



Canada-Germany Workshop Synopsis

March 20th, 2019 (Halifax)

INTRODUCTION

On March 20th, 2019, the CYRRC-LERN (Canada-Germany) Working Group on Refugee Integration hosted a workshop in Halifax. Thirty-two researchers and service providers met to discuss and exchange ideas about what makes a welcoming host community from a Canadian and European perspective.

This workshop is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) and Germany's Leibniz Education and Research Network (LERN). Funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSRCH), BMBF and the European Union's Erasmus+ funding program support regular meetings of the working group.

PRESENTATIONS

DEBORA MAEHLER

Debora Maehler from GESIS and the University of Mannheim presented on the current response to refugee integration in Germany. A scoping review of research on refugees in Germany over the last 20 years found a focus on social integration, language and learning, and wellbeing. Most studies were qualitative, with less than 10% quantitative and less than 20% using mixed methods. Notable studies with data on refugees were the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees: Adult Integration, Integration of refugees into Germany: Children and Youth, ALLBUS: German General Social Survey, and the GESIS Data Archive.

VERENA SCHMID

Verena Schmid from the University of Heidelberg presented on the development of local civic engagement for refugees in the Rhine-Necker region. On the level of individual volunteers, action was determined by the dynamics of personal relationships rather than conformity to an organization. Importantly, her study highlighted the new form of "roundtable" meeting where people from different areas met on equal footing to discuss the problem-solving process; this form of meeting was more accessible to less formalized organizations and individual volunteers.

NABIHA ATALLAH

Nabiha Atallah from the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) presented on what ISANS has learned about making communities more receptive towards refugees. Direct contact, learning about refugee situations, and training programs on cultural humility, were the among the most successful strategies. Elfinesh Zewde presented on her experience as a former refugee from Ethiopia and now proficient private sponsor. Liz MacBeth from ISANS spoke on the importance of listening to sponsors and connecting sponsors with each other so they can learn from one another.

JACK JEDWAB

Jack Jedwab from the Association for Canadian Studies presented on the Canadian Integration and Migration Index (CIMI). This work raises complex conversations around how to define integration conceptually and how to attach indices to measure it. In the Index, integration is measured with relevant indicators in four dimensions: economic, health, social, and civic and political. Admission Categories, which will be incorporated into CIMI 2.0, was used as an example of how the Index can assess trends over time, create a ranking system of provinces and metropolitan areas, and measure immigrant performance against Canadian-born residents.



SYNTHESIS: FOUR KEY AREAS OF DISCUSSION EMERGED

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARING STORIES

A reoccurring theme for creating more reception towards refugees was the importance of sharing stories. This strategy emerged in the group activity, with all groups incorporating some method of having refugees and migrants share their stories, and in the ISANS presentation.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Arising out of this stage was a concentration of community engagement. The “roundtable” meetings in Heidelberg exemplify this action, as do the community meetings ISANS hosted which focused on empowering people to set up their own initiatives and equipping them with the information and perspective to talk to people who had negative feelings about refugee arrivals.

FOCUS ON REFUGEE CHILDREN

Children were positioned as the target group for refugee integration during the group activity. There was discussion around the differences within German federal states, where children are either integrated into regular schools or put into special programs for language learning and, for older kids, for vocational training. Although the vocational track often contrasts with refugee families’ aspirations for their children there is the option to later go to university, and there was a discussion regarding the value of such a vocational system in Canada. The situation of child refugees in Canada was contrasted with adults, as children do not get training or support and are instead enrolled in school right away. Challenges integrating into schools can prevent parents from working, highlighting the need for integration programs: volunteer positions or summer jobs were some suggestions that arose.

