



THE SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES IN ALBERTA

A Study Prepared for
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Volume 1

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study is the first to systematically examine the settlement experiences of refugees in Alberta. Previous Canadian research about refugees has been limited to a small number of studies of fairly narrow scope, typically focusing on the experiences of a group of refugees from a single source country.

The central research questions guiding this study ask about the number of refugees who leave their first host community in Alberta and about their reasons for moving. In addition, the study provides a detailed description of the economic and social characteristics of the seven main host cities in Alberta, of the use and evaluation of services for refugees in these communities, and of the actual settlement experiences of refugees to Alberta in the 1990s.

A basic premise underlying the design of the study is that the integration of refugees into the social and economic fabric of Canadian society is a complex phenomenon, influenced by community structure and demographics, as well as by refugees' human capital and other personal characteristics.

The research project had five main components, each providing a unique source of information about the settlement experiences of refugees. The primary data source was a set of in-person interviews with more than 600 refugees destined to Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie between 1992 and 1997.

Interviews were also conducted with individuals involved with organizations providing services to refugees in these cities. A public opinion survey in each of the seven cities provided additional information on local residents' opinions about, and experiences with, refugees. Additional information on the demographic, economic, and social characteristics of the cities was obtained from a number of sources. A broad review of previous research on refugees, in Canada and elsewhere, helped to shape the research instruments and to interpret the findings.

The study was sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It was conducted by the Population Research Laboratory, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta, in collaboration with the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration, University of Alberta.

This final report consists of three volumes. The first outlines the rationale for the study, describes the research methods, outlines the findings in detail, and concludes with a set of policy recommendations. The second volume contains Appendices with additional research findings, while the third contains copies of the various research instruments used in the different components of the study.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

A target sample of 956 government-sponsored and privately-sponsored refugees who had been destined to the seven Alberta host cities was randomly selected from a Citizenship and Immigration Canada database of all refugees arriving in Alberta between 1992 and 1997. All but 47 of these individuals could be located. Interviews were requested with 648 individuals; only 32

refused to participate. Thus, the overall “interview rate” in this study was 64%, but the response rate was 95%.

The final sample of 616 refugees interviewed consisted of 525 adults and 91 youth. Most of the interviews (84%) were conducted in person, with the remainder completed by telephone. Approximately one-third of the interviews were conducted in English, with the remainder being translated into 11 different languages.

Because former Yugoslavia provided the largest proportion of refugees to Alberta between 1992 and 1997, particularly during the last few years of this period, refugees from this region also make up the largest proportion of the final sample (61%).

Seventy-two on-site service provider interviews were conducted with a total of 81 respondents representing settlement agencies, ESL providers, and other organizations assisting refugees in the seven host cities. In addition, interviews were conducted with six CIC representatives in Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

A random-sample public opinion survey was conducted by telephone in each of the seven cities. The final sample consisted of 150 adult residents in both Calgary and Edmonton, and at least 100 adult residents in each of the other five host cities.

Additional (aggregate-level) information on the seven communities was obtained from the 1991 and 1996 national Census, Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey, and the Landed Immigrant Database maintained by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Chapter 3: Profiles of Refugee Respondents

Over one-third (37%) of the refugees arrived in Alberta in 1996 or 1997, 44% came in 1994 or 1995, and 19% arrived in 1992 and 1993.

There were almost identical numbers of men and women in the sample. The average age of refugees in the adult sample was 37 years, compared to an average of 17 years for those in the youth sample. Three out of four respondents in the adult refugee survey (73%) were married or living with a partner. Five out of six (86%) arrived in Canada along with other members of their immediate family. One in five (22%) already had some family members in Canada when they arrived.

Nine per cent of the refugee respondents reported that they had no knowledge of English. Comparisons across region of origin reveal that 21% from the Middle East and 20% from East Asia could not speak English, compared to only 6% of former Yugoslavians. This is a conservative estimate since knowledge of English was self-reported (some refugees may have over-estimated their ability to speak English).

About one-third of the sample of refugees had spent time in a refugee camp. Their average length of stay in these camps was 37 months. Refugees from East Asia were more likely than those from other global regions to have spent time in a refugee camp.

Over 40% of the adult refugees had completed some form of post-secondary education prior to arrival, but 19% did not have a high school diploma. Five out of six (83%) had held a paying job in their home country, and 65% had some formal job training.

At the time they were interviewed, the unemployment rate for adult refugees in the sample was 16%, over two times as high as the provincial average. The refugees' labour force participation rate was 81%, comparable to the provincial average. Fifty-eight percent of the employed adult refugees considered themselves under-employed in their current jobs.

One in four of the adult refugees indicated that they owned their own homes. Forty-three percent of the adult refugees reported their total annual household income as below \$20,000. Only 8% indicated that their household income was in excess of \$60,000.

Chapter 4: Socio-Demographic Profiles of Host Communities

Two of the host cities are quite large urban centres (Edmonton and Calgary), three are medium-small centres (Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat), and two are relatively small urban centres (Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray).

Lethbridge and Medicine Hat have an older-than-average age distribution, while the residents of Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray are younger, on average, than residents of the other five cities.

Social and cultural diversity is highest in Edmonton and Calgary, lower in Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray, and lowest in Red Deer and Grande Prairie.

Immigrants and refugees are present in relatively large numbers in Edmonton and Calgary, in modest numbers in Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat, and in smaller numbers in Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray.

In 1996, the unemployment rate was relatively high in Edmonton and Red Deer, medium-high in Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray, and relatively low in Calgary and Lethbridge.

The average yearly household income is relatively high in Calgary and Fort McMurray, lower in Edmonton and Grande Prairie, and lowest in Lethbridge, Red Deer and particularly Medicine Hat. On average, about two-thirds of the population in the host communities own their homes.

In relative terms, there are more intraprovincial and out-of-province migrants in Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray than in the other host cities.

Community residents in all seven centres, to varying degrees, believe that their communities are friendly and welcoming, and open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Chapter 5: Geographic Mobility of Refugees

Sixty percent of the refugees destined to the seven host cities between 1992 and 1997 were still living in these communities in mid-1998 when this study was completed. The refugee retention rate was highest in the largest cities (69% in Edmonton and 77% in Calgary) and lowest in the smallest cities (31% in Grande Prairie and 35% in Fort McMurray). While larger than the other two mid-sized host cities, Lethbridge had a lower refugee retention rate (43%) than either Red Deer (55%) or Medicine Hat (59%).

“Leavers” tended to move on to other larger cities, either in Alberta or in British Columbia or Ontario.

The 40% mobility rate observed among refugees destined to Alberta between 1992 and 1997 is higher than the mobility rate observed for all residents of the province (24% were living in a

different community, province, or country compared to five years earlier). However, when asked about their future mobility plans, only 14% of the adult refugees planned to leave their current community within five years, while 17% answered that they did not know how long they would stay.

Over half of the reasons for moving provided by “leavers” emphasized insufficient employment or educational opportunities in the first Alberta host city. About 20% of the reasons for leaving had to do with “quality of life” issues, while smaller proportions focused on dissatisfaction with services for refugees in the first host city or a desire to be closer to family, friends and compatriots. Almost nine out of ten “leavers” were happy with their decision to move on to another community.

Individuals involved in providing services to refugees tended to emphasize employment and education opportunities as the most important reasons when asked for their opinions about why refugees leave their first host community. They also thought that the size of a compatriot community was important in a refugee’s decision to move or stay. In contrast, other residents of the seven host cities (interviewed in the public opinion survey) were more likely to mention social factors (e.g., the presence of others from the same ethnic/cultural background; the presumed greater friendliness and slower pace of life) than employment factors when asked why refugees and immigrants adjust better in different size communities.

Chapter 6: Settlement Services

Service providers in all seven of the host cities report a full range of services, including orientation, English as a second language (ESL) training, employment training/job finding, help finding housing, and translation. However, the scope of the services varies according to the size of the community.

The majority of refugees in all cities access language training, housing, and orientation services. But, contrary to the intuitions of service providers, a smaller percentage of refugees make use of these services in Calgary and Edmonton than in the other cities. The access rates for ESL are particularly notable. The rates are lower in the two large centres than in the smaller communities, despite the fact that both Edmonton and Calgary have a higher percentage of non-English speakers than do the other cities.

Where services are available, refugees continue to use them after the first year, particularly language training. However, the range of offerings after the first year varies from one city to the next (Fort McMurray has none, for example).

Refugees reported receiving less help finding a job in Grande Prairie and Calgary than in the other cities. In addition, occupational training was accessed by the smallest percentage of refugees in Edmonton and Calgary, this despite the fact that the highest unemployment rates for refugees are in these cities (26% and 15%, respectively).

In general, refugees were least satisfied with employment-related services. Many expressed a need for more job-related services, more ESL instruction, and more information in general. They viewed these as absolutely necessary for their integration into the labour force and society.

The public opinion survey indicated a disparity in perceptions of newcomers’ needs, compared to those expressed by the refugees themselves and those identified by service providers. A minority

of the general public (37%) cited ESL as a necessary service, and only 10% felt that newcomers require employment assistance, the two services viewed as most important by the refugees.

Having a place of worship was very important for refugees from the Middle East (primarily Muslims) and from Central and South America (mainly Roman Catholics).

Chapter 7: Settlement Experiences of Refugees

When questioned about their assessment of the “destining” process and their experiences on arrival, most refugees reported that they knew very little about the Alberta city to which they were initially sent.

Forty-four percent of the general public (in the seven host cities) felt that the number of immigrants admitted to Canada each year is appropriate. Two thirds believed that the mix of cultures and races is well-balanced, and 76% said that knowledge of an official language is not important upon entry

One-quarter of adult refugees reported having experienced discrimination while living in Alberta, but very few said that it happens “very often.” Medicine Hat was unique in that a majority (53%) of refugees in that city reported experiences of discrimination. The experience of discrimination appears to be linked to visible minority status; compared to refugees from other global regions, the former Yugoslavians reported fewer experiences of discrimination.

When asked about the most important issue for succeeding in Canada, most refugees mentioned learning English, followed by finding a good job. A large majority felt that settlement agencies are crucial to success as well. In general, the refugees wanted better job training/job finding services and more ESL. They also felt that they should not have to pay for settlement services.

Lack of recognition of educational and occupational credentials was a major frustration for many refugees, a large percentage of whom had professional qualifications. Obtaining Canadian work experience was also considered to be a problem by many.

When asked to rate their communities as good places to live, refugees resident in Red Deer were most enthusiastic about their city, while refugees living in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were the least positive.

Refugees are quick to take out Canadian citizenship, unless they are unable to afford the required fees.

Chapter 8: Policy Insights and Recommendations

The policy recommendations that emerged from this study can be classified into the following four categories: destining, services, employment, refugee costs.

Destining Policy

More accurate and complete information regarding destination communities in Alberta is required by both Citizenship and Immigration personnel and by refugees themselves prior to entry into Canada.

Refugees should no longer be destined to Fort McMurray or Grande Prairie; the retention rates in these two cities are very low. Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, and Medicine Hat should continue to receive refugees.

Services

English language instruction should not be limited to LINC 3. Many refugees require English skills at a much higher proficiency level if they are to obtain employment commensurate with their qualifications. Further, we recommend additional funding to cover instruction at LINC 4 level, so that existing levels of language training are not compromised.

Services should be culturally sensitive and fair to all refugee groups. This is especially important in centres where there are very few people from a particular ethnic group, and in centres where refugees frequently experience racism.

There is a need for improved employment preparation programs and job-finding assistance. A very high proportion of refugees are unemployed or underemployed. Many are working part-time and employed in temporary positions.

Settlement services should be available to those who need them after the first year in Canada. A significant percentage of refugees felt the need for additional support.

Settlement agencies should be funded on the basis of the number of sessions per client rather than the total number of clients served. The current funding structure puts refugees with multiple barriers at a disadvantage, as well as the agencies that serve them.

The quality of service in Lethbridge should be improved. Many people who were sent to that city were dissatisfied with the availability and quality of services provided.

Employment

An employer-government cost-sharing program should be implemented to ensure that refugees have opportunities to gain Canadian work experience and references.

Recognition of foreign credentials must be reviewed. Many refugees are selected to come to Canada because of their post-secondary training and/or occupational credentials, but they face barriers because there is limited recognition of their credentials by Canadian employers.

Refugee Costs

The costs borne by refugees for travel loans, living expenses, and citizenship applications should be reviewed. Some of the expectations with regard to payment schedules are unrealistic given the life circumstances of refugees.

INTRODUCTION

The available literature on refugees in Canada tends to be limited to research reports on one or another specific national group of refugees, or to research focusing on a narrow range of refugee experiences in the host society. There are no published studies comparing refugees from different national origins, or comparing refugees settled in different Canadian cities, or describing and comparing the broad range of refugees' settlement experiences.

This research report is the first attempt to collect and analyze detailed information on a wide range of settlement experiences of refugees in Alberta. It covers a large sample of refugees, both adult and youth, who arrived in Canada in the six-year period 1992-1997. It also includes refugees who were encouraged to settle in centres other than the large metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary. The five smaller centres to which they were destined are Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, and Fort McMurray. The data collected in this study allow us to compare the adaptive experience of Alberta-bound refugees from different national origins who were settled in these smaller centres, as well as in Edmonton and Calgary.

The study is timely and important because of the absence of reliable information on the consequences of the practice of destining refugees to smaller urban centres. For example, do refugees stay in the smaller centres, or do they migrate to larger cities in Alberta or elsewhere? Are smaller urban centres better, similar to, or less effective than larger centres in integrating refugees into the social and economic fabric of Canadian society? Is the policy of encouraging refugees to settle in smaller urban centres working, or does it need to be discarded or modified? These questions are of particular interest to policymakers. This is why the study was commissioned by the Citizenship and Immigration Centre in Edmonton, and strongly recommended by Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, the department responsible for the immigration and integration portfolio.

This chapter addresses these and other related research questions and elaborates the purpose of the study and its research objectives. It opens with a brief account of Canada's experience with refugees, followed by a discussion of Alberta's experience with settling refugees. Next, the

chapter delineates the purpose of the study and related research objectives, and provides a brief summary of the factors which might facilitate or impede the integration of refugees into Canadian society. The final section briefly describes the organization of this report.

Canada's Experience with Refugees

It is estimated that there are over 13 million refugees in the world who have been forced to flee their countries of origin (Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Building on a Strong Foundation for the 21st Century: New Directions for Immigration and Refugee Policy and Legislation*. Ottawa, 1998, p.40). Millions more are victims of violence and forced displacement, but because

they continue to live within the political borders of their own countries they are not, technically speaking, regarded as refugees. A significant but indeterminate number of refugees are settled annually in countries with overarching humanitarian values, such as Canada. In fact, Canada has had a long history of settling refugees from overseas as part of its humanitarian obligation to the international community. Refugees are a special kind of immigrant in the sense that their resettlement must take account of the unusual circumstances surrounding their experience prior to their arrival in Canada, as well as their unique social, economic and psychological needs.

During the last two decades of this century (1980-1999), an average of 30,000 refugees were admitted to Canada annually, for an estimated total of about 0.6 million. Given this heavy intake of refugees, it is not surprising that in 1986 the United Nations awarded Canada the Nansen medal for its outstanding humanitarian tradition of settling refugees. It is worth noting that Canada is the first country to be so honoured by the United Nations.

Judging from past and recent trends in the admission of refugees, the flow of refugees to Canada is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. The Immigration Plan for 1998 called for the admission of 22,100-29,300 refugees and it is anticipated that an additional 25,000-30,000 refugees will be settled in Canada in 1999. Related to this, a recent government document proposes to strengthen "Canada's refugee resettlement program" and pledges to continue to work closely with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). (Ibid, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. p. 43.)

Where do these refugees come from? In the 35-year period following World War II, the refugees admitted in large numbers have come from such varied countries as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Uganda, Chile, Indochina, and Lebanon. In the last two decades, however, they have come again from Indochina and Lebanon, as well as from Iraq, Iran, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Somalia and other African countries, El Salvador and other Latin American countries, Poland and former Yugoslavia, among others.

Refugees come to Canada as “immigrants” selected by Canada’s Immigration Service, often on the recommendation of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Alternatively, they arrive at a port of entry and seek Canada’s protection as refugee claimants, in which case they undergo a refugee determination process within Canada designed to ascertain the legitimacy of their claims. The focus of the present study is on refugees selected abroad and not on refugee claimants.

Canada recognizes two broad classes of refugees. The first class, **Convention** refugees, refers to those people who come under the United Nations definition by having a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin on the basis of race, religion, nationality, or group membership. The second class, which is recent in origin in Canada and not within the terms of the UN definition, refers to “people who are in **refugee-like situations** for whom no other durable solution can be found.” (See Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Ibid*, p. 39.) For administrative purposes, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) further categorizes refugees in many different ways, including, for example, whether they are (a) government sponsored, (b) privately sponsored by a group or an organization in Canada, or (c) assisted by a relative in Canada.

There are many rules and regulations governing the settlement of refugees in Canada. For present purposes, however, only a few highlights are presented. Refugees are settled in Canada with financial assistance provided by their public or private sponsors, and with other forms of assistance provided by immigrant/refugee-serving agencies and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as churches or ethnic groups. In the case of refugees who do not have sufficient funds to support themselves, CIC provides direct financial assistance in the early phase of settlement for up to one year, plus a range of publicly-supported settlement services

administered by NGOs. A partial list of settlement services provided to refugees includes: orientation (learning about the community), language training, occupational/job training, help with finding a job, help with translation, help with finding housing, help with health problems, help with children's schools, and help with finding family members.

When Canadian Visa Officers overseas interview selected refugees, they give them advice on many issues, including where to settle in Canada. Thus, even before refugee immigrants arrive in Canada, they know the city of final destination that was identified in consultation with the Visa Officer overseas. Typically, the refugees selected abroad are sent to large urban centres throughout the country. After they land in Canada, most refugees go to the predetermined city of destination; however, they may or may not reside permanently in that city.

Refugees Destined to Alberta

Considering the decade of the 1990s, Alberta-bound refugees ranged in number from a high of 4,345 in 1990 to 1,148 in 1997 (the latest year for which government figures are available). During the eight-year period 1990-1997, an average of 2,127 refugees were settled in Alberta annually. The large majority (about two-thirds) of these refugees were destined to the metropolitan areas of Edmonton and Calgary.

However, at the request of the Alberta government, CIC has, for many years, been sending government-assisted refugees not only to Edmonton and Calgary, but also to smaller destination centres. As indicated above, these centres include Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, and Fort McMurray. Privately-sponsored refugees may be settled in these or in other centres. The populations of the smaller destination centres range from 63,053 in Lethbridge to 31,140 in Grande Prairie (for more details, see Table 4-1 in Chapter 4) The Alberta government, traditionally attentive to the needs of smaller and rural communities, encourages the practice of destining publicly-sponsored refugees to centres other than Edmonton and Calgary in the hope that it helps to spread refugees more widely throughout the province.

In the six-year period 1992-1997, an average of about 57 refugees per year were destined to each of Lethbridge and Red Deer, 46 to Medicine Hat, 17 to Grande Prairie, and 9 to Fort McMurray. During the period under review, the total number of refugees destined to these communities was

1,115. Table 4-9 (Chapter 4) provides detailed information about the annual flows of refugees to these communities, as well as to Edmonton and Calgary. The destination communities, although ethnically and culturally diverse and urban, are not as diverse as the populations of the larger metropolitan centres of Canada.

Nonetheless, some policymakers assume that the integration of refugees who settle in smaller centres may be as successful as the integration of refugees who settle in larger centres such as Edmonton and Calgary. The results of this study shed some light on this assumption.

Purpose of the Research

This research assesses the extent of inter- and intra-provincial geographic mobility of government- and privately-sponsored refugees sent to the destination communities in Alberta in the period 1992-1997. It is limited to the available government landing records. Moreover, this research compares the integration experiences of these refugees, and examines factors that may contribute to their decision to remain in the smaller centres. Control groups from Edmonton and Calgary are included in the study in order to better evaluate refugee experiences in the five target communities. The project is designed to assist policymakers in deciding whether it makes sense to send refugees of a wide variety of origins to cities other than Edmonton and Calgary.

Between 1992 and 1997, a cluster of countries reappears frequently, if not annually, on the list of source countries sending refugees to Alberta. These countries include Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Ethiopia, Iran, Somali Republic, Guatemala, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, El Salvador, and U.S.S.R. Other countries that appeared once or more on the list of top 15 refugee-sending countries to Alberta include Bulgaria, Sudan Republic, Thailand, Nicaragua, India, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Honduras, Romania, People's Republic of China, Poland, Hungary, and Kampuchea Republic. Refugees destined to Alberta have also come, in smaller or larger numbers, from many other countries.

Research Objectives

In general terms, this study focuses on the reasons why refugees choose to stay in or leave smaller urban centres in Alberta. More specifically, the study addresses a number of interrelated research questions including:

- How many refugees (and their families) stay in the communities of initial settlement, and how many leave?
- Do some of the five smaller destination communities retain refugees longer than others?
- Do higher proportions leave these communities, compared with refugees who initially settle in larger centres like Edmonton and Calgary?
- Among refugees who leave, how long do they stay in their initial settlement community before leaving?
- Where do they typically go?
- Why do refugees leave these communities?
- Do local economic conditions play a part or, in other words, are the rates of leaving lower when local labour markets offer more employment opportunities?
- Do refugees encounter more difficulties (or perceive that they encounter more difficulties) accessing services in these communities?
- Do refugees encounter (or perceive that they encounter) a less welcoming reception from other local residents in these communities?

To answer these and other related questions as completely as possible, the present study employed a multi-faceted research design. Specifically, five separate but inter-related components of the study were developed. These included:

1. Face-to-face interviews with a sample of 616 refugees originally destined to the five communities, as well as a comparison group of refugees settled in Edmonton and Calgary.
2. Seventy-eight semi-structured interviews with settlement workers, educators, CIC staff, and other social service providers in the host communities.
3. Public opinion surveys in the five host communities and in Edmonton and Calgary (total sample of approximately 800).
4. A literature review of previous research (primarily in Canada) on the geographic mobility and integration of immigrants and refugees.
5. Analysis of Census data and other official statistics regarding ethnic, immigrant, language status, and labour market characteristics of the five smaller host communities, in comparison with Edmonton and Calgary.

These five components are elaborated in Chapter 2 (Research Methods).

In addition, this research report comprehensively describes the factors affecting the integration of refugees in Alberta. The findings have implications for refugee settlement policy in Alberta, and

can provide insights into the settlement of refugees (and possibly voluntary immigrants) in the rest of the country as well.

Facilitating Refugee Integration: Main Highlights of Past Research

The literature review component of this project was undertaken partly to identify the factors that to influence the integration of refugees, positively or negatively, and partly to guide the construction of the data collection instruments. Appendix I-Volume 2 provides a summary statement of this literature plus an annotated bibliography. While some of the published studies focus specifically on refugees, others do not draw a sharp distinction between refugees and other immigrants. This is also true of statistics derived from the Canadian census where the term “immigrant” covers both voluntary and forced immigration. Despite this limitation, past research is a valuable source of information and insights about the social and economic integration of immigrants and/or refugees and their descendants. While it is not our intention to review all of the material in Appendix I, four sets of variables relevant to integration can be identified. These are discussed in turn.

Demographic Integration Variables

Generally speaking, age, gender, education and occupational skills have been found to be important factors in integration. Specifically, immigrants/refugees who tend to integrate more readily into the host society are typically younger (rather than older), males (rather than females), with higher (rather than lower) education, and with well developed (rather than less well developed) occupational skills. Length of residence in the host society and family coherence within the household have also been found to be positively related to successful integration.

Social and Community Integration Variables

At the community level, the following factors have been found to be important for successful integration: presence of facilitative institutional arrangements and government support, awareness of all services provided, size of municipality of residence (inversely related to adjustment), patience with new refugees, helping refugees organize for change (empowerment), presence of a bridging approach where possible (i.e., hiring refugees as social workers or nurses), and presence of social workers who work simultaneously with refugee families and with the larger community (because integration is a two-way process occurring at both levels).

Economic Integration Variables

Many studies have shown that economic integration is facilitated immeasurably by English language proficiency (French in Quebec), recognition of the refugees' foreign credentials, full-time employment (rather than under- or unemployment), and the presence of compatriot communities (ethnic enclaves).

Service Practices and Integration Variables

The fourth set of variables influencing integration focuses on service practices in the host community. Research evidence repeatedly underlines the importance of planning for multicultural services in such areas as health and education. This involves, among other things, the use of interpreters; sufficient provision of English language instruction; adaptation to clients' cultural needs; education of healthcare professionals, social workers and teachers; and modifying teaching practices to respond more effectively to cultural diversity in the classroom.

Chapters 6 and 7 report findings from this study on settlement services in the host communities and on the settlement experiences of refugees. These chapters, along with the above highlights of past research, provide valuable insights for making appropriate policy recommendations.

Organization of the Report

This research report consists of three volumes. The main findings of the study are presented in **Volume 1** which is divided into eight chapters. Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 describes the five components of the study and the research methods used for each of them. Chapter 3 highlights the background characteristics of the three types of respondents interviewed in the study: refugees, service providers, and community residents. The next chapter addresses the social and demographic profiles of the five target communities (Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, and Fort McMurray), plus Edmonton and Calgary. Chapter 5 deals with the central question in this study, that is, the geographic mobility of refugees. Next, Chapter 6 discusses the settlement services provided to refugees in the host communities, while Chapter 7 examines the settlement experiences of the refugees interviewed in this study. Finally, Chapter 8 examines a range of policy issues involved in the settlement of refugees and offers a series of policy recommendations based on the results of this study.

Volume 2 consists of three appendices which provide supplementary findings concerning the settlement experiences of refugees in Alberta. Appendix I is divided into two parts. The first part is a summary of the literature on refugee settlement in Canada, while the second part provides an annotated bibliography, both parts covering the period 1980-1998. Appendix II contains an integrated summary of interviews with service providers, while Appendix III lists the refugees' verbatim comments in response to question number 114 in the Adult Questionnaire ("Is there anything else about your refugee experience, before or after coming to Canada, that you want to talk about?").

The final volume, **Volume 3**, is a technical report comprised of three parts. Taken together, the three parts contain all the data collection instruments used in the study, the codebooks used in connection with the refugee questionnaires and with the Public Opinion Survey, the Interviewers' Handbook, and, finally, a list of the Service Provider Organizations consulted in the study.

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Introduction

This research project had five separate but inter-related components.

- The core of the project involved locating and interviewing a random sample of refugees destined to the seven host communities. Thus, this component of the study could answer questions about: the refugee retention rate of the various communities; reasons why refugees stay in or leave host communities; refugees' evaluations of life in and services available to them in their communities; and refugees' experiences in leaving their home country and coming to Canada.
- A second key component of the study consisted of a set of semi-structured interviews with individuals in the various communities who were involved in providing services for refugees. These interviews were designed to collect information about refugee settlement experiences from the perspective of those responsible for assisting them.
- A public opinion survey of randomly selected adults in each of the seven host communities comprised the third component of the study. This survey focused on residents' perceptions of the experiences of refugees in their community, and on general awareness of and reactions to refugee and immigration issues.
- The fourth part of the study consisted of an analysis of aggregate data (primarily from the 1991 and 1996 national Census) describing the seven host communities. Such information can be useful in trying to determine some of the reasons why different communities might have different refugee retention rates.
- A review of academic research and public policy documents on refugee and immigration-related issues formed the fifth part of this study. The information collected from this literature review informed the design of the various data collection components of the study as well as the interpretation of the results from the three different surveys.

A more detailed description of the research methods employed in each of the five components of the larger study follows below.

B. Refugee Interviews

Questionnaire Construction

Consultations between the research team and the funding agency led to the decision to interview all refugee youth (aged 15 to 21) and adult members of refugee family units whenever possible. Consequently, two questionnaires were developed, one for interviews with adult refugees and the second for interviews with refugee youth age 15-21 (see Part 1, Volume 3). A majority of the questions included in the adult version were also included in the youth version, but the latter also contained a number of additional questions about issues unique to youth (e.g., school-work transitions; relationships with parents; educational, career, and family aspirations).

Most of the questions in the two research instruments were developed by the research team specifically for this study of refugee settlement experiences in Alberta. The prior review of research literature on refugee-related topics conducted by the research team identified key themes and central research questions that should be addressed in the surveys. A few questions about attitudes towards multiculturalism were drawn from other sources¹. Some of the socio-demographic, health, and attitude measures were modifications of questions used in the Canadian Census, other Statistics Canada national surveys, and province-wide opinion surveys previously conducted by the Population Research Laboratory. In addition, some of the questions in the youth survey were drawn from previous studies of school-work transitions in Canada and elsewhere². Draft versions of the questionnaire were submitted to CIC personnel, and useful comments about question modifications and additions were received in return.

¹ The source for these questions was a recent compendium of public opinion results regarding Canadians' social values; see Suzanne Peters, 1995, Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being, Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks. Specific comparisons to the original national public opinion survey results are provided in subsequent chapters of this report.

² Lowe, Graham S., Harvey Krahn, and Jeff Bowlby, 1997, 1996 Alberta High School Graduate Survey: Report of Research Findings, Edmonton: Population Research Laboratory, University of Alberta; Gilbert, Sid, L. Barr, W. Clark, M. Blue and D. Sunter, 1993, Leaving School: Results from a National Survey Comparing School Leavers and High School Graduates 18 to 20 Years of Age, Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services; Irwin, Sarah, 1995, Rights of Passage: Social Change and the Transition from Youth to Adulthood. London: University College of London Press.

The questionnaires were devised for a structured interviewing format, with a large number of fixed-response questions. However, to capture the variety of opinions and experiences of refugee respondents, the questionnaires also contained a significant number of open-ended questions. The questionnaires, and the interviewing protocols, were examined and approved by a University of Alberta Research Ethics Committee before data collection began. Before formal interviewing began, a pretest was conducted with a small number of refugees resident in Edmonton. On the basis of this pretest, a few questions were re-worded, some were dropped, and a few new questions were added.

Sampling Design

According to CIC records, a total of 9,198 refugees were destined to the seven Alberta host communities in the years 1992 to 1997. The CIC database provided to the research team contained names and addresses for a total of 5,208 government-sponsored and privately-sponsored refugees destined to these seven cities³. Omitted were individuals who claimed refugee status when arriving in Canada, dependents sponsored by their families (themselves refugees who had arrived earlier), and refugees whose addresses were not available. Thus, the findings from this study of refugee settlement experiences in Alberta can be generalized to the population of privately and government-sponsored Alberta refugees in the 1990s, but not necessarily to refugee claimants or family-sponsored refugees⁴.

A visual inspection of the names and landing record dates for the 5,208 individuals in the CIC data base was used to estimate the number of families and single individuals in this population (see Table 2-1). A “desired sample,” roughly proportional to the number of families and single individuals destined to each of the seven host communities, was then devised. Based on the numbers (of families and singles) in this “desired sample,” a systematic sampling strategy (i.e., every *n*th name or family unit) was used to select a “target sample” of possible respondents in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat. All individuals destined to Fort

³ The list actually contained 5,366 records. However, a small number of individuals who had gone to other communities immediately on arrival in Alberta were removed from the list before the sample was drawn.

⁴ In the course of interviewing, a few additional refugees from these two categories were interviewed, since they were (at the time of the interview) members of households in the original sample of private and government-sponsored refugees.

McMurray and Grande Prairie were included in this initial target sample. Across all seven cities, this target sample consisted of 956 individuals.

Using a variety of methods (e.g., direct telephone contact, directory searches, enquiries to cultural organizations and to agencies providing services to refugees), the PRL research team was eventually able to determine where 95% of these 956 individuals were currently living. Assuming that the 47 individuals who could not be located had moved, 60% of the sample members were still living in the city to which they had been originally destined.

Interviewing

Interviews were conducted with 616 of the 909 individuals who could be located (525 adults and 91 youth). This translates into an “interview rate” of 64% for the total target sample. However, because a large minority of the refugees were now living in a wide range of communities across the country, it was not feasible to conduct interviews with all of them. A total of 648 of the 956 members of the target sample were asked if they would participate in the study. Only 32 refused. Thus, the “response rate,” for those refugees asked to participate, was 95%.

Seventy-four interviews were conducted with refugees living outside of Alberta (a total of 186 members of the target sample were living outside of the province at the time the survey was completed). Out-of-province interviews were conducted in British Columbia (29), Saskatchewan (1), Ontario (41), Quebec (1), and Nova Scotia (2). Seventy percent of these out-of-province interviews were conducted by telephone. The remainder ($n = 22$) were face-to-face interviews conducted by members of the research team.

Interviews were conducted during the period July 12-October 21, 1998. The interviewing team consisted of thirteen individuals who were selected on the basis of their interviewing skills, multiple-language proficiency, and experience with refugee issues.

The majority of interviews were completed by ten of these interviewers (seven of whom were refugees themselves). The interviewers participated in a full-day training exercise at the outset, and their efforts were coordinated throughout the study by a full-time interviewing supervisor. Approximately one-third of the interviews were conducted in English, with the remainder being translated into 11 different languages (Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, Russian, Arabic, Urdu,

Table 2-1
Sampling Design, Final Target Sample, and Completed Interviews

City	Total Individuals	(presumed) *		(desired sample) #			(final target sample) @			Completed Interviews	Interview Rate ^
		Families	Singles	Families	Singles	TOTAL	Families	Singles	TOTAL		
Edmonton	2203	399	732	70	60	235	69	60	236	136	58%
Calgary	2149	374	864	65	65	228	61	65	231	162	70%
Lethbridge	312	68	78	40	40	140	35	38	196	122	62%
Red Deer	234	55	41	35	25	113	29	21	110	76	69%
Medicine Hat	209	45	52	25	30	93	22	27	115	78	68%
Grand Prairie	71	16	10	16	10	50	16	10	45	27	60%
Fort McMurray	30	6	9	6	9	24	6	9	23	15	65%
Total	5208	963	1786	257	239	883	238	230	956	616	64%

* Presumed number of families and individuals based on visual inspection of complete record of all refugees in the CIC data base destined for the seven communities (column 1).

Desired sample of (an estimated) 883 individuals constructed (roughly) proportional to the presumed number of families and singles in the CIC data base for each host community; all families and singles in the two smallest communities included in the desired sample. TOTAL assumes 2.5 potential interviews per family (not all families will include someone aged 15 to 21).

@ Actual number of families and singles that the research team tried to locate for possible interviews.

^ Interview rate = (number of completed interviews/total number of individuals in final target sample). A significant number of the target sample members had moved, to a variety of locations across the country. Even though most (95%) could be located, it was not feasible to attempt interviews with all of them. Interviews were requested with a total of 648 individuals. Only 32 refused to participate in the survey, translating into a response rate of 95%.

Spanish, Polish, Somali, Vietnamese, Pashto, Amharic, Farsi). The adult questionnaire was translated into Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, and Serbo-Croatian versions. For other languages, interviewers translated while conducting the interviews. In addition, response categories (e.g., agree-disagree) were translated into nine languages and then printed on answer sheets used by respondents during the interviews (see Volume 3, Part I, for examples).

Most interviews took place in respondents' homes. To the extent that it was possible, interviewers attempted to conduct separate, private interviews with respondents, without other household members present. On average, interviews lasted about 80 minutes. All respondents (adults and youth) were paid \$20 after the interview was completed, to compensate them for their time and any expenses incurred.

Before the interview began, respondents were again informed about the purpose of the study (most had been given this information when first contacted by telephone) and reminded that their participation was voluntary, that is, they could decline to answer any question, and they could terminate the interview at any time. They were also told that they would not be personally identified in any reports or other publications based on the study. Despite some concerns at the outset about refugees possibly being reluctant to participate in the study, very few difficulties of this type were encountered. Instead, once they had been informed about the purpose of the study, most respondents were eager to participate and indicated that they were pleased that their opinions were being sought.

