



ASK THE EXPERT  
POLICY BRIEF

May **2019**

Zeynep Kaşlı

## Integration outcomes of recent sponsorship and humanitarian visa arrivals

INTEGRATION



The **Ask the Expert Policy Briefs** are **highly informative tools** proposed in the framework of the ReSOMA project. They tap into the **most recent academic research** on the 9 topics covered by ReSOMA and map it out in a way that is **accessible to a non-academic audience**. By doing so, the briefs introduce the **policy-relevant research** conducted by researchers with different approaches and perspectives on the same topic.

LINGUISTIC VERSION

Original: EN

Manuscript completed in May 2019

Unless otherwise indicated, the opinions expressed in this document are attributable only to the author and not to any institution with which he is associated, nor do they necessarily represent the official position of the European Commission.

Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the publisher is given prior notice and sent a copy.

Contact: [resoma@resoma.eu](mailto:resoma@resoma.eu)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the grant agreement 770730

# Integration outcomes of recent sponsorship and humanitarian visa arrivals

By Zeynep Kaşlı<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, there has been experimentation and exchange of good practices in refugee settlement and integration in key asylum and migration destinations. This brief introduces available academic scholarship on diverse refugee integration policies, experiences and outcomes of new arrivals compared to spontaneous and resettlement arrivals in Europe and elsewhere.

Our literature review reveals that existing studies focus on the following: the developments in legal protection and international law; refugees' integration experiences across programs and key challenges; and finally, role of local actors in refugee integration.

## New pathways as legal innovation

Alternative legal pathways for refugees, and specifically private sponsorship (PSR), are welcomed as innovative developments in international law and flexible tools to speed up the process of settlement. Some argue that PSR would not only allow individuals to be the bearers of sovereignty, distinct from that of states, and but also enable more persons to get the legal protection by implementing international obligations in the area of refugee and human rights law more efficiently ([Krivenko 2012](#)).

PSR has been especially used as both a flexible and durable solution in Canada. Over the years, a number of studies have examined whether it is in line with the international objectives of increasing and diversifying resettlement ([Treviranus and Casasola 2003](#)) or whether the expanding role of civil society in this program leads to further privatization of immigrant welfare, localization and depoliticization of the integration experiences of refugees ([Ritchie 2018](#)). Recently it is shown that

---

<sup>1</sup>This brief is based on literature compiled via CrossMigration database. The author would like to thank the providers for privileged access to the portal which will be open access by 2020.

2013 addition to the private resettlement scheme, the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program, which matches refugees identified for resettlement by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) with private sponsors in Canada, turned it into a middle ground between sponsorship and government-assisted resettlement ([Labman and Pearlman 2018](#)).

Initiatives as well as research on assessing alternative channels in Europe seems in its infancy. Yet a recent study on the “integrated refugee management” (2013-2017) in Germany shows that the new legal and administrative measures, on the one hand, speed up asylum seeking processes, and, on the other hand, create new hierarchies. It is mainly criticized for classifying persons applying for a humanitarian residence visa into four clusters, each with different entitlements regarding the admittance to state-financed German courses and integration measures focused on education and the labour market ([Will 2018](#)). Another study inspired by the free movement within an “innovation zone” that is proposed by the E15 under GATS, makes the case for a possible policy innovation on the entry of migrant entrepreneurs that would include refugee entrepreneurship in the quest for innovation ([Lange 2018](#)).

## **Integration experiences and challenges under different pathways**

Success of sponsorship programs has been measured in different ways. Recent studies show that the co-existence of different sponsorship programs in Canada (PSR versus GAR—short for government sponsored refugees) in practice led to differential treatment based on country of origin, status of refugee claim, and mode of arrival to Canada. This has had negative implications for integration in the form of limited and hierarchical insurance coverage for asylum seekers in the aftermath of Protecting Canada's Immigration System Act of 2012 ([Harris and Zuberi 2015](#)), and GAR's significantly lower perceived physical and mental health as well as higher unmet healthcare needs compared with PSRs ([Oda et al 2019](#)).

