



**CANADA CAN
CAN
WE?**

**Sponsoring
integration of
refugees, the
Canadian way**

FORES Study 2018:1

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Canada can, can we?

– Sponsoring integration of refugees, the Canadian way

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About Fores

The green and liberal think tank

FORES — Forum for Reforms, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability — is an independent think tank dedicated to furthering entrepreneurship and sustainable development through liberal solutions to meet the challenges and possibilities brought on by globalization and global warming. Fores' main activities are to initiate research projects and public debates that result in concrete reform proposals in relevant policy areas such as: environmental policy; migration; entrepreneurship; and economic policy.

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About the Author

Trygve Ugland is Professor and Chair of the Department of Politics and International Studies at Bishop's University in Quebec, Canada, where he has been active since 2003. He was educated at the University of Oslo and Queen's University of Belfast. His research and teaching interests lie in the fields of comparative politics and comparative public policy, with a focus on European and Scandinavian politics. His latest book *Policy Learning from Canada: Reforming Scandinavian Immigration and Integration Policies* (University of Toronto Press, 2018 – in press) analyses and compares the role the Canadian immigration and integration policy model has played in the Scandinavian reform process during the 2000–2015 period.

About the Study

This study is published within the frame of Fores Migration and Integration program. In order to ensure the quality of our studies, all of Fores' studies are reviewed by at least two anonymous referees with expert knowledge of the topic. The author is responsible for the conclusions of this study.

Fores wishes to thank our anonymous referees as well as the Tom Hedelius and Jan Wallander Research Foundation whose financial contribution made the layout and printing of this study possible.

Foreword

(in Swedish)

Håll i dig, för nu är det tvära kast och snabba svängar. Det har varit temat för de senaste årens migrations- och integrationspolitik. Många har sett anledning att ompröva sina ståndpunkter, andra har med stor möda hållit fast vid sina. Det har rests krav på snabba förändringar i ett svårt politiskt läge. Hanteringen visar på en vilja att hitta lösningar men resultaten lämnar hittills en hel del i övrigt att önska. De senaste årens migrationspolitik har resulterat i ett svåröverskådligt och kanske direkt rättsosäkert lapp-täcke av beslut. Inom integrationsområdet sker visserligen insatser som på sikt kan leda till förbättringar men mer krävs. 2018 hålls det val i Sverige, varpå följer en ny mandatperiod då fönster öppnas för att tänka nytt, ställa till rätta och styra upp – även på de håll där de styrande är ungefär desamma som förut.

Till detta behövs nytt tankegods. Med denna rapport vill Fores bidra till den migrations- och integrationspolitiska samhällsdebatten och belysa ett i

Sverige tämligen okänt fenomen: privat sponsring av flyktingar, det vill säga en möjlighet för privatpersoner och organisationer att bidra, såväl ekonomiskt som på andra sätt, till integrationen av personer som invandrar på grund av asylskäl.

Hösten 2015 var antalet flyktingar som sökte asyl i Europa stort och Sverige var det land som tog emot flest flyktingar per capita. Det blev ett tillfälle för det svenska civilsamhället att träda fram och ta större plats i mottagandet av flyktingar och nyanlända. Den vilja organisationer, föreningar och privatpersoner visade att bistå de människor som sökte sig till Sverige var ett välkommet inslag. Det civila samhället uppvisade kraft, organisationsförmåga och agerade med en flexibilitet, som berörda myndigheter inte alltid har möjlighet att matcha och inte heller möjlighet att till fullo ta tillvara. Det finns därför skäl att överväga hur vi bättre kan ta hand om dessa goda byggstenar.

Medan detta, att involvera civilsamhället som en central del i flyktingmottagandet, är en relativt obeprövad metod i de nordiska länderna och resten av Europa har det sedan 1970-talet varit en viktig del i det kanadensiska flyktingmottagandet. De senaste åren har vi sett ett ökat intresse för privat sponsring av flyktingar i flera europeiska länder, och särskilt aktuellt blev det under hösten 2015. Bland annat såg vi Tyskland, Irland, Italien och Polen införa sponsor-

program för flyktingar i kölvattnet av den humanitära krisen i Syrien. Bland dessa länder var Tyskland den enskilt största mottagaren av privatsponsrade flyktingar. Programmen är dock småskaliga jämfört med det kanadensiska systemet.

I den här studien går Trygve Ugland, professor vid Bishop's University i Quebec, Kanada, igenom det kanadensiska sponsorprogrammet. Genom ett komparativt tillvägagångssätt får vi en överblick av det kanadensiska privatsponsringsprogrammet av flyktingar, hur det är utformat, dess fördelar och nackdelar samt dess potential att införas i Sverige, Norge och Danmark.

Med integration som en av vår tids stora utmaningar, och med de brister vi vet att det svenska mottagandesystemet har, är det hög tid att vända blicken utåt och söka inspiration till hur vi kan bli bättre. Det är viktigt att skärskåda det kanadensiska programmets såväl fram- som baksidor och vara varse om att avsikten har varit att programmet skall fungera som ett komplement till det statliga ansvaret. De stora fördelarna för de flyktingar som har varit delaktiga i programmet, de privata sponsorerna, medborgarna, de kanadensiska myndigheterna och Kanada som helhet gör det väl värt att överväga vilka russin som kan plockas ur denna kaka. Trots ideologiska och praktiska svårigheter vad gäller genomförande finner

Ugland att det kanadensiska programmet bör kunna fungera som inspiration för de skandinaviska länderna i sökandet efter pragmatiska lösningar för framtiden.

Minna Ljunggren

*Chef för migrations- och integrationsprogrammet,
tankesmedjan Fores*

Oskar Adenfelt

Projektledare, tankesmedjan Fores

Summary

This report presents Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, and discusses its benefits, criticisms and challenges based on a comprehensive review of the existing academic literature. Subsequently, the report proceeds with a discussion of the potential for policy learning from the program in Scandinavia. The main challenges and obstacles to such learning are also identified and discussed.

