



CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES

REFUGEE

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON

INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES—THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Today's Refugees—Tomorrow's Citizens

As a major recipient of refugees in the Western world since the 1970s, Canada had to adapt to the task of enhancing the self sufficiency of the new arrivals and removing barriers from their full participation in social, cultural, economic and political activities. The main thrust of Canada's resettlement policy is "integration," generally defined as the process whereby immigrants and refugees become part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of a society (Breton 1992).

Resettlement strategy is also influenced by the multicultural policy which permits the pluralistic existence of diverse cultures; newcomers are permitted or even encouraged to retain their prior internalized cultural values while gradually adjusting to life in Canada. As part of this process refugees will have to acquire mainstream Canadian values such as the ability to speak English/French and other social patterns. Also they may have to undergo occupational upgrading, retraining and other activities which are necessary for successful participation in Canadian society.

Canada's refugee resettlement strategy differs from that of assimilationist nations which require refugees to abandon prior internalized cultural values for their ultimate absorption into the culture of the receiving society. Whereas assimilationists dwell on totalistic change of values, integration recognizes cultural pluralism. Canada's refugee resettlement strategy rec-

ognizes that integration goes beyond basic economic conditions such as income and employment, and encompasses other aspects including participation in social, cultural and political activities of Canadian society.

In their 1992 meeting on indicators of integration, the *Canadian Academic Panel on the Social and Cultural Impacts of Immigration* identified the following

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as essential components of the integration process (Breton 1992).

First, integration is a capacity and an end result. As a capacity, integration is the acquisition of the resources, information and other means necessary to function effectively in the new societal environment. As an end result, integration measures the degree of participation in the economic, political and general sociocultural life of the society.

Considered from the standpoint of the newcomers, the end result measures participation; and from the standpoint of the receiving society, outcomes relate to the contribution to the institutions, culture and demography of the society.

Second, integration is a two way process: the process of becoming part of a society engages those who are being incorporated as well as the entity that is incorporating them. Refugees who resettle in Canada must adjust to their new circumstances. Similarly, Canada's decision to accept refugees indicates a certain disposition to change in order to accommodate the newcomers.

Third, integration is not a one-time activity. Rather, it is a multidimensional process which can extend over several years of residence in the receiving Canadian society.

Finally, integration involves experiences that can vary across groups and social categories. Although the integration process has general parameters, the experiences of becoming part of the receiving society and the rate at which this occurs can differ from one individual to another, between refugees and regular immigrants and between inland refugee applicants and sponsored refugees.

Compared to other industrial nations such as the U.K. and the U.S., Canada's refugee integration strategy is deemed to be distinctive and also based on a sound ideological basis. Nonetheless, the ultimate test of the resettlement strategy is the ability to assist refugees in dealing with the challenges and opportunities associated with living in Canada.

A common theme running through the articles is the inadequacy of the settlement services to refugees. Helene Moussa's work, for example, challenges the ideology of mainstream service delivery and calls for a system tailored more specifically to the experiences and needs of refugee women and children. The principles of social justice, humanitarianism and cultural diversity that should form the basis of service delivery to refugees are frequently ignored; making refugees targets of media attacks and public embarrassment.

Jaime LLambias-Wolff's article outlines the integration experiences of refugees in Canada. In my article, I have attempted to present an explanatory model for the integration process of landed claimants. Fernando Mata's article outlines the administrative and legal foundations of Canada's multiculturalism policy in relation to refugee integration. This set the stage for an analytical assessment of what integration amounts to in practice. Jacob *et al's* study of Cambodian, Bulgarian, Guatemalan, Tamil and Ethiopian refugees in Montréal shows how the conditions of refugees can affect their psychological well being, and David Hutton provides valuable statistics on the traumas of displacement. Perry Romberg's article on the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services demonstrates how community based strategies can make a difference in the refugee resettlement process.

Together, this special issue depicts the institutional arrangements surrounding Canada's refugee resettlement strategy, first-hand experiences of refugees who have made Canada their new home, and the strategies that community agencies employ in the resettlement of refugees. ■

Edward Opoku-Dapaah, Guest Editor

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Sowing New Foundations: Refugee and Immigrant Women and Support Groups

Helene Moussa

This paper discusses issues related to the settlement process of women refugees and their families. The issues emerged from an Education Wife Assault (EWA) project which set out to produce a handbook to assist refugee and immigrant women in establishing support groups. Drawing on the experience of support group facilitators, guidelines and descriptions of group approaches to domestic violence were drawn up (Moussa 1994). A major theme that cut across the work of these facilitators was that of refugee/immigrant women challenging myths about themselves and society, and claiming power both individually and in solidarity with each other.

Fifty-five group facilitators in Metropolitan Toronto, Kitchener and Hamilton were interviewed for the project. Some of the facilitators worked with specific country/language groups and others with multi-ethnic and multilingual groups. Facilitators for the specific country/language groups worked with women from China, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Philippines, Ghana, Iran, Korea, Portuguese-speaking countries, Somalia and Sri Lanka. The various groups met in community centres, agencies and shelters for assaulted women.

Support groups are one of the many ways of breaking the isolation women experience in the settlement process. In a group, women learn how to access the social, economic, political and legal systems of Canada. The strengths, skills and talents of each woman are validated.

The concept of a "support group" is a Western one and not necessarily applicable to the cultural background

and realities of refugee/immigrant women in Canadian society. Women in many parts of the world relate to one another in woman-centred groups within the neighbourhood or extended family.

The objectives of the support groups were multifaceted. Topics covered fell into four broad categories: life skills in Canada; information about how to access services; social activities and recreation; and the politics of sexual violence within the context of being a refugee or immigrant woman.

This article focuses on four interrelated issues drawn from the discussions with facilitators: (1) the need for an integrated response to refugee and immigrant families; (2) concerns about cultural perceptions; (3) the importance of respecting cultural differences and recognizing structural barriers in the settlement process; and (4) how the support group experience can become a springboard for refugee/immigrant women to claim power over their lives.

The Need for an Integrated Response to Immigrant and Refugee Families

The most important concern that came across when working with refugee and immigrant women was the fragmentation of services to the family. Facilitators expressed the need for an integrated approach which coordinated services to the family as a "unit."

"Keeping the family together" has particular significance for refugee women. Mothers, fathers and children may have been separated from each other when they fled their country. Refugee/immigrant women experience isolation because the public/private divide in Canadian society is unfamiliar to them. Racism and hostility toward refugees/immigrants create additional layers of alienation for newcomers during the settlement

process. Furthermore, each refugee in his or her own way, goes through a period of grievance over the separation from family and country of origin. In addition, women are generally held responsible for "holding the family together" during the settlement process. One of the implications of all these factors is that women may remain in relationships, even when those relationships are abusive or life-threatening.

Responses to the needs of women must address both the family as a unit and each of its members. An integrated response recognizes the political context of the lives of refugee/immigrant women. As Alice Walker argues, "a womanist approach" is a commitment to the survival and wholeness of entire communities, including both female and male members (Walker 1983, ix).

Child and Youth "Care"

Child care is an essential component of any service to immigrant/refugee mothers. Mothers will not, and cannot, attend group sessions if such care is not provided. Support group facilitators stressed that child care should not be limited to "baby-sitting." Children and youth have special needs, particularly as "hidden victims" of family violence.

Children in refugee families may have been imprisoned and tortured. They may have been in situations of armed conflict. They may have witnessed the torture and death of a parent(s) and family member(s). They may have been separated from one or both of their parents because of any or all of these reasons. Children in refugee and immigrant families may also experience racism in schools and the various stresses of settlement. Children respond to trauma in ways that are very different from those of adults and must be cared for in the context of

Helene Moussa is a research associate at CRS. Her book Storm and Sanctuary: The Journey of Ethiopian and Eritrean Women Refugees was published in 1993 (ISBN 1-895247-08-x).

their development (Freire 1989; Amnesty International 1990; McCallin 1993).

Settlement pressures such as unemployment or underemployment, language barriers, racism and sexism often demand so much of parents' time and emotion that their children's needs may be of secondary importance. Mothers do not need more fracturing of the family or further isolation added to this situation. Support groups for mothers can help them associate dysfunctional behaviour in their children, such as withdrawal, aggression, and poor performance in school, to the violence they may have witnessed both prior to coming to Canada and within Canada.

Facilitators reported that the difficulties many mothers experience with teenage children is perhaps one of the biggest gaps to be bridged. The values that teens acquire from peers and the media can create friction between them and their parents. Facilitators said that mothers were often "at the end of their wits" about what to do, and many felt "totally powerless." The challenge, a facilitator said, is to find ways we can reach teenagers because they will not readily attend a support group.

Facilitators were exploring culture-specific ways of responding to children's needs. For example, a Caribbean community wife assault project is matching children with families known to have healthy relationships. Children visit these families and are included in some family activities. It is hoped that when children are exposed to nonviolent behaviour and positive role models, they will learn alternative ways of resolving conflicts. The interesting thing about this experiment is that in many cultures it is not unusual for a child to spend time with an extended family member or even a neighbour.

What Help Do Men Need as Part of Meeting Women's Needs?

Understanding violence against women in refugee and immigrant families requires consideration of how

male power is constructed in their country of origin and subsequently deconstructed by the refugee experience and settlement in Canada. This does not mean that male violence is condoned or excused. Rather, it challenges us to unravel the context in which violence occurs and this in turn should help us to better respond to the protection needs of women. These factors also help us understand the barriers women have to overcome before they will speak out and take action against an abusive relationship.

Fear and distrust of authority figures is particularly strong among refugees who may have experienced torture and other forms of state violence.

A woman is also unlikely to report her abusive partner to the police when it was the police in her home country who tortured her and/or her family.

...[I]n many parts of the world, marriage is not a simple union between an individual man and a woman, it is also a union of their extended families. Separation and divorce, therefore have wider implications than the couple per se. An abusive man may use this tradition as a tool to control the situation further.

The growing hostilities toward refugees and immigrants and other forms of racism make it even harder to break this silence. A community worker in Toronto said that battered women will choose solidarity with their ethno-specific community rather than seek personal safety in the belief that exposing male violence reinforces racist stereotypes that their community consists of ruthless terrorists. This community worker was not condoning the women's choice, merely pointing out a barrier that had to be faced.

Women experience additional barriers; for example, family members may, for a wide range of reasons, collude to prevent women from reporting violence inflicted upon them. Family members may also blame the woman for her victimization. If women are sponsored by in-laws, this reinforces dependency and intensifies the fear of taking action. In addition, in many

parts of the world, marriage is not a simple union between an individual man and a woman, it is also a union of their extended families. Separation and divorce, therefore have wider implications than the couple *per se*. An abusive man may use this tradition as a tool to control the situation further.

Facilitators claimed that groups for men can be one of social spaces in which men learn about the construction of male power and the abuse of such power. Such groups should start early in the settlement process so that men can learn different, healthy ways of dealing with the frustration and humiliation of the settlement process.

Public Education

Support groups for women and children, and men's groups will remain isolated in their effects to change gender power relations if they are not sup-

plemented with public education. One of the mandates of the Coalition to Eradicate Violence against Women and Children in the Spanish-Speaking Community (Toronto), is to carry out public education and training activities on this issue. The creation of this coalition is itself a statement from and to the Spanish-speaking community that violence against women and children is unacceptable.

Funding

To achieve an integrated approach, facilitators argued that it is necessary to convince funding and collaborative agencies that their approaches and criteria have to accommodate the specific reality of refugee and immigrant women.

Culture Specific Approaches

Regardless of our background, we look at other cultures through the lens

of our own culture. The difficult question is, "how can we cross this cultural bridge to be able to respond to those who are 'different' from us?"

The concept of "cultural sensitivity" is often used in Canada as a way of relating in a positive manner to the cultural background of newcomers. "Sensitivity" alone can, however, be a patronizing, if not incomplete, response to social and political situations. "Sensitivity" is a psychological response, and as such, is only a partial strategy; whereas, culture is also political and ideological. Professionals have to recognize the ideological filters of their own cultural lenses and the dominant culture.

