

Refugees and social integration in winnipeg



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This paper will examine refugees and social integration in Winnipeg and attempt to answer the questions posed in the syllabus.

The status of refugees is significant in Winnipeg as the province of Manitoba admits more than 1000 refugees per year[1], the majority of who settle in Winnipeg. Refugees arrive in Winnipeg often with very little and are desperate to be able to integrate successfully, however this can be difficult to achieve. These new arrivals impact the city in that they are dependent on social services which in turn cost the government money. In addition due to lack of available funds upon arrival refugees often have to live in high poverty areas[2], centered on the downtown which leads to social issues that can be difficult for refugees to live with. In these circumstances making valuable social connections can be hard, often cultural differences make it challenging for new arrivals to make connections with the community, or neighbours. Poverty rates remain high for refugees living in Winnipeg and over time this has a detrimental effect not only on the lives of the refugees themselves but of the community at large as high poverty areas become a burden on the social services and typically have high rates of crime[3].

The number of refugees seeking entry to Canada has been steady increasing since 2000, this apparently in line with growing conflicts across Africa and the Middle East. Around these regions the nature of conflicts has been changing from nations fighting each other to civil conflicts within a nation, which tend to go on for much longer than tradition conflicts. In countries such as Syria, Iraq and Somalia ongoing civil war and terrorist insurgency has had a devastating effect on the civilian populations. People are often targeted for perceived allegiances to one side or the other and are

persecuted for it, the level of destruction surrounding civilian populations is high and as a result many people become displaced, people who in turn become refugees seeking asylum abroad. These people often have to leave their homes quickly and with very little in terms of monetary value for fear of their lives. Understandably these people look abroad for support where they might be free from the fear and oppression that they would suffer if they returned to their home countries. As the conflicts in these regions continue more and more people will seek a better opportunity to live abroad, and Canada is a desired destination. With the increase in asylum seekers more people are seeking entry to Canada under refugee status, this impacts Winnipeg as more new arrivals will be refugees and unlike landed immigrants these people often will require significant assistance with social integration[4]among other things. The city of Winnipeg and how many refugees we admit per year has a direct impact on the people living in destitute conditions, be it in overcrowded housing on UN tent camps. Their standard of living increases dramatically being able to live here, and despite initial challenges in getting situated the chance to live here is something sought after by many around the world.

The status of refugees in Winnipeg admittedly affects me very little.

Personally I cannot say that I know anyone who is a refugee or even any friends that know one. However despite not personally being impacted by refugees I can see the effects of the city as a whole. While sympathetic towards the difficulties these people have faced I am also aware of the burden that is placed on social services and private individuals and institutions to support refugees, support which regular immigrants would

under most circumstances not need. It is also good to keep in mind that Canada is running a deficit and any increase in social spending does nothing to help with that. People I know have also been impacted as refugees predominantly work in the service and labour sectors and hold relatively high employment around 80%[5], this could be a factor into why people around my age have difficulty finding employment at traditionally entry level jobs, such as retail, food industry etc. As for how I impact the social integration of refugees in the city I would have to say not at all, as I don't know any refugees and I am not in any position to impact their lives.

Personal bias aside as far as a critical assessment goes, I would begin with saying that refugees face incredible challenges both in leaving their home countries and establishing themselves in Canada. Refugees arriving in Winnipeg often have very little money, and low prospects of a good paying job and face difficulty in dealing with the trauma that they may have experienced due to war or persecution of some kind in their country of origin[6]. Due to how refugees are dispersed across Canada new arrivals often find themselves isolated and without anyone of their own cultural background to associate with, I can imagine how difficult this might be, for instance if there were to hypothetically be a civil war break out in Canada and myself and family were forced to relocate to somewhere like Nairobi or Istanbul I could see how difficult it would be to fit into society. The same can be said about refugees from Africa and the Mid-East many of whom don't even speak English which is essential to living in Canada. As well once a refugee does arrive things often aren't as great as they had been led to believe, in the case of Winnipeg most refugees in recent times are from

visible minorities and often have to live in poverty stricken neighbourhoods around the downtown core area[7]. I have found that once a refugee has been successfully settled in Winnipeg the majority of assistance they had received goes away and considers the job done. While I can see how it would be costly to maintain direct support for all of the refugee families admitted it is clear that many struggle with a number of issues after social services move on to the next family.