When it comes to wellbeing and integration over time, variation across sponsorship, temporary protection and government-led asylum procedure, seem related to many different factors. A two year-long study of households participating in an Extended Case Management Program (2009-2011) in Salt Lake City, in the US, show that it is related primarily to language ability/competence at arrival, household type, country of origin, and employment status ([Shaw and Poulin 2014](#)). A recent study comparing integration experiences of Liberian refugees in New York City and Minneapolis-St Paul shows that the emphasis of temporary protected status on security

and legal protection, and not having access to certain services and institutions, such as higher education, not only restrain political integration, citizenship and belonging in the country of settlement, but may also exacerbate old ethnic divisions among country fellows and created new divisions ([Reilly 2016](#)). Moreover, studies on the socio-economic integration of different refugee groups in the Netherlands and Canada show that the type of residence status granted or sponsorship type can be a source of insecurity and, along with the socio-economic position in the new destination, may turn into post-migration stressors with severe effects on health, and in particular mental health, and integration ([Bakker et al 2014](#); [Tuck et al 2019](#)).

Next to type of residence, recent studies also draw attention to the long asylum waiting period and employment bans in many European countries as factors with long-term effects on the subsequent economic integration of refugees ([Hainmueller et al 2016](#)). A recent study on the German case show that despite the existing court ruling, which prompted a reduction in the length of the employment ban, it took up to 10 years for the employment gap to disappear ([Marbarch et al 2018](#)). The authors also suggest that this employment ban cost German taxpayers about 40 million euros per year, on average, in terms of welfare expenditures and foregone tax revenues from unemployed refugee (ibid).

For successful and quick integration of refugee, and especially in terms of employment, (a) family support and friendships, and (b) whether and how these connections help in finding employment and housing seem important. Recent studies conducted on US and Canada show that even the number of business owners in refugees' networks matters ([Dagnelie et al 2019](#)) and both bonding and bridging capital are crucial for privately-sponsored refugees ([Hanley et al 2019](#)). The well-being, social and cultural integration and academic success of refugee children in especially global cities like New York seem highly contingent on access to international high schools ([Bartlett et al 2017](#)). A research in the UK shows how refugees actually constantly seek acceptance and respect beyond the tolerance they are offered ([Healey 2014](#)). Positive interaction with neighbours ([Hebbani et al 2018](#)) and informal networks, like local women organizations, ([Erden 2016](#)), and maintenance of hope ([Jani et al 2016](#)) seem to play important role in newcomers' perception of being welcomed in the host society, the opposite of which severely hampers the acquisition of bridging social capital and potentially slows down linguistic and cultural adaptation, employment and life standards. The importance of positive interaction and being welcomed are also proven by a recent research on Vancouver, based on the longitudinal national data from the New Canadian Children and Youth Study (NCCYS), which shows how, despite a decrease in perceived parental discrimination and perceived family discrimination,

perceived cultural discrimination has increased over time and had a negative effect on child health ([George and Bassani 2018](#)).

## **Role of local governments and service providers**

Empirical studies show that refugee integration is also contingent upon local dynamics.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, municipal income, unemployment rate, population, and support for the right-wing party are negatively related with the willingness to receive refugees ([Lidén, G. & Nyhlén 2014](#)). On the other hand, secondary migration across cities presents an extra challenge in terms of local dispersal policies which are specifically designed to manage regional development and population pressures on welfare and employment ([Bloem and Loveridge 2018](#)).

Some early studies on the experiences of PSRs in Canada underlined the fragility undermining reliance on refugee arrivals as a significant source of future immigration to certain provinces, suggested to think strategically on how to retain new arrivals within the province ([Denton 2003](#)) and invited both the newcomers – to assume a greater role in shaping their own resettlement pathways through transnational linkages— and places of worship –to make a bridge between their wider community services and newcomer idioms and customs ([Lanphier 2003](#)). In deed

recent studies on the partnership between a dedicated health clinic for GARs, a local reception centre and community providers in Canada ([McMurray et al 2014](#)) and US-based preventive services program ([Critelli 2015](#)) demonstrate that an integrated community-based primary healthcare intervention has become key for timely and more culturally appropriate care sensitive to family characteristics, service needs, and strength-based practices for integration.

