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Pilot Project:
A 20 Year Comparison on Immigration Retention in NL

Barbara Burnaby (Faculty of Education)
Joan Whelan (Faculty of Education)
Memorial University of Newfoundland
and
Jose Rivera
Coalition on Richer Diversity (CORD)

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

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Pilot Project: A 20-Year Comparison on Immigration Retention in NL¹

Not all destinations are the refugee's choice; they reflect the decisions of countries which produce and receive refugees, as well as the international agencies which assist their movements. (Lisa Gilad, 1990, p. 4)

Introduction

The present study focusses on the retention of newcomers as residents in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) once they arrive here for the first time. In light of recent provincial policy developments intended to put in place measures to encourage newcomers to stay and settle here, this project has reviewed and analysed: (1) new data from newcomers in 2008/09; (2) data gathered by the Coalition on Richer Diversity (CORD) from 2007 to 2008 on stakeholders' views on newcomers' experiences and satisfactions since they first arrived here; and finally (3) information from an ethnographic study done with refugees in St. John's in the 1980s concerning a range of their experiences as newcomers (Gilad, 1990). The present research project is a preliminary study on ways to inform on-going public and community efforts to retain newcomers in this province. A principle used here is to draw as much information as possible from the perspectives of newcomers themselves.

Context and Rationale

Policy Goal of Newcomer Retention

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) receives a relatively low number of new immigrants and, of these, only about 36 per cent stay in the province (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2005, p.13). The Province's new policy on immigration (Danny Williams in Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2007, p. ii) centres on "attracting and retaining immigrants." In setting this goal, the government faces a major dilemma. A central rationale for the goal is to alleviate the various effects of population decline overall in the province. Since outmigration of citizens with deep ancestry in the province is an important contributor to this

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population decline, the question arises what the province can do to make itself more attractive, specifically to newcomers.

Identification of Specific Retention Issues

To explore solutions to the general aims of NL policy on immigration, a workshop in March 2008 on immigration and settlement in NL was conducted by the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development of Memorial University. The following questions from the conclusion to the workshop report (Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, 2008, p.9) have provided part of the specific framework for the present study of the issues involved in immigrant retention in this province. We have re-arranged the order of the questions to work from broad to more specific issues.

1. What are the factors which determine whether an immigrant will remain where he or she has arrived²: career opportunities, family factors, the lack of other immigrants from his/her home country, etc.?
2. What are the factors which determine whether an immigrant is likely to settle in rural areas vs. in urban areas?
3. What are Newfoundland and Labrador's competitive advantages when it comes to attracting immigrants?
4. What strategies must the province adopt if it is to compete against other destinations (including other Canadian destinations)?
5. Are there regulatory, attitudinal or other impediments to retaining skilled workers and highly educated workers?
6. How efficient and equitable is the process of recognizing foreign credentials?
7. What special needs do refugees bring to host societies?

² We have used the word "arrived" rather than "settled" in the original question because we assume that "settled" would mean a predisposed, serious intention to stay.

Framework of the Present Study

Current Research Context

In recent years, information gathering on retention of immigrants in NL has largely been: (1) quantitative, questionnaire-driven in nature or based on literature reviews (e.g., Goss Gilroy Inc., 2005); (2) targeted on highly educated newcomers (e.g., Audas, Ross & Vardy, 2004; Pitblado & Pong, 1999; Reitmanova, 2008), (3) focussed on employment issues as the main topic (e.g., Association for New Canadians, 2007; Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2005; Locke & Lynch, 2005), and (4) conducted mostly by people with few direct ties to the provincial immigrant community. We note particularly that research based on publically gathered statistics on the geographic movement of newcomers within and between provinces in Canada is greatly limited by the nature of census questions and other regular means of tracking immigrants or citizens, much less providing clues to the motivations for making changes.

However, there are some studies based primarily on in-depth research in NL with a range of immigrant and refugee participants, and using open-ended data collection methods: that is, those conducted by the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador (MWONL) (e.g., Hajee, 1983; MWONL, 1992, 1994, 2003, 2004; Quaicoe, 2002 a,b; Sarma-Debnath, 2006a,b; Sarma-Debnath & Kutty, 2005; Sarma-Debnath & Castano, 2008), Swamidias, 1997) and the multi-year anthropology study in the 1980s of refugees in the St. John's area by Lisa Gilad (1990). (Gilad was also a founding member of MWONL.)

The priorities of immigrants and refugees themselves and their individual decisions to stay or go is in their hands. Therefore, their perspectives are fundamental to the answer to the overall question of how to retain newcomers in this province and to the more detailed questions generated. The present study has aimed at creating, finding and analysing data from newcomers and those who work closely with them over extended periods. The results have produced limited, contemporary findings on retention by gathering new data directly, and analysing these along with recent data on immigrants' contemporary priorities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Finally, refugees' perspectives on staying in or leaving this province from data collected in the 1980s provide a means to a historical perspective on present issues.

Approach to Methodology

The present proposal is rooted in the model of research used in the projects by MWONL members and Gilad in that they gathered data directly from a broad range of newcomers to discover their perspectives inductively. These projects used focus groups or ethnographic interviews of many newcomers and other stakeholders to immigration in NL, and they stimulated discussion with participants using semi-structured topics or open-ended questions. The analysis was done using disciplined qualitative procedures. A critical factor in these studies is that they were conducted by organizations and individuals who were well known in the immigrant communities of NL.