A further concern about the term "cultural sensitivity" is that it does not reflect the two-way process of cultural exchange, nor does it acknowledge that refugee and immigrant women have a great deal to offer Canadian society. The facilitators emphatically affirmed that the support groups reinforced the rich heritage of relationships and mutual support among the women; a heritage which the West has lost as a result of highly individualistic values which engender alienation. One of the facilitators said:

We need to continue to find ways of re-inventing our social and relationship values in Canada alongside with life-giving values in Canadian society. This heritage is not often visible or tangible—it is how we live and how we relate to each other, including the ways we can resolve our issues.

Another important role of a support group facilitator is to "interpret" Canadian society from the immigrant/refugee perspective. Many facilitators said that they openly shared their personal struggles with women in the group, including experiences with sexual assault, abuse and accomplishments in the settlement process.

Carrying this notion of mutual cultural change further, facilitators who are not members of "minority" ethno-specific groups need to question their own cultural myths and beliefs, as well as their privileged positions. This re-

quires an openness toward learning from other cultures. Refugees may themselves be able to offer different approaches to the "Canadian way" of responding to wife assault—even outside their own ethnocultural communities!

To feel valued, immigrant and refugee women must also feel respected as contributing members of the Canadian economic, cultural, political and social systems. They need to be in control of important life choices and decisions. They need to be seen as actively shaping their personal and collective lives, rather than depending on others and institutions.

Respecting Cultural Differences and Recognizing Structural Barriers

A starting point, it would seem, is respecting cultural differences and recognizing that refugee women are not in a position of power in Canada because of pervasive racism, existing class structures, sexism and gender inequality. Searching for commonalities in our effort to bridge the gaps is important, but not enough. Identifying commonalities must not be confused with "sameness" because this overlooks the structural barriers within Canadian society which prevent refugee and immigrant women from participating equally in Canadian society. Racism blinds people from understanding the cultural norms and beliefs of people who are "different." Cultural differences can be manifested in derogatory, stereotypical and misinformed beliefs. Popular images of Islam and Muslims, for instance, generally fail to indicate that the Qur'an (not unlike the Holy Bible) has many contemporary interpretations of the status of women, among other social issues (Ahmed 1992; Zuhur 1992; Moghadam 1993). There is also ample evidence in the literature on the intersection of race, class and gender barriers in the lives of immigrant women (Ng 1988; Vorst 1989; Bannergi 1993).

Refugee and immigrant women are not a homogenous group even though their experiences in Canada are simi-

larly constructed by legal, economic and social systems. They come from different classes and backgrounds. Educational background, for example, varies according to the level of education attained, when and where school was attended, and the historical context.

While the majority of immigrant and refugee women enter Canada in the "sponsored" or "spouse" immigration categories, many come independently. In a situation involving wife assault, different questions and strategies should be considered for each of the following situations: when both the man and the woman are awaiting decision of their refugee claim; when a woman is sponsored and arrives in Canada with her husband/family; when a woman is sponsored and follows her husband/family at a later date (sometimes several years later); when a woman comes to Canada without her spouse or ahead of him; when a woman comes to Canada ahead of her children; and when a woman arrives in Canada independent of her current relationship.

All of the support group facilitators emphasized that we must look for the less visible, inner strength of women. Women, we know, are resourceful and able to make decisions. Women are not "helpless." Refugee women, for instance, make a major decision when they flee their country. Some may have never travelled unaccompanied within their country, let alone abroad. For many, the decision to flee is an act of resistance to patriarchal traditions and state repression.

While there may appear to be common patterns in wife/sexual assault experiences, the literature and experience of women from the South points out that there is no universal way of responding to women in abusive relationships (Ghandi and Shah 1992; Centre for Women's Global Leadership 1992; Schuler 1992; CLAMDEM 1993). Facilitators emphasized that it was critically important to acknowledge and apply different and relevant ways of assisting refugee/immigrant women in abusive relationships.

The Western notion, for instance, that sharing an experience of violence can be cathartic is not necessarily valid, particularly when it is with a stranger who does not speak your language. A refugee woman who is assaulted by her partner may also have been tortured, fled, and subsequently raped in a refugee camp. How do these experiences of sexual assault affect her decision making? Has she processed the experience of torture or rape? What are the legal and economic pressures she has to contend with? What are the social pressures she is experiencing from members of her extended family and the community?

Not sharing all or any of these experience does not necessarily mean that women are passive or submissive. They may be struggling to cope with a multitude of barriers. They may want to forget the traumatic experiences of separation from family, death and war.

Submissiveness to authority may also have political, rather than gender-based, or cultural explanations. Challenging authority in a repressive political regime can result in imprisonment. Such fears will not magically disappear just because a refugee woman has set foot in Canada. In fact, racism in Canada does not nurture trust or resolve their *legitimate* fear and distrust of authority figures. The image of the police and the criminal justice system as "protectors" is not part of their life experience.

In Canada, assertive behaviour is highly valued and it is sometimes exhibited in ways which some cultures perceive as rather impolite, if not downright rude. In a letter to a friend, a South Asian woman identified a number of differences in perspectives and values in her culture from those of her Western friend. One of her examples, highlights the difference in values related to assertive behaviour, "If you saw the film *Gandhi* you may have seen a few glimpses of being effective without being assertive in the North American way" (Cairncross 1989, 83). This woman is also pointing out that women may resist oppression in very different ways.

When refugees flee their homes and countries, sometimes culture is all that they have left of their identities. Refugees and immigrants often cling to familiar ways so as not to feel totally disempowered. This is a way of establishing *continuity* in their lives when so much has been fractured. The task, facilitators said, is to find ways for women to retain values that are life-giving and learn to let go of values that are not life-giving.

Respecting and recognizing differences does not mean condoning cultural beliefs which effectively sanction the oppression of women. Rather, it involves considering different and cul-

When refugees flee their homes and countries, sometimes culture is all that they have left of their identities. Refugees and immigrants often cling to familiar ways so as not to feel totally disempowered.

turally appropriate ways of working through such issues as violence against women. Challenging the myths women have learned from their own patriarchal societies is an important part of support group activities and the settlement process. Support group activities explore and question cultural values, practices and myths that are not life-giving or that may hurt, harm and oppress women. Many Somali women, for instance, are educating women in their community about the detrimental emotional and health effects of the practice of female genital mutilation. They are also challenging the doctrine that this practice is fundamental to their religious beliefs. Recognizing and respecting difference requires conscientious dedication and perseverance.

Moving from Victim to Survivor to Advocate and Networking

An essential component of support groups is the encouragement of women to overcome attitudes identifying them as "victims" and "survivors." Violence against women is systemically and ideologically embedded in patriarchal gender relations. To claim power over their lives, women have to acknowledge that they have

identities other than mere "survivors." In fact, for some, surviving can create guilt: she has survived when many others have not. Women have many other identities: as members of national and ethnic groups, and as workers, professionals, artists, care-givers and activists. These identities have to be named, nourished and encouraged if women are to claim power over their lives.

Since the life-span of a support group is generally three to six months, facilitators stressed the importance of planning ways in which they can continue to build support systems and network with other women. The effec-

tiveness of a support group is in part measured by the ability of its participants to develop their own networks. As one support group facilitator said:

If there is no follow-up plan it's like abandoning the women after you have given them a chance to experience something meaningful and enjoyable in their lives.

Follow-up can take shape in many different ways: one group of Somali women organized families in their housing project. They learned about their rights as tenants and how to generate solutions to the issues they were facing with overcrowding. They are also planning on setting up a transition housing project for women who leave abusive relationships.

Support group facilitators often invite women who have attended previous groups to speak to newly formed groups about their struggles and accomplishments, and how, as members of a support group, they can make it work for their needs.

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Latitud 45° Nord: L'Exil au Canada

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On nous appelle immigrants ou réfugiés, mais comme Brecht, je trouve que ce nom est faux. Nous sommes en transit. Et parfois nulle part. La difficulté ne réside pas dans la tentative d'oublier le passé ou encore de vivre comme si nous étions chez nous. Ce que l'exilé doit viser, c'est le développement d'un sentiment de responsabilité personnelle et collective face aux bouleversements provoqués par l'expatriation. Même si l'attente parmi les murs et les ombres peut lui paraître sans fin, l'exilé ne doit pas avoir peur. Au contraire, il doit passer à la reconquête de son être; de son identité propre.

Les exilés: hommes ou femmes de la terre, mineurs, étudiants, techniciens, intellectuels, ouvriers n'ont pas choisi de quitter leur pays, mais ils doivent pourtant s'adapter. L'exilé apprend, par la force des choses, à connaître le peuple d'ici, sa culture, son environnement physique, son histoire, ses problèmes... Il s'interroge, apprécie, critique, rie, pleure; tous les jours il découvre. Et il veut parler, communiquer.

Il doit découvrir une autre façon de percevoir le monde, une façon qui ne soit ni l'assimilation, ni la marginalisation et qui évitera que sa vie se découpe dans le ciel comme une colonne de fumée. C'est ainsi qu'on pourra effacer les pensées qui étouffent le sommeil et imaginer vraiment l'émigration comme la meilleure école de la dialectique.

La prise de conscience

Après les péripéties et le choc psychologique de la fuite, après une certaine euphorie faite de surprises et d'étonnement dans les premiers instants vécus en terre d'accueil, l'exilé connaît

ensuite ce que l'on pourrait appeler une nouvelle phase: la prise de conscience. Étape fondamentale à partir de laquelle il commence à comprendre que sa vie n'est définitivement plus la même. Oui, quelque chose a vraiment changé. Il doit désormais se frayer un chemin en terrain inconnu alors que sa propre identité est en jeu. Malgré tout, il résiste et refuse de s'avouer sa détresse, il refuse même de considérer l'incertitude. Il doit prendre conscience de son état mais semble ne pas vouloir le faire.

À partir de là, toutes les réactions sont possibles: face à l'optimisme, se dresse le défaitisme "Je n'en peux plus", l'euphorie "On va rentrer dans quelques mois", ou la dépression "C'est épouvantable". Il est évident que ce dernier état psychologique interdit toute prise de conscience devant la nouvelle condition. Alors, le réfugié cherche des coupables: sa famille, les dirigeants politiques, le pays d'accueil, etc. Il refuse généralement d'examiner sa propre conduite: tout ce qui lui arrive est dû aux autres, qui l'ignorent. "L'hiver est horrible. On ne peut pas le supporter. Ici, l'été n'existe pas, il pleut tout le temps."

Certains y arrivent sans trop de meurtrissures, d'autres demeurent traumatisés, nostalgiques. Chaque expérience est un cas d'espèce où l'individu réagit selon sa propre histoire personnelle. Les exilés ne sont-ils pas enfin des hommes, des femmes et des enfants de toutes les couches sociales, de toutes les régions, avec des habitudes aussi multiples que variées...

Certains, au contraire, vont se culpabiliser en pensant que tout le monde est contre eux, que personne ne veut les comprendre ou même les écouter.

Je me sentais désemparé, sans pouvoir communiquer, sans pouvoir rien faire pour m'intégrer au milieu québécois. Les seules relations que j'avais étaient avec des Chiliens, et

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seulement au niveau politique. À par ça, je travaillais toute la semaine et en fin de semaine, je m'enfermais chez moi.

En fait, l'exilé devient plus ou moins un être marginal. Les rapports sociaux ne sont plus les mêmes, au sein d'une société où il n'a même pas son cercle familial ou ses amis. Il trouve difficile d'établir des contacts et des relations avec le milieu. Parfois, il revoit toujours les même gens, des Chiliens bien entendu, qui représentent ses rares amis, et les amis de ses amis. Il sent qu'il tourne en rond, autour des même choses, des mêmes problèmes, des mêmes gens.

L'exilé devient un être marqué. Le trait essentiel qui caractérise la situation vécue de l'individu marqué, stigmatisé, est son effort pour arriver à être accepté par les autres. Son angoisse s'exprime par une seule question: "Comment serai-je identifié pas les autres?" alors qu'il ne sait pas avec certitude ce que les autres pensent réellement de lui.

Puis, lorsque l'exilé réussit à comprendre le sens de la situation qui est la sienne, il commence alors à posséder les éléments lui permettant d'atténuer le conflit et donc de s'acclimater progressivement.