The overall conclusion of this report is that Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program provides clear benefits for the government, the resettled refugees, the private sponsors, the citizens and Canada as a whole. However, it might create obstacles for certain groups of refugees. Despite both ideological and practical challenges and obstacles, it is argued that the program could also serve as an inspirational model for Scandinavia and form part of a pragmatic solution to a complex practical problem.

Introduction

The challenges posed by increasing immigration and ethno-cultural diversity is a major concern for governments across the world, and different immigration and integration policy solutions exist internationally. The Canadian model has received much attention from policy-makers in other countries over the past decades, including the Scandinavian countries.¹

Canada has pursued an expansive immigration policy for an extensive period of time and its immigrant population has grown substantially. For the past 25 years, Canada has received between 200,000 and 300,000 immigrants per year, representing on average just under 1 percent of the population (Figure 1).²

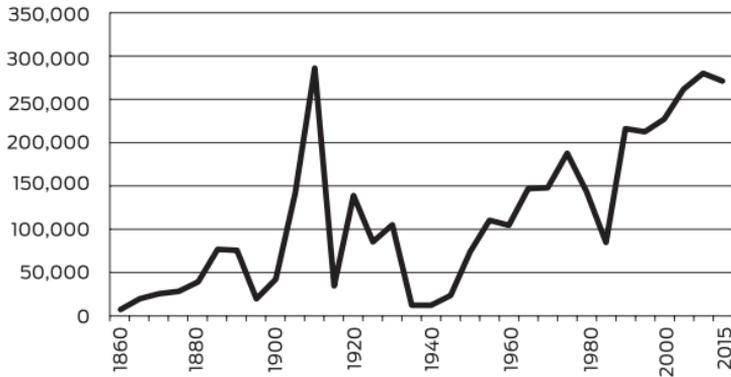
As a result of substantial immigration, Canada has among the highest levels of foreign-born populations (approximately 20 percent, according to the OECD)³ and is considered one of the most multicultural coun-

1 Ugland 2018

2 Emigration from Canada has been around 50,000 per year annually during the same period. See Statista “Number of Emigrants from Canada from 2000 to 2016”.

3 See OECD website “Foreign Born Population – Total % of Population, 2013”

Figure 1. Immigration to Canada, 1860–2015 (absolute numbers).



Source: Facts and Figures 2015: Immigration Overview - Permanent Residents, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

tries in the world.⁴ At the same time, Canada enjoys a strong international reputation, supported by comparative studies on immigrant integration, as a country that has successfully managed to benefit from immigration and increased ethno-cultural diversity. Canada has been described as a ‘statistical outlier’ in that it has managed to combine high levels of diversity with peace, democracy, economic prosperity and individual freedom.⁵ Furthermore, Canada has managed to reconcile important welfare-state objectives and principles with increased immigration and diversity. Public attitudes in Canada reveal little tension between support

⁴ Fearon, J. D. 2003

⁵ Kymlicka 2007a, Kymlicka 2007b, Laczko 1994

for ethnic diversity and support for social programs. In fact, the welfare state and multiculturalism are, for many Canadians, the two most important ingredients in the Canadian identity. Consistent with this impression, research has found that those with the strongest sense of Canadian identity embrace immigration and immigrants more warmly than their less-nationalist fellow citizens.⁶

The Canadian model has been characterized under different labels: the Canadian model of pluralism⁷; the Canadian model of multiculturalism⁸; the Canadian model of multicultural integration⁹; the Canadian model of diversity¹⁰; the Canadian model of immigration and welfare¹¹; the Canadian immigration model¹²; the Canadian integration model¹³; Canada's immigration policy model¹⁴ and the Canadian immigration and integration policy model¹⁵. The wide assortment of labels can be explained by the fact that scholars have focused on different aspects of the Canadian model.

The 'points system' for the selection of economic immigrants and Canada's 'multiculturalist' citizen-

6 Banting 2010

7 Kymlicka 2004

8 Tierney 2007

9 Banting 2014

10 Kymlicka 2007b

11 Koning and Banting 2011

12 Schmedke 2009

13 Triadafilopoulos 2006

14 Reitz 2012

15 Uglund 2014a

ship are two key components of the Canadian model that have been subject to much attention abroad.¹⁶ The points system grants priority to economic immigrants most likely to be able to enter the Canadian labour force by virtue of their age, education, work experience, language skills and adaptability, while multiculturalist citizenship refers to a policy which recognizes diversity within public institutions and celebrates it as an important dimension of collective life and collective identity.¹⁷

This report focuses on another distinct, but often overlooked, aspect of the Canadian model, Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. For many years, Canada was the only country in the world operating private sponsorship of refugees. Despite increased interests in other countries recently, the Canadian program is the oldest and most successful in the world.¹⁸ By 2017, it has offered protection and new homes to approximately 300,000 refugees since its beginning in 1978.

This report presents Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, and discusses benefits, criticisms and challenges of private sponsorship for the government, the resettled refugees, the private sponsors, general citizens and Canada as a whole based on a

16 Ugland 2018

17 Kymlicka 2007a

18 Lenard 2016

comprehensive review of existing academic literature. Subsequently, the report proceeds with a discussion of the potential for policy learning from Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program in Scandinavia. The main challenges and obstacles to such learning will also be identified and discussed.¹⁹

¹⁹ The last section is based on a study of the role of the Canadian immigration and integration policy model in the Scandinavian reform process during the 2000-2015 period (see Uglund 2018). This study was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) (Insight Development Grant / 430-2012-0707).