However, the results of the present study are limited by various factors. While qualitative empirical approaches are well suited to obtaining findings about the perspectives of a particular group, they are also notoriously hard to control through research process, demanding of human resources, and time-consuming. Also, this project was exploratory in light of limits by time and funding. To a considerable extent, we had to work with data collected with purposes other than retention directly. Therefore, for those who need answers about factors in immigrant retention, this project will provide only a start.

Data and Primary Analysis

The data used in this study are discussed below in three separate sets.

New Data

Temporary Foreign Worker Experiences in Newfoundland

For this project, ten newcomers were interviewed about their challenges and needs related to their arrival and stay in this province. Our intent to interview many more people was challenged by the fact that, as we discovered early on, there was very little available information on the identity or location on the newcomers we sought. Our eight main interviewees were all Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), brought here under a relatively new but rapidly growing program through Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Although interviews were conducted with TFWs located through informal networks, they represent a cross-section of categories available under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Interviewees included three restaurant kitchen workers; one live-in caregiver; one skilled worker (oil and gas); one skilled worker (accounting); one day-care worker and one recent Memorial University graduate employed as a skilled worker. Of these workers, two are living with spouses who have open work permits, while a third is endeavouring to bring a spouse to Canada. The two spouses present in St. John's were included in the interviews. All participants are located in the St. John's region. Our sample was not derived from a rationalized selection of temporary foreign workers because there is little access to general information about this group of newcomers. There are, for instance, no interviews with any of the more than 1,000 workers arriving each year outside of St. John's. Nevertheless, our sample population reveals a wide spectrum of settlement experiences.

Interviews with workers covered a standard set of questions, touching on the following areas:

- the process of coming to Canada;
- settlement, government and community services;
- employer supports;

- basic needs, such as food,
- shelter and communication;
- labour rights;
- plans for staying in Newfoundland; and
- major recommendations for services and supports.

The first stages of the temporary foreign worker process (including paperwork completed and travel to Canada) varied considerably for our interview participants. Most found the process to be largely unproblematic. The most positive experience was reported by a skilled worker whose employer provided access to a lawyer to facilitate the paperwork and process. At the other end of the spectrum, one lower-skilled worker experienced difficulty in the process, citing a lack of understanding of the process, the unavailability of anyone to help, and confusing instructions from the Canadian embassy. With low computer literacy skills, this worker was frustrated at the embassy's instructing him to follow the process online at the CIC website.

Settling in St. John's is aided, according to all of our interviewees, by the friendly demeanour of the resident population. Registration in MCP and SIN programs was uncomplicated, and all of the workers did so with the aid of friends, employers or colleagues. Some workers receive informal support by accessing community associations or groups that connect them with people of their culture. One worker received settlement support by a consultant hired by the employer. While some workers experience a degree of ease settling in, others report barriers created by not knowing the language or local culture.

Some workers have accessed language services through either the Refugee Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC) or the Association for New Canadians (ANC). Temporary foreign workers have to pay for ESL training, although one worker is able to take part in government-funded ESL by virtue of the fact that their partner has been admitted to the Provincial Nominee Program. The ANC will accept paying students, given the availability of seats left over after the registration of permanent residents – the group whom the ANC's Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program is mandated to serve.

Transportation was cited as an issue, with several workers commenting on the public transportation in St. John's. For some workers, getting a car provided a solution to this problem. However, obtaining a Newfoundland and Labrador driver's licence has proven to be a difficult and inconsistent process. A related barrier facing temporary foreign workers wishing to drive in Newfoundland and Labrador is the high cost of insurance, compared with rates paid by locally-experienced drivers. A similar difficulty faces workers with foreign credit history who are seeking loans or mortgages.

Employers are unanimously cited as essential support providers, although the quality and degree of support varies widely. As mentioned above, one company provided a range of services

through a third-party settlement consultant. Employers provided a range of informal settlement supports; in most cases, employers provided accommodations or assistance finding accommodations. One employer helped arrange for a phone and utilities. Other supports included help with personal needs, such as learning where to find services and amenities, opening bank accounts and applying for MCP coverage. Some employers also provided help with government documents related to permanent residency.

Basic needs were discussed, including food, shelter, medical service, socializing and recreation, spirituality, school/childcare, communication with home and communication with the local, settled population. As previously noted, transportation was cited as a major issue for most workers interviewed. Access to community services and amenities is directly affected by the availability of transportation. Workers in many cases had the support of employers in finding shelter. In one case, a worker and his spouse had a protracted dispute with their landlord.

Two workers reported seeking family doctors, with no success to date. Other workers found doctors on the advice of employers or other contacts. In one case, the worker was advised to contact the MCP office to get a list of doctors accepting new patients. Two workers are not concerned about finding a doctor, while others have made use of walk-in clinics operating in St. John's and Mount Pearl.

Social, recreational and spiritual activities were limited for most workers. Travelling within the city is difficult, particularly during the winter. One worker – a former MUN student – developed a social network while at university. Other workers socialize with colleagues or spent time at home. Another worker is studying toward an accreditation, and so has little free time. Cultural and religious organizations were cited as sources of new friends and social opportunities by three workers.

Communication with friends and family at home is unproblematic in most cases, as a result of access to phones and new technology. Communication in St. John's is more challenging; two workers speak little to no English, while others cite difficulty understanding local accents. In spite of these factors, virtually all workers report a very positive experience dealing with locals, who are described as being generally friendly and supportive.