Global Region of Origin

Table 2-2 profiles the global "region of origin" composition of: (1) the original CIC database of government-sponsored and privately-sponsored refugees destined to Alberta between 1992 and 1997; (2) the original target sample of 956 refugees destined to the seven Alberta cities included in this study; and (3) the final sample of 616 refugees interviewed. While the "region of origin" categories are generally self-explanatory, it should be noted that a large proportion of the African refugees were from Somalia, and a majority of the Southeast Asia refugees were of Vietnamese origin. About one-third of the refugees in the Middle East category were from Afghanistan and a similar proportion were from Iraq. More detailed profiles of each of these "region of origin" groups are presented in Chapter 3.

Table 2-2
Region of Origin of CIC Database, Target Sample and Final Interview Sample

	CIC database		Target Sample		Interview Sample	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Africa	589	11.0%	83	8.7%	39	6.3%
Central/South America	344	6.4%	98	10.3%	64	10.4%
Southeast Asia	568	10.6%	96	10.0%	20	3.2%
Former Yugoslavia	2482	46.3%	500	52.3%	375	60.9%
Middle East	1237	23.0%	163	16.7%	107	17.4%
Poland	99	1.8%	12	1.3%	11	1.8%
Other	47	0.9%	4	0.4%		
TOTAL	5366	100%	956	100%	616	100%

The original CIC data base included a total of 5366 government and privately-sponsored refugees destined to the seven Alberta cities considered in this study. However, a small number of these individuals went directly to other communities, rather than the city to which they were destined. Hence, the original sampling frame for this study consisted of 5208 individuals (see Table 2-1). The original CIC data base contained 85 individuals who had arrived in Canada from western European countries (e.g., Denmark) and another 40 for whom no information on country of origin has been recorded. On the assumption that these individuals probably came from Africa, the Middle East, or Former Yugoslavia, via western European countries, these cases were assigned to these three categories (in column 1) proportional to the actual number of refugees in these three categories.

Table 2-3
Region of Origin of Target Sample and Interview Sample By Destined City

	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray	Interviewed	Not Interviewed	Target Sample	Interview Rate
	Interviewed Not Interviewed	Interviewed Not Interviewed	Interviewed Not Interviewed	Interviewed Not Interviewed	Interviewed Not Interviewed	Interviewed Not Interviewed	Interviewed Not Interviewed				
Africa	14 (20)	8 (14)	3 (8)	5 (1)		2	7 (3)	39	(46)	85	46
Cent/South America	5 (12)	1 (4)	22 (6)	16 (4)	16 (5)	2 (3)	2	64	(34)	98	65
Southeast Asia	4 (21)	4 (21)	3 (16)	5 (8)	4 (10)			20	(76)	96	21
Former Yugoslavia	92 (24)	79 (19)	81 (36)	47 (16)	49 (17)	22 (9)	5 (4)	375	(125)	500	75
Middle East	15 (22)	65 (7)	13 (8)	3 (5)	9 (5)	1 (6)	1 (1)	107	(54)	161	66
Poland	6 (1)	5						11	(1)	12	92
Other		(4)						0	(4)	4	0
Total	136 (100)	162 (69)	122 (74)	76 (34)	78 (37)	27 (18)	15 (8)	616	(340)	956	64

In the early to mid-1990s, the nation-states that formerly comprised the country of Yugoslavia became a primary source of refugees to Alberta (and to Canada as a whole). Not surprisingly, then, refugees from (former) Yugoslavia comprise a significant proportion of all refugees interviewed in this study. Table 2-2 reveals that 46% of the refugees in the original CIC database were of Yugoslavian origin. However, we also see that 61% of the 616 refugees who were interviewed in this study originally came from Yugoslavia. Thus, the final sample significantly over-represents refugees from this region. Part of the explanation for this over-sampling can be traced back to the point at which the “target sample” was drawn (see the centre columns in Table 2-2). The combination of (1) different proportions of refugees from different regions being destined to different cities and (2) different sampling fractions being used to draw the target sample for each city (see Table 2-1) led, unexpectedly, to an over-representation of Yugoslavian refugees in the target sample (52%). In addition, the fact that former Yugoslavians were more likely to be arriving in Alberta towards the end of the six-year period covered by this study (1992-97) also meant that they were somewhat less likely to have moved out of Alberta, somewhat easier to contact and, ultimately, somewhat more likely to be interviewed.

Table 2-2 also shows that refugees from Central/South America are somewhat over-represented in the final sample, while those who came from the Middle East and Southeast Asia are somewhat under-represented in the final sample. With respect to the Central/South American and Middle East groups, the small variation from the original CIC database occurred at the time the “target sample” was drawn, for the same reasons discussed above. As for the under-representation of Southeast Asian refugees in the final sample, it became apparent during the interviewing process that this group (particularly those from Vietnam) were more difficult to locate, and somewhat less likely to be willing to participate in the study.

Table 2-3 details the number of refugees in the target sample, from each major region of origin, who were destined to each of the seven Alberta cities, along with the number in each sub-category who were interviewed. As noted above, refugees from former Yugoslavia were more likely to be interviewed (a 75% interview rate) while those who came from Southeast Asia were less likely to be interviewed (only 21% of the 96 individuals in the original target sample).

Since refugees from former Yugoslavia are significantly over-represented in the final sample of 616 refugees interviewed, survey results for the total sample could be influenced by this sampling bias, if former Yugoslavians answer differently than do other refugees in the sample. Consequently, in all of the data analyses in the following chapters, comparisons across regions of origin will be conducted in order to check for such a possible sampling bias.

Coding and Data Analysis

Preparation of the data sets (one each for the adult and youth surveys) began immediately following completion of the interviews. Answers to the fixed-response questions in the questionnaires were keypunched directly into a database designed for analysis with the SPSS for Windows statistical package⁵. Coding frameworks for the many “open-ended” questions included in the survey were developed by senior members of the research team after examining the range of verbatim responses provided by refugees. These responses were then electronically coded (again, by senior members of the research team), and added to the database. Subsequent data cleaning included discrepant value checks (ensuring that the data set contained only legitimate response codes) and consistency checks (cross-checking to ensure that only those respondents eligible to answer a specific question had, in fact, answered this question).

C. Service Provider Interviews

In the spring of 1998, 72 on-site service provider interviews were conducted with a total of 81 respondents (in some interviews, more than one respondent was present). An attempt was made to interview people from each of the following sectors in the seven host communities: settlement agencies, adult ESL providers, the education system (K-12), police, health care providers and general community service providers (e.g., YMCA, food bank). Six different versions of the questionnaire were developed (see Volume 3, Part III). Individuals in settlement agencies, educational institutions, churches, and community agencies were first contacted by telephone. In each instance, they were asked to refer the research team to any other agencies/individuals who could provide some information on refugees’ settlement experiences. In this way, a broad spectrum of service providers was located for each community. In general, respondents were

⁵ SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a product of SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois.

very willing to meet with the interviewers, although some people expressed concern that they would not be able to answer all questions. The participating organizations are listed in Volume 3, (Part III). (See Volume 2 for results of Service Provider Interviews.).

The taped interviews were transcribed and responses were sorted by question for each community. A qualitative thematic analysis of the responses was then conducted with a focus on similarities and differences between smaller and larger centres, reasons that refugees stay in or leave a given community, and factors affecting integration.

In addition, in the fall of 1998, one of the principal investigators interviewed six CIC personnel in several of the larger host communities about their perspectives on the settlement and integration of refugees in their respective communities. The interviews were transcribed and sent to the respondents to give them an opportunity to modify or add to their comments. These interviews were also analyzed thematically.

D. Public Opinion Survey

Questionnaire Construction

Questionnaire development for the public opinion survey began with an examination of previous surveys conducted in Alberta and elsewhere in Canada on the topics of immigration, multiculturalism, and related themes. A few of these questions were included in the draft questionnaire. A larger number of original questions were devised by the research team. In addition, some of the questions asked of refugees themselves were included in the public opinion survey (modified, if necessary, for the different population being surveyed)⁶.

The questionnaire and interviewing protocols were examined and approved by a University of Alberta Research Ethics Committee before interviewing began. A pretest with 30 randomly selected subjects led to the modification of some questions, and the decision to drop some others since the pretest interviews were somewhat longer than desirable. The final interviews averaged

15 minutes in length. Volume 3, Part II contains a copy of the final draft of the public opinion survey questionnaire.

Sampling Design

The seven host communities for refugees destined to Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Red Deer) formed the primary sampling areas for the public opinion survey. The target population in these communities consisted of all persons 18 years of age or older who, at the time of the survey, were living in a non-institutional dwelling unit (e.g., private dwellings in contrast to nursing homes or prisons) and could be contacted by telephone. The goal was to interview 150 randomly selected adults in both Calgary and Edmonton, along with 100 respondents in each of the five other host communities.

A random-digit dialing approach was used to ensure that all potential respondents had an equal chance of being contacted, whether or not their household was listed in a telephone directory. The Population Research Laboratory (PRL) uses a database of five-digit telephone number banks (i.e., 403-xxx-xx) covering all of Alberta. The seven sub-samples were drawn from the telephone database by using a computer program to select (with replacement) a simple random sample of banks for each community. The computer then appended a random number between 00 and 99 to each number selected. All duplicate numbers were eliminated from this randomly-generated list. Once the telephone survey began, business numbers and other non-eligible numbers (46% of all numbers randomly selected) were also eliminated from the sample, once they were identified. When contact with an eligible household was made, a quota sampling technique was used to select male or female respondents age 18 and older.

⁶ Most of the socio-demographic questions and several of the “quality of life” questions were obtained from the *Alberta Survey*, an annual province-wide public opinion survey conducted by the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta. Four of the general “attitudes towards immigration/immigrants” questions (Q. 10, 12b, 12d, 13) were taken from national public opinion surveys conducted by other research organizations in the 1993-95 period (see Suzanne Peters, 1995, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being*, Ottawa, Canadian Policy Research Networks Study no. F-01.)

Response Rates

Table 2-4 shows the breakdown of “call dispositions” for the public opinion survey. The overall response rate of 57% represents the number of completed interviews ($n = 802$) divided by the number of eligible telephone numbers ($n = 1410$). Thus, the denominator for this calculation includes incomplete interviews, refusals, language problems, and those who could not be contacted at a verified residential number for whatever reason (e.g., away on vacation, never at home when called, temporarily in hospital, etc.). More than half of the non-response (324 households, or 53% of all non-response) was a result of being unable to contact a respondent in the randomly-selected household. Refusals made up less than half (260 households, or 43%) of the total non-response in this survey.

Table 2-4		
Breakdown of “Call Dispositions” of Original Sample		
	Number	Percent
Sample as Drawn	2592	100%
<i>Deduct:</i>		
Non-residential/Ineligible	835	33%
Not in Service	347	13%
Eligible Numbers	1410	54%
<i>Corrected Sample Breakdown</i>		
Completed Interviews	802	57%
Incomplete Interviews	6	.4%
Refusals	260	18%
Language Problems	18	1%
No Contacts	324	23%
Total	1410	100%

Table 2-5 displays the breakdown of the final sample by host community and gender of respondents.

Table 2-5
Sample Size by Host Community and Gender of Respondent

	Edmonton	Red Deer	Calgary	Medicine Hat	Lethbridge	Fort McMurray	Grande Prairie	Total	%
Male	74	50	75	49	50	50	49	397	49.5%
Female	76	50	75	51	51	51	51	405	50.5%
	150	100	150	100	101	101	100	802	

Interviewing

The public opinion survey was conducted over a period of three weeks (October 6 - 27, 1998) by trained and supervised interviewers and administered through the CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing)⁷ system installed on a local area network at the PRL. The question text and instructions were presented on a computer screen to the interviewer who asked questions of the respondent over the telephone. Responses were entered directly into the computer. All of the data collection was conducted from a supervised research facility at the University of Alberta between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., seven days a week. Upon making contact, interviewers identified themselves, verified the telephone number, and then asked the screening questions for selecting the respondent. If the interviewers were unsuccessful in establishing contact on their first call, a minimum of fifteen callback attempts were made before declaring a telephone number as “no contact.”

Before administering the questionnaire, the interviewer informed the respondents that their participation was voluntary, that their responses would be kept completely confidential, and that they could terminate the interview at any time. After the three-week period of interviewing ended, 10% of the 802 respondents were re-contacted by interviewing supervisors to verify that the interview had been completed with eligible respondents.

Coding and Data Analysis

At the end of the interviewing period, the survey data were accumulated and formatted for analysis with the SPSS for Windows statistical package. Coding categories for the open-ended questions were constructed by members of the research team after examining the range of

⁷ The Ci3 CATI System is a PC-based product of Sawtooth Software, Evanston, Illinois.

responses (recorded verbatim by interviewers) provided by sample members. These responses were then electronically coded by professional coders and added to the SPSS data set. Data cleaning included discrepant value checks and consistency checks.

E. Profiles of Host Communities

Statistical profiles of the seven host communities were constructed to provide insight into their local labour market and economic conditions, housing availability, and other aggregate socio-demographic characteristics. Most of the information used in these profiles was compiled from the 1991 and 1996 Censuses of Canada, which provide community-level data for a variety of indicators. Obtaining 1996 data for Fort McMurray was more difficult since Statistics Canada no longer includes this city in its community profiles. Instead, the data for Fort McMurray were released as part of a larger census tract (Wood Buffalo). However, the Calgary Statistics Canada office assisted the research team by constructing a special set of Fort McMurray tabulations. Some additional information was obtained from the Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada.

Aggregate-level information on refugees destined to Alberta in the 1990s (e.g., the number of refugees arriving in each year; their country of origin) was compiled by the research team using the Landed Immigrant Database supplied by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide demographic and social profiles of the refugees, respondents to the public opinion survey, and settlement service providers. For comparison purposes, refugees have been classified by region of origin. The profile of refugees consists of six sections, each of which contains information regarding the demographic characteristics, education levels, occupation, refugee camp experience, language, and cultural characteristics of the respondents from each region. This description is followed by a discussion of the dominant characteristics of the total refugee sample. Next is a description of the demographic characteristics of the respondents to the public opinion survey. This information is used to compare the characteristics of refugees with those of other people in their host communities. The following section deals with employment, income and housing costs for refugees and respondents to the public opinion survey in order to compare the economic situation of the two groups. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the demographic characteristics of the settlement service providers in each of the seven communities.

B. Methodological Notes

Data for refugee respondents are presented by “world region”. To ensure anonymity for respondents coming from countries that provide few refugees, six world regions are represented: Africa, Central/South America, East Asia, the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, and Poland. The countries included in the Africa region are Uganda, Burundi, Zaire (Republic of Congo), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. Central/South American respondents are from El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Vietnam, China, and Burma are included in the East Asia category, while Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan form the Middle East group. Given the large number of respondents from former Yugoslavia, this country is included as a separate region (n=375). Poland is also a single category, despite the small number of respondents (n=11), since it cannot be logically grouped with other regions.

The refugee profiles are generally compiled from data collected with the adult and youth questionnaires. There are some statistics in the following profiles that use data from the adult survey only. However, these include all information on education and occupation prior to arrival refugee camp experience, and marital status, and city of current residence (Tables 3-1 to 3-7).

English language knowledge is determined using responses to the question “What other languages do you speak?” (no respondent reported English as his/her mother tongue). All “English” responses are presented as percentages of the total youth and adult sample. English language knowledge was self-reported. No attempt was made to determine individuals’ proficiency in the language.

C. Refugee Profiles by World Region

Africa

Of all respondents, the refugees from Africa have the highest prevalence of English language usage in the home (15%). They are also the youngest group (29.7 years for adults) and are the second most recent arrivals, with 82% arriving in 1996/97. Additionally, 47% of adults report that they are not married, the largest percentage of any group. About three-quarters (77%) of African respondents report having spent time in a refugee camp (only East Asians are more likely to have been in a refugee camp). The African refugees are highly concentrated in the larger urban centres; two-thirds live in Edmonton or Calgary.

Most adult refugees from Africa finished high school prior to their arrival and 42% report having completed some or all of their post-secondary education. They are less likely than other groups to have had a paying job prior to arrival in Canada (65%). Of those with occupations prior to arrival, 44% report employment in managerial or professional positions, although a significant proportion report no occupation (41%).

Table 3-1

Africa*(Sample Size: 34 Adults and 5 Youth)***1. Language and Ethnicity**

The most prevalent mother tongue is Somali (46%) followed by Amharic (18%). Other mother tongues include: French, Tigrinya, Swahili, Oromo, Arabic, and other African languages (36%). 15% of respondents are unable to speak any English.

44% use Somali as their home language. Other home languages include English (15%), Amharic (15%), and other languages (26%).

49% of African respondents report Swahili as their ethnicity. 19% are Ethiopian and 32% indicate other African ethnicities.

Respondents come from the following countries: Uganda, Burundi, Zaire (Republic of Congo), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan.

2. Time of Arrival

82% of African respondents arrived in 1996/97. Almost all of the remaining 18% arrived in 1994/95.

3. Refugee Camp Experience

77% of respondents have spent time in a refugee camp.

The mean number of months spent in a camp by Africans is 45.

4. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

44% of respondents are female and 56% are male.

The mean age of adults in this sample is 29.7 years, while the average for the youth in the sample is 17.0 years.

13% of Africans are aged 15-21; 59% of respondents are aged 22-30; 29% are aged 31-50.

38% of adult refugees are married, 9% are married with their spouse living elsewhere, 47% are single.

The average household size is 3.1 people.

35% of Africans currently live in Calgary, 32% live in Edmonton, 15% live in Lethbridge and 12% live in Fort McMurray. Others live elsewhere.

Half of the African respondents indicated they arrived in Canada alone.

All respondents indicated they left family members behind.

27% of respondents had family members living in Canada when they arrived.

5. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

41% of Africans completed high school prior to arrival, while 42% completed some or all post-secondary education.

The mean number of years of schooling for Africans is 12.6 years.

59% say they had some formal job training in their home country.

65% indicate they had a paying job before their arrival in Canada.

41% of adult African respondents say they had no occupation prior to their arrival in Canada.

Managers and professionals make up 44% of the respondents. The remaining 15% indicate they worked in clerical/service or blue-collar jobs.

Central/South America

Respondents from Central/South American countries tend to have been in Canada longer than other groups; 82% arrived in 1992/93. As a result, these refugees have some of the highest rates of English-language knowledge, with only 5% indicating that they cannot speak English. Along with East Asians, respondents from Central/South America are the oldest, with an average age of 43.3 years for adults and 18.5 years for youth (15-21 years of age). They are more likely than other respondents to be living in smaller centres in Alberta (90%). None of these respondents have spent time in a refugee camp.

Adult refugees from this region report average levels of education upon arrival slightly lower than the total sample. About 29% report they did not have a high school diploma, while 27% completed their post-secondary education before they came to Canada. A large majority, (86%) indicate they held paying jobs in their home country and very few had no occupation prior to their arrival (14%). The majority of respondents from Central/South America worked as managers or professionals in their home country, while 20% were blue-collar labourers.

Table 3-2

Central/South America*(Sample Size: 49 Adults and 15 Youth)***1. Language and Ethnicity**

All respondents report their mother tongue as Spanish.

5% of Central/South American respondents cannot speak any English.

Spanish is the language spoken at home by 94% of all respondents. Others use English.

54% indicate their ethnicity as Salvadoran. 29% of respondents state Spanish as their ethnicity.

Other ethnic backgrounds are Guatemalan (14%), and other Central/South American.

Countries of origin are: El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua.

2. Time of Arrival

82% of the sample arrived in Canada in 1992/93. Most of the remainder arrived in 1994/95.

3. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

59% of respondents are female, 41% are male.

The mean age of adults from Central/South America is 43.3 years and for youth 18.5 years.

Youth aged 15-21 make up 23% of the sample; 23% are aged 22-30; 33% are aged 31-40; and 21% are aged 41 or older.

63% of adult respondents are married or living in a common-law relationship; 2% are married with a spouse living elsewhere; 10% are widowed or divorced and 25% are single.

Average household size is 4.1 people.

Currently, 10% live in Edmonton, 27% live in Red Deer, 33% live in Lethbridge, 16% are in Medicine Hat, 8% live in Grande Prairie or Fort McMurray, and 6% live elsewhere in Canada.

90% have left family members behind in their country of origin.

20% indicate they had family members living here before they arrived.

4. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

29% of respondents did not complete high school prior to their arrival; 16% had completed high school, 27% had some post-secondary education and 27% had completed post-secondary education.

The mean number of years of formal schooling prior to arrival in Canada is 12.9.

55% indicate they had received formal job training before they came to Canada.

86% had paying jobs in their home country.

14% indicate they had no occupation before they arrived; 53% were managers or other professionals; 12% worked in clerical/service jobs and 20% were blue-collar workers.

East Asia

East Asian respondents are among the “longtime” Alberta residents in our study. Still, 20% of refugees from East Asia cannot speak any English, even though 87% have lived in Alberta since 1995. Most respondents report Vietnamese as their mother tongue (50%) or have the ability to converse in Vietnamese as a second language (40%). Many refugees from this area can also speak Cantonese. The ethnicity of the respondents is largely Vietnamese (60%); another 35% report Chinese as their ethnic origin (Indo-China Chinese). The average age of adult East Asian respondents is higher than average (43.3 years). This is likely related to their earlier arrival to the province compared to other respondents. Over half of the respondents live in either Calgary or Red Deer. These respondents have the largest incidence of spending time in a refugee camp (88%) and have the longest average stay (79 months).

Just over half of the respondents from East Asia did not have a high school diploma upon arrival. As well, very few had formal job training (31%). Only 31% report occupations as managers or professionals, with another 31% indicating they did not have a occupation prior to their arrival in Canada.

Table 3-3

East Asia*(Sample Size: 16 Adults and 4 Youth)***1. Language and Ethnicity**

50% of respondents report Vietnamese as their mother tongue, 40% indicate Cantonese and 10% speak other mother tongues.

20% of respondents cannot speak any English.

Other languages spoken include: Vietnamese (40%), Cantonese, Thai, Laotian, Fukinese and other East Asian languages.

50% of East Asians speak Vietnamese at home, while Cantonese is spoken by 44%.

60% of respondents indicate their ethnicity as Vietnamese and 35% say they are Chinese.

Countries of origin include China, Burma and Vietnam.

2. Time of Arrival

- 56% of the sample arrived in 1992/93. 31% arrived in 1994/95 and the remaining 13% came in 1996/97.

3. Refugee Camp Experience

- 88% of East Asians have spent time in a refugee camp.
- The mean number of months spent in refugee camps is 79.

4. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

- 40% are female and 60% are male.
- 20% of the sample is aged 15-21 years; 40% are aged 22-40 years and 40% are over age 41.
- The mean age of adults from East Asia is 43.3 years while the mean for youth is 18.5 years.
- 63% of adult refugees are married, the remainder are single or widowed/divorced.
- Average household size is 4.3.
- 31% currently live in Calgary, 25% live in Red Deer. The remainder live in Edmonton, Lethbridge or Medicine Hat.
- 88% left family members behind in their home country.
- 63% indicate they arrived in Canada along with other family members.
- 25% had family members living in Canada upon arrival.

5. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

- Just over half of the sample did not have a high school diploma when they arrived, just under 40% had high school level education or higher.
- The mean years of schooling prior to arrival is 9.6.
- 31% had formal job training before they arrived.
- 75% held a paying job in their home country.
- 31% reported no occupation upon arrival; 31% were managers or professionals and the remaining 38% were clerical/service workers or blue-collar workers.

Former Yugoslavia

The largest number of respondents in our study came from former Yugoslavia. They comprise 61% of all our respondents.

Practically all of the refugees from former Yugoslavia, or 96%, report a Slavic language as their mother tongue and 95% report using this language at home. The ethnicity of these respondents is mixed, with 37% reporting Yugoslav/Bosnian background, 27% Serbian ethnicity and 15% reporting Croatian as their background. Respondents from this region are the most recent arrivals in Alberta; over 90% report that they arrived after 1993. They are more likely than other groups to be married or in a common-law relationship (82%). Twenty-six percent of the respondents indicate they had spent time in a refugee camp, with an average of 17 months.

Respondents from former Yugoslavia are generally highly educated. Only 10% did not have a high school diploma upon arrival. Over 50% said they had completed post-secondary education, the highest percentage of any group in our sample. Almost 90% held a paying job in Yugoslavia and 77% indicated they had some formal job training. Half of the respondents were managers or professionals in their home country, 22% were blue-collar workers and 13% reported no occupation prior to their arrival.

Table 3-4

Former Yugoslavia*(Sample Size: 329 Adults and 46 Youth)***1. Language and Ethnicity**

96% of respondents from former Yugoslavia report a Slavic mother tongue. Other mother tongues include Ukrainian, German, Italian and Danish.

6% of respondents cannot speak any English.

The majority of respondents use a Slavic language at home (95%). English is used at home by 3% of respondents while the remaining few use other European languages in the home.

37% of respondents indicate Yugoslav/Bosnian as their ethnicity, 27% indicate they are Serbian and 15% are Croatian. Other ethnic origins include Muslim (8%), Ukrainian (6%), Hungarian, Slovakian, Albanian, Slovenian, Turk and Balkan.

Countries of origin include: Croatia, Yugoslavia, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Ukraine.

2. Time of Arrival

Most of the former Yugoslavians are recent arrivals to Alberta. 6% arrived in 1992-93, 57% arrived in 1994/95 and 37% arrived in 1996/97.

3. Refugee Camp Experience

26% of former Yugoslavians report having spent time in a refugee camp.

The mean number of months spent in a refugee camp is 17.

4. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

53% of the sample is female, 47% is male.

The mean age of adults is 37.5 years, the mean for youth is 17.0 years.

12% of the sample is aged 15-21; 20% of the sample is aged 22-30; 42% of the sample is 31-40; 18% are aged 41-50; and 7% are over age 51.

82% of the adult refugees are married or living in a common-law relationship, 6% are widowed or divorced and 11% are single.

The average household size for former Yugoslavians is 3.4.

90% indicate they had left some family members behind.

Upon their arrival to Canada, 18% say they had family members already in Canada.

30% of the former Yugoslavians are currently living in Calgary, 22% are living in Edmonton, 7% are living in Red Deer, 12% are living in Lethbridge, 11% are in Medicine Hat, 3% are living in Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray while 16% are living elsewhere in Canada.

5. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

10% report having completed less than high school; 28% have completed high school; 9% have completed some post-secondary education; and 52% have completed post-secondary education.

The mean number of years of completed formal education in their home country is 13.4.

77% report having had some formal job training in former Yugoslavia.

89% indicate having a paying job in former Yugoslavia.

13% report no occupation prior to arrival; 48% were managers or professionals; 17% reported clerical or service occupations; and 22% reported blue-collar jobs.

Middle East

Arabic is the most common first language of respondents from the Middle East (36%). This group is among the more recent arrivals to the province, 48% having arrived in 1996 or 1997. This could explain the 21% who cannot speak any English. About a third of respondents are Afghani, another third are Iraqi, with the remainder being Arabic or Kurdish. This group is comprised of 56% females and 44% males. They are among the youngest in the sample, with a mean age of 36 years. Almost half of the respondents have spent time in a refugee camp. The mean number of months spent there is 59.

Of the Middle Eastern respondents, 41% indicate they did not have a high school diploma upon their arrival to Canada; only 26% say they completed post-secondary education. Almost three-quarters (71%) had a paying job prior to entering Canada and 34% said they had some formal job training. These figures are lower than average. This figure may be related to the 32% indicating they did not have an occupation prior to arrival in Canada. The largest occupation group from this region is blue-collar labourers (33%).

Table 3-5

Middle East*(Sample Size: 88 Adults and 19 Youth)***1. Language and Ethnicity**

36% of respondents from the Middle East indicate Arabic as their mother tongue. Other mother tongues include: Pashei (18%), Persian/Farsi (20%), Kurdish (8%), Assyrian, Turkish, Armenian and Pushtu.

21% cannot speak any English.

Other languages spoken include: Russian (7%), Greek, Turkish, Arabic (10%), Hindi (8%), Urdu (20%), Pushtu (14%), Pashei, Kurdish, Farsi, Russian and Chaldean.

The language used most often at home is Arabic (29%), while 18% speak Pashei. Other languages used at home include: Persian/Farsi, English, Armenian, Kurdish and Assyrian.

36% of respondents are Afghan in origin and 33% are Iraqi. Other ethnic origins include Arab and Kurd.

Respondents included in this region came from Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.

2. Time of Arrival

48% arrived in 1996/97, 32% arrived in 1994/95 and 20% arrived in 1992/93.

3. Refugee Camp Experience

48% of all respondents from the Middle East spent some time in a refugee camp.

The mean number of months spent there is 59.

4. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

56% are female, 44% are male.

The average age of adults from this region is 35.5 years while for youth it is 18.0 years.

18% of the sample is aged 15-21; 28% are aged 22-30; 34% are aged 31-40; and the remaining 20% are over age 41.

The average size of households is 4.8.

58% of adult refugees are married, 7% are married but their spouses live elsewhere, 7% are divorced or widowed and 28% are single.

56% of the sample reside in Calgary, 20% live in Edmonton, 17% live in Red Deer, Lethbridge or Medicine Hat while 7% live elsewhere in Canada.

77% of respondents arrived in Canada at the same time as other family members.

88% left family members behind in their home country.

38% had family living in Canada upon arrival.

5. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

41% indicate they had not obtained a high school diploma prior to arrival; 19% had completed high school; 13% had some post-secondary education and 26% had completed their post-secondary education.

The mean years of schooling prior to arrival is 11.8. (Of the 21 respondents without schooling in the sample, 17 came from the Middle East.)

34% had some form of job training prior to their arrival.

71% held a paying job before coming to Canada.

32% indicate they did not have an occupation prior to their arrival; 26% were managers or professionals; 33% were blue-collar labourers and the remainder were in clerical/service occupations.

Poland

Respondents from Poland are the smallest group in our sample. For this reason, the following figures should be interpreted with caution. All respondents reported Polish ethnicity, home language and mother tongue. Almost 90% of this group are married. Over half of those interviewed lived in Calgary.

The Polish respondents are highly educated; 78% report complete post-secondary education prior to arrival. Most had a paying job and formal employment training in Poland. Almost half reported occupations as managers or professionals before they arrived in Canada.

Table 3-6

Poland*(Sample Size: 9 Adults and 2 Youth)***1. Language and Ethnicity**

All respondents report Polish as their mother tongue. All speak Polish at home.

Most respondents speak some English.

Other languages known include Russian, Greek and German.

2. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

45% of the sample is female, 55% is male.

The average age of adults is 38.3 years and for youth 16.0 years.

62% of the sample are aged 22-40 years.

89% of adult refugees are married.

The average household size is 3.1.

56% live in Calgary and the remainder live elsewhere in Canada.

All respondents left family members behind in Poland.

Most respondents did not have family members already living in Canada prior to their arrival.

3. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

78% of respondents had completed post-secondary education before they arrived.

The mean years of formal schooling upon arrival is 15.3.

78% had received formal job training before they arrived.

78% had a paying job before they came to Canada.

Almost half of all respondents had been employed in managerial or professional occupations before they came to Canada.

Total Sample

Six out of ten respondents (61% of the adult and youth samples combined) come from former Yugoslavia. This must be kept in mind when interpreting total sample results (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of this sampling outcome).

Most refugees can speak at least some English. Although two-thirds chose to do the interview in their first language, only 9% report they have no knowledge of English. The average age of adults is 36.7 years and 17.3 years for youth. Seventy-six percent of the adults are married and 17% are single. One-third (32%) of the total sample indicated they had spent time in a refugee camp (the average stay in a refugee camp was 37 months). Most respondents (72%) were government-sponsored, while 25% were privately sponsored. Only 32% have participated in a host program.

About 20% of the sample did not have a high school diploma when they arrived, and 42% indicate having completed post-secondary education. Sixty-five percent of respondents indicate they had some formal job training and 83% held a paying job in their home country. While 19% indicate they did not have an occupation before they arrived, 44% said they were managers or professionals, 15% were working in clerical/service occupations, and 22% were blue-collar workers.

Table 3-7

Total Sample*(Sample Size: 525 Adults and 91 Youth)***1. Time of Arrival**

37% of the sample arrived in 1996/97, 44% arrived in 1994/95 and 19% arrived in 1992/93.

61% of the respondents are from former Yugoslavia.

9% of the respondents cannot speak any English.

72% were government-sponsored, 25% were privately-sponsored, and 3% were sponsored in a 3/9 program.

32% of respondents indicated they had taken part in a host program.

2. Refugee Camp Experience

32% have spent time in a refugee camp.

The mean number of months spent in a refugee camp is 37.

3. Demographic Characteristics and Family Status

51% are female and 49% are male.

Mean age of adults is 36.7 years; for youth the mean age is 17.3 years.

15% of the sample are aged 15-21, 24% are aged 22-30, 38% are aged 31-40; 16% are 41-50, and 7% are over age 51.

73% of adult refugees are married or living in a common-law relationship, 3% are married but have spouses living elsewhere; 7% are widowed or divorced, and 17% are single.

The average household size is 3.7 persons.

31% live in Calgary, 22% live in Edmonton, 9% live in Red Deer, 12% live in Lethbridge, 10% live in Medicine Hat, 3% live in Grande Prairie or Fort McMurray, and 12% live elsewhere in Canada.

86% arrived in Canada along with other family members.

90% left family members behind.

22% had family members in Canada when they arrived.

4. Education and Occupation Prior to Arrival (Adult Refugees only)

19% did not have a high school diploma upon arrival; 26% had completed high school, 12% had some post-secondary education and 42% had completed post-secondary education.

The mean years of schooling is 13.0.

65% had some formal job training before they came to Canada.

83% held a paying job in their home country.

19% indicated they had no occupation prior to arrival, 44% worked as managers and professionals, 15% worked in clerical/service occupations, and 22% worked as blue-collar labourers.

D. Employment, Household Income and Housing Costs for Refugees

To help understand the current economic situation of refugees in comparison with their hosts, it is useful to look at current employment, household income, and cost of living in each community (Table 3-8).

Of all adult refugees in the sample, only 2% are retired and 17% do not participate in the labour force. The resulting labour force participation rate for refugees is 81%, comparable to the rate for the province. The unemployment rate for adult refugees is 16%, nearly three times the rate for Alberta in 1998 (5.7%) (Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Historical Review*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 1999). Twenty-eight per cent of those employed are working part-time at one or more jobs, about ten per cent higher than the provincial average (18.9%) (Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Historical Review*, 1999). Additionally, 30% of refugees work in temporary jobs, more than twice the national average of 12% (Statistics Canada (1998) *Work Arrangements in the 1990s*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Analytic Report no. 8, p. 44, 1998).

Managerial and professional occupations along with skilled trades, account for 37% of adult refugee employment, while 32% work in semi-skilled jobs and 31% in unskilled jobs. When these figures are compared with those reported by refugees in their home country, we see that 44% worked as managers or professionals and only 22% worked as unskilled labourers (results not shown in table). Furthermore, 58% of respondents report that they are over-qualified for their current job. Only one in four employed Canadians consider themselves over-qualified (Krahn, Harvey and Graham S. Lowe (1998) *Work, Industry and Canadian Society*. Scarborough, Ontario: ITP Nelson, p. 141).

Men are more likely to be employed than women (results not shown in table). The unemployment rate for refugee men is 14%, while for women it is 19%. The unemployment rate for both women and men living in Alberta is much lower (5.7%) (Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Historical Review*, 1999). The high unemployment rate for refugees may be in part related to professionally-qualified individuals who are still looking for employment in their area of expertise. Female refugees are also more likely to work part-time. Forty-six per cent of female

refugees are working at one or more part-time jobs, compared to 13% of refugee men. The comparable provincial figures are 30% for women and 9% for men.