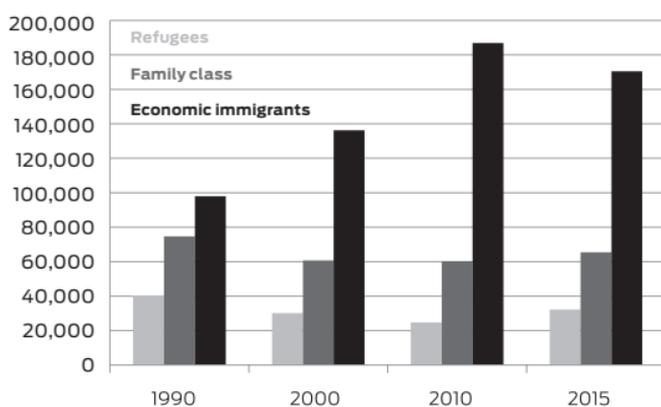
Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

Both immigration control and immigrant integration are areas of shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments in Canada. A considerable degree of decentralization and provincial autonomy has been introduced to Canada's immigration and integration policy regime over the years in order to accommodate local needs and priorities.²⁰ For instance, the composition and size of immigration populations vary across the provinces, and while British Columbia grants Sikh motorcyclists a waiver from the helmet requirement, Ontario does not.²¹ Furthermore, the province of Quebec has its own private sponsorship of refugees program and the rules private sponsors in Quebec must follow are

²⁰ Iacovino 2014

²¹ Griffith 2015

Figure 2. Permanent residents to Canada by year and category (absolute numbers).



Source: Facts and Figures 2015: Immigration Overview - Permanent Residents, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

slightly different from the rest of Canada.²² Despite the resulting increased complexity, federal legislation is still paramount in many areas related to immigration control and immigrant integration in Canada. The selective and carefully managed approach to immigration control, which actively aims to attract economic immigrants, is a defining character of the Canadian immigration and integration policy model.

Economic immigrants are people selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy, including skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial and territorial nominees, and caregivers. This stream (known as the economic class stream)

²² The Quebec program will not be covered in this report. For more on the Quebec-Canada relationship in this area, see Garcea 2017. See also Ugland 2014b for a general discussion of Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism.

has dominated since the 1990s. In 2015, this group, including spouses and dependents, constituted nearly two-thirds of migrants arriving in Canada annually. The family stream, foreign nationals sponsored by close relatives or family members in Canada, including spouses and partners, dependent children, parents and grandparents, comprised almost 25 percent, while refugees represented approximately 12 percent of immigrants coming to Canada that year (Figure 2).

Refugee categories

Based on the classifications of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the total number of refugees comprises four categories: protected persons in Canada, government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees and blended sponsorship refugees. Protected persons in Canada include all refugees who have come to Canada and made a successful refugee claim (asylum refugees). Both government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees are resettled refugees in the sense that they are approved abroad and arrive in Canada as permanent residents.²³ Government-assisted refugees are identi-

²³ According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), resettlement involves the “selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2015: 5).

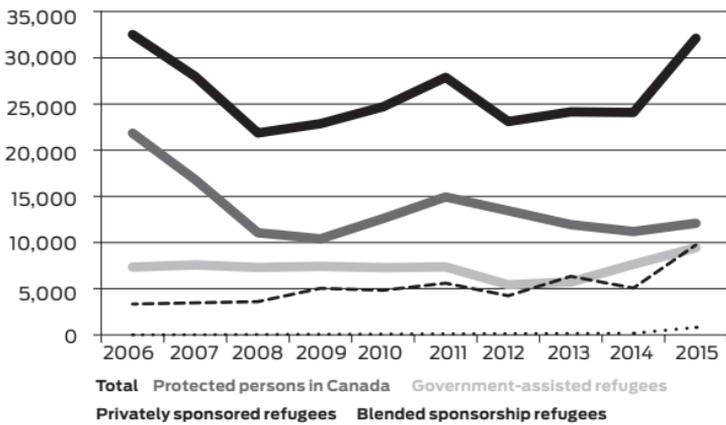
fied for resettlement by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and brought to Canada as members of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class. Refugees in this group receive resettlement assistance from the federal government. Privately sponsored refugees are selected for resettlement in the Convention Refugees Abroad Class or the Country of Asylum Class. Refugees in this group are identified and sponsored by private organizations, individuals or groups of individuals. Blended Sponsorship Refugees are refugees who were identified for resettlement by the UNHCR and matched with private sponsors in Canada, and who receive resettlement assistance from the federal government for up to six months, while private sponsors give another six months of financial support. This program, operating since 2013, is therefore a three-way partnership between the UNCHR, the Government of Canada and private sponsors.

The Canadian government sets annual targets for the resettlement of refugees in each category, and the actual numbers of refugees arriving in Canada has varied significantly over time. Indeed, Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program has been described as a "flexible tool able to respond to both small and large-scale resettlement needs"²⁴. As illustrated in Figure 3, close to 10,000 refugees were resettled in 2015

²⁴ Treviranus and Casasola 2003

both in the government-assisted and privately sponsored categories. However, the number of refugees in Canada increased significantly in response to the crisis in Syria. Between November 2015 and January 2017, 40,081 Syrian refugees were resettled in Canada.²⁵ Of those, 55 percent were government-assisted, 36 percent privately sponsored and 10 percent blended sponsorship refugees. The top five origin countries of refugees arriving in Canada in 2016 were Syria (33,266), Eritrea (3,394), Iraq (1,650), Congo (1,644) and Afghanistan (1,354).²⁶ The government objective for 2017 is to resettle 25,000 refugees.²⁷

Figure 3. Resettled refugees and protected persons in Canada, 2006–2015 (absolute numbers).



