

Migration Regime in Toronto and the Roles of Municipal Government in the Economic Integration of Somali Refugees (1991-2011)

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Abstract

In the early 1990s, the Somalis became one of the top refugee groups in Canada, when Canada was trying to throw away the yoke of economic recession bedeviling the country since the 1980s. Making the matter worse, the socio-economic attributes of those Somali refugees never reflected any possibility of quick access to labor market.

This study explored the migration history of Somali refugees to Canada and how they later became a collection among ethno-racial groups of African descent residents in Toronto. The study investigated the problem of economic integration that confronted the Somalis on arrival to the city.

The study therefore concluded that city governments have assumed more critical roles in immigrant integration and it has become needful to incorporate their views in intergovernmental diplomacy on matters relating to immigration and immigrant integration.

Keywords: Somali refugees, refugee resettlement, immigration policy, immigrant integration, and Canada.

Introduction

As one of the signatories to the United Nations Convention on Refugees, Canada has continued to demonstrate strong commitment to protection of those encountering horrific humanitarian situations often occasioned by the outbreak of civil war as evidenced in Somalia. From the Cold War period, the country has become one of the leading destinations for refugee resettlement. In its resettlement program, though, Canada has admission benchmark which all prospective refugees must meet before being considered for resettlement. One of the conditions is that applicants must be recognized as refugees in line with guidelines of the UN Convention on Refugees. Prior to the enactment of Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2002, it was also expected that prospective refugees must demonstrate 'ability to establish' (to easily facilitate their ways to labor market integration). Resulting from the enactment of IRPA, there was a shift in Canada's humanitarian admission priorities. The country began to admit refugees based on compassion rather than (their) economic viability, as previously was the case. Certainly, Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program offers protection and assistance for refugees settled outside its territory. Generally, there are three classes of refugees. These include Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), Privately-Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), and Landed in Canada Refugees (LCRs). Thus, the first two classes of refugees make up resettled refugees and enjoy full access to refugee and mainstream settlement and integration services while the LCRs often lack such privileges. Sometimes, through Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) agreements both the government and citizen groups, religious bodies or any other organizations can jointly support the resettlement of refugees. In this case, settlement and integration support funding from government can be extended for 24 months while social support can be provided for 36 months by the private sponsors (Orr, 2004 cited in Hyndman, 2011).

Hence, the major concern of Canadian government was to provide resettlement opportunities to refugees based on the urgency of their needs for humanitarian protection (Yu et al., 2007). The compassionate consideration for refugee resettlement in Canada has been laudable but it also has come with a price. It did not take long for some of the challenges associated with the new immigration law to become noticeable. The arrival of the first post-IRPA government assisted refugees (GARs) in 2003 shown the refugee resettlement that was more of:

"multi-barriered individuals, including those with low literacy levels in their original languages, and significant physical and mental health issues, as well as increased numbers of single headed households, large households, and a much higher number of children and youth who were born and raised in refugee camps with limited exposure to formal education" (Hiebert and Sherrell, 2010: 25-26).

Indeed, Somali refugees constitute one of the immigrant groups who have been eluded by labour market inclusion. Unlike the success story that accompanied the admission of Vietnamese 'Boat People' who received tremendous support from Federal government and other stakeholders including religious and voluntary organizations in 1979 and 1980, the resettlement of Somali refugees from 1991 was fraught with far less positive outcomes (Naji, 2012). Perhaps, Canadians were less receptive to the Somalis and inadequate settlement services offered to the first generation Somalis contributed greatly to their poor integration experiences (Danso, 2002; Mohammed, 2001; Murdie, 1996; Naji, 2012 and Opoku-Dapaah, 1995).

In addressing an array of challenges confronting the labor market inclusion of Somalis and other ethno-cultural minorities, various levels of government in Canada have become cooperative in their

intergovernmental relations. However, immigration falls under the concurrent control of federal and provincial governments in Canada but more power is enjoyed by the federal government in this field of governance. Federal government has full control over all aspects of admission of immigrants ranging from economic, humanitarian, family reunification, caregiver immigrants and non-immigrants including visitors and students. Except Quebec that enjoys control over selection of economic and humanitarian immigrants, the rest of provincial and territorial governments in Canada can only admit economic migrants (Banting, 2012).