Table 3-8 shows that unemployment is highest for respondents from the Middle East (29%). It is lowest for Central/South Americans (5%) and East Asians (8%). A possible reason for this is that Central/South American and East Asian respondents have been in the province longer than respondents from the Middle East. This would give these refugees more time to settle into their communities and find employment. African refugees are more likely than other groups to report part-time employment (46%), while East Asian respondents were least likely to do so (18%). Additionally, refugees from East Asia are less likely than any other group to feel over-qualified for their jobs (17%). This may be a reflection of the types of employment and training that the East Asian respondents have, since about one-third indicate they worked as semi-skilled or unskilled labourers before they arrived. Former Yugoslavian refugees are more likely than other groups to hold managerial or professional jobs (44%), a rate significantly higher than any other group.

Table 3-9 compares employment information across cities where refugees currently live. Figures for Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie are not shown due to the small number of cases. Surprisingly, Edmonton and Calgary have the lowest level of employment (57% and 63% respectively), and the highest unemployment rates (26% and 15%). One reason for this difference may be that some refugees have left smaller centres in search of work in Edmonton and Calgary. There are only small city differences in part-time employment, with Medicine Hat and Calgary reporting the lowest incidence of part-time work. There are significant city differences in temporary work. Lethbridge has the lowest percentage of temporary employment (17%) while Medicine Hat and Red Deer report the highest (53% and 42%). There are no significant city differences in feelings of being over-qualified in current jobs.

Calgary has the highest proportion of employed refugees working in managerial/professional or skilled occupations (47%), followed by Edmonton (38%) and Red Deer (39%). Also, 42% of refugees working in Lethbridge work in unskilled positions, followed by 34% in Medicine Hat.

Household income is another indicator of success in resettlement; here there is considerable variation across groups (Table 3-10). Eight per cent of all adult refugees report household

Table 3-8

Adult Refugees' Current Employment Situation By Region of Origin

	% of Total Sample					Total #
	Africa	Central America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	
Employed	71	82	75	71	47	68
Unemployed	12	4	6	13	19	13
Retired/Out of Labour Force	17	14	19	16	34	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100 *
Unemployment Rate [^]						
	14	5	8	15	29	16 *
Percent of Currently Employed						
Part Time	46	28	18	28	17	28
Temporary	29	33	42	28	34	30
Feel Over-qualified	63	63	17	56	71	58 *
Occupation [@]						
Managerial/Professional/Skilled	22	28		44	25	37
Semi-skilled	35	39		29	29	32
Unskilled	43	33		27	46	31
Total	100	100		100	100	100

Total includes 9 Polish refugees.

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

[^] Employed respondents were asked three separate questions about their current jobs. Therefore, these percentages are not meant to total 100%.

[@] National Occupational Classification System: Skilled = Skill Level B; Semi-skilled = Skill Level C; Unskilled = Skill Level D

Table 3-9

Adult Refugees' Current Employment Situation By Current City of Residence

	% of Total Sample					Total #
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	
Employed	57	63	76	79	92	68
Unemployed	20	12	3	6	4	13
Retired/Out of Labour Force	23	25	21	15	4	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100 *
Unemployment Rate						
	26	15	4	7	4	16 *
Percent of Currently Employed [^]						
Part Time	30	22	31	32	24	28
Temporary	36	22	17	42	53	30 *
Feel Over-qualified	53	59	57	58	68	58
Occupation @						
Managerial/Professional/Skilled	38	47	28	39	26	37
Semi-skilled	32	27	30	37	40	32
Unskilled	30	26	42	24	34	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100 *

Total includes 9 Polish refugees.

* Differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

^ Employed respondents were asked three separate questions. Hence, these percentages are not meant to total 100%.

@ National Occupational Classification System: Skilled = Skill Level B; Semi-skilled = Skill Level C; Unskilled = Skill Level D

incomes of less than \$10,000 per year, well below the low-income cutoff average. As well, 35% of refugees have household incomes between \$10,000 and \$19,999. There are, however, some refugees who are doing well financially; 8% of those sampled said their household income was over \$60,000 per year. However, 36% of respondents to the public opinion survey report household incomes in this bracket (Table 3-13). The average income of refugees in our sample is \$28,253. This is significantly lower than the average household income reported in provincial figures for 1991 (see Table 4-18, Chapter 4).

African respondents have the lowest average income of any group (\$15,000), and 72% of these refugees indicate their household income is lower than \$20,000 (Table 3-10). Refugees from the Middle East are not much better off, with average household incomes of \$20,833 and 65% having household incomes of less than \$20,000 per year. Refugees from former Yugoslavia have the highest average household income at \$31,476. Nonetheless, one-third (36%) report incomes of less than \$20,000 per year. While Polish refugees appear to have the highest average household income, this figure must be interpreted cautiously given there were only 9 adult respondents.

Home ownership is another indicator of successful resettlement. Of the 525 adult respondents, 26% said they owned their homes (Table 3-10). East Asian respondents were more likely to indicate home ownership (44%). This is not surprising because this group has been in the province longer than other refugee groups. African refugees are least likely to own homes (6%). The average monthly mortgage costs for owners in the sample is \$711. There are no significant differences across refugee groups with regard to mortgage payments. The average monthly rent for the remaining refugees is \$497 with the highest average rents being paid by refugees from former Yugoslavia (\$534) and Central/South America (\$532).

Not surprisingly, city differences in household income and monthly housing costs are statistically significant (Table 3-11). Refugees in Red Deer are most likely to report average household incomes of less than \$10,000 (13%). Over half (56%) of respondents from Edmonton report average household incomes of less than \$20,000. Fifteen per cent of refugees in Medicine Hat and 11% in Calgary have household incomes over \$60,000. These figures are much lower than those reported by respondents to the public opinion survey (Table 3-13). In Calgary, 43% of

all residents have incomes over \$60,000, and in Fort McMurray, 71% of are in this category. The average household income of refugees was highest in Medicine Hat (\$31,415) and Calgary (\$30,419). The lowest household incomes are in Red Deer (\$23,936) and Lethbridge (\$24,032).

Refugees in Calgary are more likely to own their homes (41%). This might appear somewhat odd, given the tight housing market in Calgary. However, with high rental costs and relatively low mortgage costs, it may make sense to try to purchase a home. The average mortgage cost was highest in Calgary (\$759) and lowest in Medicine Hat (\$604). Average rents were highest in Fort McMurray (\$655) and Calgary (\$538). Again, these differences are most likely linked to the housing shortage in both cities.

E. Demographic Profiles of Respondents to the Public Opinion Survey

This section provides a brief overview of the demographic characteristics of respondents to the public opinion survey. Table 3-12 shows that the average age of respondents is 43 years.

Respondents from Medicine Hat are significantly older than average (49 years). Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray have larger than average households (3.05 and 3.11 persons respectively).

Eighty per cent of all respondents to the public opinion survey were born in Canada, though respondents from Edmonton and Calgary are less likely to be Canadian born (69% and 72% respectively). Most have lived in their current community for more than five years, but 24% of all respondents are more recent arrivals to their respective communities. Red Deer respondents are more likely than others to be recent residents, with 33% living there for less than five years.

As can be seen in Table 3-13, 41% of all respondents indicate they have completed a post-secondary diploma or degree. Medicine Hat had the lowest incidence of post-secondary education at 32%, while Calgary has the highest rate of post-secondary completion at 50%. The employment rate was highly variable across cities. The highest employment rate is in Fort McMurray (85%). The lowest employment rates are in Medicine Hat (55%), followed by Lethbridge (60%) and Edmonton (61%). Sixty-eight per cent of all respondents are employed. The proportion of residents in Fort McMurray with a household income over \$60,000 (71%) is significantly higher than in other cities. The average income proportion over \$60,000 for all cities combined is 36%. Of all respondents, 33% indicate they are “better off financially” than

Table 3-10
Adult Refugees' Total Annual Household Income and Monthly Housing Costs by Region of Origin

		% of Respondents					
Household Income		CentralSouth		East	Former	Middle	All
		Africa	America	Asia	Yugoslavia	East	Poland Regions
	<\$10,000	36%	2%	19%	3%	19%	8%
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	36%	39%	31%	33%	46%	35%
	\$20,000 - \$29,999	25%	31%	12%	23%	17%	22%
	\$30,000 - \$59,999	3%	28%	25%	31%	14%	27%
	>\$60,000+	0%	0%	13%	10%	4%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100% #	100% *
Average Annual Household Income #	\$15,000	\$26,020	\$27,500	\$31,476	\$20,833	\$39,444	\$28,253 *
Own Dwelling	6%	25%	44%	25%	32%	33%	26% *
Average Monthly Mortgage (for owners)		\$678		\$721		\$760	\$711
Average Monthly Rent (for renters)	\$400	\$532	\$305	\$534		\$402	\$497 *

* Differences by region are statistically significant. Statistics are reported only if N>10 cases, but all cases are included in Total for all regions.

Household income was measured in \$10,000 categories. Category mid-points were used to calculate average annual incomes (e.g., \$10,000 - \$19,999 = \$15,000)

Table 3-11

Adult Refugees' Total Annual Household Income and Monthly Housing Costs by Current City of Residence

		% of Respondents						
		Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray	All Cities
Household Income	<\$10,000	7%	8%	7%	13%	9%	9%	8%
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	49%	34%	34%	36%	25%	31%	35%
	\$20,000 - \$29,999	19%	23%	32%	19%	25%	12%	22%
	\$30,000 - \$59,999	21%	24%	27%	32%	26%	36%	27%
	>\$60,000+	4%	11%	0%	0%	15%	12%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100% *
Average Annual Household Income #		\$25,000	\$30,419	\$24,032	\$23,936	\$31,415	\$33,181	\$28,253 *
Own Dwelling		15%	41%	25%	15%	33%	0%	14%
								26% *
Average Monthly Mortgage (for owners)		\$652	\$759	\$606		\$604	\$872	\$711 *
Average Monthly Rent (for renters)		\$415	\$538	\$465	\$480	\$411	\$655	\$623
								\$497 *

* Differences by city are statistically significant. Grande Prairie and other cities (eg. Toronto, Vancouver) included in "all cities". Fort McMurray results shown if N>10 cases.

Household income was measured in \$10,000 categories. Category mid-points were used to calculate average annual incomes (e.g., \$10,000 - \$19,999 = \$15,000)

Table 3-12

Public Opinion Survey, Respondent Demographic Characteristics by City

	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray	Total
Sample Size	150	150	100	101	100	100	101	802
% Female	49%	50%	50%	50%	49%	49%	50%	50%
% Married or Common-law	58%	63%	53%	61%	59%	54%	75%	60%
Average Age (years)	45	44	42	41	49	42	40	43 *
% Age 60 and older	24%	20%	19%	16%	28%	17%	6%	19% *
Average Household Size	2.75	2.78	2.88	2.86	2.73	3.05	3.11	2.87
Average # of Children at Home	1.76	1.77	2.11	1.80	1.95	2.05	1.77	1.87
% Born in Canada	69%	72%	81%	93%	86%	87%	83%	80% *
% Lived in Community < 5 years	22.7%	19.3%	25.7%	33.0%	22.0%	22.0%	22.8%	24% *
Average Years in Community	22.9	21.1	18.2	13.1	22.7	19	14.9	19.2 *

* City differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 3-13

Public Opinion Survey: Respondent Education, Employment and Financial Characteristics by City

	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray	Total
% With Post Secondary Diploma or Degree	43%	50%	39%	41%	32%	38%	47%	41%
% Employment	61%	74%	60%	67%	55%	73%	85%	68% *
% With household income of \$60,000 +	25%	43%	26%	28%	26%	36%	71%	36% *
% Better off than a year ago	34%	43%	27%	29%	20%	26%	46%	33% *
% Expect to be better off in a year	46%	49%	36%	43%	27%	38%	52%	42% *

* City differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

they were a year ago. Fort McMurray (46%) and Calgary (43%) respondents are most likely to feel better off financially. When asked whether they expect to be “better off financially in a year”, respondents in Fort McMurray and Calgary are also more likely to answer affirmatively (52% and 49% respectively). Respondents in Medicine Hat are the least likely to view themselves as doing better financially in the next year.

F. Demographic Profile of Service Providers

The service providers in each city included representatives of agencies that deal specifically with immigrant and refugee concerns, such as settlement agencies and CIC staff, and individuals from other organizations whose mandate it is to serve the community as a whole (e.g., health units, police, YMCA). In each instance most respondents were female. The service providers had lived in their respective communities for an average of over 16 years. The individuals from Lethbridge and Red Deer had been in their current positions the longest (an average of roughly 12 years), whereas the mean length of time the remaining respondents had been with their agencies was between five and seven years. Approximately 58% of the service providers had previous experience working with refugees (prior to their current position), with a range of 33% in Grande Prairie to 75% in Fort McMurray. A list of participating service agencies appears in Volume 3, Part III.

G. Conclusion

As this profile shows, refugees to Alberta from the six world regions vary with respect to age, marital status, and occupational training prior to arrival. Moreover, when compared to other residents in the host communities, refugees have much lower household incomes and higher rates of unemployment. The remainder of the report elaborates on the resettlement experiences of refugees in Alberta by examining their geographical mobility, utilization of immigrant settlement services, and experiences living in Alberta. It also brings together information from the service providers, presenting their views on how settlement services can better help refugees. Information from the public opinion survey and from the community profiles is used to give context to the settlement experiences of refugees.

Profiles of the communities in which the refugees live appear in the next chapter. These profiles provide information on various community characteristics, including population size, age/sex distribution, language and ethnocultural features, major industries, unemployment rates, education levels, and mobility rates.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF HOST COMMUNITIES

A. Introduction

A main premise of this study is that the success of refugee settlement, and refugees' decisions to stay in the community to which they were initially destined or to relocate, are likely to be influenced by a multitude of factors. Some of these factors may be personal, while others may be a function of the host community. The present study consists of several components to provide insights into how community attitudes and demographic characteristics, and refugee attitudes and inclinations, may interact and thereby influence not only the quality of the settlement experience but also the mobility inclinations of refugees. This chapter, based on government statistics and the results of our public opinion survey, compares the seven host communities in Alberta in terms of (a) selected social and demographic characteristics that may positively or negatively influence the refugees' settlement experience and geographical mobility, and (b) general public attitudes toward immigrants and refugees, and toward cultural diversity.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is largely demographic as it provides information on population size, age-sex composition, home ownership, and educational and family characteristics of the host communities. Section C examines the extent of social and cultural diversity within these communities, while the next section focuses on labour force characteristics and related economic indicators. Comparative statistics on the mobility status of community residents are presented in Section E, while the final section reports findings from the public opinion survey concerning attitudes toward cultural diversity; opinions about immigration, immigrants and refugees; and perceptions of openness to outsiders. The chapter concludes with a summary profile for each of the seven target communities in terms of major social and demographic characteristics.

Most of the statistical tables included in this chapter are derived from the 1996 Canadian census. Census data for 1991 are used only in those instances where 1996 census data are not yet available. Preference is given to the utilization of 1996 data partly because they give a more up-to-date picture of the social and demographic characteristics of the host communities, and partly

because a majority of the refugees interviewed in this study were destined to these communities between 1995 and 1997. Thus, the refugees' settlement experiences are more related to what these host communities were like in 1996 than in 1991.

B. Selected Population Characteristics of Host Communities

Population Size and Population Change

Table 4-1 shows the population size for the seven communities for 1991 and 1996. It is striking that the seven communities are alike neither in population size nor in rate of population change in the five-year period under review. Edmonton (1996 population: 616,306) and Calgary (1996 population: 768,082) are the two largest cities in Alberta. The remaining five, namely Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray, are all smaller urban centres, although the first three are somewhat larger than the resource-based Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray.

The table further shows that between 1991 and 1996, Grande Prairie experienced the largest percentage change in population (10.1%) while Calgary experienced the largest absolute increase in population (growing by an additional 57,287 people). In the same period, but at the opposite extreme, the oil-producing city of Fort McMurray lost nearly 1,700 people (or 4.8% of the population), due to cyclical factors in the economy, (the population decrease is also due to changes in the boundaries of Fort McMurray as defined by Statistics Canada). Edmonton lost over 400 people (or 0.1% of the population). The remaining three communities experienced modest to low rates of population increase (Medicine Hat: 7.2%; Lethbridge: 3.4%; Red Deer: 3.3%).

Table 4-1

Total Population and Population Change for Communities in Alberta, 1991 and 1996

	Population 1991	Population 1996	Per Cent Change
Edmonton	616,741	616,306	-0.1
Calgary	710,795	768,082	8.1
Lethbridge	60,974	63,053	3.4
Red Deer	58,145	60,075	3.3
Medicine Hat	43,625	46,783	7.2
Grande Prairie	28,271	31,140	10.1
Fort McMurray	34,706	33,045	-4.8
Total Alberta	2,545,553	2,696,826	5.9

Note: Data from Calgary and Edmonton reflect CMA only

Source: Statistics Canada (1998). Preliminary Data Release, 1996 Census of Canada. Ottawa.

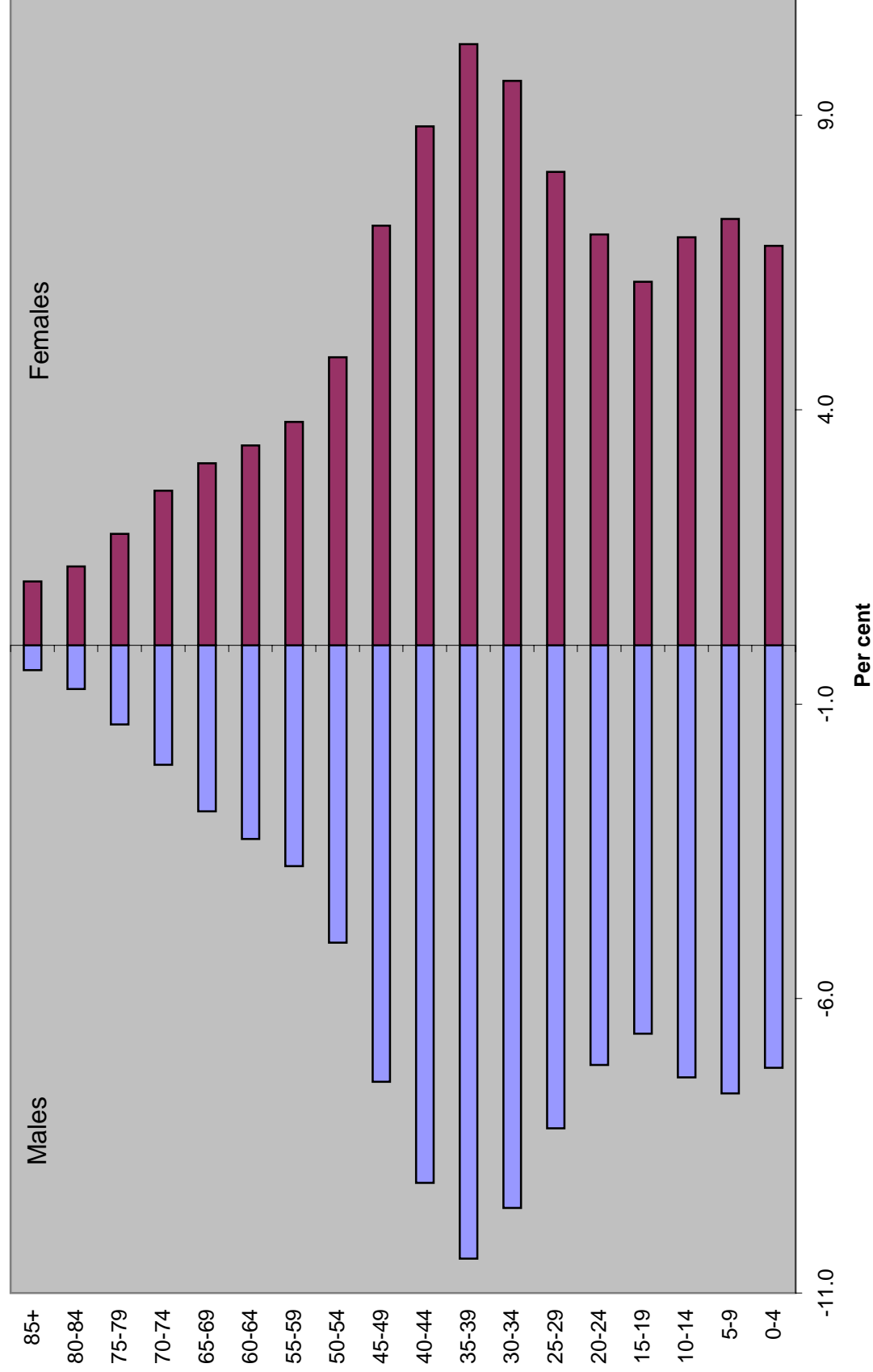
Age-Sex Distribution

With reference to age-sex composition of the population, Figure 4-2 shows the population pyramids for the host communities for 1996. A visual examination of these pyramids shows that the populations of Lethbridge and Medicine Hat are, on average, older than the populations of the other communities. Fort McMurray's population is clearly the youngest, with very few people over the age of 60, while Grande Prairie's population is also on the young side, given the large base of young people in the pyramid. The age-sex composition of the populations of Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer are between the two extremes and more similar to the age-sex composition of the Alberta population.

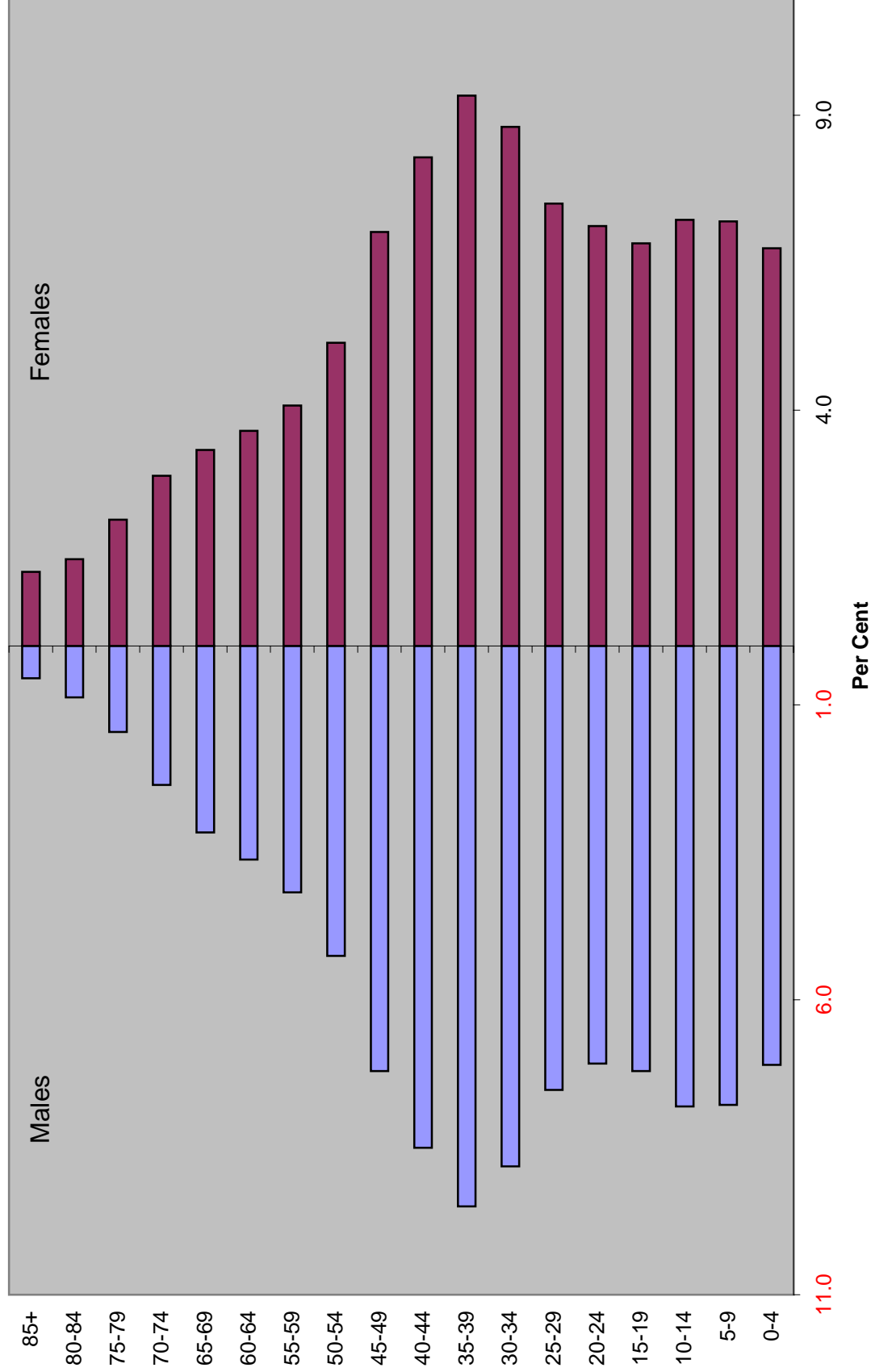
Educational Attainment

Considering other demographic characteristics, Table 4-3 shows the educational attainment of the population age 15 and older for the host communities in 1996. The table shows that there are relatively minor differences among the seven host communities in the proportions of people with a high school diploma, with some post-secondary education, or with a trades certificate. However, community differences in educational attainment are most pronounced at the extremes

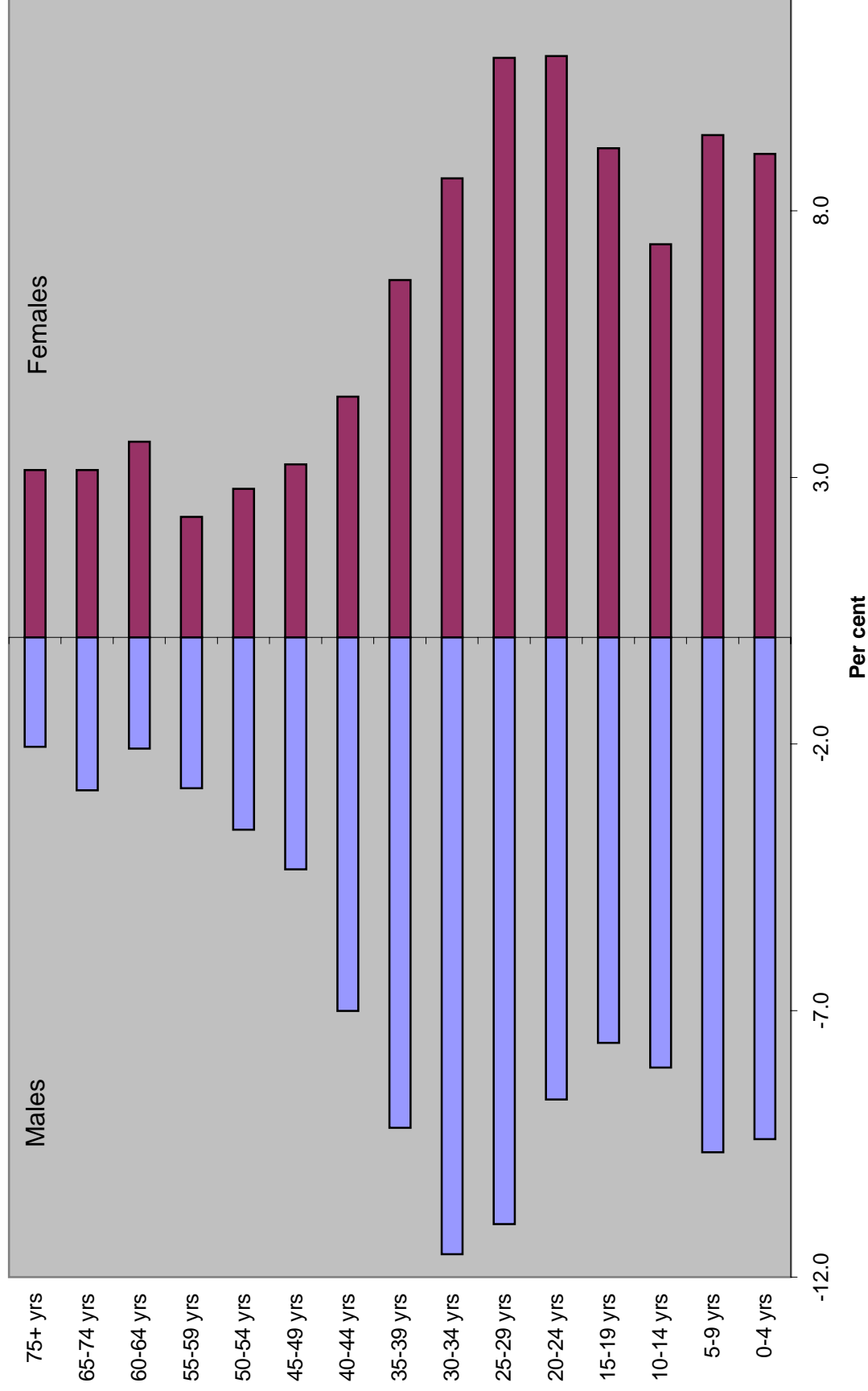
Age and Sex Distribution, Calgary, 1996



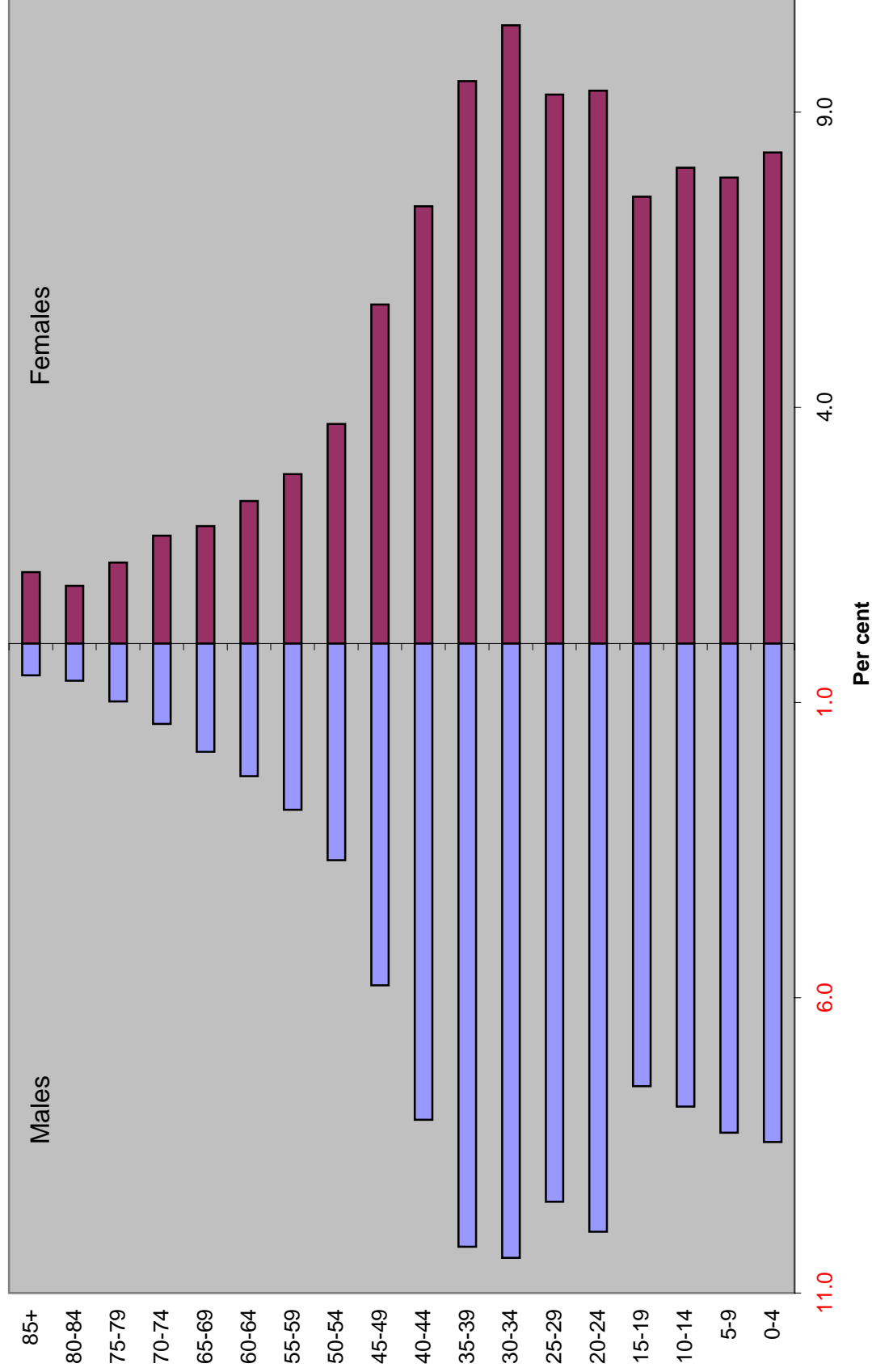
Age and Sex Distribution, Edmonton, 1996



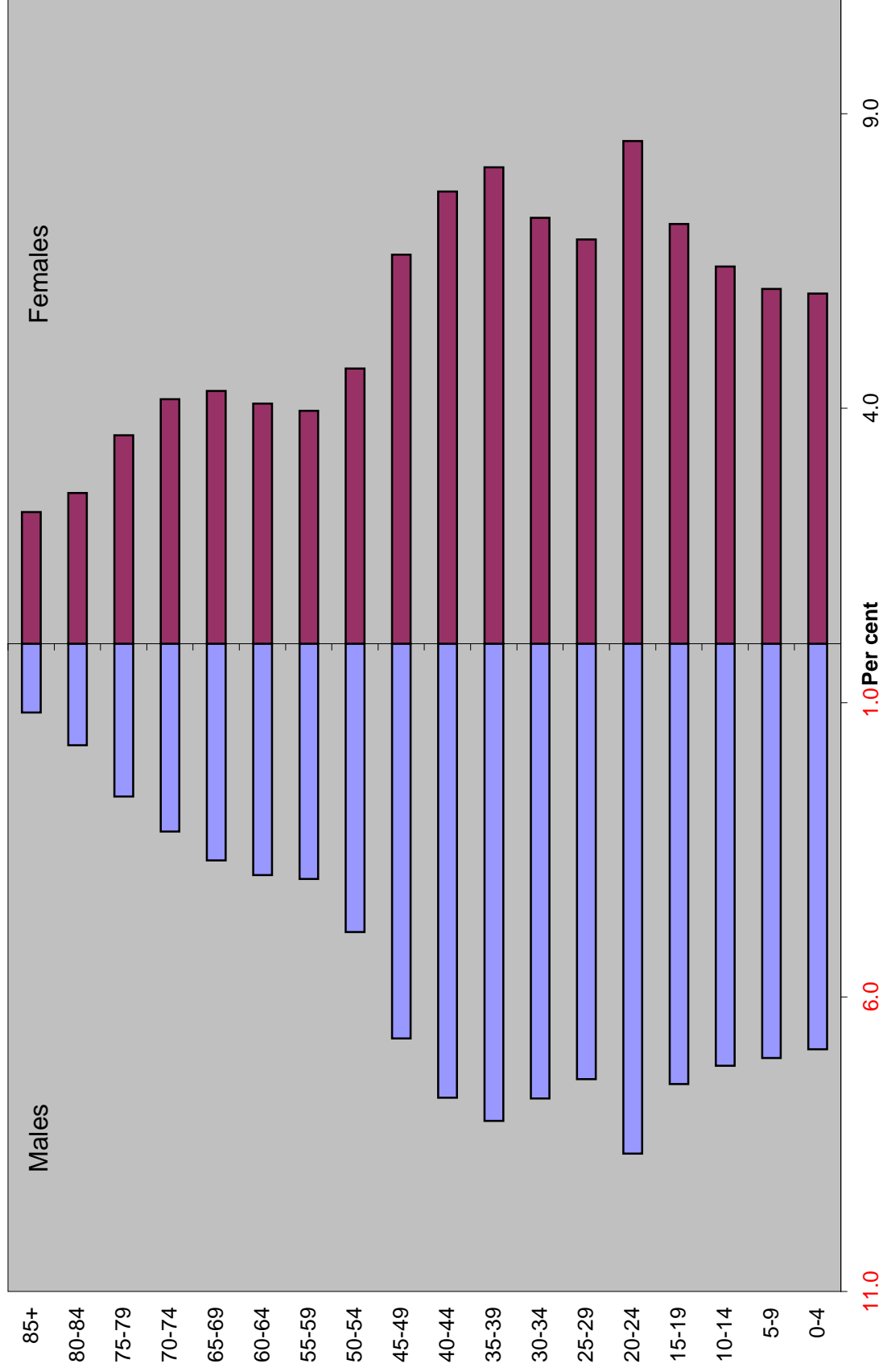
Age and Sex Distribution, Fort McMurray, 1996