Source: Facts and Figures 2015: Immigration Overview - Permanent Residents, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

²⁵ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2017c

²⁶ See Statista “Top five origin countries of refugees admitted to Canada in 2016”

²⁷ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2017b

Private sponsorship of refugees

Private sponsorship of refugees began in Canada in 1978 after it had been formally introduced in the 1976 Immigration Act, which provided the first regulations to permit private citizens to identify refugees in need, for whom they would be willing to take full financial and emotional responsibility during the sponsorship period. After the amendments in 2015, section 13(1) of the current Immigration and Refugee Protection Act forms the basis for private sponsorship of refugees in Canada today:

A Canadian citizen or permanent resident, or a group of Canadian citizens or permanent residents, a corporation incorporated under a law of Canada or of a province or an unincorporated organization or association under federal or provincial law — or any combination of them — may sponsor a foreign national, subject to the regulations.²⁸

Provided that the refugee applicant meets the definition of either the Convention Refugees Abroad Class or the Country of Asylum Class, private sponsors are

²⁸ Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, SC 2001, c. 27.

free to choose the refugee that they wish to assist. However, an officer at a Canadian visa office makes the final decision on whether someone is eligible for resettlement. This decision is normally based on an interview with the applicant, supporting documentation submitted by the applicant and sponsoring group, and additional information available to the officer. To be accepted for resettlement in Canada, the refugee must also pass medical, security and admissibility checks. In addition, refugees will be assessed on their ability to establish successfully in Canada. In making this assessment, the visa officer will consider whether the refugee has relatives or a sponsor in Canada, the ability to speak or learn to speak English or French, the potential for employment and resourcefulness. However, refugees deemed by the visa officer to be in urgent need of protection or in vulnerable circumstances are not assessed on their ability to establish. The sponsorship period is normally 12 months starting from the refugee's arrival in Canada or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. The cost of living varies significantly across Canada, but the private sponsor groups are required to raise financial resources roughly equivalent to the local social assistance rate figures^{29, 30}.

29 In the current IRCC guide to private sponsors, total annual settlement cost for one resettled refugee is estimated to 13,500 CAD (approximately 88 000 SEK). The costs for a family of four is estimated to 28,200 CAD (approximately 185 000 SEK).

30 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2017a

Refugees can be privately sponsored through ‘Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs)’, ‘Groups of Five’ or ‘Community Sponsors’. SAHs are organizations that have signed sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada to help support refugees from abroad when they resettle in Canada. SAHs can sponsor refugees themselves or work with others in the community to sponsor refugees. There are just over 100 SAHs across Canada, and most of them are religious, ethnic, community, or service organizations. Groups of Five is any group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are 18 years of age or older and who live in the community where the refugees are expected to settle. Group members act as guarantors that the necessary support, which includes financial and settlement arrangements, will be provided for the full duration of the sponsorship. Community Sponsors are organizations located in the community where the refugees are expected to settle.³¹

Sponsorship groups are expected to support sponsored refugees by providing the cost of food, rent and household utilities and other day-to-day living expenses; by providing clothing, furniture and other household goods; by locating interpreters; by selecting a family physician and dentist; by assisting with applying for provincial health-care coverage; by enrolling

³¹ Ibid.

children in school and adults in language training; by introducing newcomers to people with similar personal interests; by providing orientation with regard to banking services, transportation, and the like; and by helping in the search for employment.³²

In order to prepare for their responsibilities, a government-funded Refugee Sponsorship Training Program has been designed to support the various sponsorship groups. The objective of the training program is to address information and ongoing training needs of the sponsorship groups through workshops, e-training and webinars. A detailed handbook complements the training.³³

The Government of Canada has produced a complete guide to Canada's Private Sponsorship Program, including answers to questions like:

- Who may be sponsored?
- Who may not be sponsored?
- Who may submit a private sponsorship?
- Who may not submit a private sponsorship?
- How is a sponsoring group formed?
- What are the responsibilities of the sponsoring group?
- How much financial support will be required?
- Are there any extra costs?
- How is a match made between a sponsoring group and a refugee?
- How is the application processed?
- What are the refugee's responsibilities?
- When will the refugee arrive?

³² Ibid.

³³ The Handbook for Sponsoring Groups is available on the website of the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program: www.rstp.ca/en/resources/hand-book-for-sponsoring-groups/

Benefits of the program

Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program has been associated with a number of benefits for the government, the resettled refugees, the private sponsors, the citizens and Canada as a whole, but it also been subject to criticisms and challenges.

As emphasized by Lenard (2016), private sponsorship and public-private partnerships can reduce both short- and long-term government costs associated with refugee settlement. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), less than 1 percent of the refugees worldwide at the end of 2015 were referred for resettlement to third countries on a permanent basis that year.³⁴ Alleged lack of government resources in settlement countries is seen as the main obstacle to increased resettlement rates. In the short term, government costs can be reduced through private sponsorship since the financial burden is either borne entirely or shared with private citizens during the sponsorship period.

In the longer term, government costs can be reduced since privately sponsored refugees are considered to be among the most 'productive' refugees. Although still sparse, there is a growing literature that examines how privately sponsored refugees

³⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2017

have fared in Canada. For instance, Beiser (2003) has demonstrated that this group of refugees was more successfully integrated in terms of employment, English language fluency and general health than government-assisted refugees 10 years after their arrival in Canada. More recent numbers suggest that refugees arriving through the private sponsorship program were less likely to receive social assistance and had a higher average annual income than government-assisted refugees two years after their arrival.³⁵ Furthermore, Dhital (2015) found that privately sponsored refugees earned on average more than other refugee groups, including asylum refugees. In their early study, Neuwirth and Clarke (1981) found that private sponsors tend to expose refugees to a broader range of services than government settlement workers were able to do, which may account for some of these differences. Another factor that can explain the more successful integration of privately sponsored refugees is that they often develop friendships with their sponsors that continue after the sponsorship period is over.³⁶ The scenario described here can translate into a win-win situation where, the financial, cultural and emotional support offered by private sponsorship groups “translate into economic benefits for the welcoming society as a whole”.³⁷