Of the workers interviewed, none of them understood their rights as workers. One is actively exploring the issue in conversation with colleagues. The internet was cited as a likely approach to finding labour information, though no workers knew to check government websites as possible starting places. Three workers cited language and literacy barriers in accessing labour rights information. Two workers cannot read English or French, while another has very low computer literacy. Of these workers, one recommended making labour information available in her language (although it should be noted the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism makes standards available in simplified Chinese, French and Spanish).

Permanent residency is a goal for six workers, while one worker has already become a permanent resident. Another hopes to stay in Canada for approximately 5 years, and may return to school during that time. Of the six workers planning to stay, four are hoping to become provincial

nominees, while two are learning about the process to become permanent – both of these workers cite the desire for guidance and a clear process for applying. Of the four hoping to become nominees, two have not applied; one is waiting to hear results of her application and another is in the process of applying with assistance from their employer.

Two workers consider leaving the province for other parts of Canada; one cites weather and the desire to see other places as factors, while the other would leave to attend university in Montreal or Toronto. All other workers prefer to stay where they are.

Recommendations made by the interviewees related to the availability and/or delivery of information in several areas; activities and support networks for workers; and streamlining or improving delivery of government programs for newcomers.

Information for temporary foreign workers should be made more readily available in the following areas:

- the process for renewing visas and work permits;
- the MCP program;
- labour legislation; and
- immigration programs, including clarification on family sponsorship.

One worker expressed frustration with the inefficiency of overly-complicated government websites, suggesting that alternative methods of information delivery be explored. A related issue is the fact that government websites are available in official languages, but temporary foreign workers may not speak or read those languages. One worker pointed out the need to make information available in several languages.

One worker expressed the need for improved service with a clear process for international drivers at the Department of Motor Vehicle Registration.

One worker compared Canada with Australia, pointing out that in Australia foreign workers are given much stronger support by the government. For instance, the immigration office of the government can provide on-the-phone translation services. Labour rights information is provided to new workers, along with a private phone number to report infractions or complaints. The Australian government also monitors workplaces with surprise inspections.

Three workers expressed the desire to have access to workshops, support groups or a consultation service aiding foreign workers with integration and cultural competency training. Two workers also stated the need for support for recent graduates and spouses on open work permits in accessing the local job market.

After the results of the interviews were collated and analysed, our research group called a meeting for March 31, 2009 to bring together a range of stakeholders from federal and provincial agencies, employment and immigration related organizations, and service providing bodies. Approximately 20 people attended. After the results of previous activities of the project were given (survey of national information on TFWs, and the results of the interviews), two focus groups were formed. In one group, the discussion led to issues which were largely covered as well in the survey, so these points are not reiterated here. The following points are a summary of new considerations as follows:

Labour standards (rights, working conditions, health and safety):

1. Using some media such as the internet as the major/sole source of information excludes a number of users;
2. Information about workers' rights should take into account the fact that many relevant workers do not speak (or read) English or French fluently;
3. Workers need to be clearly informed about effective, safe ways in which they can voice issues, concerns and complaints;
4. Workplaces should be systematically monitored for compliance with labour standards policies;
5. Mandatory, suitable education for employers is greatly needed.

Labour mobility:

1. ANC provides some labour-related services for workers;
2. We need to identify TFWs' demographics (location, work type, etc.);
3. We need to do proactive planning with stakeholders;
4. We need to do rural outreach;
5. We need plans to assist TFWs who get laid off in this difficult economic climate.

Recommended action:

1. Engage stakeholders not present at this meeting (HRLE, employers, CFIB, FFAW, Board of Trade, women's organizations in community and government);
2. Create a network of all stakeholders to increase communication;
3. Increase government mechanisms to collect data and assess newcomer intakes in the larger picture of labour pools and mobility in the province;
4. Find ways to get information directly to TFWs, not just through employers;

5. Workplace procedures, behaviours and expectations must be culturally suitable to the workforce;
6. Identify not just regular ESL programs available to TFWs but also other community activities which could help newcomers improve their English;
7. Remove barriers and actively support TFWs who want to get permanent residence status.

The Role of Traditional Versus Local Food for Retention of Newcomers

At the same time as the data were being collected concerning TFWs, the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador conducted a survey study and workshops with refugees and immigrants concerning their access to acceptable food here in the province, in particular foods that were important to them from their cultural backgrounds. The overall objective of the study was to identify strategies for enhancing food security and the health and well-being of refugees and immigrants. The idea for this project was developed from a previous study that highlighted a need for food security education in the province. It was indicated that newcomers in St. John's were facing difficulties related to shopping in grocery stores, judging the appropriateness of food prices, and preparing local foods (Meaney, 2007). Further, in the Report of Consultations on a Provincial Immigration Strategy, issues related to food security were presented as possible incentives that would encourage new immigrants to settle in the province (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, 2005).

The Food Security Survey was designed to address the main issues surrounding immigrant food security: availability, access, acceptability, and adequacy. Additional questions were included as indicators of dietary acculturation. The survey was administered to 114 refugees and immigrants in the St. John's area. Results of the survey indicated that many participants are adopting unhealthy 'North American' dietary habits. Participants indicated high costs and lack of availability of cultural foods as reasons for these dietary changes. Further statistical analysis revealed gender differences in terms of satisfaction with the quality and cultural appropriateness of foods available in the province. Women were significantly less satisfied than men, suggesting a gendered perspective on specific food security issues.

