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Gender & Migration

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Genre et migration

RÉDACTRICES INVITÉES

Luisa Veronis, Université d'Ottawa

Margaret Walton-Roberts, Université Wilfrid Laurier

3 Introduction

POLICY PRIORITIES AND CONSEQUENCES

8 In the Shadow of Preferred Immigrants:
Accompanying Partners of International Students
NANCY ARTHUR & JOSÉ F DOMENE

13 Réunification conjugale au Canada :
L'expérience des femmes parrains
KARINE GEOFFRION

18 Beyond Tokenism: Translating Canada's Commitment
to Gender-Based Analysis + Into the Development
of Immigration Programs and Practices that are
Responsive to the Needs of Marginalized Migrant
Live-In Caregivers
"ESEL" LAXA PANLAQUI

PROGRAM RESPONSIVENESS

23 Supporting Refugee Women: Barriers and
Opportunities in Language and Settlement
Programs, Policies and Research
ZAHIDA RAHEMTULL, DIANA JEFFRIES & DR. AMEA WILBUR

27 Towards the Development of a Responsive English
Language Program for Refugee Women and Families
RYAN DREW

32 Supporting Educational Learning and Training
for Low Literacy Immigrant Women: A Partnership
Approach between the Calgary Immigrant Women's
Association and Bow Valley College
CHERYL KINZEL & EVA SZASZ-REDMOND

INTEGRATION EXPERIENCES

37 Gender Dynamics of Temporary Placement
Agency Work: (Im)Migrants, Know your Place!
JILL HANLEY, LINDSAY LARIOS, MANUEL SALAMANCA
CARDONA, MOSTAFA HENAWAY, NUHA DWAIKAT SHAER,
SONIA BEN SOLTANE & PAUL EID

43 Comprendre la confluence du genre, de la race
et de la charge familiale pour mieux intervenir
sur l'intégration des immigrantes Maghrébines
au Québec
SONIA BEN SOLTANE

48 "Sending our Petitions to God": Nigerian Immigrant
Healthcare Worker Settlement, Gender and the Role
of Religious Networks
SHERI ADEKOLA & DR. MARGARET WALTON-ROBERTS

52 Tracing Gendered Practices in Social Media Use
among Syrian Refugee Youth in Ottawa, Canada
RUKHSANA AHMED & LUISA VERONIS

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LETTERS

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INTRODUCTION

The papers included in this special issue of *Canadian Diversity* on “gender and migration” are mostly drawn from presentations made at the 2017 National Metropolis Conference held in Montréal. Bringing together authors from academia and the NGO sector, collectively the papers address both ongoing as well as new issues relating to the gendered impacts of immigration policy and the settlement dimension. We introduce each of the papers briefly below under the three main themes of policy priorities and consequences, program responsiveness, and settlement and integration experiences, then we elaborate on some key themes we see the collection highlighting.

POLICY PRIORITIES AND CONSEQUENCES

We see this section as highlighting the importance of designing immigration policies for socially embedded people. Over the past decade, Canada’s immigration policy has undergone tremendous changes, including in terms of selection criteria, introduction of new immigration categories, and increased admissions of international students among others (Ferrer et al., 2014). The fast paced rate of these changes has meant that their gendered impacts have yet to be fully understood. The three papers in this section offer novel insights into how these policy changes affect different groups of migrants and their families, including international students, family sponsors, and live in caregivers.

Arthur and Domene’s paper makes clear an issue that should be obvious to most people: even international students have a life pre-Canada, and yet the policy and service landscape for international student mobility appears to make it harder for spouses of international students (the majority of whom are women) to find employment opportunities in their field of expertise. While this trailing spouse gender discrepancy has long been apparent for all immigrant classes, the fact that Canada is courting more international students who have a different set of service options available to them reveals potential problems. Gearing up to use international students as a possible pool of skilled immigrants means we must take the labour market attachment needs of spouses more seriously in policy design.

The gendering and racializing of immigration, and its continued role in ideals of nation building are explored in Karine Geoffrion’s contribution on the experiences of Canadian women who sponsor non-Canadian spouses originating from countries in the Global South. The stringent policing of these sponsorship applications is testimony to how the state (still) is involved in controlling women’s decisions of matrimony and family life — these often being mixed-race couples. Through an anthropological lens, Geoffrion shows how female sponsors’ emotional and love projects (and their aspirations to traditional, monogamous family life) are put under scrutiny by a bureaucracy (Immigration) that is depicted as more rational and objective in assessing these women’s life projects. Yet, this case also reveals these women’s agency, including the building of support networks through the use of technology (e.g., support groups through social media). This article sheds new light on the links between emotion and migration, the pervasive gender and race ideals of citizenship, and the ways in which immigration procedures and bureaucracies continue to influence these processes (for earlier discussions on this see Abu-Laban, 1998).

The complexity raised by differentiated migration programs and pathways is made even more apparent in the piece by Esel Laxa Panlaqui on the experiences of live in caregivers (LIC). This immigration stream has undergone significant changes in the last few years, resulting in a segmented group of current and former care givers whose ability to access opportunities for permanent settlement are made more complex. Changes to the LIC program were ostensibly about removing the live in requirement and improving the working conditions for care givers. The outcome though has also seen a cut in the automatic ability of care givers to transition to permanent residence. Furthermore, these policy changes have had significant implications for these migrants' ability to sponsor family members, from whom they are separated for 7-8 years on average, thus further extending wait periods and the hardship of family separation (cf. Pratt, 2009).

PROGRAM RESPONSIVENESS

The second group of papers examines questions relating to service and program delivery and meeting gendered needs. It is well-known that language proficiency plays a key role in migrants' employability and labour market participation. Yet, the question remains of how service providers can offer programming that addresses multiple needs among vulnerable migrants, including women refugees and women with low literacy skills. The papers included here discuss new approaches that combine language and employment training while also responding to specific gendered needs.

Jeffries, Rahemtulla and Wilbur demonstrate that some key problems previously highlighted in the resettlement experiences of refugee women reappear in the Syrian case. Refugee women's need for language training that includes childcare has long been identified (Man 2002). Jeffries et al. remind us of this need with examples that highlight the challenges women refugees face between attending needed language training classes and finding appropriate care for their children.

Ryan Drew offers a model that can be used to respond to the problems identified by Jeffries et al., and examines the question of combining language training with meeting the many settlement needs of refugee families who have no or little English language knowledge. His paper presents the findings of research carried out by S.U.C.C.E.S.S., a settlement agency based in Surrey, British Columbia, with refugee women to discuss their multiple needs. Specifically the focus is on the Language Responsive Integrated Approach that S.U.C.C.E.S.S. developed based on these findings, which combines refugee women's language training goals with key needs in housing, family responsibilities, health, education, employment, and specialized classes.

Szasz-Redmond and Kinzel discuss another successful model of gender specific programming aimed at low-literacy female immigrants. Looking at the case of Calgary through the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) and their partnership with Bow Valley College (BVC), we can see that low literacy level immigrant women have received a wide range of important supports over the last 9 years, with employability rates surpassing 90%. In this case, the focus is primarily on intersectoral partnerships and the importance of creating them between different institutions involved in immigrant and refugee settlement and workplace integration (e.g. CIWA and BVC). The authors convincingly show that such partnerships are a significant element of program responsiveness.

SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

The focus of the third section is on gendered aspects of the settlement and integration experiences. The four papers explore issues of labour market access, barriers and experiences, how women cope with the stress of the settlement process, and how the use of social media might contribute to the resettlement process for refugees.

In their paper on the role of temporary placement agencies (temp agencies) in immigrants' labour market trajectories, Hanley et al. demonstrate the pervasiveness of racialized and gendered dynamics leading newcomers — regardless of their migrant status (temporary/permanent), education levels and occupational status — into precarious, exploitative jobs. Their longitudinal study of (im)migrant men and women employed through temp agencies in Montréal, Québec, makes two main contributions. First, Hanley et al. document migrants' reliance on such type of work as an employment strategy in the face of numerous challenges (e.g., foreign credentials recognition, lack of Canadian experience) in the Canadian labour market (Bauder 2003; Reitz et al. 2014). For many, however, rather than a temporary form of employment, temp agency work becomes permanent with significant socio-economic impacts on themselves and their families, including loss of occupational status, poverty, health risks, etc. Second, the authors shed light on the complex role of gendered and racialized stereotypes in shaping immigrants' access to and

experiences with such jobs. Hanley et al.'s findings reveal that gender, combined with race and migrant status is key in shaping immigrants' reliance on and experiences with temp agency work as they negotiate between their personal aspirations and family needs.

Also set in Montréal, Québec, Sonia Ben Soltane's study provides a detailed account of the barriers that skilled immigrant women from the Maghreb region face. The focus is on the intersecting dynamics of gender, race, and family responsibilities to understanding the challenges in these women's experiences of settlement and integration. The article makes clear that gender and family responsibilities are key factors that shape the career pathways of this group of well-educated and professional women. Thus to assist them and to provide them with adequate supports, Ben Soltane argues that it is important to examine immigrants' family context, rather than focusing solely on their individual circumstances.

Adekola and Walton-Roberts' article contributes to furthering our understanding of the settlement experience and the significant role that various types of networks play in facilitating what often is a challenging process. Specifically, they elaborate on the reliance of female migrant health care workers in Toronto on religious networks, and the multiple ways in which these assist them in their settlement experiences, from providing information to emotional and even financial assistance. Among other things, Adekola and Walton-Roberts demonstrate the close links between the emotional, religious and professional dimensions of these migrant women's settlement experiences.

If we contrast the Syrian case to earlier mass resettlement events what is really different? Certainly the technological dimensions of information sharing are distinct, as shown in Ahmed and Veronis' review of social media use among Syrian refugee youth. There are potential opportunities to create improved service delivery, but we also need to attend to the virtual isolation that online lives might create for newcomer communities. Ahmed and Veronis discuss the multiple ways social media use can support resettlement, while underlying gendered practices among refugee youth. Moreover, the article shows that although they are reliant on social media for a variety of purposes, they are critical users who are aware of the limitations and pitfalls of technology.

Taken as a whole, the papers included here point to a number of emerging issues that may inform future directions in research, policy and practice. First, it is clear that understanding the dynamic processes shaping Canada's immigration and refugee programs is the key to long-term success of settlement in Canada. Canada's apparent best practices are fast providing valuable international examples of how to approach immigration and refugee policy; for example, consider international interest in the private refugee sponsorship program and selective immigration. Canada's approach to settlement has developed over the years to be one of multiple partnerships with other levels of government, with NGOs and the public and private sectors (Lowe et al. 2017). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that Canada's settlement sector has been reframed through neoliberal tenants of greater market based service delivery through the incorporation of more private, non-governmental and employer driven interests (Shields 2004; Flynn and Bauder 2015). Geographical variability is also key in how migrants' access services, who is responsible for its delivery and content, and migrants themselves have become key actors in this sector (Richmond and Shields 2005). Important here is that settlement support also fills the broad spectrum of demand from low skilled, low literacy to high skilled and occupational specific literacy demands. The complexity of Canada's settlement and integration landscape cannot be addressed in this short collection, but these authors have explored the full spectrum of the type of services and integration experiences women immigrants face, from low skilled/literacy to high skilled/occupational specific niches, and across various immigration programs, from international students, to refugees, temporary care givers and skilled migrants. The papers reveal the importance of designing immigration policies and support systems for socially embedded people, particularly taking into consideration their family context. The family unit emerges as a useful framework (Vatz-Laaroussi 2008) to understand migrants' opportunities and challenges in terms of their access to and use of services, service needs, program design and delivery, and various other forms of supports (legal, housing, etc.). This is the case for partners of international students; refugee women; women with low literacy; live in caregivers as well as visible minority migrant women who are socially positioned at the intersections of gender, race, religion, family roles and responsibilities.

A novel contribution of this collection of articles relates to the use of technology at various stages of the immigration and settlement process. Beyond existing research on the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in facilitating global communication and sustaining transnational social fields across borders (Nedelcu 2017, Lim et al 2016), new ICTs and especially social media may be used in innovative ways in contexts of immigration and settlement. Examples include the use of online support groups for those undergoing the lengthy process of family sponsorship (as Geoffrion explores), and reliance on social media to access information and various types of resources to assist refugees in the resettlement process (as examined in Ahmed and Veronis' paper). These uses of social media suggest that technology offers new and expanding opportunities for providing

and accessing information, for the delivery of some services, and for new models of potential refugee integration. This might be suggestive of a Resettlement 2.0. approach to immigrant and refugee resettlement, where virtual resources might become more central to delivering effective and successful resources, albeit in complementarity with face to face services.

Thirdly, this collection of articles sheds new light on the existence of significant contrasts in the experiences of different groups of (im)migrants and across gender lines, as well as differences in ethnicity/race, religion, age, and family situation among others. In part, these contrasting experiences are related to the presence of increasingly diverse groups of migrants. But concomitantly, they are linked to evolving immigration policies (Meissner and Vertovec 2015), and also to geographically uneven and changing contexts of reception (Teixeira et al. 2011). In turn, these diverse groups of immigrants may require a range of distinct types of services and programming in order to help address their unique needs and circumstances. Arthur and Domene's paper provides an important contrast to the relative neglect of the experiences of high skilled partners of international students. Among highly skilled/professional migrants, we discover the diverse settlement and integration strategies of those in Montréal who rely on work in temp agencies (Hanley et al.), Muslim women from the Maghreb who put their family's needs first (Ben Soltane), and Nigerian health care professionals in Toronto who turn to religious networks (Adekola and Walton-Roberts). Next, we can note challenging family sponsorship experiences for both migrant women who have come to Canada under the Live-in Caregiver program (Laxa Panlaqui) and Canadian women who wish to be reunited with partners originating from countries in the 'Global South' (Geoffrion). Albeit occupying distinct social positions, each of these two groups of women undergo a lengthy separation and great government scrutiny. Contrasting these various cases suggests Canada's differentiated pathways to permanent settlement produce fractured settlement options and outcomes, and women's experiences of settlement are framed in various ways by these policies.

Continuing research by practitioners and academics can clearly contribute to needed immigration policy debates. Canada's position as 'exceptional' when it comes to the politics of immigration policy rests upon informed public debate and evidence based analysis of the processes and outcomes of the many different immigration and refugee policy streams Canada currently employs. Poor immigration policy outcomes in terms of marginalization, isolation and inequitable access to service produce unfair burdens for specific marginalized groups. The need to recognize and address such problems remains an ongoing project for practitioners, policy groups and academics to attend to.

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IN THE SHADOW OF PREFERRED IMMIGRANTS: ACCOMPANYING PARTNERS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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A spouse or partner accompanies approximately 25% of international graduate students who study in Canada. Understanding the career development of the accompanying partners of international students is important for advancing knowledge and for mobilizing their potential for contributing to the Canadian labour market; given the fact that a large majority of accompanying partners are women, a focus on their career development is also important for addressing gender equity. In this article, we argue that it is critical for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to go beyond a focus on individual international students to also focus on their accompanying partners and to address the ongoing career development needs of these individuals. Specifically, we identify and discuss concerns related to professional qualifications and work experiences, barriers to employment, negative status changes, sacrificing for the family's future, and inadequacies in the support systems that are available to accompanying partners.

Un conjoint ou un partenaire accompagne environ 25% des étudiants diplômés internationaux qui étudient au Canada. Il est important de comprendre le développement de carrière des partenaires d'accompagnement des étudiants internationaux afin de faire progresser les connaissances et mobiliser leur potentiel de contribution au marché du travail canadien. Étant donné qu'une grande majorité des partenaires accompagnant les étudiants sont des femmes, il est également important de mettre l'accent sur le développement de leur carrière pour assurer l'équité entre les sexes. Dans cet article, nous soutenons qu'il est essentiel pour les chercheurs, les praticiens et les décideurs d'aller au-delà de l'accent mis sur les étudiants internationaux pour se concentrer sur leurs partenaires et pour répondre aux besoins de développement de carrière de ces personnes. Plus précisément, nous identifions et discutons des préoccupations liées aux qualifications professionnelles et aux expériences de travail, des obstacles à l'emploi, des changements de statut négatifs, des sacrifices pour l'avenir de la famille et des insuffisances des systèmes de soutien disponibles pour les partenaires.

Immigration policy in Canada pertaining to international students has changed dramatically during the previous 20 years. Once considered to be temporary sojourners who study and then return to their home countries, there is growing attention paid to ways of recruiting and retaining international students as valuable sources of human capital (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, 2012). Historically, international students were prohibited from working while studying in Canada. The trend has been to gradually shift the opportunities for international students to work while studying and more recently to gain experience working in Canada post-graduation. Such changes are linked to immigration strategies intended to support international students to gain work experience that potentially qualifies under the Canadian Employment Class for immigration (Arthur & Nunes, 2014). The former Immigration Minister of Canada, John McCallum stated, "International students are the best source of immigrants, in the sense that they're educated, they're young, they speak English or French, they know something of the country," he said. "So we should be doing everything we can do to court them" (CBC News, 2016). In essence, the view of international students as preferred immigrants positions them as a valuable source of human capital. International students are highly educated, they bring experience from their home countries, they have gained educational credentials through living and learning in Canada, and many have contacts for building trans-national business partnerships (Arthur, 2013; Zigarus & Law, 2006).

The emphasis on international students as commodities for the labour market has centred on individual students themselves. There appears to be an underlying assumption that all international students are young, independent, and autonomous in their decision-making (Doyle, Loveridge, & Faamanatu-Eteuati, 2016). This assumption is rapidly becoming outdated, particularly for older international students who are studying in graduate programs. Approximately 25% of international graduate students studying in Canada, are accompanied by their spouse (Campbell & Prins, 2016). In this discussion, we define accompanying partners as the married or common-law partners of international students, who travel to and live in Canada, primarily because of the international student's education, but are not themselves engaged in academic studies. Despite the growing attention to the recruitment and experiences of international students to Canada, little is known about the lived experience of their partners, primarily women, who accompany international students to their country of education (Doyle et al., 2016; Martens & Grant, 2008). Moreover, an overwhelming majority of accompanying partners are well-educated women with valuable work experience from their countries of origin (Kim, 2012; Teshome, & Osei-Kofi, 2012). Therefore, understanding accompanying spouses' career development is important for reasons beyond advancing knowledge; it is important from the stand-point of recognizing and mobilizing the excellent potential of this population for contributing to the Canadian

labour market, and from the stand-point of gender equity.