35 Meurrens 2015

36 Carter et al. 2008

37 Lenard 2016

The fact that private sponsorship promotes integration demonstrates what has been referred to as the “deeply entwined and carefully managed relationship between the policies on immigration control and immigrant integration in Canada”.³⁸ In fact, Canada’s selective and carefully managed immigration strategy which contributes to maximize integration and minimize immigrants’ reliance on state support and the welfare budgets can be identified as the main defining feature of the Canadian model.³⁹

The benefits for the refugees also come in different forms. Due to both the short- and long-term government cost reduction of private sponsorship and public-private partnerships, aid can be offered to a greater number of refugees in need, at little or no extra costs to settling states.⁴⁰ In order for this to happen, private sponsorship and public-private partnerships would have to *add* to the government-assisted projects and increase the overall number of resettled refugees. ‘Additionality’ is a core principle in Canada’s Private Sponsorship Program.⁴¹ A second benefit, emotional support, has already been mentioned as a factor promoting integration. However, the friendship that many refugees experience with members of private

38 Ugland 2018

39 Ugland 2018

40 Lenard 2016

41 Canadian Council for Refugees 2014

sponsorship groups can also be considered to be a personal benefit and a protective factor against loneliness and isolation for individual refugees.⁴²

Several benefits of private sponsorship and public-private partnerships for sponsors, citizens and the host country as a whole have also been identified. First, individual citizens who would like to help are given a concrete channel for direct action. Moreover, since the private sponsors in Canada can identify and propose the individual refugees they wish to resettle, they can respond to the needs of individual refugees or a particular refugee community that concern them. This is referred to as ‘naming’, which together with additionality have been considered to be the two core principles of Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.⁴³ The naming principle is supposed to strengthen the relationship between the members of the sponsorship group and the refugees. A second benefit is the rewarding personal connections and bonds private citizens develop with the refugees. The fact that private citizens through sponsorships can participate directly in the implementation of international humanitarian commitments and obligations by resettling refugees can be seen as a third benefit.⁴⁴ The Canadian Council for Refugees (2014) also mentions

42 Carter et al. 2008

43 Canadian Council for Refugees 2014

44 Krivenko 2012

that the private sponsorship program tends to promote regionalization by dispersing refugees across the country, not just to the major centres. For instance, the province of Manitoba has used the private sponsorship program as a tool to increase the number of immigrants to the province. According to Denton (2003), the retention rate for these refugees has been high due to the fact that many of them are named persons with family ties. The regional distribution of refugees is considered a major benefit for Canada as a whole. Furthermore, the direct personal interaction with refugees affords sponsoring groups the opportunity to gain understanding of the challenges faced by refugees, and has made many of them advocates not only for the refugees they have resettled, but for refugees in general.⁴⁵ This can in turn contribute to create a more welcoming environment for refugees and immigrants in the country.

Criticisms of the program

Despite the actual or perceived benefits of private sponsorship of refugees and public-private partnerships, both practical and normative challenges have also been identified. First of all, failing to respect the additionality principle is seen as a potential problem. A scenario where government responsibility to reset-

⁴⁵ Treviranus and Casasola 2003

tle refugees are merely replaced by private citizens as a cost-cutting measure will not assist more refugees. Furthermore, both the core principles of additionality and naming have been seen as motivating factors for Canadian private citizens to engage in sponsorship of refugees, and for some, the future of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program is to a large extent perceived to rest on them.⁴⁶ Although that the principle of additionality has largely been adhered to in Canada,⁴⁷ the naming principle has been challenged due to the potential tension between the desires and choices of private sponsors and the political orientations and administrative and bureaucratic practices of government.⁴⁸ Introduction of new restrictions on how many refugees can be sponsored (and from which region), longer processing delays and higher refusal rates for sponsorship applications are seen as products of this tension.⁴⁹ As explained by Treviranus and Casasola (2003), sponsorship groups have also been accused of using the naming principle to sponsor friends and relatives of refugees that have already been resettled in Canada. However, the Canadian government has warned against using Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program as an instrument for family reunifica-

46 Canadian Council for Refugees 2014

47 As demonstrated in Figure 3, government-assisted exceeded privately sponsored refugees every year between 2006 and 2015 with the exception of 2013.

48 Krivenko 2012

49 Canadian Council for Refugees 2014

tion rather than helping people in need of protection.⁵⁰

Second, practical and cultural challenges associated with interactions among people with different cultural norms and expectations for interactions should also be mentioned. Operational issues related to the neglect of duties among sponsors vis-à-vis the resettled refugees represent one possible challenge⁵¹, while sponsors who impose their expectations of conventional “Canadian” social behavior on refugee families represent a more cultural challenge⁵². Another potential cultural challenge is that an overwhelming majority of Canadian Sponsorship Agreement Holders are religious organizations, and that refugees may feel direct or indirect pressure to become members of the sponsor’s religious community.⁵³ However, the extent to which private-sponsored refugees encounter more practical and cultural challenges than government-assisted refugees is not documented.