INITIAL STAGES OF WELCOMING LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES

Verena Schmid used the term “living chaos” to describe the initial response of German citizens to the 2016 influx of refugees, categorized by broad spontaneous engagement without structure where new organizations and support networks emerged. ISANS described a similar response that was simultaneously overwhelming and effective. This initial stage of “living chaos” highlighted that communities made a huge effort in response to the Syrian crisis.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The next steps for the CYRCC-LERN collaboration includes three more Erasmus-funded events planned for the coming two years. The next two workshops will focus on training in both quantitative and qualitative methods and will be of interest to graduate students, new researchers, and service providers. The final event will coincide with the Metropolis conference in Winnipeg and will be open to the public. Finally, there is a collaboration with the Canadian Diversity magazine to produce a special issue on welcoming refugees and social cohesion.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Abdikheir Ahmed	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg	Ljudmilla Petrovic	The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies
Amanda Koyama	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Lori Wilkinson	University of Manitoba
Anke Pazelt	University of Ottawa	Luin Goldring	York University
Ashley Manuel	Association for Canadian Studies	Mike Ungar	Dalhousie University
Bong-Hwan Kim	Korean Senior Citizens' Society/ Kyung Hee University	Mohammed Baobaid	Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration
Debora Maehler	GESIS/University of Mannheim	Nabiha Atallah	Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
Elfinesh Zewde	Ethiopian Association	Nicole Ives	McGill University
Fariborz Birjandian	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Noelle Depape	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg
Howard Ramos	Dalhousie University	Pallabi Bhattacharyya	University of Manitoba
Jack Jedwab	Association for Canadian Studies	Paula Kline	Montreal City Mission
Joe Garcea	University of Saskatchewan	Sally Ogoe	University of Manitoba
Johanne Paradis	University of Alberta	Simone Chia-Kangata	Dalhousie University
Jonathan Amoyaw	Dalhousie University	Thomas Soehl	McGill University
Laura Monteiro	Western University	Verena Schmid	University of Heidelberg
Lisa Rochman	NorQuest College	Yoko Yoshida	Dalhousie University
Liz MacBeth	Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)	Ian Van Haren	McGill University

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CHILD AND YOUTH REFUGEE RESEARCH COALITION

UNDERSTANDING HOST SOCIETY RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES WORKSHOP

March 20th, 2019 | 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM | Marriott Harbourfront Hotel, Halifax

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Asylum seekers, queue jumpers, illegal immigrants, and other derogatory words are used to describe the humanitarian crisis of today. These labels are fueled by the growth in xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and various forms of racism. The objectives of this workshop are to share recent European and Canadian research on host society receptivity towards refugees, best-practices in the integration of refugee children and youth, and compare European and Canadian policies on various aspects of the current humanitarian crisis. Our key focus is on what makes communities more receptive toward refugees and what, if any, policies and programs can contribute to a more welcoming approach. One of our goals is to discuss strategies related to educating civil society about refugees, particularly given the myths about refugees and queue jumping, use of social welfare and unemployment.

This is the first of four Erasmus-sponsored workshops. The main objective of this workshop, besides sharing our work to date, is to get to know one another and to begin to strategize about potential projects in the future, to suggest items for the next three Erasmus workshops. This is meant to be a more relaxed/informal event as we know that you are gearing up for a busy three days at the Metropolis Conference!

9:00

Introduction and about the CYRRC and Erasmus Project:
Lori Wilkinson and Michael Ungar, Dalhousie University

9:15

Debora Maehler, GESIS/
University of Mannheim

9:45

Verena Schmid, University of
Heidelberg

10:15

Coffee Break

10:45

Group Activity: Noelle Depape
and Abdi Ahmed, Immigrant
Partnership of Winnipeg

11:45

Lunch

1:00

Nabiha Atallah, ISANS Halifax

1:30

Liz MacBeth, coordinator of the
Private Refugee Sponsorship
Program, ISANS and Elfinesh
Zewde, Private Sponsor

2:00

Coffee Break

2:15

The Canadian Integration and
Migration Index Jack Jedwab,
Association for Canadian
Studies

2:45

Wrap Up

3:00

Next Workshop



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