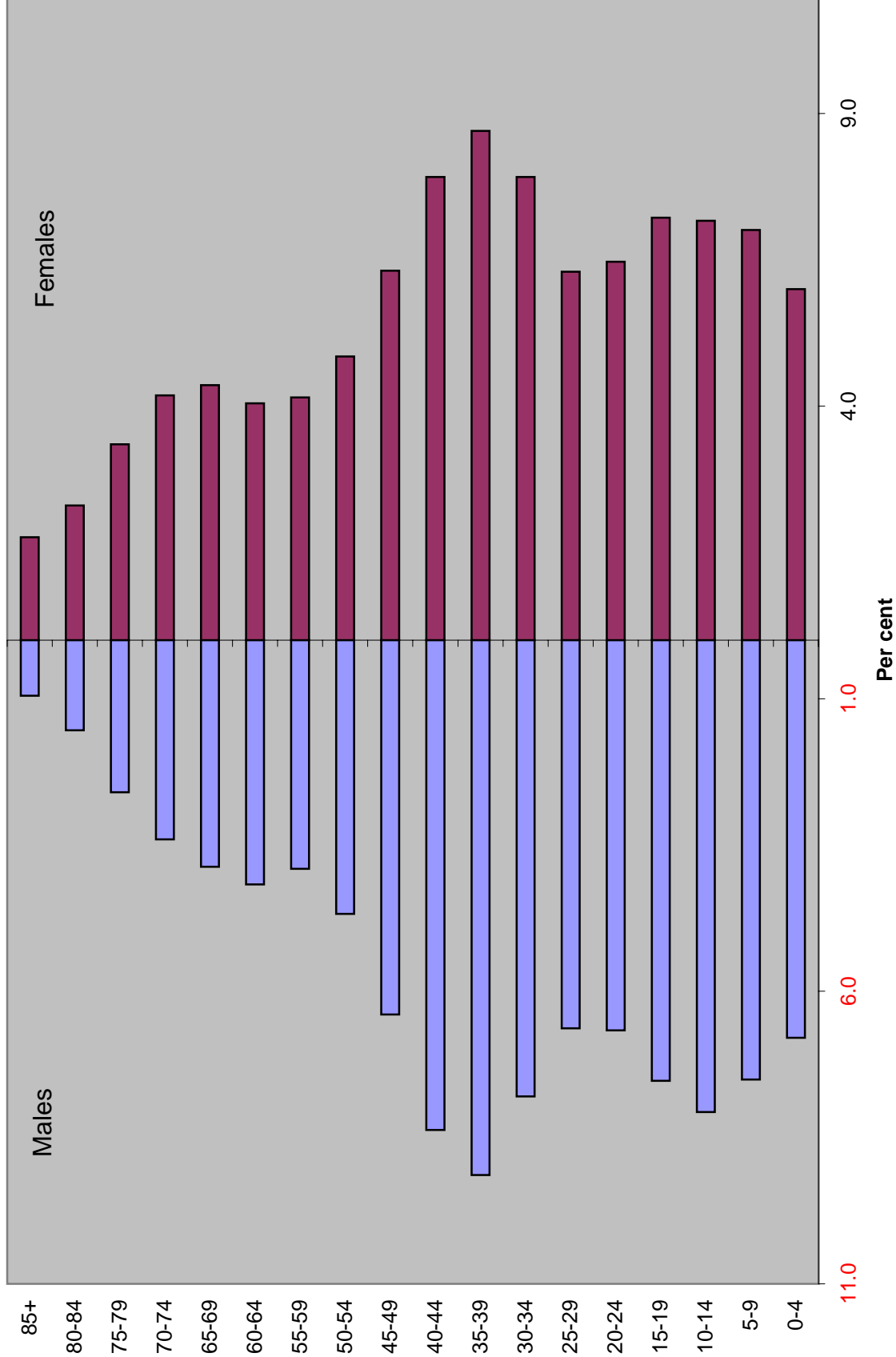
Age and Sex Distribution, Grande Prairie, 1996



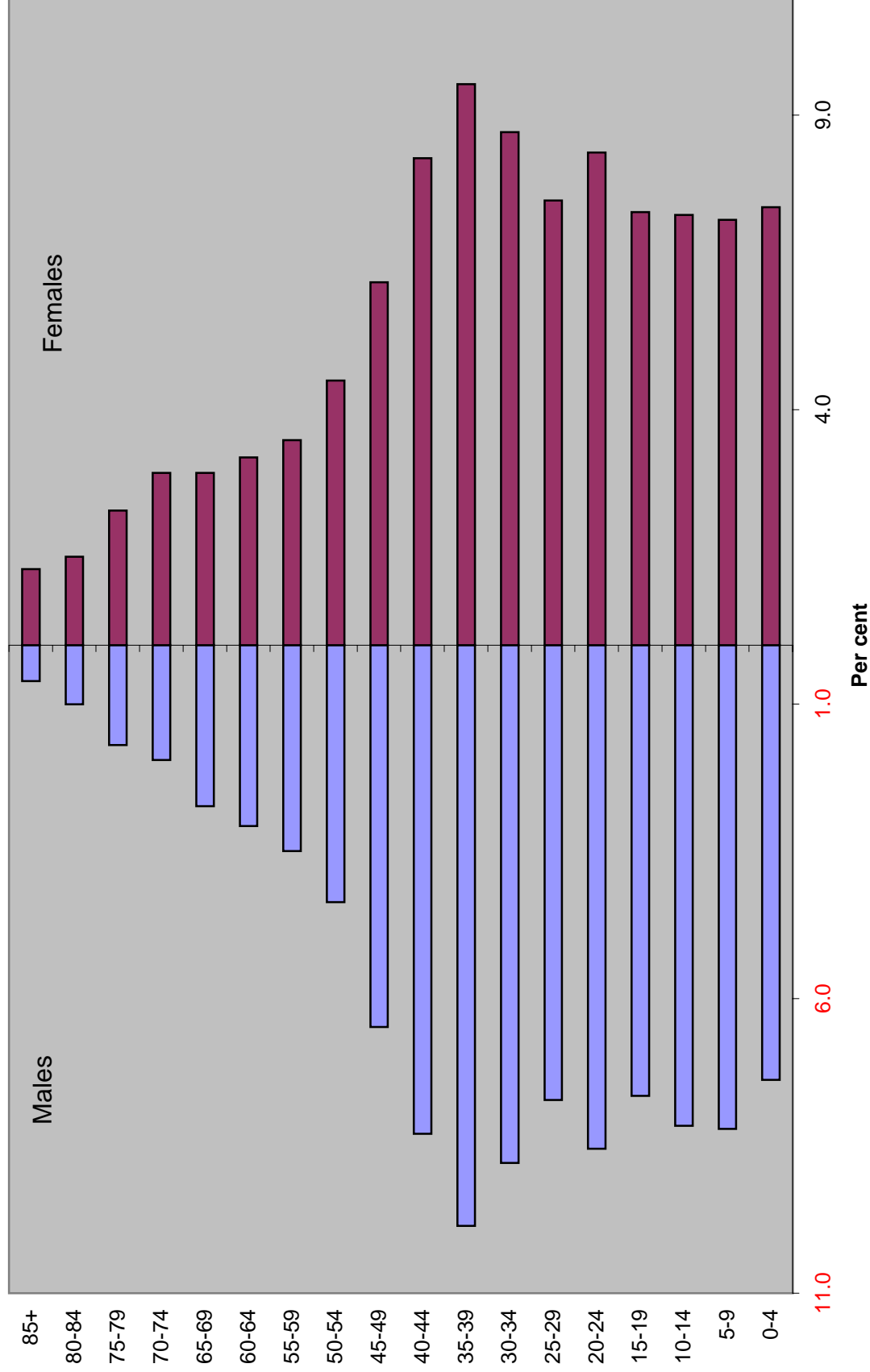
Age and Sex Distribution, Lethbridge, 1996



Age and Sex Distribution, Medicine Hat 1996



Age and Sex Distribution, Red Deer, 1996



in terms of the proportions of people with less than a high school education at one end, and the proportions of people with a university degree at the other end.

For example, Table 4-3 shows that 11.3% of the adult population in Medicine Hat has less than a Grade 9 education, compared to only 4.4% of the population in Fort McMurray in that educational category. The comparable proportion for all of Alberta is 7.1%. At the other extreme of educational attainment, Calgary is distinguished by having the largest proportion (20.8%) of the population with a university degree, compared to 8.8% with a similar educational attainment in Fort McMurray. Uniquely, however, among the seven host communities, Fort McMurray records the largest proportions of people with a trades certificate (31.1%) or with some postsecondary training (17.4%).

Family Size

In terms of family size, there are no noteworthy differences among the seven host communities. Table 4-4 shows that among married or common-law families, the average number of persons per family ranges from 3.0 (for Lethbridge and Medicine Hat) to 3.2 (for Grande Prairie). Similarly, among lone-parent families, the average number of persons per family ranges from 2.5 (for Calgary) to 2.7 (for Grande Prairie).

Home Ownership

Home ownership is a common experience among Albertans. For example, 67.8% of families in Alberta reported that they owned their dwelling in 1996, compared to 31.7% living in rental property (Table 4-5). Research as well as anecdotal evidence indicates that immigrants and refugees tend to be more satisfied when they own their place of residence. There are no official statistics regarding home ownership among immigrants/refugees; however, in Table 3-10, Chapter 3, we observed that only 26% of refugees in this study owned their own homes.

C. Social and Cultural Diversity Within the Host Communities

As an immigrant receiving country, Canada exhibits a high degree of demographic and socio-cultural diversity. This diversity is mirrored, in varying degrees, in Canada's urban centres from coast to coast. Table 4-6, compiled from different sources, compares the seven host communities on four major indices of diversity: percentage of immigrants (i.e., foreign born) in

the population; percentage of the population with racial or visible minority status; percentage of the population with knowledge of non-official languages; and percentage of the population whose mother tongue is neither English nor French, but rather a “heritage” language. These indices of diversity will be discussed briefly in turn, but first, a few general observations about this table are in order.

The first observation that can be made from Table 4-6 is that on each of the four indices of diversity, Edmonton and Calgary are above the provincial average, while the remaining centres fall below this average (meaning that they are less diverse than Edmonton and Calgary). Second, on the indices under consideration, Edmonton is decidedly more diverse than Calgary. Third, if ranks are assigned to each community from high (rank 1) to low (rank 7) on each index, and then summed across the four indices and averaged, the average ranks for the seven communities would read as follows: Edmonton (1); Calgary (2); Lethbridge (3.25); Medicine Hat (5.0), Fort McMurray (5.0); Red Deer (5.75); and Grande Prairie (6.0). In descriptive terms, Edmonton and Calgary would be classified as “high” on diversity; Lethbridge would be classified as “medium”; Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray would be classified as “medium-low;” and Red Deer and Grande Prairie would be classified “low” on diversity.

Immigrant Population

Table 4-7 shows the total immigrant population in 1991 for the host communities by period of immigration (before 1961, 1961-1970, 1971-1980, and 1981-1990). Considering all periods, it will be observed that the most popular destinations have been Edmonton and Calgary, accounting for 40.1% (n=152,805) and 39.8% (n=151,745), respectively, of all Alberta-bound immigrants. A distant third is Lethbridge (accounting for 9,105, or 2.4%, of these immigrants), followed by Red Deer (n=5,285, or 1.4%), Medicine Hat (n=4,130, or 1.1%), Fort McMurray (n=3,870, or 1.0%), and Grande Prairie (accounting for 2,425, or 0.6%, of all immigrants to Alberta).

It is interesting to note that most of the immigrants to the five smaller centres have been recent arrivals, with the exception of Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. For the period prior to 1961, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat (and to a lesser degree Red Deer) attracted many more immigrants than in the decades that followed. On the other hand, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie began

to attract more immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s, but the numbers continued to be relatively small.

Government statistics show that, between 1991 and 1996, the percentage of immigrants living in Edmonton has increased from 18.5% to 22.5%, and in Calgary from 20.4% to 21.7% (data not shown in a table). During this same period, the percentages of immigrants in Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Grande Prairie remained relatively stable, while those for Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray declined by about one percentage point each.

In terms of country of birth, Table 4-8 shows that in 1991 50.7% of all the immigrants to Alberta were from Europe; 4.0% were from India and 24.9% from other Asiatic countries, for a total of 28.9% from Asia; 7.8% were from the United States; 4.5% were from Central and South America; 4.2% were from Africa; 2.2% were from the Caribbean and Bermuda; and 1.7% were from Oceania and other countries. Again, in 1991, relative to the provincial average, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie had a larger share of immigrants from Central and South America; Edmonton and Calgary had a larger share of immigrants from Africa; Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie had a larger share of immigrants from India; and, finally, Edmonton, Calgary, and Fort McMurray had a larger share of immigrants from Asiatic countries other than India. Notably, in 1991 about one-third of all the immigrants in Fort McMurray (and, for that matter, in Edmonton and Calgary) were of Asiatic origin. These census statistics clearly show that immigrants have become increasingly dispersed throughout the host communities in Alberta.

Unfortunately, the Canadian Census does not distinguish refugees from other immigrants, even though refugees constitute about 12.5% of all immigrants landed in Canada (Statistics Canada. The 1996 Census of Canada, The Nation Series on CD Rom, 1998). Thus, in all the preceding (and in most subsequent tables) the term “immigrant” refers to voluntary immigration as well as to forced immigration (i.e., refugees). There is, however, one source of information (the Landed Immigrant Data base) from which we were able to obtain precise figures on the number of refugees who arrived in the seven host communities in Alberta during the period 1992-1997. This information is reported in Table 4-9 and Figure 4-10.

We see that the overwhelming majority of government and privately sponsored refugees are destined to Edmonton and Calgary (6,236 out of a total of 7,351 or 85%). Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Medicine Hat receive roughly one-tenth the number of refugees as do Edmonton and Calgary. However, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray receive even smaller numbers of refugees.

Considering the six-year period covered in this study (1992-1997), the largest number of refugees arrived in Alberta in 1992. This is also reflected in the refugee populations of three of the communities in the study. Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer all recorded the highest percentage of refugees arriving in their communities in this year (Figure 4-10). However, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray witnessed the arrival of the largest proportion of their refugees in subsequent years. Over one-third of Fort McMurray's refugees arrived in 1996 and close to one-third of Grande Prairie's refugees arrived in 1995. For the remaining communities (Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Red Deer), the numbers of refugees arriving annually in each city between 1994 and 1997 were roughly equivalent, excepting Lethbridge where the number of refugee arrivals was significantly lower in 1996 than in any of the other years.

Visible Minority Status

About 9 out of 10 Albertans identify themselves as white, while the remainder regard themselves as visible minorities (Table 4-11). However, there are notable differences in self-definition among cities. For example, 18.1% of Edmonton's population and 16.5% of Calgary's population identify themselves as visible minorities. At the other extreme, only 3.3% of Grande Prairie's population and 3.4% of Medicine Hat's population identify themselves as visible minorities.

In both Edmonton and Calgary, relatively large proportions identify themselves as Chinese or South Asian. In the former city, in particular, Blacks constitute a very large segment of the visible minority population. With reference to the other centres, the largest visible minority category in Fort McMurray is South Asian; in Lethbridge, Chinese or Japanese; in Medicine Hat, Chinese, Latin American and South Asian; in Red Deer, Chinese, South Asian, and Latin American; and in Grande Prairie, the largest visible minority categories are Chinese, South Asian, and Latin American.

While visible minority status is an important aspect of diversity, ethnic origin (or ethnicity) is also important. Scores of ethnicities are represented in the Canadian population; however, that kind of detail is not currently available for the host communities in Alberta. Nevertheless, Table 4-12 reports some useful information on ethnic origin for 1991. The most common ethnic origin reported for all centres is British, averaging about 20% of all the responses. However, those who reported multiple origins ranged from 40% to 50% of the population. Uniquely, Edmonton accommodates a large Ukrainian-origin community accounting for 6.3% of the population. Medicine Hat has a large German-origin community that accounts for 23.8% of the population. Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie have strong aboriginal representation (5.2% in Fort McMurray and 4.3% in Grande Prairie).

Knowledge of Languages

The 1996 Canadian Census shows 81% of the Alberta population being unilingual English speakers (Table 4-13). The comparable percentages for specific cities range from 73.1% in Edmonton to 91% in Fort McMurray. Focusing on the absence of English language ability, the Canadian Census shows that, in 1991, about 2% of the Edmonton and Calgary populations and less than 1% of the populations in the other centres did not know English (data not shown in table). It is noteworthy that the most bilingual centre is Fort McMurray. With particular reference to refugees, the 1996 Landed Immigrant Database shows that their knowledge of English varies widely. On average, however, only 3 out of 10 refugees destined to Alberta reportedly knew some English upon arrival (it should be noted that knowledge of English is based on self-report; there are no indications of actual proficiency levels).

Table 4-3
Education Statistics, Selected Communities in Alberta, 1996

	% of Population					
	Less than Gr. 9	Less than High School	High School Diploma	Some Post-Secondary	Trades Certificate	University Degree
Edmonton	7.6	24.2	11.3	12.8	26.4	17.6
Calgary	5.2	21.8	11.4	14.2	26.5	20.8
Lethbridge	6.9	25.0	11.1	15.3	27.5	14.3
Red Deer	5.1	30.3	11.8	13.4	28.0	11.4
Medicine Hat	11.3	30.7	11.3	11.4	26.1	9.3
Grande Prairie	5.0	28.9	13.3	12.2	29.9	10.7
Fort McMurray	4.4	25.6	12.7	17.4	31.1	8.8
Alberta	7.1	26.4	11.8	12.4	27.1	15.1

Note:
for the population aged 15 years and over.

Source:
Statistics Canada (1998) 1996 Census of Canada: Nation Series.

Table 4-4
Family Characteristics, Selected Communities in Alberta, 1996

	Married or Common-law			Lone-Parent Family		
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average persons per family</u>	<u>Average Income</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average persons per family</u>	<u>Average Income</u>
Edmonton	133,780	3.1	\$58,375	27,835	2.6	\$28,844
Calgary	176,280	3.1	\$67,309	27,950	2.5	\$33,497
Lethbridge	14,745	3.0	\$55,912	2,430	2.6	\$30,871
Red Deer	13,035	3.1	\$59,181	2,730	2.6	\$26,532
Medicine Hat	11,510	3.0	\$54,164	1,670	2.6	\$26,503
Grande Prairie	7,050	3.2	\$62,339	1,090	2.7	\$30,262
Fort McMurray	7,780	n.a.	\$81,824	4,538	n.a.	n.a.
Alberta	625,080	3.2	\$60,771	92,485	2.6	\$30,860

Source:
Statistics Canada (1998). 1996 Census of Canada.

Table 4-5
Dwelling Characteristics, Selected Communities in Alberta, 1996

	Total	Owned		Rented		Average Value of Owned Dwellings (\$)
		N	%	N	%	
Edmonton	240,055	138,425	57.7	101,625	42.3	\$126,605
Calgary	288,320	185,520	64.3	102,805	35.7	\$150,820
Lethbridge	24,500	16,785	68.5	7,715	31.5	\$111,890
Red Deer	22,415	13,315	59.4	9,100	40.6	\$119,710
Medicine Hat	18,455	13,145	71.2	5,310	28.8	\$108,257
Grande Prairie	10,840	6,795	62.7	4,045	37.3	\$117,186
Fort McMurray	11,185	7,230	64.6	3,955	35.4	\$93,770
Total Alberta	979,175	664,165	67.8	310,300	31.7	\$126,979

Source:
 Statistics Canada (1998). 1996 Census of Canada: The Nation Series.

Table 4-6

Indices of Diversity, Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991-1996

	% Immigrant	% Visible Minority	% Speak Heritage Language	% Mother Tongue is Non-official Language*
Edmonton	22.5	18.1	24.7	19.6
Calgary	21.7	16.5	19.5	17.4
Lethbridge	14.1	7.8	14.5	15.3
Red Deer	9.7	5	8.6	8.9
Medicine Hat	9.2	3.4	12.4	13.6
Grande Prairie	7.6	3.3	8.9	10.1
Fort McMurray	10.4	8.1	7.5	9.4
Alberta	15.2	10.1	16.9	16.8

* Data for mother tongue are collected from the 1991 Census of Canada. All other data are from the 1996 Census.

Source:

Statistics Canada (1998) 1996 Census of Canada: Nation Series; Statistics Canada (1994) 1991 Census of Canada: Provincial Series, Alberta, Part B. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Table 4-7
**Total Immigrant Population by Period of Immigration for Selected Communities in
Alberta, 1991**

	Before 1961		1961-1970		1971-1980		1981-1991		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Edmonton	38,710	25.3	22,160	14.5	44,110	28.9	47,825	31.3	152,805
Calgary	32,975	21.7	23,900	15.8	44,005	29.0	50,865	33.5	151,745
Lethbridge	4,385	48.2	1,190	13.1	1,675	18.4	1,855	20.4	9,105
Red Deer	1,820	34.4	745	14.1	1,165	22.0	1,555	29.4	5,285
Medicine Hat	2,175	52.7	425	10.3	715	17.3	815	19.7	4,130
Grande Prairie	740	30.5	370	15.3	545	22.5	770	31.8	2,425
Fort McMurray	425	11.0	595	15.4	1,760	45.5	1,090	28.2	3,870
Total Alberta	107,620	28.2	57,110	15.0	103,680	27.2	113,095	29.6	381,505

Sources:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part B. Catalogue: 95-378. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Calgary. Part B. Catalogue: 95-375. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part B. Catalogue: 95-373. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994.

Table 4-8
Immigrant Population and Place of Birth for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991

	United States		Central/South America		Caribbean & Bermuda		United Kingdom		Other Europe		Africa		India		Other Asia		Oceania and Other		Total* Immigrants
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Edmonton	7,625	5.0	7,495	4.9	3,890	2.5	22,410	14.7	51,220	33.5	6,615	4.3	7,635	5.0	43,160	28.2	2,755	1.8	152,805
Calgary	9,560	6.3	6,570	4.3	3,900	2.6	28,080	18.5	42,680	28.1	8,120	5.4	6,455	4.3	43,855	28.9	2,525	1.7	151,745
Lethbridge	1,060	11.6	505	5.5	55	0.6	1,860	20.4	3,850	42.3	105	1.2	135	1.5	1,435	15.8	105	1.2	9,110
Red Deer	740	14.0	400	7.6	50	0.9	1,275	24.1	1,555	29.4	165	3.1	135	2.5	875	16.5	100	1.9	5,295
Medicine Hat	590	14.3	350	8.5	45	1.1	850	20.6	1,745	42.2	20	0.5	50	1.2	445	10.8	40	1.0	4,135
Grande Prairie	335	13.8	175	7.2	30	1.2	415	17.1	825	34.0	35	1.4	160	6.6	425	17.5	30	1.2	2,430
Fort McMurray	185	4.8	175	4.5	125	3.2	1,260	32.6	585	15.1	145	3.8	280	7.2	1,005	26.0	105	2.7	3,865
Total Alberta	29,630	7.8	17,135	4.5	8,485	2.2	67,550	17.7	125,995	33.0	15,880	4.2	15,285	4.0	95,100	24.9	6,455	1.7	381,515

Note:

* Table excludes non-permanent residents.

Sources:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part B. Catalogue: 95-378. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Calgary. Part B. Catalogue: 95-375. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part B. Catalogue: 95-373. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994.

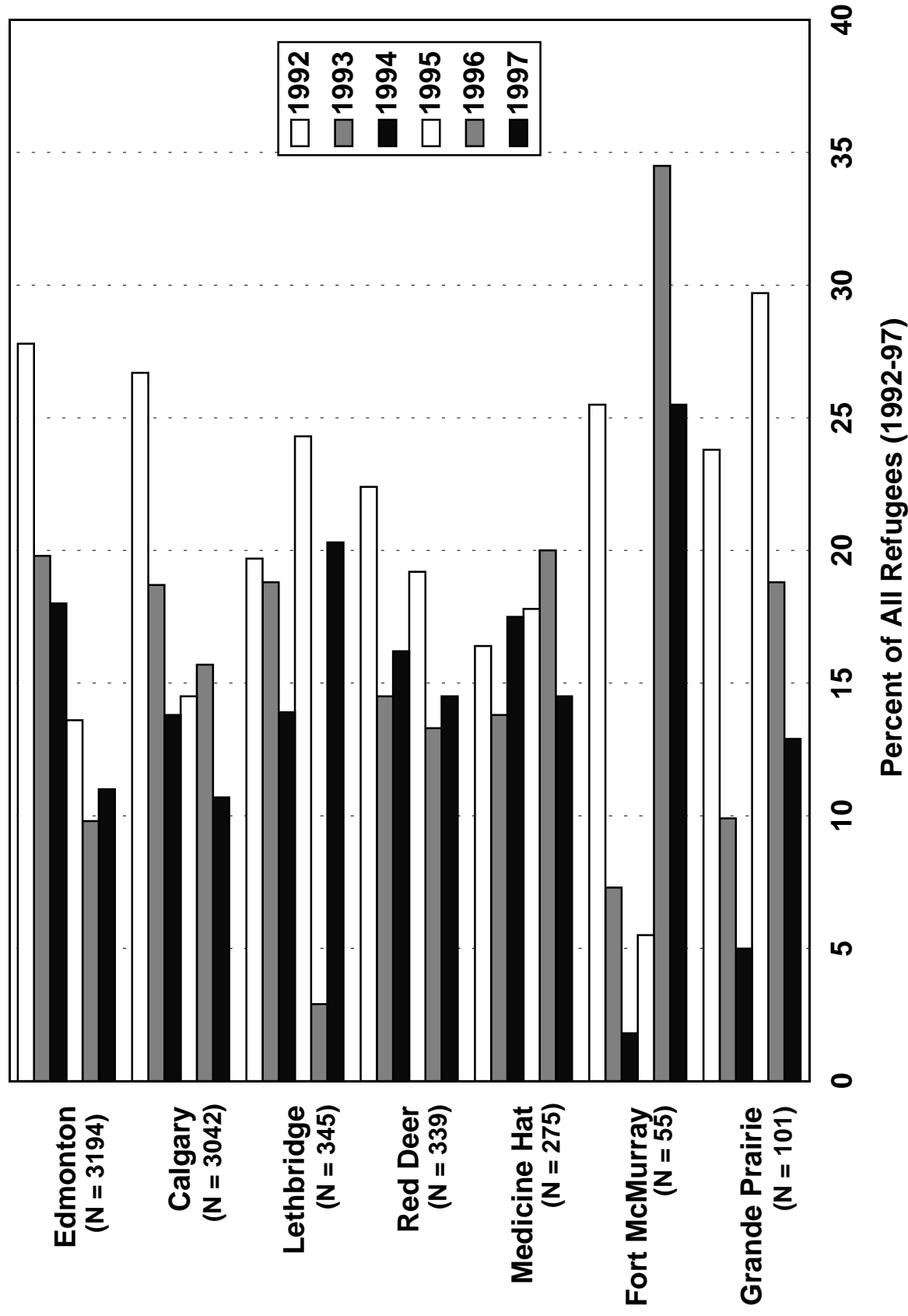
Table 4-9
Number of Refugees by City of Destination, 1992-1997
 Excluding Dependents Abroad and Refugee Claimants

	Edmonton		Calgary		Red Deer		Lethbridge		Medicine Hat		Grande Prairie		Fort McMurray		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1992	889	27.8	811	26.7	76	22.4	68	19.7	45	16.4	24	23.8	14	25.5	1,927
1993	632	19.8	568	18.7	49	14.5	65	18.8	38	13.8	10	9.9	4	7.3	1,366
1994	574	18.0	421	13.8	55	16.2	48	13.9	48	17.5	5	5.0	1	1.8	1,152
1995	434	13.6	441	14.5	65	19.2	84	24.3	49	17.8	30	29.7	3	5.5	1,106
1996	313	9.8	477	15.7	45	13.3	10	2.9	55	20.0	19	18.8	19	34.5	938
1997	352	11.0	324	10.7	49	14.5	70	20.3	40	14.5	13	12.9	14	25.5	862
Total	3,194	100.0	3,042	100.0	339	100.0	345	100.0	275	100.0	101	100.0	55	100.0	7,351

Source:
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Landed Immigrant Data Base, 1992-1997.

Data provided by Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development.

Figure 4-10
Total Refugees by Host City by Year of Arrival *



* Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Landed Immigrant Data Base; see Table 4-9 for actual numbers.

Table 4.11
Visible Minority Population for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1996

	Chinese	South Asian	Black	Arab and		Filipino	Southeast Asian		Latin American	Japanese	Korean	Other Visible Minority NEC	Visible Minorities Total % of Population
				West Asian	East Asian		Asian	Asian					
Edmonton	6.2	3.7	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.0	0.2	0.3	0.6	18.1
Calgary	5.8	3.3	13.9	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.7	16.5
Lethbridge	2.4	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.7	1.1	2.3	0.1	0.1	7.8
Red Deer	1.2	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.3	5.0
Medicine Hat	1.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.1	3.4
Grande Prairie	1.0	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	3.3
Fort McMurray	1.3	1.9	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.4	8.1
Alberta	3.4	2.0	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	10.1

Source:

Statistics Canada (1998) 1996 Census of Canada: Nation Series.

Note: NEC = not elsewhere classified

Table 4-12
Ethnic Origin for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991

	British		French		German		Ukrainian		Chinese		Canadian		Aboriginal		Other Single Origins		Multiple Origins	Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Edmonton	139,125	16.7	27,240	3.3	53,330	6.4	52,610	6.3	32,960	4.0	30,550	3.7	16,585	2.0	137,985	16.6	341,780	41.1
Calgary	164,380	22.0	16,215	2.2	42,095	5.6	14,970	2.0	32,515	4.3	28,085	3.8	5,940	0.8	127,685	17.1	316,325	42.3
Lethbridge	12,805	21.3	890	1.5	4,450	7.4	1,205	2.0	1,405	2.3	1,305	2.2	1,490	2.5	10,205	17.0	26,440	43.9
Red Deer	13,245	23.4	1,360	2.4	3,720	6.6	1,340	2.4	740	1.3	2,010	3.5	605	1.1	5,920	10.4	27,735	48.9
Medicine Hat	6,885	16.0	750	1.7	10,230	23.8	760	1.8	360	0.8	1,435	3.3	335	0.8	3,810	8.9	18,360	42.8
Grande Prairie	5,130	18.4	1,125	4.0	1,855	6.6	980	3.5	450	1.6	805	2.9	1,195	4.3	2,620	9.4	13,760	49.3
Fort McMurray	10,095	29.1	1,705	4.9	905	2.6	650	1.9	750	2.2	1,190	3.4	1,795	5.2	2,920	8.4	14,655	42.3
Total Alberta	493,195	19.6	74,615	3.0	185,635	7.4	104,355	4.1	71,635	2.8	92,490	3.7	68,445	2.7	360,640	14.3	1,068,180	42.4
																		2,519,190

Sources:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part B. Catalogue: 95-378. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Calgary. Part B. Catalogue: 95-375. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part B. Catalogue: 95-373. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994.

Table 4-13
**Knowledge of Official and Non-Official Languages,
 Selected Communities in Alberta, 1996**

	English	French	Both French and English	Other Non-Official Language*
Edmonton	73.1	1.8	0.4	24.7
Calgary	78.8	1.6	0.3	19.5
Lethbridge	84.4	0.8	0.2	14.5
Red Deer	89.9	1.3	0.2	8.6
Medicine Hat	86.5	0.8	0.2	12.4
Grande Prairie	88.0	2.5	0.6	8.9
Fort McMurray	91.0	0.2	8.5	0.3
Alberta	81.0	1.7	0.4	16.9

* Many of these people would also know English, or perhaps French.

Source: Statistics Canada (1998) 1996 Census of Canada: Nation Series

There are wide differences among the host communities in knowledge of non-official languages (Table 4-13). For example, 1996 Census data show that knowledge of languages other than English or French is 'very strong' in Edmonton and Calgary, where 24.7% and 19.5% report knowing a non-official (or heritage) language; 'strong' in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat where 14.5% and 12.4% respectively report knowing a non-official language; and 'somewhat strong' in Grande Prairie and Red Deer where 8.9% and 8.6%, respectively report knowledge of a heritage language.

Detailed statistics are not available for 1996; however, in 1991, the Canadian Census showed that German, Chinese, Ukrainian, Spanish, Dutch, Polish and Italian were among the most common non-official languages in the communities to which refugees have been destined in Alberta (data not shown in a table). But there are important differences in the mix of these non-official languages. For example, although knowledge of German is most common throughout the seven Alberta communities under study, it is highest in Medicine Hat and lowest in Fort McMurray. Chinese, in general, is the next most common non-official language in these

communities. However, only in Fort McMurray is knowledge of Chinese more common than knowledge of German (mainly because the latter is low).

About 8 out of 10 residents of Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge report that English is their mother tongue (1991 Census data), compared to about 9 out of 10 residents in the remaining four communities (Table 4-14). Relatively small percentages report French, Chinese, German, Ukrainian, or Polish as their mother tongue. It is significant, however, that a range of 5%-11% of the population in the host communities report other languages as their mother tongue. Table 4-15 shows that the language used at home in all host communities is overwhelmingly English (ranging from 96.9% for Red Deer to 88.9% for Edmonton). The other home languages reported in this table include French, Chinese, German, Vietnamese, and Polish, and “other.”

D. Labour Force Characteristics

One statistic that is correlated with the well-being of immigrants and certainly refugees in the communities in which they settle is the unemployment rate. Figure 4-16 depicts the total unemployment rate and the youth-specific unemployment rate for Alberta for the period 1976-98. The graph shows that between 1990 and 1993, a period of economic downturn, the unemployment rate in Alberta rose steadily from 7% in 1990 to a high of 9.7% in 1993. However, the unemployment rate then began to decline steadily from 8.6% in 1994 to a low of 5.7% in 1998. During the same two periods, the unemployment rate among youth (ages 15-24) followed a similar pattern, except that the youth unemployment rate, in general, was 60-65% higher than for the total population. It is worth noting that most of the refugees interviewed in this study arrived when the unemployment rate in Alberta was beginning to decline.

Census data show variable unemployment rates for the seven host communities. Table 4-17 provides information by host community on selected labour force indicators for 1996. The table shows that, in 1996, the unemployment rate was lowest (less than 7%) in Calgary and Lethbridge; higher in Medicine Hat, Fort McMurray, and Grande Prairie (ranging from 7.7% to 8%); and highest in Edmonton (9.0%) and Red Deer (9.7%). These variations notwithstanding, it should be noted that the relationship between unemployment rate and well-being is far from perfect. With particular reference to refugees, their well-being tends to be conditioned not only by the unemployment rate, important as it may be, but also by many other factors.

