (ibid). Newbold (2009) also highlights the effect that positive perceptions of settlement have on health, discovering that those who are more satisfied with the outcomes of the resettlement process are more likely to have a positive health experience (p.331). Please remember the connection between mental health wellbeing and integration mentioned earlier. These findings conclude that unmet expectations prohibit one from integrating based on the negative effects it has on one's mental health.

In 2003, Joe Fontana, M.P. presented a report to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration that indicated some settlement agencies experienced many of their clients arriving with "serious gaps" in the information they have been given about Canada (p.3). As an example, he explains refugees did not understand the enormity of Canada's size, as they thought a bus ride from St. John to Vancouver would take a couple

of hours. He pointed out that funding for the COA should focus on producing digestible information (meaning not just a package of papers) that could be shared with refugees selected for resettlement, so that they may prepare for life in Canada with an accurate idea of what to expect.

Once a refugee is selected for resettlement by an officer, the next step is to decide in which city the refugee will be resettled. The Destination Matching Centre (DMC) exists within CIC, with the purpose of determining in which province each refugee would be best suited to be resettled, based on the information provided by the CIC officer responsible for overseeing the process. The CIC officer sends a Destination Matching Request (DMR) to the DMC for processing. A DMR is to help the Centre consider factors such as areas with friends and family, an established ethnic community, employment conditions, other services that would help the refugee settle, etc. The DMR is then forwarded to the appropriate region, which specifies the city or town to which a refugee will go.

Simich, Beiser & Mawani (2003) performed a study to demonstrate the resettlement process as a determinant of refugees' mental health status post-arrival in Canada. Their findings concluded that social support, defined as informational, instrumental, and emotional, was a defining element in refugees' mental health. Social support was so critical to refugees' well-being that they would relocate within Canada almost immediately after having been settled by a CIC officer from a city where they had no social support, to one where they did. Through semi-structured interviews with recently resettled refugees throughout Canada, the researchers discovered that CIC officers organizing the resettlement of refugees would often either withhold the location of a

refugee's intended destination or would switch the destination that a refugee had initially been given, and rarely matched refugees with their requested destination.

As per Straehle's typology of vulnerability, refugees here are victims of circumstantial vulnerability, where the "harm" is lack of, or false, information. Thus, the duty of the CIC officer is to provide as much accurate information as soon as possible, so that refugees may avoid remaining circumstantially vulnerable for a prolonged period of time. The aversive power relationship between newly accepted refugees and state representatives, as studied by Simich, Morton & Farah (2003) prove that, in the earliest stages of resettlement, the state is failing to fulfill this duty. CIC officers have the discretion to relocate refugees close to family and friends, and in theory this is what they are supposed to try their best to do, as it would allow them to quickly begin building social support that is critical to their mental health and integration process. Yet, this study revealed that officers more often chose to settle them elsewhere (p. 879).

The pattern of re-location within Canada that they discovered is referred to as *secondary migration*. Refugees' inability to autonomously choose where to establish themselves was not what caused this adverse reaction. Of course the DMC, with the guidance and recommendations of the CIC officer, needs to have the final decision on where to resettle refugees based on the resources available in each region. It was the lack of information, miscommunication, and refugees' sense of *disentitlement* on suggesting where they would like to live that promoted secondary migration. In other words, refugees were made to feel as though they were not entitled to recommend their preferred place of resettlement, and were instead given the impression that they should be equally thankful to be resettled anywhere in Canada.

Alternatively, refugees were sometimes offered, and encouraged, to recommend their preferred place of resettlement, but if they were set to be relocated elsewhere, they were often not informed of this decision until they were boarding the plane. This lack of autonomy and ability to prepare during the resettlement selection process led refugees' to react in one of two ways: They would either refuse to meet connecting flights so that they could remain in their preferred destination, or they would continue to the destination given to them by the CIC officer, soon after which (less than a year) they would relocate. Okonny-Myers (2010) performed a study commissioned by CIC, in which he calculated that, between the years 2000 and 2006, refugees who had been destined for the Atlantic, Saskatchewan, or Manitoba were more likely to have moved elsewhere in Canada (48%, 50%, 59%). SPOs reported that relocation was generally associated with reunification of family or friends, to find work, or to access programs or services not available in the destined community (CIC Evaluation Division 2011, viii).

Simich et al. documented cases where officers misled refugees to believe that if they did not remain in the city destined to them by the CIC officer, they would not be eligible for government support (p. 881). In 2010, this was the case in Norway (Valenta & Bunar 2010), for example, but this has never been a criterion present in the RHRP. These outcomes, both of which led to refugees establishing themselves in a region other than the one registered by the DMC, were noted as having placed added stress on the refugees being interviewed. They were already in a difficult transition, and this unnecessary obstacle led to the development of feelings of anger and mistrust towards government officials (p. 881).

This type of trend could lead one to question whether CIC officers were abusing the resettlement system and the power they had over where refugees would be resettled, exploiting this relationship of dependency. Straehle's vulnerability typology can help to understand how this behaviour damages one's initial stage of resettlement by limiting one's autonomy, possibly further damaging refugees' ability to trust state organizations specifically, and the objectives of integration more generally. The relationship between officers and refugees could benefit from one of trust and reciprocity; one where officers openly acknowledge that a network of social support is imperative to the well-being and establishment of refugees, and where officers encourage refugees to openly share in which cities they would prefer to be resettled. If resettlement in one's ideal list of cities is not possible sufficient notice given to a refugee, so that s/he may begin to plan their resettlement process properly, could greatly lift a refugees' sense of autonomy and engagement in the process. Understandably, some critics may argue that resettlement is not about engagement and autonomy, but moving people out of dangerous places as fast as possible. Of course, this is true, but if refugees can be better engaged in the process, it has the ability to greatly help their integration later on.

