

**ABSTRACTS**

**TITLE: CITIZENSHIP, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND RECENT IMMIGRANTS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION**

**P.I.:** Alexia Bloch, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia

The 2006 Canadian census reported that 92,360 people in British Columbia identified their “ethnic origin” as Russian. Despite the numbers, this group has not mobilized to bring about improvements in such pressing areas as the recognition of credentials or access to affordable education. One B.C. Settlement Services counselor told me recently “People who grew up in the Soviet Union think, ‘Why should I bother to lobby for my credentials to be recognized; there will be no result.’” This ethnographic project explores the conundrum of the relative lack of political mobilization and civic engagement among recent immigrants in the Lower Mainland arriving from the former Soviet Union. The research considers the ways Russian-speaking immigrants experience civic engagement in their first ten years in Canada and seeks to answer three related questions: How do immigrants who share a language and socio-political history, but not necessarily ethnic belonging, interact in their new country of Canada? What are the spaces, institutions, and cultural organizations that draw people together or create new forms of division in this linguistic community? Finally, what mechanisms could foster a greater sense of civic and political engagement among immigrants from the former Soviet Union living in the greater Vancouver Area? As an organization striving to mobilize this community around issues of mutual concern, the Russian-Canadian Cultural Association of British Columbia strongly supports this research. This organization hopes to gain a better understanding of ways to draw recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union into community engagement and key networks that would facilitate their integration in Canada.

**TITLE: AFRICAN IMMIGRANT YOUTH: CHALLENGES FACING TEEN MIGRANTS**

**P.I.:** Gillian Creese, Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, University of British Columbia

Immigrants from sub-Saharan African countries living in B.C. form one of the smallest (about 20,000), most diverse (arriving from more than 50 countries), under-studied, under-resourced, and high needs groups of recent immigrants and refugees (Creese, 2007; Creese & Wiebe, in press; Masinda & Kambere, 2008). In spite of the small size of this nascent community and its relatively recent establishment, services designed to address the needs of Africans have begun to emerge. Umoja Operation Compassion Society/African Family Services (established in 2003) has, together with the PI, identified youth, in particular those who arrived in Canada in their teens and many of whom come from refugee camps, as a sector of the African community who urgently need support. This group finds integration especially difficult; appears to have very low rates of high school completion, in turn making transition to employment, and indeed adult responsibility, problematic. Families with teenage members at the time of

migration appear prone to significant family disruptions that impair integration for all members. These observations of settlement workers at Umoja, and some research in Toronto (Reitsma, 2001), form the starting point for more systematic research. Thus this project will assess the settlement challenges, needs, experiences and strategies (both successful and unsuccessful) available to African immigrant and refugee youth who arrive in Canada as teenagers with a view to informing subsequent service delivery and policy intervention.

### **TITLE: REFUGEES FROM PROTRACTED SITUATIONS TO BC**

**P.I.:** Jennifer Hyndman, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University

**C.I.:** Alison Mountz, Department of Geography, Syracuse University

In the next five years, the Canadian Government has agreed to settle between 3,000 to 8,000 refugees from long-term camps, including Karen and Rohingya refugees from Burma and Bhutanese refugees from Nepal. All of those targeted for resettlement have been displaced for a decade or longer in protracted refugee situations (PRS); their transition and integration into Canadian society poses distinct challenges compared to other refugees. Since the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002 was implemented, Canada has been accepting refugees based more on protection needs than admissibility and adaptability to Canada criteria (*ibid.*). This legal change has transformed the client base for refugee-serving agencies into a predominantly 'high needs' population. Yet little is known about how refugees from protracted situations have fared since they came to Canada (Yu et al., 2007), and even less is known about how researchers, NGO providers, and policymakers can measure and enhance their settlement. The proposed research aims to fill this gap. Focusing on refugees who came to Canada post-IRPA from PRS and for whom baseline data exists (McLean and Hyndman, 2006), this proposed research has two aims: 1) empirically, to (re)trace the housing, employment, language, and 'participation' trajectories of 40 Acehnese refugees who arrived in Greater Vancouver in 2004 and who were surveyed about these issues in 2005; and 2) to develop preliminary data collection protocols and possible qualitative measures of settlement, participation, and integration based on PRS research and in-depth interviews with the Achenese who experienced 3-5 years of detention in Malaysia en route to Canada.