A workshop was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the food security issues facing refugees and immigrants in Corner Brook. The workshop served to improve understanding of food security and encourage participants to focus on building community-based initiatives for enhancing food security and the health and well-being of refugees and immigrants. The workshop was conducted as a semi-structured discussion around food related experiences and challenges. One participant stated that when she first settled in Corner Brook 15 years ago, culturally diverse food options were very limited, though the situation has improved a little since then. Participants articulated the strategies they use for dealing with their cultural food needs, one of which involves travelling great distances – often to other cities or countries – to purchase ingredients that are not available in the Corner Brook region. Participants were asked whether they believe the availability and accessibility of quality foods of their cultures is a factor in a refugee or immigrants' decision to

stay or leave this province; the response was a unanimous “yes”. Participants suggested that seeing foods of their cultures in stores gives newcomers a “welcoming feeling”, and gives rise to a sense of well-being. It was expressed that the inability to access cultural food causes feelings of frustration and anxiety amongst the refugee and immigrant community.

Based on survey data and focus group discussions, several recommendations were made to address the food security issues of newcomers to the province:

1) Education Initiatives. There is a need for educational programs designed to promote healthy dietary acculturation amongst newcomers. Such programs should emphasize the following key objectives:

- Introducing newcomers to locally available ingredients suitable for use as substitutes in cultural cooking
- Working with local farmers and agriculture experts on identifying culturally diverse produce that could be grown in the province
- Imparting food preparation skills and nutritional knowledge to younger generations
- Sharing knowledge about the health benefits of foods from different cultures
- Introducing long-standing residents of the province to culturally diverse ingredients and food preparation methods

2) Capacity Building Initiatives. Many provinces across Canada have developed community-based strategies to foster the independence and integration of refugees and immigrants. Capacity building initiatives work best for small, rural communities that may be more marginalized in terms of food availability and accessibility. Examples of community-based programs that may be successful in rural regions of Newfoundland and Labrador include:

- Community kitchens and community gardens to introduce refugees and immigrants to locally grown products, their nutritional benefits and ways in which they could be substituted in preparing foods of their culture. It could also be an opportunity for newcomers to share their foods with long-standing residents, exchange food knowledge, practice language skills, and build new relationships.
- Facilitating more food security workshops and discussion groups to bring individuals together to help identify the specific needs of their communities and work to develop strategies that will best address those needs.
- A resource centre or organisation targeted towards the needs of newcomers in rural areas could serve as a knowledge base and social hub. Individuals would have the opportunity to come together on a regular basis to address the issues that are pertinent to the refugee and immigrant community.

3) *Awareness.* Spreading awareness of refugee and immigrant food needs and the eating habits of diverse cultures, particularly in rural communities, might motivate local businesspeople to find a niche in the ethnic food market. Some of the initiatives currently being explored in Corner Brook as a result of the workshop include:

- Writing group letters to local grocery stores encouraging the sale of diverse international foods.
- Encouraging local restaurant owners to introduce more cultural diversity in their menus.

4) *Research.* As the province strives to encourage the settlement and retention of refugees and immigrants, it is important to consider the health implications of adapting to a new cultural environment. There is a need for continued research on the impact of dietary acculturation of refugees and immigrants, particularly those in more isolated rural regions. The current study found that in St. John's, participants were adopting many unhealthy "North American" dietary habits. This trend is likely to be magnified in rural areas where food options are more limited. Future research should be focused on identifying the factors that promote the successful, healthy dietary acculturation of refugees and immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Previously Collected Data

Our analysis of the temporary foreign worker data was extended by detailed reference to data collected by the Coalition on Richer Diversity (CORD) from June 2007 to the present. In the spring of 2007, a steering committee of twelve community members with strong roots in the newcomer community in the St. John's area organized three focus groups to scan community opinions on needs in the field of immigration. About forty people (newcomers and others) from a broad range of social engagement and action (for example, ethnic NGOs, health care, education, adult literacy, and so on) took part in these sessions. These perspectives were organized by topic and used as the basis for the formation of CORD and its "solutions groups" in September 2007. Since that time, five CORD meetings have been held with a focus on gathering a wider involvement and collaboration of community players and getting their input on issues and priorities for the five emerging solutions groups (health, education, community, youth and employment, identified below as H, E, C, Y, and W respectively). The original reports are available at www.cancord.org. Data from the original focus groups as well as the subsequent discussions through CORD were analysed in the present project to augment the findings from the TFW interviews.

Our findings from CORD's discussions listed below are the result of the condensation of a great deal of input during face-to-face meetings. For present purposes, we have selected the most representative from CORD's records, and found that they fall into three viewpoints on immigration to this province. (The items below are not listed in a prioritized order.)