LOOKING BEYOND THE INITIAL ADJUSTMENT TO CANADA

The sparse literature on accompanying partners of international students has primarily focused on their initial adjustment and adaptation to living in another country (Kim, 2012; Myers-Walls, Frias, Kwon Ko, & Lu, 2011; Teshome & Osei-Kofi, 2012). We have advocated for a focus on the career development of women accompanying partners as their roles have been minimized and silenced in the discourse about international education and immigration (Cui, Arthur, & Domene, 2017). It is essential to consider that career decisions are not only made by individuals, but are made within the family context (Domene et al., 2012; Evans, 2012). What has been neglected in the international student literature are the family issues and experiences that are relevant for (a) the decision to study internationally, (b) the decision to pursue work experience post-graduation in Canada, and (c) plans for permanent immigration to Canada. As such, the experiences of accompanying partners have been largely ignored. This is particularly problematic because the partners of international students are often caught between gaps in educational, employment and immigration policies and systems, and may end up in precarious working and living situations. To reframe the quote above, if we are going to do everything we can to attract international students to Canada as permanent immigrants, consideration should also be given to the career plans, employment potential, and support needs of their accompanying partners.

THE GENDERED NATURE OF CAREER EXPERIENCES

In our research, involving interviews with 60 heterosexual women accompanying partners recruited through our respective universities, preliminary analysis has suggested five trends related to the gendered nature of their career experiences. First of all, there was a trend related to 'professional qualifications and work experience'. Similar to previous research (e.g., Kim, 2012; Teshome, & Osei-Kofi, 2012), we found the majority of accompanying partners to be highly educated, with one or more degrees, who brought valuable work experience and credentials from their countries of origin. Nonetheless, these women also reported experiencing substantial difficulty with having their qualifications and experiences recognized in Canada.

'Barriers to employment' emerged as a second important trend. Conditions in Canada were often unfavorable for these accompanying partners to advance their employment and career development. Similar to other groups of newcomers (Arthur, 2015; Chen, 2005), many of our participants experi-

enced barriers for pursuing their occupations, both in their selected field, and at the level they had obtained in their home countries. Language competency and proficiency in English was consistently reported as a barrier. Unfortunately, the story of limited employment options is all too familiar, when educated newcomers are limited to low-skilled, low-pay, gender-stereotyped work. The choice for many accompanying partners who want to work was to remain unemployed or to compromise and accept 'survivor' jobs to gain Canadian experience, at the expense of furthering their professional careers. However, the extent to which such jobs afford a ladder up experience or represent a long-term career barrier requires further examination. The hours working in survivor jobs, time to improve language fluency, and time for parenting and household activities may leave many women at risk for longer-term underemployment. In contrast, the few accompanying partners who were able to secure work within their occupational field reported a positive sense of career success and learning about the workplace in Canada. Their resourcefulness for overcoming barriers is similar to previous research that has noted the more positive aspects of transitioning for accompanying partners (Campbell & Prins, 2016).

Third, the trend of 'negative status changes' also became apparent. While international students are furthering their education and prospects for future employment by coming to Canada, many accompanying partners have their careers in a holding pattern; they have left the labour market in their country of origin and are neither enrolled in higher education to advance their own future career opportunities, nor employed in positions commensurate with their qualifications and experiences. Consequently, many of the interviewees felt their status shifted from the role of working professional, to a secondary status as 'partners of' an international student. In other words, at the same time as studying in Canada centred on the 'upskilling' of international students, accompanying partners reported the experience of 'downskilling' and lack of status.

Fourth, was the trend of 'sacrifice for the family's future'. Several of the women noted that they chose to sacrifice their own career advancement to support their spouses/partners. The adoption of traditional gender roles, including the expectation/desire to support their student spouses, was described as investing in the longer-term benefits for the family. Some accompanying partners may intentionally pursue full-time parenting as their primary life role and, consequently, view the acts of supporting their spouse's education and taking care of their children as an extension of their career plans. Yet, many of the women we interviewed also reported role disruption, as they were positioned by default, as having to take primary responsibility for child-rearing, seeking new resources for the family, and managing households (Zhang, Smith, Swisher, Fu, & Fogarty, 2011). This role disruption left little time, energy, or opportunities to pursue interests outside the home. Many international students find the demands of

international studies to be time-intensive, leaving little time for them to spend with family or pursue extracurricular activities (Arthur, 2016). This reality seemed to add role strain for the accompanying partners, who were then left, behind the scenes, to figure out the logistics of life in Canada.

Fifth, there was a trend related to 'inadequate support systems'. There was considerable variation in the knowledge that women held regarding available support on campus or in the larger community. Although the women we interviewed were articulate about the kinds of supports that would help to ease their transition experience and enable their career plans, they often lacked information or access to a network to help them obtain suitable resources. This situation was exacerbated by university policies that focused specifically on providing support services only for enrolled students. Most institutions of higher education that recruit international students have support programming in place, particularly to address the initial stage of transition to life in Canada and a new educational institution. International students have the anchor of attending educational systems where they can quickly meet other people and have access to a myriad of academic and support services. However, because their spouses/partners are not enrolled at the educational institution, they are often not included in institutional programming and funding is lacking to provide such outreach services. This lack of access to services usually includes access to campus-based career and employment services. It is also prudent to remember that labour market information and job search processes vary considerably across country and cultural contexts. Access to current information about local labour market conditions and culturally-appropriate job seeking skills are key resources when large discrepancies exist between the norms and practices of various countries of origin, in comparison to the Canadian context (Arthur, 2017). Moreover, although campus-based career development practitioners may have difficulties providing services to individuals seeking to work internationally, they are certainly qualified to assist accompanying partners who are attempting to enter the Canadian labour market.

CONCLUSION

Canada is one of many countries in competition for market share of international students. It is timely to consider the needs of this diverse population and their family members. There is a growing evidence base regarding the adjustment and acculturation experiences of accompanying partners, but less information regarding their career development. There are strong career connections found between people's interests and capacity for navigating educational, employment, and immigration systems. However, it appears that those connections are underexplored to better understand the realities faced by international students and their families. Those experiences are going to be varied, given the heterogeneity

of these populations, the cultural similarities and differences, and the extent to which issues of gender, race, and social class intersect in the transition experiences of a new life in Canada (Cui et al., 2017).

Ironically, in our research we found that there were many gatekeepers for accessing interviews with accompanying partners. These included various administrators and departments within student services and campus housing, and we had to rely on international students passing along recruitment information to their spouses/partners. If we found it challenging to reach out to accompanying partners, we are left with many questions about how difficult it might be for them to connect with other systems of service and support. Although some campuses are considering ways to be more 'family friendly' to international students and their family members, there is not a consistent model of service provision in Canada (Domene, 2016). Given the lack of programming for accompanying partners that exist on campus and in the community, it seems that many accompanying partners are at risk of falling between the cracks of education, employment, and immigration services. If we extend the notion that we should be 'courting' international students to stay in Canada, the 'courting' needs to extend to their accompanying partners in more substantive and intentional ways.

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RÉUNIFICATION CONJUGALE AU CANADA: L'EXPÉRIENCE DES FEMMES PARRAINS

KARINE GEOFFRION est diplômée du département d'anthropologie de l'Université de Montréal. Elle s'intéresse aux questions d'amour, de mobilité et de relation intime transnationale chez les couples binationaux, ainsi qu'au processus de réunification familiale au Canada. Elle a publié sur ces thèmes dans les Cahiers d'études africaines et les Cahiers du genre. Présentement, elle travaille sur un projet de recherche qui se penche sur l'expérience de la réunification familiale chez les enfants dont les parents ont migré au Canada.

Au Canada, le parrainage du conjoint est l'une des seules avenues possibles pour qu'un individu canadien puisse fonder un foyer conjugal avec un partenaire non-canadien. Pour les femmes canadiennes en couple avec un homme originaire d'un pays du Sud, les procédures administratives longues, coûteuses et émotionnellement chargées qui caractérisent le processus de parrainage d'un conjoint ne sont pas que de simples formalités. Elles constituent une série d'obstacles administratifs à la réunification du couple. Ce processus augmente l'idéalisation romantique du couple binational chez les femmes canadiennes et contribue à la valorisation d'un modèle matrimonial traditionnel et mono-national où les femmes n'accèdent au bonheur qu'à travers la conjugalité avec un homme. Le droit des femmes à choisir un conjoint de leur choix est remis en question à travers ces procédures bureaucratiques.

In Canada, spousal sponsorship is one of the only possible avenues for a Canadian individual to create a home with a non-Canadian partner. For Canadian women in a relationship with a man from a southern country, the lengthy, costly and emotionally charged administrative procedures that characterize the process of sponsoring a spouse are not just formalities. They constitute a series of administrative obstacles to the reunification of the couple. This process increases the romantic idealization of the bi-national couple and contributes to the development of a traditional and mono-national matrimonial model in which women access happiness only through conjugality with a man. The right of women to choose a spouse of their choice is challenged through these bureaucratic procedures.

« Ce soir, j'ai la satisfaction d'avoir accompli mon plus grand projet à vie. Mais en même temps, j'ai cette peur immense qu'une personne inconnue décide de notre sort, décide de notre vie... Je vais peut-être me sentir heureuse pleinement quand, à chaque matin en ouvrant les yeux, je vais voir mon mari, l'homme de ma vie, à côté de moi, en chair et en os, pour profiter de la vie à deux dans le même pays, la même ville et la même maison. (Simone) »

Cet extrait d'une publication faite sur le forum de discussion en ligne d'un groupe de soutien aux femmes canadiennes qui parrainent l'immigration de leur conjoint non-canadien exprime à la fois l'appréhension que ces femmes ont face à un processus administratif rébarbatif, long et émotionnellement exigeant et la valeur affective qu'elles accordent au mariage et au projet de vie commune avec un homme. Dans cet article, il sera question d'expliquer comment le processus de réunification conjugale au Canada accroît l'idéalisation romantique du

couple chez plusieurs femmes parrains. La réflexion s'appuie les récits de rencontre, de mariage et de réunification conjugale de 24 femmes canadiennes qui ont épousé un homme originaire d'un pays du Sud¹; ainsi que sur dix-huit mois d'observation participante au sein de deux groupes de soutien en ligne destinés à ces femmes².

Au Canada, le mariage à un citoyen canadien n'est pas un gage suffisant pour l'octroi d'un titre de séjour au partenaire non-canadien. Le processus de parrainage du conjoint est l'une des seules avenues possibles pour qu'un individu canadien puisse fonder un foyer conjugal au Canada avec un partenaire non-canadien, surtout si ce dernier est originaire d'un pays du Sud³. Les partenaires conjugaux sont confrontés à une série d'obstacles administratifs à leur réunification au Canada, tels que des frais d'application élevés, de nombreux formulaires à remplir, différents certificats et attestations à fournir dans les langues officielles du Canada et des délais de traitement prolongés, allant de plusieurs mois à plusieurs années. Pour être accepté, un dossier de parrainage doit convaincre les agents d'immigration en charge d'évaluer le dossier que la relation de couple est « authentique ». En d'autres mots, la motivation principale au mariage et à la demande de réunification conjugale ne doit pas être l'immigration au Canada. Or, pour les demandes dans lesquelles le partenaire non-canadien est originaire d'un pays du Sud sont souvent traitées avec beaucoup plus de suspicion que ne le sont les demandes où le partenaire non-canadien est originaire d'un pays du Nord (Satzewich, 2015b). Cette économie ou politique du « soupçon » (D'Aoust, 2017; Lavanchy, 2013; Robledo Salcedo, 2013) se traduit par un haut taux de refus dans le groupe de soutien étudié. En effet, 33 % des dossiers déposés et évalués entre 2010 et 2016 ont été rejetés, principalement pour cause de « mariage non-authentique », sans que ce « déficit de légitimité » (Rea & Tripier, 2010) ne soit explicité davantage dans la plupart des cas.

Selon les statistiques canadiennes, le taux de refus des demandes de réunification conjugale, toutes nationalités d'origine confondues, oscille autour de 15 % (Satzewich, 2015a). Pourquoi les taux de refus sont-ils si élevés dans le groupe observé ici ? Les cas étudiés peuvent aussi être conçus comme plus vulnérables à l'abus parce que les « parrains » sont des

femmes. En effet, Laura Odasso (2017) argue qu'en France, les couples binationaux dont la femme est française sont investigués de façon plus intrusive que les couples où l'homme est français. Un double standard s'applique de façon évidente à travers le type de questions posées aux partenaires et dans la façon dont ils étaient traités (Charsley & Wray, 2015). À cet effet, Maskens (Maskens, 2015) soutient : « *Women still form particular sites for the reproduction of the nation and are thus objects of more state interventions* » (p. 44); voir aussi (Stoler, 2002).

La lourdeur administrative liée au processus de parrainage, l'intensité des émotions générées par l'expérience bureaucratique, ainsi que la peur de recevoir une réponse négative des autorités migratoires ont contribué à accroître la valeur que les femmes accordaient à leur projet de réunification conjugale. Pour les femmes de cette étude, se lancer dans le projet de parrainage de leur amoureux est une entreprise qui a demandé du courage, de la patience et de la détermination. Ainsi, ce processus, qui a exigé une telle charge de travail a pris une place centrale dans leur vie et est devenu une « obsession ».

De plus, à travers le processus de parrainage de leur conjoint, plusieurs femmes ont eu tendance à accentuer l'aspect romantique de leur relation, « tellement comme dans les films⁴ », ce qui contribue encore davantage à son idéalisation. À travers cette dynamique de réification de la relation intime, l'identité même de ces femmes s'inscrit d'abord à travers un projet conjugal traditionnel, où les conjoints vivent sous un même toit, ce que Simone qualifiait de son « plus grand projet à vie ». Ainsi, pour les femmes en question, le « bonheur » en vient souvent à être associé à une vie de couple traditionnelle et monogame. Or, ce « bonheur » est contingent au succès de la demande de parrainage du conjoint. Dans plusieurs cas, l'investissement dans le projet de parrainage prend une telle ampleur pour les femmes que, même si leur relation intime ne fonctionne pas ou si elles sont incertaines de la sincérité des intentions de leur conjoint, elles sont incapables de l'abandonner. C'était le cas pour Johanne :

« Et là j'avais la preuve [qu'il m'avait menti et qu'il avait un enfant], mais je n'ai pas voulu le voir. J'ai fait une crise d'enfer. J'ai failli partir. Tout a revolé dans la mai-

1 Les entretiens ont été conduits en personne ou par Skype avec des femmes canadiennes résidant toutes au Québec sauf une, qui habitait en Ontario. La langue utilisée était le français ou l'anglais. Elles ont été recrutées par le biais d'annonces sur des pages Facebook montréalaises, ainsi qu'à travers différents réseaux de femmes coopérantes et par effet boule de neige.

2 Les 2 groupes en question, l'un destiné aux femmes qui parrainent un homme étranger et l'autre, à des femmes mariées à des hommes cubains, sont ouverts à toutes les femmes canadiennes mais, puisque les administratrices des groupes sont des femmes québécoises francophones et que les discussions se passent toutes en français, les membres, dont le nombre oscille autour de 150 dans chacun des groupes, sont majoritairement québécoises.

3 Le processus de réunification conjugale est le même pour un conjoint originaire d'Europe ou d'Afrique. Or, il est beaucoup plus difficile, voire impossible pour ce dernier d'obtenir un visa de visiteur au Canada; alors qu'il est beaucoup plus aisé pour une personne originaire d'un pays d'Europe d'obtenir un visa de touriste ou d'études.

4 Citation tirée d'une discussion dans le forum du groupe de soutien.

son. Le cendrier a revolé dans la télé. J'ai passé plusieurs jours à hurler, mais je l'aimais trop. Et je voulais continuer ce projet-là [le parrainage]. Ce n'était pas du tout raisonné. J'étais encore dans mon obsession de le faire venir. J'étais dans les papiers et tout.»

Dans plusieurs cas, ce n'est qu'après coup, dans les cas où leur conjoint est venu au Canada et que la relation s'est terminée plus ou moins dramatiquement, que les femmes ont commencé à remarquer les «signes» que leur relation ne fonctionnaient pas; signes qu'elles refusaient de voir alors qu'elles étaient dans le processus de parrainage. Dans son étude des femmes occidentales en couple avec des hommes «locaux» au Costa Rica, Frohlick (2009, p. 397) soutient que ces femmes adhéraient à un «*script of loving too much – a performance of a gendered stereotype of femininity as a pathological condition*». En effet, il apparaît que, chez les femmes canadiennes parrainant leur conjoint non-canadien, un «script» similaire ait été nourri par l'État canadien. En effet, tout au long du processus de parrainage, ce dernier remet en doute la compétence des femmes en matière de sélection d'un conjoint non-canadien. Une réappropriation, par les femmes concernées, de la croyance que les femmes amoureuses manquent de jugement, a aussi été remarqué au sein du groupe de soutien au parrainage et lors des entretiens individuels. Par exemple, Simone, qui est devenue l'une des modératrices du groupe lors de son parrainage, soutenait que l'ingérence de l'État dans la vie privée des femmes parrains était un mal nécessaire puisque

«[n]ous, les filles, on est un peu naïves parfois. On oublie le poids de la culture... Il faut protéger les femmes malgré elles, parfois. Les agents d'immigration ont peut-être un regard plus objectif et voient des choses qu'elles ne voient pas. C'est arrivé dans le groupe, quand le parrainage est refusé, elles sont frustrées, mais quand l'homme l'apprend, il les quitte.»

Ainsi, parce que le processus administratif crée, chez les femmes parrains, une instabilité émotionnelle et une réification du couple, l'expérience vécue du processus de parrainage de leur conjoint contribue à la construction et au renforcement de la conception des «femmes amoureuses» en tant qu'êtres irraisonnés. En retour, la diffusion de ce stéréotype féminin dans les médias et dans l'entourage des femmes et des couples en question justifie l'intervention de l'État dans la vie intime de ces femmes.