Recent studies looking at reception experiences from the perspective of service providers and administrators reveal a considerable variation among those actors in what they believe to be the goals and outcomes of reception ([Dubus 2017](#)) while lack of interconnections between actors, lack of an articulated political vision of integration and absence of systematic evaluations and long-term follow-ups of how the reception affect integration are highlighted as issues that take fold and are to be addressed at the local level ([Wimelius et al 2017](#)).

In sum, existing research shows that, for successful, fast and effective refugee resettlement, as much as opening up alternative pathways, it is important to offer smooth transition into labor market and closely follow up of the health and other needs related to the wellbeing of individuals and households. Research conducted at different times also stress that local level ac-

---

<sup>2</sup> For policy debates on cities' role as services providers to migrant populations topic see

RESOMA [discussion brief](#) and [expert brief](#) published in 2018.

tors play a crucial role in refugee integration especially in countries where municipalities have full autonomy to accept or decline refugees.

## References

- Bakker, L., Dagevos, J. and G. Engbersen (2014) "The Importance of Resources and Security in the Socio-economic integration of refugees. A study on the impact of length of stay in asylum accomodation and residence status on socio-economic integration for the four largest refugee groups in the Netherlands," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 15 (3): 431-448. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-013-0296-2>
- Bartlett, Lesley, Mary Mendenhall and Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher (2017) "Culture in acculturation: Refugee youth's schooling experiences in international schools in New York City," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 60, 109-119. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.04.005>
- Beiser, M. (2003) "Sponsorship and resettlement success," *Journal of International Migration & Integration*, 4 (3): 203-215. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-003-1033-z>
- Bloem, J. and S. Loveridge, S. (2018) "The Costs of Secondary Migration: Perspectives from Local Voluntary Agencies in the USA," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 19 (2): 233-251. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0538-4>
- Critelli, F.M. (2015) "Parenting in a New Land: Specialized Services for Immigrant and Refugee Families in the USA," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 16 (4): 871-890. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-014-0359-z>
- Dagnelie, Olivier, Anna Maria Mayda and Jean-Francois Maystadt (2019) "The labor market integration of refugees in the United States: Do entrepreneurs in the network help?" *European Economic Review*, 111: 257-272. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2018.10.001>
- Denton, T.R. (2003) "Understanding private refugee sponsorship in Manitoba," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 4 (2): 257-272. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-003-1036-9>
- Dubus, Nicole (2018) "Integration or Building Resilience: What Should the Goal Be in Refugee Resettlement?," *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 16: (4): 413-429, DOI: [10.1080/15562948.2017.1358409](https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1358409)
- Erden, O. (2017) "Building Bridges for Refugee Empowerment," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 18 (1): 249-265. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0476-y>
- George, M.A. and C. Bassani, C. (2018) "Influence of Perceived Racial Discrimination on the Health of Immigrant Children in Canada," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 19 (3): 527-540. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0539-3>



Hanley, J., Mhamied, A. A., Cleveland, J., Hajjar, O., Hassan, G., Ives, N. , Khyar, R. and M. Hynie (2018) "The Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital of Syrian Refugees Privately Sponsored to Settle in Montreal: Indications for Employment and Housing During Their Early Experiences of Integration," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 50(2), 123-148.

Hainmueller, Jens, Dominik Hangartner and Duncan Lawrence (2016) "When lives are put on hold: Lengthy asylum processes decrease employment among refugees," *Science Advances*, vol.2, no.8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1600432>

Harris, H.P. and D. Zuberi "Harming Refugee and Canadian Health: the Negative Consequences of Recent Reforms to Canada's Intern Federal Health Program," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 16 (4): 1041-1055. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-014-0385-x>

Healey, R. L. (2014) "Gratitude and Hospitality: Tamil Refugee Employment in London and the Conditional Nature of Integration," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 46(3): 614–628. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a4655>

Hebbani, Aparna, Val Colic-Peisker, Mairead Mackinnon (2018) "Know thy Neighbour: Residential Integration and Social Bridging among Refugee Settlers in Greater Brisbane," *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 31 (1): 82–103. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fex016>

Jani, J., Underwood, D. and J. Ranweiler (2016) "Hope as a Crucial Factor in Integration Among Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth in the USA: A Pilot Project," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 17 (4): 1195-1209. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-015-0457-6>

Labman, S. and M. Pearlman (2018) "Blending, Bargaining, and Burden-Sharing: Canada's Resettlement Programs," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 19 (2): 439-449. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0555-3>