CIC Officers and SPOs

Federal funding for settlement programs and targeted ethno-cultural settlement services are provided based on the number and background of immigrants and refugees destined to each province (Fontana 2003). Contrary to the information officers were reported having given refugees refusing to resettle in the city chosen for them, refugees *are* entitled to settlement services and financial assistance wherever they resettle. However, if officers are recording the settlement of refugees in one province when they

initially requested to be resettled in another province, and are most likely going to move there soon after their resettlement, settlement funding is improperly allocated and ethnically-tailored settlement services become less effective. Establishing a better relationship between CIC officers and refugees would also ensure the proper allocation of federal settlement funding and settlement service delivery.

The CIC Evaluation Division (2011) acknowledges that information-sharing mechanisms need to be better developed between CIC officers and SPOs (p.iv). Group processing, which is becoming more common and presently makes up for 20 per cent of GAR selections (ibid, xii), is an example of how settlement service providers could tailor programs in advance, so that they are prepared to meet the requirements of the incoming group of refugees. However, the report presented to the Standing Committee highlighted in the last section that settlement workers often had little information about the group of newcomers destined to their area. They expressed that it would greatly facilitate their program planning if they had some forewarning as to the needs of refugees that would be arriving shortly. Since the CIC Evaluation Division report of the GAR resettlement process does not mention such information sharing initiatives, nor how well they are performing, it is unclear whether such an initiative between CIC and SPOs has been undertaken since the report was presented in 2003.

Another positive development is CIC's acknowledgement that a coordinated relationship between CIC officers and a healthcare database in Canada would greatly ease the transition of refugees' health information from the time of their selection to the time they seek health care treatment in Canada. One of the most difficult barriers facing refugees upon arrival is trying to explain the status of their health to a practitioner (ibid).

Language difficulties, shame, limited understanding of one's own health care needs, etc. all impact one's ability to receive proper and timely health care treatment. In its 2010/11 Report on Plans and Priorities, CIC had as one of its goals to "build an integrated approach for pre-departure medical screening and post-arrival health interventions" (p.27). This initiative is also mentioned in the CIC Evaluation of the GAR selection process and RAP policies as "a new process for transmitting health-related settlement needs information [that] has been piloted in the three largest refugee processing missions" (CIC Evaluation Division 2011, xiv). No information has yet been published as to the success of these pilots, but the initiative would be an essential addition to fostering more mutually beneficial relationships between government officials and local organizations, ultimately easing refugee integration.

The illustration of the initial resettlement process provided here highlights how several agencies necessary throughout the refugee selection and resettlement process are sometimes working together, but are more often working in silos, often not sharing important information with each other and refugees that is necessary to facilitate their establishment in Canada and to provide them with positive first impressions of life in Canada.

SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS

The remainder of this paper is concerned with the relationships important to successful settlement service delivery. This section will focus on the relationships involved in settlement service delivery in general, whereas the subsequent sections will address the relationships within each RHRP programs individually.

Service Provider Organizations and the State

The successful delivery of settlement services is, arguably, the most important factor contributing to overall refugee integration, as settlement service provision consists of all the services and programs that refugees can access in order to begin establishing themselves in Canada. The sheer necessity of settlement services is understood by all levels of government (GoC 2003), and is jointly funded by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. The RHRP, in particular, is funded by the federal government, but settlement service delivery more generally is also funded by provinces and municipalities through the delivery of other services, such as targeted education programs in schools (provincial) and social housing programs (municipal).

Canada does have a comparatively wide range of settlement services available to refugees, and has been commended on the sheer breadth of the RHRP (UNHCR 2010). One positive element of the RHRP worth mentioning is the geographical autonomy it permits refugees, in theory. As mentioned earlier, Norway has prevented refugees from accessing settlement services if they decide to re-locate within the country to somewhere other than the area in which they had initially been resettled (Valenta & Bunar 2010). The study also found this policy to, perhaps obviously, conflict with the principles of integration. This is not the case in Canada, as refugees may access settlement services anywhere in Canada, even if they decide to re-locate. Although, in practice, as will be discussed, refugees are often forced to live in sub-standard housing due to inflated housing prices, or forced to move to the outskirts of an urban area, where expensive public transportation and long commutes to the city can be a barrier to integration on

many fronts. Thus, refugees do not, in practice, have full autonomy over where they choose to live.

CIC is primarily responsible for ensuring that the services offered by the RHRP are available to all refugees. CIC directly provides income support to refugees up to one year after arrival through RAP, which also provides funding for a variety of orientation services and immediate needs. More general settlement services are provided through ISAP and language training is offered through LINC². Instead of CIC offering these programs and services directly, it contracts them out to SPOs, most often to local, non-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that, in turn, provide these services to newcomers. This relationship is structured so that SPOs sign contracts with CIC agreeing to provide the specific settlement services outlined in RAP, ISAP and LINC agreements. In other words, the delivery of services has been decentralized, but the federal government still maintains control over what and how services are provided through rigid, short-term contracts.³

The decentralized and localized nature of the service delivery framework being used by CIC has made it of international interest. It encourages, however, service providers to work in competition with each other. Richmond & Shields (2005) fear the current settlement service framework is prohibiting the autonomy and advocacy of SPOs and is ruining relations and alliances between SPOs and other actors involved in settlement service delivery. Although CIC does not directly provide the RHRP settlement services, it is still accountable for ensuring access and quality. This framework however,