With the ascendancy of technological and economic dynamics instigated by globalization and international trade competitions coupled with budget constraints experienced in Canada which made it imperative for municipal governments to demand for more control in immigrant integration policy coordination (Tolley, 2011). The economic recessions and the budget deficits that accompanied it raised public resentment against any government policy that would encourage reliance of refugees and other immigrants on social welfare (Mulholland and Biles, 2004). The economic situation of refugees became more precarious as federal government transferred some of its functions (i.e. post-secondary education, health care, social support etc) to the provincial governments without adequate fiscal backing and most of which provinces in turn downloaded to the municipal governments, complicating already distressed fiscal condition that municipal jurisdictions were grappling with.

More interestingly, most newcomers usually choose large urban centres like city of Toronto as their destination. Perhaps, it is not out of place that most immigrants usually regard economic opportunity as the significant magnet that frames their decision on where to reside (Torjman, 2002). This instructs why most immigrants prefer to settle in big cities like

Toronto considered abound with economic opportunities. There was growing population of Somali refugees settling in the City of Toronto, most of whom were eluded of the anticipated opportunities due to certain barriers like inability to communicate effectively in Canada's official languages (English and French languages), non-recognition of their educational certificates, among others (Bashir-Ali, 2006; Brown, 2008 and Galabuzi, 2001).

The rising poverty prevalent among the Somali refugees in Toronto City created a lot of apprehension and criticism among the public in the city (Ornstein, 2000). The city being the closest to the public began to play more active role in immigrant integration and social assistance despite the fact these policy areas were under exclusive control of federal and provincial governments (Birrel and McIsaac, 2006; Good, 2008 & 2009; Israelite et. al., 1999; McIsaac, 2003 and Poirier, 2003 & 2006).

This study investigates the problem of economic integration that experienced by most Somalis on arrival to the City of Toronto and explains various factors responsible for their economic exclusion. The study also examines what informed the involvement of the City government in immigration matters despite the fact that it falls outside the functional responsibilities of the city government and the effect of the intervention on its already overstretched local fiscal resources. The study shall also elucidate various initiatives taken by the city administration towards labor market inclusion of the Somalis and a number of positive outcomes achieved through the integration strategies of the local authorities in the City of Toronto.

Theoretical Framework

It is federal and provincial governments that jointly deliberate on immigrant admission, settlement and integration. According to Section 95

of the Constitution Act 1867, immigration falls under concurrent jurisdiction of the Federal and Provincial governments but immigration law of any province “shall have an effect in and for the Province as long as and as far as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada.”

While the bulk of integration processes takes place at the municipal level, the municipal governments have also found it compelling to agitate for their inclusion in intergovernmental deliberations on immigration matters. This new development has created a new political agenda setting, which according to Kingdon (1995) is motivated by three factors which include problems, policy and politics. Kingdon's Policy Window thesis largely explains the intervention of municipal jurisdiction especially the city authorities in the economic integration of refugee immigrants despite the fact that such function falls under the jurisdiction of Ottawa (Federal government) and provincial authorities. The municipal governments being the nearest to the people in various localities are being confronted with a mirage of agitations from various socio-cultural groups concerning the welfare and labour matters relating to the refugees (Leo, 2009).

Again, due to the downloading nature of intergovernmental relations in Canada where federal government often transfers certain responsibilities including immigrant integration to the provincial and territorial governments who in turn transfer same to the municipal jurisdictions. Perhaps, more critical roles played by municipal governments in immigration have continued to impact adversely on their finances while financial transfers from federal and provincial governments have been grossly inadequate. Evidently, these transfers of responsibilities are not backed with adequate fiscal support from the higher level jurisdictions. As a result, the fiscal capacity of municipal government was overstretched with resultant inefficient outcomes from the local provision of public goods and services. In addition, lack of local knowledge used to

affect higher level government coordination of immigrant settlement and integration services and programs in Canada which necessitated the Canada's engagement with provincial government on the need to consult the municipal governments and other local stakeholders on issues relating to settlement and integration of refugees and other immigrants (Piorier, 2003, 2006).