Lanphier, M. (2003) "Sponsorship: Organizational, sponsor, and refugee perspectives," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 4 (2): 237-256. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-003-1035-x>

Lidén, G. & Nyhlén, (2014) "Explaining Local Swedish Refugee Policy," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 15 (3): 547-565. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-013-0294-4>

Marbarch, Moritz, Jens Hainmueller and Dominik Hangartner (2018) "The long-term impact of employment bans on the economic integration of refugees," *Science Advances*, 4 (9). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aap9519>

McMurray, J., Breward, K., Breward, M., Alder, R. and N. Arya (2013) "Integrated Primary Care Improves Access to Healthcare for Newly Arrived Refugees in

Canada," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 16 (4): 576-585. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-013-9954-x>

Mukoya, M.N., McKay, F.H. and M. Dunn (2017) "Can Giving Clients a Choice in Food Selection Help to Meet Their Nutritional Needs?: Investigating a Novel Food Bank Approach for Asylum Seekers," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 18 (4): 981-991. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-017-0515-3>

Krivenko, Ekaterina Yahyaoui (2012) "Hospitality and Sovereignty: What Can We Learn from the Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program?" *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 24 (3): 579-602. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/ees039>

Lange, T. (2018). "Intersecting Policies of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Migration in the EU and the Netherlands". In *EU External Migration Policies in an Era of Global Mobilities: Intersecting Policy Universes*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004354234\\_011](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004354234_011)

Oda, A., Hynie, M., Tuck, A., Agic, B., Roche, B. and K. McKenzie (2019) "Differences in Self-Reported Health and Unmet Health Needs Between Government Assisted and Privately Sponsored Syrian Refugees: A Cross-Sectional Survey," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 21 (3): 439-442. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-018-0780-z>

Reilly, Janet E. (2016) "Temporary Refugees: The Impact of US Policy on Civic Participation and Political Belonging among Liberians in the United States" *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 35 (3): 94-118. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdw009>

Ritchie, Genevieve (2018) "Civil society, the state, and private sponsorship: the political economy of refugee resettlement," *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 37 (6): 663-675. DOI: [10.1080/02601370.2018.1513429](https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2018.1513429)

Shaw, S.A. and P. Poulin (2014) "Findings from an Extended Case Management U.S. Refugee Settlement Program," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 16 (4): 1099-1120. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-014-0374-0>

Treviranus, B. and M. Casasola (2003) "Canada's private sponsorship of refugees program: A practitioners perspective of its past and future," *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 4 (2): 177-202. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-003-1032-0>

Tuck, A., Oda, A., Hynie, M., Bennett-AbuAyyash, C. Roche, B. Agic, B. and K. McKenzie (2019) "Unmet Health Care Needs for Syrian Refugees in Canada: A Follow-up Study," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-7. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-019-00856-y>

Will, A. (2018). On “Genuine” and “Illegitimate” Refugees: New Boundaries Drawn by Discriminatory Legislation and Practice in the Field of Humanitarian Reception in Germany. *Social Inclusion*, 6(3), 172-189. DOI:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/si.v6i3.1506>

Wimelius, M.E., Eriksson, M., Isaksson, J. and M. Ghazinour (2017) “Swedish Reception of Unaccompanied Refugee Children—Promoting Integration?” *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 18 (1): 143-157. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-016-0472-2>

# ReSOMA

RESEARCH SOCIAL  
PLATFORM ON MIGRATION  
AND ASYLUM

## ReSOMA - Research Social Platform on Migration and Asylum

is a project funded under the Horizon 2020 Programme that aims at creating a platform for regular collaboration and exchange between Europe's well-developed networks of migration researchers, stakeholders and practitioners to foster evidence-based policymaking. Being a Coordination and Support Action (CSA), ReSOMA is meant to communicate directly with policy makers by providing ready-to-use evidence on policy, policy perceptions and policy options on migration, asylum and integration gathered among researchers, stakeholders and practitioners.

🌐 [www.resoma.eu](http://www.resoma.eu)

🐦 @ReSOMA\_EU

✉ [resoma@resoma.eu](mailto:resoma@resoma.eu)