LE BONHEUR RÉSIDE DANS LE FOYER CONJUGAL

Le groupe de soutien au parrainage est un lieu où une forte pression normative est appliquée sur ses membres. Les couples y sont dotés d'une aura d'amour — à travers les commentaires positifs que les femmes portent sur les photos et les

autres publications sur le forum — qui devient difficile à dissiper, même quand les femmes vivent des difficultés dans leur relation intime. Ainsi, la relation amoureuse (avec un homme) et la réunification conjugale au Canada sont conçus comme des conditions préalables au bonheur des femmes.

L'idéalisation de l'amour romantique et de la vie de couple n'est pas spécifique aux femmes du groupe en ligne. Or, le groupe cristallise ces valeurs déjà bien ancrées dans plusieurs sociétés occidentales (Illouz, 1997; Mai & King, 2009; Maskens, 2013). Les publicités et les films romantiques, dans lesquels les couples amoureux exultent le bonheur et la joie de vivre, témoignent de la présence de ces idéaux romantiques sur d'autres sphères de la vie offrant une certaine reconnaissance sociale. Les filles et les femmes sont particulièrement ciblées par cette «socialisation amoureuse» (Jackson, 1993). Dans le cas des femmes du groupe de soutien, l'amour romantique et conjugal (ici, les deux sont amalgamés) est élevé au niveau de valeur suprême, d'autant plus qu'il doit être mérité, car il nécessite la réussite de l'«épreuve» qu'est le processus d'immigration du conjoint. Ainsi, ces femmes conçoivent souvent le processus de réunification conjugale comme l'obstacle à la réalisation de leur bonheur et l'institution en charge de ce processus, Immigration Canada, comme un ennemi du bien commun.

UNE VISION MANICHÉENNE DU PROCESSUS DE RÉUNIFICATION CONJUGALE

«L'amour est plus fort que le temps, la distance, les problèmes et surtout l'Immigration!»

Cette citation, qui a été tirée d'une discussion publiée dans le forum du groupe de soutien au parrainage, exemplifie bien la polarité qui s'est créée entre le couple mixte, d'un côté, et Immigration Canada, l'agence gouvernementale avec laquelle les femmes doivent transiger pour être réunies avec leur conjoint. En étant conçu comme l'obstacle ou le frein à la réalisation du couple, Immigration Canada et ses agents représentent les ennemis des femmes parrains. Le processus de parrainage devient donc une bataille où s'affrontent le sacré — l'amour — et le profane — la bureaucratie. Les femmes membres du groupe de soutien au parrainage ont ainsi développé une sémantique de l'adversité qui oppose leur couple, lequel est posé comme l'unité légitime où fleurit l'amour romantique, à Immigration Canada, l'usurpateur de cet amour. Par exemple, quand l'une des femmes a indiqué au groupe que son parrainage venait d'être refusé par Immigration Canada, plusieurs autres femmes se sont braquées contre cet ennemi commun :

«Tu as perdu un *round*, pas la partie. Dis toi ça et fonce! Battez-vous pour votre amour. Prouvez leur

qu'ils ont tort. Qu'Allah soit avec vous deux. Ça va aller ma belle, COURAGE.»

Cette rhétorique, mise de l'avant dans le groupe, contribue à mettre une pression considérable sur les femmes qui souhaitent se séparer ou arrêter les démarches de parrainage pour quelque raison que ce soit. Pour celles qui ont essuyé un premier refus de la part des autorités canadiennes, la seule option, aux yeux des autres membres, consiste à persévérer dans les démarches, soit à aller en appel ou à refaire le parrainage. Autrement, si elles décident d'abandonner, elles commettent un délit contre l'amour.

Par ailleurs, dans le groupe, les femmes utilisent souvent les épreuves liées à l'immigration de leur partenaire comme des outils qui leurs servent à légitimer leur projet de couple. D'une part, les difficultés rencontrées renforcent leur conviction que leur projet est sacré. La référence à Allah, dans la citation précédente, ajoute au caractère sacré du couple. D'autre part, la traversée d'épreuves est appréhendée comme la preuve que le couple est solide et qu'il est destiné à être ensemble. Par exemple, l'expérience de refus multiples qu'a partagée une femme membre du groupe (en réponse à une autre femme qui a vécu un premier refus) est révélatrice du processus de légitimation de la relation transnationale à travers les épreuves migratoires :

«on a tenu la route et on s'est dit que de vivre tout ceci et d'être encore ensemble, c'est qu'on était fait l'un pour l'autre. Là, on va en appel et rien ne va nous arrêter. Si votre amour est assez fort, vous allez vous retrouver sans aucun doute et vous allez continuer à vous battre pour être réunis. Moi, si l'appel ne fonctionne pas, je vais partir pour le Maroc. Ce n'est pas vrai que l'Immigration va arrêter notre couple, nos vies, notre bonheur...

Ainsi, appréhender l'institution bureaucratique en terme d'adversité devient un moyen de mettre en valeur le capital d'authenticité de ces couples. Ceux qui persévèrent malgré les embûches gagnent, aux yeux de l'immigration et aux yeux des membres de la communauté de soutien, des « points » d'authenticité et de moralité.

CONCLUSION

Cet article a exploré l'expérience vécue du processus migratoire de la perspective de femmes canadiennes. En effet, pour les femmes en couple avec un homme originaire d'un pays du Sud, les procédures administratives longues, couteuses et émotionnellement chargées qui caractérisent le processus de réunification conjugale au Canada ne sont pas que de simples formalités. Elles génèrent un lot de stress important car, même si les partenaires amoureux sont mariés, l'envoie

d'un dossier de parrainage ne garantit pas l'acceptation de ce dernier. Ces procédures déstabilisent l'identité nationale de ces femmes en les positionnant dans une catégorie nouvelle et intermédiaire, celle de la citoyenneté précaire. En effet, certains de leurs droits les plus fondamentaux, comme celui de fonder une famille avec l'époux de leur choix, sont questionnés et suspendus (et parfois niés) le temps des procédures. Le processus bureaucratique lié à la réunification conjugale contribue ainsi à la valorisation d'un modèle matrimonial traditionnel (privilegiant l'hypergamie féminine) et mononational (dans le but de préserver les privilèges liés à la citoyenneté canadienne (Shachar, 2009)).

De plus, à travers la manipulation des émotions des femmes parrains, le processus bureaucratique sert à diffuser un stéréotype de la « femme amoureuse irrationnelle », ce qui justifie l'intervention de l'État dans la vie privée des femmes en couple binational. En effet, parce que le processus les rend « folles », elles-mêmes en viennent à croire qu'elles sont incapables de faire un choix sensé et que l'intervention de l'État est faite dans le but de les « protéger » contre des imposteurs étrangers. Cependant, les femmes parrains ne sont pas des victimes passives de l'ingérence de l'État dans leur vie privée. Tout au long de leur processus de réunification conjugale, elles font aussi preuve d'agentivité et même, à certains moments, de résistance, que ce soit individuellement, ou collectivement. Les réseaux de femmes parrains qui se sont créés grâce à Internet permettent en effet à ces dernières de partager leur expérience du système bureaucratique, de trouver du réconfort mais aussi, de se placer dans une position moralement supérieure dans le cadre de leur relation de pouvoir avec l'État.

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BEYOND TOKENISM: TRANSLATING CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS + INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF MARGINALIZED MIGRANT LIVE-IN CAREGIVERS

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The Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) has offered an entry point to Canada to many migrant caregivers (mostly women). This article offers a critical review of the 2014 changes that the Canadian Federal Government brought to the Live-In Caregiver Program. Specifically, the focus is on the new program requirements relating to education and language, and the ongoing challenges migrant caregivers face to obtain permanent resident status and to achieve family reunification.

Le Programme des aides familiaux résidents (PAFR) a offert un point d'entrée au Canada à de nombreux soignants migrants (principalement des femmes). Cet article propose un examen critique des changements apportés en 2014 par le gouvernement fédéral canadien au Programme des aides familiaux résidents. Plus précisément, l'accent est mis sur les nouvelles exigences du programme en lien à l'éducation et à la langue, ainsi que sur les défis continus auxquels sont confrontés les aidants migrants pour obtenir le statut de résident permanent et compléter la réunification familiale.

The Government of Canada has always been vocal in its commitment to gender equality. In 1995, it adopted the use of Gender-based Analysis (GBA) in the development of its policies, programs and legislation across the federal government, including in Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The IRCC has been mandated under Section 94 of the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) to identify the gender-based impacts of IRPA through its Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration (Paddock, 2010). In

accordance with this Act, one important question that needs to be asked is whether the government's commitment to the use of GBA as a tool has resulted in better immigration policies and practices that are responsive to the needs of disadvantaged groups under Canada's immigration policy. With the recently renewed commitment of the Canadian government to GBA+ and its recognition of the importance of how gender intersects with other identities such as race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and physical disability (Status of Women

Canada, 2017), IRCC must fulfill the legitimate expectation to come up with immigration reforms that are inclusive and reflective of the needs of marginalized community members, such as live-in caregiver migrant workers.

Canada needs to recognize the positive contribution that live-in caregivers have made for many years and who continue to provide service to Canadian families today. Their work is critical for the growth and efficient functioning of the Canadian economy. Their temporary status, however, makes their employment precarious, which compounds their vulnerability and marginalization. Caregivers look after Canada's aging parents and young children — in most cases leaving their own children back home in the care of relatives. The actual number of years of potential family separation for caregivers can be more than eight years, longer for those who worked in Taiwan, Hong Kong or in the Middle East before coming to Canada (Thornclyffe Neighbourhood Office, et al. 2016). Most of these workers are racialized women coming from developing countries who left because of chronic poverty and high unemployment (Migrant Workers' Alliance, et al. 2016). While the main source country for caregiver applications is the Philippines, caregivers also come from the Caribbean, South America and other parts of Asia (Santos, 2009). Live-in caregivers are only allowed to work for the employer specified on their work permit. They are low-wage earners who are also the bread winners for their families back home. Previously, live-in caregivers had to work for 24 months, and at the end of their contract could apply for permanent residency (PR). In 2014 the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) was replaced by the creation of the two New Caregiver Pathways: (1) Caring for Children Pathway; and (2) Caring for People with High Medical Needs Pathway (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2016a). Under this two-stream program caregivers will no longer have a guaranteed pathway to PR after working in Canada for two years. This new program also restricts the number of caregiver PR applications accepted to 2,750 under each stream for a total of 5,500 a year. There are also stricter rules on education and language requirements. Caregivers must pass a level 5 language test in English or French, or if the caregiver is a registered nurse or a psychiatric nurse he or she must pass a Level 7 language test (Black, 2014).

Many caregivers under the new program are not even aware of the language and education requirement changes. Many have long years of experience as nannies and domestic helpers in Hong Kong, Taiwan and other parts of Asia; but they will no longer qualify to enter Canada because they will not be able to meet the education and language eligibility requirements. Moreover, there is no guarantee that those who meet these tight requirements will be able to apply for PR because of the limited yearly quota of 5,500. Moreover, every time caregivers need to renew their work permit they will have to get a new Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). Some employers are unwilling to apply and pay for a new LMIA, especially if the caregiver has only a few months before the completion of

their 24 month contract. Another issue faced by thousands of live-in caregivers is the immigration backlog for their PR application. According to the immigration department, there are currently 29,000 foreign caregivers caught up in the PR application backlog, and they wait an average of 53 months to have their applications processed (Keung, July 2017). This is negatively impacting them and their families, with wait times for PR applications of up to 53 months. Many of these workers are frustrated with the current processing time and in some cases, the inefficient handling of their PR applications. The many years of delay of PR processing have caused prolonged family separation, stress and vulnerability to live-in caregivers as they wait increasingly longer periods to be reunited with their children and spouse. The long years of separation have serious psychological and physical impacts on these families. Many caregivers miss their children's entire childhood and so they become strangers to them. They thus face additional challenges and issues when reunited with their families. Live-in caregivers currently in Canada have to keep renewing their work permits to maintain their status while waiting for PR applications to be processed. Although the live-in requirement has been removed under the 2014 new Caregiver Program, many caregivers still opt to stay in their employers' home because they cannot afford to pay rental costs on their very low wages. Although they are aware of their rights, they are not able to assert them because of fear of deportation and job loss. Unfortunately, there are unregistered immigration consultants who take advantage of the precarious immigration situation of live-in caregivers. Many live-in caregivers who are not familiar with the paper work involved in the renewal of their work permits have no choice but to avail of the paid services of these consultants. Often these consultants do not complete or fill up the immigration forms properly, and by the time IRCC returns the incorrect or incomplete work permit application forms existing work permits may have expired.

Many live-in caregivers are often isolated socially and geographically. As a consequence, many have limited access to, and lack of knowledge about navigating, free services, especially legal, settlement and health services. This is a service gap that has been identified among many live-in caregivers. However, those who are aware of the available services also face a number of challenges in accessing them. Free services are often located far away from their employer's home and/or organizations' operating hours are inconvenient. In addition, there is limited access to health coverage for expectant mothers who are waiting for the approval of the renewal of their work permits and/or their PR approval. Most of the caregivers who gave birth in Canada are indirectly being forced to bring their babies back to their home countries because they cannot afford child care services in Canada. Another gender related issue that needs to be raised are challenges faced by single mothers when their children become ineligible to be included in their PR application. Older children need to be continuously enrolled in and attend post-secondary education in

order to be sponsored by their parents. In most cases, single mothers with 3-4 children cannot support the high cost of education for their children back home. Covering medical costs is also challenging for caregivers, and Canadian immigration sponsorship applications may be rejected due to family members' health conditions.

FEELING LEFT OUT – CAN'T WAIT NO MORE!

We cannot progress towards gender equality unless our work is inclusive. Live-in caregivers are among the most vulnerable workers in Canada. IRCC's efforts to improve the Canadian immigration system by modernizing client service delivery, specifically speeding up the family reunification for Family Class immigration category, are very laudable. However, family reunification for live-in caregivers and refugees is separate from the Family Class. Live-in caregivers and refugees are marginalized and vulnerable groups. Canada should also prioritize their needs to be reunited with their families.

The immigration department has made progress in terms of clearing the immigration backlog of live-in caregivers, which is now 29,000, down from 70,000 cases. The department plans to eliminate the remaining backlog by October 2018. However, details of IRCC's Immigration Levels Plan showed that they will only be accepting 18,000 caregivers as new PRs for 2017 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, October 2016b). This is much lower than the 22,000 targets in 2016 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, October 2016b; Puzic, 2016) and 26,000 in 2015 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014). The 18,000 target for 2017 included admissions in all three streams of the Caregiver Program: the previous Live-in Caregiver Program, and the new High Medical Needs and Caring for Children pathways (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, October 2016d). What will happen to the remaining 29,000 cases affected by the backlog who will not be included in the 2017 quota? They may need to wait again until 2018, and many have already waited for 7-8 years and have complied with all the documents required by the IRCC.

Many welcome the improvement to PR processing under the new pathways IRCC has created, but many are insisting that the government should prioritize the applications of those enrolled in the program before the 2014 policy changes. GBA principles entail the provision of fairness, and if the current government wants to adhere with its commitment to GBA, then IRCC should take affirmative action to address the backlog now and not make these vulnerable workers wait any longer. Caregivers and advocates also believe that despite the removal of the live-in requirement and the four-year limit on migrant workers' work permits, many live-in caregivers will still be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because the temporary nature of the program remains the same. Despite the promise of faster processing of PR applications under

the two new streams, advocacy groups find the removal of the humanitarian and compassionate appeals for caregivers' dependents as very problematic and discriminatory. Furthermore, if dependents are medically inadmissible, the caregiver will also be declared inadmissible for PR application.

RETHINKING GBA + AT IRCC: WHAT ELSE CAN THE GOVERNMENT DO TO PROTECT THESE VULNERABLE WORKERS?

The Ministerial instructions for the creation of the two new caregiver pathways will be expiring in November 2019. Considering the timing and focus given to GBA+ and intersectional approach, the IRCC needs to undertake a comprehensive review of the New Caregiver Program specifically to ensure that the cap and the education and language eligibility requirements are equitable and non-discriminatory, and to remove barriers for pathways to PR. The federal government should also consider the call by advocacy groups to provide PR status to all live-in caregivers and other temporary migrant workers and to allow them to enter Canada with their families. This will protect the live-in caregivers and migrant workers from being abused by their employers and allow them to speak up without risks of getting deported.

Canada's GBA+ policy presents new hopes not only for live-in caregivers affected by the immigration backlog but for those who will negatively be impacted under the New Caregiver Program and for those under the other streams of Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). The Federal Government should continue to play a proactive role in protecting the rights of these vulnerable workers by considering the following recommendations:

Addressing the immigration backlog:

- Issuance of a special order to expedite the processing of PR applications and immediately eliminate immigration backlogs involving live-in caregivers and refugees
- Reduce the lengthy processing time of work permit renewals from 114 days to 10 days
- Review section 38 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act for discriminatory content against persons with disabilities (Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, 2016)
- Require only one medical exam for their spouses and children
- Provide special considerations of, and not penalize through outright refusal, applications from live-in caregivers, refugees and other foreign workers pre-

pared by immigration consultants. IRCC should not blame and punish the victims, but ensure that immigration consultants who abuse these workers are prosecuted

- In response to the 'Death of the Sponsor' resolution of the Canadian Council of Refugees (CCR) <http://ccrweb.ca/en/res/death-sponsor>, complete PR application processing considering the best interests of the child and other humanitarian and compassionate considerations; (Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, 2016)
- Repeal Regulation 117(9) (d) of Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, deal with material misrepresentations in Family Class sponsorships as they arise in s. 40 of the IRPA

Fulfilling international obligations:

- Rethink its decision not to ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
- Acknowledge and ratify international human rights frameworks, laws and instruments that offer protection for women migrants (UN and ILO) and instruments/conventions with women specific frameworks such as CEDAW, UN Resolution 1325
- Expedite the consideration for the adoption of International Labour Organization Convention No. 189 (2011) concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers

Reaching out to isolated workers and the development of alternative service delivery model:

- Increase efforts to inform live-in caregivers and migrant workers about their legal rights
- Provide support for organizations working with live-in caregivers and migrant workers
- Develop creative outreach strategies to engage hard to reach workers
- Support the development of alternative approaches to service delivery such as evening and weekend hours, itinerant services and offering various online and phone services
- Proactive support to reunited families

Improving access to services:

- Provide live-in caregivers and migrant workers across Canada access to settlement and language services

- Ensure that all persons have access to healthcare, regardless of immigration status

Protecting live-in caregivers and other migrant workers:

- Treat the home of the employer as any other workspace
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the New Caregiver Program specifically to ensure that the cap, the education and language eligibility requirements are equitable and non-discriminatory and remove the barriers for pathways to PR
- Transition all closed work permits to OPEN work permits
- Give caregivers and other migrant workers landed (PR) status upon arrival.