Table 4-17 also shows that six centres reported the percentage employed in resource industries lower than the provincial average of 11.6%. The highest rate of resource industry employment is in Fort McMurray (30.5%), roughly three times the provincial average and four to six times greater than all the other centres. In the goods producing industries (manufacturing and construction), the percentage employed for Alberta is 15.2%. Except for Fort McMurray, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie, all the other centres are at or above this figure. The service industry captured the largest percentages of workers in all centres. About 8 out of 10 workers in Lethbridge and Edmonton reported work in this sector, compared to about 7 out of 10 in the other centres.

Table 4-18 shows the average household income for the seven host communities for 1991 (the latest year for which such information is available). It will be observed that the average yearly household income ranged from a high of \$69,300 in Fort McMurray to a low of \$40,034 in Medicine Hat. The comparable averages for the remaining centres, in descending order, are \$52,152 for Calgary, \$47,371 for Edmonton, \$46,976 for Grande Prairie, \$43,701 for Red Deer, and \$42,179 for Lethbridge.

In terms of future financial prospects, the results of the opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the present study of refugees indicate that community residents were generally optimistic about the future. For example, 42% of the respondents “expect to be better off a year from now.” The respondents from Fort McMurray, Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer are slightly more optimistic about the future than are the residents of the remaining centres. (see Table 3-13, Chapter 3).

E. Geographical Mobility of Community Residents

The seven host communities are home not only to long-term residents but also to migrants and immigrants as well. Table 4-19 shows the 1991 mobility status of the population in each of these communities within a one-year time span, while Table 4-20 shows the residents’ mobility status over a five-year period. At first glance, the two tables seem to be comparable, but upon closer inspection it is evident that there are important differences between them.

Table 4-14
Mother Tongue for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991

	English		French		Chinese		German		Ukrainian		Polish		Other languages*		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Edmonton	654,455	77.9	19,630	2.3	23,890	2.8	20,505	2.4	19,715	2.3	9,165	1.1	92,560	11.0	839,920
Calgary	611,860	81.1	10,535	1.4	24,800	3.3	14,555	1.9	3,875	0.5	5,470	0.7	82,940	11.0	754,035
Lethbridge	51,180	83.9	465	0.8	930	1.5	1,560	2.6	510	0.8	625	1.0	5,705	9.4	60,975
Red Deer	52,275	89.9	745	1.3	450	0.8	745	1.3	275	0.5	185	0.3	3,470	6.0	58,145
Medicine Hat	37,325	85.5	400	0.9	270	0.6	3,085	7.1	180	0.4	120	0.3	2,250	5.2	43,630
Grande Prairie	24,715	87.4	700	2.5	250	0.9	530	1.9	225	0.8	240	0.8	1,605	5.7	28,265
Fort McMurray	30375	87.5	1,060	3.1	375	1.1	220	0.6	155	0.4	95	0.3	2425	7.0	34,705
Total Alberta	2,068,650	81.3	51,100	2.0	52,635	2.1	72,790	2.9	38,690	1.5	18,250	0.7	243,445	9.6	2,545,560

Note:

* Includes multiple "mother tongue" responses.

Sources:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part A. Catalogue: 95-377. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1993; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part A. Catalogue 95-372. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1992; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts in Calgary. Part A. Catalogue 99-374. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1993.

Table 4-15
Home Languages for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991

	English		French		Chinese		German		Vietnamese		Polish		Other languages*		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Edmonton	739,780	88.9	6,255	0.8	21,160	2.5	2,330	0.3	4,935	0.6	5,750	0.7	51,940	6.2	832,150
Calgary	670,185	89.6	3,100	0.4	20,780	2.8	1,850	0.2	5,570	0.7	3,695	0.5	43,040	5.8	748,220
Lethbridge	56,415	93.7	140	0.2	795	1.3	180	0.3	265	0.4	335	0.6	2,055	3.4	60,185
Red Deer	54,905	96.9	95	0.2	490	0.9	15	0.0	120	0.2	75	0.1	960	1.7	56,660
Medicine Hat	41,480	96.6	75	0.2	105	0.2	345	0.8	80	0.2	45	0.1	800	1.9	42,930
Grande Prairie	26,430	94.6	135	0.5	235	0.8	125	0.4	0	0.0	200	0.7	810	2.9	27,935
Fort McMurray	32,815	94.6	380	1.1	360	1.0	15	0.0	30	0.1	0	0.0	1075	3.1	34,675
Total Alberta	2,285,525	90.7	17,805	0.7	45,180	1.8	22,950	0.9	11,305	0.4	10,560	0.4	125,850	5.0	2,519,175

Note:

* Includes multiple "home language" responses.

Sources:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part A. Catalogue: 95-377. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1993;
 Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part A. Catalogue 95-372. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and
 Technology, 1992; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts in Calgary. Part A. Catalogue 99-374. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and

Figure 4-16
Total and Youth Unemployment Rate, Alberta, 1976-1998

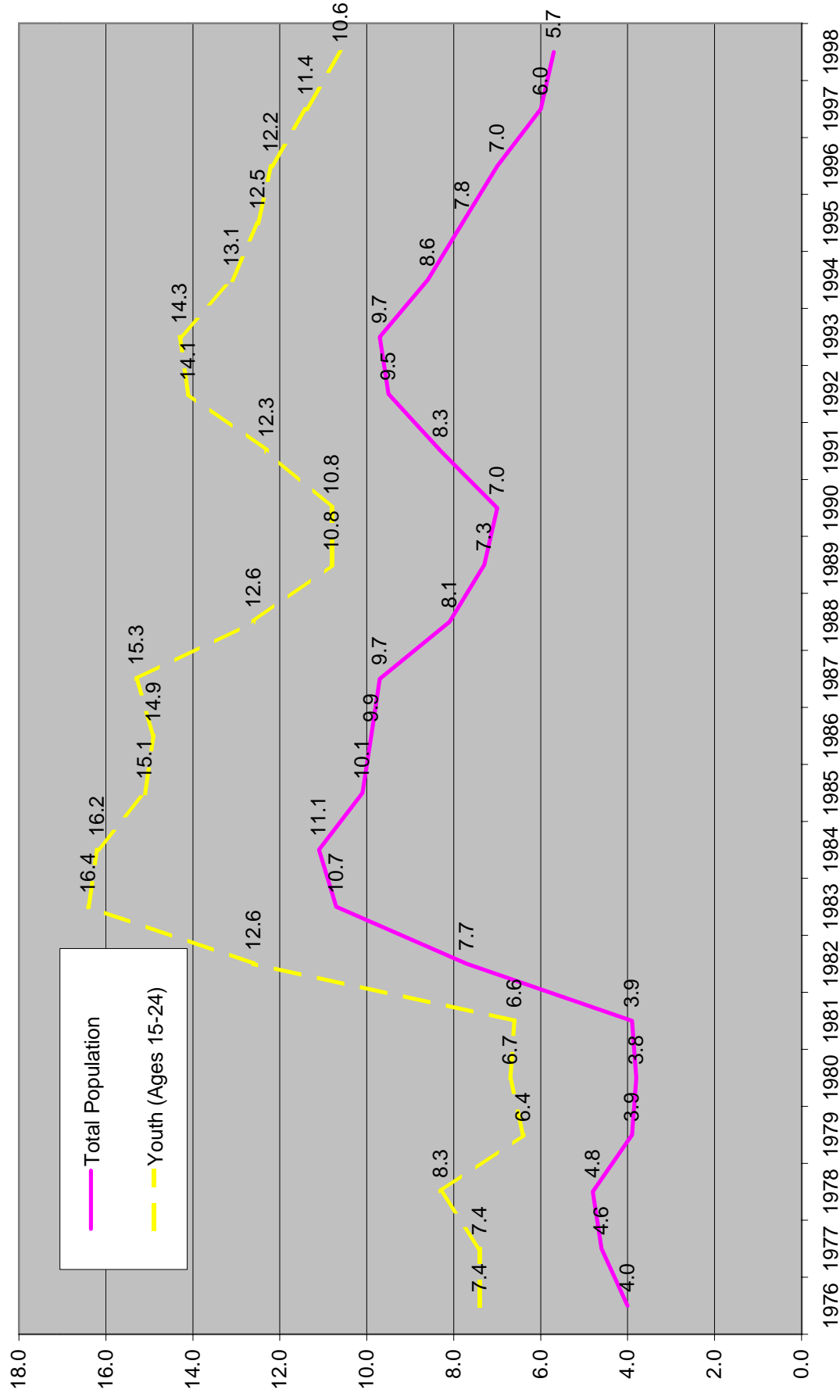


Table 4-17
Selected Labour Force Indicators, Selected Communities in Alberta, 1996

	Unemployment Rate		% in Labour Force		% Reporting Unpaid Senior/ Childcare	% in Agriculture/ Resource Industry	% in Goods Producing	% in Service Industry
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total		
Edmonton	9.3	8.7	9.0	75.5	63.3	69.3	54.1	15.8
Calgary	6.8	6.7	6.7	80.2	67.4	73.7	52.6	16.1
Lethbridge	6.4	7.2	6.8	73.5	61.4	67.2	57.0	15.4
Red Deer	10.6	8.7	9.7	79.8	68.0	73.7	54.1	13.9
Medicine Hat	7.0	8.5	7.7	73.3	59.8	66.3	56.7	16.6
Grande Prairie	7.6	7.8	7.7	85.9	73.6	79.9	55.4	14.9
Fort McMurray	7.0	10.0	8.0	88.0	69.0	79.0	n.a	10.3
Alberta	7.3	7.1	7.2	79.3	65.5	79.3	57.1	15.2
							11.6	73.2

Source:
 Statistics Canada (1998). 1996 Census of Canada: The Nation Series.

Table 4-18
Household Income, All Private Households for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991

	Edmonton		Calgary		Lethbridge		Red Deer		Medicine Hat		Grande Prairie		Fort McMurray	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under \$9,999	21,825	7.1	15,380	5.9	1,495	6.4	1,570	7.3	1,205	7.1	540	5.5	510	4.5
\$10,000-14,999	25,460	8.3	18,685	7.1	2,380	10.2	1,890	8.8	1,920	11.3	840	8.5	405	3.6
\$15,00-19,999	19,920	6.5	16,120	6.1	1,850	7.9	1,595	7.4	1,665	9.8	605	6.1	405	3.6
\$20,000-29,999	39,835	13.0	33,415	12.7	3,865	16.6	2,960	13.8	2,515	14.8	1,065	10.8	625	5.5
\$30,000-39,999	40,465	13.2	34,170	13.0	3,370	14.4	2,900	13.5	2,565	15.1	1,425	14.5	760	6.7
\$40,000-49,999	37,940	12.4	31,395	12.0	2,975	12.8	2,910	13.6	2,180	12.8	1,335	13.5	905	8.0
\$50,000-59,999	34,460	11.3	28,090	10.7	2,495	10.7	2,360	11.0	1,660	9.8	1,310	13.3	1,195	10.6
\$60,000-69,999	26,170	8.5	22,480	8.6	1,610	6.9	1,985	9.3	1,075	6.3	985	10.0	1,180	10.4
Over \$70,000	60,105	19.6	62,640	23.9	3,285	14.1	3,275	15.3	2,185	12.9	1,755	17.8	5,310	47.0
Total Households	306,180	100.0	262,375	100.0	23,325	100.0	21,445	100.0	16,970	100.0	9,860	100.0	11,295	100.0
Average Income	\$47,371		\$52,152		\$42,179		\$43,701		\$40,034		\$46,976		\$69,300	
Median Income	\$41,246		\$43,974		\$35,819		\$39,198		\$34,442		\$42,979		\$66,906	
Standard error of average income	\$160		\$195		\$443		\$474		\$463		\$629		\$768	

Source:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Subdivisions in Alberta. Part B. Catalogue 95-373. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. 1994.

Table 4-19

	Non-movers		Migrants						
	N	%	Intraprovincial migrants		Interprovincial migrants		Immigrants		Total
			N	%	N	%	N	%	
Edmonton	632,620	77.7	154,465	19.0	18,820	2.3	8,290	1.0	814,195
Calgary	559,180	76.3	139,575	19.0	23,950	3.3	9,985	1.4	732,690
Lethbridge	46,210	78.2	11,250	19.0	1,105	1.9	520	0.9	59,085
Red Deer	40,310	72.6	13,305	23.9	1,660	3.0	280	0.5	55,555
Medicine Hat	33,300	79.0	7,545	17.9	1,060	2.5	225	0.5	42,130
Grande Prairie	19,595	71.9	6,585	24.1	1,005	3.7	85	0.3	27,270
Fort McMurray	25,340	74.6	7,220	21.3	1,270	3.7	125	0.4	33,955
Alberta	1,929,955	78.6	439,360	17.9	63,015	2.6	22,355	0.9	2,454,685

Source:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part B. Catalogue 95-378. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part B. Catalogue 95-373. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Calgary. Part B. Catalogue 95-375. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994.

Table 4-20
Mobility Status Five Year for Selected Communities in Alberta, 1991

	Non-movers		Movers										Total				
	N	%	Non-migrants				Intraprovincial migrants				Interprovincial migrants				Immigrants		
			Non-migrants											Immigrants			
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%		
Edmonton	346,070	45.5	245,405	32.2	90,545	11.9	49,250	6.5	30,010	3.9	761,280						
Calgary	282,425	41.2	252,705	36.9	51,805	7.6	64,520	9.4	33,435	4.9	684,890						
Lethbridge	26,630	48.0	15,740	28.4	8,660	15.6	2,935	5.3	1,525	2.7	55,490						
Red Deer	18,115	35.1	17,405	33.7	10,900	21.1	4,270	8.3	950	1.8	51,640						
Medicine Hat	19,865	50.1	11,370	28.7	4,345	11.0	3,455	8.7	645	1.6	39,680						
Grande Prairie	9,065	35.9	8,115	32.2	5,185	20.6	2,350	9.3	505	2.0	25,220						
Fort McMurray	11,290	36.0	11,725	37.4	4,215	13.4	3,515	11.2	595	1.9	31,340						
Alberta	1,081,105	47.2	668,220	29.2	296,845	13.0	170,015	7.4	74,890	3.3	2,291,075						

Source:

Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Edmonton. Part B. Catalogue 95-378. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Divisions and Sub-Divisions in Alberta. Part B. Catalogue 95-373. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994; Statistics Canada. Profile of Census Tracts: Calgary. Part B. Catalogue 95-375. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1994.

For example, Table 4-19 includes children who are 1-4 years of age, while Table 4-20 does not. Also, the columns entitled “Intraprovincial migrants” in the two tables are not strictly comparable. Specifically, whereas Table 4-20 includes a separate column entitled “Non-migrants” (referring to individuals who merely changed their address but not their city of residence), Table 4-19 lumps the non-migrant category together with those who changed their city of residence under the “Intraprovincial migrants” column. This exaggerates the percentage of intraprovincial migrants in Table 4-19, relative to the same category in Table 4-20. To correct for this, it appears that there are about twice as many non-migrants as there are individuals who actually changed their city of residence (judging from the ratio of “intraprovincial migrants” to “non-migrants” in Table 4-20). Accordingly, a more plausible proportion for the category of intraprovincial migrants within a one-year time span is anywhere from 5.5%-6.0%, and not 17.9% as shown in Table 4-19. Also, it is estimated that about 12% of the Alberta population were non-migrants who merely changed their address but not their city of residence (Table 4-19).

Taking these corrections into account, it appears that about 85%-90% of the population in all seven centres did not move during the past twelve months, and the balance, accounting for 10%-15% of the population, were movers. Also, most of the movers were intraprovincial migrants. The communities with the largest proportions of intraprovincial migrants within the specified one-year time span include Grande Prairie, Red Deer, and Fort McMurray. Intraprovincial migrants are slightly less prevalent in Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

In 1991, the proportions of interprovincial (out-of-province) migrants were highest in Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie (3.7% each), Calgary (3.3%), and Red Deer (3.0%). The comparable proportions are lower for Medicine Hat (2.5%), Edmonton (2.3%), and Lethbridge (1.9%).

With reference to immigrants received within a one-year time span, the numbers were highest in Edmonton (8,290) and Calgary (9,985), and much lower in the remaining five centres (ranging from 520 in Lethbridge to only 85 in Grande Prairie). However, as a proportion of the total community population, immigrants who moved within the past 12 months ranged from 1.4% in Calgary, 1.0% in Edmonton, 0.9% in Lethbridge to anywhere from 0.3%-0.5% in the remaining communities (Table 4-19).

If geographical mobility is measured in terms of a five-year rather than one-year time span, one would expect the proportions of movers to be higher. Table 4-20 shows the 1991 mobility status of the population in each of seven host communities, over the preceding five-year time span. The results are clearly in line with expectations. In all of these communities, the movers ranged from one-fifth to one-fourth of the population, resulting in an average of about 76% of the Alberta population being non-movers. The proportions of movers during the specified five-year time span were highest in Red Deer and Fort McMurray, but the comparable proportions for the remaining communities are only slightly lower.

The communities with the largest proportions of intraprovincial migrants within the specified five-year time span include Red Deer (21.1%) and Grande Prairie (20.6%), followed by Lethbridge (15.6%), Fort McMurray (13.4%), Edmonton (11.9%), Medicine Hat (11.0%) and Calgary (7.6%). In 1991, about one in 10 residents of Calgary, Red Deer, Fort McMurray, Medicine Hat and Grand Prairie came from out-of-province within the past five years, compared to only one out of 20 residents of Edmonton and Lethbridge being out-of-province migrants.

As a proportion of the total community population, immigrants who arrived within the past five years ranged from 4.9% in Calgary, 3.9% in Edmonton, and 2.7% in Lethbridge to anywhere from 1.6%-2.0% in Red Deer, Fort McMurray, Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie.

It is noteworthy that Tables 4-19 and 4-20 show a high degree of geographical mobility among the populations of Edmonton and Calgary, as well as among the populations of the smaller centres. When measured in terms of a five-year span, compared to one-year span, the proportions of movers in the population tend to be twice as high.

F. Attitudes Toward Community of Residence and Toward Diversity

The socio-demographic profiles of the seven host communities may be elaborated further by drawing on some of the relevant results of the public opinion surveys which have already been described in Chapters 2 and 3. This section focuses on how the residents of the seven host communities evaluate their own community of residence (Table 4-21); perceptions of community openness to cultural diversity (Table 4-22); opinions about immigration, immigrants,

Table 4-21
Public Opinion Survey: Evaluation of Community by City

		% Agree and % Strongly Agree [#]							
		Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray	Total
(City) is a good place in which to live.	A	31	21	26	26	20	32	28	26
	SA	57	73	63	66	74	60	54	64 *
There are good job opportunities here for me. [^]	A	31	30	35	35	23	26	18	28
	SA	29	57	16	34	19	57	64	41 *
(City) is a good place in which to raise a family.	A	38	30	31	30	25	32	33	32
	SA	43	51	64	61	66	58	44	54 *
The people in (City) are very friendly and welcoming.	A	39	35	52	43	39	49	27	40
	SA	32	49	26	34	45	34	46	38 *
(City) is very open to newcomers.	A	29	47	37	39	33	36	43	38
	SA	31	27	24	26	30	32	37	29

Respondents answered on a 5 point scale with '1' representing "Strongly Disagree" and '5' representing "Strongly Agree". Only values of '4' (Agree) and '5' (Strongly Agree) are shown in the table.

* City differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

[^] 11 percent of all respondents (typically older respondents) did not answer, since they considered the question to be non-applicable.

and refugees (Table 4-23); and perceptions of whether immigrants or refugees are accepted and treated fairly (Table 4-24).

Table 4-21 shows that the overwhelming majority of the respondents from the seven host centres either agree or strongly agree with the statement that their community “is a good place in which to live.” The relevant proportions in Calgary (94%), Red Deer (92%), Medicine Hat (94%), and Grande Prairie (92%) are slightly higher than in Edmonton (88%), Lethbridge (89%), and Fort McMurray (82%). It is interesting that the respondents who “strongly agreed” with the statement were most prevalent in Calgary (73%) and Medicine Hat (74%), followed by those in Lethbridge (63%), Red Deer (66%), and Grande Prairie (60%). The percentages of the respondents who agreed with the statement very strongly were lowest in Edmonton (57%) and Fort McMurray (54%).

Table 4-21 also shows that respondents who “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that “There are good job opportunities here for me” are most prevalent in Calgary (87%), Grande Prairie (83%) and Fort McMurray (82%). Good job opportunities are perceived to be present by a smaller proportion of respondents in Edmonton (60%), Lethbridge (51%), and Medicine Hat (42%). Red Deer’s residents fall in the middle as 69% of them agree or strongly agree with the statement. However, the community residents’ perceptions regarding job opportunities in 1998 do not exactly correspond to the 1996 unemployment rates reported in Table 4-17.

Despite the reservations that some community residents may have about job opportunities in their own city, the overwhelming majority (81%-95%) either agree or strongly agree with the statement that “(City) is a good place in which to raise a family.” A slightly lower proportion of the respondents in Fort McMurray (77%) similarly agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Table 4-21 also shows that the statement ‘The people in (City) are very friendly and welcoming’ attracted mixed reactions. While the respondents who either agree or strongly agree with the statement ranged from 71% in Edmonton to 84% in Calgary and Medicine Hat, city differences were particularly wide among those who chose the ‘strongly agree’ category. For example, only 26% of the Lethbridge respondents strongly agreed with the statement, compared with 49% of the Calgary respondents. The comparable proportions for Edmonton, Red Deer and Grande

Prairie ranged from 32%-34%; while the percentages for Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray were decidedly higher (45% and 46%, respectively).

A majority of the respondents in the public opinion survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “(City) is very open to newcomers”, with notable variations among the centres. For example, 80% of the residents of Fort McMurray and 74% of the residents of Calgary perceived their community to be open to newcomers, while slightly lower proportions of the residents of the remaining communities felt likewise (60%-68%). Table 4-22 provides information on perceptions of community openness to cultural diversity and immigrants. Four items were used to measure openness to cultural diversity.

The first item was worded as follows: “A mixture of different lifestyles and cultures makes (City) a more attractive place to live.” About two-thirds of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The same statement was used in a 1994 national survey conducted by EKOS Research (see Suzanne Peters, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1995, p. 137). However, they used a 1-7 scale while we used a 1-5 scale. The EKOS survey found a mean score of 5.4 on the 1-7 scale, while in the Alberta survey we found a mean score of 3.88 on the 1-5 scale. If the two scales are standardized by calculating a score out of a possible 100 points, the EKOS national survey would have a score of 78 out of 100, while our public opinion survey would have a score of 77 out of 100. It appears that Alberta, or at least urban Alberta, is not all that different from the nation at large.

Three additional statements, phrased in an opposite direction from the preceding one, were asked of the respondents. These statements read as follows:

People who come to this city should change their ways to be more like other community members.

I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to (City).

I worry that the way of life in (City) is being threatened by high levels of immigration.

Only the first of the above statements attracted a large minority of the respondents to either agree or strongly agree with it (37%). Differences by city, in general, are neither large nor statistically significant. The remaining two statements were endorsed, in terms of “agree” or “strongly agree”, by about 2 out of 10 respondents. Judging from the percentages reported in Table 4-22, it appears that the smaller centres (Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray) are more open and less threatened by immigration than are the larger centres (Edmonton and Calgary).

It would be interesting to compare the responses to the last statement with those obtained from the aforementioned 1994 national survey conducted by EKOS Research. In the EKOS survey, the respondents were asked to agree or disagree with: “I worry that the traditional Canadian way of life is being threatened by high levels of immigration.” EKOS obtained a mean score of 4.23 on their 1-7 scale, while we obtained a mean score of 2.18 on our 1-5 scale. When we standardize the two scales, the national EKOS survey score is 60 out of 100, compared to our score of 44 out of 100. It appears that urban Alberta respondents are less worried about the way of life in their community than Canadians as a whole are worried about the “Canadian way of life.”

Table 4-23 provides additional information on community attitudes toward immigration, immigrants and refugees. Again this table is made up of several structured questions with predetermined response categories. The first question reads: “In your opinion, do you feel there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada? (200,000 to 225,000 per year).” The response categories provided are “too many,” “right number,” “too few,” and “don’t know.” The results show that 39% said “too many,” 44% said “right number,” 12% said “too few,” and 5% said “don’t know.” The same question was included in a 1994 national survey conducted by Perspectives Canada (see Suzanne Peters, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1995, p. 135). They found that 51% said “too many,” 36% said “about the right number,” 8% said “too few,” and 6% said “don’t know.” It is clear that the Alberta survey, conducted four years after the Perspectives Canada survey, reflects more favourable attitudes toward immigrants.

The second question in the Alberta survey was: “Does Canada’s immigration policy provide a good balance of people and backgrounds coming to Canada, or does it allow too many people of different races and cultures into Canada?” The results show that 66% of the respondents said “good balance,” 24% said “too many races/cultures,” and 10% said “don’t know.” The same question was used in a 1993 and a 1995 Decima national survey (see Suzanne Peters, *Exploring Canadian Values: Foundations for Well-Being*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 1995, p. 137). In the 1993 Decima survey, 54% said “good balance,” 41% said “too many races/cultures,” and 7% said “don’t know.” In 1995, the comparable figures were 46%, 46%, and 8%, respectively. Again, the Alberta survey, compared to earlier national surveys, reflects more positive attitudes toward diversity.

Table 4-23 also shows that about 8 out of 10 respondents are in agreement with current immigration policy as they feel that immigrants and refugees should be allowed to sponsor immediate family members (spouses and children). Conversely, 18% feel that immigrants and refugees should not be able to sponsor immediate family members. Also, 76% of the respondents feel that Canada should admit immigrants who speak neither of the official languages; 19% feel that immigration should be restricted to those who speak English or French, and a further 3% would restrict immigration only to those who speak English.

Before concluding this chapter, it will be worthwhile to provide additional evidence from the public opinion survey concerning the residents’ perceptions of whether immigrants and refugees are accepted and treated fairly in the community. Table 4-24 shows that a large majority of the respondents (79%) agree with the statement “that most people in (City) accept (refugees’ and immigrants’) cultural differences.” City differences on this questions are not large.

The same table shows that about two-thirds of the respondents concur with the statement that “refugees and other immigrants are treated fairly when they look for jobs in (City).” However, there are significant city differences in the responses to this statement. Considerably more people (8 out of 10) in Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray concur with the statement than in Edmonton, Calgary or Lethbridge (where only about 5 out of 10 concurred). Red Deer is in the middle, with about 7 out of 10 feeling that immigrants are treated fairly when they look for jobs. With reference to housing, about 7 out of 10 respondents believe that refugees and

immigrants are treated fairly when they look for housing. There are minimal city differences in responses to the question on housing, with the exception of Fort McMurray where a high of 82% of the residents concurred with the statement.

The evidence provided thus far indicates that the majority of the residents in each of the seven host communities under study are positive toward and accepting of refugees and diversity. Nevertheless, there is a minority of residents who are not as open or as welcoming of immigrants, or who perceive that there are “too many” immigrants and refugees coming to Canada.

G. Summary

Table 4-25 summarizes and highlights the main elements of the statistical and attitudinal profiles of the seven cities under study. The results of this chapter provide a basis for a more analytic discussion, later in the report, of the relationship between geographical mobility among refugees on the one hand, and community attitudes and demographics on the other.

Table 4-22

Public Opinion Survey: Community Openness to Cultural Diversity and Immigration By City

	% Agree and % Strongly Agree #							
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray	Total
A mixture of different lifestyles and cultures makes (City) a more attractive place to live.	A 38	31	32	31	26	34	32	32
	SA	35	42	27	31	30	43	34
People who come to this city should change their ways to be more like other community members.	A 20	18	15	17	21	12	17	18
	SA	23	15	18	22	13	15	19
I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to (City).	A 14	13	13	1	8	8	5	10 *
	SA	14	18	12	6	7	11	11
I worry that the way of life in (City) is being threatened by high levels of immigration.	A 11	12	3	3	11	6	7	8 *
	SA	12	16	9	5	1	5	9

Respondents answered on a 5 point scale with '1' representing "Strongly Disagree" and '5' representing "Strongly Agree". Only values of '4' (Agree) and '5' (Strongly Agree) shown in the table.

* City differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 4-23

Public Opinion Survey: Opinions about Immigration, Immigrants and Refugees

	Right			Don't Know	Total
	<u>Too Many</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Too Few</u>	<u>Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
In your opinion, do you feel there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada? (200,000 to 225,000 per year)	39%	44%	12%	5%	100%
Does Canada's Immigration Policy provide a good balance of people and backgrounds coming to Canada, or does it allow too many people of different races and cultures into Canada?	<u>Good Balance</u>	<u>Too Many Races/Cultures</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
	66%	24%		10%	100%
Under the current immigration policy, immigrants and refugees are allowed to sponsor immediate family members (spouses and children) who want to come to Canada. Do you think they would be able to sponsor such family members, or not?	<u>Yes, Should be able to Sponsor</u>	<u>No, Should not be able to Sponsor</u>		<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
	79%	18%		3%	100%
Not all immigrants or refugees can speak English or French. Do you think immigration should be restricted to only those who can speak English or French, or should we also accept individuals who speak neither of the official languages?	<u>Eng/French Only</u>	<u>Admit Others</u>	<u>Restrict to English</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>
	19%	76%	3%	2%	100%
Should refugees or immigrant parents have to pay for "English as a second language training" for their children who can't speak English?	<u>Yes, Both Groups</u>	<u>Only Immigrants</u>	<u>Only Refugees</u>	<u>Both if Affordable</u>	<u>Neither</u>
	42%	2%	<1%	16%	37%
				3%	100%

Note: City differences were not significant for all six questions.

Table 4-24
Public Opinion Survey: Residents' Perceptions of Whether Refugees/Immigrants are Accepted, Treated Fairly & Need Special Programs and Services - By City

	% Yes #						
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray
Do you think that most people in (City) accept (refugees' and immigrants') cultural differences?	79%	74%	82%	79%	79%	79%	86%
Do you think refugees and other immigrants are treated fairly when they look for jobs in (City)?	50%	58%	55%	69%	79%	73%	81%
Do you think refugees and other immigrants are treated fairly when they look for housing in (City)?	63%	63%	70%	68%	76%	68%	82%
Do you think refugees or immigrants need any special programs and services to help them adjust to Canada?	81%	80%	81%	80%	73%	80%	64%
							77% *

These questions were asked only of the 83% of respondents who indicated that they knew of refugees or immigrants living in their community (See Table P-6).

* City differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 4-25

Host Community Profiles: Demographics and Community Attitudes

Edmonton

Demographics: Large urban centre. "Typical" age-sex distribution. Very highly educated population. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: High level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees very prevalent in absolute and relative terms. High level share of visible minorities covering a wide range. Heritage languages very prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Relatively high unemployment rate. Highly service-based economy. Average yearly household income medium-high. Residents somewhat optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province slightly less prevalent. Medium-high proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Very friendly and welcoming. Open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Calgary

Demographics: Large urban centre. "Typical" age-sex distribution. Very highly educated population. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: High level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees very prevalent in absolute and relative terms. High level share of visible minorities covering a wide range. Heritage languages highly prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Relatively low unemployment rate. Service-based economy. Average yearly household income somewhat high. Residents quite optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province slightly less prevalent. Relatively high proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Very positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Very friendly and welcoming. Open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Lethbridge

Demographics: Medium-small urban centre. Relatively older population. Highly educated population. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: Medium level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees present in modest numbers. Medium level share of visible minorities (particularly Chinese and Japanese). Heritage languages very prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Relatively low unemployment rate. Highly service-based economy. Average yearly household income medium-low. Residents somewhat optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province slightly less prevalent. Medium-high proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Very positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Friendly and welcoming. Highly open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Red Deer

Demographics: Medium-small urban centre. “Typical” age-sex distribution. Highly educated population. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: Low level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees present in modest numbers. Relatively low level share of visible minorities (particularly Chinese, South Asian and Latin American). Heritage languages somewhat prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Relatively high unemployment rate. Service-based economy. Average yearly household income medium-low. Residents quite optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province migrants prevalent. Relatively lower proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Very positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Very friendly and welcoming. Highly open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Medicine Hat

Demographics: Medium-small urban centre. Relatively older population. Fairly educated population with prevalence of less than high school education. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: Medium-low level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees present in modest numbers. Relatively low level share of visible minorities (including Chinese, Latin American and South Asian). Heritage languages very prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Medium-high unemployment rate. Highly service-based economy. Average yearly household income relatively low. Residents quite optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province slightly less prevalent. Relatively lower proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Very positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Highly friendly and welcoming. Highly open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Grande Prairie

Demographics: Small urban centre. Somewhat youthful population. Fairly educated population with prevalence of trades skills. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: Low level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees present in smaller numbers. Relatively low level share of visible minorities (including Chinese, South Asian, and Latin American). Heritage languages somewhat prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Medium-high unemployment rate. Resource-based economy. Average yearly household income medium-high. Residents quite optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province migrants prevalent. Very low proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Very positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Very friendly and welcoming. Highly open to immigration and cultural diversity.

Fort McMurray

Demographics: Small urban centre. Very youthful population. Fairly educated population with prevalence of trades skills. Average family size. Home ownership prevalent.

Cultural Diversity: Medium-low level of cultural and population diversity. Immigrants/refugees present in smaller numbers. Medium level share of visible minorities (particularly South Asian but also Chinese. Heritage languages somewhat prevalent.

Labour force indicators: Medium-high unemployment rate. Resource-based economy. Average yearly household income relatively high. Residents somewhat optimistic about the future.

Geographical Mobility: Intraprovincial and out-of-province migrants prevalent. Relatively lower proportion of immigrants.

Attitudes toward community of residence: Positive.

Community attitudes toward cultural diversity and immigrants: Highly friendly and welcoming. Highly open to immigration and cultural diversity.

GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY OF REFUGEES

A. Introduction

This chapter directly addresses two of the most central research questions in this study:

- How many of the refugees destined to each of the Alberta host communities left?
- Why did they leave?

We begin by examining the refugee “retention rates” for each of the seven host communities. We then compare the level of geographic mobility among refugees to Census data for the Alberta population as a whole, to determine whether refugees, on first arrival in Canada, are unusually mobile. The specific mobility patterns of refugees who did leave their first host community are also discussed (e.g., How long did they stay in their destined community? Where did they go?). The chapter then turns to a discussion of the explanations provided by adult “leavers” for moving away from the first city in which they lived. Findings from other parts of the larger study are examined to see if they can help us interpret these explanations. In addition, an analysis of the future mobility intentions of refugees currently living in each of the host cities is presented.

The focus then shifts to settlement service providers’ explanations of why refugees leave their first community. Finally, opinions of residents of the seven host communities regarding the relationship between city size and satisfactory refugee adjustment to life in Canada are discussed.

