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Reception and Inclusion of Refugees

Insights for Catalonia from Canada, Portugal, and
Sweden

John R.B. Palmer and Ricard Zapata-Barrero

GRITIM-UPF Policy Series

September 2017

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GRITIM-UPF is an Interdisciplinary Research Group on Immigration at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona, Catalonia). It is made up of researchers from different disciplines, who are interested in aspects of innovation and management of change processes arising from human mobility and immigration. The group's main objectives are to promote theoretical and applied research related to political and social agendas.

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Universitat
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Report from the International Symposium on the Reception and Inclusion of Refugees held in Barcelona on 14th June 2017, organized by GRITIM-UPF and the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia, with the collaboration of the Secretary of Equality, Migration and Citizenship of the Catalan Government, and with the support of the rectorate of Pompeu Fabra University

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A full video of the symposium is available at Diplocat website: <http://scur.cat/BEK5Z6>

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Barcelona, September 2017



Opening session: Maria Badia, Jaume Casals, and Albert Royo

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Executive Summary

This report documents and builds on the “International Symposium on the Reception and Inclusion of Refugees”, held on 14 June 2017 in Barcelona. Experts from Canada, Portugal, and Sweden, along with the Catalan Government, the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia, and Pompeu Fabra University came together to discuss best practices and challenges, with the goal of strengthening the design and implementation of policies and strategies to improve the situation of refugees in Catalonia.

The key questions the Symposium participants were asked to consider were:

- How can we mobilize citizens in general, and the economic, cultural and social sectors in particular, to work with a collaborative logic?
- What are the conditions to take advantage of the economic and social opportunities offered to refugees in host societies (institutional conditions, resource conditions, legal conditions, etc.)?
- How do civil society actors and all levels of public administration participate in the process of reception and inclusion of refugees in our society, and how can this be articulated at different levels of government?
- How to manage public opinion and potential prejudices towards refugees and how to articulate a political narrative and pro-active social discourse?

Common themes emerging from the symposium discussions included the importance of facts, memory, and opinion, the need to adopt a values-centred approach, and the relevance of the categories employed in refugee policy and discourse. Based on all of this, we offer a “toolkit” of 10 key dimensions that may be drawn on in formulating and refining Catalan refugee policy:

1. Construct the intellectual foundations from the history and experience of forced migration out of Catalonia and of the recent immigration into the territory.
2. Use the human tower metaphor for working together, including multidimensional cooperation and coordination among actors and sectors.
3. Work toward and manage political consensus.
4. Make public engagement a core part of the policy.
5. Employ a strong media communication strategy
6. Work for a holistic refugee policy
7. Consider refugee policies as part of the mainstream migration system
8. Ensure a long-term inclusion strategy and evaluation
9. Include an external dimension of refugee policy.
10. Facilitate knowledge formation throughout the process

Forewords



A strong commitment to human rights must always inform our work as we continue searching for synergies and solutions to one of the worst humanitarian crises in Europe's long history. I write to share some thoughts about best practices to help us face this common challenge. How can we mobilize European society to reduce fear of refugees, counter hate speech, and provide for the reception and inclusion of refugees?

We must change the current catastrophic social, and sometimes political, views of the refugee crisis into an opportunity to reintroduce our values into Europe's different societies. We must deal with the fact that migrant redistribution has not been handled in a proper manner, and that the processing of asylum applications is still too slow to cope with the scale of the problem. We must recognize that no meaningful impact has yet resulted from the lengthy political engagement between EU member states and other countries in the Mediterranean region, despite the magnitude of the ongoing humanitarian crisis. We must strive for innovative strategies to ensure that refugees are treated equally and are able to participate fully in our societies.

Catalonia is a committed and responsible country that aspires to help create a world where people are equal and free, where government is fair, and where development is sustainable, and human rights are respected, protected and guaranteed. Sustainable human development as a driver of democratization, good governance, and the promotion of peace are core principles of Catalonia's 2030 National Plan, which will be presented to the Catalan Parliament in October of this year. We have adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as the core of our agenda and we strongly believe in the importance of building a global partnership plan to reduce poverty.

Our deep interest and responsibility in the refugee crisis is linked to the fact that Catalonia is a Mediterranean country. Already in 2011 the EU warned of growing troubles in the Mediterranean region, all of them strongly related to migration issues. These include: human trafficking, drug trafficking, and arms trafficking. The Mediterranean's troubles are also closely linked to poverty, lack of democracy and longstanding human rights violations. Thus, the current refugee crisis is not a new issue at all. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, there are more than 60 million refugees around the world today. In 2015 the number of refugees increased by 8.5 million. Some of this growth was the consequence of natural disasters, while other causes were war and poverty.

We are convinced that we must focus on prevention and reaction. In terms of prevention we need to eradicate the causes, which include poverty, human rights violations, short-term conflicts, and long-term wars. In terms of reaction, we need to understand the reality and the will of the refugees themselves. To do this, it is always useful to have some data. More than 11 million Syrians have been forced to leave their homes. In Lebanon alone, some 70% of Syrian refugees live below the official poverty line. Let us not forget that Lebanon was already hosting millions of Palestinian refugees and right now the Lebanese government's ability to deal with the refugees is critically limited by the scale of the problem. Meanwhile, hate speech has become an issue, not just in overwhelmed host countries like Lebanon, but throughout Europe.

Because Catalonia is not a state, we face some difficulties working in the international sphere. However, we have carved out our space on a regional basis and the Mediterranean region is

obviously one of our priorities. We have been focused with the refugee crisis and our financial contribution since 2015 has been over 1.5 million Euros. But the government of Catalonia is not working alone on this challenge. Catalonia has a very strong, powerful, and well-organized civil society, with several organizations that have been working in the field since the beginning of the crisis, first with Palestinian refugees, and then Syrians and also Kurds. We have promoted an agreement among the main governmental institutions like the Barcelona City Hall and the United Nations in Lebanon, with the aim of collaborating with local authorities where a majority of refugees are placed. We are also working in Greece, where Catalan doctors and nurses offer medical assistance to refugees.

In short, I want to emphasize Catalonia's commitment to the international community's agenda and global goals. Our civil society and our government are ready to assume responsibility as a member of the international community to host refugees. We have several times made clear to the Spanish government and the relevant EU officials that we are ready to apply asylum laws and host refugees tomorrow. I will reiterate once more our capacity and desire to help with migration programs in the Mediterranean. I would also like to offer Barcelona, the Mediterranean capital of Catalonia, as a host for any meeting or conference to discuss Mediterranean peace issues with all actors involved in the crisis.

Regarding the Mediterranean migration issue, there is no doubt about the need to establish a permanent focus in the region. There are many threats. But there are also opportunities to define a global strategy based on dialog, democracy and human rights protection. This strategy must be applied coherently for all European members involved. We must offer real opportunities to the refugees, We must apply the relevant international legislation. We must condemn all forms of violence and focus on the causes of poverty and forced migration. We must be strong in sidelining all who profit from and encourage the violence. We can and must show to other European societies that there is no harm in welcoming refugees in our cities.