It was against the foregoing that, on 29th September 2006, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Immigration and Settlement was entered into by Canada, Ontario and Toronto. The tripartite agreement was facilitated as *“a framework for the federal, provincial and municipal governments to discuss matters related to immigration and settlement in the City of Toronto”* (Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement, 2006). The MOU was the product of the acknowledgement from the federal and provincial governments of the crucial roles played by the City of Toronto in complementing the immigrant settlement and integration coordination efforts of the two higher levels of government. It was, however agreed that almost 50 percent of newcomers settled in Toronto. The rationale behind the tripartite summit federalism was to achieve more positive outcomes from Canada's immigration policy as the City of Toronto was required to contribute its experience, expertise and capacity for community infrastructure and service delivery methods...to enhance the existing federal and provincial strengths of well established policies, programs and network (Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement, 2006: 2-3).

Acting beyond their statutory functions, municipal governments have opted for overlapping intergovernmental approach by playing more active roles in the settlement and integration of immigrants to avoid social problems that may accompany economic exclusion of any immigrants. Third factor has to do with the commitment of the political elites across

municipal jurisdictions to optimize public gains in the economic integration of refugees to reduce the number of refugees relying on public support. Usually, the local political elites partner with other levels of government as well as other stakeholders in providing economic integration needs of the refugees (Good, 2008).

Somali Refugees in the City of Toronto: Arrival and Economic Integration Issues

Ontario remained the leading destination for majority of the landed Somali refugees and other immigrants. More than fifty percent of the landed Somali refugees settled in Ontario. For instance in 1991, out of 3221 refugees who landed in Canada as newcomers, over 2000 of them chose Ontario as their intended destination while City of Toronto has remained the leading destination for immigrant settlement not only in Ontario but also the entire Canada (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1992). Between 1991 and 1995, the number of Somali newcomers that settled at the Metropolitan Area of Toronto was five thousand, four hundred and eighty-five (5485). The City of Toronto is significantly larger than all the municipalities in Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). Between 1996 and 2001, two thousand, seven hundred and seventy (2770) Somali newcomers had arrived Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2001). At arrival, Somali refugees possessed different attributes in terms of language skills, education and capacity to excel in Canada's labor market. Within the ten years, different integration outcomes were recorded among the Somalis in Toronto and elsewhere based on their year of admission and skills.

On arrival, Somali refugees encountered a lot of challenges. One of the problems was non-recognition of credentials or lack of formal education which reduced their chances of participating in Toronto's labour market. Those who were working as professionals in their home country found

themselves excluded from applying for professional jobs due to non-recognition of their credentials by various provincial governments including Ontario (Bashir-Ali, 2006; Israelite et. al., 1999; Opoku-Dapaah, 1995 and Zine, 2001). Hence, the only choice left to them was to attain Canadian education which was at high cost. In many provinces, the refugees were expected to pay high tuition like foreign students.

However, the federal law guarantees free access to primary and secondary education to all residents including refugees but the policy of each province determines the cost of accessing tertiary education. For Ontario, refugees' fate to access tertiary education was nebulous because those of them who desired to have tertiary education were mandated to pay high fees like foreign students. They also had no access to student loans and scholarship (Israelite, et. al, 1999). Certainly, immigrants who obtained Canadian certificates would have comparative advantage over those who studied in their country of origin. The advantage was not only in terms of language skills but also in terms of income (Bonikowska et.al., 2008). The prevailing dilemma that accompanied non-recognition of their pre-arrival credentials and absence of financial means to attain tertiary education in Canada reduced their situations as ones that were very precarious.

Another major problem evidenced among the Somali refugees between 1991 and 2011 was that many Somali parents lacked the language skills to support their children in their school work. At arrival, the children were confronted with a number of impediments in Toronto schools due to inadequate schooling in their home country as a result of civil war and they were placed in class according to their ages. The problem of language made their experience more pitiable as their parents also lacked language skills to support them in their school work. The frustration was expressed by a Somali mother:

“Even if the child has a good educational background, with a strong base in math and other subjects, still he wouldn't be able to follow along in class because of the language. Language is the key factor, and it is only when the child has a strong language base that he can catch up to his classmates. It is of no help for him to throw him in a class without giving him any support” (Israelite et. al, 2009: 12).