Il s'agit de l'étape de l'oubli relatif. Graduellement, l'exilé assume de nouvelles responsabilités et commence à redéfinir sa vie avec à la fois plus de calme et plus d'espoir.

Actuellement, je peux dire que je me suis intégré au Québec. Cela ne veut pas dire que j'ai oublié ma nature chilienne, ni les raisons pour lesquelles je vis ici. Ainsi, j'ai fait la connaissance d'autres gens qui font du théâtre, surtout dans des troupes de jeune théâtre. J'ai pu discuter, échanger avec eux. J'ai, moi aussi, monté de petits spectacles dans des centres populaires, ce qui m'a permis de connaître du monde.

Précis:

Latitude 45° North: Exiled in Canada

Refugees: they are construction workers, miners, students, technicians and intellectuals; from the working class and the elite. Many have ended up in Canada. The majority did not choose to leave their country. Nevertheless they must adapt to life here. Forced by circumstance, the refugee learns to understand the people, the culture, the physical environment, the history and the problems of Canada. The refugee wonders, appreciates, criticizes, laughs, cries; every day is a discovery. More than anything, she or he wants to speak, to communicate.

The refugee must discover a way of becoming part of society, that is neither assimilation, nor marginalization. This way must allow the refugee to maintain his or her own identity without feeling alienated. Only after this discovery will s/he be able to erase the troublesome thoughts that haunt his or her attempts to adjust to a new life.

Let us imagine for a moment the feeling of insecurity that the refugee experiences during the transition from one social reality to a new one that in no way resembles the old.

Some arrive here without many bruises; others are traumatized, filled with nostalgia for their home. Every refugee's experience is different; each individual reacting according to his or her own personal history. After all,

refugees are men, women and children from all social backgrounds, from all religion, and from equally diverse life-styles.

Unfortunately for the refugee, nothing is more uncertain than the future. He worries about everything: his life, his work, his family.... However, the refugee knows that he must dress his wounds and face the unknown.

In the thoughts of a newly-emigrated refugee, the present loses all meaning—even ceases to exist in the minds of some. The present is seen as a function of either the past or the future. The refugee lives with memories of the past, or alternatively is obsessed with returning home in the future. This internal conflict can be illustrated by Janus, the Roman god who had two faces that looked in opposite directions; one toward the past and the other toward the future. Experiences almost disappear. Logical explanations do not have any value.

Emotion and nostalgia tightly seize hold of the refugee's life. He dreams of his country... the blue sky, the familiar places, the noisy bustle of his or her village each morning and the barking of the dogs... in short, the simple things of everyday life.

This nostalgia, accompanied often with extended periods of solitude, can result in psychological breakdowns. In

the end, there remain only two choices: total disintegration or the adaptation to a new life.

All humans, regardless of origin, have become who they are by integrating their own personal culture with the cultural heritage of others. The refugee must, in like manner, develop a personal responsibility to confront his new reality. It is his or her responsibility to ensure that the experience of imposed and prolonged estrangement in a new country becomes a source of enrichment for his life.

Recognizing the difficulty of picking up the pieces of a life and putting them together, it is necessary that the refugee learn to think realistically. This process will allow him or her to give free reign to his imagination and to his creativity for evaluating the future in a more positive way. Once s/he can think realistically, the refugee will be better able to understand the interdependency of past, present and future. This interdependence is not causal; the present defines the future, which in turn allows the redefinition of the present. It goes without saying that only the refugee will be able to venture forth and feel that s/he is part of his new society. With time, s/he gradually comes to adapt to the values and culture of the people he meets. This is the refugee's greatest victory. □

Acclimatation certes, par la force des choses, mais les difficultés ne s'estompent pas nécessairement toutes avec le temps. Souvent, les exilés connaissent une période de dépression (plus ou moins intense selon les individus et le contexte). Les premiers signes? La nostalgie. Un oeil sur le présent, l'autre sur le passé. La partie perdue est souvent magnifiée.

Car durant ses moments de loisir dans la société d'accueil, le nouvel arrivé peut facilement faire de fréquents retours en arrière. Il se remémore les événements du passé et il a souvent tendance à idéaliser a posteriori sa communauté d'origine. Le mal du pays suscite ainsi, chez le réfugié, une réaction négative devant sa nouvelle communauté.

Conscience et responsabilité de l'adaptation critique

Plusieurs auteurs utilisent les concepts d'assimilation, d'intégration, d'acculturation, d'ajustement, d'adaptation, d'identification pour proposer des typologies et des phases ou étapes du processus d'implantation d'un étranger dans la société d'accueil. Pour les uns, l'objectif visé doit être l'assimilation totale et l'acculturation des nouveaux arrivés, alors que d'autres préfère envisager le problème dans la perspective de l'intégration ou de l'adaptation. Difficile pourtant d'établir une règle générale concernant l'ensemble des exilés, dont les expériences —encore une fois—sont souvent très diverses en fonction des individus eux-mêmes.

La première chose importante pour moi fut le changement culturel. Arriver au Canada signifiait s'adapter à une autre forme de pensée et à des valeurs différentes. Dans mon cas, ce sont peut-être ces points qui m'ont le plus marqué, d'autant plus que la ville qui m'a accueilli a été Toronto, où la façon d'être et d'agir est complètement opposée à ce que j'avais connu en Amérique latine.

Je me sentais entouré par les gens et totalement intégré. À Trois-Rivières, il n'y a pas beaucoup d'immigrants. Tout le monde veut te parler, te demander d'où tu viens. Ils s'intéressent à toi, à ta langue. Il y a même des gens

qui veulent apprendre l'espagnol. J'ai de beaux souvenirs de mon séjour à Trois-Rivières. De préférence, j'aimerais vivre dans cette ville, mais il est difficile d'y trouver du travail.

L'exilé devrait d'abord être en mesure de neutraliser ses déceptions en acceptant l'exil. Il doit ensuite apprendre à se reconnaître en tant qu'individu dans son pays d'accueil et redéfinir son rôle dans la nouvelle société. Cette adaptation implique aussi qu'il apprenne à aimer sa terre d'adoption, tout en respectant et en préservant son vécu antérieur à l'exil.

La victoire de l'exil n'est pas l'assimilation totale, non plus que la désintégration absolue. L'exil doit, répétons-le, constituer une forme d'enrichissement personnel et collectif permettant de s'ouvrir au monde, de connaître d'autres cultures et de se solidariser avec les autres peuples.

Tout être humain, quelle que soit son origine, évolue à partir de la dialectique des échanges confrontant sa propre culture au patrimoine culturel d'autres peuples. L'exilé doit aussi développer une responsabilité personnelle face à sa nouvelle réalité. Il lui faut agir pour que l'expérience de l'éloignement imposé et prolongé devienne source d'enrichissement et d'humanisation des relations.

Tout en reconnaissant la difficulté de rassembler en une juste mesure de temps morcelés et de les joindre à un niveau d'équilibre personnel, il est néanmoins obligé de réapprendre à penser avec réalisme. Ce processus lui permettra de donner libre cours à son imagination et à sa créativité pour évaluer plus positivement l'avenir. C'est ainsi qu'il pourra mieux comprendre l'interpénétration du passé, du présent et du futur. Une interdépendance non pas causale mais d'un présent qui cerne le futur, qui à son tour permettra la redéfinition du présent. Alors seulement l'exilé pourra aller de l'avant et sentir qu'il appartient aussi à cette société nouvelle. Il parviendra ainsi à s'adapter mieux aux valeurs et à la culture des gens qu'il rencontre. Ce sera la grande victoire sur l'exil sans toutefois être l'assimilation. ■

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Integration of Landed Refugee Claimants in Canada: Toward an Explanatory Model

Edward Opoku-Dapaah

This paper seeks to develop a framework for explaining the integration process of landed refugee-claimants in Canada. The main focus is on Third World origin landed claimants who arrived in Canada during the 1980s. The central argument is that the social and economic background of landed refugee-claimants, together with their past and recent experiences, tend to result in their marginalization within the Canadian socioeconomic context. Past experiences of refugee claimants include political violence, physical assault and repression which precipitated their departure abroad. Experiences in Canada, such as delays in the acquisition of legal status, restrictive access to settlement-related services, and racism create anxiety, discouragement and economic dependency. This paper contends that such past experiences can make it difficult for landed refugee-claimants to participate effectively in social and economic activities and subsequently create barriers to integration.

In this paper integration is conceptualized as the ability of immigrants and refugees to settle into the existing Canadian social mosaic, benefitting fully from available opportunities, without emerging as a subclass. This definition is based on the observation that Canada's official multicultural policies promote the pluralistic coexistence of diverse social groups. It is officially assumed that relatively equal opportunities should be available to every Canadian, provided that the person is equipped with the resourcefulness, ability, and ambition to take advantage of such opportunities (Boyd 1987).

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Context

The 1980s saw an unprecedented number of Third World origin immigrants who travelled to Canada as visitors and then sought refugee status upon arrival. People who press refugee claims from within Canada have been referred to as "inland refugee-claimants," "asylum seekers," and "spontaneous refugee-applicants." People in these categories will all be referred to as "claimants" in this paper. Claimants whose refugee applications are successful are granted permission to stay permanently in Canada; those who are unsuccessful are made to leave "voluntarily" or face deportation. The term "landed claimants" is used here to designate claimants who have successfully completed the in-Canada refugee application process and have acquired the legal rights to stay permanently. The characteristics of Third World origin landed claimants are discussed below.

Distinctive Origin

People who sought asylum in Canada throughout the 1980s came mainly from Sri Lanka, Somalia, China, Poland, Ghana, Iran, Haiti, El Salvador and Portugal. The Third World origin of contemporary refugees is a recent historical development in Canada. Prior to 1968, refugees and immigrants to Canada came mainly from Western Europe or the United States. The immigration policy for that period was based on the assumption that people from certain racial and cultural backgrounds would be unable to participate in Canadian economic, political and social processes (Satzewich 1991). People of non-European backgrounds, such as the Chinese, Japanese and East Indians, were restricted from settling in Canada because they were seen as a threat to Canadian economic stability

and cultural identity (Verma and Bun Kwok 1992). Subsequent to 1968, immigrants and refugees in Canada have come mainly from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world such as South East Asia, West Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

Cultural and Social Prejudice

The distinctive cultural characteristics of landed claimants can give rise to racism and ethnic discrimination. Although publicly admitted prejudice against ethnic minorities in Canada may be declining, privately held prejudice still remains at significant levels (Simmons 1990). Economic and residential indicators suggest that certain visible minorities suffer disproportionately from prejudice, and that their economic success in Canada is proportionately reduced (*ibid*). Studies have also documented the behaviour of employers and landlords in Toronto toward minority groups such as Chinese, Blacks and South Asians. It was found that a variety of screening processes effectively discriminates against these groups without being overt enough to be detected by the applicant, or to be used as evidence in a tribunal or court (Richmond 1989).

Particularly in the case of claimants, racist sentiments can lead to exaggerated scepticism about the credibility of their refugee applications. This was graphically illustrated in a recent five-part series on Canada's immigration system in a major newspaper. The series questioned the legitimacy of refugee claims made by Portuguese, Ghanaians and Somalis (Stoffman 1992, A19). Given the media attention, it is not surprising that Canadians are greatly concerned about the possibility that a significant number of inland refugee applicants are actually "queue jumpers," that is, economic opportunists masquerading as refugees in order

to avoid waiting for admission through regular immigration procedures (Simmons 1990).

Racism can also have a negative impact on the job prospects of landed claimants. In short, the cultural background of landed claimants in Canada places them in the ranks of a disadvantaged minority group. The consequences can include discrimination in the spheres of employment, acquisition of accommodation and in the case of claimants, public scepticism of their claim of refugee status.

Flight-related Trauma

Landed claimants may have been traumatized by preflight experiences of coercion, torture, rape, starvation and other abuses [see Hutton in this issue]. Such trauma can be aggravated by the stress of flight from their homeland to Canada. For many refugee-applicants, the psychological reaction to the circumstances of exit, and the loss of relatives and material possessions, entail a long process of grief and mourning, heightened anxiety and depression, and an overwhelming sense of helplessness and hopelessness (Rumbaut 1991, 381). Without medical intervention and appropriate resettlement conditions, those who suffer from the effect of trauma cannot participate effectively in their new social environment.