These are some of the reasons for the Symposium on the Reception and Inclusion of Refugees and for this report. We view this as an opportunity to strengthen alliances between Catalonia and our international partners to take on the global challenge of promoting peace and human rights. I thank all of participants for making this possible.

Maria Badia

Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the European Union, Government of Catalonia



The Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia seeks to use public diplomacy to create bridges between Catalonia's institutions and civil society and those of the rest of Europe and the rest of the world. It is in this framework that we decided to start working on and discussing some of the many challenges that Europe and the world are facing. One of them, of course, is the response to Europe's worst humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War, with the massive arrival of refugees on the shores of Europe.

In 2016 we organized an international seminar on the integration of refugees. We invited some 80 experts from Europe and North America, among them mayors, regional representatives, and experts from think tanks and other areas of civil society.¹ Our goal with the 2017 International Symposium on the Reception and Inclusion of Refugees was to go beyond this first step and seek out more insights and concrete experiences on the reception and inclusion of refugees from experts in Canada, Portugal, and Sweden.

Why take this initiative? Because it is in line with the longstanding internationalist tradition and vocation of Catalonia's society and its commitment to solidarity. This a way of being Catalan: To contribute to some of the most relevant discussions internationally and to offer possible responses to the main challenges that we all face.

The present report summarizes and synthesizes the Symposium discussions, offering suggestions for refugee policy drawn from the experiences of Canada, Portugal, and Sweden. Our goal is to provide a useful resource for policymakers and civil society in Catalonia, but we hope that this will be helpful for others around the world as well.

Albert Royo

Secretary General of the Public Diplomacy Council of Cataloni

¹ See http://www.diplocat.cat/files/docs/160503_ReportRefugeesEU.pdf.



I am sincerely happy to have hosted this international symposium, where we were surrounded by international and national political and social actors with so much to offer. In fact, the honor is double because it is a key priority for Pompeu Fabra University to be present in and contribute to solving current social challenges and to continue to enlarge the social dimension that we aim to always include in our work. It is in our highest interest, and I would even say it is within the core meaning of University as far as I understand it, to contribute to clarifying demanding political and social issues. To put at the disposal of our society our tools: expertise, scientific knowledge, research, policy and social interface promotion. We are very happy to have hosted the Secretary General of the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia (Diplocat) and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the European Union of the Government of Catalonia, and all of the other participants. With GRITIM-UPF, we aim to achieve this specific commitment to improving policy on the reception and inclusion of refugees -- without limits. We will always be there to support such initiatives. Our mission is to facilitate dialogue among administrations and civil society, and promote those research groups, like GRITIM-UPF, which have a clear commitment to the accumulation and transfer of knowledge.

Jaume Casals

Rector of Pompeu Fabra University

Introduction

This report addresses one of the most important challenges of the current global agenda: the issue of refugees and forced migration. While recognizing the political challenges associated with refugee arrival, the reception phase and the economic and social inclusion of refugees and their families in Catalan society are matters that require sustained attention and resources. It is these issues that constitute the basic dimensions of the debate we seek to promote and contribute to through this work.

To frame these discussions, we utilize a comparative methodology, taking into account the experiences and practices of other countries as the best way to find our own approaches. Given our social, economic, cultural and political realities, we invited key speakers and participants to discuss theoretical and conceptual dimensions, social practices, public policies and politics at the “International Symposium on the Reception and Inclusion of Refugees.” The symposium was held on 14 June 2017 at UPF’s Ciutadella campus in Barcelona, organized by GRITIM-UPF and Diplocat in collaboration with the Catalan Government’s Secretary for Equality, Migration, and Citizenship, and with the support of the UPF Rectorate.

Speakers from Canada, Portugal, and Sweden were invited to discuss their experiences with the reception and inclusion of refugees and their families. They were joined by speakers from the Catalan Government, Diplocat and UPF, and an audience drawn from government, civil society, and academia, all involved in the process of reception and inclusion of forced migrants. The aim of the symposium was to survey best practices and challenges, with the goal of providing recommendations for the design and implementation of policies and strategies to improve the situation of refugees in Catalonia.

The reception and inclusion of refugees are at the core of the international protection system. Much of the Refugee Convention is devoted to these issues, placing specific obligations on states with respect to refugees’ social and economic rights. Refugee integration is a core part of the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees,² and UNHCR views integration as the most relevant durable solution for the majority of refugees in Europe (UNHCR 2013). Economic and social inclusion in host states is essential for the welfare of forced migrants who cannot return to their countries of origin or who are waiting for the political and social situation in these countries to change. It is also essential for the social, political and economic health of the host societies in which they find themselves and for the viability of the system of international protection, which depends on the cooperation of governments, civil society and citizens.

Comparative studies to date have shown that there is a lack of evidence on policy options and best practices in terms of reception and inclusion, particularly in terms of long-term results. The focus of attention for many years was on refugee status determination and resettlement decisions, with longer-term questions of integration left aside. This situation has been improving since 2001, when the Swedish Government hosted the *International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees*, part of a larger *Integration Initiative* by UNHCR and its partners. A number of important publications on integration have followed, including UNHCR’s *International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration* (2002), its subsequent study of integration in Europe (UNHCR 2013), and recent studies by Martin et al. (2016), the EUI (2017) and the OECD (2016). This report seeks to add to this growing body of work by fostering the exchange of experiences, policy approaches and “public philosophies,” with direct information coming from politicians and public servants who select and implement policies, and from experts in academia and civil society.

² See UNHCR Statute, Art. 8(c); Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, Conclusion on Local Integration, No. 104 (LVI) (2005), A/AC.96/1021.

The key questions the Symposium participants were asked to consider were:

- How can we mobilize citizens in general, and the economic, cultural and social sectors in particular, to work with a collaborative logic?
- What are the conditions to take advantage of the economic and social opportunities offered to refugees in host societies (institutional conditions, resource conditions, legal conditions, etc.)?
- How do civil society actors and all levels of public administration participate in the process of reception and inclusion of refugees in our society, and how can this be articulated at different levels of government?
- How to manage public opinion and potential prejudices towards refugees and how to articulate a political narrative and pro-active social discourse?

The **symposium was opened** by Jaume Casals, UPF's Rector, Maria Badia, Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the EU in the Catalan government, and Albert Royo, Secretary General of the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia. The opening was followed by two panels of presentations, each followed by an open discussion. The **first panel** focused on institutional and political arrangements, and included presentations by Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration in Portugal, Bernd Parusel, a policy expert at the Swedish Migration Agency and the European Migration Network, and Deborah Tunis, Special Coordinator for Syrian Refugee Resettlement at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The **second panel** focused on practical and academic issues, and included presentations by Pieter Bevelander, Professor of International Migration and Ethnic Relations in the Department of Global Political Studies and Director of the Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, at Malmö University in Sweden, Rui Marques, President of the Refugee Support Platform (*Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados*) in Portugal, and Leslie Seidle, Research Director at the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) in Canada. The **symposium was closed** with remarks from Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Director of GRITIM-UPF, and Oriol Amorós March, Secretary for Equality, Migrations, and Citizenship in the Catalan government.