In addition, the culture shock evidenced in Canada further deepened the frustration of majority of Somali refugees as they were losing sense of belonging to their new home due to cultural differences. For instance, many parents would complement their girl children's school dresses with hijab (scarf used by Muslim females to cover their hair), which were found unacceptable in most Canadian schools. They were ignorant of the secular character of majority of Canadian schools. In addition, racial and religious discrimination created deep sense of exclusion among the Somalis particularly the first generation in Toronto. Somali refugees predominantly Muslim can be said to be victims of prejudice and stereotypes. The religious resentment has been confirmed by many studies to generate intergroup threats especially negative stereotypes and intergroup anxiety, often leading to discrimination (Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al., 1999; Bizman & Yinon, 2001; Croucher, 2013).

The experience of discrimination and its negative impact on the integration of Somali Canadians have attracted a handful of studies (Israelite, 1999; Kusow, 1998; Ighodaro, 1997; Buchanan, 1996; Grover, 1995; Opoku-Dapaah, 1995). The discrimination experienced by the Somalis was driven by three factors: being newcomers, Muslim and Black (Reitsma, 2001). The September 11 terrorist attacks in the United State further put the Somalis like many other Muslim groups in the Western world in shackles of bigotry with growing Islamophobia. One pointer to these studies was the sense of despair and exclusion prevalent among the

Somali refugees. Perhaps, the racial and religious discrimination compelled majority of them to be phlegmatic in relating with other cultures which may have had a huge impact on their labor market integration. In addition, the difference between the host culture and the Somali culture also put them more at disadvantage within Canada's educational system, slowing down or impeding their success in the academic pursuits (Brown, 2008, Bashir-Ali, 2006; Zine, 2001). As if that was not enough, the structural constraints imposed by the immigration policy of Canadian government of excluding Somalis without landing status from employment until the decisions were made on their landing applications, many of whom waited for more than 5 years before government decisions on their applications (Israelite et. al., 1999 and Opooku-Dapaah, 1995).

The hefty tuition same as foreign students, the refugees were made to pay in Toronto also limited their shot at career progression. Canada's tertiary education certificate would be enhanced their labor market participation (Israelite et. al., 1999; Mohammed, 2001). The high cost of the university education indeed worked against the efforts of Somali residents in the City of Toronto (and the rest of Canada) to secure their inclusion in the socio-economic life of the urban centre as unemployment was high among them (Mohammed, 2001).

Without doubts, most of the first generation Somali refugees relied on welfare support in spite of their eagerness to work as captioned by a Somali:

“If I had the proper documents and a loan to open my own business, I could be an independent person. They [Immigration officials] told me to stay at home and wait for the \$500 [welfare] cheque. That is not what I came here for” (Israelite, 1999: 10).

The resentment of many Canadians toward providing jobs to refugees was another stumbling block to the labor market integration of Somali refugees (Opoku-Dapaah, 1995 and Zine, 2001). The second generation Somalis have had their own share of poor performance like their parents in the labor market participation. Apart from the inability of most Somali parents to provide all the needed support to their children's schooling, the negative images of muslims and homogenization of African groups propagated by the media in Canada, propelled discrimination against them. Studies have shown that negative stereotypes reinforce discrimination against any minority groups as individuals from any outgroup are often erroneously expected to behave in certain ways (Stephan & Stephan, 1993).

Local Strategies to Enhance Economic Integration of Refugees

The City offered support to a lot of immigrant settlement and integration service providers through provision of grants. The grant awards were accessed by immigrant service agencies and non-governmental organizations through different windows including Access and Equity Grant Programme for certain important initiatives including anti-hate advocacy, fear and threat management, employment counseling for the vulnerable groups etc (Good, 2009; Gunn, 2012). Since December 1998, the City of Toronto provided in its annual budget the Access and Equity Grant Program to foster harmonious relations among various ethno-racial communities residents in the City.