² ISAP and LINC are available to both immigrants and refugees

³ Section 8 of the IRPA permits the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to enter into agreements with the provinces, whereby completely handing over responsibility for settlement program delivery. CIC has agreements with three provinces – Quebec, British Columbia and Manitoba

as explained by Richmond & Shields, highlights the government's *lack of* responsibility during the overall settlement and integration phases:

The first stage of initial reception is that for which Citizenship and Immigration Canada is mainly responsible. For the middle stage of the process, which involves securing long-term access to appropriate employment, housing, and education, and so forth for all members of the newcomer families, no single or lead federal department is responsible. Nor is responsibility assigned clearly to a single or municipal branch or coalition of government departments. In the third stage newcomers develop some sense of attachment or belonging in Canada without giving up their ethno-racial identities and their ties to their homelands... there is some support from various departments of the three levels of government and from other players... but efforts are generally under resourced and *not coordinated* (emphasis added p.515-16).

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), as well as being concerned with the lack of government leadership, is more specifically concerned with the absence of a set of national standards or comparative benchmarks across Canada to ensure that a refugee in Charlottetown PEI receives the same set of services as a refugee in Surrey BC (Fontana 2003; CCR 2000). The GoC's response to the Standing Committee's 2003 Report on Settlement and Integration confirms this lack of coordination between, and within, provinces. The GoC's response emphasizes their coordination regarding "the planning, development, and funding of settlement and integration programs" between the GoC and individual provinces. It speaks to the autonomy provided to provinces through its agreements with BC, Manitoba, and Quebec, who have been given permission to develop and implement their own programs as opposed to following the ones part of the RHRP. It does mention "bilateral discussions and information sharing" as initiatives underway, but no further insight into what this would look like or when it would happen is mentioned (GoC 2003, response 4). Although this Report is somewhat dated, the funding structure of settlement services has not changed in the past ten years, and no discussion forum has been established for these horizontal working relationships to develop and grow, where SPOs would be able to share best practices and build working relationships with one

another. In fact, the CIC Evaluation Division (2011) also recommended that better coordination of services between RHRP programs and with provincial and territorial programs be a priority for CIC, who agreed, but did not detail any particular initiative underway. Instead, SPOs continue to be forced to compete for contracts, rather than encouraged to work in collaboration.

Kareen Sadiq (2004) researched two of the most important organizational relationships in the settlement service sector in Canada, both focusing on financial dependency leading to limited autonomy, and how this can interrupt effective service delivery. His research focused on unpacking two relationships: (1) the relationship between large multi-service immigrant settlement agencies (ISAs)⁴ and the government, on whom they are financially dependent, and (2) the relationship between smaller ethno-specific ISAs and larger multi-service ISAs, on whom they are financially dependent. He refers to this funding set-up as a “parallel settlement system characterized by two-tier dependency” (p.2). Both of these relationships highlight *dependency* as a major barrier to autonomy within the sector, limiting their ability to creatively tailor their services to meet the specific needs of their clientele. The choice of location of smaller ethno-specific ISAs is pre-determined by the larger ISA on whom they rely for funding, questioning whether their target population accesses their services at all. Kareen investigates how financial dependency on either the government or larger ISAs compromises the quality and relevancy of the services offered to refugees, which, arguably, heavily impacts the integration capacities of refugees. ISAs of all sizes, therefore, are being stifled by their relationships of dependency, which is compromising refugees’ ability to have their specific needs met. An analysis of these two relationships will follow, keeping the

⁴ ISAs and SPOs refer to the same settlement organizations

concepts of dependency and autonomy in mind – with a focus on power imbalances and an emphasis on mutuality and equal power-sharing as necessary to building a healthy relationship.

The first relationship involves large multi-service ISAs being dependent on government contracts for the bulk of their operating expenses. A multi-service ISA includes settlement agencies that provide multicultural services to newcomers from a diverse range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The efficiency gains of multi-service ISAs rests in their ability to offer a large number of services at one location. They have been criticized, however, for “essentializing” ethno-cultural groups, by using ethnic and cultural generalizations to organize their specific programs and service delivery, restricting their ability to meet the specific needs of newcomers (p.15). Multi-service ISAs are the organizations that compete for “purchase-of-service agreements” from the government. These contracts are normally for one-year funding periods and contain certain requirements specifying which services the government wishes to fund. Sadiq notes that this limits the opportunities for ISAs to offer services outside of their contractual terms of reference, thus limiting their autonomy “due to deepening state penetration in everyday operations” (p.5). Several of his sources and himself criticize these contractual agreements as prioritizing cost-efficiency and administrative oversight, rather than establishing quantifiable successful settlement outcomes. By dictating to ISAs what services they should be offering, their perspectives are not acknowledged, and the insight they could share with the government are shoved aside as irrelevant. This relationship of dependency is one that encourages competition between ISAs as opposed to cooperation, promoting an environment that is only concerned with efficiency gains as

opposed to the quality of service delivery. While ISAs are busy competing for their next contract and ensuring their services are within the limits of their contract, the quality of the services offered to all newcomers suffers.