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SUPPORTING REFUGEE WOMEN: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN LANGUAGE AND SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND RESEARCH

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Systemic barriers affecting refugee women's participation in settlement programs have come to the attention of service providers, policy-makers, and researchers nation-wide. Yet, there is still much to be understood about the impacts of trauma, lack of childcare, and inflexible classroom environments on the long-term integration of newcomer women. Drawing upon grounded examples from the settlement sector, this article reflects on how the gendered dimensions of access to learning opportunities are affecting the resettlement of refugee women in Canada.

Les obstacles systémiques qui affectent la participation des femmes réfugiées aux programmes d'établissement ont été portés à l'attention des fournisseurs de services, des décideurs et des chercheurs à l'échelle nationale. Pourtant, il reste encore beaucoup à comprendre sur les répercussions du traumatisme, du manque de services de garde d'enfants et des environnements de classe inflexibles sur l'intégration à long terme des femmes nouvellement arrivées. En s'appuyant sur des exemples fondés du secteur de l'établissement, cet article examine comment les dimensions de genre de l'accès aux possibilités d'apprentissage affectent le rétablissement des femmes réfugiées au Canada.

Last year, Canada's highly publicized acceptance of over 40,000 (IRCC 2017) refugees reignited cross-country conversations amongst academics, policy-makers, and practitioners around how to keep up with the demand for settlement services. However, many of these conversations failed to take

into account the particular needs of refugee women. Unfortunately, this is not a new trend, as female migrants have historically been left out of such exchanges. Research in the North American context has shown how voices of refugee women are not typically incorporated in research, planning for ser-

vice provisions, and policy design (Goodkind & Deacon 2004).

The Metropolis Conference in March 2017 confirmed that on-the-ground accessibility of settlement programs for women is a pressing issue nationally, as per the presentation on Customized Services for Immigrant Women (Drew, Kinzel, Mubashir, & Ngoga 2017) and Trauma Informed EAL Program for Refugee Women (Jeffries & Wilbur 2017). Service providers from across Canada presented evidence to suggest that refugee women face multiple barriers attending programs that do not meet their childcare, family commitment, and social needs. Such exclusions can have far-reaching consequences across many different aspects of a refugee woman's life, and must be assessed not in isolation, but from the perspective of their interactional effects.

In the context of today's increased numbers of migrants and the spike in refugee claimants seeking asylum in Canada (CBC 2017), this longstanding issue has become particularly noticeable in the area of language programs, where women struggle with lack of childcare, mental health support, and classroom flexibility.

Settlement service practitioners have observed a number of systemic barriers that refugee women face in trying to access language classes and this is further exacerbated for female refugee claimants.

Diana Jeffries (D. Jeffries, personal communication, 2017) cites an example of how a refugee student from a Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (LINC) program struggled with the strict attendance rules. The student was anxious about losing her seat in her LINC class and had therefore left her five-year old child at home so she wouldn't miss the class. When the school learned the child was home alone, the mother was asked to go home to her daughter. She agreed only because she received assurance from the school that her spot would not be taken from her due to her absence.

Though the mother in this situation was striving to learn English since she wished to find employment and was not intentionally neglecting her child, there was discussion among the LINC staff as to whether social services should be informed that the child had been left at home unattended. The teacher in this situation was unable to offer support or flexibility to the mother because of the mandatory LINC attendance rules of only two absences per month.

Dr. Amea Wilbur's research reveals (Wilbur 2015) that these are common barriers (policy and practice) within language programs. Typically, refugee women are the primary caregivers within families and struggle with meeting strict policies around attendance and punctuality. Due to the long wait lists for LINC classes, women who struggle with home life demands are often asked to withdraw from classes if their attendance expectations are not met.

Student attendance expectations and long waitlists to get into language classes aside, many refugee women are also unable to accept places in LINC because the majority of classes do not provide a childcare option. When classes offer childcare on-site, the 18-months to 5-year-old age restriction can be limiting for women with children outside of this age bracket, as observed with the newly arrived Syrian families (Glowacki 2016). Many women have therefore been directed towards the daycare system as a solution. However, childcare fees are expensive, even for mid-income Canadian families, and are usually not a viable option for refugee children. Although program staff often suggest informal methods of childcare through kin networks, many refugee women face isolation, without the extended family or trusted friends to help with childminding needs.

The impact of trauma on learning is another substantial issue affecting refugee women's participation in language classes. The losses most refugees suffer pre-migration, which are often exacerbated by poverty, grief, and the struggles of literacy, education, and language in new home countries have been well researched (Carswell, Blackburn, & Barker 2009). However, there has been less research on the impact of trauma on learning, and how to support English language learners who have suffered trauma on multiple fronts. The few exceptions to this include the seminal work of Horsman (1999) and Isserlis (2000), who address how trauma can impact learning and program planning for adult students. A recent article by Amea Wilbur investigated how English as an Additional Language (EAL) instructors are finding they need more assistance, training, and resources to support refugee populations in the classroom (Wilbur 2016). Nonetheless, there is still much work to be done, since the curriculum and training for most publicly-funded EAL classes do not contain a framework for teaching students who have experienced trauma.

Trauma experienced as part of a refugee woman's forced migration to Canada can impact the student's abilities to participate, recall information, attend classes, and do well on tests and assessments. When instructors are unfamiliar with the impact of trauma on student learning, they often misread symptoms as disengagement, poor effort, and incompetence. Furthermore, students who have experienced trauma may be re-traumatized by policies and practices that do not create inclusive classroom learning. Therefore, additional teacher education in Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) training programs are necessary to support teachers who are working with refugee populations.

In some cases, women-only learning environments are also needed to facilitate refugee women's participation in settlement programs. Co-ed classrooms can be a barrier for learning because of the discomfort or unfamiliarity with learning in male and female classroom. Co-ed classes can also deter some women from fully engaging in learning simply because of the traditional expectation that men's learning needs will take pre-

cedence over women's, and therefore women can sometimes feel less inclined to engage in classroom activities.

Additionally, topics such as women's health, domestic violence, self-care and parenting in a new country are not typically covered in co-ed spaces. Resources shared in LINC classrooms are not targeted to include programs and referral information specific to the needs of refugee women, which tend to differ from the general immigrant population and from refugee men.

The integration process for refugee women is often slow because of the gendered constraints of childcare, classroom flexibility, and a lack of understanding of trauma. Therefore, many individuals remain in isolation for years without learning English or being able to contribute their skills to the Canadian workforce. On a daily basis, this inhibits a refugee woman's ability to communicate with her children's teachers, take an active role in her child's education, make friends, and integrate socially, culturally, and economically into Canadian society. In many cases, mothers become dependent on their children or husbands for translation and economic security, leading to long-term impacts on their lives stemming from a lack of integration.

In a climate where the numbers of displaced persons fleeing war, persecution, and economic instability are unprecedented (UNHCR 2017), Canada has been seen as a beacon of light for upholding the rights of refugees on a failing world stage (Austen 2017). However, as evidenced by the gendered challenges refugee women face outlined in this article, it is necessary that Canada re-think how to best support and include vulnerable refugee women in resettlement programs. Refugee women are important contributors in our society, and it therefore costs us economically and socially to overlook the important roles they can play. In order to assist newcomer women in reaching their full potential, Canada must ensure that the design of settlement programs are not inadvertently overlooking their particular needs and excluding their participation. A combination of research, policy, and training is needed to bridge the current gap in accessibility of language programs for refugee women. At present, the impact of trauma on refugee women's learning remains a critically understudied area. Research into the combined relationships between gender and displacement, and the impact of these factors on resettlement and learning opportunities would assist policymakers and practitioners in developing holistic programming for refugee women. Such research efforts, however, must be combined with support from policy-makers to target evident needs in the areas of childcare, language class attendance flexibility, and women-only programs. Within classrooms, training is needed to assist instructors in understanding students who have experienced trauma as well as classroom practices that may better support them. As apparent from the discussions at the Metropolis 2017 Conference, the needs of refugee women relating to language are finally coming to the attention of ser-

vice providers, researchers, and policymakers. Through the combined efforts of these parties, refugee women will be able to access language programs more easily, leading to smoother and improved integration and far-reaching impacts on the lives of newcomer families in the long-term.

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TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RESPONSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND FAMILIES

RYAN DREW began her career at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. 17 years ago. As the Best Practices Coordinator for Language in the Immigrant Settlement & Integration Program, Ryan supported the training of the Language staff, contributed to proposal development, and the implementation of Best Practices across service regions. In 2015, Ryan was appointed the Regional Manager for the Tri-Cities Immigrant Settlement & Integration Program overseeing settlement and language services in the region. In this role, she implemented new and additional programming to further serve the needs of newcomers in the Tri-Cities region. Now, in her new role as Program Director of the Immigrant Settlement & Integration Program, Ryan is looking forward to continuing to support newcomers to BC with quality settlement and language programming that will assist in their settlement and integration process.

Settlement and adaptation can be particularly challenging for refugee families who have low to no English language ability. Government statistics indicate that amongst resettled refugees who have come to Canada since 2015, 62% are unable to speak an official language. English language learning is a fundamental settlement need and also one of the key facilitators of social and economic integration in Canada. S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has identified crucial areas where major settlement and language learning needs of refugee families intersect. These intersections include family supports (including childminding and school attachment), employment, health, and family literacy needs. In order to develop service approaches that are highly responsive to the needs of refugee women and families S.U.C.C.E.S.S. presents integrated and cost effective service approaches that are essential to innovative and effective language programming and are highly responsive to the needs of refugee families. This presents the first step towards developing a responsive English Language programming model to support refugee settlement in Canada.

L'établissement et l'adaptation peuvent être particulièrement difficiles pour les familles de réfugiés qui ont peu ou pas d'aptitudes en anglais. Les statistiques gouvernementales indiquent que parmi les réfugiés réétablis qui sont venus au Canada depuis 2015, 62% sont incapables de parler une langue officielle. L'apprentissage de l'anglais est un besoin d'établissement fondamental et l'un des principaux facilitateurs de l'intégration sociale et économique au Canada. S.U.C.C.E.S.S. a identifié des domaines cruciaux où les principaux besoins d'établissement et d'apprentissage des langues des familles de réfugiés se recoupent. Ces intersections comprennent les soutiens familiaux (incluant la garde d'enfants et l'attachement à l'école), l'emploi, la santé et les besoins d'alphabétisation de la famille. Afin de développer des approches de service qui répondent bien aux besoins des femmes et des familles réfugiées, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. présente des approches de service intégrées à bon rapport coût/efficacité qui sont essentielles à une programmation langagière novatrice et efficace et répondent très bien aux besoins des familles de réfugiés. Ceci constitue la première étape vers l'élaboration d'un modèle de programmation de langue anglaise adapté pour soutenir l'établissement des réfugiés au Canada.

The literature demonstrates a myriad of examples of the daunting challenges and barriers refugees face in their host countries. These barriers include language difficulties, financial challenges, cultural differences and housing shortages, among others (e.g., Morris, Popper, Rodwell, Brodine & Brouwer, 2009; Simich, Beiser, Stewart, & Mwakarimba, 2005; Murray and Skull, 2005; McKeary & Newbold, 2010). Refugees, as a socio-demographic group, have common needs and similar barriers which are experienced differently by women and men, and have different impacts. In the literature that focusses on the language learning needs of refugees as a homogenous group, often the complex and gendered needs of refugee women are overlooked or obfuscated. Cognizant of how refugee women's settlement needs and experiences are qualitatively different from those of men, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. conducted focus groups with refugee women to explore their perspectives and experiences with accessing and attending English language training – a central element in their settlement journey. The results of this research highlight the need to develop responsive settlement language programming to ensure refugee women have access to language learning services that are responsive to their experiences as refugee women settling in Canada.

METHOD

For this research, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. employed a research methodology that utilized qualitative investigation by conducting a focus group to explore their experiences and perspectives on accessing services intended to support newcomers in their settlement journey.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. conducted a focus group in November 2016 with fifteen refugee women participants to determine the needs, challenges and English language learning goals of refugee women. The focus group session was conducted in the province of British Columbia, in the city of Surrey. A total of 15 refugee women participated in the focus group, with over 70% of respondents being refugees from Syria (11); the remaining from Iraq (3) and Eritrea (1). 80% of participants (12) had been in Canada for six to twelve months. Over 70% of participants (11) were government-assisted refugees (GARs). In this focus group, 60% of participants were aged 25 to 44 with 1 participant between 18-24 years, 2 participants between 45-54 years, 1 between 55-64, and 2 were 65 years and above.

RESULTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP

Settlement goals facilitated by improved English language

Capacity: The participants in the focus group identified specific settlement goals particular to their socio-demographic group that they thought would be best supported through their participation in tailored English language learning opportunities. Their goals included: attaining employment, securing Canadian citizenship, independently navigating the Canadian healthcare system, assisting their children with school work, and establishing connections to other women in the community to facilitate feelings of belonging.

Participants also identified and discussed their specific needs for acquiring English language skills, and their barriers to learning English language.

Needs for Language Instruction: Participants reported that they want to learn English that is directly relevant to the tasks of daily living. These included: English language pertinent to shopping, banking, socializing, health and health care; looking for housing and communicating with landlords along with accessing government services; inter alia. Participants reported the need to strengthen their computer skills and vocabulary for common technology-related information. For social situations, participants reported the need to learn about cultural norms in terms of appropriate and inappropriate conversation topics and words, as well as typical etiquette. In addition, participants reported a need for a teacher who spoke their first language in lower level English classes to facilitate their learning. Some participants reported preference for slower paced classes, while others wanted classes that were more intensive. Participants also reported wanting more activities and interactive components in the classroom, such as discussions and learning about/with English media including television shows, movies, and news reports. Furthermore, some participants reported wanting to focus more on writing, while others, particularly older participants, wanted to focus more on speaking skills in a less structured format.

Barriers to accessing English language training: Despite having clear settlement goals and specific needs within English language classes, focus group participants and frontline workers also identified a variety of significant impediments to accessing English language classes and moving towards their attainment of their settlement goals.

Participants identified long waiting lists for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes as the primary barrier affecting their English language learning along with an insufficient number of childcare spaces. The participants reported that without childcare support to attend language class, those mothers with pre-school aged children would not be able to attend. A related point is that participants mentioned the lack of English classes for clients with special needs. Still on the learning environment, some participants described how the lack of more gender-specific classes or activities make English learning less accessible to women with the barrier of not being fully able to openly discuss and

learn about services, resources, and information that could support their health and well-being. Finally, participants also reported that inclement and severe weather often prevented them from attending classes as the majority either are required to walk or are unable to afford the public transit cost to travel to language classes.

DISCUSSION

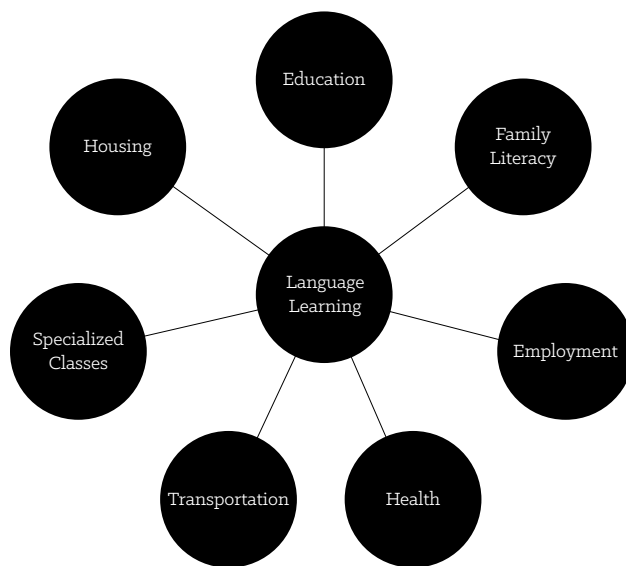
The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program – an Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funded language training activity – is designed to assist immigrants and refugees to overcome language barriers, facilitating their integration into Canadian society; however, this program does not appear to meet the unique English language learning goals, needs and challenges of refugee women who participated in the focus group. According to Bettencourt et al. (2003), “LINC was premised on the idea that the ability of newcomers to communicate in one of Canada’s official languages was the key to integration...” (p.xiii). The mandate of the LINC program is to provide basic language instruction to adult newcomers in either of Canada’s two official languages (English and French) and to facilitate the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees into Canadian society (Cleghorn, 2000; Papillon, 2002; Thomson & Derwing, 2004; Fleming, 2007). The LINC program is generic and is generally not tailored to meet the needs of any specific newcomer group, rather it embraces all eligible newcomers. A case in point is that the LINC program has a general set curriculum following monthly settlement themes such as housing, transportation, education, health, banking, etc. Classes run on specified days and times and learners are required to regularly attend class on these prescribed days. Often, refugee women have insurmountable challenges that prevent them from attending classes regularly or from attending at all. These challenges include child care, insecure housing, health issues and transportation costs, among others. It is within this context that the LINC program does not fully meet the specific needs of refugee women that we recommend innovative English Language programming that is more responsive to the needs of this socio-demographic group.

RECOMMENDATION – THE LANGUAGE RESPONSIVE INTEGRATED APPROACH

The responsive language program recommended addresses the key identified access barriers of refugee women, their settlement goals and their English language training needs. This approach is targeted for this particular group and provides integrated settlement services as well as delivery methods that reduce barriers to support improved outcomes for refugee

women. The model of such an approach is presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: LANGUAGE RESPONSIVE INTEGRATED APPROACH (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.)



Each of the components of the model works to facilitate access to language training and/or accelerate progress towards a settlement goal for refugee women. Each of the components will be expanded upon to demonstrate the responsiveness of the integrated approach.

HOUSING

In the Metro Vancouver area of British Columbia, there is a significant need for affordable rental housing. In February of 2016, the Toronto Star reported that lack of affordable housing had left refugees stuck in hostels and hotels, delaying their chance to settle into Canadian life (Friday, Feb 5, 2016). Due to low vacancy rates and high rental costs, the ability to secure safe and appropriate housing has become more tenuous. As such, according to Francis and Hiebert (2014), immigrants and refugees have indicated that they: live in overcrowded and poor living conditions; experience discrimination based on family size as well as on race/ethnic/cultural/national background, and language/accent; and have even experienced homelessness. The ability to secure appropriate and safe housing can be affected by a number of factors, but a significant aspect is insufficient English language ability (Francis & Hiebert, 2014).

The proposed integrative program would determine the contexts and situations in which learners would need to use English language in securing housing for their families, and focus instruction on those contexts by bringing in *realia* and authentic materials that would build language skills while boosting confidence in using the language within these con-

texts. The classes would cover *case studies* based on student needs, such as, the process of finding housing, communicating with the landlord, information and referral to housing-related organizations, reading housing advertisements, etc. This would result in an emergent curriculum that would be adaptive to the ever-changing needs of learners.

EDUCATION

With a theme such as education, parents need to be supported and oriented on the expectations placed on parents' involvement with their child's education and how they can have conversations with teachers and school officials on their child's progress and learning. Akin to housing, the curriculum would cover case studies that support parents so that they could participate in their children's education such as parent-teacher interviews, student-led conferences, field trips, student absences, report cards, and volunteer opportunities at schools.

FAMILY LITERACY

Family literacy encourages families to learn together while addressing the barrier of limited childminding availability. Both parents and children increase their language and literacy abilities through participating in this type of programming. Classes would be less formal and tailored for families with young children (aged 3 to 5). This model can, however, be adapted for older school-aged children as well. In similar ways as the housing and education domains, the curriculum would make use of *case studies* that support parents to participate in their children's development: reciting nursery rhymes to their children, reading simple developmental books with their child, singing songs with actions, etc.

EMPLOYMENT

The refugee women who participated in the focus group reported a settlement goal of supporting their family financially by securing employment. In this connection, the proposed English language program would be tailored to develop occupation-specific language programs. The focus and thrust of the program would be developing curriculum focused on high demand occupations that match the background of the learners. For example, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. developed and implemented a program called Project-based Language Training – for Retail Trades and Construction. These programs were in high demand and demonstrated excellent outcomes among the learners. For students with lower language proficiency, classes could focus on sectors such as food preparation and processing or hospitality cleaning services (focused on language such as: small talk, giving/receiving instructions, workplace safety, etc.).

HEALTH

As established among the focus group, having gender-specific classes to enable open dialogue and discussion is particularly important, but especially in the area of health and healthcare access. One female participant, for instance, mentioned that she had left a class because she did not feel comfortable communicating freely with men she did not know. Not only would the participants gain language competence to independently navigate the Canadian healthcare system, but would also build confidence in seeking help and benefiting from community supports available. Women refugees would be empowered to utilize public services and resources that would improve their health and ultimately their settlement and integration. Further, refugee women would have an opportunity to expand their networks by connecting with other women in class, hence strengthening their community integration. As such, gender-specific classes focused on educating women on language that could be used to independently navigate the healthcare system while focusing on health-related topics such as: mental health, healthy relationships, emotional health, and reproductive health are critically needed.

TRANSPORTATION

One unique feature of the responsive approach is the delivery method. In traditional LINC classes, students attend class at a fixed location and time at the service provider's classroom/office space. For the responsive integrated approach, we suggest 'the mobile teacher approach' – the teacher travels to the learners and teaches those learners in their own communities. The teacher and the learners would use common spaces in buildings, or community organisations such as mosques and churches that would eliminate travel time and costs. By removing the burden and financial stress of traveling to a distant location, refugee women would be comfortable to attend language training. Further, these learners might also be able to garner the support of neighbours or friends living in their building to provide short-term childcare while these mothers attend classes.

SPECIALIZED CLASSES

Having the ability to offer specialized classes to meet the emerging needs of learners would not only help to increase language proficiency, but it is envisaged that even literacy would improve tremendously through intensive reading and writing classes; vocabulary expansion and basic computer skills training in partnership with libraries.

CONCLUSION

The settlement goals of women refugees are significant and varied. English language learning remains a key factor in facilitating viable refugee settlement and integration into Canadian society. In the context of English language training needs, settlement goals and access barriers were identified by focus group participants in this study. It was evident that generic English language training programs such as the LINC program do not adequately cater for the unique circumstances confronting women refugees in BC, and by extension in Canada. It is therefore necessary to create customized English language training programs such as the Language Responsive Integrated Approach which combines a variety of approaches and settlement service streams to accelerate the settlement and integration of refugee women. The approach provides English language training while simultaneously addressing barriers which may prevent this group from meeting their English language training needs and settlement goals that this demographic are striving to attain. It is envisaged that such programs would accelerate the settlement and integration of refugee women in Canada.

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SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL LEARNING AND TRAINING FOR LOW LITERACY IMMIGRANT WOMEN: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH BETWEEN THE CALGARY IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION AND BOW VALLEY COLLEGE

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Immigrant and refugee women with limited or interrupted education face a range of challenges to full participation and integration into Canadian society, including longer times to learn Canada's official languages and barriers to employment. This necessitates a broad array of immigrant bridging programs that immigrant and refugee women can avail and that are customized and tailored to their specific needs. The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) in partnership with the Bow Valley College (BVC) developed one such program to assist low literacy women transition to the Canadian workplace as Child Development Assistants in the child care field. This article presents the model upon which this program is based and outlines key aspects that led to average employability rate of 93% among its clients.

Les femmes immigrantes et réfugiées ayant une éducation limitée ou interrompue font face à une série de défis pour participer et s'intégrer pleinement à la société canadienne, incluant des périodes plus longues pour apprendre les langues officielles du Canada ainsi que des obstacles à l'emploi. Cela nécessite un large éventail de programmes de transition pour les immigrants accessibles aux femmes immigrantes et réfugiées et personnalisés et adaptés à leurs besoins particuliers. La Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA), en partenariat avec le Bow Valley College (BVC), a mis au point un programme visant à aider les femmes peu alphabétisées à faire leur entrée sur le marché du travail en tant qu'assistantes au développement des enfants. Cet article présente le modèle sur lequel repose ce programme et décrit les principaux aspects qui ont mené à un taux moyen d'employabilité de 93 % parmi ses clients.

CONTEXT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

CALGARY

For several years now, service providers in Calgary have been committed to creating and supporting programs and services that help immigrant and refugee women attain equitable employment and full participation in Canadian society. The labour market participation rate of women was 8 percent lower than for men, while the labour market participation rate of immigrant women was 7 percent lower than for the rest of the female population. Women with a low level of literacy in their first language and up to seven to eight years of education from their home countries also face more difficulties in the labour market than other immigrants. Among the female immigrant population, recent arrivals were the least likely to be employed when compared with women who had been landed immigrants for a longer period (Chui, 2015).

According to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the economic situation of recent immigrants has worsened over the past decade; in addition, difficulties integrating into the labour market can cause depression, family tensions and other mental stresses on the family (Wilson & Murtza, 2010). This necessitates a broad array of immigrant bridging programs that immigrant and refugee women can avail and that are customized and tailored to their needs.

CALGARY IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) was established in 1982 as a non-profit organization to address the needs and concerns of immigrant and refugee women, youth, children and families in Calgary. CIWA takes a holistic approach in the delivery of 50 programs and services in the areas of settlement and integration, literacy and language training, employment support and bridging programs, family violence, parenting, individual counselling, in-home support, civic engagement, health, housing and community development. This is reflected in the mission of the agency to engage and integrate all immigrant women and their families in the community and CIWA's five values: integrity, equity, inclusiveness, innovation and leadership.

During its 35 year history, CIWA has developed innovative programs, entered into partnerships and has become an organization that is truly responsive to the unique and diverse needs of its constituency. Over the years, CIWA has made the transition to Canada a more comfortable, pleasant and successful one for more than 90,000 immigrant women and their families. In the past four years alone, CIWA has served over 1,300 low literacy women through employment programs geared towards women with interrupted education.

In the past fiscal year, CIWA worked in partnership with 157 employer partners to provide mentorship, work experience placements, and networking opportunities for our clientele. Of these employers, 101 provided work experience placements for CIWA's low literacy immigrant and refugee clientele. These employers range from daycare centres in both non-profit and private sectors to the food service industry, hotel and caretaking industry as well as the retail sector.

BOW VALLEY COLLEGE

Bow Valley College (BVC) has a long and strong history of working alongside community; its mission states: "Where people live and work, Bow Valley College will contribute to the vitality of communities and the strength of the economy through innovative adult education programs and services that equip people for successful living, lifelong learning, and work in a global, knowledge-based economy" (Bow Valley College, p.4, 2015). The partnership approach utilized in the collaboration between CIWA and BVC is an example of the college's vision in practice.

In the 2014-15 academic year, BVC served 15,000 students. Of those students, 76 percent are female and the average age is 27. The college student body is a diverse community of learners with over 98 languages represented (Bow Valley College, 2014). BVC's Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) programming is housed within the School of Community Studies under the auspice of the Centre for Early Development and Applied Research (CEDAR). CEDAR, through the lens of cultural diversity, supports the social-emotional well-being and mental health of children, youth, family, and community through exemplary programming and applied research. The ELCC program supports approximately 400 students per semester with an annual intake of 200 learners. The program consists of (1) a certificate based on eight courses (45 hours and three credits each) along with two required practicums, and (2) a diploma involving 16 courses (45 hours and three credits each) with an additional four required practicums. The program is heavily over-subscribed, with a waitlist of one year. The English language proficiency requirements if your first language is not English are: IELTS – Academic 6 with minimum band score of 5.5; TOEFL – 83; Academic English 2 (BVC course) B-; CLB 8 in each strand; or transcripts demonstrating successful completion of 3 years full time secondary education in English or transcripts demonstrating successful completion of 1 year full time post-secondary education in English. As noted by CIWA staff, these admission requirements are beyond the current English language abilities of the clients they serve in this program.

The Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement (CEIIA) at Bow Valley College provides programming and services in: English language learning, career

advancement, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship. CEIIA is involved in a project titled “Enhancing Well-being and Civic Engagement of Immigrant Women Retirees.” This two-year SSHRC-funded Community and College Social Fund project has BVC and the CIWA partnered to investigate the critical barriers and available supports for retired immigrant women.

CHALLENGES

According to UNESCO, of the world’s 774 million illiterate adults, 60 percent are women, a statistic that has not changed in 20 years (UNESCO, 2014). Immigrant and refugee women with limited or interrupted education face a range of barriers to full participation and integration into Canadian society. English language learners who lack literacy in their first language require significantly longer time to learn as they are working on both language and literacy simultaneously (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2016); among literacy learners, some have never held a pencil or a pen before. Further, they are learning English and literacy in the context of a new country, culture, and community. Many literacy learners have unique techniques to interact with the literate world and often develop stronger oral skills to compensate for their inability to read and write; others are dependent on children, spouses and other family members to help them navigate their communities and interactions. The barriers to employment faced by immigrant and refugee women with limited or interrupted education are many and go beyond English language and basic literacy. Some of the barriers include:

- Lack of work experience in their home country; many women were not allowed to work and stayed at home to care for their children and family.
- Lack of understanding of workplace expectations and Canadian business culture. Canadian business culture comes with spoken and unspoken demands of behaviour and attitude, which may be very different from other cultures.
- Limited soft skills or differing perceptions regarding hours of work, timeliness, following and understanding rules, and interacting with coworkers and supervisors.
- Lack of a supportive community and isolation; many are single parents, which increases the challenges they face. They struggle with:
 - Regular and ongoing stress related to limited or lack of income and the inability to pay bills and provide for their families.
 - Juggling inflexible or demanding work schedules

with daycare, after school care and family needs; making childcare arrangements can be very complex without a thorough understanding of how to find childcare and/or before or after school care.

- Not having the resources to pay for daycare at the commencement of employment.
- Being restricted from employment due to hiring processes. Interviews over the phone or in person are intimidating for most; employers who are not familiar with cross cultural communication and do not understand the language barriers faced by these women will often overlook them as a viable labour source. Many employers invest in psychometric assessments, pre-employment testing or questionnaires that are dependent on cultural understanding and/or higher levels of literacy and English than are required for the job.
- Employment environments that do not take into consideration these women’s specific language and literacy needs in hiring, training and ongoing communication. Some employers assume prior knowledge and understanding of a job or task.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THIS DEMOGRAPHIC

CIWA began its journey supporting low literacy immigrant and refugee women in 1999 with the Pebbles in the Sand program, a pre-Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program which equips participants with basic literacy, English language and learning skills required to excel in English language learning classrooms. CIWA watched Pebbles graduates work tirelessly; however, many graduates lacked sufficient opportunities to join the workforce, and those who did transition to employment often struggled to maintain their job or excel in their positions. Thus, in 2007, CIWA launched the Childcare Training Program for Low Literacy Immigrant Women with funding from the government of Alberta. Since then, with support from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), CIWA has expanded its programming to include a variety of learning, employment training and bridging services for low literacy clientele including the following:

- Low literacy ESL programming through language classes, home visitation (HIPPO) as well as focused support for struggling language learners.
- Counselling and job search support for those with limited proficiency in English.
- Retail Training by learning customer service, retail vocabulary, using documents, WHMIS and food safety, working with money, cashier training and

phone skills.

- Food Service Training for the quick service industry by learning customer relations, occupational vocabulary, numeracy, weights and measures, food safety, sanitation, equipment training and handling.
- Modular Employment Training to work in cleaning, hotel housekeeping or kitchen help by learning housekeeping and kitchen vocabulary, WHMIS, health and safety, working with others, room attendant skills, kitchen help skills, schedule & phone skills and customer service.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN SUPPORTING LOW-LITERACY WOMEN

At the forefront of effective practices in supporting low literacy immigrant women is the customization and tailoring of service delivery to meet the labour market integration needs of vulnerable populations. For example, the FCSS Research Brief Three cites a recent policy paper, in which Alboim and McIsaac (2007) delineate promising practices for programs to improve immigrants' employment, comprising bridging and work experience programs, job mentoring in the field and language training as essential components (FCSS, 2014); all of which are incorporated into our bridging programs. Such customization includes the entire spectrum of program and service delivery starting with client intake and needs assessment, continuing on to skills training that incorporates the latest innovations in program design and skill acquisition, utilizing resources and technology grounded in research, availing opportunities that mirror workplaces in form of mentored job placements and finally, evaluating and measuring results to ensure that the program abides by the outcome measurement frameworks.

Programs designed with low-literacy populations in mind must take an asset based approach, utilizing the skills that learners bring to the program and tapping into their prior learning experiences either via concrete skills or lived experience. Integration of life skills into programs designed for those with limited education is crucial to ensure that the gap between prior experience (education and work) and Canadian experiences is bridged. This bridging can further be supported by a mentored job placement where program participants are exposed to the Canadian workplace environment and labour market. Such work experience is typically provided by business partners from the not-for-profit and private sectors and are in line with labour market needs and the participant's interests, skills and abilities as concluded in the career planning activities.

THE MODEL: CHILDCARE TRAINING FOR LOW LITERACY IMMIGRANT WOMEN

CIWA AND BVC EDUCATION COLLABORATION

The current BVC and CIWA's childcare training collaboration began in 2011. The program assists women with seven years of education or less in their home country transition to the Canadian workplace as Child Development Assistants in the child care field. BVC supports the program through the provision of the Orientation course from the Ministry of Children's Services Child Care Certification division within a fee for service arrangement.

The program's educational model addresses the unique barriers that these women face by providing them with specialized occupational training and Essential Skills development with particular attention to their individual learning styles. The curriculum takes cognizance of conceptualizing/contextualizing new learning and is tailored to meet the unique needs of individual learning styles by incorporating various instructional methodologies and instructional theories such as: Literacy Development, Hands-on Learning, Conceptual Learning, Whole Language Instruction, Participatory Instruction, and Observational Learning.

The English language learning and Child Care Orientation course is provided onsite at CIWA's main location downtown and is delivered jointly by a CIWA staff member and a BVC Early Learning and Child Care instructor. The program consists of delivery of the Child Care Orientation course materials provided by the Ministry of Children's Services by the BVC instructor and English language instruction and support provided by the CIWA instructor.

Work experience placements consist of eight weeks of full time mentored work experience at a host company that assigns a staff member to mentor the participant and thus to ensure that the work experience opportunity is one of learning and growth. The supervisor/mentor can be the direct supervisor or a co-worker. There were over 25 on-site observation-support visits per intake, and over 30 meetings with clients and supervisors to discuss issues, gain and provide feedback, and numerous telephone support sessions conducted with supervisors and clients.

LOOKING FORWARD

After eight years of a successful partnership, BVC and CIWA are preparing to launch the next phase of programming for low literacy immigrant and refugee women, Child Development Worker Certification, funded by IRCC. The program will provide mid-literacy clients with the support needed to successfully enter and complete the Life Experience Equivalency Process (LEEP). Alberta Children's Services developed LEEP to allow employed Child Development Assistants to

demonstrate that they have the competencies to advance to child development worker certification without taking a college certificate program. CIWA and BVC will ensure that the necessary supports are in place and are accessible to clients so that they are successful in attaining certification in Early Learning and Child Care and Child Development Worker. This new initiative will help graduates of the Childcare Training Program as well as other eligible, mid-level literacy women grow their careers in the early childhood development sector. Partnerships such as the one between CIWA and BVC are of great benefit for all. They provide higher social return on investment, averaging a 93 percent employability rate over the past five years in this case, and they ensure a higher value added benefit for clients overall.