In its award of grants, the City did not only focus on mainstream immigrant service organizations but also ethno-racial organizations for successful integration of refugees and other immigrants. The City has been very proactive in building sense of belonging among various ethnic-racial organizations and supporting programmes that would assist the refugees and other immigrants and ensure their timely labour market

integration. The City government prioritized the need to partner with ethno-racial communities to build confidence among them and address the problem of discrimination which may have adverse impact on immigrant integration processes. In this respect, the City authority partnered with many Somali groups including Dejinta Beesha Somali Multi-Service Centre (City of Toronto, 2003).

The City of Toronto has appeared to be very committed to issues bothering on immigrant settlement and integration as amplified in its motto - "Diversity Our Strength." One of the ways to foster social inclusion among its diverse racial-ethnic communities was to address the problem of economic inequalities that dominated discourse about the experiences of immigrants in Canada.

The rapidly increasing social and economic inequalities in Toronto, and elsewhere in Canada, became a source of worry to the government of the Toronto City and elsewhere. The sense of exclusion among the vulnerable groups including the refugees and the newcomers required mobilization of wide-ranging policies to foster equity, multiculturalism and socio-economic inclusion. In 1998, the City inaugurated a Task Force on Community Access and Equity to recommend ways to develop policies that would foster inclusiveness of all the diverse cultures in the City in realizing the goals underlying its motto-"Diversity Our Strength." In the follow-up to the Task Force, the City facilitated a Roundtable on Access, Equity and Human Rights (Altilia, 2003; Isrealite et. al., 1999).

On January 29, 1999, the draft report was submitted to Strategic Policies and Priorities Committee while requesting for Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who would put up a report concerning the administrative choice for the implementation of the Action Plan proposed. The report (Diversity Our Strength, Access and Equity) was finally approved in December 1999 by the City Council. The thrust of the Action Plan was to

develop a framework and roadmap that would guide the processes of decision-making across all departments of the City Council. One of the ninety-seven final recommendations from the Task Force was the setting up of Race and Ethnic Relation Advisory Committee "to advise City Council on issues of access, equity and human rights" and four other groups including Aboriginal Affairs; Disability Issues; Status of Women; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Issues. Out of all the five groups, Race and Ethnic Relations was essentially the one that largely aimed at economic integration of refugees and other vulnerable groups include other classes of immigrants and "racialized groups".

On October 12, 2001, the Acting Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) tabled the Status Report before the Administration Committee with central focus on the performance of immigrants in labor market in the City of Toronto. In the report, it was found that a number of ethno-racial community groups were experiencing high level of labor market exclusion, and the situation was worrisome. It was also reported that one of the most vulnerable and least integrated ethno-racial groups was Somali community. It was revealed that at least 24 percent of Somali residents were unemployed, which higher than national average. In addition, the number of Somalis living below poverty line in the City stood at 62 percent (City of Toronto Clerk, 2001). It was therefore clarified that:

"the City has previously noted that many of the inequalities identified by the study requires action by all sectors and orders of government. As a result City has called upon other orders of government to address these issues, and in particular requested the Government of Canada to establish a national urban policy that results in social inclusion and the elimination of racism and for intergovernmental initiatives to respond to these issues." (City of

Toronto, 2001; Administration Committee Report, No.18, Clause No. 25).

On the 16th of October 2001, many community associations reacted and expressed their concerns on the issues of inequalities and socio-economic exclusion against minority cultural groups including the Somali as captured by the Study commissioned by the City of Toronto. The problem of endemic poverty and economic uncertainties among the Somalis and other vulnerable community organizations provoked urgent government in the City of Toronto actions to militate against the prevalent ethno-racial inequality in the City. Without doubts, the Status Report from CAO was released at the right time because the time of the release coincided with the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. Councilor Pam McConnell of the City of Toronto was part of the Canadian delegation to the Conference. On November 19, 2001, Councilor McConnell presented a report articulating the need for the City authorities to develop a Plan of Action in line with the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to address to the growing ethno-racial inequality in the City of Toronto.