It should also be mentioned that although government costs associated with refugee settlement can be reduced through private sponsorship and public-private partnerships, Canada’s Private Sponsorship Program is still resource-intensive. Both administrative costs in connection with the processing of sponsor-

⁵⁰ Labman 2016

⁵¹ Lenard 2016

⁵² Lanphier 2003

⁵³ Ibid.

ship applications prior to the refugee arrives in Canada, as well as in-kind government contributions to education, health care and social services during and after the sponsorship period must be taken into account.⁵⁴

Summary

Table 1. Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: A brief summary of benefits and challenges/criticisms

Benefits

- Promotes social and economic integration of refugees
- Reduces government costs of resettlement and integration
- Expands total resettlement capacity
- Facilitates compliance with international humanitarian commitments and obligations
- Provides citizens with a direct channel for action and assistance
- Provides citizens with a more personal experience with refugees
- Promotes regionalization of immigrant settlement

Challenges/Criticisms

- High refusal rates, long processing and wait times for sponsors and refugees
- Practical operational and cultural challenges in the interaction between sponsors and resettled refugees
- Loss of government control/sovereignty over immigration policy and priorities
- Significant costs administering the program

⁵⁴ Hyndman et al. 2017

Promotion abroad

The Canadian government has actively promoted its immigration and integration policy model abroad. For instance, the government has funded academic research, conferences, and policy workshops that explore the international relevance of Canadian policies and programs.⁵⁵ Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program has also been increasingly promoted internationally. In a panel discussion organized by the UNHCR in 2016 on best practices dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis, the Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, John McCallum praised the Canadian program and argued that it could be "exportable" to other countries.⁵⁶ The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) represents a concrete attempt to export the Canadian model to other countries. The GRSI is a joint initiative led by the Government of Canada, the UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, the Radcliffe Foundation and the University of Ottawa. The GRSI was announced in New York City in conjunction with the UN and US Refugee Summits, and was formally launched in Ottawa, Canada in December 2016. According to its website, the GRSI "works to assist and inspire countries around the world to open new pathways for

⁵⁵ Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002; Kymlicka 2004

⁵⁶ McCallum 2016b

refugee protection. We do this by sharing Canada's history, experience, and leadership in private sponsorship and by supporting the creation of new programs that countries design to meet their unique needs".⁵⁷

The promotion of the Canadian model has been well received. A representative from the UNCHR said in a meeting in 2016 that "Our hope is that the successful Canadian private sponsorship model will inspire other states to develop programs appropriate to their context".⁵⁸ Several countries have already shown interest in Canada's example.⁵⁹ Australia launched a private sponsorship program heavily based on the Canadian model in 2013, and several European countries – Germany, Ireland and Switzerland – experimented with short-term private sponsorship in response to the Syrian refugee crisis.⁶⁰

The next section discusses the potential for policy learning from Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program in Scandinavia, as well as the main challenges and obstacles to such learning.

57 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2016

58 Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative 2017

59 Economist 2016

60 Kumin 2015

How Practical and Desirable Could It Be in Scandinavia?

The construction of and use of so-called ‘national models’ in comparative migration studies has been challenged on empirical, as well as on epistemological and methodological grounds since the early 2000s.⁶¹ With specific references to the Canadian immigration and integration policy model, some regard it as a product of unique and favourable domestic circumstances, which makes it ill-suited for other countries lacking similar underlying conditions.⁶² Kymlicka, for instance, suggests that both the precise timing of the introduction of multiculturalism and Canada’s unique geography, limit the exportability of the Canadian model to other nations.⁶³ Nevertheless, based on the literature on policy transfer⁶⁴, a basic premise in this

61 see for instance Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012

62 Reitz 2012

63 Kymlicka 2007b

64 Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Dolowitz and Marsh 2000

report is that policy-makers can learn from their observations of policies and programs even in foreign systems.

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) identify four different gradations of policy transfer: copying (direct and complete transfer of a policy or program from another jurisdiction); emulation (transfer of the basic ideas behind a policy or program in another jurisdiction with adjustments for different circumstances); combinations (transfer of policies and programs from several different jurisdictions); and inspiration (policy in one jurisdiction is used as an intellectual stimulus and may inspire a policy change, but the final outcomes do not actually draw upon the original). Non-transfer is also an option, if decision-makers deem foreign policies or programs to be either politically or technically undesirable or impractical in the domestic context. According to Richard Rose, every policy or program can be appraised by two very different standards: "Is it practical? Is it desirable?".⁶⁵ Both questions must be addressed when assessing the relevance of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program in Scandinavia.

Concerning the desirability, it is clear that certain aspects of the Canadian immigration and integration policy model has been rejected due to distinctive political-administrative histories, cultures, traditions and styles of governance in the Scandinavian coun-

⁶⁵ Rose 1991

tries. For instance, Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program has so far been met with little enthusiasm from the state-oriented welfare regimes in Scandinavia. A Norwegian high-ranking civil servant bluntly expressed his scepticism towards the private sponsorship in the following way: "Privatization, like it is practiced in Canada, is a distant thought in the Scandinavian welfare states".⁶⁶ The same attitudes were observed in Sweden where several high-ranking public servants claimed that the private sponsorship of refugees in Canada represented a clear misfit with Swedish welfare state ideology, which is based on values like universalism and equality. To ensure that all refugees will have the same conditions and services was here seen as important. At the same time, it was also often indicated that Sweden is interested in the way Canada has managed to engage civil society and NGOs to complement to the work of local and central authorities.

A former Canadian government official with extensive international experience in the immigration and integration policy field, aptly articulates the difference between Canada and Sweden:

66 quoted in Ugland 2018

Every time I have spoken in Sweden, people in the audience have accused me as a Canadian or accused Canada of abusing vulnerable human beings: that we cherry-pick our migrants – even refugees – and when they arrive here, the government does not look after them but leaves them to civil society organizations to look after them and many of those civil society organizations are run by immigrants. You leave immigrants to themselves. Whereas in Sweden, we look after them – hold them in our arms and rock them back and forth and pet them: a totally different approach. My only response is that yes, this is how we do it in Canada because we think it is better for the immigrants... We like to think that through the NGO sector, we empower migrants to become participating citizens of our country. Whereas we would argue that in Sweden you disempower them by doing everything for them.⁶⁷

Although private sponsorship so far has been met with little enthusiasm, public policies are not static. For instance, the record numbers of refugees that arrived in Scandinavia in connection with the crisis in Syria may have led to an increased openness towards private sponsorship. In 2016, the former Norwegian