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GENDER DYNAMICS OF TEMPORARY PLACEMENT AGENCY WORK: (IM)MIGRANTS, KNOW YOUR PLACE!

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For newcomers to Canada, placement agencies (or temp agencies) are a common path into a labour market that is difficult to access. It is widely documented that temp agencies are linked to precarious work conditions, dangerous occupational health conditions, racialized and gendered division of labour, and the exploitation of precarious immigration statuses. Our study shows that gender plays out strongly in (im)migrants' experiences of temp agency work. Regardless of their previous education or experiences it is their immigration status, race and gender that seemed to dictate the types of work available to them. We discuss five elements of workers' experiences that were strongly shaped by gender: their sectors of work; their tasks within the workplace; gender-normative bullying; sexual harassment and assault; and their management of work-life balance.

Pour les nouveaux arrivants au Canada, les agences de placement (ou les agences de placement temporaire) sont une voie commune vers un marché du travail difficile d'accès. Il est largement documenté que les agences de placement temporaire sont liées à des conditions de travail précaires, à des conditions de santé professionnelles dangereuses, à la division du travail racialisée et sexuée et à l'exploitation de statuts d'immigration précaires. Notre étude montre que le genre joue un rôle important dans les expériences des (im)migrants dans le travail temporaire. Indépendamment de leurs études antérieures ou de leurs expériences, c'est leur statut d'immigration, leur race et leur sexe qui ont dicté les types de travail disponibles. Nous discutons de cinq éléments de l'expérience des travailleurs qui ont été fortement façonnés par le genre: secteurs de travail, tâches sur le lieu de travail, intimidation sexiste, harcèlement sexuel et voies de fait, et gestion de l'équilibre entre vie professionnelle et vie privée.

When temporary placement agencies, or temp agencies, first emerged they originally focused on casual female clerical workers who filled in for regular workers on vacation or sick leave. Today, however, temp agencies are ubiquitous in the labour market and the profile of their target employees has expanded far beyond the young, white, female clerical worker. Employers in all sectors (private and public, unionized and non-unionized, white- and blue-collar, male- and female-dominated workplaces) now hire temp agencies and the 'temporariness' of the contracts is often debatable. For newcomers to Canada, temp agencies are a common path into a labour market that is widely documented to be tough to gain access to with foreign credentials and work experience.

In this article, we begin with a brief review of the literature before introducing our three-year longitudinal study looking at the trajectories of (im)migrant agency workers. We then share our findings illustrating the racialized gender dynamics at play in agency work, underscoring how gender stereotypes are imposed on workers and exploited for employer profit. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for policy, practice and future research.

THE CHALLENGES OF WORKING FOR A TEMP AGENCY

The key distinguishing feature of temporary placement agencies is their introduction of a triangular employment relationship. Workers are hired by the temp agency (their official employer), yet their day-to-day work is contracted out by the agency to be performed on the premises of and under the supervision of the client company (Vosko, 2010; Salamanca Cardona, 2017). Under normal employment relationships, it is the company directing and overseeing the daily work that would be respon-

sible for work conditions and occupational health and safety (OHS) (Lippel et al, 2011). The triangular relationship of temp work puts such safeguards at risk because identifying the party responsible for worker protection is not straightforward (CNT, 2013). The result is that agency workers are often paid less than their non-agency co-workers, face the most risk of workplace illness and accidents, and report serious difficulties related to the unstable nature of the work (CTTI, 2016; Underhill & Quinlan, 2011; Lippel et al, 2012).

Despite these problems, in the Canadian labour market temp agencies are common and increasingly so since 2000 (Choudry & Henaway, 2012); in 2013 they represented a \$12.5 billion industry (Statistics Canada, 2015). In Québec, the site of our research, it is estimated that there are more than 1,000 agencies in operation (Choudry & Henaway, 2012), yet in the absence of any legal licensing framework it is impossible to have an accurate number (Bernier, 2012, 2014). It is widely documented that temp agencies are linked to precarious and dangerous work conditions with poor occupational health protections. They are also prominent in racialized and gendered divisions of labour and in the exploitation of precarious immigration statuses (Bernier, 2012; Choudry & Henaway, 2016; Salamanca Cardona, 2017). This is a trend that intensified in the early 2000s (Theodore & Peck, 2002) as agencies were hired by an increasing array of employers looking to cut costs and avoid longer-term legal commitments to employees (Gonos & Martino, 2011; Choudry & Henaway, 2012; Van Arsdale, 2013).

Recent scholarship has documented some of the means by which temp agencies are leveraging racialization in order to provide labour to employers; for example through the use of spatial and geographic segregation of temp workers from the broader community (Gonos and Martino, 2011; Peck and

Theodore, 2002) and targeted recruitment based on ethnicity, migrant status and language proficiency (Canek, 2016; Villarrubia-Mendoza, 2016; Vaillancourt, 2014). For racialized immigrant women, working in temp agencies intensifies the effects of systemic discrimination already experienced in the labour market through, for example, professional segregation (Cognet & Fortin, 2003; Chicha & Charest, 2013), lack of equity payment (Déom & Beaumont, 2008; Beeman, 2011; Chicha & Charest, 2013), and professional disqualification (Chicha, 2009). The precarious nature of temp agency work makes it more difficult to manage family care needs, which disproportionately affects women (Grant & Nadin, 2007, as cited by Chicha, 2009).

For (im)migrant workers facing discrimination in the labour market (Galabuzi, 2006; Block & Galabuzi, 2011), temp work remains accessible, and temp agencies become their first Canadian work experiences (Choudry & Henaway, 2016). The conditions of work are very difficult and often in violation of labour standards and OHS regulations (Calugay, Henaway & Shragge, 2011).

HOW DOES WORKING FOR A TEMP AGENCY AFFECT THE SETTLEMENT TRAJECTORY OF (IM)MIGRANTS?

Inspired by the temp agency casework and organizing experiences of the Immigrant Workers Centre in Montréal, our research team embarked upon a three-year longitudinal study. Our objective was to examine to what extent engaging in temp work helped or hindered (im)migrant workers in achieving their broad settlement objectives. We followed 40 workers employed in five different sectors (warehouse, food transformation, health care, professional work, and day labour). Table 1 outlines the participants' socio-demographic profile.

(IM)MIGRANT WOMEN AND MEN AGENCY WORKERS: KNOW YOUR PLACE!

Here we report on the ways in which gender played into the experiences of these agency migrant workers. Regardless of their previous education or experiences, their interests or aptitudes, it was their immigration status, race and gender that seemed to dictate the types of work available to our participants. We discuss five elements of workers' experiences that were strongly shaped by gender: their **sectors of work**; their tasks within the workplace; gender-normative bullying; sexual harassment and assault; and their management of work-life balance.

TABLE 1. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT

Gender	44% women	56% men
Age	73% prime working age, between 26-44 years old	
Family situation	49% single 68% have children	51% married 43% of these children in their country of origin
Language	85% speak French	65% trilingual (French, English, other)
Education	80% have post-secondary education	20% have post-graduate education 88% would like to study in Canada
Immigration Status	53% citizens or permanent residents	47% precarious status (including 17% undocumented) All continents except Australia

To begin, there was a clear gendered division of the sectors of work. While three of the sectors included in our study employed both men and women – the most precarious sector (day labour) and the two with the best conditions (health-care and professional work) – two other sectors were heavily gender segregated. The warehouse sector included almost exclusively men and the food transformation sector encompassed disproportionately women. For the workers in these sectors, it was absolutely clear that their agency would not easily hire across these gender lines. One of our male participants describes the agency representative hiring for a new food transformation job:

They say, “There is going to be work tomorrow: Friday. Who wants to work?” And I lifted my hand, but they told me “Not you. I just want her and her and her.” All women.

Within any particular workplace, it was the norm that individual **job tasks** were assigned according to gender stereotypes. Men are called upon to do lifting and work with heavy machinery because they are supposedly stronger and have more physical endurance. Women do the fine-detail packaging, repetitive fine motions and light assembly because their supposedly delicate hands and eye for detail make them more trustworthy in this work. Such gendered task division was visible in the mixed warehouse workplaces (almost exclusively heavy lifting and heavy machinery for men) and in food transformation (attention to recipes, cooking for women). While the agencies and the client companies assign tasks along these gendered lines, the workers themselves are sometimes uncomfortable if they are asked to cross the gender dividing line, as we hear in this woman worker's description

of when a man comes to her workplace:

Men don't like to go there too much because they are lazy! Ha ha ha... There are some men that came there and they don't like to stay because it is little money and it is a lot of work. So there are some tasks they don't like to do... to sweep. This one man got really upset... He said he didn't sweep at his home, so why should he at work?! Ha ha ha!

In all sectors, agency workers also reported significant **gender-normative bullying**, harassment directed towards women and men that questioned their gender identities and sexual orientations or pressured them to adopt more gender-normative appearances or behaviours. One man working in food transformation shared:

Many times, I felt that the people just stayed staring at me, and I felt ashamed. There are many things I heard near the end. The three main things I heard from people about me are (a) he looks like a gay, (b) he seems to be sexually obsessed, (c) something must have happened to him. Then, one never can be with tranquility.

In the food transformation sector women were also pressured to fit the norm, as illustrated in this woman worker account about a friend:

One day that [supervisor] asked her "What do you have on your face?" Because she was wearing makeup. She is almost never with makeup [...] Well, this time she put some makeup on her eyes and this woman told her, "It is a little weird because you look like a bitch." And my friend said, "What?" I told her what that word means and that I know in English that word is used a lot... It is like passive aggressive. Half true, half joking.

Finally, women agency workers reported instances of **sexual harassment** from both the agency representatives responsible for the attribution of contracts and for the distribution of pay, and from supervisors in the workplace. Instances of women being led to understand that "dating" the supervisor ensured easier job tasks and more stability in the contract, as well as unwanted touching and sexual comments in the workplace, were reported across the sectors. In the health care sector, where women workers are called upon to provide services, often solo in private homes, there were also two instances reported of attempted **sexual assault** by a male family member of the care recipient. In both situations the workers escaped, but only after being physically assaulted. Both workers reported the assault to other family members and to their agencies, but nothing substantive occurred. Rather, each woman was advised on how to 'keep herself safe'. Despite these incidences, both felt they needed to hang onto the job and kept working until they were finally able to find another opportunity.

The final major gendered phenomenon we found in our research was the gender differences in terms of their need to find a **work-life balance**. Here, the pattern follows the common traditional household division of labour with men occupying the role of primary breadwinner and women occupying the role of the primary family caregiver. We often heard, therefore, of women trying to secure contracts with schedules that accommodated their caregiving responsibilities or, if unable to do so, taking great effort to ensure that children or other dependent family members were cared for in their absence. As a result women generally worked fewer paid hours than men. In the absence of any security in scheduling, men described taking on multiple shifts to make as much money as possible, sometimes combining this with studies. Any caregiving responsibilities at home were primarily looked after by their female partners.

CONCLUSION

Gender is a key factor layered onto others, such as race and immigration status, in explaining the experiences of (im) migrant temp agency workers. While it is widely recognized that temp agency work is deeply problematic and lends itself to exploitation of workers, a gender lens brings to the fore how the experience plays out differently depending upon one's social location. Regarding sector of work, the gender of a worker can determine the type and amount of work made available to them. Gendered work tasks shape the kinds of health and safety risks people are exposed to. Gender-normative bullying and harassment shape work environment interactions, promoting traditional gender stereotypes and heteronormativity, as well as exposure to violence, resulting in further marginalization. Lastly, gender also shapes the ways in which workers conceive of the costs and benefits of temp agency work, for example in relation to family responsibilities. While such dynamics exist in other forms of employment, the temp agency sector is so precarious that workers feel they have little choice or recourse. Given the ubiquity of temp agency work as first employment for newcomers to Canada, it is essential for those who work in the field of immigration – whether as policymakers, frontline workers or as scholars – to understand the role of racialized gender dynamics in temp agencies, and how that frames settlement and integration experiences.

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COMPRENDRE LA CONFLUENCE DU GENRE, DE LA RACE ET DE LA CHARGE FAMILIALE POUR MIEUX INTERVENIR SUR L'INTÉGRATION DES IMMIGRANTES MAGHRÉBINES AU QUÉBEC

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Cet article explore la déqualification des immigrantes racisées au Québec avec une approche intersectionnelle. L'objectif, est de comprendre est de visibiliser le rôle et le poids de la famille, des dynamiques de genre, et de la race dans la compréhension de la déqualification de ces immigrantes. Cette démarche nous permettra de dépasser l'argument de « la priorisation du mari » qui reste un argument central dans l'explication de la déqualification des immigrantes au Canada et au Québec, en y apportant une vision plus dynamique et non simplificatrice.

This article uses an intersectional approach to explore the dequalification of racialized immigrants in Québec. The goal is to understand the role and importance of family, gender dynamics, and race in understanding the dequalification of these immigrants. This approach allows us to move beyond the argument of the "prioritization of the husband", which remains a central argument when explaining the dequalification of immigrants in Canada and Québec, and to put forward a more dynamic and non-simplistic vision.

L'intégration des immigrant.e.s est un enjeu social majeur dans un pays comme le Canada où l'immigration est conçue politiquement comme un outil de développement social et économique. Plusieurs barrières à cette intégration sont identifiées dans la littérature, mais il reste que certains profils d'immigrants, essentiellement ceux appartenant à des minorités visibles semblent faire face à des barrières plus tenaces (M.-T. Chicha, 2012; Eid, 2012a, 2012b; Ledent, 2012). Le genre a aussi une influence directe sur la capacité des immigrantes à concrétiser leur succès économique dans leurs sociétés d'accueil. Au Canada, le taux de chômage des immigrantes est de 9,1%, contre 6,9% pour les femmes natives (Statistique Canada, 2016). Au Québec, et malgré une légère baisse en comparaison à 2013, le taux de chômage des immigrantes a

atteint 11,1% pour l'année 2014 (MIDI, 2015), et la situation des immigrantes racisées est encore plus critique (Boulet, 2012; M.-T. Chicha, 2012; M.-T. Chicha & Deraedt, 2009; Lenoir-Achdjian, Arcand, Helly, Drainville, & Vatz-Laaroussi, 2009; Vatz Laaroussi, 2008).

Dans le présent article, nous voulons faire le point sur la confluence du genre et de la race dans la déqualification professionnelle et économique des immigrantes, tout en situant l'importance du contexte « familial » dans la compréhension de cette situation. Les difficultés familiales post-immigration et les dynamiques de genre à l'intérieur de la famille immigrante amènent souvent les femmes à choisir de « se déqualifier » à escient pour aider à l'accélération de l'intégration des

autres membres de leurs familles (M.-T. Chicha, 2012; Vatz Laaroussi, 2008); un sacrifice qui va, en quelque sorte, booster l'intégration de leurs enfants et de leurs conjoints.

Les barrières que rencontrent les immigrant.e.s et le processus de déqualification sont souvent envisagés sur une échelle individuelle, et leur effet global sur la famille immigrante -dans sa totalité- reste peu exploré dans la littérature existante. Cette vision professionnelle, économique et individuelle de la situation ne parvient pas à saisir la complexité des situations de déqualification et leur articulation aux rapports de genre, et leurs effets à long terme sur le vécu des immigrantes racisées et de leurs familles. Or le Canada et le Québec reçoivent principalement une immigration familiale (Statistique Canada, 2016) d'où la nécessité de questionner la dimension familiale de la déqualification.

Pour atteindre nos objectifs, nous nous proposons de recouper brièvement, la théorie sur ce sujet avec des données empiriques. Ces données ont été collectées auprès de dix immigrantes Maghrébines à Montréal entre l'automne 2015 et l'hiver 2017, dans le cadre d'une thèse de doctorat en travail social. Les femmes interviewées sont pour la plupart mariées et mères de famille ou en phase de le devenir, leurs âges varient de vingt à cinquante ans. Elles sont, le plus souvent entrées au Québec comme conjoint accompagnant ou parrainé. Leur durée de séjour à Montréal est très variable, et se situe entre 5 et 20 ans. Ces entrevues sont croisées avec 5 entrevues avec des informateurs institutionnels travaillant auprès de femmes immigrantes. Nous pensons que la situation des immigrantes Maghrébines, qui appartiennent à une communauté immigrante faisant face à de grandes barrières à l'emploi et à de la discrimination au Québec (Arcand S., 2009; Lenoir-Achdjian et al., 2009; Vatz Laaroussi, 2008), illustre clairement les difficultés d'intégration et la déqualification des immigrantes racisées de manière générale.

Dans une première partie de cet article, nous allons présenter un état des lieux sur la question de la déqualification des immigrantes, pour ensuite analyser la complexité de la déqualification vécue par les immigrantes racisées à travers une brève exploration de la situation d'immigrantes Maghrébines à Montréal.

UN ÉTAT DES SAVOIRS SUR LA DÉQUALIFICATION, LA DOMINATION D'UNE VISION ÉCONOMIQUE SIMPLIFICATRICE

Dans les deux dernières décennies, il s'est développé dans la littérature sur l'immigration au Canada et au Québec, un corpus littéraire à part entière explorant les barrières à l'intégration des immigrants, et aussi la question de leur déqualification professionnelle (Bouardbat & Connelly, 2013; Boulet, 2012; M.-T. Chicha, 2009, 2012; M. T. Chicha & Deraedt,

2009; Giroux-Gareau & Houle, 2014; Houle, 2012; Ledent, 2012; Vatz Laaroussi, 2008).

Pour l'essentiel, ces études fondent leur définition de la déqualification sur « l'adéquation entre les exigences d'un emploi et les compétences » de l'immigrant.e, sur « l'écart de salaire ... par rapport aux natifs », ainsi que sur les conditions de travail (travail précaire et à mi-temps vs. travail permanent) (Boulet, 2012). Cette littérature confirme pour l'essentiel, qu'à leur arrivée au Canada et/ou au Québec les immigrants sont déqualifiés, car ils n'arrivent pas à occuper des emplois équivalents à ceux qu'ils occupaient dans leurs pays d'origine, équivalents à leurs compétences et au même niveau de revenus que des natifs détenant des qualifications semblables.