The theoretical lens which I have viewed this in is the Liberal approach, which also seems to be the method by which the West approaches refugees in general. The most important point being that there is a moral imperative to help these people the best way we can with the abundant resources at our disposal. This also plays into international justice and how to Liberal west can help those that are oppressed by people who hold opposing views. Looking at the status of refugees in Winnipeg it is clear that Liberal minding institutions have helped many thousands of people, not only find homes but also employment. While I can certainly appreciate the good done on behalf of institutions in Winnipeg clearly more has to be done. Many of the values which we hold here are not readily apparent to refugees who are finding it difficult to manage here and find them falling into poverty. This seems to be a recurring issue within the refugee population in the city and it is troubling that despite the numbers of those stuck in poverty they seem to have been largely abandoned by the government which continues to bring in more refugees without improving the conditions of those already here[8]. It follows to me at least that if those refugees here in Winnipeg are able to access better education and jobs that they would be able to contribute far more to

our society that they are at the present. With higher wages they would be able to afford their own homes, rather than be exploited by landlords that enjoy powerful positions over refugees in their situations. With access to jobs more befitting of their qualifications they would be able to afford education for any children they may have brought with them which in turn leads to a better community as a whole since their children would be far less likely to get into crime or be recruited into street gangs, a real issue among young African male refugees who see it as the only opportunity to better their position. Certain policies I would also view as questionable, for instance the cost effective move to have affordable housing located in the worst parts of the city. While this may be less of a burden of the social services it does little to help the city of Winnipeg in the long-term. As these refugees are forced to live in dangerous neighbourhoods where children are routinely exploited, this does nothing to exalt the value we place on Liberty in the West. These families are forced to live in cramped, dirty apartments where social interactions with the community tend to be minimal due to crime within those areas. From my own experiences in dealing with people downtown I can imagine some of the difficulties a recent Syrian or African immigrant may face if they have to work late night as past a certain time the majority of people leave the downtown area and it can become dangerous to have to travel on foot very late into the night. This goes back to the issue of good employment, having to work late night shift work with the chance of being harassed or accosted after work doesn't sound very appealing to me. The lack of continued aid once a refugee has found a job is a failure, and aid agencies like Winnipeg Harvest among others are often strained to help or are unknown to refugee families. Now that isn't to say that I believe we are

<https://assignbuster.com/refugees-and-social-integration-in-winnipeg/>

obligated to help refugees, however if Canada is to uphold the Liberal values which it proclaims then we should handle refugees properly and with adequate support networks in place. From the articles and new reports I have researched for this paper it is clear that while refugees are certainly grateful to everything Canada has given them, it simply is not enough once they are settled and families fall into poverty and all associated issues. I can think of several things that could help the situation of refugees in the city, of course doing the right thing tends never to be time/cost effective.

Recognition of refugees education is a big step in helping them to get meaningful employment, many refugees simply cannot afford to go to school here when they must work long hours to support themselves and families. In our diverse multicultural society it would pay off in the long term to give refugees better access to working environments, longer programs to ensure successful integration. Also better methods to deal with the trauma and mental issues that accompany living in a warzone. All told despite the many issues, refugees are doing well in Winnipeg issues in good employment remain but refugees do overwhelmingly feel safe in Winnipeg are at least able to find work for the most part. With the financial difficulties facing Canada, and Winnipeg it is understandable that we simply cannot provide the best for refugees at the moment without a noticeable impact of groups giving aid to Canadians that already are in need, however anything we can give them is far better than what they would have faced in their country of origin.