Action for public/professional knowledge, accommodation and understanding of newcomers

C.	Counteract stereotyping – see newcomers as individuals
C.	View people as having more than one identity (not just “Newcomers”) and engage individuals based on their personal interests
C.	Educate the community (at all levels) and community organizations/ agencies to be more accepting and welcoming and to ensure that newcomers are treated fairly
C.	Model and facilitate more inclusion in the community
W.	Go to great lengths to ensure that hiring practices are fair for newcomer candidates
W.	Identify barriers, successes and resources in the employment sector
H.	Develop a more holistic understanding of health (Mental, Emotional, Physical, Spiritual)
H.	Examine current institutional practices in healthcare to ensure that unjust practices are not perpetuated
H.	Get feedback from newcomer participants in any public service

Action for effective learning and participation for newcomers

C.	Make public services more understandable to the newcomer
C.	Demonstrate to immigrants the benefits of volunteering in the communities
C.	Find ways for newcomers to better understand the rules of Canada’s social system
C.	Add value and ease to the immigrant experience
E.	Include newcomers actively in all aspects of research concerning them
E.	Improve education effectiveness for newcomers
E.	Enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching/learning opportunities
E.	Provide unique services for newcomer students who may have little previous experience with formal education
Y.	Improve access and awareness of programs for newcomer youth
Y.	Provide a space where newcomer youth can have a collective voice
H.	Improve access to all healthcare services
H.	Upgrade and train health care professionals
H.	Staff education (especially regarding the impact of war and trauma, cultural differences and experience, e.g., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Approaches to mutual understanding between “old” and “new” residents

C.	Explore cultural networking techniques
C.	Bridge gaps between immigrants and long-term residents (relationships, patience, adjustment)
W.	Find new solutions to credential evaluation and the accreditation process. Address policies and credentials: i.e. qualifications for health care providers coming from other countries
W.	improve references recognition (employers need to recognize skills and foreign experience rather than strict Canadian experience)
W.	Provide complete information for internationally trained educational professionals (ITP) <u>before</u> they enter Canada

W.	Make workplaces more representative of a diverse community
W.	Arrange diversity training as part of work orientation and establish diversity training for hiring committees
Y.	Allow local and newcomer youth to develop their own mechanisms to meet, attract and appeal to the each other
Y.	Promote a positive view of newcomer youth
Y.	Contribute to a positive appreciation of newcomer youth in the research process.
H.	Develop culturally sensitive health and wellness services
H.	Overcome language and other cultural barriers
H.	Deliver pastoral care of all faiths in hospitals
H.	Understand culture specific and traditional medicine
H.	Understand the different views on health from different cultures (i.e. not everyone believes they should/ can take responsibility for their health)

Gilad's Findings on Retention

Lisa Gilad's 1990 book, *The Northern Route: An ethnography of refugee experiences*, provided rich information against which to view the findings of the analysis of the two contemporary sources of information described above. The basis of the book is the experience of about ten refugee families or individuals who came to St. John's in the 1980s.

A principal aim of this book is to explore the stages in the refugee experience of claimants in Canada and applicants from abroad. We will see how these stages are negotiated by different kinds of refugees as they acquire new skills. The particular and unusual structure of the refugee experience is clearly one of *process*. It has not one centre of gravity, but rather occurs simultaneously all over the world...For the refugee, it involves researching a series of destinations....Not all destinations are the refugee's choice; they reflect the decisions of countries which produce and receive refugees, as well as the international agencies which assist their movements. (p. 4)

While we considered Gilad's findings throughout the book, we specially focussed on her chapter, "Moving On", which detailed the motivations and experiences of the refugee families or individuals as they all left the province for other destinations (most within a year). Gilad's work was done at a time when the structure of supports for newcomers in NL was developing slowly into the institutions and public approaches to immigration which form our current resources. Also, routes through which medical professionals gained employment here were different at that time. Her detailed analysis, based on richly documented data, provides a milestone against which to compare present-day data.

According to Gilad, "a key characteristic of the refugee world...is its transient nature; a first destination in Canada, not the last on the refugee journey" (p.262). She explains that with the exception of a few family-sponsored Vietnamese refugees, none of the refugees she spoke with had

chosen St. John's as their preferred destination in Canada, and, to the contrary, virtually all had asked visa officers to settle them elsewhere. This fact alone may explain high out-migration. In interviews with Gilad shortly after their arrival, refugees expressed anger in being sent to Newfoundland. It has been hypothesized that, in the case of refugees settled in St. John's against their wishes, it may be "psychologically important for them to be able to choose their own homes. Since they lacked freedom [in their countries of origin], they now gain it by choosing a place to live" (p. 266). It should be kept in mind that refugees may have psychological needs which are different from those of workers who have chosen their destination.

The Boat People crisis of 1979-1980 in which over 350 Vietnamese refugees were sponsored by Newfoundland groups, led to the creation of service delivery programs for newcomers on the level of the local civil service. At the time of Gilad's study, refugees whose arrival point in Canada was St. John's were comparatively advantaged in terms of access to government services. Overall, Gilad reports "refugees found people generous with their time and advice and were usually overjoyed about the services they received upon arriving in Newfoundland" (p. 264). Refugees had only a one or two month wait to begin language classes in comparison with six months or longer on the mainland.

Gilad concluded that it was primarily their inability to find work, rather than a shortage of supportive settlement programs, that ultimately led to refugees' resettlement on the mainland. While a few registered for university, training programs often required a two year wait for admission and newcomers were therefore left with time on their hands, without work or training opportunities. Although an ANC sponsored job finding club had some success in providing refugees with local employment, refugees often took dead-end positions in order to raise money for relocation to the mainland. Gilad seems to suggest that no amount of job finding assistance could have secured meaningful employment given Newfoundland's high rate of unemployment in the 1980s. At the time of Gilad's writing, a full "80 per cent of all refugee arrivals to Newfoundland [were] expected to leave within two to three years" (p.267). Primarily, those who remained either found jobs in their professions, as was the case for some doctors and university professors, or were willing to take any employment offer in order to raise money to sponsor family members still in refugee camps.