⁶⁷ Ugland 2018

Minister of Migration and Integration of the conservative/right-wing minority coalition government, Sylvi Listhaug, travelled to Canada to learn more about Canada's Private Sponsorship for Refugees Program. The future sustainability of the Norwegian welfare state was a prime motive for her trip.⁶⁸

The notion that there is a potential trade-off between an open and accommodating approach to immigration and the maintenance of a robust welfare state has been increasingly expressed in many European countries⁶⁹, and the universalistic and generous Scandinavian welfare model has been regarded as particularly vulnerable.⁷⁰ Brochmann (2003:6) makes the point succinctly:

... immigration to a country that espouses the principle of equal treatment and has an extensive welfare state challenges the population's generosity in the first instance, and may in the longer term affect the sustainability of the system itself if the bulk of the newcomers are unable to support themselves... Good welfare states do not tolerate substantial elements of persons or groups that fall by the wayside, that disturb the regulated world of work and burden social welfare budgets.

68 Uglund 2018

69 Cuperus et al. 2003

70 Brochmann and Hagelund 2012

There has been a growing awareness that the efforts to integrate immigrants into the workforce have not succeeded in Scandinavia. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data, for instance, demonstrates that the Scandinavian countries fare poorly compared to many other countries in integrating immigrants into the labour market. Unemployment rates are significant higher for foreign-born men and women than for native-born persons.⁷¹ Table 2 gives an overview of the employment situation for immigrants in the three Scandinavian countries for 2016.

Table 2. Share in employment aged 15–64 years in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in 2016, per cent.

	Denmark	Norway	Sweden
Native-born persons	76.3	75.2	79.3
Foreign-born persons	66.8	69.2	64.9

Source: OECD (2017), Foreign-born employment (indicator). doi: 10.1787/05428726-en (Accessed on 01 December 2017)

The objective of ensuring the future of the Scandinavian welfare states may make private sponsorship of refugees where the financial burden is either borne entirely or shared with private citizens more desirable for two reasons. First, private sponsorship can contribute to reduce government costs in the short term

⁷¹ OECD 2013

since the private sponsors would cover the costs of food, rent and household utilities and other day-to-day living expenses during the first year. Second, evidence demonstrating that privately sponsored refugees are more successful based on standard measures of integration than government-assisted refugees in the longer term is also important from a welfare state perspective. Swedish research that has demonstrated that resettled refugees have lower employment rates compared with other refugees and immigrants who arrive via family reunion migration may prove a further incentive to explore alternative solutions to the government-assisted programs.⁷²

However, the practical differences between the Canadian and Scandinavian welfare states are here important to take into account. While the Scandinavian countries distribute services to new immigrants not just according to expressed needs, but according to principles of universality, Canada's welfare policy is more residual and without the same commitment to equality of outcome⁷³.⁷⁴ In the case of new Canadian immigrants, much of the responsibility for embedding themselves in paid labour is expected to be self-directed with minimal assistance from service agencies.

⁷² Bevelander 2009; Bevelander 2011

⁷³ Although not as universal, comprehensive and generous as the Swedish welfare state, the Canadian social security system includes unemployment insurance, child tax credits, universal childcare benefits, medicare, the Canada Pension Plan, old age security, and social assistance and a host of other socially-oriented tax deductions and tax credits.

⁷⁴ Daenzer, van Aerschoot and Rees 2014

Focusing on the practical aspects, only a small number of countries take part in the UNHCR's resettlement program. No country is legally obliged to resettle refugees, and, according to the UNHCR (2017), accepting refugees is a demonstration of generosity on the part of governments. The number of countries offering resettlement programs has grown significantly in recent years, from 14 resettlement countries in 2005 to 37 resettlement countries worldwide in 2016 (Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Sweden, among others).

While the United States has been the world's top resettlement country, Canada, Australia and Sweden also provide a sizeable number of places annually.⁷⁵ For instance, Sweden has engaged in resettlement since 1950, and between 1987 and 2016, 54,624 refugees were resettled in Sweden.⁷⁶ The fact that Denmark, Norway and Sweden are already participating in the UNHCR resettlement program could increase the relevance of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program in Scandinavia.

There are, however, also several factors that may make resettling of refugees through private sponsorships more challenging in the Scandinavian context. First of all, Canada's geography has been said to make

⁷⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2017

⁷⁶ Migrationsverket 2017

refugee settlement more palatable.⁷⁷ Surrounded by world oceans and an affluent neighbor in the south, Canada has been confronted with fewer asylum seekers claiming refugee status at Canadian ports of entry. As the Syrian refugee crisis demonstrated at its fullest, Scandinavia is less shielded against spontaneous arrivals of asylum seekers. However, the number of asylum seekers entering Canada from the United States has risen sharply lately. Many of the asylum seekers are believed to be coming to Canada because the U.S. government in 2017 indicated that it intended to lift the temporary protected status given to Haitian nationals after the deadly 2010 earthquake, meaning thousands of people could be deported. More than 7,000 people – the vast majority Haitian nationals – have crossed the border between New York and Quebec since July 2017.⁷⁸ The long-term consequences of this trend for Canada's capacity for refugee settlement are yet to be determined.