Bibliography

Articles

<https://assignbuster.com/refugees-and-social-integration-in-winnipeg/>

1. Carter, Derwing, Ogilivie, T. Wotherspoon. "Prairies Region," *Our Diverse Cities* 6 (2009): 8-50, 104.
2. Omidvar, Richmond. "Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada," *Working Paper Series: Perspectives on Social Inclusion* (2003) 44.
3. Gyepi-Garbrah, J., Walker, R., & Garcea, J. "Indigeneity, Immigrant Newcomers and Interculturalism in Winnipeg, Canada." *Urban Studies* (2013) .

Short Sources

1. Carol Sanders, "Feds to pay for only 40% of refugees," *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 1, 2015. Accessed April 1, 2015. <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/feds-to-pay-for-only-40-of-refugees-288229911.html>
2. Janine LeGal, "Congo refugee Hilaire Ndyat helps new immigrants settle in Winnipeg," *Canadian Immigrant*, August 12, 2011. Accessed April 1, 2015. <http://canadianimmigrant.ca/immigrant-stories/careers/congo-refugee-hilaire-ndyat-helps-new-immigrants-settle-in-winnipeg>
3. Carol Sanders, "Syrian refugees' obstacles decried," *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 1, 2014. Accessed April 1, 2015. <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/syrian-refugees-obstacles-decried-253319531.html>
4. Amanda Thorsteinsson, November 27, 2013 (3: 45 PM), Special to CBC news "Syrian refugees faced with nowhere to live" <http://www.cbc>.

- ca/news/canada/manitoba/syrian-refugees-faced-with-nowhere-to-live-1. 2442659
5. Donna Carreiro, "Winnipeg refugee the face of a global crisis," *CBC News* December 15, 2014. Accessed March 27, 2015. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-refugee-the-face-of-a-global-crisis-1.2872961>
 6. Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association, Last modified 2015. <http://www.mirssa.org/about.aspx>
 7. Voices of Manitoba, <https://manitobavoices.wordpress.com/about/resources-for-refugees-in-winnipeg/>
 8. Carol Sanders, "Manitoba hit record refugee count in 2013," *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 27, 2014. Accessed March 27, 2015. <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/manitoba-hit-record-refugee-count-in-2013-252590021.html>
 9. University of Winnipeg Communications, December 9, 2014. "Bridging two worlds: Helping refugee youth succeed in Canada" <http://news-centre.uwinnipeg.ca/all-posts/bridging-two-worlds-helping-refugee-youth-succeed-in-canada/>
 10. Shane Gibson, "Tough road for African immigrants, refugees in Winnipeg: report." *Metro News*, July 26, 2012. Accessed April 1, 2015. <http://metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/310949/tough-road-for-african-immigrants-refugees-in-winnipeg-report/>
 11. CBC News, "Syrian refugees glad to be in Winnipeg, but struggle to feed kids," *CBC News*, July 4, 2014. Accessed April 6, 2015. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/syrian-refugees-glad-to-be-in-winnipeg-but-struggle-to-feed-kids-1.2697018>

12. Shane Gibson, "Library for refugee and immigrant children opens in Winnipeg," *Metro News*, February 6, 2015. Accessed April 6, 2015. <http://metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/1281922/library-for-refugee-and-immigrant-children-opens-in-winnipeg/>
13. "Winnipeg Crime Statistics" last modified April 5, 2015 <http://www.winnipeg.ca/crimestat/>

[1]Carter, Derwing, Ogilvie, Wotherspoon, "Prairies Region."

[2]"Prairies Region"

[3]"Winnipeg Crime Statistics"

[4]Omidvar, Richmond "Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada"

[5]"Prairie Regions"

[6]Gyepi-Garbrah, J., Walker, R., & Garcea, J. "Indigeneity, Immigrant Newcomers and Interculturalism in Winnipeg"

[7]"Prairie Region"

[8]"Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada"