

# The Double Bind

Exploring Integration Challenges for Muslim Refugees amidst  
Islamophobia

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# The Double Bind

Refugees who are Muslim find themselves doubly condemned. Once for being a refugee and secondly for being Muslim.

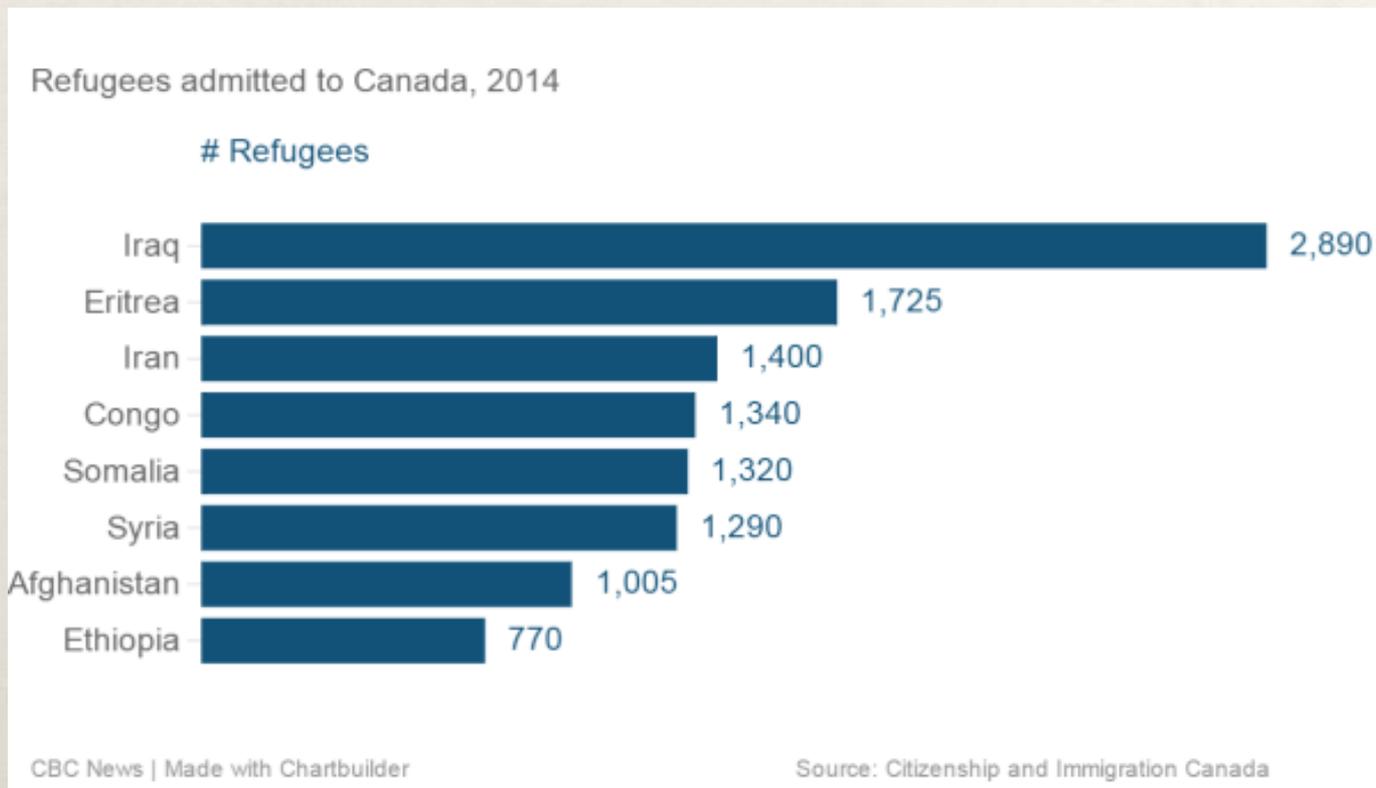


# Muslims in Canada

- \* In 2011 there were 1,053,945 Muslims living in Canada (2011 National Household Survey).
- \* Comprising 3.2 % of the national population (up from 2% recorded in 2001).
- \* Representing the 2nd largest religious group (after Christianity).
- \* And is one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population.

# Refugees in Canada

The below graph shows the 5 top source countries for refugees in Canada



# Discrimination Against Muslims in Canada

- \* One in three Canadian Muslims reports having experienced discrimination in the past five years due primarily to one's religion or ethnicity.
- \* Women and youth report higher levels of discrimination and stereotyping.
- \* Most commonly experienced in the workplace, in public spaces, in retail establishments, and in schools and universities.
- \* One in four Muslims reports having encountered difficulties crossing borders (irrespective of gender, age and country of birth).
- \* Muslim youth (those aged 18 to 34) are the least optimistic about the next generation facing less discrimination than their own.

# Gender and Generation

- \* Women and younger Muslims reported to have been more often discriminated against than men and older Muslims.
- \* The head scarf/niqab makes them more visible.
- \* Muslim youth may have a better understanding of what constitutes as racism/discrimination, as well as a more complicated sense of belonging to Canada.



# Hate Crimes Against Muslims

- \* Muslims in Canada report an increase in discrimination 9/11 (Helly, 2004; CAIR-CAN, 2002; Adams, 2007).
- \* A commissioned poll conducted by Environics Research Group (2010) showed that one in three Canadians reported that Aboriginal people and Muslims are considered as “frequent targets of discrimination”.
- \* A poll by Ipsos Reid suggested that 60% of those surveyed felt that there was an increase in discrimination against Muslims compared to 10 years ago (Chung, 2011).

# Hate Crimes

Hate crimes in Toronto fell by about eight per cent in 2015 compared with the year before, but police found a spike in incidents targeting Muslims following the Paris attacks and the announcement that Syrian refugees would be settling in the city.



# Bias Against Muslim Refugees

- \* The CCR (2015) notes with concern that there are already signs that there may be a bias against Muslim refugees.
- \* In 2012, in selecting priority populations for resettlement to Canada from among refugee groups recommended by the UNHCR, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration rejected Somalis and Afghans, two populations that are mostly Muslim.
- \* More recently the government has stated that it will give priority to religious minorities in responding to Syrian refugees, thereby implying discrimination against Muslim Syrians.

# Discrimination Towards Refugees

- \* A study examining barriers to health care for refugees in Canada found that some health providers were unwilling to accept refugees as patients, with refugees perceived as more challenging due to complex health needs, linguistic barriers, and/or complicated insurance coverage schemes that can delay payment for services delivered (McKeary & Newbold, 2010).
- \* Mary explained that she stopped wearing a head scarf so as not to appear “visibly Muslim” because she felt that “Muslim women who leave home and go into the community become targets.”

# The Triple Bind

- \* Racialized Muslim Refugees are placed in an even more precarious situation.
- \* In the late 1980s, Canada saw a significant influx of Somali families fleeing violent persecution, mass repression, and torture under Siad Barre's military rule. Toronto became a popular destination for resettlement.
- \* Within Canada, Somalis essentially encountered three strikes against them; (i) being a newcomer to/refugee within Canada, (ii) being Muslim, and (iii) being Black (Reitsma, 2001).

# Future Research

- \* The literature and data point to integration challenges for Muslim refugees amidst racism and rising Islamophobia.
- \* There is a need for more research to better understand the experiences and needs of Muslim refugees who are placed in a double and triple bind.
- \* The recent influx of refugees coming from Muslim countries makes this even more important.