### **TITLE: DIASPORA STRATEGIES OF THE PRC AND ITS IMPACT ON CHINESE MIGRANTS**

**P.I.:** David Ley, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia

**C.I.:** Elaine Ho, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia

The emergence of contemporary sending state strategies seeking to maintain links with citizens living abroad complicates immigration, settlement and integration issues for immigration countries like Canada. In China, the highly-educated and professional class are regarded as an asset for national development. Thus the Chinese state is enacting new strategies to reach out to its overseas citizens. Emigration from China is estimated at 500 000 annually (Luo, 2003). Since 1998, migrants from mainland China have represented the largest flow of immigration to Canada. The present scholarship on new Chinese emigration (*xinyimin*) is still nascent. Such studies valorise Chinese migration patterns and ethnic networks (Pieke *et al.*, 2004), but neglect to develop fully the implications for citizenship issues such as

belonging, rights and responsibilities. Displacement accentuates notions of home and belonging (Teo, 2007) while exposure to a Western liberal democracy, like Canada, may impact migrant attitudes towards citizenship in China. Simultaneously, the cultural signifiers of Chinese citizenship can influence migrant attitudes towards Canadian ideals of citizenship and democracy.

This project investigates, first, the contemporary diaspora strategies of the Chinese state, including the participation of migrants in mainland Chinese diaspora organisations in Canada. What are the economic, political and cultural impetuses triggering such sending state initiatives? Second, the project will compare the citizenship attitudes of highly skilled Chinese migrants presently in Canada with those who have returned to China. In what ways does China's dual citizenship restriction and distinctive politico-cultural values (e.g. on home, community and nation) influence decisions for emigration and return migration? In so doing, this research will develop a culturally sensitive understanding of Chinese citizenship compared to Canadian ideals of citizenship and democracy.

This research makes two distinctive contributions. First, by contextualising China's diaspora strategies in the Canadian immigration milieu, this research will advance understandings of the way that sending state initiatives impact the settlement, integration and citizenship decisions of migrants. Despite recent interest in the diaspora strategies of sending states (e.g. Larner, 2007), there is still a critical lack of work addressing the implications for receiving states. Second, this research decentres Anglo-American perspectives by studying Sinicised interpretations of citizenship. The project will investigate citizen interpretations alongside meta-narratives of citizenship (Thunø, 2001). Thus this work augments emerging research agendas on the everyday practices of transnationalism and citizenship. Given the growing volume of highly skilled Chinese migration, this research is a timely intervention for academic scholarship and policymaking. The significance of China's ascending role as a world power makes it important to understand Chinese perspectives of citizenship, and more importantly, its implications for the Canadian immigration milieu.

*\*This project has been jointly funded with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada*

**TITLE: THE HEALTH & HOUSING IN TRANSITION STUDY: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY  
OF THE HEALTH OF HOMELESS AND VULNERABLY HOUSED ADULTS IN  
VANCOUVER, TORONTO AND OTTAWA**

**P.I.:** Anita Palepu, Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences, St. Paul's Hospital, University of British Columbia

This multi-site longitudinal study will track the health and housing status of a representative sample of 600 homeless adults and 600 vulnerably housed adults in 3 Canadian cities – Vancouver, Toronto, and Ottawa – over a 2-year period. The study will explore the relationship between immigrant status and housing status, and identify the significant barriers faced by immigrants in securing affordable housing. The specific research questions of this study are: (1) What is the incidence of housing transitions in the immigrant population?; (2) What are the risk factors, and individual, interpersonal, and community-level resources associated with (a) the attainment of stable housing among homeless immigrants, and (b) the onset of homelessness among vulnerable housed immigrants?; and (3) Are changes in housing status

associated with subsequent changes in physical and mental health functioning, access to health care, substance use, quality of life, and social support?