The following paragraphs summarize of presentations in each panel, annotated with footnotes offering additional sources and information.³

³ A full video of the symposium is available from Diplocat at <http://scur.cat/BEK5Z6>.

Panel 1. The governance of refugees and their economic and social inclusion

Pedro Calado, High Commissioner for Migration, Portugal



Calado centred his talk on the importance of memory and facts in countering the effects of fear and the “post-truth” mentality, which now contaminate and bias migration policy. Memory must be celebrated and validated, and facts about migration and refugees must be wielded to dismantle the dumbfounded environment in which we find ourselves when speaking about this topic. He noted Portugal’s long history as a beneficiary of international protection and as a beneficiary of the immigration policies of countries that host its large diaspora.

As examples of the power of memory, Calado offered the history of displacement from the Azores to the United States at the end of the 1950s,⁴ as well as the image of Paris slums (*bidonvilles*) filled with Portuguese immigrants in the 1960s.⁵ He noted how this history has given the Portuguese an understanding of what it means to be the feared “Other” and of how views can change with time. While U.S. newspapers in the 1950s echoed fears that the displaced Azoreans might be Communists, the U.S. House of Representatives recently commemorated their arrival with the introduction of a bill recognizing the contribution of Portuguese Americans to the country⁶; in contrast to the slums of the 1960s, France now benefits from over 40,000 enterprises managed by Portuguese descendants.⁷

Calado also explained how Portugal’s historical memory of accepting refugees was shaped by the arrival and integration of over half a million people from former Portuguese colonies in the period from 1975 to 1980. These people were viewed as “internal refugees” and their arrival sparked a movement to support refugees – the *Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados*, which is now headed by Rui Marques and plays a crucial role in the integration of refugees in Portugal today.

In addition to preserving memories like these, Calado stressed that the dissemination of facts is vital to successful refugee policy. The High Commission for Migration publishes an annual report examining 11 indicators of immigrant integration,⁸ and it widely distributes a summary version to all levels of government and civil society. Among other things, the current report points out that Portugal now has *negative* net migration, that over 400,000 immigrants have acquired Portuguese

⁴ Large-scale displacement of Azoreans followed a volcanic eruption and earthquake activity on the Island of Faial in 1957-58. Coutinho et al. (2010) report that lobbying by Azoreans in the United States led Senators John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts and John O. Pastore of Rhode Island to sponsor the *Azorean Refugee Act of 1958*, Pub. L. 85-892, which initially allowed 1,500 affected families to enter the United States, and which was later amended to increase that number to 2,000 (Pub. L. 86-648). Although Coutinho et al. (2010) note that there is uncertainty over the exact number of Azoreans who entered the United States under this law, Rocha-Trindade (2015) places the number at around 12,000 and reports that more than 175,000 Azoreans followed in subsequent decades through family reunification.

⁵ Baganha, Góis, and Pereira (2005) estimate that 1,218,000 people emigrated from Portugal between 1965 and 1975, of which 775,000 went to France. The French *bidonvilles* (named for rooves cut from metal containers, *bidons*) were home to immigrants from many countries and were concentrated particularly around Paris, with 10,000 Portuguese immigrants congregating in Champigny (Volovitch-Tavares and Stoenesco 2007; Rosello 2002). Photographs by Haitian photojournalist Gérald Bloncourt show the poor condition of these settlements (Marc 2013).

⁶ See *Resolution Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Azorean Refugee Act of 1958 and celebrating the extensive contributions of Portuguese-American communities to the United States*, H.R. Res.1401, 110th Cong. (2008).

⁷ Pan Ké Shon and Verdugo (2015) show that relatively high levels of segregation experienced by Portuguese immigrants in France during the 1960s quickly dissipated during the 1970s when the French government gave immigrants access to public housing and replaced the slums with varied housing types.

⁸ See Oliveira and Gomes (2016).

citizenship since the adoption of the country's new nationality law, that the immigrant population is increasingly female, that it brings young people to an aging native population, that immigrants work in the so-called "dirty, dangerous, and demeaning" employment sector but are also highly entrepreneurial, and that they make positive net fiscal contributions.

Calado credits historical memory and facts with the highly favorable public opinion in Portugal towards immigrants and refugees.⁹ This makes it possible to adopt and implement effective policy measures related to integration. The High Commission for Migration is responsible for inter-ministerial migration policy, formulating a *Strategic Plan for Migration* that brings together 13 ministries. Local integration plans and an index of intercultural openness across Portuguese cities have been important components, along with an immigrant mentorship program modelled on Canada's. Portugal's "one-stop shop" approach to immigrant services in cities brings together, in one building, public services that would otherwise be spread out across the city. Other successful initiatives include the use of a migration observatory for disseminating reliable data, a strong television and radio presence, media training and awards, a network of intercultural enterprises, diversity training in schools and NGOs, and a network of intercultural schools.

Bernd Parusel, Policy expert, Swedish Migration Agency, European Migration Network National Contact Point, Sweden



Parusel agreed about the importance of memory and historical experience, noting Sweden's successful integration of refugees who arrived in the early 1990s from the Balkans. At the same time, he placed Sweden's current refugee policy in the context of the large increase in asylum seekers entering Sweden in recent years, particularly 2015, and including a large number of unaccompanied minors. This led the Swedish government to adopt a number of restrictive policies, which went into effect in the beginning of 2016 and have led to increasingly polarized public discussions even as the numbers of arrivals have now dropped significantly.¹⁰

The reception of asylum seekers in Sweden is based on voluntary agreements between the Swedish Migration Agency and the country's 290 municipalities. The municipalities offer public housing to asylum seekers, but the Migration Agency can also rent facilities when needed. Importantly, asylum seekers can opt out of this settlement system and instead reside with family or friends anywhere in country.

In contrast to asylum seekers, there is now a dispersal mechanism for recognized refugees, which aims to achieve a more equal distribution among municipalities based on size, labour market conditions, and existing populations of asylum-seekers, refugees, and unaccompanied minors. Some municipalities find refugee settlement challenging because of a lack of housing and other resources, but they can now be required to take them in. Beneficiaries of international protection are still free to settle where they want if they find their own accommodation, but this is often difficult.

The Swedish welfare state is organized according to work-based and residence-based entitlements. Anyone who legally works in Sweden is entitled to work-based benefits, which

⁹ See, e.g., Costa (2017); Mackaoui (2017); Ames (2016).

¹⁰ See Parusel (2016b).

include unemployment and sickness benefits and pensions. Anyone who legally resides or is expected to reside in Sweden for at least one year is entitled to residence-based benefits, which include social welfare, a child allowance, and a housing allowance. This covers all beneficiaries of international protection and their family members, but not asylum seekers. Although excluded from welfare, asylum seekers are allowed to work without any delay as long as they give their identity or contribute to clarifying their identity.

While Swedish integration policy seeks equal rights for all, irrespective of background, favouring general policies over special rules, it also recognizes the special needs of refugees.¹¹ The current integration program lasts for 2 years and includes 15-20 hours per week of language instruction, an orientation course, internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training, translation of foreign diplomas and assistance with their formal validation, and short, complementary educational programs to fill gaps in training.