Particularly troubling is the “social control and legitimation especially pertinent to small [ethno-cultural] ISAs, because they are subject to two sets of rules and regulations” (Sadiq 2004, 6). Sadiq documented how smaller, ethno-specific ISAs are dependent on larger multi-service ISAs to compete for funding contracts on their behalf. This dependency originates from small ISAs’ inability to compete for provincial contracts because of a lack of resources. The level of administrative accountability that ISAs must submit to prove their organization’s efficiency is too time-consuming and financially draining for small ISAs. This results in a “collaborative relationship” where larger ISAs fund smaller ISAs who are better positioned to offer more ethno-culturally specific services that is often a contractual requirement of government agreements. The outcome of the relationship, Sadiq uncovered, is one of distrust. Larger ISAs are reported as not trusting smaller ISAs to deliver quality settlement services, and are thus ignoring their input into funding decisions (p. 6). The unequal power sharing has resulted in the independence of ethno-cultural ISAs being compromised. Further to the issue of distrust, smaller ISAs are required to locate wherever the multi-service ISA is located, resulting in a “spatial mismatch” where ethno-specific ISAs are not necessarily close to the communities they are intended to serve (Lo, Wang, Wang & Yuan 2007). These relationships of dependency are preventing both types of ISAs from autonomously developing tailored services they feel are best suited to the needs of their clientele. It is also preventing smaller ISAs from being able to locate in communities where their

services would be most useful. Shariq nicely sums up what this means for newcomers: “In its present form, the two-tier settlement system is inaccessible to many newcomers and is ill-equipped to meet the needs of numerically-small newcomer groups requiring ethnically-compatible services” (p.6).

Lo et al. (2007) undertook a comprehensive data analysis to identify which immigrant groups had more services available to them or had easier access to available services than other groups. In general, they discovered what they termed a “spatial mismatch” between the supply of and demand for settlement services in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), more so for Sri Lankan, Somali, and Iranian newcomers (p.ii). They also discovered that the distribution of SPOs was not only uneven between the City of Toronto and the suburban regions, but also among neighbourhoods within the City of Toronto (p.16).

These relationships of dependency are compounded when refugees are not resettled in their city of choice, are resettled in a city where the refugee cannot access an established ethnic community, or are resettled in a city where the SPOs best tailored to meet their needs are limited or do not exist. The next four sections will focus specifically on each RHRP program, and will illustrate how the relationships present in each one either serves to facilitate or impede integration.

REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The RAP, created in 1998, is a federally-funded program that is part of the RHRP, and is designed to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency. RAP is responsible for providing immediate and essential resettlement services (up to six weeks after arrival) and income support (up to a year after arrival) to recently arrived refugees (ibid, v). The

most important relationship involved in RAP is between refugees and CIC. Although RAP service providers do administer some programs to assist with initial resettlement – temporary housing, assistance with access to medical care, interpretation, and orientation services – the bulk (75%) of RAP funding is directly given to refugees as financial assistance, and is calculated according to the criteria of provincial welfare programs.⁵ RAP is also responsible for administering the Immigration Loans Program (ILP) for which refugees who cannot pay for their medical exams and transportation to Canada are eligible. RAP, therefore, places refugees into a direct relationship with the state immediately after resettlement. The two elements of the RAP that will be discussed here will highlight the relationship between the state and refugees as one of dependency and perpetual circumstantial vulnerability, ultimately leading to limited autonomy and, jeopardizing the beginning stages of integration. This relationship is fostered during the beginning stages of refugees' settlement in Canada, and is a time when they are most vulnerable. This relationship will be studied by looking at the financial assistance granted refugees during their first year in Canada and the effects of the ILP.

RAP Financial Assistance

RAP is designed as largely an income assistance program. This means that immediately after refugees are settled into temporary housing, they can begin to receive a monthly cheque from RAP that is supposed to cover basic subsistence. Immediately, this relationship becomes one of dependency, as refugees begin their search for employment, housing, school, friends, and community programs, while relying on government

⁵ For information on how Canada's provincial welfare programs also exist within a relationship of dependency between the state and the recipient, and how this relationship creates what is known as a "poverty trap", see Dean Herd, Ernie Lightman & Andrew Mitchell (2009), Searching for Local Solutions: Making Welfare Policy on the Ground in Ontario, *Journal of Progressive Human Services* 20(2) 129–151 or Denis Raphael (2008), Getting Serious about the Social Determinants of Health: New Directions for Public Health Workers, *Promotion & Education* 15(3) 15-20.

assistance during this process. At first, this relationship is not necessarily one of dependency as it has been negatively interpreted throughout this paper. However, it has been proven that refugees in general do not like receiving financial assistance, and are instead “strongly motivated to contribute, and to avoid dependence” (Ager & Strang 2010). To many refugees, making a contribution is important for regaining their sense of belonging and self-esteem. RAP, in many ways, ignores this desire, instead inadvertently forcing most refugees to begin their life in Canada collecting a government pay cheque which is pegged at subsistence levels (Simich et al. 2006, 421).

The other, more pressing problem with RAP assistance is that it does not cover all the basic needs of refugees. The CIC Evaluation Division (2011) reported that the majority of refugees were spending upwards of 56 percent on housing, which is almost double the level at which rent should not exceed if one is to meet his/her other basic needs (30%). The study performed by Simich et al. (2006) reported that 75 per cent of refugees felt that financial support provided by RAP was not enough to meet their basic needs (p. 428). This claim has been substantiated by the CIC Evaluation Division (2011), which calculated the high number of refugees receiving RAP assistance using food banks (57%), having difficulties repaying their transportation loan (61%), and their calculation that RAP support equates to less than one-half the income required to meet the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) level in Canada.⁶ Of course, one’s inability to meet his/her most basic needs greatly inhibits one’s ability to look beyond one’s next meal, which is imperative to begin the process of integration.

⁶ LICO is the calculation used to determine Canada’s poverty line.

The purpose of RAP is to mitigate one's circumstantial vulnerability by providing adequate resources to meet one's basic needs, fostering self-esteem and autonomy. Instead, not one author throughout the research for this paper denounces the claim that RAP does not come close to mitigating such vulnerability, and consequently further limits the autonomy of refugees.