Les barrières principales rencontrées consistent en la barrière linguistique, les difficultés plus ou moins surmontables à faire reconnaître leur formation et leur expérience professionnelle acquises en dehors du Canada/Québec et des stratégies d'intégration inefficaces (M.-T. Chicha, 2012). La déqualification qui en résulte atteint essentiellement les capacités professionnelles et économiques de l'immigrant.e, dans le sens où ce/cette dernier.e va finir par accepter des emplois pour lesquels il/elle est surqualifié.e et situés au plus bas de l'échelle salariale, pour pouvoir survivre. Le processus de déqualification opère à plusieurs niveaux. En premier lieu, il touche la capacité financière des immigrant.e.s et de leurs familles, ce qui est paradoxal pour des immigrants économiques dont la motivation principale est souvent d'améliorer leur situation économique. En deuxième lieu, les longues périodes de chômage et les emplois déqualifiés ont pour effet principal d'éroder les compétences de ces immigrant.e.s, car ils les privent de l'opportunité de les maintenir par la pratique ou de les mettre à jour. Ceci peut les amener sur le long terme à rester emprisonnés dans des emplois « alimentaires », initialement envisagés comme un moyen d'avoir une première expérience de travail au Canada/Québec (Alaoui, 2006; M.-T. Chicha, 2009; M.-T. Chicha & Deraedt, 2009).

La littérature documente aussi les exigences des ordres professionnels comme étant une barrière majeure menant à la déqualification (Houle, 2012). Pour être éligibles à l'inscription aux ordres professionnels les immigrants se retrouvent souvent obligés de reprendre des études et des formations d'appoint. Outre le fait de devoir payer des frais élevés pour l'évaluation de leurs dossiers, souvent ces formations sont contingentées, ce qui ajoute un filtre supplémentaire. Pour nos répondantes, le coût de ces formations ajouté à l'impossibilité de concilier le retour aux études avec un travail alimentaire et les charges familiales reste la barrière initiale la plus forte. Ceci sans relever l'impossibilité pour certaines de fournir tous les documents requis dans ce processus, qui se révèle compliqué dans des pays où ces métiers ne sont pas réglementés par des ordres professionnels.

Par ailleurs, c'est dans l'intersection de ces différentes bar-

rières avec le genre et la race ou l'ethnicité que s'explique la persistance de la déqualification des immigrantes appartenant aux minorités visibles (Boulet, 2012 ; M.-T. Chicha, 2012 ; M. T. Chicha & Deraedt, 2009). Cette compréhension intersectionnelle de la déqualification tranche avec la vision classique qui idéalise souvent les parcours d'intégration des immigrantes, et les imagine consacrant un effort et une volonté linéaires, dans un objectif sans ambiguïté et sans interruption, tendant vers la réussite économique inéluctable. Cette conception de l'intégration laisse supposer qu'une performance positive des immigrantes dépend principalement de leur propre volonté. Or, ces dernières ne sont pas toujours libres de leurs choix et ne peuvent se permettre le luxe d'attendre que des opportunités s'ouvrent à elles. Leur désir de se « requalifier » ne peut être le seul moteur de leur intégration. Ce qui ressort des données que nous avons collectées auprès d'immigrantes Maghrébines est que la famille est au centre de leurs décisions professionnelles ; lesquelles décisions se prennent souvent dans l'urgence et dans des situations de grand besoin économique. Dans les premiers temps « tout est important » ; les besoins matériels et émotionnels de toute la famille ont une influence considérable dans les choix économiques des immigrantes, et même s'ils pèsent sur les stratégies économiques déployées par les immigrantes, ces choix sont vus comme de simples « stratégies familiales » (M.-T. Chicha, 2009, 2012).

Si la littérature récente a permis de situer le poids de la famille dans le processus de déqualification des immigrantes racisées (M.-T. Chicha, 2012 ; M. T. Chicha & Deraedt, 2009 ; Vatz Laaroussi, 2008), les mécanismes "intimes" à l'origine de la formulation de ces « stratégies » visant à l'« intégration familiale » (Vatz Laaroussi, 2008) restent encore peu clairs. Les données relatives aux immigrantes Maghrébines à Montréal montrent clairement qu'elles sont tiraillées entre le bien-être et la réussite de leurs enfants, l'égo écorché de leurs conjoints, leurs propres aspirations professionnelles et un marché de l'emploi qui offre peu de ressources leur permettant de dépasser les barrières rencontrées tout en conciliant leurs rôles de mères. La priorisation du développement du capital humain du mari et sa requalification professionnelle est, certes, une constante (M.-T. Chicha, 2012 ; Vatz Laaroussi, 2008), mais elle émerge dans un contexte de nécessité ; elle est aussi le produit de la convergence des barrières structurelles, du sexisme et du « racisme systémique ».

LES IMMIGRANTES MAGHRÉBINES AU CROISEMENT DE L'EXPÉRIENCE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DES BARRIÈRES ÉCONOMIQUES, DE LA RACE ET DES DYNAMIQUES DE GENRES

Dans les premiers temps de l'installation, les besoins familiaux en matière d'intégration sont grands, urgents et décisifs pour l'intégration efficace de toute la famille immigrante (Ives *et al.*, 2015). Les tensions qui adviennent en cours de

ce processus, qui semble mener inexorablement les familles immigrantes Maghrébines vers la déqualification, mettent les rapports intrafamiliaux sous tension (Vatz Laaroussi, 2008) et deviennent dans la plupart des cas, la cause de conflits où les femmes immigrantes se retrouvent à l'intérieur de leur propre famille dans la position de celles qui doivent encaisser le coût émotionnel, économique et social de cette déqualification, et parfois même la responsabilité de l'échec d'intégration.

Plusieurs entrevues effectuées auprès d'intervenants sociaux œuvrant auprès d'immigrantes Maghrébines à Montréal reportent une incidence alarmante de situations de conflits intrafamiliaux menant au divorce, à la violence conjugale et familiale et à des problèmes de communication parents-enfants qui produisent à leur tour de nouveaux problèmes sociaux (signalement aux services de protection de l'enfance, consommation de substances, délinquance juvénile, etc.). Le lien subtil entre ces problématiques est la déqualification, et il est résumé dans l'extrait suivant :

« Quand on s'appelle, Fatma ...c'est plus difficile de trouver un emploi...Si on n'a pas d'emploi, psychologiquement on n'est pas bien...On parle dans les comités de plusieurs problèmes... Mais ces problèmes reviennent toujours au fait que les parents ne travaillent pas... ce manque de travail fait des chicanes, des conflits avec les enfants... Fait que c'est vraiment relié. » (AT.MO.NF.Fr.2, intervenante dans un organisme communautaire de Montréal Nord)

S'il est clair que les stratégies familiales qui priorisent le mari sont vouées à l'échec (M.-T. Chicha, 2012), les raisons qui poussent les femmes à s'engager dans ce type de stratégies sont complexes et devraient être adressées de manière intersectionnelle. Peu d'études ont permis de questionner le double « système de genre » dans lequel sont empêtrées les immigrantes racisées ; elles sont à la fois redevables à leurs familles et communautés d'origine de rester les porteuses des rôles traditionnels d'éducation et de soin (*care*), et soumises dans leur pays d'accueil au poids du sexisme croisé avec les racismes et doublés d'une injonction très forte à la performance économique (Ben Soltane, 2015).

Le sexisme dans le pays d'origine a une influence sur la trajectoire professionnelle pré-migratoire de ces immigrantes qui reste « ...un peu floue et non toujours reliée à leur diplôme » (M.-T. Chicha, 2012, p. 98). Ce profil professionnel additionné au sexisme et au racisme dans le marché de l'emploi canadien/québécois, ont une influence considérable sur la stratégie familiale post-immigration. La stratégie de priorisation du mari est la seule alternative valable pour ces immigrantes pour pouvoir continuer à occuper leurs rôles de mères avec peu de ressources, et alors qu'elles ont perdu le soutien de leurs familles restées au pays d'origine. C'est aussi un choix intelligible, car souvent le mari a pu bénéficier d'une trajectoire professionnelle plus « lisse » dans le pays d'origine et

de relativement moins de difficulté sur le marché de l'emploi canadien/qubécois. À date, peu de mesures concrètes ont été posées pour permettre aux femmes immigrantes de s'affranchir de l'empreinte du sexisme sur leur parcours pré-immigration et de performer sur le marché de l'emploi canadien/qubécois.

Les controverses récentes sur les accommodements religieux et l'hostilité grandissante envers le voile, au Canada en général et au Québec en particulier, créent de nouvelles formes de domination et des barrières supplémentaires. L'une de nos informatrices, Leila*, une immigrante tunisienne, ayant une formation universitaire en comptabilité, se destinait à un doctorat dans sa spécialité. Ses choix professionnels étaient au départ une priorité familiale. Elle décrit l'érosion du climat à l'université au moment des débats sur la Charte dite des valeurs québécoises, comme étant à l'origine de l'abandon de son projet. Étant voilée, elle dit avoir subi plusieurs micro-agressions et de l'hostilité expresse durant cette période, y compris de la part d'enseignants :

« [Depuis la charte]... Un grand changement, oui, très grand même... Dans la rue, les gens me dévisagent... Dans les établissements d'université... les professeurs... Il en avait un en particulier, ... qui était vraiment, genre des remarques, genre ... si je pose une question il est concentré sur son laptop, ... et il ne me regarde même pas. Si une autre personne par exemple un québécois, pose une question ... tu sens la différence. »

Ces incidents l'ont poussée à reconsidérer ses choix. Elle a abandonné son doctorat, et a choisi de travailler dans une entreprise familiale dont les propriétaires tolèrent son voile et ses contraintes familiales, tout en l'exploitant de manière éhontée. La stratégie d'intégration de la familiale de Leila s'est réorientée vers le retour aux études de l'époux, qui lui ne rencontre pas de résistances dans son milieu professionnel.

Aussi, le contexte d'immigration vient souvent avec son lot d'épreuves inattendues. L'une de nos répondantes a dû sacrifier sa recherche d'emploi pour pouvoir faire face aux besoins de santé de son enfant né avec une maladie grave, et dans un contexte où son accès aux services de santé adéquats était compromis par des préjugés par rapport à son port du voile.

Ces choix ont un coût humain considérable sur ces femmes. Leila avoue être déprimée et perdue, car elle imaginait faire mieux que dans son pays d'origine où elle était enseignante universitaire et consultante.

Le cas de Nedra*, une autre de nos répondantes, illustre un autre aspect de ce coût émotionnel ; il s'agit de l'épuisement mental. Ces immigrantes doivent batailler sur plusieurs fronts

et réagir aux contraintes rencontrées par les membres de leurs familles avec un coût physique et émotionnel sur leur santé très grand. Nedra a accepté plusieurs emplois, car son mari unilingue n'arrivait pas à trouver un emploi. Elle s'est épuisée et a fait une dépression, dont elle parle avec beaucoup d'euphémisme et de culpabilité, car elle s'était volontairement mise au chômage durant cette période, qui a été sa seule pose professionnelle depuis son arrivée au Québec, il y a 9 ans :

« J'avais fait beaucoup de choses en arrivant et très vite. Mon conjoint n'est pas bilingue, fait que tout est tombé sur moi... Puis, il y a cette expérience de travail [dans]... le centre d'appel... D'avoir des gens qui se plaignent tout le temps... je pense que cela a coïncidé avec la petite faiblesse émotionnelle que j'ai eue. J'ai arrêté de travailler ... ce moment-là ça a été un épisode un peu, le plus difficile, je dirais de ma migration ... ».

Si Nedra a réussi à sortir de sa mauvaise passe, d'autres femmes ont de la difficulté à trouver des ressources dans ce domaine. Plusieurs d'entre-elles ont même rapporté l'inadaptation « culturelle » des services auxquels elles ont été référées ainsi que le poids des stéréotypes sur leurs accès à ces services.

En conclusion, nous pensons qu'il reste encore beaucoup à apprendre sur la complexité de l'articulation du genre, de la race et de la classe sociale dans la modulation des parcours économiques de ces immigrantes. Expliquer la déqualification des immigrantes en mettant tout le poids sur la stratégie de la priorisation du mari, relève non seulement d'une méconnaissance des mécanismes de genre opérant dans le couple immigrant hétérosexuel, mais c'est aussi un déni du poids de la race et de la classe sociale dans ce processus. Nous pensons que situer l'influence des parcours pré-migratoires et celle du racisme systémique sur l'intégration économique de ces immigrantes, permettrait d'agir avec plus d'efficacité pour aider ces femmes à sortir de la déqualification qu'elles vivent et de mieux comprendre l'intensité de leurs besoins durant la période d'installation.

* Pseudonyme

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“SENDING OUR PETITIONS TO GOD”: NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT HEALTHCARE WORKER SETTLEMENT, GENDER AND THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS NETWORKS

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This paper provides a brief overview of a study aimed at understanding the lived experiences of health care migrants from Nigeria now living in Canada and their individual perceptions regarding their migration experience. We report here on an interesting finding of the research that highlights how Nigerian women migrants cope with the isolating effects of migration and resettlement through a profound attachment to spirituality and religious community networks.

Cet article donne un bref aperçu d'une étude visant à bonifier la compréhension des expériences vécues par les migrants en soins de santé au Nigeria et de leurs perceptions individuelles de leur expérience de la migration. Nous rapportons ici une découverte intéressante de la recherche qui montre comment les migrantes nigérianes font face aux effets isolants de la migration et du rétablissement grâce à un profond attachement à la spiritualité et aux réseaux communautaires religieux.

There has been a steady increase in the number of Nigerians in Canada, with the 2015 census estimating that there were 33,140 people of Nigerian origin in the country (Statistics Canada, 2015), up from 27,650 in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Nigerians rank in the top 11 source countries for Permanent

Resident applicants, International Students, and Temporary Foreign Workers. Both current and anticipated trends indicate that skilled African migrants will comprise an important part of the projected growth in the Canadian population. The migration of Africans to Canada is particularly important when

we account for the skills they bring in the health care field. Nigeria is one of the top 10 source countries for international medical graduates in Canada (Health Force Ontario, 2011).

Reviewing the migration process for Nigerian health care workers begins by understanding why they leave Nigeria. A recent systematic literature review by Salami et al. (2016) concluded that the emigration of Nigerian nurses could be attributed to the inability to secure a job, security threats in the northern part of the country, inadequate compensation, unsafe work environments and limited opportunity for career advancement. People also migrate because they lack supportive networks (i.e., institutional, infrastructural, technical, educational, or social support or financing to build or develop) in one location and can find them in another.

Nigeria, like several other sub-Saharan African nations is ethnically diverse (Flahaux and De Haas 2016). There are deep socio-cultural and religious divisions within Nigerian society which are extended to Nigerians in the diaspora. In the process of settling in new places and bringing relatives to join them, Nigerians establish faith-based as well as social, cultural, professional and ethno-cultural organizations and practices. Christians and Muslims cultivate their ethnic and religious identities, often gathering together for contact with their members as well as providing support and serving as a coping mechanism allowing the pooling of resources with those from the same place of origin, background, and religious group. This research examined the experiences of Nigerian health care workers who had migrated to Canada. One finding was the profound role that religious networks play in the settlement process.

Research methods for the study included modified surveys and in-depth interviews with 132 participants, and 13 key informant interviews. The study was transnational, with 59 participants from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Canada, and 63 participants from Ibadan in Nigeria. For the purposes of this paper we focus on the Toronto findings, and draw out some of the discussions regarding the role religion played in the respondents' settlement experiences. In Canada, data collection occurred between 2015 and 2016. The sampling had a diverse mix of health care workers (those with training prior to emigration and those receiving further training post migration) in order to capture the full range of skilled migration contexts.

The Canadian sample extended in age from under 30 to over 60. The largest number (19 or 32%) fell in the 40–49 age range. In addition, 53 (90%) of the sample were female, and 6 (10%) male. 58% of the Canadian sample were married; 39 of the 53 (74%) women were married while four out of the six men (67%) were also married before migration. Of the married women, 29 (74%) migrated with their families to Canada. Next, over 78% of participants held a diploma or degree and 56% were in the nursing field as either as a Registered Nurse or a Registered

Practical Nurse. In short, this is a highly educated mainly female sample. More than two-thirds of the respondents (69%) indicated they had an affiliation with some kind of network, and faith-based associations were most evident, accounting for a total of 66% of the associations respondents indicated.

In addition to the data collection, a list of Nigerian networks and their mission statements was compiled using several internet searches to provide some sense of the range of Nigerian-Canadian networks currently in existence. At least 94 formal Nigerian linked networks were identified in Canada and these ranged in size from a few hundred to a few thousand members. These networks can be categorized into four types: social, ethnocultural (ethnically/territorially delimited), professional, and religious as shown in figure 1. It is important to recognize that many religious organizations not captured in this list have pastors who are Nigerian; however, since only limited information was available regarding the congregation and community orientation, they were not included. Several of these associations assist with settlement, counselling, empowerment, and spiritual prayers to help immigrants. Some even provide financial assistance for those who are in need, and members are always encouraged to contact each other and pray together or offer any assistance to newcomers to Canada.

	Total – n=94	Percentage
Social	25	27%
Professional	13	14%
Religious	4	4%
Ethnocultural	49	52%
Political	1	1%
Not listed	2	2%

Some migrant networks empower their members to pursue their dreams. As one key informant mentioned:

“One major reason why women join this [faith based] group is the fact that they get to meet and relate with people who are living a life they dream of and esteem... Women find candid support and hope to become who they want to become. Trainings and mentorship are ongoing at no cost to community members and various support is available to meet their needs. Women found the strength to pursue and attain their goals with support every step of the way.” (Key Informant Interview: Participant 3)

Participants were asked for their reasons for joining a network or an association. The majority of the participants belong to multiple networks and agreed with the statement that belonging to a migrant network was a necessity. The main reasons given were described as 'cultural', for assistance and due to religious attachments; other reasons include opportunities to socialize, to relieve stress, for educational purposes, to improve quality of life, teamwork, and to receive financial and other assistance. As one interviewee put it, "To praise my God and for financial assistance. While in school, my church provides some money and counselling to those in need" (Interview: participant 9). According to another, "In terms of faith-based, my church supports every family in prayers and helps them to achieve their dreams" (Survey: participant 13). One participant elaborated that "they were the ones that help us to get settled and connect us with people from Nigeria" (Survey: Participant 44). Another interviewee said she joined for support services, saying "You know, they speak your language, they understand where we are coming from, they understand this country and what is needed to be successful here" (Interview: Participant 8). With further probing, she recalled an encounter with members of her husband's community and stated:

"I didn't even invite myself to the community when I lost my husband; someone told them, and they reached out to me. Even my husband is part of a different social group, and they came around as well. The money to transfer his corpse home and my fare were donated to us since we just came to Canada then." (Interview: Participant 8).