New measures have been recently introduced to try to improve labour market integration, including an emphasis on bringing refugees to the areas where there are jobs, increased focus on internships and training, earlier language education, and complementary courses, incentives for companies that hire at least 100 new arrivals, and local initiatives for public sector and community jobs. These measures also cover a fast-track program into occupations for which there is a labour shortage (e.g. cooks, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, butchers, lorry-drivers, social workers, and teachers), government-subsidized jobs, and increased funding for civil society.¹²

These new measures, however, were introduced along with steps aimed at reducing arrivals. In this regard, Parusel pointed out how the two sets of policies may be coming into conflict. The restrictive measures include the reintroduction of border controls and extraterritorial ID checks (subsequently abolished), restrictions on the duration of residence permits given to people granted international protection, and restrictions on family reunification for the recipients of subsidiary protection. The concern is that people cannot focus on integration when worrying about a short residence permit or the fate of family members who remain stuck in conflict zones.

Other recent challenges include bottlenecks in not only the asylum application process but also the integration process, due to the large number of arrivals in 2015, overburdened institutions with little time for individual help, a lack of jobs, particularly in the service sector, and long wait times for family reunification. In addition, there is a growing population of rejected asylum seekers who remain in the country without authorization and ineligible for integration assistance. Finally, while statistics show overall success in employment integration, they also show a gap between men and women and a continued gap between native-born and foreign-born workers.

¹¹ See generally Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (2009).

¹² See Parusel (2016a).

Deborah Tunis, Special Coordinator for Syrian Refugee Resettlement at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



Tunis gave an overview of Canada's general approach to refugee resettlement, and she offered reflections on the country's Syrian resettlement program. She began by placing Canadian policy in historical context, stressing Canada's pro-immigration self-image as a "settler nation", its involvement in the drafting of the Refugee Convention and Protocol, and its experience with the resettlement of some 7,000 Ugandan Asians in 1972-73, and more than 60,000 Indochinese boat people in 1979-80. It was during that latter resettlement effort, she said, that Canada created its private refugee sponsorship program – an achievement for which Canada received the Nansen medal.

Canadian law provides three categories of resettled refugees: (1) Government-assisted refugees (GARs), who are referred for resettlement by UNHCR and receive Canadian Government support, including one-year of income, medical support, language training, child-care, and employment support; (2) blended visa office-referred (BVORs), who are referred by (UNHCR) and matched with private sponsors, and who receive a blend of government and private support (6-months each), and (3) privately sponsored refugees (PSRs), whose private sponsors provide all support for up to one year after arrival. Canada generally takes 1 of every 10 refugees recommended for resettlement by UNHCR.

Canada's immigrant integration model is based on the notion of mutual adaptation by immigrants and Canadian society. The federal government shares integration responsibilities with the provinces, which are responsible for health care and education. The education system is a great leveller for immigrant and second-generation outcomes, which tend to be very positive, including a high rate of citizenship acquisition. The federal government works closely with municipal and provincial/territorial governments. Quebec is totally responsible for integration and immigration programs, whereas in the rest of the country the federal government administers the programs. At the community level, local integration partnerships bring together business and civil society leaders, and all integration programs are implemented by third-party party deliverers.

Canada's program for Syrian refugee resettlement was launched on 24 November 2015 with large support from the public and from the three main political parties. It involved a 5-phase plan to quickly take in 25,000 refugees. The target number was achieved by 27 February 2016 and over 40,000 Syrian refugees had arrived in Canada by January 2017. The program's phases were (1) identification (including a fast-tracked process with UNHCR), (2) processing, (3) transportation, (4) welcome, and (5) settlement and integration. All medical and security clearance was done outside Canada, and this was important for maintaining public support. In addition, a huge communication effort, including a social media campaign, was used to explain the program to the public.

Resettled refugees arrived first in welcome centres where they underwent an additional health check, were assigned a social insurance number, and were given a winter snowsuit. Destining across the country was based on medical needs and family connections. Most refugees went to Canada's largest cities (Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver), but there were housing challenges there.¹³

¹³ On the problems of affordable housing for refugees in Canada, see Rose (2016).

Tunis offered a set of early lessons and reflections on the process. She argued that the ambitious timelines and targets, combined with the transition to the new government, were important for mobilizing political leadership – and high level political support has been a critical part of not just this resettlement program but also Canada’s previous ones. She highlighted the massive public support for the program, with calls coming in every day from retailers and from the voluntary sector, offering donations. Everyone wanted to help and signs are now appearing across Canada reading, “No matter where you are from, we are glad you are our neighbour.” Tunis identified social media as key to the public outreach campaign. She also noted that housing was a challenge, with available rental accommodations not well suited to large family sizes, and she stressed the need for flexibility and adaptability in implementing a program like this.

Tunis concluded by announcing that Canada has agreed to lead an effort, along with UNHCR, the Open Society Foundation, the Radcliffe Foundation, and the University of Ottawa, to try to share Canada’s experiences with private refugee sponsorship.¹⁴ This will include developing modules and doing capacity building to help other governments adopt this type of model. At the same time, Canada remains committed to exploring additional ways in which it can help address the humanitarian crisis.



Panel 1. Perdro Calado, Bernd Parusel, Deborah Tunis and Orland Cardona (Chair)

¹⁴ See Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (2017); UNHCR (2016).

Panel 2. The practical and academic agenda: identifying challenges and opportunities

Pieter Bevelander, Professor of International Migration and Ethnic Relations at the Department of Global political studies and Director of Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, Malmö University, Sweden.



Bevelander presented his work with Ravi Pendakur on the labour market integration of refugees in Sweden and Canada (Bevelander and Pendakur 2014). He explained that historical employment rights for foreign-born people in Sweden were higher than those for native born until the oil crisis and economic restructuring of the 1970s, which transformed Sweden from an industrial economy to a service one, and led the government to cut off labour migration, only reopening that channel in 2008. The immigrant flow into Sweden since the 1970s has, therefore, been dominated by refugees and their family members, and the foreign-born employment rate has remained below the native-born rate. (The native-born employment rate in Sweden also happens to be the highest in Europe.)

The employment rates of foreign-born people increase with time since migration and also vary by migration stream. Labour migrants begin with high employment rates, whereas refugees and their families begin much lower but catch up over time. Cohort analysis shows employment rates varying significantly by country of origin, with Eritreans and Ethiopians ending up with the highest rates and Somalis with the lowest. It is not clear if this reflects a failure of integration policy or simply failed integration.

In comparison, Canada has smaller differences in employment rates between natives and the foreign-born, but this may be driven by the lower proportion of refugees in Canada's immigration stream. To assess difference more formally, Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) carried out a cohort analysis of non-economic migrants using longitudinal data from Statistics Canada and Statistics Sweden, controlling for gender, age, education, type of entry (those who entered seeking asylum and were granted refugee status, resettled refugees, and family reunification beneficiaries), and country of origin (former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq).