Immigration Loans Program

The Immigration Loans Program (ILP) covers both medical expenses required to be accepted for resettlement and the costs associated with travelling to Canada. Canada is the only country that requires refugees to pay for their medical exams and transportation to Canada, with interest accruing after three years. Most of the refugee-sponsoring nations (eg. Australia, Netherlands, Sweden) fully cover medical expenses and airfare. The United States also requires its refugees to pay this expense, but does not charge interest. Refugees are asked to sign loan repayment papers prior to coming to Canada. They are required to pay the loans in instalments, usually over a three-year period, with the repayment process beginning three months after settlement in Canada.

As mentioned in the previous section, two-thirds of refugees who received a transportation loan from CIC reported having difficulty paying it back (Simich et al. 2006). The CIC Evaluation Division (2011) stressed the need for the transportation loan to be re-examined, but CIC did not agree. The Division also stressed the need to "re-examine the need, appropriateness and functionality of the transportation loan", to which CIC did agree. Both teams agreed that the loan's impact on integration was worth investigating (p.xvi).

However, the impact of the loan on mental health has already been examined by Access Alliance (nd), whose research found that the burden of repaying the loan is a major source of economic as well as mental health stress on refugees, particularly for refugees who come from cultures where there is a social stigma to being in debt, and a loan must be paid off as quickly as possible (eg. Muslim communities). In turn, this stressor “adds to and exacerbates the multiple vulnerabilities and risks” that refugees already face (p.1). This research determined that the implications of the loan are, in fact, a critical factor in understanding one’s integration capacity.

A relationship of trust is questioned between CIC and refugees when the issue of informed choice regarding one’s agreement to repay the loan is highlighted. As mentioned, refugees are asked to sign the ILP contract prior to resettling in Canada, at which point refugees would agree to participate in any number of arrangements than would be the case under a situation where s/he was not exposed to circumstantial vulnerability. Clearly, this is not the case when a refugee signs the ILP contract. In fact, Access Alliance highlights that this procedure is inconsistent with lending policies in Canada (p. 2). Wilson, Murtaza & Shakya (2010) also criticize the ILP for the exploitative contractual obligation is requires refugees to sign during a phase when they are most vulnerable and desperate, rather than through informed choice. Their research has proven the ILP to be a significant stressor on refugees, invoking worry, anxiety, and stress (p.47).

Fear, unfortunately, is the primary driver of the high loan recovery rate (91%), as several refugees admitted experiencing pressures to quickly repay the loan because of a fear of deportation, or other consequences (ibid, 3; Sherrell 2009, 21). CIC’s lack of

clarity regarding the terms and conditions of the loan repayment exacerbates refugees' state of dependency on the government. Of course, the financial burden of repaying the loan makes refugees more vulnerable to poverty and economic insecurity, but the fear that drives their repayment makes refugees more prone to mental health distress.

What remains unclear is the cost-benefit implications of the ILP. The government may very well be losing more money measured in lost integration potential than it is saving by maintaining the high recover rate of the ILP. As opposed to examining its effect of one's integration potential, CIC should concern itself with understanding the economic and social costs and benefits of the ILP before it completely disregards the recommendation by multiple organizations to eliminate it completely.

IMMIGRANT AND SETTLEMENT ADAPTATION PROGRAM

In 1974, the federal government launched the Immigrant and Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP) before a formal resettlement program was in place. The purpose of ISAP is to “facilitate a smoother transition ... to provide them with the guidance and knowledge necessary to meet their basic settlement needs independently and to adapt to life in Canada” (CIC Evaluation Division 2009, 1). The immediate objective is “to provide clients with guidance and information ... including housing, banking, shopping, access to social and health services, so that they can understand their rights and obligations in Canada (ibid, 10). ISAP services are only available to refugees up to three years after arrival (GoC 2003, response 11), despite refugees' ongoing need for settlement services, up until ten years after arrival (Beiser 2009, FCM 2011). This section will highlight the importance of one's mental health wellbeing as one accesses the services offered by ISAP, and how a severe lack of collaboration and partnership between

levels of government and government funded services are exacerbating mental illness during the early stages of settlement.

Housing

ISAP workers are supposed to act as a resource from which refugees can draw when trying to find affordable and accessible housing. Several authors have expressed concern that refugees are not being given all the tools required to find affordable and accessible housing, like access to housing information, house search techniques, and tenant rights, which are undoubtedly some of the most needed newcomer services (Lo et al. 2007). Housing is, arguably, the most important factor to one's successful settlement.

Secure housing establishes the circumstances for access to other formal and informal supports and networks. Good housing for immigrants facilitates and reduces the length of the resettlement and integration process. Good housing also reduces long-term costs to society in other areas such as health, education, social assistance and employment insurance (Carter et al. 2008, 5).

Consequently, “community stability... has wide implications for refugee integration policy, not least in the area of housing, where short-term accommodation, insecure tenancies, and certain forms of dispersal strategy all serve to promote instability in refugee resettlement” (Ager & Strang 2008, 184).

A portion of RAP funding is to cover housing expenses. However, it is wholly inadequate since refugees are spending more than half of their income on housing. In Canada, housing is considered affordable if a household allocates no more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Households spending upwards of 31 percent of household income on housing are considered to be experiencing housing stress, and those spending upwards of 51 percent are considered to be in critical housing stress. For example, a study of refugees living in Surrey BC revealed that 15 of 22 respondents were spending upwards of 51 percent of monthly household income on housing. Seven of the

22 respondents admitted spending more than 75 percent on monthly income on housing, placing them at “extreme risk of housing homelessness” (Sherrell 2009, 6). A Metro Vancouver study performed by Francis (2009) discovered that 14 percent of GARs had experienced at least one episode of homelessness (p.12). Based on his qualitative data, 90 percent of the participants experienced moderate, high, or extreme housing stress (p.32).