In December 2001, the City of Toronto Community Advisory Committees on Access, Equity and Human Rights were mandated to consider the United Nations anti-racial discrimination declaration and pass their comments to the City of Toronto Diversity Advocate and Chief Administrative Officer (City of Toronto Clerk, 2001). With the diversity narratives being amplified by the municipal government as a major force for the strength of the city, Toronto city government expressed commitment to further assure the collateral market expansion of the city while equality program was considered as key to addressing the labor market exclusion being experienced by Somalis (Jacobs, 1998; Kipfer and Keil, 2002 and Ornstein, 2000).

On 16 January, 2002, a meeting that included all the five advocacy groups held and a number of issues were identified that required adequate attention of the City Council, and these included poverty reduction, housing, public transit and transportation, youth leadership and elimination of youth violence, employment, policing, education , public awareness as well community outreach. The issues of pay disparity particularly between the Canadian born and immigrants including refugees, accreditation of foreign credentials and diversity training also received attention.

Since 2001, the City of Toronto demonstrated stronger commitment to labor market integration of refugees and other immigrants. One of the strategies undertaken by the City to fastrack the inclusion of immigrants into labor market was to engage its Social Service Division to initiate service agreements with several community organizations specialized in the provision of labor skills training, occupational planning, career counseling and mentoring programs. In addition, the Social Service Division of the City also motivates financially relevant employers to offer job placement to Ontario Works clients including those without Canadian work experience. The City also provides financial support to immigrants to get their credentials assessed. The City had very unique job posting system in which the major consideration for employed was not based on certificate recognition or Canadian work experience. Though, immigrants' credentials were still assessed to determine the positions of the applicants. Another strategy used by the City of Toronto was forging partnership with various ethno-racial communities and always informed them about job placement and process of job hiring into the City government workforce.

Positive Outcomes of Local Initiatives to Labour Market Participation of Somali Refugees

Between 1991 and 2000, 1020 Somalis out of 17,380 Somali residents in Toronto lacked knowledge of both the English and French languages, which are the two official languages in Canada. The lack of requisite skills in the two official languages may be said to be one of the major causes of high unemployment rate among Somalis in Toronto during that period. Without doubts, various integration services especially the language training and adult education programs coordinated by the federal and provincial governments with support from the City government to complement their efforts through provision of support grants to the local immigrant service agencies. From 2001 to 2011, the population of Somalis increased but rather than having an increase in the number of Somalis without skills in any of the two official languages, the number of that category of Somalis in Toronto reduced by half. It was only 620 out of 21,450 Somalis could communicate neither in English nor in French. The number of Somalis having skills only in French was 50, which was a slight reduction compared to 55 Somalis who could only communicate in French between 1991 and 2000. The number of Somalis that had skills both in English and French languages also increased from 780 to 1105 by (Statistics Canada, 2011).

The growing number of multilingual Somalis will increase their chances of achieving better integration into the labor force. With the growing interest by all levels of government, requesting the services of interpreters and translators for their multilingual communication system, more Somalis with multilingual skills including English and French will find much easier to secure (better) jobs. The renewed interest among immigrant service agencies to provide access programs to newcomer, many multilingual Somalis may secure employment in that sector. There are many corporate organization where having skills in English and French may be added advantage.

The number of Somalis with knowledge in English language only also increased from 15,525 recorded between 1991 and 2000 to 19,675 by the end of 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2001 & 2011). With an increase of less than two thousand Somali residents in Toronto within the two periods, and an increase of over four thousand in the population of Somalis who could communicate in English indicates that the language services and programs attracted great positive outcomes among the Somali refugees in Toronto.