They found that employment rates for non-economic migrants were similar in each country, and that earnings were higher in Canada but that the earnings trajectories were similar. They also found that, all else equal, migrants from the former Yugoslavia had higher employment rates than those from the other countries, and that migrants from Iran had higher employment rates than those from Iraq and Afghanistan. They found that differences across intake categories and countries of origin were smaller in Sweden than in Canada, and they suggest that could be the product of the services and programs offered in each country: In Sweden, all non-economic immigrants have access to roughly the same range of settlement assistance, whereas in Canada family reunification immigrants are privately sponsored and have access to less assistance than government sponsored refugees.

Rui Marques, President of *Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados*, Portugal



Marques pointed out that when policymakers in Portugal began building strong integration policies 15 years ago, they looked to Canada and Sweden as benchmark models. At the same time, he stressed the differences in Portugal's situation, without the pressure of large-scale arrivals, terrorist attacks, far right parties, or political fights around the issue. With strong support for migration issues in Portugal, the approach has been to take the time necessary to build consensus around policy decisions.

The Refugee Support Platform (*Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados*) is a network of 350 organizations representing a broad spectrum of civil society. Their starting point is not policy or pragmatic solutions but the values of solidarity, human dignity, and social justice. They aim for an integrated holistic approach to integration, stressing empathy and hospitality, as well as the rule of law, rights, and duties. Marques argued that Europe needs to move toward this more values-centred approach, and that we must also work on building bridges and talk more about peace, which is ultimately what is under threat from the far right movement across Europe.

One of the key aspects of the Portuguese approach to refugee integration is that it is led by civil society. Although there is close cooperation with government, the strategy has been to put civil society in the lead, with host organizations taking responsibility for accommodation, food, clothing, health care, education, and the labour market integration of each refugee family. Their rationale is that this direct support from civil society makes integration easier than when the state is in the lead, particularly because it engages communities to be part of the process from the beginning.

The Refugee Support Platform also works on shaping public opinion. This is, in fact, one of their most important activities because public support is essential for the success of integration programs and for the continued political consensus that exists. This work has included publications in magazines, TV appearances, and social network activities. One of the most successful initiatives so far has been a youth challenge in which they asked students across Portugal to pack a bag with whatever they would take with them if they were forced to leave their home for another country.

Overall, Marques's recommendations for others engaged in this issue were to (1) stay loyal to values and not be afraid of populist policies that promote fear; (2) engage communities; (3) use holistic, integrated solutions, (4) focus on the value of single human lives, not large numbers; (5) avoid being trapped in arguments; (6) focus on similarities, not only differences; and (7) be effective in actions, not just well-intentioned.

Leslie Seidle, Research Director at the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), Montréal, Canada



Seidle offered an overview of Canada's managed immigration system, discussed early outcomes and public opinion data from the Syrian resettlement initiative, and offered lessons in terms of good practices for refugee admission and integration.

Canada's immigration system is structured around economic migration (63% of admissions in 2014), family reunification (26% in 2014), and refugees (9% of 2014 total). There is a target number of total admissions reported to Parliament each year and the number for 2017 is 300,000. Since 1967, the admission of economic immigrants has been based on a points system for assessing qualifications and experience. The criteria for federal skilled workers admissions (the largest economic admissions program) are: (1) skills in English and/or French, (2) education, (3) work experience, (4) age, (5) a valid job offer, and (6) adaptability (likelihood of settling in Canada).

Immigration to Canada in 2014 represented 0.7% of the total population, higher than most other countries including the United States (to which immigration represented 0.3% of the population), but lower than Australia (1%) and New Zealand (1.8%). Public opinion towards immigration is favourable, with 58% of survey respondents disagreeing with the statement that immigration levels are too high and only 37% agreeing with it.¹⁵ Moreover, this result shows even a slight uptick in attitudes towards immigration since the Syrian resettlement program was implemented.

Immigrants tend to do well in the Canadian labour market, with only slightly higher unemployment for immigrants compared to natives, and with improvements visible with greater time since arrival – up to the point where after 10 years since arrival immigrants have *lower* unemployment than natives. Nonetheless, refugees and people entering for family reunification have lower median income than skilled labour immigrants.¹⁶

With respect to the Syrian resettlement initiative,¹⁷ provincial governments were supportive, with total commitments exceeding the federal target, and with an impressive level of private sponsorship.¹⁸ An important contribution to help solve housing problems came from a group of businesses that pooled resources to provide a rental subsidy for the resettled Syrians. Recent public opinion polls show increasingly positive responses over time, with 52% of the public now supporting the Syrian resettlement program and 44% opposing it.¹⁹

As a very early look at outcomes, surveys and focus groups carried out between June and September 2016²⁰ show a high level of satisfaction with life in Canada and a sense of belonging among resettled Syrians. For this group of new arrivals, 53% of privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) and 10% of government-assisted refugees (GARs) were employed. Of those not then employed, 59% of PSRs and 43% of GARs were looking for work. The main reason for not currently looking for work, particularly among GARs, was that the person was taking language classes to improve English or French. The GARs tend to have very low language skills when they arrive and they have the right to language classes for a full year. Previous research on other refugees resettled to Canada has shown that PSRs find work earlier but that their income after 8 years is lower than GSRs. One explanation for this is that the GSRs are encouraged to use their first year for language courses, so while they delay entering the labour market they ultimately enter with higher language skills.

In terms of good practices, Seidle highlighted the importance of sustained government commitment, including proactive, consistent communication efforts to reassure citizens. He also stressed the importance of cross-government and multi-level coordination to address the range of

¹⁵ See Environics Institute (2016).

¹⁶ See generally Hyndman (2011).

¹⁷ See generally Seidle (2016).

¹⁸ See, e.g. Ashraf (2016).

¹⁹ Angus Reid Institute (2016); see also Nanos Survey (2016).

²⁰ IRCC (2016).

issues related to admission and to coordinate post-arrival support. With respect to admission, coordination in the Canadian case included all of the actors involved in offshore vetting, and he stressed that offshore vetting turned out to be a very good decision in terms of alleviating citizens fears and maintaining support for the program. With respect to post-arrival support, he stressed that coordination must occur across governmental levels because government supported refugees who are not employed at the end of their 1-year period of federal support end up in the regular social assistance system which is funded almost entirely by the provinces.

The need to view settlement and integration services as a public responsibility with government funding is also a key feature of the Canadian policy narrative. It is insufficient to hope that community groups or the private sector will be able to do the job alone. At the same time, Seidle argued that commitment and ongoing engagement by community groups, the private sector, and individual citizens is critical. He cited an estimate from a Canadian immigration official that each refugee comes into contact with as many as 100 people during the integration process. This networking and interaction provides a very human way for fears and stereotypes to be overcome, as well as an important force in shaping service delivery and the integration process generally. This is how the two-way street of the integration process actually works.