One interviewee also mentioned the need to belong, stating, "In this place, you need to go somewhere to... belong [in] fellowship [with] God with other believers. It's biblical too" (Interview: Participant 2). Another interviewee stated she goes to church to serve God; when she further elaborated, she mentioned, "Yes, every week, we go to worship and thank him for his mercies over us" (Interview: Participant 3). Additional responses include the notion that faith-based associations provide empowerment: "The church is a gathering where we pray and send our petition to God. This has been making me strong despite my predicaments" (Interview: Participant 19). The support women gained from these religious associations is important to the process of settlement, which for some women was marked by a loss of professional identity and a former life marked by greater socio-economic security. As one interviewee said, "Before migrating to Canada, we were very successful. We had money, we live comfortably. We had house helpers, people serve my family daily" (Interview: Participant 2). Another stated, "Before migrating I was living in luxury. My husband was a bank manager, and I was previously working in the bank and later left that job to stay home with my children" (Interview: Participant 13). Some respondents revealed that rather than advance their own personal contexts, migration was seen as key for the future of their children, "Myself and my husband were working at a

hospital in the city then. We decided to move in order to raise our boys in a better environment" (Interview: Participant 12). In these cases migration is seen as a personal sacrifice for the betterment of their children, and the comfort of faith and spirituality clearly guided the respondents' internal narrative on this matter, and eased their ability to cope.

For many respondents their migration was a life event that marked other moments of significance for them. They traced key events in relation to the migration event; a married participant with a sojourner spouse stated that "I am a mature woman now. I understand how as a mother, we have to live a sacrificial life for our children. Since being in Canada, I lost my mother and had two children and raised them on my own" (Interview: Participant 11). One stated, "I didn't even want to ever recollect this. It was the hardest part of my life. My husband died the second day we got to this country" (Interview: Participant 8). Spirituality was also deeply embedded in the professional status of many women in the sample, which became clear when asked about why they entered the profession: "I used to dream and see nurses in their uniform, before I got married...I never took it seriously and everything was going down so I went to my pastor and my pastor said God has called me to become a midwife so I went and did the state course" (Interview: Participant 9). Another respondent remarked, "Nursing to me is a gift from God. I dreamt about being a nurse. I spoke to my pastor and I was advised to go through it and that with hard work and prayer, nursing will become a reality" (Interview: Participant 17).

In this short paper we have elaborated on the accounts of female migrant nurses from Nigeria in Toronto, Canada, and their narratives of how they were able to survive their migration and settlement experiences through the assistance of religious networks. In addition to this support, these immigrant women benefited from the additional help provided by migrant networks in terms of financial assistance, community service, and religious or spiritual fulfilment. Our results are consistent with those of other studies (such as Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003; Kalu, 2010, Mensah *et al.*, 2013) that suggest religious institutions play a major role at every step of the migration process, but can offer particular support to women immigrants. Another major finding was that women participate in religious networks more than men, and they seem to belong to more than one network in seeking support to cope with their new environment. The growing importance of this group of migrants to Canada highlights the need to understand their migration experiences in more detail. Further research needs to be conducted to determine the gendered dimensions of participating in different types of networks for migrant men and women.

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TRACING GENDERED PRACTICES IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE AMONG SYRIAN REFUGEE YOUTH IN OTTAWA, CANADA

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The role of social media in the everyday life of Syrian refugee youth is understudied. Based on the findings of focus group interviews with 29 Syrian refugee youth, both female and male between ages 16-25, in Ottawa, Canada, this article investigates the everyday use of social media for resettlement and integration. Thematic analysis reveals distinct gendered practices in social media in three main areas: (1) social media for settlement, (2) social media as sites of connection, and (3) social media as learning platforms. Gendered implications of social media use for well-being, inclusion, and integration of refugees at the initial stages of relocation and resettlement are discussed.

Le rôle des médias sociaux dans la vie quotidienne des jeunes réfugiés syriens est peu étudié. Basé sur des entretiens de groupes de discussion avec 29 jeunes réfugiés syriens, hommes et femmes âgés de 16 à 25 ans, à Ottawa au Canada, cet article examine l'utilisation quotidienne des médias sociaux dans un contexte de rétablissement et d'intégration. L'analyse thématique révèle des pratiques sexospécifiques distinctes dans les médias sociaux dans trois domaines principaux: (1) les médias sociaux pour l'établissement, (2) les médias sociaux en tant que sites de connexion, et (3) les médias sociaux en tant que plateformes d'apprentissage. Les implications sexospécifiques de l'utilisation des médias sociaux pour le bien-être, l'inclusion et l'intégration des réfugiés aux stades initiaux de relocalisation et de rétablissement sont discutées.

By January 2017, over 40,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada (IRCC 2017). Previous reports show that a majority of Syrian refugees who resettled in Canada are 25 years old and under (CIC 2015, 2016). Facilitated by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), this population displacement and relocation is met by new forms of connections across space, place, and time. In many cases, in today's network society (Castells, 1996), refugees may bring their mobile phones and technological skills when they arrive at a new destination (Maitland and Xu, 2015). For example, 86% of Syrian youth in the Za'atari refugee camp based in Jordan were found to own a mobile phone and more than 50% were found to be using the Internet at least once daily (Maitland and Xu, 2015). Given the scope and speed of the Syrian refugee resettlement as well as its demographic composition, much can be learned by examining how Syrian refugee youth experience resettlement, adaptation and eventually integration into Canadian society, including the tools and strategies they deploy to do so and especially the use of social media.

Although there is an emerging body of literature on refugees' ICT use (Alegado, 2009; Chamarkeh, 2009; UNHCR, 2016), less is known about how they are used in refugee resettlement process, including the role of social media in meeting settlement related needs. Moreover, while some research exists on how migrants and refugees use various types of media (which vary along the lines of migrant status/category, ethnocultural groups, language skills, age, and gender, etc.) to assist in their settlement related information needs (Ahmed and Veronis 2017; Veronis and Ahmed 2015), the role of social media in the everyday life of Syrian refugee youth has yet to be studied in more depth. Adopting a gender lens to study these processes is essential given the growing body of work illuminating the gendered dimensions of mobility and migration (Silvey, 2004, 2006; Yeoh and Ramdas 2014) and in the use of ICT (Green and Singleton, 2013). From making migration decisions in the place of origin to settlement and integration in the receiving society, gender along with other markers of identity shapes individuals' experiences and outcomes of migration due to differentiated social positionings in relation to dominant norms and power structures. Indeed, scholars have noted gender differences in self-disclosure on social media (Sheldon, 2013), searching for health information (Allison et al., 2017), and self-presentation on social media (Manago et al., 2008). Yet these scholarly efforts are sparse or non-existent in the context of the everyday use of social media among Syrian refugee young men and women for resettlement and integration.

Furthermore, the usefulness of social media in assisting with resettlement is a timely topic considering the Canadian government is investing in the development of settlement services available online that can be accessed prior to arrival – a program known as Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA).¹ This trend is part of efforts to decrease costs of settlement support while making access and use more convenient (by reducing constraints relating to location/travel

distance and scheduling) (Mills 2016).

Drawing on focus group data, this article aims to answer the following question: How and why do Syrian refugee young men and women use social media in their everyday life? By doing so, we will offer insights into the role of gender in social media use among newly arrived Syrian refugee youth. Empirical evidence from this article can help to advance an understanding of the social media use practices of young Syrian refugee men and women – how they seek information, the nature of their information needs, information use behaviors, and challenges – and thereby help to improve existing refugee resettlement and integration efforts, both content and delivery of programming by service organizations, government, and other relevant stakeholders.

From January to May 2017, we conducted five focus group discussions with 29 recently resettled Syrian refugee youth both male (19) and female (10), aged between 16-25, who arrived in Ottawa, Canada, as part of the resettlement effort in 2015 and 2016 as government assisted refugees or under private sponsorship and were able to communicate in English. Our findings are organized around three main themes: (1) Social Media for Settlement, (2) Social Media as Sites of Connection, and (3) Social Media as Learning Platforms.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SETTLEMENT

TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Emerging research reveals that social media play an important role in meeting settlement related information needs of immigrants and refugees, especially among younger age groups (Veronis and Ahmed, 2015). The omnipresence of social media has also touched the daily life of Syrian refugee young men and women. Participating Syrian refugee youth were found to be avid users of various social media sites and applications, namely Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Skype, Snapchat, Skype, Twitter, Viber, YouTube, and WhatsApp. While these websites and Internet-based applications are popular among participants, Facebook continues to dominate their social media use, because they find it is user-friendly and appreciate how it continuously updates its features. Participants shared how in Syria they used social media mainly for entertainment purposes, but after coming to Canada, social media have become very important in their daily life; they use social media more frequently and for most activities. Further, they explained that they use various social media tools in a multitude of ways. For example, participants, both male and female, rely on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp for communication purposes. They also use these tools to gather news about and from Syria, and refugee life in Canada, as well as to share pictures and videos of special events and occasions such as Canada Day and Christmas

with their network. A young Syrian young woman said, “I use Facebook and Instagram. Now WhatsApp. I use it to see the news, just in English, not in Arabic, to learn from videos. And I use WhatsApp to contact my brother in Syria. And to contact my friends in other countries” (FGD #3). Below, we delve further into the importance of these virtual social networks and their role during resettlement in Canada.

REASONS FOR USING THESE SOCIAL MEDIA

When discussing specific reasons for using social media, Syrian refugee young men and women mentioned how social media have become useful since they arrived in Canada in terms of helping to get settled. Participants use various social media tools and sites as GPS tracker, to access health care services, find jobs, and for educational purposes. Syrian refugee young women in particular expressed keenness about using social media for educational opportunities. They talked about everything now being accessible online and how with social media they can search for universities, colleges, look at specific programs, and even take online classes.

Participants discussed how social media help them to integrate into Canadian culture, for instance, by providing tools to reduce language barriers they face. Syrian refugee young men in particular shared how they find the language translation features of some social media sites very helpful in school, during social interactions, and even for simple tasks like grocery shopping (e.g., to check food ingredients in unfamiliar products). A young Syrian refugee man explained, “I spend my time on Facebook because it makes me learn another language [English], information about another country [Canada]” (FGD #5).

Participants brought attention to the socializing aspect of using social media. Both Syrian refugee young men and women use social media to mostly find other Syrians in Canada. A number of participants also said they use social media to interact with their sponsors on a regular basis, including when they need to undertake complex transactions for which they need help. Generally, many feel that social media make things easier. For example, through online social networking, they learned about access to free services for Syrians (e.g., free gym for Syrians), Canada Day, events in the community, and Canadian culture, especially through advertisement in social media sites.

Hence, social media are important sources for refugees as they seek various types of resources and information, orienting (relating to everyday events) and problem-specific (relating to individual tasks) (Caidi et al. 2010), at different stages of their settlement process (Ahmed and Veronis, 2017; Matsaganis, Katz, and Ball-Rokeach, 2011).

SOCIAL MEDIA AS SITES OF CONNECTION

CONNECTING ACROSS SPACE AND PLACE

One important role that social media play in the lives of Syrian refugee young men and women is to help them stay connected with family and friends who have stayed back in their place of origin, have been displaced in countries neighbouring Syria, or have resettled to other countries. Participants said they miss their loved ones and social media provide a relatively easy and affordable means of communication, especially allowing for an instantaneous way of communicating on a regular, daily basis. Further, they explained that they use social media to check on the safety of those who have stayed behind, and for whom they worry almost constantly. Social media allow them to be in the know about the whereabouts of family and friends and also to be informed of any developing situation affecting them. Given the hardships associated with family separation through migration, especially in contexts of conflict (Svašek. 2010), social media thus provide a novel and unique form for refugees to communicate with those who stay behind, and thus ease the need for them to focus on the resettlement process. One main challenge, however, is connecting with those who remain in conflict zones or refugee camps as access to technology (Internet, smart phones) or basic infrastructure (electricity) may be limited (see UNHCR 2016). Moreover, participants shared that they use social media to follow news and events in their country of origin, and access detailed information about the conflict. Often, mainstream news media in host societies do not cover events in migrants’ countries of origin in depth, and thus transnational and diasporic media can help fill this void (Signer et al. 2011), a role that social media also play. In addition, we learned that participants actively participate in sharing and disseminating information through social media by posting photographs and videos as well as by producing their own material. This was especially the case among Syrian young men participating in the study, a number of who had advanced digital skills. They explained that they did so to keep others informed and also as a form of activism to raise awareness about the conflict in Syria and the plight and needs of Syrian refugees. This use of social media speaks to the novel field of “migrant digitalities” whereby displaced persons use technology as part of their struggles (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos, 2015).

From a different viewpoint, participants mentioned that social media have been helpful to communicate with others in Canada. In addition to meeting other Syrian refugees, a number of Syrian refugee young women said they meet new (Canadian) friends on social media and can stay connected with new people they meet. A Syrian young woman explained, “I got some new people, and for my school, I use [social media]. There was a girl, I never knew her, but I knew her name, so I went to Facebook, I searched her name, I added her, she added me back, now she’s my friend” (FGD #4).

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Another useful role that social media play in the resettlement experiences of Syrian refugee youth is in providing a space for expressing emotions and receiving support. Syrian refugee young women in particular explained that they use social media to share how they feel, often on a daily basis. Others talked about turning to social media when they feel lonely or sad, and that talking to their friends and family, including those who have stayed behind, helps them cope. A majority of participants, both male and female, spoke about their ongoing worries for family and friends who remained in insecure conditions and the fact that being able to communicate via social media, or at least check on them, provided some comfort. But unfortunately, social media are sometimes bearers of sad news; in such moments, participants said that they further share this information through their networks, while also using social media to give and receive support. To this extent, social media afford a space for Syrian refugee youth to express and grapple with emotions, all while creating an emotional landscape of exile, trauma and support that stretches across space and place (Thien, 2005). This combined with the fact that some Syrian refugee youth use social media to advocate about the situation in their country appear to give these youth a sense of agency and of being able to contribute to advancing the well-being of their people.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS LEARNING PLATFORMS

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

A significant finding of the study is that participating Syrian refugee youth, both men and women, showed a critical attitude towards the use of social media, discussing their advantages as well as limitations. On the positive side, participants shared a number of ways that social media served as learning platforms that were useful in their resettlement experiences, for example to learn about Canada, its culture, its geography and its people. Furthermore, social media proved a useful tool to help learn the language – both English and French. A number of participants also mentioned that they turn to social media to access information about education, including postsecondary institutions and various types of training. This information was important because many were planning their professional development and job prospects, taking into consideration any formerly acquired education, their career aspirations and family responsibilities. Existing research shows that ICTs create economic opportunities for refugees (Robinson, 2016). A few participants in this study also talked about economic opportunities that ICTs afford, such as online businesses and the use of social media to promote small entrepreneurship (e.g., catering services, etc.).

Nevertheless, participants delved into a number of negative

aspects relating to social media use. Many recognized that using social media can be addictive and time consuming and both Syrian refugee young men and women were wary of the time it may take away from their studies, and even sleep. This finding is consistent with social media addiction research (Griffiths, 2013; Griffiths, Kuss, and Memetrovics, 2014). Further, participants seemed generally aware of various risks associated with ICT use. Specifically, Syrian refugee young women spoke about online trust issues and of being selective in how they use the Internet and social media in order to avoid false information. Participating Syrian refugee young men focused on a different type of online danger; they were especially concerned with Internet privacy and security issues such as identity and personal information theft and other forms of cyber misbehavior. Thus ultimately, participants demonstrated agency in how and why they use social media, usually turning to them with a well-defined purpose, and awareness of needing to be informed on safe online practices and behaviours.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article was to shed light on the daily use of social media among young Syrian refugee men and women. Although limited in scope, collectively, the findings reveal multiple functions of social media in refugee resettlement processes, from meeting various settlement related information needs, sustaining communication across borders and fostering new connections in place, to serving as learning tools. The findings also allude to distinct gendered practices in social media use among Syrian refugee youth for resettlement and integration purposes.

While many participants mentioned that social media have become an important part of their life, some underscored the negative consequences brought upon by heavy use of social media. Female participants in particular talked about the negative effects of social media more than male participants. By and large, participants demonstrated understanding of the risks associated with using social media. Nonetheless, female participants were vocal about online source credibility, while male participants were alarmed about Internet privacy and security issues. In other instances, female participants discussed using social media more to gain information, to pursue educational opportunities, and connect with family and friends, whereas male participants talked about using social media mostly for entertainment purposes and connecting with family and friends. Notwithstanding these gendered practices, both Syrian refugee young men and women appear to be social media multitaskers and thus if “used effectively,” can help to bridge “cultural, gender and educational gaps” (O’mara and Harris, 2016, p. 639).

It is important to note that during the focus group discussions

with the Syrian refugee young men and women, no indication of social media's role in hindering integration was documented. This could be due to the fact the participants were recent arrivees and their use of social media is shaped by their experience with conflict back in Syria and forced displacement, and as such is different from and unique when compared to other types of migrants who might use such media to hold on to the culture and place of origin.

Considering the recent influx of Syrian refugee youth in Canada, empirically founded understanding of how social media are reshaping the everyday life of young Syrian refugee men and women can fill gaps in existing refugee resettlement and integration strategies. The nuanced gendered practices in social media use among Syrian refugee youth as evidenced in this article can help inform service organizations, government, and other relevant stakeholders to target and tailor their refugee resettlement and integration efforts.

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