Legal Status Upon Arrival

Landed claimants do not have permanent residential status when they come to Canada initially as claimants. Canada's Immigration Act has no category for individuals seeking refugee status from within; the Immigration Act's rules of admission distinguish only two classes of people: immigrants and visitors. Landed claimants acquire legal residential status only after they have successfully completed an in-Canada refugee determination process.

Due to their insecure future, claimants lead a precarious life, at least until they acquire permanent residential status. This was more so in the 1980s when the magnitude of inland refugee

applications led to a huge backlog of refugee cases. Toward the end of 1989, the backlog totalled over 121,000 cases (Adelman 1991). Although the introduction of Bill C55 in 1989 sped up the processing of existing claims, the influx of inland refugee applications continued to be large; approximately 36,000 per year. As a consequence, even with expanded state resources, a new backlog of unprocessed claimants emerged (Simmons, *op cit.*).

After successfully completing the refugee determination process, claimants could wait as long as 24 months before receiving permanent status (Employment and Immigration Canada). Findings from a study of Ghanaian claimants who came to Canada between 1985 and 1986 found that the overwhelming majority waited three years and more before residential status was conferred (Opoku-Dapaah 1993).

The refugee backlog can prolong the duration of the inland refugee application period and its attendant anxieties. The inland refugee determination process which claimants undergo before acquiring legal residential status in Canada can therefore have a negative psychological impact. The EIC Advisory Council (1985) indicated that the slowness of the inland determination process places a psychological burden on the claimant which can be even more damaging than the material hardships he or she suffers.

Linguistic/Educational/ Occupational Preparedness

Canada's official immigration policy requires potential immigrants and refugees to undergo screening and selection processes abroad before admission is granted. Since claimants do not go through the established screening and selection processes prior to their arrival, Canadian authorities cannot determine whether claimants possess sufficient levels of linguistic, educational and occupational preparedness essential for integration into Canadian society.

Immigration regulations introduced in 1967 and reinforced in 1976

instituted a nondiscriminatory, but selective immigrant intake system based on a point scheme that favoured educational attainments, occupational skills, and financial resources, while minimizing personal biases of those officials responsible for admissions (Simmons 1990.). Potential immigrants and sponsored refugees therefore undergo a screening and selection process which emphasizes linguistic ability, formal education and occupational background—criteria deemed to be crucial to their integration into Canadian society. Given that Canada's official languages, educational standards and industrial work system differ from those of Third World countries, it is likely that a great portion of landed claimants will not have the acceptable levels of preparedness essential for integration into Canadian society.

Settlement Assistance

Landed claimants are eligible for most of the existing newcomers settlement assistance programs. However, these claimants are not eligible for the same assistance programs when they wait in the refugee backlog. Similarly, landed claimants are eligible for the Adjustment Assistance Program (AAP) that provides indigent newcomers with temporary financial support for up to a year, or until they are reasonably self-sufficient whichever comes first (Shane 1991). Claimants on the other hand, are ineligible for AAP, yet they qualify for a subsistence allowance which covers food, rent and other basics. Claimants therefore do not benefit from bridging programs, such as employment counselling and loan schemes, that are components of the AAP—reception and orientation programs that are meant to familiarize newcomers with their new sociocultural environment. This delay can affect their ability to understand Canadian society especially in the early stages of their settlement.

Rights to Employment

Landed claimants hold rights to participate in economic activities in Canada. For example, they are eligible

for employment-related training. Claimants, on the other hand, require authorization before they can work and are ineligible for employment-related training. Prior to 1989, claimants were not permitted to work. Following the amendment of existing immigration regulations in 1989, they were given the right to work after they had successfully completed the first phase of the refugee hearing process or the case had been referred for full hearing (CEIC 1989). The amendment also allowed claimants, with no employment authorization, to work provided they arrived in Canada after May 21, 1986, or were in Canada prior to January 1, 1989 (*ibid.*, 2). [The new Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has recently introduced regulatory changes to enable refugee claimants to seek employment as soon as they are allowed into the determination process. — Ed.]

In addition, claimants are ineligible for employment-related programs such as the Canadian Jobs Strategy Program which is meant for upgrading skills, job development and retraining. Since claimants have neither access to employment related training, nor permission to engage in economic activities until authorized to do so, they are initially prevented from participating in economic activities in Canada. In some circumstances, joblessness can have its own psychological effects, for example, long term dependence on public assistance.

Rights to Education

Similar to other permanent residents of Canada, landed claimants have rights to participate in educational programs. They are also eligible for funding toward furthering their formal education. Claimants on the other hand, require formal authorization from immigration officials before beginning educational programs. Prior to 1989, inland refugee applicants could not engage in any educational programs. However, as of 1989, they were permitted to study after completing their first refugee hearing. Given the claimants' uncertain future, however, these new rules offered little in-

centive for furthering their education. Findings from a study of Ghanaian claimants in Toronto in 1992 showed that the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of their refugee claims exerted a negative influence on their willingness to embark on formal studies (Opoku-Dapaah, *op cit.*). Such disincentives may be even more pronounced in the case of claimants who were compelled to migrate in the midst of their academic programs.

Political and Other Rights

Landed claimants who hold permanent resident status in Canada, but who are not yet citizens, have no political rights. Political rights are linked to citizenship, thus creating a gap in social and political rights of migrants and long term residents (Tomasi 1981). In addition, landed claimants have to wait two or more years after obtaining permanent resident status before they can take part in national political activities.

Integration of Landed Claimants in Canada

Having outlined the circumstances of landed claimants in Canada, this section of the paper seeks to develop a framework for explaining the integration of landed claimants. Previous research and theory on integration can generally be classified into three broad schools: the assimilationist approach (Park and Burgess 1924; Eisenstadt 1954; Gordon 1964); the pluralistic approach (Goldlust and Richmond 1974); and the structuralist school (Portes and Borocz 1989). Each tradition provides arguments which are useful for interpreting cases of both slow and rapid integration. Each, moreover, is suggestive with respect to understanding certain aspects of the integration of landed claimants in Canadian society. However, none of these major schools cover the full range of issues necessary to analyze the claimant's case. This is because they all focus on immigrants rather than refugees. In this manner they do not provide sufficient attention to the unique features of the refugee experience—namely, refugees are

less likely to have planned their move; they often have fewer kin and community contacts in the receiving nation to buffer their arrival; and their move is associated with social crisis and personal trauma.

A small, emerging body of research has begun to focus specifically on the case of refugees. This literature gives particular attention to trauma, and argues that special medical, social and psychiatric services are necessary for assuring the recovery and integration of refugees (Kunz 1981; Portes and Borocz 1990). However, even this body of literature has given only superficial attention to the plight of refugee claimants. Claimants not only experience all the stress and disorienting experiences of regular refugees, but they also arrive in Canada not knowing if they can stay. Coming from the Third World and not having planned their move, their language and occupational skills may be particularly weak for integration into Canadian society. In addition, they may be unprepared for dealing with rejection and racism.

An explanatory framework focusing on the experiences and particular challenges faced by refugee claimants from Third World nations is offered in Figure 1. This framework builds on the existing literature, but goes beyond earlier work to specify new elements which need to be incorporated in order to interpret the case of Third World claimants. It indicates that the experiences of claimants in Canada—including their traumatized departure, delays in the acquisition of legal status, other administrative restrictions and ineligibility for settlement-related services—slow their integration. This is because the period during which they are a claimant involves anxiety, discouragement and economic dependency. The legacy of the claimant period then slows progress through other stages of settlement and integration. This can lead to their marginalization within the Canadian socioeconomic context. Ultimately, landed claimants will have to break away from the cycle of anxiety, depression and dependency before

they can participate effectively in mainstream social and economic activities.

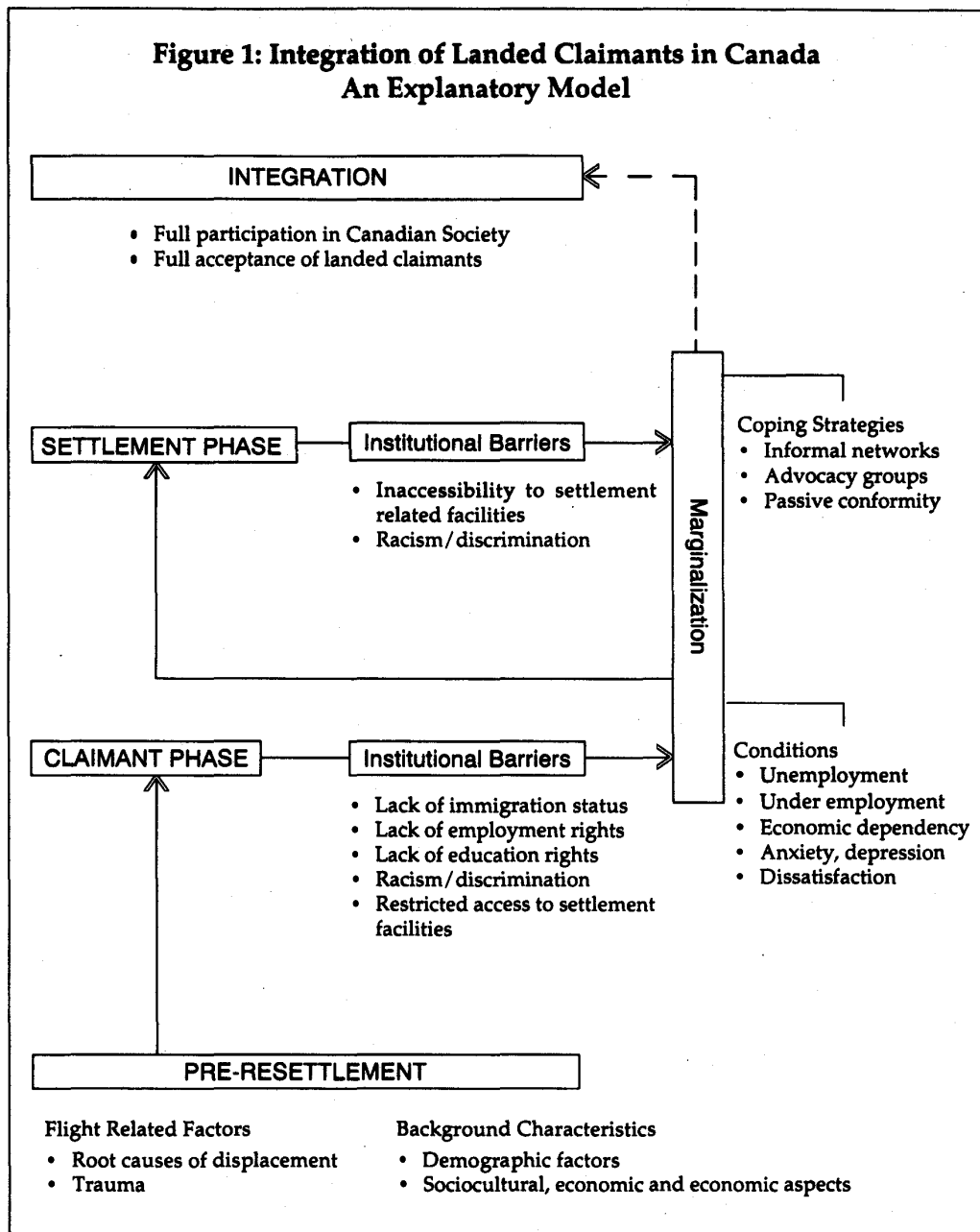
The explanatory framework is based on three phases derived from the experiences of Third World origin landed claimants, namely: claimant, settlement and integration phases. The essential characteristics of these phases and the elements outlined in Figure 1 are explained below.

The model begins with the first step in the flight process, pre-resettlement characteristics. This comprises the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects which the claimants bring to their new home. This has two major components: flight-related factors and background characteristics of the refugees.

Flight-related factors refer to the repression, persecution and other human rights infractions which led to the departure of claimants. Without medical intervention and appropriate resettlement conditions, those traumatized by their flight to Canada cannot participate effectively in their new social environment, nor integrate into Canadian society.