The following are quotes from her chapter, "Moving On", to represent her main findings on retention.

A key characteristic of the refugee world in St. John's is its transient nature: a first destination in Canada, not the last on the refugee journey. (p. 262)

It must be stated first that the large majority of refugees do not want to be here to begin with. (p. 262)

Only doctors ask to come to Newfoundland, and the province cannot accommodate all their requests because of the limited number of internships and cottage hospital positions available (p.262)

...[most refugees in the study] accepted being in St. John's until they had finished language school and could finance their departure: they quickly grew accustomed to the help provided by the Adjustment Assistance Programme counsellor and the settlement association. (p.264)

I met most of the refugees in this study during their first months of their arrival: in this group, all but one family left within the year. (p. 264)

[Despite supports for job finding] the stark reality is that for most refugees, there is no future in this province unless they can radically retrain for the few and far between positions open in Newfoundland. ... A few register for university training programmes, the latter often requiring a two-year wait for admission thus discouraging newcomers from trying to enter these programmes. (p. 265)

Towards the end of six months in language school, most refugees have been in the province for nine months and are aware that in three more months they will face the humiliation of accepting welfare. (p. 265)

The lack of viable refugee/ethnic communities is pronounced in the area of employment, although the poor employment prospects in Newfoundland generally may prevent refugees from finding meaningful work even if they had scores of co-ethnics to find it. (p. 266)

Gilad quotes a colleague

...he told me that he coined the phrase "secondary migration syndrome" for the Vietnamese refugees who arrived and left in the early 1980s: 'For those who were brought here [to St. John's rather than to some Canadian city] without choice, even if they like it here, it is psychologically important to them to be able to choose their own homes''. (p. 266)

Comparisons Across Four Sources

The following are responses to the questions listed above from the Harris Centre's workshop on immigration. Relevant items from the three data sources are listed under each question with some comments for some.

1. What are the factors which determine whether an immigrant will remain where he or she has arrived: career opportunities, family factors, the lack of other immigrants from his/her home country, etc.?

Our reading of the data convinces us that, while all the factors listed in the question are important to newcomers, the one which overrides all others is employment. The following description relates to TFWs. It is important to note that they, unlike many newcomers especially refugees, already have jobs. Thus, the high level of interest in staying greatly reinforces our other evidence that the most important factor in retaining newcomers is that they have jobs – and not just any jobs, but those they have chosen for themselves.

- Permanent residency is a goal for six [of ten TFW] workers, while one worker has already become a permanent resident. Another hopes to stay in Canada for approximately 5 years, and may return to school during that time. Of the six workers planning to stay, four are hoping to become provincial nominees, while two are learning about the process to become permanent residents; both of these workers cite the desire for guidance and a clear process for applying. Of the four hoping to become nominees, two have not applied; one is waiting to hear results of her application and another is in the process of applying with assistance from the employer.
- Two workers consider leaving the province for other parts of Canada; one cites weather and the desire to see other places as factors, while the other would leave to attend university in Montreal or Toronto. All other workers prefer to stay where they are. (TFW)
- Food security plays an important role in feeling welcome in the province. Refugees and immigrants feel stressed and a lack a sense of well-being when they are unable to adjust to a new diet due to lack of availability of their own cultural foods. (FSN)
- [Despite supports for job finding] the stark reality is that for most refugees, there is no future in this province unless they can radically retrain for the few and far between positions open in Newfoundland. ... A few register for university training programmes, the latter often requiring a two-year wait for admission thus discouraging newcomers from trying to enter these programmes. (Gilad, p. 265)
- Towards the end of six months in language school, most refugees have been in the province for nine months and are aware that in three more months they will face the humiliation of accepting welfare. (Gilad, p. 265)

- The lack of viable refugee/ethnic communities is pronounced in the area of employment, although the poor employment prospects in Newfoundland generally may prevent refugees from finding meaningful work even if they had scores of co-ethnics to find it. (Gilad, p. 266)

- Gilad quotes a colleague:

...he told me that he coined the phrase “secondary migration syndrome” for the Vietnamese refugees who arrived and left in the early 1980s: ‘For those who were brought here [to St. John’s rather than to some Canadian city] without choice, even if they like it here, it is psychologically important to them to be able to choose their own homes’”. (p. 266)

2. What are the factors which determine whether an immigrant is likely to settle in rural areas vs. in urban areas?

We found very few indications in our four data sources on newcomers’ views concerning whether they would willingly settle in a rural area or not. Our impression is that only access to a high quality job would be important, and that a rural location would not be a major impediment.

- “Only doctors ask to come to Newfoundland, and the province cannot accommodate all their requests because of the limited number of internships and cottage hospital positions available.” (Gilad, p.262)
- We need to do rural outreach (TFW, March meeting)
- Food options are more limited in isolated, rural areas (FSN)

3. What are Newfoundland and Labrador’s competitive advantages when it comes to attracting immigrants?

- Settling in St. John’s is aided, according to all of our interviewees, by the friendly demeanour of the resident population. Registration in MCP and SIN programs was uncomplicated, and all of the workers did so with the aid of friends, employers or colleagues. Some workers receive informal support by accessing community associations or groups that connect them with people of their culture. (TFW)
- Employers are unanimously cited as essential support providers, although the quality and degree of support varies widely (TFW)
- Cultural and religious organizations were cited as sources of new friends and social opportunities by three workers. (TFW)

- ...[most refugees in the study] accepted being in St. John's until they had finished language school and could finance their departure: they quickly grew accustomed to the help provided by the Adjustment Assistance Programme counsellor and the settlement association. (Gilad, p.264)

4. What strategies must the province adopt if it is to compete against other destinations (including other Canadian destinations)?