Education

Table 1
Education characteristics of Somali Immigrants
in Toronto (1991-2000)

Total population of 15 years and above by highest level of schooling	9325
Less than high school graduation certificate	3930
High school certificate	1780
Some postsecondary education	1330
Apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma	475
College certificate or diploma	790
University certificate below bachelor's degree	210
Bachelor's degree	585
University certificate above bachelor's degree	40
Master's degree	145
Earned doctorate	40

Source: *Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0010XCB2001041.*

Table 2
Education characteristics of Somali Immigrants (2001-2011)

Total population aged 25 years to 64 years by highest certificate, diploma or degree	8010
No certificate, diploma or degree	1875
High school diploma or equivalent.	2645
Apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma	345
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma.	1555
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level.	335
Bachelor's degree.	880
University certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level	375

Source: *Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011036.*

It was not only in the knowledge of official languages that an improvement was recorded among the Somalis residents in Toronto. From 1991 to 2000, only nine from every one hundred Somalis had bachelor's degree and above including earned doctorates while by 2011, 16 Somalis out of 100 had bachelor's degree and above . The increase in the number of Somalis was another positive outcome from the pattern of settlement regime in Toronto. In addition, by the end of 2000, for every three Somalis, one possessed certificate less than high school which suggests that majority of the Somalis never had up to secondary education.

In 2011, the number of Somalis without certificate reduced to one-quarter of the Somali population. However, the educational situation improved compared to the first ten years that followed 1991 but still very poor. Perhaps, many of them could not complete their studies in their country of

origin due to outbreak of war. Notwithstanding, some of them may have long dropped out. This explains the high incidence of low income among the Somalis in Toronto at 51.7% compared to 12.4% reported among the Canada born residents of Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Labor Market Outcomes

Table 3

Employment Portraits and Selected Occupations of Somalis (1991-2000)

The total number of Somalis from 15 and above by labor force activity	9330
The total number of Somalis in labor force in Toronto	4520
Employed Somalis was	3260
Unemployed Somalis was	1260
Employment rate	34.9%
Unemployment rate	27.9%
175 in management occupations	3.9%
710 in business, finance and administration occupations	15.7%
215 in natural & applied sciences & related occupations	4.8%
85 in health occupations	1.9%
1265 in sales and service occupations	28.1%
680 in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	15.0%
404 in occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	8.9%

Source: *Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0010XCB2001042.*

Table 4
 Employment Portraits and Selected Occupations
 of Somalis (2001-2011)

Total number of Somalis aged 15 and above in labor force status	13420
Total in the labor force from age 15 and above was	6170
Employed Somalis	4455
Unemployed Somalis	1715
Employment rate	33.2%
Unemployment rate	27.8%
265 in management occupations	4.3%
725 in Business, finance & administration	11.8%
320 in health occupations including medical doctors and nurses	5.2%
275 in natural and applied sciences and related occupations	4.5%
1580 in sales and service occupations	25.6%
880 in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	14.3%
175 in occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	2.8%

Source: *Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011036.*

Employment

From 1991 to 2001, the number of Somalis in Toronto aged 15 and above in labor force was four thousand, five hundred and twenty (4520) was labor force but there was rapid increase in the number of Somalis in the labor force as the number increased to six thousand, one hundred and seventy (6170). Occupations that immigrants belong will determine their income level and the portraits of occupational career of Somalis in Toronto labor force shown that the number of Somalis in management occupations rapidly increased from 175 (1991-2000) to 265 (2001-2011). This suggests that more Somalis had achieved more income level by 2011. In the similar vein, a marginal increase was recorded in the population of Somalis in business, administration occupations from 710 (1991-2000) to 725 (2001-2011). Certainly, more Somalis had also achieved greater income level by 2011. Between 1991 and 2000, there were only 85 Somalis in health occupations, and by 2011, the number had increased to 320, which was a welcome development. The gradual increase of Somalis in high income occupations, suggests that pattern of integration services in Toronto yielded moderate outcomes.

Income

From 1991 to 2000, the average income of Somalis in Toronto was fifteen thousand, five hundred and nineteen Canadian dollars (\$15,519) (Statistics Canada, 2001). By 2011, the average income for Somalis had reached twenty-one thousand, four hundred and eight Canadian dollars (\$21,480) (Statistics Canada, 2011). There was a little reduction in the unemployment rates among Somalis between the two periods. From 1991 to 2000, the rate of unemployment was 27.9% while in the period of 2001-2011, unemployment rate fell to 27.8%. Meanwhile, the employment fell in the later period to 33.2% from previous 34.9%. The

issue of fall in the rate of among employment also affected the Canada born, even more than the Somali residents.