Although ISAP is, arguably, fulfilling its mandate of providing housing workshops to refugees so that they may begin their own housing search, the level of housing stress and homelessness among refugees proves that this approach is not working. Refugees across Canada have expressed their inability to find and keep affordable housing primarily due to not knowing where to look, not properly understanding the geography of the area, and not being aware of their tenant rights. The CIC Evaluation Division (2011) expressed concern at the allocated housing allowances and the sharing of information on housing availability between levels of government (p.xx). CIC agreed that it needed to work with provinces and municipalities to explore ways to meet refugees’ housing needs, but gives not indicators on how this would happen.

As it stands, housing is a municipal responsibility, and no formal relationship exists between ISAP and municipalities (FCM 2011). Ager & Strang (2010) agree that “it is at the local level that much of the work of the integration process has to take place” (p.601) Housing is the most obvious example of this. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2011) published a report detailing the importance of municipalities to the immigrant and refugee integration process, and also highlighted the difficulties municipalities are facing, some of which stem from the lack of collaboration with other

government services, such as ISAP. Some relationships in this area have begun to formulate in isolation, and could greatly benefit by acknowledging their mutual objectives and by creating partnerships.

In 2005, Canada signed a trilateral immigration agreement with Ontario and the City of Toronto, “laying the groundwork for a protocol for consultation and information sharing between all orders of government” (FCM 2011, 3). This agreement, however, has not translated into any tangible initiatives. FCM is encouraging other government programs to “find ways to engage municipalities” so that municipal and federal programs can work together.

One needs to make integration services work better with programs delivered by provincial and municipal governments. Integration services cannot be delivered in silos. They will be much more effective if we take advantage of the whole range of government programs in areas as diverse as sport and recreation, early childhood education, family counseling, housing, employment and community mental health” (Matthew Mendelson, Former Deputy Minister in Intergovernmental Affairs in the Government of Ontario as cited by FCM 2011, 11).

Consequently, this lack of collaboration between ISAP and municipalities means that affordable rent is most often found in suburbs, away from like-ethnic communities and the majority of settlement services, or in ghetto communities. The difference between a ghetto and an enclave is important to understand the distinguishing characteristics of a supportive community. Briefly, both types of communities require there to be a majority presence of a minority ethnicity. Enclaves, however, can be a positive experience for refugees and can foster integration, as they live among people with whom they can develop bonding capital and social networks that can eventually lead to bridging capital (Qadeer & Agrawal 2010). Refugees living within an enclave experience a supportive community, which has proven to keep them particularly resistant to the development of mental disorder (Beiser 2009, 560). To this end, the presence of a large like-ethnic

community in the form of an enclave protects mental health. Beiser cites a study by Murphy (1977) that found a negative correlation between hospitalization rates of immigrants and the size of their ethnic representation in the community (p.562).

The presence of a ghetto normally exists alongside the persistence of poverty within a community. Ghettos often breed feelings of an unsafe community and produce mental disorders among refugees who feel unsafe around, and untrustworthy of, their neighbours. This environment inhibits integration as refugees are unable to build bonding or bridging capital to develop social links within their community. Presently, ISAP is not capable of providing refugees with all of the housing resources they need, and are working in parallel to municipal housing organizations. The consequences of this disconnect fall to refugees, who are most often living in sub-standard and precarious housing. Developing a relationship between municipalities and ISAP so that refugees are given the proper housing information, resources, and help that they need when performing their own housing search would ensure that refugees are not alone during this difficult and overwhelming process.

Employment

The most evident barriers to employment consist of (1) no Canadian work experience, (2) unfamiliarity with the Canadian job market, (3) limited official language ability, and (4) mental illness. It is the responsibility of ISAP to assist refugees in finding employment by providing the tools to overcome these barriers. Women, in particular, have additional barriers to face when searching for employment. Social networks within one's community and among one's ethnic group have proven to be very valuable during one's search for employment. Although refugees often find work this way, women's

networks are more likely to “push [them] into the informal sector, and consequently, lower paying jobs” (George & Chaze 2009, 397). ISAP workers, therefore, must be aware of the gender disparities that appear during one’s search for work.

Although language acquisition is the responsibility of the LINC program, it can take an adult several years to learn a new language, especially if their reading and writing skills in their own language are already poor, as is more common among refugees than other groups of newcomers. Therefore, ISAP must learn to work around language as a barrier if it is to help give refugees the tools to find meaningful work. ISAP is unable to address the first barrier independently, as job requirements are at the discretion of the employer. The second barrier is addressed by ISAP in a very libertarian way, meaning refugees are able to sign up for resume writing courses, job search courses and such, hopefully gaining the know-how to begin looking for employment. As one may suspect, this liberal approach is not very successful, as the majority of refugees continue to cite informal networks as their primary means for gaining employment (Sherrell 2009).