Developing Policy or Other Actions

- H. Get feedback from newcomer participants in all public services. (CORD)
- E. Include newcomers actively in all aspects of the research process on issues related to them (CORD)
- Y. Promote a positive view of newcomer youth, including in the research process (CORD)
- Some TFW experiences suggest that guidelines for services to temporary residents, such as access to a NL drivers license, in government agencies are inconsistent at best. (TFW)
- Engage stakeholders not present at the TFW March meeting
- Increase government mechanisms to collect data and assess newcomer intakes in the larger picture of labour pools and mobility in the province (TFW March meeting)
- Remove barriers and actively support TFWs who want to get permanent residence status (TFW March meeting)
- Workplaces should be systematically monitored for compliance with labour standards policies (TFW March meeting).
- Needs for proactive planning involving TFWs and representatives of all other stakeholders (TFW March meeting).
- Encourage a multicultural gastronomy in the province (FSN)
- Promote the health benefits of diverse local ingredients and food preparation methods to ensure successful dietary acculturation for all newcomers (FSN)

Communications

- C. Explore cultural networking techniques (CORD)
- Provide on-the-phone translation services (TFW)

- Make information available in newcomers' languages (TFW)
- C. Make public services and the rules of the Canadian social system (e.g. workers' rights) more understandable to the newcomer (CORD) (TFW March meeting)
- E. Enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching/learning opportunities both for children and adults (CORD)
- Newcomers cited language and literacy barriers (not reading English or French, not having computer literacy) (TFW)
- Confusing instructions from the Canadian embassy. With low computer literacy skills, this worker was frustrated at the embassy's instructing him to follow the process online at the CIC website. (TFW)
- While some workers experience a degree of ease settling in, others report barriers created by not knowing the language or local culture. (TFW)
- Some newcomers have difficulty understanding local accents (TFW)
- Some newcomers are unable to find foods of their culture because of poor labeling in grocery stores. (FSN)
- Some newcomers are hesitant to try unfamiliar foods because they cannot read the labels (FSN)

Overall Demeanor in the NL Community

- C. Educate the community (at all levels) and community organizations/agencies to be more accepting and welcoming and to ensure that newcomers are treated fairly (CORD)
- C. Model and facilitate more inclusion in the community (CORD)
- Y. Provide a space where newcomer youth can have a collective voice (CORD)
- Y. Allow local and newcomer youth to develop their own mechanisms to meet, attract and appeal to the each other (CORD)
- Accessibility of some basic features of newcomers' traditional culture (such as food) can make a difference in their feeling comfortable enough to stay here (FSN)

Change for Private and Public Institutions

- H. Examine current institutional practices in healthcare to ensure that unjust practices are not perpetuated (CORD)

- H. Deliver pastoral care of all faiths in hospitals (and other relevant institutions) (CORD)
- H. Understand culture specific and traditional medicine (and other service domains) (CORD)
- H. Understand different and more holistic views on health (and other areas of practice, e.g., parenting) from different cultures (i.e. not everyone believes they should/ can take responsibility for their health) (CORD)
- Stop relying principally on websites for information and interaction for those with low computer literacy skills. (TFW)
- E. Improve education effectiveness and ESL programs for newcomers and professional development for their teachers (CORD)
- Make newcomers aware of various activities in which they can improve their English other than through formal classes (TFW March meeting)
- Temporary foreign workers are charged a higher price for insurance, compared with rates paid by locally-experienced drivers. (TFW)
- Workers with a foreign credit history are charged more for loans or mortgages.(TFW)
- Poor quality of public transportation in St. John's (TFW)
- Some newcomers are actively seeking family doctors, with no success to date. (TFW)

Workplace

- Newcomers cited language and literacy barriers in accessing labour rights information (e.g. not knowing how to read English or French or not having computer literacy). (TFW)
- Make available a private phone number for workers to report labour code infractions or complaints (TFW)
- Mandatory, suitable education for employers with newcomer workers is greatly needed
- Workers need to be clearly informed about effective, safe ways in which they can voice issues, concerns and complaints about workplace practices (TFW March meeting)
- Find ways to get information to newcomers workers about their rights through channels other than just through their employers (TFW March meeting)
- Workplace procedures, behaviours and expectations must be culturally suitable to the workforce (TFW March meeting)

- One worker who graduated from a Canadian university was in Canada during the application process. In this case, the employer and worker collaborated, as neither was familiar with the process beforehand. Interestingly, this worker supported the employer by providing information on hiring foreign workers. (TFW)
- Only doctors [in the 1980s] ask to come to Newfoundland, and the province cannot accommodate all their requests because of the limited number of internships and cottage hospital positions available (Gilad p.262)
- Specific Examples from Other Places:
 - One worker compared Canada with Australia, pointing out that in Australia foreign workers are given much stronger support by the government. For instance, the immigration office of the government can provide on-the-phone translation services. Labour rights information is provided to new workers, along with a private phone number to report infractions or complaints. The Australian government also monitors workplaces with surprise inspections.
 - One worker previously lived in Ontario, where his driving experience from his home country was recognized; however, that same experience is not recognized in Newfoundland and Labrador. (TFW)

5. Are there regulatory, attitudinal or other impediments to retaining skilled workers and highly educated workers?

In a word, the answer is yes! The small number of actual quotes here does not relay the impression of vehemence with which this topic is discussed.