Second, Canadian public opinion towards immigrants is another factor that facilitates resettlement of refugees through private partnerships. Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program was "created out of the will of individual Canadians to help refugees and those in need"⁷⁹, and as then Canadian Immigra-

77 Hyndman et al. 2017

78 For more on this evolving story, see for instance "Canada sees 'unprecedented' surge in asylum seekers", CNN, August 17, 2017

79 Labman 2016

tion Minister, John McCallum, recently expressed it:

*I probably have a problem that no other Immigration Minister has. I can't produce refugees quickly enough to satisfy the incredible demand of all those generous Canadians who want to bring them in. That's a good problem to have. It's a problem other Immigration Ministers would long to have.*⁸⁰

Canadian immigration and integration policies are supported by an overwhelming political consensus at the federal level. All of Canada's main political parties agree with the comparatively high admission totals of immigrants annually, and official multiculturalism continues to enjoy the backing of Canadian governments, regardless of ideological orientation.⁸¹ There is rarely any debate about immigration during Canadian election campaigns⁸².⁸³ In fact, federal immigration and integration policy has been described as "de-politicized" due to what has been referred to as a "liberal and expansionary consensus".⁸⁴ Opinions polls since the early 2000s confirm this consensus: between

⁸⁰ McCallum 2016a

⁸¹ Marwah et al. 2013

⁸² The exception is here the 2015 election, when resettlement of Syrian refugees became a defining issue. While all the main political parties promised increased efforts, the election resulted in a new majority Liberal government led by Justin Trudeau, who had significantly exceeded the competing parties' promises (Labman 2016).

⁸³ Reitz 2012

⁸⁴ Marwah et al. 2013

60 and 70 percent of the Canadian population is either systematically supporting current immigration levels or wanting them increased.⁸⁵

Although popular opinion towards immigrants among the majority populations in Denmark, Norway and Sweden during the 2000s, tend to be more positive than the oft-heated debates among media pundits would have it, sizable proportions of the surveyed populations agree or strongly agree with expressions of negative sentiment towards immigrants. However, there are significant differences in attitudes among the Scandinavian countries. According to Yngve Lithman (2013), Sweden has traditionally been the most liberal in terms of attitudes towards immigrants, Denmark the least liberal, and Norway somewhere in-between. Political parties with anti-immigration agendas have also, until very recently, enjoyed more success in Denmark and Norway than in Sweden. However, the last general election in Sweden in 2014, when the right-wing Sweden Democrats polled 12.9 percent of the popular vote and won 14 percent of the seats in Parliament, indicates that the intra-Scandinavian differences have narrowed. The upcoming 2018 national election may further reinforce the Sweden Democrats' position in the Swedish parliament. Opinion polls have consistently shown support around 17

85 Ugland 2018

percent for the party since 2015.⁸⁶ Be that as it may, the more negative attitudes towards immigration may make private sponsorship of refugees more challenging in the Scandinavian context.

However, the more positive public attitudes towards immigration in Sweden compared to in Denmark and Norway may indicate that the potential for private sponsorship of refugees will be greatest in Sweden.⁸⁷ What has been referred to as the ‘special relationship’ that has emerged in the area of immigration and integration policy since the early 2000s between Canada and Sweden, which is based on regular and frequent contacts and interactions between Canadian and Swedish politicians and civil servants, has already stimulated policy learning between the two countries.⁸⁸ Private sponsorship of refugees has already been addressed in bilateral exchanges between Canada and Sweden. During a recent visit to Sweden by a Canadian delegation in 2017, the Governor General of Canada, David Johnson, said that Swedish officials had shown keen interest in the Canada’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program as a way of overcoming immigration and integration challenges.⁸⁹

86 Statistics Sweden 2017

87 According to the European Social Survey (EES), Sweden is consistently cited as the most ‘immigrant friendly’ country in Europe. The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every two years across Europe since 2001.

88 Ugland 2018

89 Press 2017

Conclusion

The Canadian immigration and integration policy model has attracted much attention in Scandinavia, and it has served as an inspirational model in the reform debate and process in Denmark, Norway and Sweden since the early 2000s.⁹⁰ In particular, Canada's positive view of immigrants as resources has served to inspire new attitudes and policies towards labour immigration in the three countries. Still, the general notion of an increasingly open and selective immigration strategy has prompted different responses in the three Scandinavian countries that all differed from the original Canadian programs and policies. Indeed, Scandinavian pragmatism has been applied to the Canadian model in that it has not been accepted and transferred as a complete package of reforms. Instead, the Canadian model has been filtered, edited and redefined in a process of practical or pragmatic adaptation.

The history of Canada's Private Sponsorship of

⁹⁰ Ugland 2018

Refugees is a proud one, and this report has discussed benefits as well as actual and potential challenges and criticisms of private sponsorship. Overall, the evidence suggests that Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees program provides clear benefits for the government, the resettled refugees, the private sponsors, the citizens and Canada as a whole. Despite both ideological and practical obstacles, it could also serve as an inspirational model for Scandinavia.

However, Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees program is not likely to be copied in its entirety. Instead, the Scandinavian reform profile suggests that the Canadian program will be filtered, edited and redefined through a process of pragmatic adaptation to the domestic context. A number of key questions should be considered in this process:

- How much autonomy should be given to private sponsors to identify and select candidates for sponsorship?
- How much government oversight of private sponsorship groups should be exercised during the sponsorship period?
- How long should the sponsorship period be?
- How should sponsorship groups be evaluated?
- Should focus be on privately sponsored or public-private partnerships to support refugees?

Pragmatism is an essential element of Scandinavian policy-making, and as Scandinavia continues to reassess immigration and integration policies to ensure the long-term survival of the welfare state, an adapted version of Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program could form part of a pragmatic solution to a complex practical problem.

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Trygve Ugland

CANADA CAN, CAN WE?

Sponsoring integration of refugees,

the Canadian way

This report presents Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, and discusses its benefits, criticisms and challenges based on a comprehensive review of the existing academic literature. The report proceeds with a discussion of the potential for policy learning from the program in Scandinavia. The main challenges and obstacles to such learning are also identified and discussed.

While respecting and understanding the large contextual differences, this report provides food for thought when addressing pressing issues; How can we find new ways to help refugees in need of protection and at the same time improve integration? Has Canada got it right? What role does civil society play and what role could it play?