Panel 2. Pieter Bevelander, Rui Marques, Leslie Seidle, and John Palmer (Chair)

Building blocks of a refugee policy for Catalonia

The two panels offered a rich and varied assortment of insights and experiences related to refugee reception and inclusion. In considering lessons that may be borrowed for Catalan policy from the experiences of Canada, Portugal, and Sweden, it is important to consider differences in historical, social, economic, political, and institutional contexts. Canada's history and self-image as a "settler society" places it in a very different position from Sweden, which first experienced large-scale immigration after the Second World War; both experiences are far from Catalonia's, which is more like Portugal in terms of the important historical role of emigration and the relative newness of significant immigration flows (Freeman 1995). Canada, Sweden, and Portugal also have very different welfare regimes and labour markets (Esping-Andersen 1999; Nickell 1997; Bevelander and Pendakur 2014), with Catalonia again coming closer to the Portuguese model in certain respects. In the political debate over refugees, there appears to be more consensus in Canada, Portugal, and Catalonia, than in Sweden, which has become increasingly polarized since the recent increase in asylum applications and the subsequent imposition of more restrictive policy (Calado, Tunis, and Parusel presentations). Institutionally, of course, there is a critical difference between the three sovereign states, which control all aspects of immigration and refugee policy, and Catalonia, which does not control admissions and has limited room for manoeuvre in terms of the reception and inclusion of refugees.

Despite these differences, there is much to be learned from the Canadian, Portuguese, and Swedish experiences in considering Catalonia's refugee policy. A number of common themes emerged from the presentations and subsequent discussions, and these are a useful starting point for drawing lessons.

Facts, Memory, and Opinion: socializing citizens with mirror reflections

All of the talks addressed, in different ways, the issues of facts and memory that Pedro Calado proposed as central themes. These issues are linked directly to the question of public opinion that is essential to the success of any refugee policy. Indeed, the collection and dissemination of facts are viewed by many government immigration and refugee agencies as among their most important activities (Calado presentation). Although engagement with the public is central, of course, to the success of governmental programs in almost every policy area, the issue takes on particular importance in the immigration and refugee context because of the tendency for these debates to become dominated by fear-mongering and misinformation.

Public engagement and the harnessing of facts can take many forms. Governmental agencies are often uniquely positioned to gather the data necessary for the understanding and evaluation of immigration and refugee programs. This data can be shared with the public through regular statistical reports and summaries (e.g. Calado presentation; Oliveira and Gomes 2016). The quality of the reporting, degree to which it is made understandable by key audiences, and mechanisms of dissemination are critical issues in this regard. At the same time that government plays an important role in explaining facts to the public in this way, there is also value in making raw data open to all so that it can be studied and presented in ways that no agency can do or anticipate on its own (Robinson et al. 2008). A good example of this is the longitudinal integration data collected and made available by Statistics Canada and Statistics Sweden, which enables

important research like Pieter Bevelander's and Ravi Pendakur's studies of refugee labour market outcomes (Bevelander 2011; Bevelander and Pendakur 2014).

Immigration and refugee agencies must also find successful ways of working with the media to explain their programs. Calado noted his Commission's strong television and radio presence, as well as the use of media training and awards to encourage good reporting. Tunis described the huge communication effort that was at the core of Canada's Syrian resettlement program and helped to achieve generally positive coverage. Effective use of social media platforms, of course, is also key (Tunis presentation), and creative strategies are often used to leverage both traditional and new media in spreading messages. Examples can be seen in Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's well-publicized meeting with and "welcome home" message to arriving Syrian refugees (Austen 2015), or the more subtle message of his outing with Ivanka Trump and U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley to see the Canadian musical *Come From Away*, which celebrates generosity toward foreigners in need (Paulson 2017).

Other forms of outreach include funding and implementation through NGOs and schools, including diversity training as well as programs that enable citizens and communities to empathize and connect personally with refugees. For example, in one of the Refugee Support Platform's programs, Portuguese school children were asked to pack a bag with the things they would bring if they were forced to flee to another country (Marques presentation). Similarly, the main reason for placing civil society in the lead of the integration process in Portugal has been to promote direct engagement by communities (Marques presentation). Canada's private sponsorship program and the broad range of Canadians refugees come into contact with during the integration process are not just ways of harnessing private resources, but also important tools for ensuring direct contact between natives and refugees and giving natives a personal stake in the process (Seidle presentation). This can have powerful effects on attitudes and opinions (Pettigrew 2008; Pettigrew et al. 2011; Pettigrew 1998; Cameron et al. 2006; Savelkoul et al. 2011).

Memory and opinion, of course, are shaped in complex ways. Time is an inextricable ingredient, with past policies shaping present opinion, and present policies shaping future opinion. The open U.S. policy toward Azorean refugees was driven by prior waves of Azorean immigrants to the United States who successfully lobbied their representatives to sponsor the Azorean Refugee Act (Coutinho et al. 2010). Portugal's policy toward "internal refugees" from its former colonies in the 1970s has had a powerful effect on Portuguese public opinion today (Calado presentation). The Portuguese schoolchildren who think what they would take with them if they were forced to flee may grow up to be strong supporters of refugees in the future. By some accounts, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's supportive position towards refugees was influenced by his childhood memories of meeting Ugandans resettled to Canada by his father (Tunis presentation). In this sense, there is likely to be both positive and negative feedback loops in immigration and refugee policy with successful open policies encouraging further openness, just as restrictive policies appear to encourage further restrictiveness (Massey, Durand, and Pren 2016; Massey and Pren 2012; see generally Pierson 1993; Freeman 1995).

Values: putting human rights and solidarity first

Underlying the question of public opinion or any of the pragmatic considerations that often go into policy development, there must be a solid foundation of values. This point was articulated forcefully by Rue Marques, and it was clearly in the background of the other presentations as well. There are strong arguments for a more ethical approach to migration policy in general (Zapata-

Barrero and Pasetti 2015; Zapata-Barrero and Pécoud 2012; Zapata-Barrero 2010; Zapata-Barrero 2012a). The concept of the refugee, in particular, is inextricably rooted in values of solidarity, human dignity, and social justice. Yet, these are often forgotten in the public debate and in policymaking, overshadowed by concepts of sovereignty, national security, and control – concepts that have ended up taking a large degree of precedence in the formation of the modern regime of international protection and that continue to erode that regime (Hathaway 1990; Chimni 2000). As Marques argued, this should not be so. Solidarity, human dignity, and justice should be the starting point for decision-making and should be kept front and centre in debates. Without emphasizing and defending these values, we risk abandoning the moral foundation of the refugee concept, undermining refugee policy, and further weakening the system of international protection.

Categories: bridging abstractions and facts

Underlying much of the discussion was a set of categories that inevitably structure our thinking about refugee policy. One of the challenges in understanding society and formulating good policy is determining when these categories are useful abstractions and when they are not. The category of refugee for example, is our starting point in this work, and yet it can take different meanings (the narrow definition of the Refugee Convention or the broader common understanding) and can often distort our understanding of the people in question. To what extent should we consider refugees as a special case and to what extent should we lump them with other migrants when formulating integration policy? This is clearly something that the Swedish government has grappled with (Parusel presentation) and it is an important question. Although international law attempts to draw clear lines between refugees and other migrants based on, among other things, motivation, we know that in reality people make their migration decisions based on a variety of reasons; many forced migrants also consider economic factors in deciding when to leave or where to go, and many “voluntary migrants” are in fact pushed into moving by factors very similar to those driving refugees (e.g. Martin 1990). Consequently, there are many reasons to draw on our understanding of immigrant integration generally when considering the case of refugees, and yet there are also good reasons for considering the special situation of refugees at the same time.