This project has been funded by CIHR, but these funds are only sufficient to allow recruitment of individuals who can participate in survey interviews in English or French. The funds requested from Metropolis BC will be used to hire cultural interpreters to allow the recruitment of an estimated 60 immigrants who would not be able to participate in interviews in English or French. Thus, Metropolis BC funding will make this important study more inclusive and directly relevant to the issue of immigrants, housing, and health. This study will help inform the development of policies and programs that ensure the availability of affordable housing for immigrants.

**TITLE: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ECONOMICS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

**P.I.:** Krishna Pendakur, Economics, Simon Fraser University

**C.I.:** Christian Dustmann, Co-Director, CReAM

This dissemination proposal is to fund (jointly with HRSDC and CReAM) a conference entitled "International Perspectives on the Economics of International Migration". The conference will have two special themes: (1) Temporary Migration; and (2) the Children of Immigrants. It will be an opportunity to bring together the best academic researchers from around the world to share their current research findings. The conference will be held in Vancouver and will have four distinct purposes. First, as an academic research conference, it will help move forward our research agendas in these areas. Second, by bringing together policy-makers and academic researchers, we give policy-makers access to current research debates. Third, by bringing together policy-makers and academic researchers, we give academics the opportunity to add policy-relevance to their research. Fourth, this conference will allow MBC to invigorate and improve the stature and productivity of its Economics domain.

**TITLE: JUST PASSING THROUGH? TRAFFICKED PERSONS TRANSITED THROUGH BC**

**P.I.:** Benjamin Perrin, Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia

The RCMP Criminal Intelligence Directorate estimates that 800 individuals are trafficked into Canada every year, 600 of whom are subject to sexual exploitation. A further 1,500 to 2,200 persons are believed to be trafficked through Canada annually into the United States. However, beyond these broad estimates of the problem, this phenomenon remains poorly understood.

To date, Canada has yet to convict a single individual for the offence of human trafficking related to foreign nationals. Only a handful of trafficked persons have been granted temporary residence permits and assistance to recover from their ordeals.

This research project aims to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the nature and extent of British Columbia's role as a transit point for foreign national being trafficked into the United States?
- 2) What additional measures could be taken to reduce the chances that high-risk and illegal migrants enter the country?

**TITLE: IMMIGRANT CLASS, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION  
ACROSS CANADIAN PROVINCES**

**P.I.:** Marc-David Seidel, Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia

**C.I.:** Wendy Roth, Department of Sociology, University of British Columbia

The role that latent social networks play in determining labour market outcomes is critical to understanding immigrant integration. Social ties often prove an important means for immigrants to find employment in their host society. Yet latent differences in friendship networks of various demographic groups can lead to discriminatory outcomes in the employment relationship, hindering successful integration of newcomers to Canada. The role of social networks in facilitating economic integration has relevance for different classes of immigrants, as sponsored immigrants by definition have sources of social support which other classes of immigrants may not have. In this program of study, we will examine whether immigrants who are sponsored by family members already in Canada achieve greater labour market outcomes than immigrants lacking this source of social support, and how their social networks with other members of their ethnic group differ from those of other immigrants. We plan to further explore the relationships for immigrants between social networks, race, sex, and employment outcomes in different provinces. Previous work has shown that differing ethnic network portfolios can lead to differential integration success within specific demographic groups (Seidel, Barsness, Lo, and Wong 2008), but few have examined how these experiences may differ across provincial or geographical contexts. Using the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), we will attempt to shed light on the role social network factors play in successful economic integration for immigrants to Canada.