Background characteristics consist of pre-migration variables likely to influence the integration process in the host environment. Background characteristics fall into two major categories: demographic and socioeconomic attributes. Demographic characteristics important to the integration process include: age on arrival, gender, marital status, and size of family. So-

**Figure 1: Integration of Landed Claimants in Canada
An Explanatory Model**



ciocultural and economic characteristics include: occupational and educational background, marital status and language ability. The degree of occupational, linguistic and academic preparation of claimants will determine the extent to which they can participate in prevailing activities. Most claimants will require orientation, language training and skills retraining/

upgrading in order to enhance participation in mainstream activities.

Claimant Phase

This phase begins with the arrival of claimants in Canada seeking refugee status and ends with the completion of the refugee determination process. In the 1980s, the claimant phase could last two years or more, depending on the

refugee determination process and the refugee backlog. Claimants encounter administrative rules and restrictions which govern their social and economic activities in Canada. As shown in Figure 1, the claimant phase is associated with "institutional barriers" and "marginalization" of claimants.

Institutional barriers refer to the plethora of administrative regulations and the eligibility criteria which claimants confront. First, claimants have no definite immigration status. Delays in the acquisition of permanent resident status place claimants in limbo, creating uncertainties about the outcome of their application.

Second, in this phase claimants are denied employment and educational rights until they have appeared for their first level hearing. Furthermore, they cannot freely access settlement related services such as language training and skills training/upgrading programs. As a result, claimants become "marginalized." That is a situation whereby claimants are sidelined onto the periphery of mainstream Canadian society without participating fully in the social, economic and political institutions.

Claimants portray three employment characteristics: those without employment rights due to the lack of work authorization; those with work authorization but unable to find work (the majority of such claimants have to depend on public assistance for their subsistence); and those with employment authorizations who are compelled to work in "ghettoized" occupations. The condition of claimants can range from alienation to loss of identity. The relations which emerge between claimants and the host society do not permit them to live either according to their own standards nor to attain those of the host society (Kuhlman 1991, 49).

Claimants may adopt several coping mechanisms to deal with their circumstances. They may be drawn into networks of primary relationships with kin and compatriots. Claimants may set up community agencies or join existing ones to advocate for change.

Some passively accept the prevailing Canadian values without any in-depth commitment to them. Finally, those without working rights may engage in informal activities such as working unofficially. For a great number of the claimants, this state of marginalization can be filled with great dissatisfaction and anxiety. The institutional barriers, stereotyping by the media, deportation of compatriots and other disadvantages can foster reactive solidarity, that is, the growth of unity among groups whose members experience shared liabilities, disadvantages and discrimination (Gold 1992).

In summary, during the claimant phase, refugees encounter conditions which place them in insecure and marginalized socioeconomic circumstances. Those who become landed will have to overcome such circumstances in the settlement phase in order to integrate into Canadian society.

Settlement Phase

This phase begins with the formal acceptance of claimants as Convention Refugees; claimants become "landed." Landed claimants require information on the operation of Canadian institutions such as education, professional certification, upgrading, banking and religious systems.

Although the completion of the inland refugee determination process brings relief, realistically it does not end the disadvantageous conditions of refugees. Despite the fact that landed claimants are entitled to participate in and benefit from existing socioeconomic programs and facilities in the settlement phase, prevailing factors often prevent this. As shown in Figure 1, the settlement phase is associated with institutional barriers which prevent access to settlement-related facilities, and lead to unemployment, underemployment and racism. Landed claimants may also encounter unemployment/underemployment due to non-recognition of prior occupational experience and academic attainments. In the case of those without any readily employable skills, lack of retraining and Canadian experience

can hamper their job prospects. Landed claimants are compelled to take low-level jobs associated with poor wages, layoffs, and few options for advancement.

Landed claimants also encounter diverse forms of prejudice and ethnic discrimination. Racism can limit landed claimants' access to socioeconomic opportunities—especially in hiring and promotion contexts, housing policies, and in the provision of services.

Landed claimants are eligible for settlement-related programs and facilities, yet access is impeded by structural factors. Those who intend to pursue their education cannot access government funding and grants. Most Canadian provinces require landed claimants to work at least one year before qualifying for grants and governmental funding (Refuge Survey 1982). Access by newcomers to retraining in Ontario's public educational system, as well as in federal and provincially funded programs, is impeded by institutional barriers such as lack of publicity, entrance requirements, tuition fees, prerequisites, and full-time attendance requirements (Cummings 1989). Some training programs require stringent prerequisites such as work experience in Ontario or Canada, and language proficiency standards which immigrants find hard to meet.

The settlement phase can witness the participation of landed claimants in informal economic activities such as the peddling of merchandise in their ethnic community, and other small scale economic operations.

The cumulative effects of inaccessibility to facilities, lack of upgrading and retraining, underemployment and racism can lead to the marginalization of landed claimants. Thus, after the anxiety over the refugee claim has receded, further barriers in the socioeconomic arena arise to impede the integration of landed claimants.

Integration Phase

The integration phase is the final phase in the settlement process of refugees and immigrants to Canada. Landed

claimants encounter a series of barriers and general inaccessibility to settlement related facilities which can create an expansive gap between the settlement and integration phases. As a consequence, in the settlement phase, landed claimants can fall into deplorable socioeconomic conditions. It is only when such Canadian residents overcome their marginalized conditions that they can proceed to the integration phase. In Figure 1, the broken arrows linking the marginalized condition to the integration phase depicts the precarious advance to the integration phase.

The integration of landed claimants may depend on two major factors. The first is the claimant's ability to advance from his/her low socioeconomic position—in itself made precarious by the depth of social deprivations and the length of time spent in marginalized circumstances.

The second factor is related to changes in the receiving society, not only through the provision of a favourable settlement context, but also by sociocultural adjustments within the wider society which facilitate the acceptance and civic participation of landed claimants.

Conclusion

The preceding framework is useful for the study of the settlement pattern of landed claimants for two reasons. First, it enables us to explain the effect that the inland refugee determination process has on the settlement process of landed claimants. Second, it enables us to show the impact of cultural factors such as racism, and structural factors such as access to socioeconomic facilities, on the settlement process of Third World origin claimants. ■

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Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement To Canada

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Contributors:

Robert H. Keyserlingk, Gerald E. Dirks, Harry Cunliffe, Howard Adelman, The Honourable J.W. Pickersgill (then-Minister of Immigration and Citizenship), John L. Maston, Earl B. McCordy, N.F. Dreisziger, Charles Farnocci, Joseph Kage and Freda Hawkins.

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The Traumas of Displacement

David G. Hutton

Most refugees, regardless of geographical and historical circumstance, must cope with extreme and frequently life threatening conditions. In the past decade, much has been written of the Vietnamese Boat People and their harrowing experiences of flight. More recently have come the reports of civilian massacres and "ethnic cleansing" in the Balkans. In Africa, where famine is as much an enemy as guns and bullets, the death toll continues to rise.

An assessment was carried out on the conditions of the displacement and flight of Ethiopian, Laotian, Vietnamese, Chilean and Salvadorean refugees resettled in Winnipeg. Of the 115 refugees surveyed, fully 90 percent believed that their lives had been at least "sometimes" in danger while living in their country. Almost 60 percent reported that were "frequently" or "always" in danger. Many, either prior to or during their flight, had been imprisoned (32 percent), physically assaulted (30 percent), and/or attacked by a government or rebel force (31 percent). Over one-third reported of a death (44 percent), abduction or disappearance (37 percent) of an immediate family member, relative, or close friend.

Just over two-thirds of the sample rated the conditions of their country prior to their departure as "somewhat" to "extremely" adverse. The most cited reasons for flight, of which at least one was reported by 83 percent of the refugees, included the need to secure personal safety (40 percent), the desire to attain personal freedom (35 percent), and the wish to escape government persecution or harassment (33 percent). Only 14 percent of the refugees had sought resettlement for the purpose of bettering their own lives.

Approximately two-thirds of the sample, and 88 percent of the Ethiopian and Asian refugees, fled their countries "illegally" —the governments neither knew of nor consented to their leaving. Conditions encoun-

tered during this period were rated as "very" or "extremely" adverse by 45 percent of the refugees. Of those who fled overland or by sea, again predominantly Ethiopian and Asian in origin, 73 percent believed that their lives had been "frequently" or "always" in danger. Exactly one-quarter of these refugees had lacked adequate transportation while 30 percent had gone without food and/or water. Attacks,

by pirates or a military force, were reported by 31 percent of the refugees.

The data clearly reveals a common experience of pain and adversity among refugees. Practitioners, as well as researchers, must be aware of both the past which many refugees bring to resettlement as well as the possible impact of trauma upon their capacity to adapt to the demands of involuntary migration. ■

Table 1: Conditions of Displacement and Flight			Table 2: Experienced Events		
Factors	I #	II %	Factors	I #	II %
Reasons for fleeing country			Personally experienced		
personal safety	46	40	imprisonment	37	32
attain personal freedom	40	35	assault (inc. torture and rape)	34	30
escape government persecution	38	33	rebel/army attack	36	31
improve children's future	25	28	piracy	13	11
economic improvement	16	14	fought in war	13	11
escape war	13	11	injury/illness	13	11
family reunification	11	10	Immediate family		
other	8	7	death	21	18
Feeling of danger in country of origin			abduction or disappearance	34	30
never or seldom	11	10	imprisonment	31	26
sometimes	36	31	assault	34	30
frequently	35	30	injury/illness	15	13
always	33	29	Relative/close friend		
Level of adversity in country of origin			death	51	44
none or a little	37	32	imprisonment	27	23
some	34	30	abduction or disappearance	42	37
very	30	26	assault	29	25
extreme	14	12	injury/illness	22	19
Fled country legally			Flight		
yes	45	39	lacked transport	21	18
no	70	61	lacked food and/or water	22	19
Feeling of danger during flight			loss of direction	20	17
never	12	10	bad weather	16	14
seldom	22	19	refused landing	9	8
sometimes	19	17	Notes:		
frequently or always	62	54	I — Number of refugees sampled		
Level of adversity during flight			II — Percentage of sample		
none	28	24	<i>David G. Hutton is currently working on an interdisciplinary doctoral program in refugee disaster relief at the University of Manitoba. This research note is based on data collected as part of his master's thesis.</i>		
slight	20	17			
some	15	14			
very	25	22			
extreme	27	23			

The Multiculturalism Act and Refugee Integration in Canada

Fernando G. Mata

From the scope of federal government work, this document sketches some legal, administrative and policy related aspects of the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act* with regard to their linkages to the refugee integration process in Canada.

Introduction

In Canada in the 1990s, refugees arrive in a society characterized by a high degree of ethnic and cultural diversity. In 1986, those Canadians who reported origins other than British and French represented about 38 percent of the total population. By 1991, out of a total population of 27.3 million, 42 percent of Canadians reported ethnic origins other than British or French—representing a 20 percent increase from 1986. Census statistics also point out the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in the country; in 1991, 15 percent of Canadians had a first language other than English or French, and about 16 percent were born outside Canada. It is estimated that by the year 2016, the diversity of the population will increase by 5 percent among school-aged children, 30 percent among members of the labour force and 40 percent among the senior population (Statistics Canada 1993).

Canada currently receives approximately 250,000 immigrants and refugees annually, or one percent of its population, ostensibly to maintain its population level in the face of declining birth rates. Since the mid-1980s, Canada has also experienced significant increases in the volume of refugee claims. The number of claims between 1983 and 1986 jumped from 6,000 to 18,000. In 1990, about 36,000 claims were received while the volume

diminished in 1991 to approximately 31,000. In the years to come, immigration is likely to continue to be an important aspect of Canadian society.

Throughout the years, sustained immigration has contributed to Canada's diversity. Early settlers came primarily from the U.S., Britain and other European countries. In recent decades, there has been a major shift in the sources of immigration to Canada. By the 1980s, two out of three people coming to Canada originated from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean or Latin America. Most of these immigrants could be described as visible minorities. In 1986, visible minorities accounted for 6.3 percent of Canada's population. With the tendency of recent immigrants and refugees to settle in major Canadian cities, visible minorities account for close to one-fifth of the population in these cities. Demographers forecast that by the year 2000, they will make up 10 percent of Canada's total population, and possibly one-third of the population in major centres.