B. Refugee Retention Rates

Table 5-1 identifies the destined community and the current city of residence for the total “target sample” of 956 refugees. Sixty percent (576 individuals) were still living in the first community to which they had been sent on arrival in Alberta. Comparing across host

communities, we observe that retention rates are highest in the two largest cities (Edmonton and Calgary) and lowest in the two smallest cities (Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie). For example, 178 of the 231 refugees destined to Calgary were still living in Calgary when located by the research team (a retention rate of 77%). In contrast, only 14 of the 45 refugees destined to

Table 5-1
Refugee Mobility Patterns, all Refugee Sample Members *

Current Residence	Destined Community					
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray
Edmonton	163	7	1	7	--	7
Calgary	10	178	49	17	6	3
Lethbridge	--	4	85	--	--	--
Red Deer	1	--	--	60	--	--
Medicine Hat	--	--	1	--	68	3
Grande Prairie	--	--	--	--	--	--
Fort McMurray	2	--	--	--	2	8
Other Alberta	--	3	--	--	1	--
Quebec/Nova Scotia	--	--	3	1	--	--
Ontario	37	14	22	20	22	2
Man./Sask.	--	1	--	--	6	--
British Columbia	3	14	18	3	5	--
Other #	1	--	5	2	--	--
Not located	19	10	12	--	5	--
TOTAL	236	231	196	110	115	23
Retention rate (%)	69%	77%	43%	55%	59%	35%

* This table includes all refugees (adults and youth) in the original "final sample." Not all these individuals were interviewed (see Table 2-1).
Includes two deceased individuals, and six who returned to their country of origin.

Grande Prairie were still living there (a 31% retention rate). The mid-sized communities of Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat had retention rates of 43%, 55%, and 59%, respectively. It is noteworthy that Lethbridge, the largest of these three mid-sized host communities, had the lowest retention rate of the three. In short, refugees destined to larger communities are more likely to stay, although Lethbridge appears to be an exception to this pattern.

While unlikely, it is possible that the different retention rates simply reflect the fact that most of the refugees destined to the smaller communities arrived early in the 1992-97 study period, while most of those sent to the larger cities arrived there in the middle of the decade. In other words, the “time at risk” for leaving a host community might vary across cities, leading to the pattern of differential retention rates observed in Table 5-1.

An examination of Alberta data from the CIC Landed Immigrant Database discounts this explanation. Table 4-9 and Figure 4-10 (Chapter 4) showed that the two cities with the highest refugee retention rates also received higher proportions of their refugees in the beginning of the 1992-97 period covered by this study. For example, 48% of all the refugees destined to Edmonton and 45% of all those sent to Calgary arrived in 1992 and 1993, compared to only one-third of all the refugees destined to Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray. In fact, these two small cities (with the lowest retention rates) received a higher proportion of their refugees in 1996 and 1997, compared to about one-quarter for the other five host communities. Thus, the higher proportion of “leavers” among refugees destined to small Alberta cities (Table 5-1) cannot be explained by arguing that they arrived earlier and, hence, had more time to leave.

C. Refugee Mobility Compared to the Larger Alberta Population

Table 5-1 reveals that 40% of the 956 refugees in the original “target sample” were “leavers” (including the 47 individuals who could not be located). In other words, four out of ten refugees destined to the seven host communities between 1992 and 1997 were no longer living there when this study was conducted in mid-1998. It would be interesting to compare this statistic with data on mobility patterns among non-refugees who had moved to these same cities during this time period, but such comparison information is not available.

However, the profiles of the seven host communities presented in Chapter 4 do contain some 1991 Census information on the geographic mobility of residents of these cities and of the total Alberta population (see Tables 4-19 and 4-20). In 1991, 24% of Albertans indicated that they had been living in a different city, different province, or different country five years earlier. While this statistic is clearly not directly comparable to the 40% “leaver rate” in our target sample of refugees (it covers a different time period, and it measures “new arrivals” rather than the proportion of “leavers”), it does suggest that, in their first few years in Canada, refugees to Alberta are likely to be more geographically mobile than the population as a whole.

D. Refugee Mobility Patterns

Along with refugee retention rates for the seven host communities, Table 5-1 (above) also documents the mobility patterns of “leavers” (those who left their original destined community). Edmonton and Calgary do not appear to “trade” refugees – only 10 of those destined to Edmonton had moved to Calgary, while only 7 of those sent to Calgary had subsequently moved to Edmonton. But one in four refugees destined to Lethbridge had moved to Calgary, along with 17 of the 110 (15%) who had originally been sent to Red Deer. One-third of the refugees destined to Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray had subsequently moved to Edmonton. Thus, to some extent, “leavers” tend to head for the nearest of the two largest cities in the province.

However, larger cities in other provinces are also attractive. Thirteen percent of all the refugees destined to Alberta between 1992 and 1997 (126 in total) had moved to Ontario (many to Toronto) by the time this study was completed in 1998. Another 5% (43 in total) had moved to British Columbia (most to Vancouver). Provinces and the metropolitan centres with high proportions of immigrants are obviously most attractive to refugees who decide to leave Alberta.

How long do refugees who leave their first city in Alberta typically stay? Table 5-2 demonstrates that 22% had left within the first three months, and 40% had left within six months. A majority of “leavers” (61%) had left their original city of destination within a year, and five out of six (83%) had left within two years. Comparisons across destination cities show that (the small number of) “leavers” from Calgary tended to move on very quickly (50% had left within three months), in contrast to Edmonton (only 21% left within three months). One third of the Red Deer “leavers” had also moved to another city within three months. Individuals who left Lethbridge,

Medicine Hat, and Grande Prairie tended to stay a bit longer. Comparisons across region of origin suggest that, if they leave their original host city, African refugees move on quite quickly, compared with refugees from former Yugoslavia and the Middle East.

E. Reasons for Leaving Original Community

Adult refugees who were no longer living in the Alberta city to which they were originally sent were asked an open-ended question about why they had left. Some respondents provided a single reason, while others mentioned several. In total, the 135 “leavers” interviewed in this study provided 184 different answers to this question. Table 5-3 displays the distribution of responses, sorted into four general categories, for the total sub-sample of “leavers,” along with differences in the pattern of responses by destined city, global region of origin, and gender.

Looking first at responses from the total sub-sample of “leavers,” over half (54%) of the explanations they gave for leaving their original destined community focused on insufficient or inadequate employment and/or educational opportunities. In many instances, the “leavers” were speaking of opportunities for themselves, but sometimes they also answered with respect to opportunities for their children. About one in five responses (21%) had a more general “quality of life” component, emphasizing the size of the community (e.g., too small), the reception received from residents (e.g., impersonal and not welcoming), the cost and/or quality of housing, and sometimes the climate (e.g., too cold). Fourteen percent of all answers to the “Why did you leave?” question commented on a desire to be closer to family and friends or to live in a community where others from the same ethnic/racial origin were also living. The remainder of the responses (11% in all) focused on the inadequacy or non-availability of settlement and ESL services for refugees. Table 5-4 contains examples of the types of answers included in each of these four categories, in the original words of the respondents.

Thus, overall, better employment/educational opportunities elsewhere constituted the most common reason for refugees’ leaving their original destined community, followed by more general quality of life issues, the desire to be closer to family and friends, and dissatisfaction with refugee settlement services. If we combine employment/educational opportunities and a desire to be closer to family/friends/compatriots into a “pull factor” category (68% of all responses), it is apparent that the attractions of other communities outweigh dissatisfactions with

Table 5-2

Adult Refugees - Leavers - Months in First Community By Destined City and Region of Origin

	% of Leavers							Mean Months	(N)
	0-3 Mths	4-6 Mths	7-9 Mths	10-12 Mths	1-2 Yrs	3-4 Yrs	4-7 Yrs		
<u>Destined City*</u>									
Edmonton	21%	17%	17%	4%	8%	33%		16.0	(24)
Calgary	50%	14%			18%	14%	4%	10.7	(22)
Lethbridge	14%	8%	14%	6%	33%	25%		15.6	(36)
Red Deer	31%	26%	26%	13%	4%			5.5	(23)
Medicine Hat	7%	33%	13%	27%	7%	13%		10.7	(15)
Grande Prairie	9%	18%			73%			14.4	(11)
Fort McMurray									(4)
<u>Region of Origin*</u>									
Africa	30%	20%	30%	10%	10%			6.4	(10)
Former Yugoslavia	20%	21%	13%	6%	23%	17%		12.1	(95)
Middle East	37%		11%	11%	26%	10%	5%	14.2	(19)
Central/South America									(4)
East Asia									(1)
Poland									(6)
<u>Total</u>	22%	18%	13%	8%	22%	16%	1%	12.47	
Total 'N'	(30)	(24)	(17)	(11)	(30)	(22)	(1)		(135)

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Note: 19 respondents did not arrive at their destined city and are not included in totals.

Results are not presented for groups with fewer than 10 cases.

Table 5-3
**Adult Refugees' Reasons For and Satisfaction About Leaving Their First Community by
 Destined City, Region of Origin, and Gender**

% Leavers' Responses (N)^					% of Leavers	
Leavers (N)	For Better City	Services Inadequate	Employment /Education	To Be Near Friends/Family	Leaving Was Right Decision	Others in Family Wanted to Stay
Why did you leave (name of first city in Canada)?						
Destined City						
Edmonton (24)	28	10	52	10	83	8
Calgary (22)	38	0	34	28	90	17
Lethbridge (36)	13	24	54	9	89	3
Red Deer (23)	14	7	65	14	96	10
Medicine Hat (15)	15	0	80	5	87	31
Grande Prairie (11)	23	12	47	18	73	0
Region						
Former Yugoslavia (95)	20	14	55	11	92 *	10
Middle East (19)	24	0	48	28	80	23
Other (21)	21	0	54	25	68	0
Gender						
Male (69)	19	10	60	11	94 *	14
Female (66)	23	11	47	19	79	6
Total 100%	21%	11%	54%	14%	87	10
Total Responses (N) 184	38	20	99	27	(130)	(119)
Total Respondents (135)						

[^] The 135 respondents moved from their destined city provided a total of 184 reasons for leaving. Four leavers from Fort McMurray are included in total percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small 'n'.

* Differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

Table 5-4

Adult Refugees' Reasons for Leaving Their First Community - Selected Quotes

ID #	Destined City	Present Location	Examples
For a Better City <i>(Includes: prefer larger/smaller city, people not welcoming/impersonal, cost/quality of housing, climate)</i>			
3072	Edmonton	Toronto	Sick of small town living; Toronto is where everything is happening.
0671	Grande Prairie	Calgary	That's a close community, not good for young, ambitious people.
2572	Medicine Hat	Ontario	Bad climate.
2442	Fort McMurray	Edmonton	Living costs and housing were very high.
2621	Calgary	Ontario	It was too cold. I escaped from winter.
Services Inadequate			
2431	Grande Prairie	Calgary	Because of bad settlement agencies in GP; having no interpreter or translator made our life difficult, ESL program and language training were not helpful.
2752	Lethbridge	BC	Frustrated with Immigration Office's conduct
2910	Lethbridge	BC	Very dissatisfied with ESL programs in schools, very dissatisfied with treatment received from Settlement Agencies and the people who worked there.
2992	Lethbridge	Ontario	Because we wanted to learn the language. ESL training in Lethbridge was very poor and basic; the other program called "Workplace" was just a waste of time.
3031	Grande Prairie	Ontario	Nobody wanted to help us.
Employment/Education			
3211	Edmonton	Ontario	We applied everywhere to do just about anything: cleaning, dishwashing. We didn't get hired anywhere so we moved.
1641	Grande Prairie	Calgary	We didn't want to stay in GP because it is a small town without a University or technical school for our children.
0721	Lethbridge	Calgary	I did not have any possibilities to find a job and to survive except to spend all the time on Social Assistance.
0451	Lethbridge	Calgary	Because of bad public transportation, no job opportunities - no opportunities for young people (my son).
1742	Red Deer	Calgary	Because of school system. Calgary has better post-secondary school system.
Friends/Family/Compatriots			
2442	Fort McMurray	Edmonton	Because there were no people from our home country and we felt very alone.
1580	Fort McMurray	Calgary	There were only four African people in Fort McMurray. I was very lonely. No one talked to me.
2961	Lethbridge	Halifax	My daughter was destined to Halifax. I wanted to be together with her and her family.
2932	Red Deer	Ontario	Inter-ethnic hostilities within immigrant community from the former Yugoslavia.
0350	Lethbridge	Calgary	I felt lonely. There were only two Iraqi people there.
2693	Edmonton	BC	Because we felt very alone and isolated.

the present community (a “push” factor – 32% of all responses). With respect to the latter, noteworthy by its absence is a category of explanations emphasizing host city residents’ hostility to refugees or the widespread experience of racism or discrimination by refugees. While a few of the answers included in the “leaving for a better city” category mentioned these issues, such answers were not sufficiently widespread to warrant their own category.

Table 5-3 also displays some interesting differences across cities¹. For example, refugees who had left Calgary were much less likely to provide employment/education reasons for leaving (only 34% of their responses), in contrast to 80% of the responses from those who had moved away from Medicine Hat and 65% of those who had left Red Deer. Concerns about the adequacy of settlement services were more widespread among “leavers” from Lethbridge (24% of their responses), while Calgary “leavers” were more likely than others to mention the desire to be near family/friends or in a community with others from a similar ethnic/racial background.

Comparisons of reasons for leaving across region of origin (Table 5-3) reveal few important differences, other than that Middle East refugees who had left their original destined community were somewhat more likely to explain the move with reference to a desire to be near family/friends/compatriots. Finally, female “leavers” were somewhat more likely to emphasize employment/education opportunities, while males tended to put more emphasis on being close to family/friends/compatriots.

All of the “leavers” were asked to think back to when they left their destined city and to indicate whether they now thought “this was the right thing to do.” Almost nine out of ten (87%) answered “yes” to this question (Table 5-3). Female “leavers” were significantly more likely to answer “yes,” as were those who had originally come from Yugoslavia. The “leavers” were also asked whether others in their family had wanted to stay in the first city. Only 10% of the adult “leavers” indicated that other family members had wanted to stay. Thus, in general, the survey results indicate that a large majority of refugees who had moved on to a second (or third)

¹ Since the analyses discussed here are based on “multiple response” data (i.e., some respondents could, and did, provide more than a single answer), tests of statistical significance (e.g., for differences between destination cities) are not appropriate. Hence, we must rely on our judgement, rather than a statistical rule, to determine whether differences across groups are noteworthy.

community in Alberta (or elsewhere in Canada) were satisfied with their decision to leave their first host community.

F. Interpreting “Reasons for Leaving”

We have observed that: (a) 40% of the refugees destined to the seven Alberta host cities between 1992 and 1997 had moved by 1998; (b) that larger host cities have higher refugee retention rates; and (c) that employment/education opportunities are most often identified by “leavers” as their reason for moving. Less common, but still noteworthy reasons for moving included general dissatisfaction with the quality of life in the destined community, the desire to be closer to family, friends, and others of the same ethnic/racial origin, and dissatisfaction with refugee settlement services in the first host community. Largely absent were explicit references to intolerant community members or to experiences of racism or discrimination. In this section of the chapter, we examine results from other parts of the larger research project to further interpret the refugee mobility patterns and the explanations for moving provided by “leavers.”

The fact that “leavers” are most likely to mention employment/education opportunities for leaving their first Alberta community is not particularly surprising, given the high unemployment rate among adult refugees interviewed in this study and evidence that they were much more likely than other employed Albertans to be working part-time, to be in temporary jobs, and to consider themselves over-qualified for their current jobs (see Tables 3-8 and 3-9, Chapter 3). As a result, the household incomes reported by adult refugees were typically much lower than those of other residents of the cities in which they lived (compare Tables 3-11 and 3-13, Chapter 3), and almost half indicated that they sometimes or often had problems covering living costs (see Table 7-13, Chapter 7). Furthermore, as we will see in a subsequent chapter, when asked about the different things people worry about when settling in a new country, four out of five adult refugees (81%) indicated that they were concerned about “finding or keeping a job” (see Table 6-10, Chapter 6). And virtually all (97%) agreed that “finding a good job” is important for continuing to live successfully in Canada (see Table 6-8, Chapter 6).

Hence, we know that employment opportunities are of great concern to refugees arriving in Canada and Alberta, and that the desire for better employment figures strongly in the explanations for moving to larger cities provided by “leavers.” However, when we examine the

current employment situation of adult refugees living in Edmonton and Calgary (see Table 3-9 in Chapter 3) we observe that their unemployment rates are higher than those observed among refugees currently resident in the mid-size and smaller host communities. Part of the explanation of this unexpected finding may be that refugees who were having more difficulty finding employment in their first Alberta city were more likely to move on, leaving behind those who had been somewhat more successful in the local labour market. More importantly, the “refugee profiles” in Chapter 3 (Tables 3-1 to 3-7) show that a relatively high proportion of refugees arriving in Alberta have post-secondary credentials and occupational training that they obviously hope to use in Canada. Smaller and mid-sized host communities would offer fewer opportunities for well-educated refugees seeking employment in their area of training, while larger cities like Edmonton and Calgary would offer more hope. In fact, we see a slightly higher proportion of adult refugees employed in managerial / professional / skilled jobs in Edmonton and Calgary, compared with the other host communities (Table 3-9 in Chapter 3). Furthermore, larger cities contain more post-secondary institutions where refugees could go for credential up-grading or retraining.

Nevertheless, when we compare the current employment situation of “leavers” who arrived in Edmonton and Calgary with that of refugees originally destined to these two large cities and still living there (results not shown in tables), we find similar unemployment rates (19% and 20%, respectively). Individuals in the two groups are about equally likely to be working part-time (24% and 26%, respectively), to be in temporary jobs (31% versus 26%), and to feel over-qualified for their jobs (46% versus 43%). However, the “leavers” who came to these two large cities are somewhat more likely to be employed in managerial / professional / skilled jobs (49%), in contrast to the refugees who were originally destined to these two cities (42%). Thus, while the possibility of better jobs attracted most “leavers” to larger cities, many of their employment hopes remain unfulfilled. Even so, the vast majority of “leavers” look back at their decision to move and conclude that it was the “right decision” (Table 5-3).

We noted in Section E above that only 14% of all answers to the “why did you leave?” question referenced a desire to be closer to family and friends or to live in a community where others from the same ethnic/racial origin were also living. Employment and education-related reasons for leaving were much more common. This difference in relative importance is corroborated by

other survey findings presented later in this report. There we observe 61% of the adult refugees indicating that “having relatives close by” is “very important” for living successfully in Canada, and 52% stating that “having friends from the same cultural background” is “very important,” compared to 92% for “finding a good job” (see Table 6-8, Chapter 6).

We also noted that very few “leavers” commented on negative responses from other community residents (e.g., hostility, discrimination) when explaining their reasons for leaving their original city of destination. Thus, the lower refugee retention rates in mid-sized and smaller host cities cannot be directly attributed to the reception received by refugees in these communities. In fact, in Chapter 4 we observed that, according to the public opinion survey results, residents of these cities appeared to be somewhat more open to cultural diversity (see Table 4-22).

However, as Chapter 7 demonstrates (see Table 7-9), one in four adult refugees did report experiences of discrimination/racism after arriving in Alberta. More than half of these individuals indicated that this had happened “several times” or “very often.” Furthermore, refugees currently living in Calgary and Edmonton were less likely than those living in smaller host cities (Fort McMurray was the exception to this pattern) to report such experiences. In contrast, over half of the refugees currently living in Medicine Hat stated that they had experienced discrimination or racism since arriving in Alberta (Table 7-9). Thus, there is evidence that refugees resident in the two largest Alberta cities are less likely to report experiences of discrimination and racism. But since most “leavers” did not link such experiences to their decision to leave, we cannot draw the conclusion that a more positive reception for refugees in larger cities is related to higher refugee retention rates².

Finally, Table 5-3 revealed that 11% of all reasons for moving provided by “leavers” focused on the inadequacy or absence of services that refugees felt they needed. A more detailed discussion of service use and evaluation by refugees appears in the next chapter. It is noteworthy, however, that when refugees were asked about services that would have been beneficial but that were not available, the largest number of their responses focused on job-related issues (see Table 6-6, Chapter 6).

G. Refugees' Mobility Intentions

Midway through the interview, after a set of questions about the quality of life in their current city, all of the adult refugees were asked how long they planned to live in this city. Over half (56%) answered that they had no plans to leave or used phrases such as “for good” or “for life.” One in six (17%) indicated that they did not know how long they would stay, 14% gave answers up to and including five years, and the remaining 13% gave answers ranging from 6 to 40 years.

Recognizing that current intentions may not translate into reality, the fact that only 14% of this sample of refugees expect to leave their current community within five years is very interesting, particularly when compared with an Alberta-wide statistic cited earlier – in 1991, 24% of all Albertans were living in a different community compared to five years earlier (see Table 4-20, Chapter 4). Even if we add the 17% who answered “don’t know” to the “within five years” category, the total of 31% is not that much higher than the province-wide mobility rate. This would suggest that, after a few years in the country and a higher than average level of geographic mobility at the outset, refugees do begin to “put down roots” within several years.

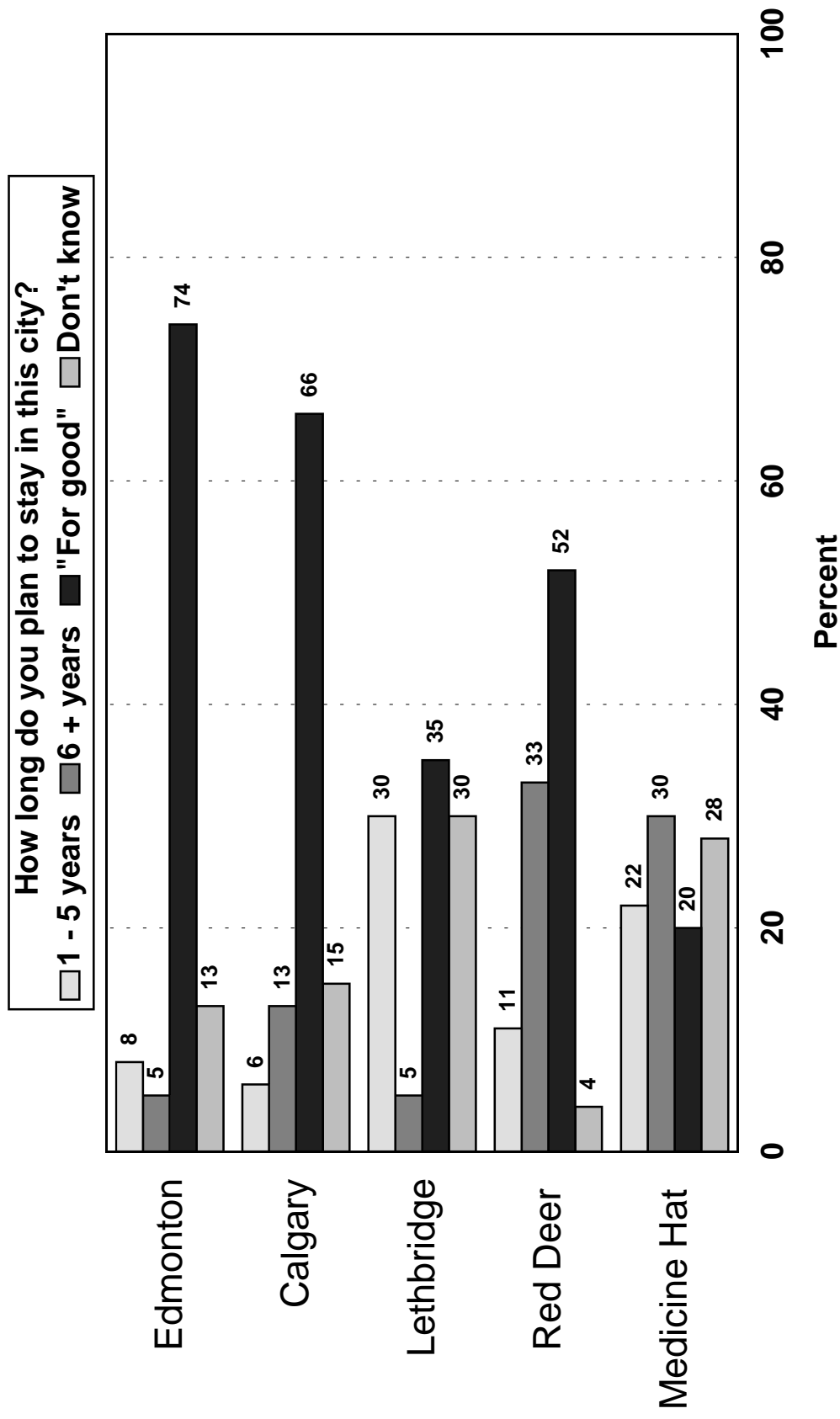
However, refugees are also more likely to settle and stay in larger cities. We have already observed that, with a few exceptions, the larger the city, the higher the refugee retention rate. This study also provides evidence that, in general, the larger the current city of residence, the more likely refugees are to plan to stay indefinitely. Figure 5-5 presents responses to the “mobility intentions” question from current residents of the five largest host cities³. Three-quarters (74%) of the current Edmonton residents had no intention of leaving, along with two-thirds of the Calgary residents, and just over half (52%) of the Red Deer residents. However, only one-third of the Lethbridge residents, and only 20% of the refugees living in Medicine Hat are in the staying “for good” category.

Turning our attention to those who planned to leave within five years, we note that only 8% of the refugees living in Edmonton, 6% of those resident in Calgary, and 11% of the Red Deer sub-sample are in this category. In contrast, 22% of the refugees living in Medicine Hat and 30% of

² Furthermore, because of how the question was asked, we cannot determine whether the incidents occurred in a prior city of residence or the current city in which the respondent was living.

³ For Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie, sub-sample sizes are too small to provide reliable estimates.

Figure 5-5
Adult Refugees' Mobility Plans by Current City of Residence *



* City differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$). A small number of Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie residents are excluded because of small sub-sample sizes, along with residents of other communities in Alberta and other provinces.

those living in Lethbridge indicated that they planned to stay for five years or less. In addition, almost one-third of the refugees living in these two cities answered “don’t know” to the mobility intentions question. Thus, in general, the larger the city, the less likely refugees are to plan to move elsewhere. Lethbridge is somewhat of an exception to this pattern. While larger than both Medicine Hat and Red Deer, it also has the highest “planning to leave within five years” rate.

A pair of follow-up questions asked those refugees who planned to move within the next five years where they might move, and why they expected to do so. Since the number of respondents planning to move is small, the following discussion combines responses from a total of 57 adult refugees resident in the Alberta host cities (those living in other communities in Alberta and in other provinces are omitted from the analysis).

A total of 23 refugees currently living in the mid-sized or smaller host cities expected to move to Calgary or Edmonton (16 and 7 individuals, respectively). Nine individuals planned to move to Vancouver, and one mentioned Victoria. Seven planned to move to Toronto, along with three others who mentioned other Ontario destinations. Six mentioned other countries, only two planned to move to other Alberta communities, and six did not specify a city. Thus, for refugees planning to move within the next five years, large Canadian cities, both inside and outside Alberta, appear to be most attractive.

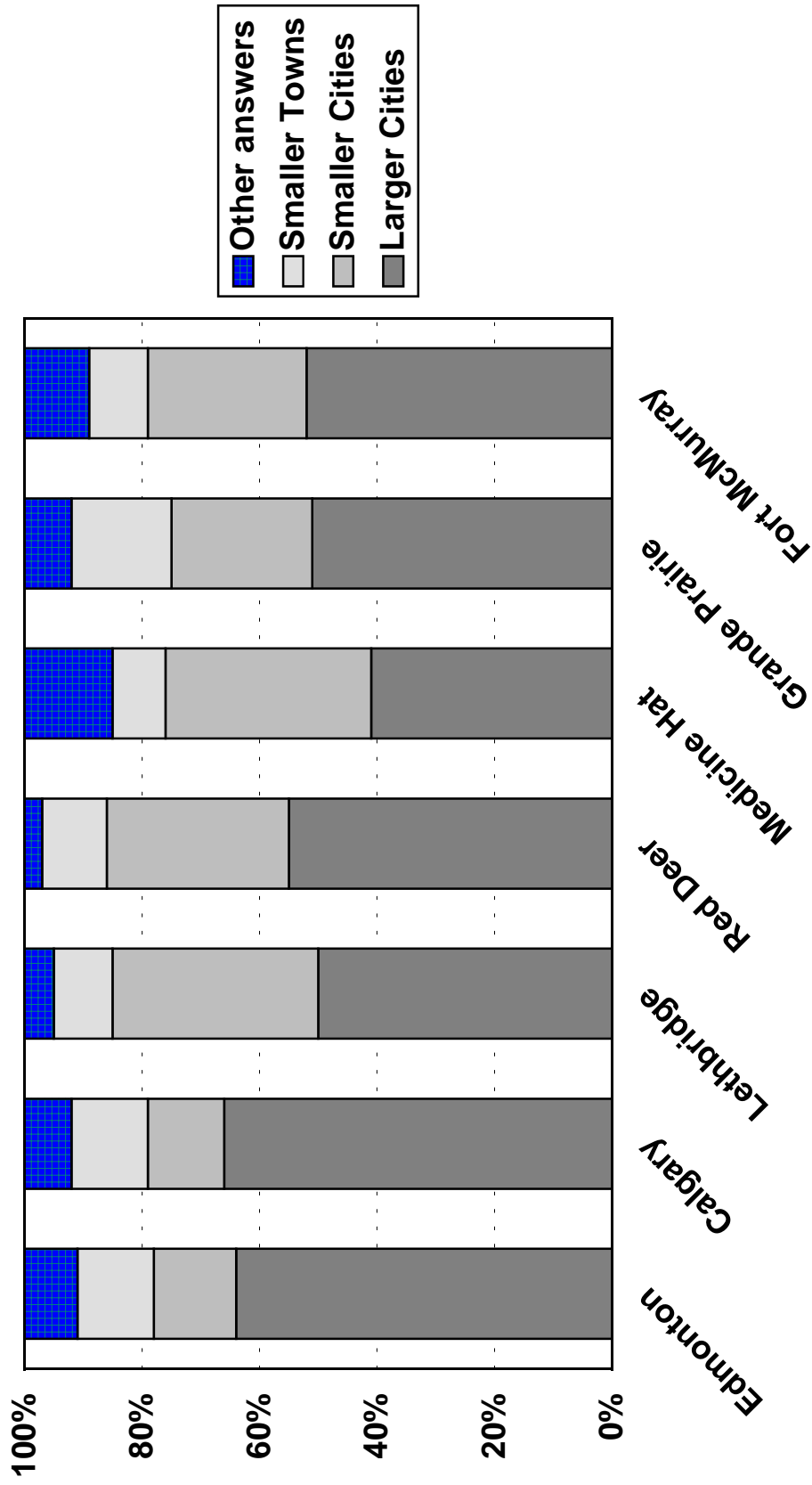
When asked why they might move within the next five years, the 57 refugees who had such intentions typically mentioned better employment opportunities elsewhere (41% of all responses) or better educational opportunities for themselves and/or other family members (25% of all responses). Only 12% of the responses made reference to a desire to live closer to other family members or friends, while the remaining responses commented on a range of more specific “push” or “pull” factors.

H. Service Providers’ Comments on Refugees Leaving Host Communities

As a group, the “leavers” interviewed in this study have provided us with a fairly clear explanation of why they left. Employment/education opportunities were most often the “pull” factors attracting them to larger cities. A better quality of life, the desire to live near to family/friends/compatriots, and dissatisfaction with services in the original community were

Figure 5-6

Public Opinion Survey, Opinions about Community Size and Refugee/Immigrant Adjustment by City *



* Respondents were asked: "Do you think refugees and other immigrants would adjust to Canada more easily in larger cities like Edmonton or Calgary, smaller cities, or smaller towns?" Eight percent of respondents volunteered other answers (e.g., it makes no difference, it depends on the person/community).

somewhat less common reasons for moving. How do these explanations for leaving compare to those provided by individuals working in refugee-settlement and other agencies offering services to refugees in Alberta?

Examination of the comments made during interviews with representatives of service providers (see Appendix II, Volume 2) reveals that virtually all of them thought that the availability of jobs was the most important determinant of refugees staying in or leaving a host community. Some service providers also mentioned the importance of having family/friends/compatriots nearby for determining whether refugees would leave their city of destination. In addition, some of these individuals commented on the need for the residents of the host community to be supportive and welcoming, and on the need for support services for refugees. Thus, the explanations service providers gave for why refugees leave their original city of destination generally correspond to the explanations provided by refugees who had left their first host community.

It is interesting to note that most service providers in the seven host communities reported that relatively few refugees left their communities. In fact, this study has demonstrated that a large number (40%) of the refugees who arrived in these cities between 1992 and 1997 had left by 1998. Some service providers believed that refugees who left did so quite soon after arrival (between 2 and 10 months). However, Table 5-2 revealed that only 53% of the “leavers” had left within the first nine months of arriving. Thus, to some extent, service providers under-estimate the number of refugees who leave their initial host communities, and some also under-estimate the length of time “leavers” actually stay before moving on to another city.

I. Host Community Residents’ Opinions about Successful Refugee Adjustment

Respondents in the public opinion survey were asked: “Do you think refugees and other immigrants would adjust to Canada more easily in larger cities like Edmonton or Calgary, smaller cities, or smaller towns?” Combining responses across the seven host communities, we observe that 56% of all respondents recommended large cities, 24% said smaller cities, 13% said small towns, and 8% volunteered other answers (e.g., it makes no difference, it depends on the person/community).

Figure 5-6 presents the responses broken down by host community. Not surprisingly, Edmonton and Calgary residents were somewhat more likely to indicate that refugees and immigrants adjust more easily in larger cities, and least likely to mention smaller cities.

Residents of the three mid-sized host communities (Lethbridge, Red Deer and Medicine Hat) were somewhat more likely than survey respondents in the other four cities to state that smaller cities were better for refugee/immigrant adjustment. Nevertheless, a majority in all of the cities except Medicine Hat felt that newcomers to Canada adjust better in larger cities.

When asked why they felt this way, respondents who recommended larger cities were most likely to comment on the greater likelihood of other people from the same ethnic/cultural background living in larger cities (Table 5-7). The next most common type of response mentioned the greater number of job opportunities in larger cities. Those who recommended smaller cities or small towns typically focused on “quality of life” issues, particularly the presumed greater friendliness of people in smaller communities and the slower pace of life.

Thus, in general, residents of the host communities tend to emphasize social factors when speculating about why refugees and immigrants adjust better in different-sized communities. Material factors, particularly employment opportunities, were mentioned much less often (only 120 of a total of 866 responses provided by 723 individuals). In contrast, refugees themselves are highly concerned about employment issues when settling in their new cities, and “leavers” most often provide employment/education related reasons for moving to a new city. These very different perspectives on refugees’ adjustment to life in Canada suggest that many residents of the Alberta host communities may not be all that aware of the employment-related problems faced by refugees.

J. Summary

Forty percent of the total sample of 956 refugees destined to the seven host cities in Alberta between 1992 and 1997 had left these communities by the time this study took place in mid-1998. Compared with the Alberta population as a whole, on first arriving in the province refugees appear to have a somewhat higher five-year mobility rate. Six out of ten “leavers” (61%) in the refugee sample had moved on within a year, and 83% had left within two years.

Table 5-7

**Public Opinion Survey: Respondents' Explanations of Why Refugees/Immigrants
Adjust Better in Different-Sized Communities**

<u>Most common reasons provided by:</u> [*]	Number of Responses
<i>Respondents who answered "larger cities" (n=436)</i>	
More people from some cultural/ethnic background.	142
More job opportunities/businesses.	107
More cosmopolitan/less culture shock.	61
More support from agencies.	51
Most refugees/immigrants came from large cities.	36
People are more open-minded/tolerant.	34
More anonymity/don't stand out.	32
<i>Respondents who answered "smaller cities" (n=180)</i>	
People are friendlier/more personal.	85
Slower pace/Less confusing and overwhelming.	43
Less likely to stick with own cultural group.	16
Easier to get around.	14
People are more open-minded/tolerant.	13
More job opportunities/business.	13
More support from agencies.	12
Not as easy to stay anonymous.	11
<i>Respondents who answered "smaller towns" (n=97)</i>	
People are friendlier/more personal.	51
Slower pace/Less confusing and overwhelming.	15
Less likely to stick with own cultural group.	12

* A total of 866 responses were provided by 723 individuals who answered that refugees/immigrants adjusted more easily in either large cities, smaller cities, or smaller towns (see Figure 5-2). Only the most frequently mentioned responses are reported in this table.