- W. Governments, workplaces and employers should go to great lengths to ensure that hiring practices are fair for newcomer candidates (CORD)
- W. Identify barriers, successes and resources in the employment sector (CORD)
- W. Make workplaces more representative of a diverse community (CORD)
- W. Arrange diversity training as part of work orientation and establish diversity training for hiring committees (CORD)

6. How efficient and equitable is the process of recognizing foreign credentials?

By far the strongest feeling expressed in CORD meetings related to access (or not) to professional credentials which approximated those which newcomers gained before they came here as immigrants, refugees or in other immigration classes.

- W. Find new solutions to credential evaluation and the accreditation process. Address policies and credentials: i.e. qualifications for health care providers coming from other countries (CORD)
- W. improve references recognition (employers need to recognize skills and foreign experience rather than strict Canadian experience) (CORD)
- W. Provide complete information for internationally trained educational professionals (ITP) before they enter Canada (CORD)
- Everyone agrees that the province should attract refugees who have real job possibilities and who are therefore more likely to remain. Of course, this means the “cream of the crop” of the government-sponsored applicants abroad. If such people are to come to St. John’s, steps must be taken to assure that they can reaccredit themselves to work in their professions with little difficulty; frequently such courses are available only in universities or in professional associations on the mainland. (Gilad, p.274)

7. What special needs do refugees bring to host societies?

Refugees tend to be the most diverse group among the immigration categories. The fateful events which cause people to flee their home countries may affect the most wealthy or the poorest – sometimes both but at different times of the struggle. Also, the time between leaving their home lives and arriving here, especially for the poorer refugees, may have been full of trauma and affect their skills, education and opportunities. Sometimes, the richest refugees arrive in the earlier stages of a conflict because they have the money and contacts to leave safely, while those with fewer resources are forced to stay until things become so unbearable that they leave by any means possible. Therefore, in planning to work with refugees, one can expect to encounter not only people with much education and worldly experience who have some expectation of getting on with their professional and social lives but also people who have been very poor, with little education or experience outside their original home communities.

- E. Provide unique services for newcomer students who may have little previous experience with formal education (CORD)
- Y. Improve access and awareness of programs for newcomer youth, especially refugee youth (CORD)
- H. Staff education (especially regarding the impact of war and trauma, cultural differences and experience, ex. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- E. Improve education effectiveness and ESL programs for newcomers and professional development for their teachers (CORD)

- E. Enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching/learning opportunities both for children and adults (CORD)
- Newcomers cited language and literacy barriers (not reading English or French, not having computer literacy) (TFW)
- “A key characteristic of the refugee world in St. John’s is its transient nature: a first destination in Canada, not the last on the refugee journey.” (Gilad, p. 262)
- “It must be stated first that the large majority of refugees do not want to be here to begin with.” (Gilad, p. 262)
- “I met most of the refugees in this study during their first months of their arrival: in this group, all but one family left within the year.” (Gilad, p. 264)
- “[Despite supports for job finding] the stark reality is that for most refugees, there is no future in this province unless they can radically retrain for the few and far between positions open in Newfoundland. ... A few register for university training programmes, the latter often requiring a two-year wait for admission thus discouraging newcomers from trying to enter these programmes.” (Gilad, p. 265)
- Provide programs and services that promote healthy dietary acculturation through nutrition and health education. (FSN)

Conclusions

- Much more data on newcomers and those most closely associated with them (e.g., employers for TFWs) must be systematically collected and made easily accessible in aggregate form (to preserve individual privacy) for the purposes of planning and implementing appropriate services. These data can then be used to systematically track the effects of efforts at retention.
- Since it is each newcomer’s personal choice to settle in or leave this province once they have arrived, then research which inductively elicits their perspectives and understandings must be conducted and used in planning and implementing retention strategies.
- One must understand most newcomers as in the midst of a process of rapid, and sometimes traumatic changes in their lives. Making judgements about their long-term value to the community must not be made solely on factors (e.g., English language proficiency) soon after their arrival here.

- The role of communication needs to be scrutinized for effectiveness in all forms of contact with newcomers: media (print, broadcast, computer, face-to-face, etc.); language (English or newcomers' languages, plain language text or speech in English, etc.); ethical and professionally reliable translation and interpretation.
- Access to fair recognition of foreign professional credentials and trade experience must be examined through a publicly transparent process with significant consultation with relevant newcomer workers. A transparent process must be the result, put in place and regularly monitored.
- Many regulated policies and processes (e.g., acceptance of international drivers' licences, regulations on insurance rates for those with no Canadian credit rating, rights of workers, etc.) need to be reconsidered in light of newcomers' circumstances, and employees need to be retrained to use the new regulations.

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THE LESLIE HARRIS CENTRE OF REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

1st Floor Spencer Hall, St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5S7

Tel: 709 737 6170 Fax: 709 737 3734 www.mun.ca/harriscentre

THE HARRIS CENTRE Memorial University