In previous years ISAP workers and CIC officers often informed refugees of where work opportunities existed, and proceeded to set up introductions between refugees and prospective employers. Presently, ISAP workers are strictly limited to providing a set of tools so that refugees may be able to find work on their own. This approach is flawed in many ways, most importantly regarding the first three barriers mentioned above. Although ISAP does not formally partner with employers, Sherrell (2009) argues that immediate access to jobs that do not require Official language ability would facilitate more rapid integration. This is true, as employment provides economic stability and self-esteem. Refugees themselves have asked to be given immediate work in

a warehouse or on a construction site, where official language ability is not a requirement (ibid, 37). This could be done by initiating partnerships between employers of varying ethnicities and ISAP, so that refugees have access to work in their own language immediately upon resettlement.

Furthermore, refugees who do find work often feel compelled to choose between language classes and full-time employment. Refugees have suggested that programs that allow them to work in their first language and learn English on the job site would be the ideal compromise. The ultimate relationships in this regard would be between foreign speaking businesses, ISAP, and LINC, so that refugees are guaranteed access to immediate employment and have the opportunity to learn an official language.

The last barrier underscores a dilemma refugees must face in search of work:

Mental disorders such as PTSD compromise the chances of becoming economically productive. At the same time, lack of productivity can jeopardize mental well-being. Eliminating marketplace barriers that create high rates of unemployment will help prevent mental disorder. At the same time, attending to the mental health needs of refugees and to disorders that have their roots in other resettlement difficulties will prevent wastage of human capital (Beiser 2009, 558).

Later in the resettlement process, when the emergence of suppressed memory threatened wellbeing, consistent work helped ameliorate the threat (ibid, 562), acting as a tool of resiliency.

Although ISAP is designed to give refugees the tools they need in order to find meaningful work, settlement workers are falling short in being able to provide these tools independently of employers, LINC, and mental health services. Better organizational relationships will benefit employers and refugees, while ensuring that ISAP workers are better able to meet the objectives of the overall RHRP.

Para-Counselling

The trauma refugees face associated with departure from their home country and entry into a new country often go unaddressed by a mental health professional, primarily due to the limited understanding and capacity of settlement and healthcare providers (Wilson, Murtaza & Shakya 2010). Beiser (2009) noted that community studies identified a period of high risk for the development of depressive symptoms between 10 and 24 months post-arrival (p. 560). Consequently, trauma therapy often falls on ISAP workers during their routine service delivery. Although it is possible that ISAP workers provide authentic and compassionate counselling to refugees, helping them to work through their trauma, this is not their responsibility, whose workload already supersedes their ability to be effective at their job (ibid).

The CIC Evaluation Division (2009) expressed uncertainty regarding the nature and scope of para-counselling services that should be provided through ISAP. Part of this concern was regarding professional training, but were also concerned that ISAP workers were feeling obligated to provide such services on top of their already strenuous workload, putting the health and wellness of settlement workers at risk if they are also expected to provide therapeutic counselling to refugees above and beyond their mandated responsibilities of providing information and guidance regarding housing, employment, language training, and community activities.

Another explanation to refugees' limited use of health care services is provided by Beiser (2009), who explains refugees' low use of mental health services by their ability to temporarily disassociate themselves with their traumatic memories to be able to "get on with life in the sort and medium term" (p.556). If services are not readily available, many

refugees will avoid working through their trauma, to their own detriment. This gap in service delivery has led several mental health and refugee scholars to the conclusion that the health and settlement sectors could benefit from developing a more meaningful relationship between each other, by beginning to work alongside each other (McKenzie, Hansson, Tuck & Lurie 2010) and through active collaboration (Wilson, Murtaza & Shakya 2010), so that refugees receive the proper support they need immediately after resettlement and throughout the integration process. Beiser provides an insightful recommendation that each one of us would make do to remember:

Although service providers must always take account of differences imposed by culture, we must not lose sight of what unites us all as human beings – the struggle between autonomy and affiliation, the centrality of family and community to everyday life, the need to feel productive and cared for, the need for continuity as a counterpoint to the search for novelty. Culture often casts unfamiliar veils over universal longings, discontent, and strengths. One of the tasks of cross-cultural psychiatry [or therapy in general] is to find a way to look behind the veil without offending the wearer. (p.572)

There are a number of relationships that SPOs providing ISAP services could initiate. The CIC Evaluation Division recommends beginning with hospitals, colleges, and universities, but the options are endless. The problem, however, rests in the priority of fostering such relationships. ISAP workers are concerned with meeting their immediate objectives, that such initiatives are rarely given priority, despite the mutual benefit for ISAP workers and refugees in the medium and long term.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

LINC was designed to help newcomers learn one of Canada's official languages and began in 1990. It is funded by the federal government as part of the RHRP, but is administered by a variety of organizations, including schools, community centres, and libraries. LINC focuses its courses on official language ability that will benefit those seeking work who want to learn employment-related language, and for those interested in

general language ability that will help them access the services they need (eg. health care & housing). Some LINC programs offer child care, which greatly increases the possibility for women to participate in LINC. Overall, the quality of LINC teachings is well received, according to the CIC Evaluation Division (2010). LINC is a key element of the RHRP, accounting for about one third of CIC's integration budget. Interestingly, almost three quarters of LINC students are female (ibid, 3 & 12). LINC is only available to newcomers up to three years after arrival. Although this short time frame in which people can access LINC is a concern in and of itself when discussing integration as an ongoing process, my concern rests with the accessibility of LINC for two other reasons. The first concern rests with the vulnerable state in which refugees with citizenship find themselves when they are no longer eligible for LINC courses. The second concern rests with the accessibility of LINC courses and the relationship LINC has failed to form with provincially-funded ESL programs.