From 1991 to 2000, the employment rate among the Canada born was 70.0% but within of period of 2001 and 2011, the employment rate fell to 65.3% (Statistics Canada, 2001 & 2011). The reduction was far above that of the Somalis. During the period of 2001 and 2011, while the unemployment of the Somalis reduced from previous 27.9% to 27.8% by 2011, the Canada born experienced more unemployment which increased from the previous 5.5% to 8.6% (Statistics Canada, 2001 & 2011). Irrespective of the slight reduction in the rate of unemployment among the Somalis, their average income was still less than half of what was earned by the Canada born. Again, the incidence of low income was very prevalent due to less educational qualification.

Conclusion

The difficult conditions in Somalia in the late 1980s provoked exodus of Somalis from their fatherland. Canada was one of the leading destinations for the resettlement of Somali refugees. The admission of Somali refugees, among other ethnocultural immigrants, was accompanied with mixed feelings considering the litany of forces that worked against their integration. Lack of language skills and Canadian work experience and non-recognition of certificates possessed by many of them with post-secondary education militated against their labor market inclusion. Above all, the discrimination that Somali refugees had to contend with due to their religion (Islam) and race (Black) also slowed down their inclusion into the urban labor market in the City of Toronto and elsewhere in Canada.

The government of Canada, at all levels, developed different policies and programs to support the refugees; each level of government has adopted

different programs to support immigrant settlement. However, the two lower level jurisdictions (municipal and provincial authorities) play more active role in the integration of immigrants but federal government has continued to provide an enabling environment and intergovernmental cooperation with provincial governments and certain city authorities including Toronto as well as providing long-term settlement programs for the new immigrants in the first three years of their arrival.

A number of proactive policies were developed by the city government that helped in facilitating greater language skills, education and labor market participation among the Somalis. The Access and Equity Grant program initiated by the city government assisted in facilitating better performances of ethnocultural minorities including Somali group in the local labor market participation. The Access and Equity grants provided by the municipal government to mainstream settlement organizations enabled Somalis and other vulnerable groups to undertake training in fear and threat management, job skills, mentoring and employment counseling without being put in any financial burden. Extending the grants to ethnocultural associations including many Somali groups to provide essential settlement services to newcomers was also a welcome development.

Further, the financial incentives provided by the city government to motivate employers to offer jobs to Somali residents as well as members of other ethnocultural minority groups assisted greatly in integrating them economically. The continued interface between community organizations and the city government through its Social Service Development is very commendable. The interface makes the government to be aware of the peculiar and general needs of various community associations including the Somali group resident in the City of Toronto. The policy helped in guiding municipal policy formulation and implementation especially in the areas of employment skills training, mentoring and career counseling. Suffice, for the city government not to lay any strong emphasis on

certificate recognition and Canadian work experience made access to local public jobs more open to vulnerable groups like Somali community and it indeed helped to improve the labor market experience of Somalis in the City. The regular provision of information on job vacancies to ethno-cultural associations designed to create adequate awareness among cultural groups regarding vacancies within the city workforce was also a welcome development in the economic integration of the Somalis and other ethno-cultural minority groups in the city.

Indeed, in recognition of the immigrant settlement services provided by the City of Toronto to the teeming immigrant population including the refugees, the federal and Ontario governments were compelled to facilitate a tripartite intergovernmental agreement that involved the City of Toronto in 2006. The agreement made Toronto City the first municipal jurisdiction in Canada to be fully involved in matters relating to immigration and immigrant integration. It is however recommended that federal and provincial governments should provide more grants to municipal governments to allow the tier level of government be in good financial footing with the aim of enabling them to perform better in the provision of essential settlement services that quicken the integration of immigrants. It is also recommended that priority be given to both the vertical (three levels of government) and horizontal (municipalities) exchange of ideas and information in the coordination of immigrant integration policies to optimize the quality of settlement services across jurisdictions.

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