In the context of the present refugee integration process in Canada, it is important to explore the effectiveness of a culturally pluralist legal framework—such as that of the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act* and its derived policies—in facilitating the refugee integration process. The *Act* formally commits the Government of Canada to assist all communities and institutions in bringing about equal access and participation for all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the *Act* and its bearing on some aspects of the refugee integration process in Canada.

Historical Background to the Act

For the first 75 years following Canadian Confederation in 1867, Canadians assumed that ethnocultural minorities ought to be assimilated into

the dominant British or French cultures. For much of that period minority ethnocultural communities were ignored and marginalized from mainstream Canadian life. This exclusionary attitude extended to Canadian immigration policy, which favoured British, Americans and Europeans and firmly discouraged immigrants from other countries. As a result, the proportion of Canadians of non-French and non-British origin rose relatively slowly, from approximately 8 percent of the population at the time of Confederation to just over 20 percent by 1951.

In 1947, the *Canadian Citizenship Act* was introduced, giving Canadians their own citizenship for the first time, and providing all Canadian citizens—whether citizens by birth or by choice—equal status with respect to their rights and obligations. In the following years, Canada, like many other nations, committed itself to extending the principles of equal treatment and respect for diversity throughout the world by ratifying various United Nations treaties. In the late 1960s, Canada's *Immigration Act* was changed to eliminate preferences based on national origin or race. In essence the new immigration policy removed discriminatory provisions, shifting from an emphasis on economic priorities to one which included humanitarian and social goals such as family reunification, the admission of refugees and the integration of immigrants.

During the 1960s, there was an awakening within Canada to the unequal treatment accorded to the two major language groups. Hearings were conducted across the country. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism heard the aspirations of ethnocultural communities other than British and French. Canadians of Eastern European origin—particularly from the Western provinces

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—argued that their cultural and economic contributions to the country should be recognized. The Report of the Royal Commission led to passage of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969 and to the announcement of Canada's first multiculturalism policy.

Canada's first multiculturalism policy was announced in Parliament in 1971. Its main aims were: (1) to help minority communities preserve and share their language and culture; (2) to remove the barriers they faced to full participation in civic society; and (3) to assist new immigrants in their adaptation process. The Multiculturalism Directorate took over existing programming relating to the long-term integration of immigrants and introduced programs to encourage cultural retention. These changes were established to increase awareness among Canadians of the contributions made by people of all backgrounds to Canadian society.

By the early 1980s, the Canadian public realized that the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country was a fundamental and irreversible characteristic of Canadian society. The economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of multiculturalism were acknowledged and a new emphasis was placed on the principle of equality and participation.

There was also a growing need to take affirmative action against discrimination (e.g. employment equity) and to build consensus for acceptance of these measures. The growing cultural and racial diversity of Canada's population reinforced the obsolescence of an assimilationist or "melting-pot" philosophy in social policy.

The Multiculturalism Act

In 1988, Canada's Parliament unanimously passed the world's first national multiculturalism legislation, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

This *Act* established a new type of multiculturalism policy. The succinct statement of the policy is included in its preamble:

to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while

working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.

The *1988 Multiculturalism Act* declares that the intentions of the government policy are to:

- (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
- (b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
- (c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to such participation;
- (d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;
- (e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
- (f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
- (g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
- (h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and evolving expressions of those cultures;
- (i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and

- (j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

The *Act* also declared that all federal institutions should:

- (a) ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in those institutions;
- (b) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada;
- (c) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society;
- (d) collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada;
- (e) make use, as appropriate, of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins; and
- (f) generally, carry on their activities in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada.

The *Multiculturalism Act* emphasizes the principle of building inclusiveness in Canadian society. Section 27 of the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees this inclusiveness through the preservation and enhancement of Canada's multicultural heritage. The *Act* complements the policies designed to achieve an equitable representation of minorities in the workplace, such as the *1986 Employment Equity Act*. However, there are important differences between the *1986 Employment Equity Act* and the *1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. Multiculturalism policy goes beyond the workplace and relies solely on a political accountability mechanism (i.e., the Annual Report to Parliament) while employment equity legislation focuses on the workplace and has a built-in enforcing or regulatory accountability element.

Federal Multicultural Programming

In 1991, legislation was passed creating a federal Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. This Department, however, was short-lived. In the fall of 1993, it was dismantled and subsumed under the larger Department of Canadian Heritage. Despite these organizational changes, as part of the Citizens Participation and Multiculturalism Branch, multicultural programs continue to encourage the appreciation of the Canadian identity and participation in Canadian life. These programs provide technical and financial assistance to voluntary groups for ongoing activities and projects addressing Canada's ethno-cultural diversity and the elimination of barriers to participation in Canadian society, and focus on the promotion of change in Canada's governmental, legal, educational, health, cultural and other institutions so that they adapt more quickly to diversity.

Programs such as the Heritage Cultures and Languages Program help newcomers and first generation Canadians to express their heritage, and foster appreciation and understanding of other cultures. The Community Support and Participation Program targets its funding to first generation Canadians who have post-settlement difficulties integrating into Canadian society. In the area of race relations, the Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding Program promotes the elimination of racism and racial discrimination. It works with businesses, labour organizations, the police, the judicial system, educators and school boards.

It should be noted that the federal multiculturalism programs' mandate extends only to those first generation Canadians experiencing "long-term" integration (postsettlement) related problems. Although the programs do not have a legal or administrative mandate over refugees *per se*, they carry out their integration role by seeking partnerships with different levels of government, non-profit organizations and

immigrant serving agencies which also provide services to refugees. These organizations are involved in integration issues affecting refugees such as language training, race relations and human rights. The federal multiculturalism programs have participated in initiatives related to mental health issues affecting refugees and refugee children, and access of refugees to social services.

The funding and coordination of multiculturalism programs at the provincial and municipal levels complement the programs available at the federal level. The broad concept of multiculturalism is reflected in the variety of policies now in place in each Canadian province.

The Act and Refugee Integration

Integrating refugees into Canada means working toward finding societal solutions which will make them participants in a more harmonious societal whole (Thomas 1992). From a longitudinal perspective, the integration of refugees is an ongoing process that extends from arrival in the host country, to initial settlement, citizenship acquisition and beyond. As a societal subgroup, refugees aspire to "bridge" these stages, assume self-sufficiency and rapidly integrate into community life (Lanphier and Lukomskyj 1992).

Leaving behind violent conflict and political persecution creates in refugees a strong need for developing cognitive and emotional bonds within the new social milieu. Available statistics in Canada show that immigrants and refugees from non-traditional source countries are more likely to become citizens than those coming from traditional source countries, suggesting that the acquisition of citizenship is regarded as a proxy for political integration. For instance, immigrants from Iran spend an average of five years before acquiring Canadian citizenship. This average is similar for immigrants from El Salvador, Korea, China, the Philippines, Egypt and Hong Kong. Several of these are refugee producing countries. In contrast, immigrants

from the U.S. and the U.K. spend an average of 10 years or more in Canada before acquiring Canadian citizenship (DeVries 1992).

The *Multiculturalism Act* ties the concept of cultural diversity to citizenship values, customs or symbols. In a summary fashion, the following are the three major direct and indirect impacts of the *Act* on the refugee integration process in Canada:

1. Recognizing the Cultural Diversity of Refugees

The first premise of the *Multiculturalism Act* is that it recognizes the diversity of all Canadians with regard to race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. Cultural diversity is seen as a permanent and central reality, not as something transient or outside the mainstream. The diversity of Canada (expressed clearly in its refugee population) is not seen as a liability but as an asset to nation-building. Furthermore, the *Act* encourages individuals and communities to express this diversity in cultural as well as in economic, social and political terms. To ensure that these expressions are possible, the entire society (including its major institutions and government) is encouraged to change its institutional make-up and organizational culture.

2. Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Other Participation Barriers

Another significant aspect of the *Multiculturalism Act* is the emphasis placed on the elimination of all forms of discrimination (racial, ethnic or religious) and the removal of participation barriers in order to avoid the marginalization of new Canadians (e.g., immigrants and refugees). Refugee groups are particularly vulnerable to different forms of occupational, educational, economic and political marginalization in Canadian society. Marginalization impedes participation in civic life and leads to alienation, a sense of "disenfranchisement" and feelings of "powerlessness."

The key goal of the multiculturalism policies and their supporting federal, provincial and local programs is to prevent the marginalization of minorities. Racial discrimination is a contributing factor to this marginalization. The Act stresses the benefits of living in a multicultural society, the dangers of racism and the problems faced by refugees and other minorities in adjusting to Canadian society. So much importance is placed on the values of racial harmony and tolerance that the federal government has commemorated March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. A public education campaign, known as the March 21 Anti-Racism Campaign, has brought the message of achieving a racism-free society to schools, the workplace and the general public.

3. The Provision of Culturally Sensitive Services

The Act formally recognizes the need to provide adequate and culturally sensitive services. Language and cultural barriers between providers and recipients of services are responsible for the under-utilization of the social services and infrastructure available to the immigrant and refugee populations. Federal multiculturalism programming is presently funding projects aimed at promoting multicultural health care, multilingual interpreter services and the production of service manuals in the major languages spoken in Canada.

The Multiculturalism Secretariat (situated within the Multicultural Programming of the Department of Canadian Heritage) has coordinated actions with other institutions such as the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) in order to ensure that the policy has been implemented in all institutions dealing with an immigrant/refugee clientele. The IRB's cross-cultural sensitivity workshops help Board members to recognize cultural barriers that can prevent claimants from presenting their cases effectively in hearings. At present, the Board provides claimants with a copy of different religious texts

to take their oaths at hearings and makes translation/interpretation services available in 33 languages for people claiming refugee status.

Today's Refugees are Tomorrow's Citizens

In summary, the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act's* approach to diversity is based on a set of fundamental values and principles which allow immigrants and refugees to identify with Canadian society. These values are, in essence: (1) inclusive; (2) welcoming; (3) understanding of cultural differences; (4) protective of individual and collective rights; and (5) aimed at the promotion of a social ethos based on equality and participation. These values are extremely important vis-à-vis the present and future participation of refugees in the collective system of symbolic rewards in society (Breton 1987) and in the need to affirm the principles of cultural, economic and political security all along the different stages of the integration process.

As Canada moves into the twenty first-century, it is faced with strong challenges to nation-building in a culturally diverse society. Despite its incremental effect on society, there is still some distance between the objectives set out in Canada's multiculturalism policy and changing political, demographic and economic realities. In addition, the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act* and similar legal, administrative and social expressions of the Canadian cultural pluralist model are under "siege" due to internal pressures and the attack of those who see the restoration of an assimilationist or melting-pot model as the only viable alternative for Canada (McLellan and Richmond 1993; Abu-Laban and Stasiulis 1992).

The task of reconciling equality and cultural pluralism involves political risks. However, reconciling cultural diversity, national goals and national identity are the most critical challenges of the 1990s for Canada and other nations adhering to the governing philosophy of pluralism, democratic values and tolerance. ■

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March 21
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Predictors of Psychological Tension Among Refugees Living in Montréal

André Jacob, Joseph J. Lévy, Louis Robert Frigault and Jocelyne Bertot

Québec, like the rest of Canada and other industrialized countries, is experiencing a growing influx of refugees from various regions around the world. In 1991, nearly 30 percent of all immigrants were refugees from Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe or the Middle East. For refugees, integration inevitably raises complex economic, sociocultural and psychological problems. For these populations, settlement in the host country is often accompanied by multiple tensions and stresses, leading to a profound disorganization of personal and social identity for refugees and increasing their risk of psychological imbalance.

Refugees may experience a range of diverse psychological problems such as detachment, anxiety, irritability, emotional instability, aggression and depression (Beiser 1990; Tousignant 1992). These problems have been linked to numerous factors. For some authors, pre-migratory factors (conditions surrounding the departure from the country of origin), traumatic experiences (war, torture, rape, etc.) and the time spent in transit play important roles in the modulation of mental health (Beiser, Turner and Gamesan 1989). For others, mental health depends on the conditions of integration in the host country (Murphy 1977). Economic and sociocultural integration, as well as the social resources related to family and to communal support, also seem to play important roles in maintaining mental health. Finally, the ability to communicate in the language of the country is one of the

most important variables determining psychological adaptation (Lambert and Taylor 1990).