LINC and Canadian Citizenship

Naturalization is part of the process of integration, and Canada supports this belief entirely. Refugees are encouraged to obtain citizenship as soon as they are eligible. The Government of Canada's 2011 Plans and Priorities measures the rate of naturalization as an indicator of integration. Several authors also agree that citizenship is an important part of integration. "Rights and Citizenship are foundational to understandings of refugee integration... having secure status is, in itself, instrumental in enabling integration... and 'belonging'" (Ager & Strang 2010, 592 & 596).

Ironically, refugees who follow the course of naturalization but who are still interested in improving their English are not eligible for LINC courses. This is so,

because Canadian citizens cannot register for LINC (GoC 2003, response 11). This puts refugees, particularly women, in a precarious position, as they may hold off on gaining their citizenship so that they may be able to access LINC classes, which stalls their integration process, or they may gain citizenship at the expense of accessing LINC classes. Women are unfairly penalized, because LINC often offers free child care and subsidized transportation, whereas provincial language programs do not. CIC does

Spatial Mismatch

Lo et al. (2007) performed a study of the spatial organization of settlement services across the Toronto CMA. What they discovered regarding settlement services in general was a “spatial mismatch” between the supply of and demand for settlement services. One particular area of study was the accessibility of LINC programs, where they discovered an alarmingly high level of spatial mismatch.

For example, the City of Toronto accommodated 69 per cent of the newcomers to Toronto, but it held 76 per cent of LINC spaces. York and Peel Regions, while holding 31 per cent of the larger region’s newcomer population, were home to only 24 per cent of the LINC spaces (p.38). Certain immigrant communities – most notably Pakistanis and Russians – had the worst access to LINC programs (p.53). The authors suggest that although funding increases would help to meet the need of additional services, funding reallocation could be just as beneficial.

An additional suggestion to funding reallocation would be organizational collaboration between ESL and LINC programs. Currently, they run parallel to each other, and do not communicate their services to one another. What Lo et al. discovered was that ESL was meeting the needs of some of the newcomers, and LINC was meeting

the needs of another portion of newcomers. There was some overlap in program delivery, and some refugees did not have access to either. Although the authors did not explicitly suggest ESL and LINC programs “join forces” so to speak, they make a very solid factual argument for why this would be beneficial, given that both programs strive to achieve the same objectives of official language acquisition.

HOST PROGRAM

In 1990, CIC announced that the Host program would be made a permanent part of the RHRP (CCR 2000). The Host program has been widely successful in building authentic relationships between Canadian citizens and newcomers. Citizens learn about the experiences, cultures, and lifestyle of the newcomer and they, in turn, learn many practical tools to living in Canada. The Host program encourages relationships between Canadians and newcomers that would have very likely happened otherwise. The Host program has the smallest budget of all the RHRP programs, so matches between citizens and refugees are prioritized over other groups of immigrants. This occurs primarily because refugees are understood to be in the most need of building social networks and social capital.

Social Networks and Social Capital

“Host is considered effective in meeting newcomer needs and expectations to a significant extent. Impacts were reported with respect to providing social support, friendship, and expanding social networks. Other reported benefits of Host include improved access to services, increased self-confidence, and improved communication skills... [and] improved awareness and understanding of other cultures” (CIC Evaluation Division 2004, Summary of Findings). Social capital, in particular, is critical to one’s

mental health wellbeing. Only refugees lacking personal and social supports suffered an increased risk of depression 10 to 12 months after arrival in Canada (Beiser 2009, 560). Additionally, social networks help one gain the tools required to navigate through a new society. Oftentimes, refugees reported having been introduced to the social networks of their host, who also provided helpful guidance and advice on a variety of topics, such as job search, financial management, Canadian society and values. Their official language ability was often greatly improved as well. Other refugees reported that Host helped to reduce feelings of isolation and emotional distress. Overall, Host is an excellent example of an authentic and mutually beneficial relationship, where citizens can assist a refugee in establishing themselves in Canada, and refugees can help citizens better understand what the experiences of a refugee may be like.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to explore how the RHRP, designed to facilitate the resettlement and integration of refugees, operates. In order to evaluate how successful the programs that comprise the RHRP are, a relational approach was adopted so as to specifically analyze the relationships present during each stage of the resettlement process; from the identification of refugees, to the selection of refugees for resettlement, to the process of re/settlement, and finally to the beginning stages of the integration process. Oftentimes, the relationships between different organizations and refugees were poorly developed, and were instead guided by dependency & unequal power relations, independency from one another, miscommunication, and distrust. Some relationships, however, were either guided by trust and open communication or had already been identified as in need of being established.

The concepts of vulnerability, autonomy, dependency, and equality as they are understood within relational theory were borrowed to understand how focusing on relationships could add value to an analysis of a system that carries with it several different actors, all of which have important roles to play if the system is to function smoothly and their common objectives are to be achieved. In the case of the RHRP, this system comprised of several actors, and began with the identification of refugees by the UNHCR and finished with their establishment in Canada, on the road to becoming fully-naturalized citizens. This system is designed to ensure that refugee resettlement is a *durable solution* for refugees, emphasizing their ability to become Canadian citizens and to benefit from all the opportunities available to Canadian-born citizens and other permanent residents.

The quality of the relationships involved in the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program greatly impact refugees' ability to integrate into Canadian society. CIC is unashamed to admit that the RHRP is not up to the ideal standard, and has acknowledged that several flaws do exist throughout the program. I decided to focus specifically on these relationships in an attempt to identify where better integration prospects could exist if the ideal relationships were better managed. During my research, I discovered that establishing better relationships between institutions, organizations, and individuals, founded on mutual trust, interdependency, equal power-sharing and information-sharing would have a positive impact on refugees' integration prospects in Canada, and that these relationships are worth acknowledging in future research on refugee integration.

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