We see this tension between abstraction and fact elsewhere in the integration arena as well. One of the important conclusions reached by Bevelander (2011) and by Bevelander and Pandakur (2014) is that refugee intake category is an important predictor of labour market outcome. For example, Bevelander (2011) finds that in Sweden refugees who gain their status through the asylum process tend to find employment faster than those who come through resettlement. These categories, of course, are artificial in the sense that they are created by Swedish law. On the other hand, one explanation for this result is that asylum seekers self-select into particular countries and tend to have more country-specific skills as well as social networks, all of which facilitate labour market integration. In that sense, the categories reflect consequential social facts. The categories may also produce consequential social facts: Bevelander and Pandakur (2014) suggest that greater differences across intake categories in Canada as compared to Sweden is driven by the fact that government-sponsored refugees receive more state assistance than family reunion beneficiaries. Seidle made a similar point in his presentation, noting that government-sponsored refugees in Canada find work later than privately-sponsored refugees but end up with higher incomes – possibly because the government-sponsored refugees are encouraged to use their first year for language courses, entering the labour market later but with higher skills. In formulating refugee policy, it is critical to consider this interplay between the ways in which categories may reflect social facts but may also influence them.

A toolkit on refugee governance for Catalonia



In his closing remarks at the symposium, Ricard Zapata offered a set of recommendations drawn from the presentations. He frames these recommendations as the main contents of a “toolkit” on refugee governance that the Catalan government might look to in formulating its own policy philosophy.

The way this toolkit can help to focus Catalan refugee policy is dependent of the main external factor restricting the Catalan government’s decision-making process: Its limited competences within the Spanish context (Ricard Zapata-Barrero 2013; Ricard Zapata-Barrero 2012b). The Spanish government has the final say on how many people are allowed to enter and stay and who they are. This multi-level structure creates a gap between the questions of “who decides” and “who does” at the level of admissions and integration (Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Barker 2014). Addressing this tension within its own policy agenda is the main particularity of Catalonia. This means that Catalonia cannot draw a proper policy philosophy in the same way as Canada, Portugal or Sweden.

In spite of these structural restrictions, Catalonia is developing its own policy approach following its own tradition, as has been evident in the process of designing the Catalan National Agreement on Immigration (Generalitat de Catalunya 2008). Its approach is to involve civil society, manage public opinion, and explore new dynamics not as a restraint, but as an opportunity for Catalan development and the process of national-building, as it is evident in Ms. Maria Badia’s Foreword to this report. Nonetheless, this tension is hard to resolve when faced with the Spanish government’s unwillingness to take in any meaningful number of refugees through resettlement or the EU’s relocation scheme. It is, then, within this restricted multi-level framework that we offer 10 key dimensions of this toolkit.

Recommendation 1: History and tradition

Catalonia does not have Canada’s tradition of refugee reception, but it does have a tradition of receiving economic migrants, first from other territories of Spain at the beginning and the second half of the XXth. Century (the so called “internal migrants”), and more recently from the rest of the world. It also has a recent history of Catalan refugees fleeing the territory during the 40 years of Francoist persecution from 1936 to 1975. This refugee history is still very present in the memories of the older generations and it has been transmitted to the younger ones. Catalan refugee history belongs to Catalan history and tradition. It is by combining these two migration experiences – the reception of economic migrants and the flight of Catalan refugees – that Catalonia can build the intellectual foundation for its own refugee policy. This first recommendation links the refugee policy narrative to relevant historical experience and memory. In the case of Catalonia, like that of Portugal, this means drawing on the history of *being* refugees and being taken in by other communities. The concept of reciprocity – do now for refugees what was done for you in your own refugee past – should be at the core of the narrative here. This is also an area in which further academic research and exploration could be very helpful.

Recommendation 2: Working together, “fer pinya”

One of the main drivers of Catalan refugee policy must follow Catalonia’s tradition of the human tower, or *castell*, as an example of the power of working together, of “fer pinya” (people together sustaining the human tower at the ground). In policy terms, this basically means that Catalan refugee policy requires multidimensional cooperation and coordination among actors and sectors. It requires strong civil society networks like Portugal’s Refugee Support Platform, which can bring together very different stakeholders to take part in the process.

Recommendation 3: Raising and managing consensus (consensus building)

Political consensus involves the management of political parties across all levels of government (multilevel governance). Effective refugee policy involves building and managing political consensus. Moreover, this must be achieved across government levels within Catalonia (between the Generalitat and the municipalities, for example). There is also an obvious source of tension for Catalonia when this consensus building tries to reach level of the central Spanish government. This is an area that deserves further exploration.

Recommendation 4: Public engagement

Engaging with the public and managing public opinion is vital. It cannot be an afterthought but must instead be at the core of refugee policy. There is a need to build a specific policy with the main purpose of reducing tensions between what the government does and how the society may interpret government’s actions. The Portuguese program of asking school children to consider what they would take with them if they were refugees (“what if it was me?”) is an excellent example. There would seem to be great value in implementing something similar across Catalonia’s schools.

Recommendation 5: Communication policies

The role of media is clearly an integral part of public engagement, but it deserves separate treatment as a unique recommendation. This focus on media means not only managing the choice of language by which policy is explained, but employing the whole narrative of refugee movement, what other states do, and how NGOs support the process through their work and claims. In particular, the concept of “protection” should be emphasized. This is not only a legal concept, in the sense of the international protection regime, but also an important element of any communication strategy in that it clearly explains the position of the refugee and the basic reason and moral imperative for providing sanctuary. This pedagogic purpose could be also shared with recommendation 4. A useful step could be to produce a short video promoting solidarity and human protection values, with biographies and refugee testimonials, and an explanation of how they relate to all of us.

Recommendation 6: Holistic refugee policy approach

Another recommendation that became clear from the presentations is how interconnected all of the issues are: Admission is connected to integration; reception conditions are connected to long-term integration outcomes; housing policy is connected to public opinion. There is also a great deal of interconnectedness across levels of government and across countries, where policies at different levels or in different countries affect one another. This makes refugee policy especially complex and it makes holistic, integrated approaches, multilevel governance, and institutional and international cooperation essential. This also means that inclusion policies cannot be done without a clear short-term and long-term strategy, taking into account the opposition of the political system, public opinion and civil society in general. The territorial distribution of refugees and the social distribution must also be an integral part of this holistic view of refugee policies. Canada offers an excellent example of this. In Catalonia, of course, this is a source of tension in that admissions policy is controlled by the Spanish government.

An interesting aspect of this holistic policy approach is to consider joint action between the public and private sectors. While recognizing that refugee support is inherently a public function, it is nonetheless useful to consider how to mobilize more private resources. The Canadian approach based on joint action between the private sector and government is really unique.

Recommendation 7: Considering refugee policies as part of mainstream migration system

One policy question that needs to be clarified from the very beginning is whether refugee policies should be integrated into mainstream migration policy or kept separate? Although there are many ways in which refugees have unique needs that require special treatment, there are also obvious similarities and areas of overlap between refugees and other migrants and workers. Moreover, there are additional advantages to incorporating refugee policy into the core structure of Catalan society rather than treating it as a circumstantial area. Refugee policies need to include long-term strategies for bridging the transition from refugee to workers, and finally citizen. Moreover, the international reality means that refugee policy must be a permanent part of the policy structure, not an ad hoc component that is turned to only in times of crisis.