Women often suffer more intensely from psychological problems associated with their status in the country of origin, amplified by the consequences of exile. Their level of education and professional skills (which are often lower than those of men—depending on the country of origin), social isolation, and childcare responsibilities make their adaptation and integration into the host country more difficult (Camus-Jacques 1989).

These studies show the complex interplay of factors which determine the mental health of refugees. In order to better understand them, we will present here the preliminary results of a study on the postmigratory predictors of psychological tensions among five different groups of refugees living in Montréal. This comparative research will illustrate the common underlying variables affecting the development of psychological wellbeing among refugees.

Methodology

The Subjects

Within the framework of a comparative analysis of the integration of refugees and the use of social and health services, 472 respondents (119 Cambodians, 97 Bulgarians, 92 Guatemalans, 93 Tamils and 71 Ethiopians; 245 women and 227 men) completed, between September 1992 and April 1993, a questionnaire composed mainly of closed questions pertaining to different dimensions of their economic, sociocultural and psychological integration. The immigration status of the respondents varied; while almost all entered Canada as refugees, 62.4 percent had become permanent residents,

8.5 percent had attained refugee status, 10 percent were awaiting status determination and 18.9 percent were Canadian citizens. The mean age of the respondents was 32.9 years. The majority, 53 percent, were married or lived in cohabitation, 34.7 percent were single and 12 percent were separated, divorced or widowed. On average, they had been living in Montréal for three years and five months.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was translated from French to English and to the different languages of the respondents. Responses were later retranslated into French in order to ensure comparability. Questionnaires were completed by the respondents under the supervision of research assistants and interpreters.

The questionnaire included questions about the refugees' profile and integration. The level of psychological tension was established from a global scale (ranging from 4 to 28) which included the following dimensions: worried, discouraged, nervous, anxious, tired, guilty and angry in the last six months. They were evaluated on a four point Likert scale (from not at all, to very much). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.75.

The independent variables were as follows: length of stay in Québec; level of education; knowledge of French and English (measured by a global scale evaluating their speaking, reading and writing abilities in each of these languages); family income; employment; difficulties in adaptation in different areas (pace of lifestyle, climate, diet, work and housing, family and community relations variables included in a single global scale); social support (size of household, ethnic origin of friends, discussion of personal problems, appreciation of neighbours and

The authors are researchers at the Centre de Recherches sur les relations interethniques et le racisme, Université du Québec à Montréal. This research has been made possible by a grant from the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ottawa, Canada.

expected help from them); and scale of participation in intra-and extra-communal activities. Several variables dealt with different perceptions of integration into Québec society: progression in material wellbeing; adaptation to social environment and lifestyle; evaluation of professional prospects in Québec; level of satisfaction concerning social relations and perception of the level of welcoming by the Québécois; and desire to return to their native country. Age, civil status, sex as well as immigration status (refugee, resident, citizen, etc.) were also included as variables.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-tests were carried out in order to evaluate the effect of each of the independent variables on the score of psychological distress. Following this first analysis, a logistic regression analysis was carried out in order to determine the most important predictors.

Results

As shown in Table 1, the level of psychological tension, which was relatively low, varied significantly according to the national origin of the respondents. The *post hoc* analysis demonstrated that the Cambodians

experienced the lowest levels of distress, differing significantly from all other groups, except the Guatemalans. The Tamils, however, had the highest levels of distress, differing significantly from all other groups, except the Bulgarians, who differed significantly from the Guatemalans.

Several postmigratory factors appear to have modulated the psychological scores. Refugees living in Québec for less than one year had higher levels of distress than those who had been in Québec between one and three years. Citizenship status also modulated the levels of tension; those

Table 1: Variations in the Level of Psychological Tension According to Significant Variables

	Mean	<i>F</i> or <i>t</i>	DF	<i>p</i>		Mean	<i>F</i> or <i>t</i>	DF	<i>p</i>
Ethnocultural groups					Knowledge of English				
Bulgarians	14.32	10.43	4,452	0.001	poor	12.54	-3.15	442	.002
Cambodians	11.74				good	13.81			
Ethiopians	13.18				French courses				
Guatemalans	12.42				yes	12.67	2.94	451	.003
Tamils	14.91				no	13.83			
Immigration status					Difficulties of adaptation				
permanent resident	12.77	6.46	3,450	.0003	low	12.5	4.09	347	.0001
accepted refugee	14.59				high	14.6			
awaiting status	15.30				Adaptation to environment				
Canadian citizen	13.10				better than before	12.93	3.71	444	.0001
Length of stay in Québec					worse than before	15.46			
less than 1 year	14.06	3.76	2,450	.023	Adaptation to lifestyle				
1 year to 3 years	12.67				better than before	12.87	4.21	444	.0001
4 years and over	13.09				worse than before	15.87			
Level of education					Perception of attitudes of welcoming by Québécois				
less than 12 years	12.72	-2.52	417	.012	positive	12.75	3.65	446	.0001
more than 12 years	13.77				negative	14.30			
Employment					Appreciation of neighbours				
yes	12.65	-2.02	437	.0044	strong	13.07	-2.16	451	.034
no	13.47				weak	14.43			
Family income					Level of satisfaction in social relations				
less than \$1000	13.72	2.62	451	.009	strong	12.40	5.28	443	.003
more than \$1000	12.70				weak	14.55			
Material conditions					Desire to return to country of origin				
better than before	12.87	2.94	445	.003	strong	13.67	2.59	448	.010
worse than before	14.08				weak	12.67			
Perception of professional future in Québec									
optimistic	12.77	3.07	376	.002					
pessimistic	14.08								

who had permanent resident status in Canada reported less psychological tension than those who had been accepted as refugees or were awaiting refugee status. Canadian citizens were also less tense than those awaiting status determination.

Respondents with higher levels of education, as well as those with a good knowledge of English or those who did not attend French language courses were more likely to report higher levels of psychological tension. Refugees who were unemployed or had a low family income, as well as those experiencing difficulties adapting to the Québec social environment, reported higher levels of tension. In contrast, an optimistic evaluation of a professional future in Québec resulted in lower levels of psychological tension.

Positive perceptions concerning improved material conditions, adaptation to the social environment and lifestyle of Québec were also indicators of lower tension levels. The same effect was present when respondents reported positively about perceived Québécois hospitality, social relations, and a weak desire to return to their native country.

Other factors such as household size, willingness to discuss personal problems, perceived willingness of their neighbours to assist, knowledge of French, the ethnic origin of friends, participation in intra- or extra-communal activities, age, civil status, and sex did not significantly vary with the level of psychological distress.

Discussion

This comparative study of refugees living in Montréal provided support for the presence of important variables in the modulation of psychological distress within the five ethnocultural groups considered. In this respect, two groups, the Bulgarians and the Tamils could be clearly distinguished from the others, and this was confirmed by logistic regression. Table 2 indicates that being a member of either of these two groups was associated with high levels of psychological tension. This

Table 2. Odd Ratios for Predictors of Psychological Tension According to Logistic Regression

Variables	Odd Ratio	CI (95%)
Bulgarians	3.79	(2.12; 6.77)
Tamils	2.91	(1.62; 5.23)
Amelioration of material conditions	0.68	(0.48; 0.95)
Desire to return to country of origin	0.75	(0.59; 0.93)
Perception of professional future in Québec	0.80	(0.64; 0.99)
Family income	0.85	(0.73; 0.99)
Difficulties of adaptation	0.87	(0.78; 0.97)

Note: Final Chi-square model: Chi-square 69.30; df 7; $p < 0.0001$.

could be due to specific factors linked to their integration in Québec society.

Preliminary results of our research (Jacob, Lévy, Bertot *et al.* 1993) showed that both groups were confronted with problems which differentiated them from other groups included in the study. The highest percentage of persons awaiting refugee status was found among Bulgarians and this finding can explain in part why they experienced higher levels of psychological tension. Secondly, the Bulgarians reported the highest level of university education—a finding which could be a second source of tension, since, in spite of this asset and the fact that many speak fluent French, they had the highest level of unemployment among the study groups, as well as the greatest drop in living standards, compared to the other groups.

While economic factors seemed prominent in explaining the higher levels of tension experienced by the Bulgarians, another configuration could be pinpointed for the Tamils. Although their economic standing was slightly higher than the Bulgarians, they had more difficulties fitting into the sociocultural milieu of Montréal, reporting high levels of stress in adapting to their new environment, as well as the lowest level of fluency in French, the lowest number of French-Canadian friends and the most negative perception of the hospitality of the

Québec population. They also reported the greatest difficulty in adapting to the social environment or lifestyle. Furthermore, the Tamils were most likely to report a desire to return to their native country. All these dimensions seem to indicate a less satisfactory integration in Montréal than in Toronto (Shier and Coomarasamy 1988; Mills 1993).

As we shall now see, several factors affected the level of psychological distress for the study population as a whole. Length of stay in Québec had a significant impact, with the first year being crucial in this respect. This effect has also been reported in other studies on refugees from Southeast Asia (Beiser *et al.* 1989). The high initial stress levels can be linked to the level of stress experienced during the premigratory context. However, one should note that stress levels increased slightly after three years. This could be due to new stresses related to problems arising from the integration process. Awaiting the determination of refugee status could also have contributed to tensions, since the lengthy judicial process, and the unpredictability of the outcome were certainly important sources of stress. However, this factor was not found to be a significant determinant of psychological wellbeing.

Higher levels of education were associated with higher levels of psy-

chological tension. The underemployment generally experienced by immigrants and refugees (Tousignant 1992) can have a deeper effect on the psychological wellbeing of the more educated, since they would suffer more from professional changes.

Several economic factors were linked to the psychological score: employment, family income (even if it was lower than in the general population), perceptions of progress in the level of economic standing, and an optimistic perspective concerning one's professional future were all sig-

integration into the French milieu, especially among groups, like the Tamils, for whom English is one of their mother tongues. Conversely, learning French through immersion courses would enhance integration by increasing possibilities of communication with the host population (Beiser 1990). But, as shown by the logistic regression, these factors did not predict psychological wellbeing among refugees.

While satisfactory social relations and positive perceptions concerning adaptation to the Québécois social en-

vironment suggested that psychological tension was predominantly modulated by socioeconomic factors and stressors linked to the acculturation process as well as nostalgia for the country of origin. These results indicated that the psychological tension of refugees was dependent on objective indicators as well as sociopsychological dimensions. Both have to be taken into account when defining programs of intervention among these populations in order to increase their wellbeing and enable them to successfully integrate into their new physical and sociocultural environment. ■

While many variables intervened in its modulation, logistic regression suggested that psychological tension was predominantly modulated by socioeconomic factors and stressors linked to the acculturation process as well as nostalgia for the country of origin. These results indicated that the psychological tension of refugees was dependent on objective indicators as well as sociopsychological dimensions.

nificant factors in modulating psychological wellbeing among the refugees interviewed. The logistic analysis (Table 2) showed that the last three factors were significant predictors, confirming the crucial role that economic integration plays in the development of the mental health of the refugees (Beiser 1990). In this respect, it seems that objective economic conditions alone do not positively influence psychological health. In addition, cognitive factors linked to the evaluation of economic progress also have an effect by empowering refugees in their quest toward a brighter future.

Several variables which measure sociocultural integration affected the scale, but their impact disappeared almost completely when they were entered in the logistic analysis. Some linguistic variables (knowledge of English, participation in French courses) did affect the psychological score, however, the linguistic situation in Québec may explain the paradoxical results found in this research. Since English is not the predominant language in Québec, speaking fluent English could be an impediment to

environment were strong positive predictors of psychological wellbeing, difficulties encountered in the adaptation process were one of the main negative predictors revealed by logistic regression (Table 2), suggesting that stresses and conflicts linked to acculturation are, as proposed by Berry (1990), a source of reduced mental health status of refugees. Finally, it seems that a strong desire to return to one's native country is also a predictor of psychological distress, indicating that for some refugees, life in their new country cannot erase the memories and nostalgia for their native country. As reported by Beiser *et al.* (1989), nostalgic people have a tendency to be more depressed than those who are oriented toward the present and the future. This was also the case in our study.