However, when asked about their future mobility plans, only 14% of the adult refugees indicated that they planned to move to another community within the next five years. Thus, after an initial period characterized by relatively high mobility, refugees do appear to “put down roots” in the province.

Edmonton and Calgary had the highest refugee retention rates, while the two smallest host communities – Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie – had the lowest retention rates. Thus, with one exception, this study indicates that the larger the host community, the higher the refugee retention rate. Lethbridge, the largest of the three mid-sized destination cities, had a lower retention rate than either Red Deer or Medicine Hat. “Leavers” typically move to other larger cities, either inside Alberta or in Ontario or British Columbia.

When asked about their reasons for moving, a majority of the “leavers” responded by mentioning better employment/education opportunities in other (typically) larger cities. It is somewhat ironic, then, to observe that unemployment rates among refugees were also higher in Edmonton and Calgary, the preferred Alberta “second cities.” Part of the explanation may be that the refugees who stayed in their first host city were those who had been more successful in finding employment. However, the survey data also suggest that some well-educated refugees may move on to larger cities like Edmonton and Calgary hoping to find employment more suited to their training and interests.

Reasons for leaving the first host community also included comments about the quality of life, about a desire to be closer to family/friends/compatriots, and about inadequate services for refugees. Noteworthy in its absence was a separate category of reasons focusing on experiences of racism or discrimination. While other findings in this study indicate that refugees in mid-sized Alberta cities are more likely to report such experiences, few “leavers” explained their move to a larger city with such comments.

Interviews with service providers in the seven host communities suggest that they under-estimate the number of refugees leaving their community. They also under-estimate, to some extent, the length of time that “leavers” actually stay in their first host communities before moving on to other cities. Service providers provide much the same types of explanations for why refugees leave their host cities as do the refugees themselves, that is, they emphasize employment

opportunities in larger cities. In contrast, other residents of the host communities tend to place much more emphasis on social factors (e.g., the presence of others from the same ethnic/racial group, the welcome received from local residents) when asked to explain why refugees adjust better in different-sized communities.

These findings have a number of important implications for refugee destining policy. While the two largest Alberta cities have the highest refugee retention rates, the findings certainly do not provide a strong argument for discontinuing the practice of destining refugees to mid-sized host communities. The number of refugees leaving these three cities is relatively high, but we also observed that geographic mobility is quite high in Alberta in general. Furthermore, although a substantial number of refugees have left these communities, a sizeable proportion of those who remained plan to stay indefinitely.

Thus, mid-sized Alberta cities have the potential to become permanent homes for some refugees, and may also serve as a good temporary home for others. The latter may move on to larger cities that offer a wider range of employment/education opportunities and the possibility of more frequent contact with family, friends and compatriots, but they may still benefit from the chance to learn about Canada in a smaller city. Nevertheless, several further comments must be made. Comparisons of the three mid-sized host communities show that Lethbridge had the lowest retention rate, the highest proportion of “leavers” attributing their move to the quality/range of services they received, and the highest proportion of “stayers” (30%) planning to leave in the next five years. Medicine Hat also had a relatively high proportion of “stayers” planning to leave in the next five years (22%), and a very high proportion (53%) indicating that they had experienced discrimination/racism. Thus, while unemployment rates are low among refugees still living in these two cities, the service provision situation in the former, and the community reception received by refugees in the latter, need to be considered if the practice of destining refugees to these cities is continued.

However, the low retention rates in the two smallest host cities (Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray) suggest that the policy of sending refugees to these communities should be re-considered. It may be asking too much of refugees to send them to smaller, northern, natural resource-based cities. In these host communities, refugees would be least likely to be able to maintain contact with

family, friends, and compatriots, would have the smallest range of employment and education opportunities and would experience the greatest difficulty adapting to the climate. Furthermore, because they are smaller cities, these host communities simply cannot be expected to offer as wide a range of refugee settlement services.

That said, this study also indicates that more could be done for refugees in all host communities. Survey findings discussed in the next chapter indicate that many refugees would have appreciated more assistance in finding satisfactory employment. Refugees living in Calgary and Edmonton were more likely to use a range of different settlement services after their first year, possibly because these two larger cities offered a wider array of services for a longer period of time. Thus, the refugee retention rates in mid-sized host communities might be improved somewhat if agencies working with refugees could find ways to extend their services beyond the mandatory first year.

Finally, given our findings about why “leavers” decided to move on to another city, more attention might be paid to how individual refugees (or families) are matched with specific host communities. There might be merit in sending refugees who lived in large cities in their home country to large cities in Alberta. While making the many required adjustments to life in Canada, they at least would not have to learn how to live in a “small city” at the same time. In addition, sending refugees with specific professional skills to smaller communities may not be that useful, since the chances of finding employment in their area of expertise would be lower. And dispersing refugees from the same ethnic background may also be counter-productive, given the fact that a sizeable minority of “leavers” mentioned the desire to be closer to family/friends/compatriots as a reason for leaving their first Alberta host city.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

The services available to refugees in each of the seven communities will be described in this chapter. In addition, factors affecting utilization rates will be explored. The information is taken from the interviews conducted with settlement providers (see Volume 2, Appendix II) and from the adult and youth surveys as well as the public opinion survey. A detailed account of the refugees' experiences with regard to settlement and the environment of the destining community can be found in Chapter 7. All of the service providers interviewed in this study reported that they offer a full range of settlement services; however, there are differences in the scope of provision. For instance, in Grande Prairie, there is one individual who is responsible for all refugee services, while a single agency in Calgary (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society) has 85 employees and 400 volunteers. To give a concrete example, the employment-related services available in each city can be seen in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

City	Employment Services
Edmonton*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job finding • counseling & coaching • ESL trades and technical professions • computer training programs • integrated skills programs • work experience placements • workplace literacy
Calgary*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job finding • counseling & coaching • ESL trades and technical professions • computer training programs • integrated skills programs • work experience placements • workplace literacy
Lethbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible Steps – an individualized program to help refugees look for work • work experience placements
Red Deer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job search • on-site training
Medicine Hat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job finding club
Fort McMurray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • job search • heavy equipment training • instrument repair program
Grande Prairie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual assistance with employment-related issues

* more than one agency involved in employment-related services for refugees

To get a sense of the utilization of agency services across communities in the first year of settlement, the adult refugees were asked to indicate from a list of 15 possibilities which services they had received. Overall, refugees in Calgary and Edmonton tended to rely less on services provided by agencies than did individuals in the smaller cities; this may be tied to the existence of larger compatriot communities. Table 6-2 shows that although language training was accessed more than any other service overall, there was a significant difference among cities, such that the individuals destined to smaller communities were more likely to study English in their first year than those who settled in Calgary and Edmonton. Help finding housing was also a very heavily accessed service, but again, the percentage of refugees who made use of this service was lower in Edmonton and Calgary than in the smaller cities. Interestingly, the number of refugees who received housing help in Calgary was only 52%. This figure is somewhat surprising, given the concerns expressed by CIC personnel and the other service providers regarding the severe shortage of housing in that city. Refugees in Calgary and Edmonton may have received help finding housing from friends or relatives, rather than agencies.

There were also significant differences in accessing orientation services across cities; both Lethbridge and Grande Prairie provided over 80% of the newcomers with orientation services, while in Edmonton, only 52% of refugees (10% fewer than in Calgary) received orientation. In terms of help with children's schools, Red Deer and Calgary stand out from the rest: Red Deer by providing assistance to 92% and Calgary by assisting only 43%. Help with translation also varied among cities, from a low of 27% in Fort McMurray to a much higher level of use in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The two questions relating to work were also significantly different across communities: help finding a job was lowest in Grande Prairie and Calgary, while occupational/job training was accessed by the smallest percentage of refugees in Edmonton and Calgary. There were no other significant differences, but it should be noted that several of the services accessed most often were related to a need for help with language.

The differences in access to settlement services outlined above are counter to the perceptions of the service providers in the seven cities, most of whom believe that newcomers to Canada take advantage of the wider range of services in Calgary and Edmonton to a greater extent than is actually the case. When the settlement providers in each community were asked what the

Table 6-2

Services Received From Agencies by Adult Refugees During First Year in Canada by City of Destination

	% Received Service							Total	(N) #
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray		
Language Training	69	66	85	86	86	92	87	78 *	(515)
Help finding housing	71	52	81	80	92	100	93	74 *	(518)
Orientation	52	62	81	62	78	85	73	67 *	(523)
Help with children's schools	63	43	71	92	80	61	67	65 *	(303)
Help with banking system	44	50	77	75	91	76	87	65	(520)
Help filling in forms	54	50	66	68	86	60	93	63	(498)
Help with shopping	51	35	69	72	81	88	80	60	(516)
Help with health problems	48	35	73	72	79	61	67	59	(429)
Help with translation	46	45	75	60	74	56	27	57 *	(486)
Help finding a job	32	27	42	34	45	23	40	35 *	(487)
Occupational/job training	11	14	44	33	27	20	33	24 *	(501)
Help with money when needed	22	14	38	15	35	32	13	24	(486)
Help with legal matters	15	14	35	16	17	29	25	20	(334)
Help with personal problems	11	11	25	19	19	29	0	17	(348)
Help finding family members	8	7	11	0	12	0	0	7	(202)
Maximum 'N' in each category	(113)	(164)	(63)	(48)	(54)	(12)	(74)		

All respondents were asked if they received each of these services from agencies in their city of destination during their first year in Canada. For several services (e.g., children's schools, locating family members), a significant number indicated that this service was "not applicable" to their situation. Percentages are based on the number (n) for whom the questions was applicable.

* City differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

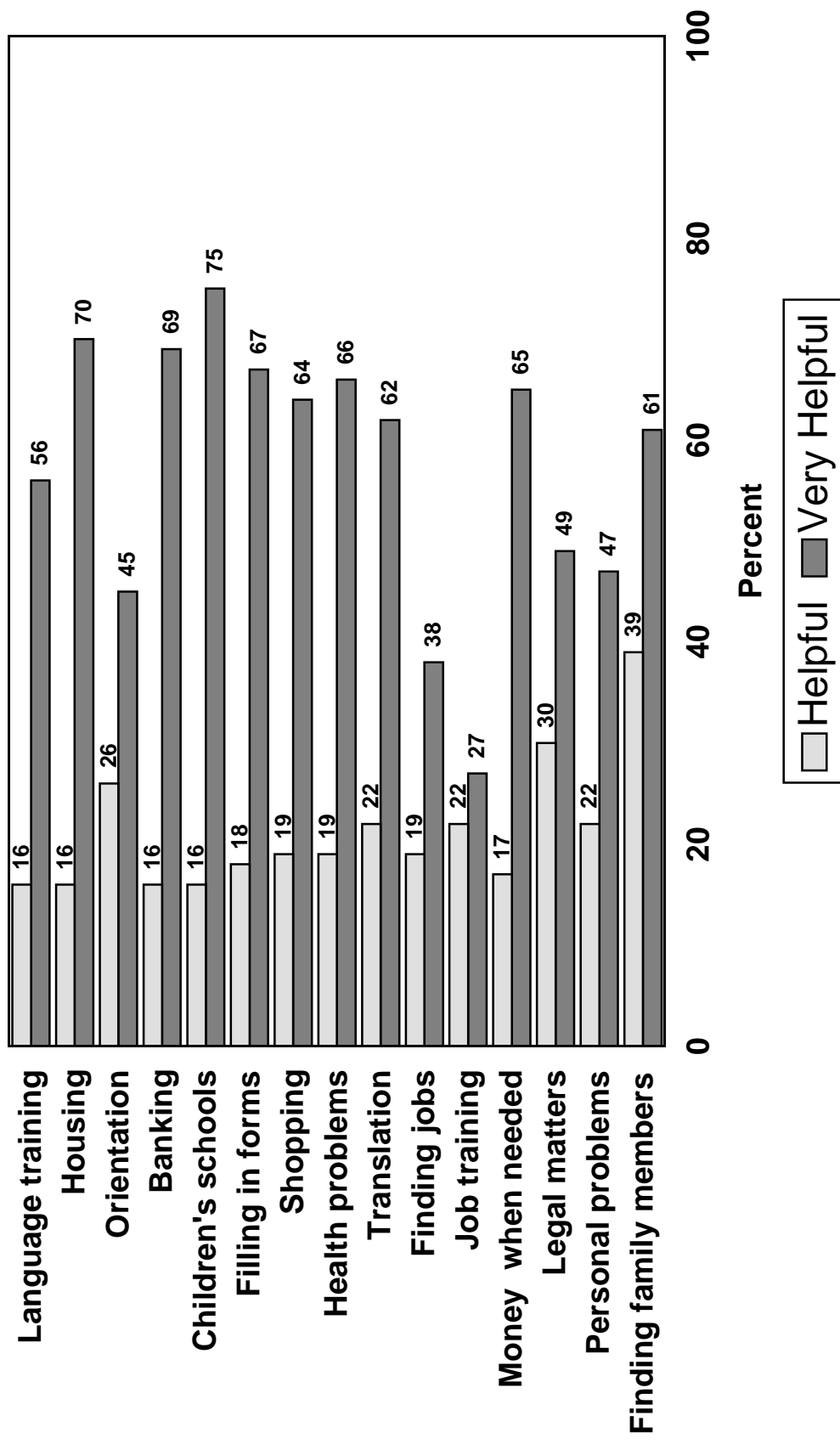
benefits would be to destining all refugees to Edmonton and Calgary, many cited the availability of services (see Appendix II, Volume 2).

Refugees were also asked to evaluate each of the 15 services on a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 represented 'not at all helpful' and 5 meant 'very helpful'. The responses to this question are shown in Figure 6-3. Overall, the respondents appear to be quite satisfied with most of the services, but assistance with finding jobs and with job training opportunities were both rated much lower than the other categories. Clearly these services are somewhat distinct from some of the others in that job-finding and access to occupational training that results in a job can be interpreted on an all-or-nothing basis. That is to say, even though someone may not have become fully fluent in English through language training, there is still a recognition of the usefulness of any increase in proficiency. Assistance with job training or a job search that doesn't lead to a job, or that results in a job in which the newcomer is severely underemployed, is bound to be viewed negatively (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of underemployment among refugees).

The usage rates of ESL programs by region of origin and by city of destination are shown in Table 6-4. Although there are significant differences (Africans are least likely to study English, for example, likely because, as shown in Chapter 3, 15% of African refugees use English as a home language) it is important to keep in mind different sub-sample sizes from one group to the next. Eighty-five percent of former Yugoslavians, who make up the majority of respondents, took ESL. Interestingly, when the cities of residence are examined, we note that the figures for people having studied ESL are higher than those found in Table 6-2, especially for Calgary and Edmonton. This suggests that a) some refugees are studying ESL after their first year in Canada, and b) that some of the individuals received their language training elsewhere (e.g., someone in Lethbridge who now lives in Calgary).

When other formal education or training is examined (Table 6-4), we see that although there are significant differences across groups by region of origin, those groups reporting the greatest use are also the smallest in number. There were no significant differences in use of the formal education/training system across city of residence.

Figure 6-3
Adult Refugees' Evaluations of Services Received During First Year in Canada *



* Refugees were asked to evaluate each service on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing "not at all helpful" and '5' representing "very helpful." The percentages answering '4' and '5' are shown in this graph. Percentages are based on the total number of refugees who indicated that they had received the service (see Table 6-2).

Table 6-4

Adult Refugees' Use of ESL and Formal Education System in Canada by Region of Origin, Current City of Residence, and Gender

	% Yes	
	Taken ESL Courses	Other Formal Education/Training (N)
<u>Region of Origin</u>		
Africa	*	*
Central/South America	62	50 (34)
East Asia	94	53 (49)
Former Yugoslavia	75	31 (16)
Middle East	85	39 (329)
Poland	80	23 (88)
	100	89 (9)
<u>Current City of Residence</u>		
Edmonton	*	
Calgary	85	39 (113)
Lethbridge	77	34 (164)
Red Deer	95	41 (63)
Medicine Hat	92	46 (48)
Fort McMurray	78	39 (54)
Other Communities [#]	92	58 (12)
	83	41 (71)
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	84	37 (260)
Male	83	41 (265)
Total	93	39 (525)

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Grande Prairie is included with Other Communities since only 7 respondents currently live in Grande Prairie.

Table 6-5

Services Received by Adult Refugees After First Year in Canada by Current City of Residence

	% Received Service						
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray	Total (N) #
Language training	26	21	17	25	12	10	21 (472)
Help with translation	16	5	20	16	18	0	11 * (467)
Help filling in forms	10	4	10	11	14	0	8 * (463)
Help finding a job	1	6	16	16	10	0	7 * (454)
Help with health problems	9	2	8	7	10	0	7 * (443)
Help with legal matters	11	3	14	6	4	0	6 (390)
Orientation	8	1	8	9	4	0	5 * (456)
Occupational/job training	1	5	8	16	6	0	5 * (460)
Help finding housing	10	5	2	5	2	0	5 * (459)
Help with children's schools	3	3	11	3	6	0	4 (362)
Help with money when needed	4	3	4	5	6	0	4 * (455)
Help with personal problems	4	2	5	7	6	0	4 * (422)
Help with shopping	3	3	2	2	4	0	3 * (460)
Help with banking system	2	2	2	2	4	0	2 (464)
Help finding family members	0	0	6	4	3	0	1 (312)
Maximum 'N' in each category	(113)	(164)	(63)	(48)	(54)	(12)	(71)

All respondents were asked if they received each of these services from agencies in their current city of residence after their first year in Canada. A small number of respondents who had lived in Canada for a year or less did not answer the questions. In addition, for some services (e.g., children's schools, locating family members), a significant number indicated that this service was "not applicable" to their situation. Percentages are based on the number (n) for whom the questions was applicable.

* City differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

Note: Separate results from Grande Prairie are not reported, since the sample size was too small. However, respondents living in Grande Prairie as well as in communities other than the host cities examined in this study are included in the total.

Table 6-6
Adult Refugees' Reports of Potentially Helpful Settlement Services They Did Not Get

	% of Responses	(N)
Job-related services	22	(72)
Information (various issues)	16	(53)
Education/ESL	15	(49)
Health/dental/counselling	7	(22)
Orientation (various issues)	6	(20)
Credential recognition	6	(20)
Financial assistance	6	(18)
Translation	5	(17)
Better treatment by agencies	3	(9)
Social activities	2	(7)
Transportation	2	(6)
Housing	2	(5)
Clothing	2	(5)
Other Services	6	(21)
	100	(324)

A total of 251 respondents (48%) answered "yes" in response to a question about "services that you did not get that would have been helpful" When asked to elaborate, these individuals identified 324 types of services/assistance that have been grouped into 14 categories. Percentages are based on the total number of responses.

The adult refugees were asked to indicate which services they had received *after* their first year in Canada (see Table 6-5). Here there were many significant differences across cities, largely due to the fact that, other than language training, no service use was reported in Fort McMurray. The top three services were language training, help with translation and help filling in forms. The two items related to jobs -- help finding a job and occupational training -- differed across cities in that refugees in Edmonton had a very low access rate compared with the other cities. This is a particularly striking finding, given that Edmonton has the second highest unemployment rate of all the cities under consideration (see Chapter 4). Both Lethbridge and Red Deer were relatively high in providing help finding a job after the first year, and Red Deer provided occupational training assistance to twice as many individuals in that community as was observed in any other city.

When asked whether there were services that could have benefited the refugees but which were unavailable to them, almost half of the refugees answered 'yes'. The largest number of responses were related to jobs, followed by a need for information and a need for more education and/or ESL (see Table 6-6). Given that a very large majority of respondents had received at least some ESL and/or formal education, and yet some still felt that they needed more, it is interesting to turn to responses in the public opinion survey. When asked what types of services are needed by refugees/immigrants, only 37% of the public felt that ESL was a necessary service (Table 6-7). An even greater disparity between the views of the refugees and the public occurred with regard to job training; only 10% of the public felt that there was a need for assistance to newcomers in this area. The public cited cultural orientation as an important need (35% of all respondents) but only 9% thought that refugees and immigrants needed help getting adjusted. In other words, they were most concerned that newcomers learn "Canadian ways."

The question which asked refugees to rate factors that are most important for settling in Canada elicited the highest ratings for 'learning to speak English' and 'finding a job', both in the adult and the youth populations (see Tables 6-8 and 6-9). There was a difference in responses by region with regard to the importance of accessibility to a settlement agency. Although the majority of the adult respondents in all groups felt that being able to go to a settlement agency was very important, the East Asians were significantly less likely to rate it so. Both the Central/South Americans and the former Yugoslavians rated the need for interpreters more

highly than did the other groups, but this may be a recency effect (i.e., they arrived later) in the case of the latter group. Having relatives close by was considered to be very important by the groups with smaller overall ethnic communities, but although the East Asians and the former Yugoslavians valued having relatives nearby, it was not as important to them. Some other group differences emerged in responses to the question regarding the importance of having a place of worship. The people from the Middle East (primarily Muslim) and from Central/South America (primarily Roman Catholic) rated the need for their own place of worship more highly than the other groups.

The youth followed similar patterns to their parents in terms of order of importance with the exception of ‘having your own place of worship’ and ‘having friends from the same cultural background’ (Table 6-9). In both instances, the importance they placed on these activities was less than their parents had reported, but they valued a place of worship more than friends from the same background. This suggests that they are developing friendships with other youth at school from a variety of backgrounds.

Finally, refugees were asked to rate several issues for how much concern they cause when settling in a new country (see Tables 6-10 and 6-11). The adults’ principal concern was finding or keeping a job, but individuals from Central/South America and East Asia were more worried about employment than people from the other groups (Table 6-10). The Africans’ major concern was for relatives and friends back home. Although the majority of all adults were concerned for their children’s future, former Yugoslavians appeared to be less worried than the other groups. This may reflect an awareness that educated white immigrants are generally more successful in Canadian society. Learning English was a major concern for all groups, but the Central/South Americans stood out from the others; fully 96% of this group stated that they were very concerned about ESL. Africans and Central/South Americans were the two groups most concerned about “fitting in” in Canadian society.

The youth in the refugee sample were asked to react to a subset of the same issues that had been given to their parents (Table 6-11). They were generally less concerned than their elders about most issues, but the Central/South American group, like their parents, were more worried in general than their peers from other regions.

Table 6-7

**Public Opinion Survey: Respondents' Opinions About the Kind of Programs/Services Needed by
Refugees/Immigrants by City**

	% of All Respondents #						
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray
							Total *
Cultural orientation	39%	34%	23%	36%	35%	39%	42%
ESL/Language	34%	40%	48%	35%	37%	32%	35%
Job training information	12%	10%	11%	9%	8%	11%	7%
Getting adjusted	7%	9%	8%	8%	12%	11%	10%
Financial/Housing/Education/Health	8%	6%	8%	11%	8%	7%	3%
Other answers		1%	2%	1%			3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Sixty-three percent of all respondents agreed that "refugees or immigrants need special programs and services to help them adjust to Canada. These 508 individuals were then asked "What kind of programs or services do you think they need?" Up to three answers were recorded. Five hundred and one respondents provided a total of 872 answers. The percentages in this table are based on the total number of answers provided.

* Significance tests for city differences are not appropriate because of multiple answers by respondents.

Table 6-8

Adult Refugees' Assessments of Issues that are Important for Settlement In/Living Successfully in Canada by Region

		% Important and % Very Important [#]				
		Africa	America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East
Having your children do well in school	Imp.	100	100	100	99	97
	VI					
Learning to speak English	Imp.	6				3
	VI	94	98	100	97	97
Finding a good job	Imp.	3		6	5	10
	VI	82	100	88	95	84
Being welcomed by the people who live here	Imp.	15	10	25	13	14
	VI	79	90	75	83	83
Being able to go to an immigrant/refugee service centre/settlement agency	Imp.	27	6	31	16	17
	VI	73	84	50	76	69
Being able to get an interpreter	Imp.	12	10	38	11	21
	VI	65	82	56	81	58
Making Canadian friends	Imp.	21	14	19	22	23
	VI	68	84	75	66	66
A good bus system	Imp.	15	16	31	20	15
	VI	68	76	63	60	68
Having relatives close by	Imp.	12	6	20	13	17
	VI	74	75	53	55	73
Having friends from the same cultural background	Imp.	29	14	31	20	15
	VI	44	61	44	50	61
Being able to buy the kind of food you like at a nearby store	Imp.	21	12	19	16	22
	VI	53	76	25	46	53
Having your own place of worship	Imp.	18	13	25	18	17
	VI	55	71	38	35	72
Maximum 'N' in each category		(34)	(48)	(16)	(329)	(88)

Respondents answered on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing "Not At All Important" and '5' representing "Very Important". Only values of '4' (Important) and '5' (Very Important) shown in table. Ten refugees from Poland are included in the TOTAL percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small N.

* Region differences are statistically significant.

Table 6-9

**Youth Refugees' Assessments of Issues that are Important for Settlement In/Living Successfully
in Canada by Region of Origin**

	% Important and % Very Important [#]					N
	C/S America	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	Other [^]	Total	
Learning to speak English	100	98	100	100	99	(91)
Finding a good job	93	97	100	100	99	(91)
Being welcomed by the people who live here	100	94	73	82	89 *	(91)
Making Canadian friends	87	85	69	90	82	(90)
Having relatives close by	74	72	58	82	71	(91)
Having your own place of worship	74	54	74	82	65	(91)
Having friends from the same cultural background	67	61	58	73	63	(91)
Total 'N' in each category	(15)	(46)	(19)	(11)	(91)	

[#] Respondents answered on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing "Not Important" and '5' representing "Very Important". Values of '4' (Important) and '5' (Very Important) have been combined and are shown in table.

* Region differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$)

[^] Other category includes refugee youth from Africa, Asia, and Poland, as their numbers are too small for comparison.

Table 6-10

Adult Refugees' Assessments of Issues that Concern Them When Settling in a New Country by Region of Origin

		% Concerned and % Very Concerned [#]						(N)
		Africa	C/S America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	Total	
Finding or keeping a job	Con	6	4	6	18	8	13	*
	VC	71	82	88	63	75	68	(507)
Friends or relatives back home	Con	6	16	19	21	15	18	*
	VC	88	63	50	55	73	61	(521)
Your children's future here in Canada	Con	13	6	27	17	2	14	*
	VC	80	75	73	56	85	63	(369)
Learning English	Con	12	2	25	11	11	10	*
	VC	56	96	69	58	74	65	(520)
The health of your family (living with you)	Con	17	9	15	13	11	12	*
	VC	72	80	69	52	72	60	(461)
Your future here in Canada	Con	6	12	25	22	5	17	*
	VC	77	76	63	41	68	52	(521)
Money (personal/family income)	Con	21	16	31	19	11	18	
	VC	53	61	50	46	53	49	(525)
Your own health	Con	3	10	27	11	10	11	*
	VC	59	71	53	36	55	45	(521)
"Fitting in" in Canadian society	Con	12	25	38	16	25	20	*
	VC	53	50	38	24	25	29	(523)
Canada's economy	Con	24	25	31	23	13	22	*
	VC	35	49	38	16	35	25	(524)
Past experiences and bad memories	Con	18	15	13	9	16	12	*
	VC	32	38	6	18	48	25	(523)
Getting married	Con	17	21	0	8	20	14	*
	VC	28	7	0	8	43	20	(115)
Your marriage	Con	13	11	8	3	6	5	*
	VC	44	46	33	23	21	26	(395)
The politics of Canada	Con	9	6	19	8	15	9	*
	VC	18	25	19	4	17	10	(521)
Maximum 'N' in each category		(34)	(48)	(16)	(329)	(88)	(525)	

Respondents answered on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing "Not At All Concerned" and '5' representing "Very Concerned". Only values of '4' (Concerned) and '5' (Very Concerned) are shown in table. Ten refugees from Poland are included in the TOTAL percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small N.

* Region differences are statistically significant.

Table 6-11

Youth Refugees' Assessments of Issues that Concern Them when Settling in a New Country by Region of Origin

	% Concerned and % Very Concerned [#]				(N)
	C/S America	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	Other	
Friends or relatives back home	94	85	78	63	83 (90)
Finding or keeping a job	87	78	99	73	81 (90)
Your future in Canada	87	71	83	73	77 (90)
Money (personal/family income)	73	74	84	73	76 (91)
Learning English	87	59	63	91	68 (91)
Your own health	74	57	79	54	64 (91) *
"Fitting in" in Canadian society	67	50	53	72	57 (91)
Getting married	27	31	44	40	35 (85)
Past experiences/bad memories before coming to Canada	33	29	50	36	34 (90)
Total 'N' in each category	(15)	(46)	(19)	(11)	(91)

[#] Respondents answered on a 5 point scale with '1' representing "Not At All Concerned" and '5' representing "Very Concerned". Values of '4' (Concerned) and '5' (Very Concerned) have been combined and are shown in the table.

^ Other category includes refugee youth from Africa, Asia, and Poland, as their numbers are too small for comparison.

* Region differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Summary

Contrary to the beliefs of many service providers, individuals who were destined to Calgary or Edmonton do not access programs to a greater extent in their first year than those who were destined to smaller cities. Indeed, fewer refugees are able to access ESL in the large cities, despite indications that they need language training at least as much as the people who are destined elsewhere. The service most utilized in the province is ESL, and the refugees felt that there is a need for more provisions in the area of employment, general information, and ESL/education.

SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES

A. Introduction

In the course of this study we learned how the refugees perceived their settlement experiences, not only in terms of the services provided, but also in regard to the openness of the communities to which they had been destined. Their views on factors that contribute to settlement and those which serve as barriers to integration are compared here with the views of the general public. Refugees' knowledge of Canada and expectations prior to arrival will be discussed first, followed by their initial experiences in their communities and their perceptions of cultural diversity, community acceptance, and discrimination. The respondents' opinions on issues that are important for living in Canada, including advice to other newcomers and to Canadians in general, will be reviewed, as will their attitudes towards taking Canadian citizenship.

B. Prior to Arrival

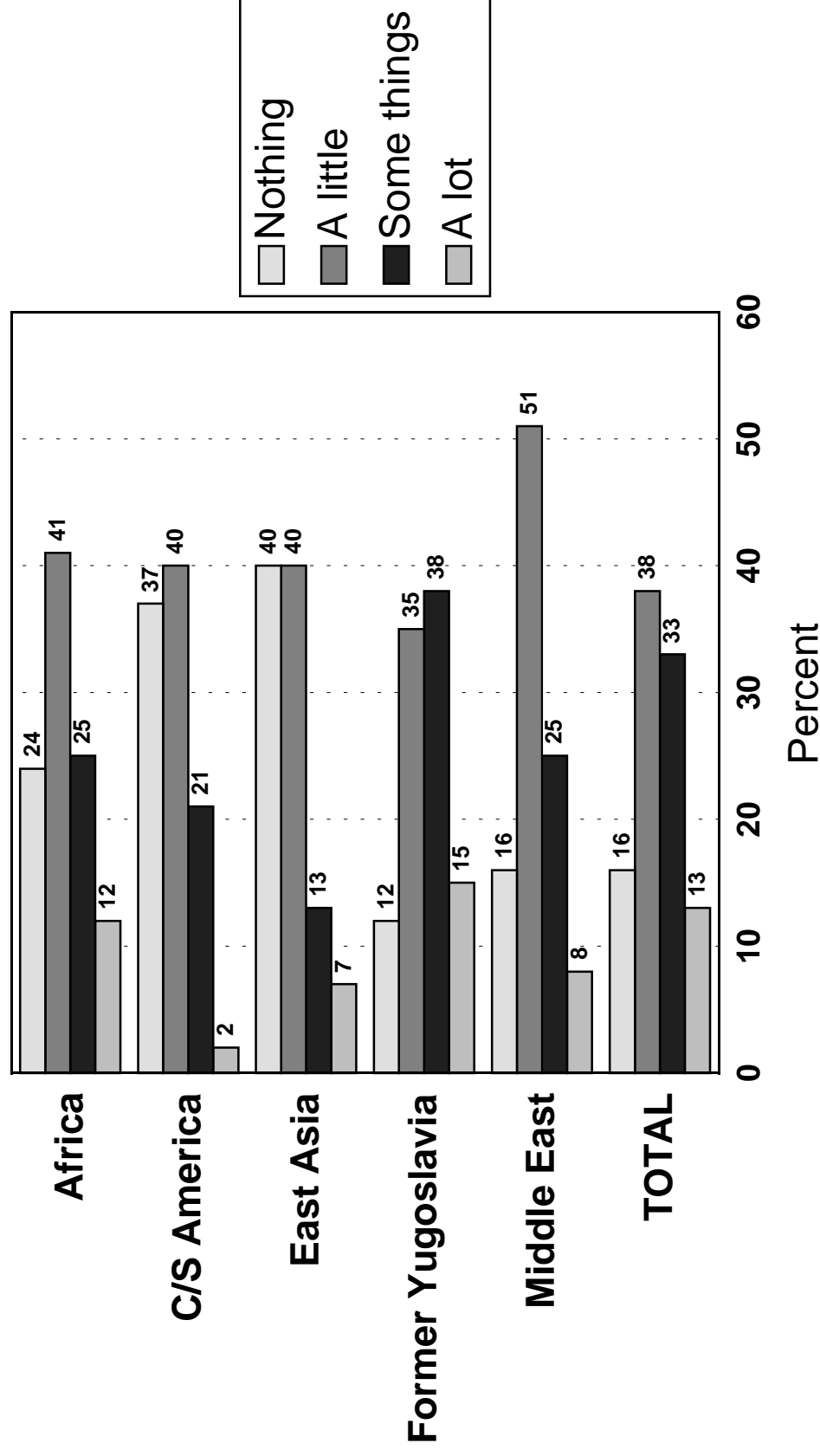
All the individuals in this study have undergone a stressful experience in moving to Canada. They have left behind conditions that were considered to be threatening to their survival. For some, fleeing to Canada happened relatively quickly, but 32% of the adult interviewees spent time in refugee camps; 60% of these individuals were confined for over a year. In some instances the conditions within the camps were appalling, as is apparent in the following accounts: "Life in refugee camp in Turkey was very horrifying. Our food and water was poisoned. We were afraid to eat or drink too much. We are happy to be in Canada, but Canadians must realize we are stateless. The Iraqis tried to kill us. We need all the help we can get. People need to be patient and understanding" (respondent 0952). "I feel fortunate to come to Canada as I am from a war-torn country and have lived in horrifying conditions in refugee camps in Saudi Arabia" (0350). "I was in a refugee camp for six years. I was tired and needed to heal" (0020).

When the adult refugees were asked what their hopes and expectations were when they learned they were destined for Canada, approximately 8% said that they had none. "I was

so depressed. I did not expect anything – just to live and work” (0422). The rest of the responses were very general in nature; very few people had specific notions of what awaited them. Twenty-one percent reported that they simply hoped for a better or more normal life for themselves or their children, free of war. “I did not expect to get rich; I expected to live quietly and to prevent my son from getting into some stupid war” (2251). “I wanted my children to get an education and have a better life” (1341). Some individuals had somewhat more defined expectations: 14% speculated that they would find a job; a subset of this group (3%) anticipated reentering their own profession. “My expectations were to find any type of job and the long term goal would be to get closer and closer to my profession” (2491). Another 3% hoped to become financially secure and 1% thought that they would have a higher standard of living than in their home country. Three percent of the individuals interviewed thought that they would have a difficult transition period.