Recommendation 8: Ensuring a long-term inclusion strategy and evaluation

Refugee policy must contain a long-term strategy for inclusion and a mechanism for evaluating the key areas of the integration process: housing, employment, education, and health. This is, in a sense, the real heart of refugee integration policy, and also areas in which refugee policy connects with broader areas of social and economic policy. The key is that the situation of refugees in these areas must be approached with a long-term perspective, ensuring the accommodation of refugees into the mainstream areas of Catalan society.

Recommendation 9: External dimension of refugee policies

Refugee policy has not only internal dimensions but also external ones, acting as a foreign policy. This external dimension of refugee policy means basically to apply policies outside the Catalan territories. For instance, we can envisage a policy in the refugee camps in countries of first asylum, but avoiding the focus on remote control (selection and admission) that currently permeates external migration policies (R Zapata-Barrero 2013). This external dimension would offer a way to better understand the people who will become part of our society prior to their arrival. Forging these external links can thus be highly beneficial to any policy related to reception and inclusion of refugees.

Recommendation 10: Facilitate knowledge formation throughout the process.

Catalonia must be able to evaluate the policies that are implemented, and this requires benchmarks and indicators. We must be able to analyse results and communicate them back to the public. All of this requires data collection and interpretation. The symposium reported here is a great example of synergies between government, civil society, and academia in this quest for knowledge and we anticipate that type of cooperation will continue to play an important role in the development of Catalan refugee policy.



Closing remarks. Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Oriol Amorós March

Afterword



We have many things to learn from Canada, Portugal and Sweden. I would like to underline the idea of political consensus that came out of the presentations, as this is something that we also work for here in Catalonia. Indeed, it is a key attribute of the Catalan case. I should also point out our envy of those countries that have good data. In developing Catalan refugee policy, we want from the very beginning to have data and indicators that we can use for evaluation. Finally, I must admit how much we admire the political commitment of the Canadian government, in particular. We all feel a little bit Canadian when we see your Prime Minister saying “welcome home” to arriving refugees.

Let me offer a few words about the Catalan case. I think we are a very interesting case for studying migration issues for a simple reason: In the 21st Century, no other European country has had such dramatic demographic change. In just twelve years we grew from 6.3 million to 7.5 million inhabitants – an increase of nearly 20 percent driven largely by immigration. We have people from 187 countries speaking 300 different languages. Listening to the xenophobic narrative spreading around Europe these days, one would think this would be disastrous for us – that we would explode. And yet we have not. We have social and economic difficulties, of course. But we also have a good level of social cohesion. How is this possible?

One explanation is that we have done things correctly. For instance, our immigration policies have had a clear goal from the very beginning: citizenship. Catalonia’s basic goal has been that wherever our immigrants come from and whatever they know of us when they arrive, at the end of the process they become new citizens with the same rights and duties as the rest of us. We have also benefited from political consensus. Our approach is to work with all parties that respect human rights (while sidelining those parties that do not). We have had a National Agreement on immigration since 2008. It is our main framework, based on consensus with all of the main political parties and social actors, and it was reached at the height of our immigration surge. We also want to be the first country in Europe that explicitly bets on the intercultural approach to managing diversity. Indeed, we have already been welcoming people in an intercultural way, even without saying it explicitly. Our idea is always that we have some things to share for which there is no cultural relativity (e.g. equal rights of men and women, free sexual orientation, free religious beliefs and practices), but there are many areas in which differences are beneficial and where we can learn much from newcomers.

On the other hand, there is a more pessimistic explanation for our success with recent immigration. Perhaps this is just a matter of time. We are aware we are still in the first steps of becoming a country of immigration. The second generation is still in school, and still very few members of this generation reach our universities. We know that the big challenge is social mobility. I am completely convinced that if we have social mobility, we will be the best country in the world. If we do not, then we will have the same problems that other European countries of immigration have experienced. So this is where we must focus our efforts: Success in education, access to university, access to jobs and the public sector, and entrepreneurship.

Turning to refugee policy, we have a problem of centralization. The Spanish government invests lot of money in refugee programs and must be given due credit for this. But it relies on a centralized system that has the problems of all centralized systems: bureaucratic waste and difficulty in making the right decisions in individual cases. I hope we can change this. We have an

open and frequent dialog with the Spanish government on these issues. We have very different positions but we talk a lot and that is important.

The Spanish refugee integration program is run by seven NGOs that are doing a very good job, and have very successful histories. But the program has a fixed duration of 18 months (12 in some cases), and when it ends, those refugees who have not achieved economic independence must rely on our municipalities' social services. In order to avoid a heavy impact on these services, we are launching at this very moment a Catalan integration program that will kick in when the Spanish one ends. We want the two programs to be well-coordinated and we are working with the Spanish government and the relevant NGOs to make sure this happens.

The Catalan refugee program will include a mentorship component, and in developing this we have drawn a lot from Canada as well as on others of our existing social programs the take a mentoring approach. We prepared a large public outreach campaign to attract people to volunteer as mentors, and yet we ended up with 3000 volunteers after just one press conference. This shows just how much Catalan society wants to contribute to refugee issues. We have now finished the first training program for the mentors and we are in the process of matching them with refugees.

We view municipalities as a key part of this program. It is the municipalities that have most experience and capacity in social work for individual cases and coordination with civil society. They make decisions in thousands of cases every day related other aspects of our social welfare system and they should be the ones to do this for individual refugee cases. We will also rely on municipalities for anything related to engaging civil society as they know best how to put together diverse organizations. We will also work with the specialized refugee NGOs that are managing the Spanish program. We need them to give us a report on each refugee family at end of that program. We will also involve our mentors in the last phases of the Spanish program to ensure there is a good link.

The goals of our refugee integration program are very simple: language, employment, and social links. We will involve NGOs to create spaces where refugees and natives can interact. Refugees will have a plan of activities related to learn our language, finding a job, and increasing their social relations and municipalities will be empowered to ensure that they are doing these things. The Catalan government's approach is decentralized: we will fund the program, and we are working to ensure that refugees get the same general basic income as is now being debated for citizens.

The last point to stress is affordable housing. This is a very difficult challenge that affects the entire population. We are working with many different administrations to solve this, and seems clear that the solution will involve housing refugees outside of Barcelona because Barcelona is simply too expensive. We are fully aware we need to be cautious, since the local population has the same housing problems. The solution is not to promote specific housing policies for refugees, but to work closely with other municipalities with more affordable housing, and to quickly incorporate refugees into the mainstream housing policy.

We are at the beginning of this major policy initiative and we are very happy to have the chance to learn from other countries. I appreciate very much the experts from Canada, Portugal, and Sweden who have come here to shared their knowledge. I am also grateful to Diplocat and GRITIM-UPF for organizing this interesting and fruitful symposium.

Oriol Amorós i March

Secretary for Equality, Migrations, and Citizenship, Government of Catalan

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