Conclusion

The results of this study of refugees living in Montréal led us to conclude that the level of psychological tension varied according to the ethnic group studied and was higher for Bulgarians and Tamils. While many variables intervened in its modulation, logistic re-

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Service Delivery to Refugees and Immigrants: Toward an Integrated Approach

Perry Romberg

In the late 1980s, the changing political environment in the former USSR provided an opportunity for large scale immigration to Canada. Faced with shrinking resources and increased demands for its services, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) changed its traditional format of one-to-one casework to include a group service component. The new service was called the Integration Program. Four program modules were developed which reflected the core settlement service needs of newcomers: instruction in English as a second language (E.S.L.); job preparation; ethnocultural programming; and group counselling. All new clients were placed in small groups of 15 to 20 over a five month period. During that time, each group met weekly for each of the four modules.

This group approach provided basic resettlement services over a short period of time in a very intensive manner. The results of a recent program evaluation indicated that the program enabled JIAS to:

1. Improve its efficiency and service larger numbers of its case load;
2. Provide a strong peer support base via the group approach;
3. Provide resettlement information, guidance and counselling through the professional group leaders; and
4. Provide cultural programs with the host community which have facilitated the initial integration of newcomers into their host community.

Introduction

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada received its federal charter on

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August 30, 1922. The Agency was established and funded by the Jewish community of Canada and acted as its representative in the area of immigration/refugee affairs. In the 70 years since its inception, JIAS has had a long, prestigious history advocating on behalf of immigrants and refugees, and developing quality social service programs to facilitate their resettlement and integration into Canadian society. In many cases, bringing Jews to the safety of Canada and away from the perils of anti-Semitism, has been a central task of JIAS, one which the Agency continues to perform to this day.

In the late 1980s, the political reforms introduced in the Soviet Union by then-President Gorbachev provided scores of people, particularly Jews, with the opportunity to leave the Iron Curtain countries. The history of anti-Semitism in Soviet culture and in the Soviet establishment over the last 70 years of Communist rule is one that has been well documented. Throughout this period, Jewish communities worldwide advocated for the right of Jews and other minorities to freely emigrate from the Soviet Union. By the late 1980s, this right was becoming a reality.

Although Gorbachev and his reforms held out the hope of changing the country for the better, the loosening of state controls in Soviet society also had the effect of unleashing rampant nationalism, and with it, the return of old voices of anti-Semitism, blaming the Jews for the ills of the country. The departure of state sanctioned anti-Semitism allowed the rise of grassroots expressions of hate and mistrust toward the Jewish population, manifested through threats and acts of physical violence. In this environment, many Jews held little hope for their future in the former USSR.

With emigration possible again, JIAS was instrumental in helping thousands of Soviet Jews reunite with their families who had come to Canada years before. The Soviet Jewish population in Toronto numbered approximately 10,000 by the mid-1980s. Since early 1988, JIAS has resettled over 5,900 Soviet Jews in Toronto. Faced with the large case load of newcomers, the officers and staff of the Agency were determined to intensify the social service programs being offered, and, in particular, to be involved in the area of integration programming. JIAS defined integration as the step after resettlement—namely, that period during which newcomers establish firm, long-term roots and connections in their host community.

Use of Groups in Resettlement and Integration Programs

In gearing up for this large wave of immigration, JIAS was faced with a challenge common to many social service agencies, namely, a small staff complement with an unmanageably large caseload. While wishing to provide in-depth services to our newcomers, it was apparent that the traditional casework approach, relying heavily on individual counselling and taking the clinical approach to problem-solving, would not be viable. JIAS viewed immigrants and refugees not as individuals with pathological problems, but as a relatively homogeneous group facing the challenge of adjusting to a new culture and society. In our experience, immigrants and refugees are a hardy group with sharpened survival skills and are experienced at risk-taking. Given these characteristics and similar life challenges, it seemed reasonable to assume that they would benefit from resettlement counselling using a group approach to service delivery. In the

group environment, the newcomer would benefit not only from the expertise of the professional caseworker, but also from the experience of other peers facing similar challenges.

A group can be seen as a mutual aid system. Specifically, a counselling group is comprised of individuals who need each other in varying degrees to resolve their common problems. Facilitated by a professional leader, the group becomes a helping system wherein clients rely on each other as well as the staff leader/worker. The group facilitates the creation of a number of helping relationships, namely client-to-client, as well as client-to-worker, and as such expands the ability of the immigrant to receive support from more than one source (traditionally, the resettlement worker). The main objective in group counselling is for the worker to help people help each other.

While a group can be a "mutual aid system," for many immigrants, sharing with strangers in a closed setting is a foreign and intimidating experience. This is understandable in light of the fact that ours is a client group comprised of individuals coming from totalitarian regimes where sharing with strangers was dangerous. However, the initial months of resettlement in new homes and communities, leaves many immigrants feeling isolated and vulnerable.

The experience of being part of a group, especially comprised of immigrants from the same country or region, offers the necessary initial support needed to face the hurdles of starting life over again.

Immigrants and refugees share the common fate of having been forced to leave their homes, families and cultures, in order to start anew. Coming together under the guidance of a qualified staff leader provides an opportunity for them to look at issues and difficulties in the safety of those experiencing similar concerns and problems.

The Family Life Education group approach was chosen because it embraces a "health model." It stresses in-

formation sharing, problem solving and the use of group dynamics to create a supportive group environment. Recognizing that the concept of counselling and receiving help from a "bureaucrat" is foreign to our clients, JIAS chose to employ this more structured "educational" framework, as it was less intrusive and easier for our clientele to accept.

It seemed that this group approach had much to offer given the homogeneity of the JIAS clientele. A basic, yet fundamental way that group members help one another is through information sharing. The group members have all had immigration and other life experiences through which they have accumulated knowledge, views and values. By sharing their experiences, members can tap into the ingenuity and solutions of others to help themselves. The group leader also contributes in the exchange of information. Together the group can access a rich resource of relevant and varied information. Moreover, within any group there will be different and opposing views or solutions to a problem. Group members can listen to all points of view and synthesize those which carry most meaning to their particular situation.

As the group solidifies and as an environment of confidence and security is created, sensitive areas of discussion such as family stress/violence, marital difficulties, mourning for country of origin, and despair over the loss of status can be broached. Members hearing the expression of feelings similar to their own from their peers often has a powerful effect; it validates hidden feelings and allows members to see they are not alone, and that their fears and despairs are shared by others going through the same adjustment phase.

Moreover, hearing the accounts and concerns of their peers makes a much stronger impact than being told by a professional that other immigrants experience similar concerns and problems.

Alone and isolated in the early period of arrival, many immigrants feel they are the cause of their current

misery. The group environment helps put the initial adjustment period into perspective. Discussion of the experiences of group members, facilitated by the group leader, can demonstrate that many of their problems are externally caused (i.e., socioeconomic conditions, racist attitudes) and are *not* brought about solely by the immigrants themselves.

Finally, from an administrative point of view the group approach presents an efficient mode of service. While it may be costly to ensure staff are adequately trained in group counselling theory and techniques, the benefits to an immigrant clientele, along with the ability of staff to effectively serve a larger caseload makes this a viable alternative.

The Integration Program

JIAS surveyed its clients to determine the basic needs to facilitate integration into the community. Four core needs were identified: language training (E.S.L.); casework counselling (psycho-social support); job preparation; and cultural programming which connects newcomers to their ethnic community.

Keeping with the group approach, the Agency decided to provide these services as a integrated package over a five month period. Offered twice a year, all new clients are placed in the program. While new clients do see an individual caseworker for initial screening and any ongoing individual attention, the group program delivers the basic services required.

Clients are placed in small groups of 15 to 20 and move through each service area (module) as a group. By offering an integrated package of services, newcomers are relieved of the burden of having to find or be referred to these necessary programs in different settings. Although delivered over a relatively short period of time, the fact that the newcomers participate in each module as a group week in and week out, makes for dramatic results. Evaluation of the program has consistently shown that the intensity and integrated nature of the program provide

an environment of safety and security for the newcomers which enables them to begin settling in and feeling more connected to the host community in the early stages of their arrival.

Language Training: English as a Second Language (E.S.L.)

Groups participating in the daytime program receive 25 hours of language instruction each week, while evening participants receive 12 hours each week. All clients are assessed by standard educational methods for class placement and are taught by a qualified teacher. The curriculum incorporates information and discussion topics relevant to the immigrant and resettlement experience. Teachers meet regularly with our casework group leaders to share material/topics which can be worked on in both venues.

Psychosocial Support Groups

Each group also participates in a weekly two hour support group led by one of our Russian speaking staff. As described earlier, the format is a Family Life Education model. Settlement information to help the newcomer understand Canadian society and lifestyle is shared. However, the primary objective is to help group members deal with the stress and conflict which results from the radical new changes many are experiencing in their lives. Along with receiving instruction in more practical areas such as banking, police, health, schools, etc., more personal issues are introduced as the group coalesces.

Changes in the family, especially with children, new roles for women in Canada, socioeconomic change and its effect on self-esteem, and mourning for the culture of home are examples of the emotional issues confronted in these groups. Skilled staff leadership is necessary to direct the discussion and use the group dynamics in a productive manner. As well, the group leader should be able to communicate in the language of the group in order to effectively facilitate discussion of such sensitive issues.

Job Preparation

This module is delivered by staff of the Jewish Vocational Services. Along with basic job hunting skills, newcomers are instructed in résumé preparation and how to conduct oneself in a job interview. However, of significance, is the instruction outlining the differences between job search in a free market as opposed to a controlled one (to which our clientele are accustomed, coming from a Communist regime). Another core objective of this module is to prepare the client psychologically for the probability of underemployment in their first positions. Realistic expectations are set and the accompanying frustration, sadness and anger are dealt with in the group. Individual sessions are also held with each client to develop a personal vocational/educational plan.

Cultural Identity

Unlike the U.S., Canada does not espouse a "melting pot culture." Rather, it is upheld that Canada grows stronger by supporting the richness of the cultures which comprise the Canadian mosaic. Facilitating a connection between newcomers and their local ethnic group is essential if true integration is to occur. The local ethnic community is a reminder of home, and provides a sense of safety, continuity and connectivity to one's roots. Moreover, the host community can provide many opportunities to facilitate the newcomers' understanding of Canadian culture. Also, host communities can offer support to which newcomers can more easily relate, than would be the case for support offered by a non-immigrant Canadian.

Finally, most émigré communities want to be actively involved in the lives of newcomers. Developing programs which link newcomers and the "settled" former immigrants expand the newcomers' support network beyond the agency.

In this way, newcomers have the opportunity to make connections with the host community for friendship, job networking and emotional support.

Creating ongoing programs in a community which keeps newcomers and "old timers" connected is very difficult. Organizing the local community and sustaining their commitment is a long term process.

Conclusion

The emotional upheaval caused by the immigration experience often leaves newcomers, particularly refugees, feeling isolated and detached from their roots. The JIAS Integration Program aims at reversing this sense of fragmentation by consolidating core services under one program and by intensifying these services through the use of a peer group support model.

The group support program has been a particularly valuable source of assistance to the refugees. The trauma associated with fleeing one's home, family and roots—indeed, fearing for one's life and being—has a devastating impact on the refugee and his/her ability to adjust. The group support aspect of the program has offered a place of safety and security to the refugees. They have benefitted from peer support, from the structured discussions of adjustment and related issues, and from the general atmosphere of mutual trust which fosters open discussion of the difficulties associated with fleeing and starting over.

In the JIAS experience, the group approach has proven itself to be administratively efficient. Moreover, evaluation surveys have demonstrated its effectiveness in facilitating early adjustment, consistently demonstrating that the integrative nature and intensity of this program promotes a feeling of safety and security in newcomers. This security leads to a reduction of anxiety and stress, allows newcomers to feel psychologically together earlier on, and in general hastens the mending process.

Ultimately feeling more rooted in the new environment, newcomers are then able to access their inherent skills to begin the climb back to independence and self-assurance—basic ingredients for integration into their new community. ■

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