When the participants were asked what they knew about Canada before coming, the majority indicated that they knew nothing or just a little; only 13% reported that they knew a lot (see Figure 7-1). In an open-ended question, however, some individuals discussed how Canada had been portrayed to them, either at an embassy or in refugee camps. They suggested that the information they received was either misleading or insufficient. “When they interview you in the refugee camps, they ask you about training and what would you do in Canada. I have agricultural experience and I thought I was going to find a job in that area. The immigration officers in Kenya made me feel I could get a job here. But now they are asking for Canadian experience” (1911). “Consulates should give truth about life in Canada” (1382). “The Canadian Embassy in Belgrade and the people who worked there did not make us sure about expectations and our future in Canada. They provided no useful information for us” (2991). “Advice to employees in Canadian Embassy abroad: They should make more contacts with people, explain to them how Canada is” (0101). “People working in Canadian Embassy should have provided us with more useful information, they should be more informative” (1802).

Figure 7-1
Adult Refugees' Knowledge about Canada Before Arriving by Region of Origin *



* Region differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$). A small number of adult refugees from Poland are included in the Total results.

Table 7-2

Adult Refugees: Time Spent (in the Past Few Months) With Others in the Community by Current City of Residence

		Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray	Other Cities	Total	(N)
Friends from (<i>country of origin</i>)										
Never	Never	6	2	3	11	4	11	1	4 *	
	Sometimes	44	45	59	34	64	56	55	49	
	Often/Daily	50	53	38	55	32	33	44	47	(337)
Family and relatives outside of your household										
Never	Never	40	22	49	55	47	33	42	39 *	
	Sometimes	20	24	31	9	13	0	22	21	
	Often/Daily	40	54	19	36	40	68	36	40	(337)
Neighbours										
Never	Never	43	45	57	60	44	42	44	47	
	Sometimes	31	32	25	23	35	33	39	31	
	Often/Daily	26	23	18	17	21	25	17	22	(520)
Other Canadian Friends										
Never	Never	42	31	29	10	24	0	25	29 *	
	Sometimes	44	49	48	67	46	25	59	50	
	Often/Daily	14	20	23	23	30	75	16	21	(512)
People from work										
Never	Never	44	37	36	27	35	10	46	38 *	
	Sometimes	46	44	48	60	45	40	48	47	
	Often/Daily	10	19	16	13	20	50	6	15	(419)
Other immigrants (<i>from a different culture</i>)										
Never	Never	37	37	22	39	34	8	34	34 *	
	Sometimes	53	47	62	40	53	59	60	52	
	Often/Daily	10	16	16	21	13	33	6	14	(522)
Sponsor family or Canadian host volunteer										
Never	Never	61	46	45	31	88	100	89	57 *	
	Sometimes	32	38	39	52	6	0	7	31	
	Often/Daily	7	16	16	17	6	0	4	12	(334)
Maximum 'N' in each category		(113)	(164)	(63)	(48)	(54)	(12)	(71)	(525)	

* Current City of Residence differences are statistically significant.

Note: Grande Prairie is included with other communities since only 7 respondents currently live in Grande Prairie.

C. Entry

In order to come to Canada, the refugees in our sample required direct financial support in addition to settlement services. One quarter of the refugees were privately sponsored, either by church groups, ethno-cultural organizations, family members or other individuals. Another 3% took part in the 3-9 program, in which the federal government and private sponsors shared responsibility for the newcomers, and 72% of refugees were sponsored by the government. Of those who reported private sponsorship, 63% said that they continue to maintain contact with their sponsors. Thirty-two percent of the refugees participated in a host program; of those, 60% still have contact with their hosts.

The extent to which refugees accessed settlement services can be found in Chapter 6. To recapitulate the main findings, the most heavily used service was English language instruction, followed by help finding housing. A wide variety of settlement services are provided across the province, but the consensus of the refugees was that they were not supplied with sufficient language training and that they needed more support in obtaining good jobs. “Government should offer more opportunities to learn English as this is so important” (1090); “Give us language skills to be able to compete” (3042); “Refugees come here wanting to have a job. I think the government should have some kind of plan and agency to help those with skills to get jobs quickly, so they can contribute back to society” (0980).

D. Community Openness

The benefits of living in a particular city and how welcoming a community is to newcomers can be gauged both by the views elicited in the public opinion survey and in the reaction of the refugees to their new homes. (For a comparison of urban Albertans with national norms with regard to these issues, see Chapter 4). We asked the residents in the seven cities their views of Canadian Immigration Policy, that is, whether there are too many, too few, or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada. As can be seen in Table 4-23 (Chapter 4), the respondents did not differ in their replies from one city to the next. Forty-four percent felt that the federal government is admitting the right number, while 39% felt that too many immigrants are entering the country each year.

Two thirds of the public stated that there is a good balance of people from different races and cultures coming to Canada, and a large majority of respondents (79%) felt that immigrants and refugees should be allowed to sponsor immediate family members. When asked whether immigration should be restricted to those who can speak an official language, 76% said no; however, 42% thought that refugee and immigrant parents should pay for their own children's ESL training, and another 16% thought they should pay if it was affordable.

The residents of the seven cities were also asked about their own knowledge of and personal contact with refugees and immigrants. The majority of respondents were aware that there are newcomers to Canada living in their respective cities, but only a minority were aware that there are refugees who were admitted because of life-threatening problems. There were significant differences among the respondents in the seven cities when we asked whether they personally knew any immigrants or refugees (results not shown in a table). People in Lethbridge (59%), Red Deer (55%), and Medicine Hat (55%) were less likely to be acquainted with a refugee or immigrant than the individuals interviewed in Fort McMurray (79%), Calgary (75%), Edmonton (70%) or Grande Prairie (67%). Among those in each city who know refugees or immigrants, approximately three quarters know 20 or fewer.

We also asked refugees about the degree of contact they had with Canadians and other people within their communities (See Table 7-2). Refugees living in Fort McMurray stood out in that 75% of them indicated that they spent time with "other Canadian friends" often or daily. In contrast, the average percentage of individuals from all the cities who reported spending time often/daily with Canadian friends was only 21%. Refugees in Fort McMurray also reported spending time with co-workers, other immigrants (from a different culture), and family and relatives outside their households significantly more often than did refugees in any other city. Finally, none of the Fort McMurray respondents spent any time with a sponsor family or Canadian host volunteer.

In Table 4-21 (Chapter 4) the public was asked to evaluate the openness of their respective communities in general. A number of significant differences emerge. One of

the most notable contrasts is between Medicine Hat and Fort McMurray. Seventy-four percent of residents polled in Medicine Hat strongly agreed that their city is a good place to live, compared with Fort McMurray residents where only 54% strongly agreed with the same statement. Given that Medicine Hat residents are older and on average have lived longer in their city, this is not a surprising difference. When asked about jobs, residents of Calgary, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray agreed or strongly agreed that their cities offered good employment opportunities (87%, 83% and 82% respectively). Only 60% of Edmontonians felt that job opportunities were good in that city, and southern Albertans were even less enthusiastic about employment prospects (51% in Lethbridge and 42% in Medicine Hat). When asked to rate the suitability of the cities for raising a family, a minority of Edmontonians and people in Fort McMurray strongly agreed that their cities were good in this respect. People from the other smaller centres were much more ardent about their communities. In terms of a welcoming attitude, residents of Calgary (49%), Fort McMurray (46%) and Medicine Hat (45%) were most likely to strongly agree that their communities were friendly; Lethbridge, Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Edmonton saw their communities as less welcoming (although a clear majority of residents in every city either agreed or strongly agreed that their cities are friendly). When asked about openness to newcomers, there were no significant differences across cities: in each case, between a quarter and a third of residents strongly agreed that their communities were welcoming to newcomers.

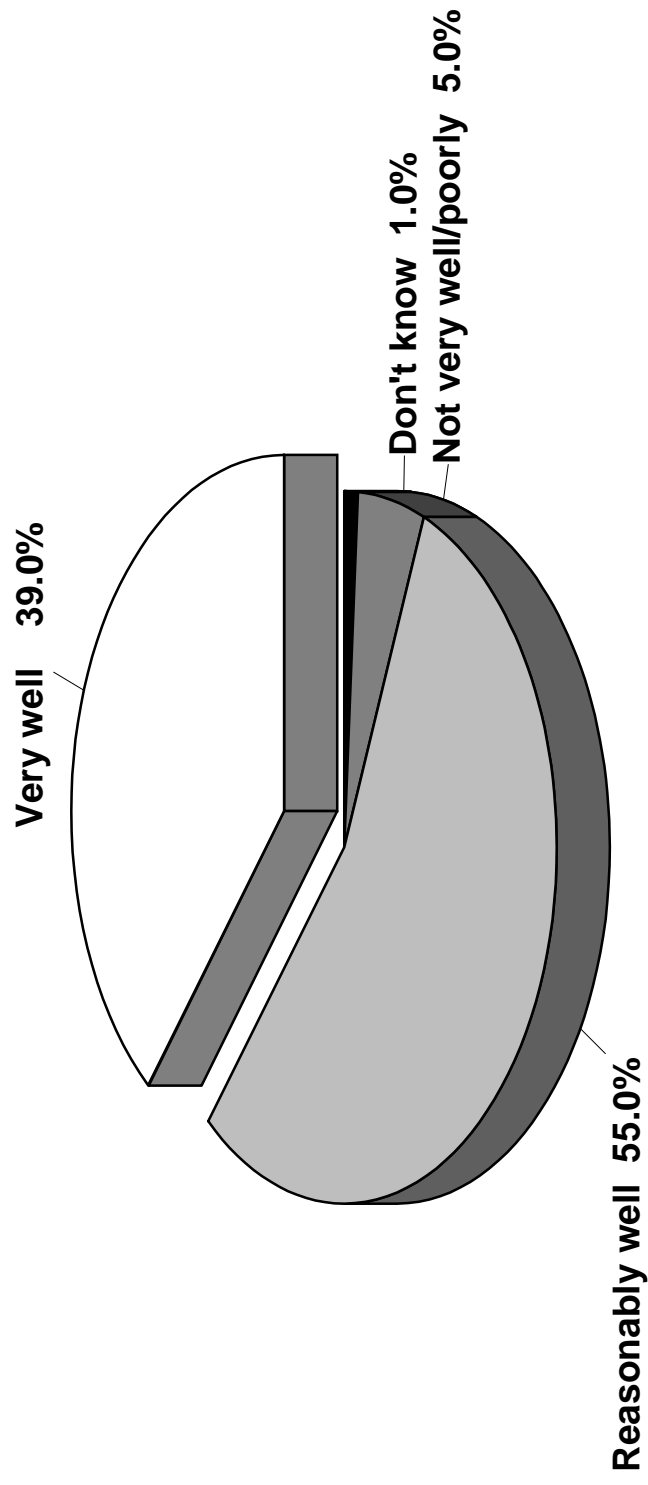
Another indicator of the openness of communities to refugees is the extent to which residents recognize the need for assistance programs to help newcomers adjust (see Table 4-24, Chapter 4 and Table 6-7, Chapter 6). When asked whether there is a need for special services, the public in Fort McMurray saw the least need (64%). There appears to be an assumption in Fort McMurray that people will manage relatively well without special services; in fact, for those refugees who have remained in the city, this is apparently the case. They have more ongoing contact with co-workers and other Canadian friends than do refugees in the other cities. Fort McMurray has also attracted a number of “movers” who were originally destined elsewhere. However, as noted in Chapter 5, the original retention rate in Fort McMurray is not high. The community

seems to be open to newcomers, but it is best for immigrants who have a particular employment profile, and who are not in need of special assistance. Overall, residents of the seven host cities believed that refugees and immigrants were adjusting well in their communities. Four out of ten (39%) thought they were adjusting “very well” while 55% answered “reasonably well” to this question (Figure 7-3).

E. Cultural Diversity

Both the youth and the adult refugees were questioned about their own openness to cultural diversity and immigration. When we examined their responses by city, we found that in most instances, the youth and their parents reacted in similar ways (see Tables 7-4 and 7-5). On the whole, both groups felt that it was worthwhile for ethnic groups to keep their first (heritage) languages and to maintain cultural traditions. As one refugee put it, in giving advice to other newcomers, “I would tell them to keep their own culture and not let their kids lose it” (1261). One somewhat noticeable difference appeared between the youth in Edmonton and their parents; 23% of the former thought that people should change their ways to be more like average Canadians, while 47% of their parents agreed with this statement. The youth in Calgary, Edmonton, and the smaller cities did not differ much on most of their responses to questions about cultural diversity, with the exception of Calgarians’ lower agreement to the statement “I would like to keep cultural traditions from my home country.” The youth in Calgary were also more likely than the rest of the sample to agree that having different cultural groups in Canada makes it difficult to develop a sense of unity among Canadians. It is not surprising then that when the youth were asked how concerned they were about “fitting in” in Canadian society (see Table 7-6, below), Calgarians (56%) were more concerned than were Edmontonians (46%). Even more respondents from the smaller cities were concerned about fitting in (62%). This may reflect the fact that they have fewer alternatives than do the youth in larger cities to interact with people from the same background.

Figure 7-3
**Public Opinion Survey,
 Residents' Perceptions of How Well Refugees/Immigrants
 are Adjusting to Life in the Community ***



* 83% of the total sample (all seven communities combined) indicated that they knew of refugees or immigrants living in their community. These respondents were then asked: "How well do you think these newcomers are adjusting to life in?" City differences in responses were NOT statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 7-4

Youth Refugees' Openness to Cultural Diversity and Immigration by Current City of Residence

	% Agree and Strongly Agree [#]			(N)
	Calgary	Edmonton	Other [^]	Total
It's good for ethnic groups in Canada to keep their first (heritage) language(s).	88	91	89	89 (91)
People who come to Canada should change their ways to be more like average Canadians.	28	23	35	30 (91)
Having many different cultural groups is good for Canada.	81	76	70	76 (90)
I would like to keep cultural traditions from my home country.	78	96	84	85 (91)
Having many different cultural groups in Canada makes it difficult to develop a sense of unity among Canadians.	34	18	19	24 (91)
I feel like a real Canadian.	34	32	35	34 (91)
I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada.	25	34	30	29 (91)
Being in a multicultural society is one of the things I like best about living in Canada.	75	68	65	69 (91)
Total 'N' in each community	(32)	(22)	(37)	(91)

[#] Respondents answered on a 1-5 point scale with '1' representing "Strongly Disagree" and '5' representing "Strongly Agree". Values of '4' "Agree" and '5' "Strongly Agree" have been combined and are shown in the table.

[^] Other category includes all other cities of residence.

Table 7-5

Adult Refugees' Openness to Cultural Diversity and Immigration by Current City of Residence

	% Agree and % Strongly Agree [*]							
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray	Other Cities	Total (N)
It's good for ethnic groups in Canada to keep their first (heritage) language(s).	A 26 SA 66	21 67	10 78	15 83	15 63	8 75	17 69	19 * 70 (524)
I would like to keep cultural traditions from my home country.	A 23 SA 59	22 60	11 78	13 83	19 63	0 75	23 55	19 64 (523)
My spouse would like me to keep the cultural traditions from my home country.	A 27 SA 58	20 54	23 60	14 83	12 42	0 88	17 52	20 * 58 (386)
Having many different cultural groups is good for Canada.	A 31 SA 39	25 51	31 57	13 72	21 48	8 42	31 50	26 * 50 (515)
Being in a multicultural society is one of the things I like best about living in Canada.	A 24 SA 45	28 49	21 64	13 52	23 33	50 17	34 31	26 * 45 (513)
People who come to Canada should change their ways to be more like Canadians.	A 30 SA 17	18 14	18 13	13 13	23 25	8 42	11 23	19 17 (518)
I feel like a real Canadian.	A 15 SA 21	13 23	13 18	15 11	11 17	17 58	14 20	14 21 (515)
I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada.	A 13 SA 12	14 9	8 5	13 9	14 15	8 17	7 7	12 10 (505)
Having many different cultural groups in Canada makes it difficult to develop a sense of unity.	A 16 SA 6	8 5	5 2	9 9	17 8	8 33	6 6	10 * 6 (506)
Maximum 'N' in each category	(113)	(164)	(63)	(48)	(54)	(12)	(71)	(525)

Respondents answered on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing 'Strongly Disagree' and '5' representing 'Strongly Agree'. Only values of '4' (Agree) and '5' (Strongly Agree) are shown in table. Ten refugees from Poland are included in the TOTAL percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small N.

* Current City differences are statistically significant.

Note: Grande Prairie is included with other communities since only 7 respondents currently live in Grande Prairie.

Table 7-6
Youth Refugees' Assessments of "Fitting In" in Canadian Society by Current City of Residence

	% Concerned about "Fitting In" #		
	Not Concerned	Very Concerned	(N)
Other^	38	62	(91)
Calgary	44	56	(91)
Edmonton	55	46	(91)
Total	44	56	(91)

Respondents answered on a 5-point scale with '1' representing "not at all concerned" and '5' representing "very concerned". Values of 1 to 3 have been combined into the "not concerned" category.

^ Other category includes all other city of residence.

Amongst the adult refugees, there were some significant city differences: for example, the respondents in Medicine Hat were the least enthusiastic with regard to first language retention, while those in Red Deer were most in favour of it (Table 7-5). The residents of Fort McMurray and Red Deer appeared to be most distinct from one another across the board. When asked whether they felt like real Canadians, 75% of the people in Fort McMurray agreed that they did, and they were significantly less convinced than were other respondents that having many different cultural groups is good for Canada. They were also most supportive of people changing their ways on arrival to Canada in order to be more like Canadians. Their endorsement of this point of view was much higher than that of the general public living in Fort McMurray (50% versus 32%). Adult refugees in Fort McMurray agreed significantly more often than did those in other cities that having many different cultural groups in Canada makes it difficult to develop a sense of unity. The adult refugees in Red Deer were at the other end of the continuum in that they most strongly supported the maintenance of cultural traditions; they were also least likely to feel like "real Canadians."

When asked to comment on the statement "I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada," between a quarter and a third of youth agreed. Roughly a quarter of

adult refugees agreed (no significant differences across cities), but there was a split in the reactions of the general public. People in Calgary (31%) and Edmonton (28%) were more likely to agree or strongly agree than people in the smaller cities, where the mean percentage of individuals who agreed was 15%. This is no doubt a reflection of the fact that Calgary and Edmonton receive the largest numbers of newcomers, refugees and immigrants alike.

The reactions of the youth and the adult refugees to cultural diversity were also tabulated according to region of origin (see Tables 7-7 and 7-8). Parents and youth generally respond similarly. Former Yugoslavian adults differ from the adult refugees from other regions in their assessment of the effect different cultural groups have on unity in Canada. Seventy-one percent agree or strongly agree that a variety of groups interferes with unity, whereas 88% of the other respondents feel that way. Interestingly, the same people (former Yugoslavians) are the less likely to enjoy living in a multicultural society by a significant margin. Fully half of the Africans believe that people should change to be more like average Canadians, and 53% of them state that they themselves feel like real Canadians. Nearly half (49%) of the refugees from the Middle East also report feeling like real Canadians, in contrast to the Central/South Americans (38%), former Yugoslavians (29%) and East Asians (26%). Overall a majority of all adult refugees think that having many different cultural groups is good for Canada.

Although worded differently, two questions that elicited relevant comparisons were put to members of the general public. First, they were asked if a mixture of different lifestyles and cultures makes their own city a more attractive place to live (see Table 4-22, Chapter 4). The majority of respondents in the public opinion survey agreed that diversity is good. Second, they were asked if a good balance of people and backgrounds are coming to Canada or if too many people of different races and cultures are allowed to enter (see Table 4-23, Chapter 4). A two-thirds majority agreed that there is a good balance. It appears as though one's personal experience of cultural diversity, as a member of the majority, or as a relatively recent refugee, has a definite influence on how it is perceived.

Table 7-7

Youth Refugees' Openness to Cultural Diversity and Immigration by Region of Origin

	% Agree and Strongly Agree [#]				Total	(N)
	Central/South America	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	Other		
It's good for ethnic groups in Canada to keep their first (heritage) language(s).	100	80	95	100	89	(91)
People who come to Canada should change their ways to be more like average Canadians.	20	28	42	27	29.7	(91)
Having many different cultural groups is good for Canada.	93	69	68	91	75.6	(90)
I would like to keep cultural traditions from my home country.	100	80	74	100	84.6	(91)
Having many different cultural groups in Canada makes it difficult to develop a sense of unity among Canadians.	27	30	11	18	24.2	(91)
I feel like a real Canadian.	40	28	42	36	34.1	(91)
I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada.	23	24	47	55	31.9	(91)
Being in a multicultural society is one of the things I like best about living in Canada.	87	65	74	55	69.2	(91)
Total 'N' in each community	(15)	(46)	(19)	(11)	(91)	

[#] Respondents answered on a 5 point scale with '1' representing "strongly disagree" and '5' representing "strongly agree". Values of '4' "agree" and '5' "strongly agree" have been combined and are shown in the table.

[^] Other category includes all other cities of residence.

Table 7-8

Adult Refugees' Openness to Cultural Diversity and Immigration by Region of Origin

			% Agree and % Strongly Agree [#]					Total	(N)
			Africa	Central/South America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East		
It's good for ethnic groups in Canada to keep their first (heritage) language(s).	A	12	22	44	17	22	19 *		
	SA	74	71	38	72	65	70		(524)
I would like to keep cultural traditions from my home country.	A	12	25	25	19	19	19 *		
	SA	77	69	44	62	67	64		(523)
My spouse would like me to keep the cultural traditions from my home country.	A	13	34	42	18	14	20		
	SA	75	53	33	55	75	58		(386)
Having many different cultural groups is good for Canada.	A	18	39	60	24	23	26 *		
	SA	65	53	33	47	59	50		(515)
Being in a multicultural society is one of the things I like best about living in Canada.	A	18	31	50	26	18	26 *		
	SA	77	55	38	36	66	45		(513)
People who come to Canada should change their ways to be more like average Canadians.	A	21	14	25	19	17	19 *		
	SA	29	4	13	21	8	17		(518)
I feel like a real Canadian.	A	9	15	13	15	12	14 *		
	SA	44	23	13	14	37	21		(515)
I feel that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada.	A	21	10	31	9	17	12 *		
	SA	21	6	19	8	14	10		(505)
Having many different cultural groups in Canada makes it difficult to develop a sense of unity among Canadians	A	9	16	13	7	18	10 *		
	SA	9	4	20	6	5	6		(506)
Maximum 'N' in each category		(34)	(48)	(16)	(329)	(88)	(525)		

Respondents answered on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing "Strongly Disagree" and '5' representing "Strongly Agree". Only values of '4' (Agree) and '5' (Strongly Agree) are shown in table. Ten refugees from Poland are included in the TOTAL percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small N.

* Region differences are statistically significant.

F. Discrimination/Racism

We asked the refugees whether or not they had experienced discrimination or racism since arriving in Canada. It should be noted that we left the interpretation of these terms to the respondents. It may be the case that they restricted their answers to instances of blatant discrimination rather than more subtle forms. One quarter of the adult interviewees stated that they had experienced discrimination (Table 7-9); of those, 41% reported that it had happened ‘once or twice,’ 38% said it had happened ‘several times,’ and 17% thought they had been discriminated against ‘very often’ (results not shown in a table). These same individuals were then asked if they had encountered discrimination in seeking employment, housing, or in some other sphere. Fourteen percent of all respondents reported employment discrimination. The most commonly cited manifestation was being avoided or ostracized. Very few people (only 4%) thought they had faced housing discrimination. Seventeen percent reported having faced discrimination in other areas; of those, 32% said that the attitudes of service providers (agency staff, public service, and ESL teachers) were negative. The majority of adult respondents in Medicine Hat (53%) reported general discrimination. As one Medicine Hat respondent said, “No one cares about what happens or wants to be friends with us” (0050). They also perceived significantly higher rates of discrimination related to employment than refugees in any other city. This is in sharp contrast to the perceptions of the general public in Medicine Hat, where 79% felt that refugees are treated fairly when they look for jobs (see Table 4-24, Chapter 4). The adult refugees who reported the least discrimination were living in Fort McMurray, followed by those in Edmonton and Calgary (see Table 7-9). Because of the limited number of youth in the sample, it was not possible to isolate those living in smaller cities; however, there are some significant differences by city. None of the youth in Edmonton perceived discrimination, compared to 38% in Calgary and 43% in the smaller cities (see Table 7-10).

Table 7-9

Adult Refugees' Reports of Experiences of Discrimination/Racism in Canada by Region of Origin, Current City of Residence, and Gender

	% Answering Yes		(N)
	Discrimination/Racism In General	Related to Employment Housing	
<u>Region of Origin</u>			
Africa	*	*	(34)
Central/South America	18	6	(49)
East Asia	78	16	(16)
Former Yugoslavia	31	0	(329)
Middle East	16	2	(88)
Poland	33	5	(9)
	22	0	
<u>Current City of Residence</u>			
Edmonton	*	*	(113)
Calgary	18	3	(164)
Lethbridge	20	6	(63)
Red Deer	33	2	(48)
Medicine Hat	37	2	(54)
Fort McMurray	53	8	(12)
Other Communities [#]	8	0	(71)
	17	3	
<u>Gender</u>			
Female	*	*	(260)
Male	29	5	(265)
	22	3	
% Total N	25	14	4

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Grande Prairie is included with Other Communities since only 7 respondents currently live in Grande Prairie.

Note: Since some refugees have moved, we cannot be certain that any discrimination they report occurred in their current community of residence.

Table 7-10
**Youth Refugees' Experiences of Racism or Discrimination
 Since Arrival by Current City of Residence**

	<i>% Experiencing Discrimination</i>		(N)
	No	Yes	
Other^	57	43	(37)
Calgary	63	38	(32)
Edmonton	100	0	(22)
Total	69	31	(91) *

^ Other category includes all other cities.

* Community differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

When the responses regarding discrimination are considered in terms of region of origin and location, some interesting significant differences emerge (Table 7-9). Central/South Americans report considerably more discrimination than people from any other region, followed by people from the Middle East, East Asians, and Africans. Yugoslavians experience the least discrimination; this finding is mirrored in the youth findings (see Table 7-11). It appears from these figures that visible minority status plays a role in the degree of discrimination perceived by the refugees.

Table 7-11
**Youth Refugees' Experiences of Racism or Discrimination
 Since Arrival by Region of Origin**

	<i>% Experiencing Discrimination</i>		(N)
	No	Yes	
C/S America	20	80	(15)
Middle East	58	42	(19)
Other ^	82	18	(11)
Former Yugoslavia	87	13	(46)
Total	69	31	(91)*

^ Other category includes all other world regions.

* Region differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 7-12

Adult Refugees: Best and Worst Thing About Living in Current City by Region of Origin and Gender

% of Responses

Responses		Central							
		Africa	South America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	Male	Female	
(N)	%								
What would you say is the BEST THING about living here?									
Jobs/Employment/Economy	(134)	17	25	11	19	14	29	13	21
Services/Educational Opportunities	(87)	11	18	5	7	11	14	11	12
Everything/Way of Life	(65)	9	2	3	7	11	6	9	8
Community/Family/Friends/Compatriots	(100)	13	12	8	4	14	16	14	12
Location/Climate/Parks/Cleanliness	(277)	36	27	53	30	37	26	38	34
Freedom/Democracy/Safety	(106)	14	16	20	33	13	9	15	13
Total	(769)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
What would you say is the WORST THING about living here?									
Unemployment/Economy/Costs	(98)	23	25	27	46	20	24	22	24
Services/Education	(67)	15	14	20	15	18	6	16	14
Location/Climate/Size	(150)	35	36	26	16	35	37	37	32
Isolation/Culture Shock	(70)	16	18	18	15	16	15	15	17
Racism/Discrimination/Crime	(49)	11	7	9	8	11	18	10	13
Total	(434)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: 475 respondents answered the "Best" questions while 380 respondents answered the "Worst" questions.

Ten refugees from Poland are included in the TOTAL percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small 'N'. Similar analyses were done by gender but none were significant.

Although respondents were questioned directly regarding discrimination, the issue was also raised by a small number of people in two other open-ended questions: “What is the worst thing about living in Canada?”, and the question at the end of the interview which invited refugees to comment on anything else that they felt was important. One of the five most frequently cited “worst things” was discrimination (reported by to 11% of the adult refugees, see Table 7-12). One of the respondents described the experience of discrimination as follows: “There should be more human rights because discrimination is the same thing as making someone die a slow death” (0191).

As was pointed out in Chapter 5, most refugees do not leave a community because of discrimination, and in most locations, the level of discrimination experienced is relatively low. Medicine Hat stands out from the other cities in that a majority of refugees interviewed there reported experiences of discrimination. The service providers there also indicated more concern around issues of discrimination than did those in any other city. They noted that Medicine Hat would be unable to support concentrations of newcomers from a single background, and that they would prefer families over single men. There seems to be a reaction to the influx of single men to the city, particularly Iraqis, because of its proximity to Brooks, where the Lakeside Meat Processing Plant offers relatively high paying jobs to refugees.

G. Important Issues for Living in Canada

Both the youth and the adult refugees were asked to rate a number of issues with regard to settling in Canada on a scale of 1-5 where ‘1’ meant ‘not at all important’ and ‘5’ meant ‘very important’ (see Tables 6-9 and 6-8, Chapter 6). The youth responses are very similar to those of their parents; the only differences involve two items, namely, “having your own place of worship” and “having friends from the same cultural background.” First, the Middle Eastern and Central/South American youth value the importance of having their own place of worship less than do their parents (74% vs. 89% and 74% vs. 84%, respectively). The other difference is that youth are less concerned about having friends of the same cultural background than are their parents.

Table 7-13

Adult Refugees Assessments of Income Adequacy and Perception of Financial Optimism by Current City of Residence

	% of Respondents					
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray All Cities@
Enough Income?						
Often Problems	19%	18%	13%	20%	17%	17%
Sometimes Problems	34%	32%	40%	25%	18%	33%
Covers living costs	47%	50%	47%	56%	65%	67%
Total	100%	100%	100%	101%	100%	100%
Financial situation improved compared to a year ago#						
Better Off	63%	64%	58%	65%	68%	75%
Same	24%	20%	35%	24%	23%	25%
Worse Off	13%	16%	7%	11%	9%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%
Financial situation expected to improve a year from now#						
Better Off	68%	70%	57%	80%	70%	83%
Same	19%	14%	27%	9%	17%	17%
Worse Off	1%	5%	3%	7%	4%	3%
Don't Know	12%	11%	13%	4%	9%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

@ "All cities" includes Grande Prairie, along with Vancouver, Toronto and other non-Alberta cities. City differences for all three questions were not statistically significant.

Less than 1% of the total sample failed to answer the question comparing their financial situation to a year earlier. These cases are omitted. However, 10% answered 'don't know' to the second question, hence these cases are included in the analysis.

Table 7-14

Adult Refugees' Assessments of Income Adequacy and Perceptions of Financial Optimism by Region of Origin

		% of Respondents						
		Central/South			East	Former	Middle	All
		Africa	America	Asia	Yugoslavia	East	Poland	
Enough Income to:	Cover living Costs	30%	41%	81%	61%	24%	78%	52%
	Sometimes Problems	46%	37%	6%	29%	37%	22%	31%
	Often Problems	24%	22%	13%	10%	39%		17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100% *
Financial situation improved to a year ago#								
	Better Off	67%	51%	69%	71%	48%	44%	64%
	Same	21%	35%		23%	22%	56%	24%
	Worse Off	12%	14%	31%	6%	30%		12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100% *
Financial situation improved to year from now#								
	Better Off	85%	49%	53%	76%	56%	56%	70%
	Same	12%	39%	47%	15%	16%	44%	17%
	Worse Off		4%		3%	8%		3%
	Don't Know	3%	8%		6%	20%		10%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100% *

* Differences by region are statistically significant.

Less than 1% of the total sample failed to answer the question comparing their financial situation to a year earlier. These cases are omitted. However, 10% answered 'don't know' to the second question, hence these cases are included in the analysis.

Table 7-15

Refugee and Public Opinions About Current City of Residence

	% Agree and Strongly Agree [#]					
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Red Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray
						Total
						(N)
(City) is a good place to live.						
Refugee Adults	88%	89%	75%	94%	76%	75%
Public Opinion	93%	87%	89%	92%	94%	81%
Refugee Youth	86%	91%	(Total Other Cities 73%)			
						85% * (525)
						90% * (802)
						82% (91)
(City) has good job opportunities.						
Refugee Adults	59%	72%	43%	65%	33%	67%
Public Opinion	60%	86%	51%	69%	42%	81%
Refugee Youth	86%	84%	(Total Other Cities 35%)			
						59% * (525)
						69% * (709)
						64% * (89)
(City) is a good place to raise a family.						
Refugee Adults	84%	78%	87%	100%	85%	87%
Public Opinion	80%	80%	95%	91%	91%	77%
Refugee Youth	85%	77%	(Total Other Cities 75%)			
						84% * (525)
						86% * (792)
						78% (87)
(City) people are friendly and welcoming.						
Refugee Adults	78%	81%	76%	92%	70%	92%
Public Opinion	70%	85%	77%	77%	84%	82%
Refugee Youth	59%	75%	(Total Other Cities 76%)			
						78% * (525)
						78% * (801)
						71% (91)

Respondents answered on a 1-5 scale with '1' representing "Strongly Disagree" and '5' representing "Strongly Agree".

Values of '4' (Agree) and '5' (Strongly Agree) are combined and shown in table.

Grande Prairie is not presented separately because of the small N.

* Current City differences are statistically significant.

By far the most important issue rated by all refugees for succeeding in Canada is learning English, followed closely by finding a good job. Although African respondents were significantly less concerned about finding a good job than refugees from other regions of origin, 85% saw it as an important issue nonetheless (see Table 6-8, Chapter 6). Nearly all refugees agreed that successful settlement necessitated being welcomed by local residents. When adult refugees were asked how important it was to be able to go to a settlement agency, the overwhelming majority stated that it was important or very important (91%). There was one significant difference here, however, in that East Asians were less likely than were members of other groups to view the accessibility of a settlement agency as being vital. Being able to find an interpreter was considered to be important or very important by the majority of respondents, but Central/South Americans, East Asians and former Yugoslavians saw this as significantly more important to successful settlement than did Africans and people from the Middle East.

Making Canadian friends and having access to a good bus system were both seen as important by all groups. There were some differences in responses to the importance of having relatives close by: only 68% of former Yugoslavians saw their relatives' proximity as important or very important, in contrast to the Middle Eastern respondents, 90% of whom viewed this as a crucial condition for successful settlement.

Considerations such as being able to buy preferred foods at a nearby store and having one's own place of worship were not as important as the issues discussed above, but nonetheless, a majority of respondents overall valued these neighbourhood amenities as contributing to successful settlement. Significant differences did emerge across ethnic groups, however; East Asians were the least concerned with accessible foodstuffs, and Central/South Americans and people from the Middle East were most anxious to have their own place of worship.

Another indicator of successful settlement in Canada is personal income (for a comparison of refugees' incomes with those of other host city residents, see Chapter 3). We asked refugees to comment on the adequacy of their current incomes, and we also asked them to compare their situation now to what it was a year ago. Finally we asked them to predict how their financial situation would change over the course of the next

year to get a sense of their degree of optimism (see Table 7-13). When the refugees' responses are compared by city of residence, there are no statistically significant differences. Nevertheless, there are some notable trends. Sixty-seven percent of respondents in Fort McMurray and 65% of refugees in Medicine Hat report having enough income to cover their living costs, while roughly half of the refugees in the other cities feel they have enough money to live on. While the average percentage of refugees who state they often have problems getting by is 17%, no one fits into this category in Fort McMurray. Roughly two thirds of all respondents declare that their financial situation has improved over the last year, while a quarter state that their income has remained the same. On average, 12% state that they are worse off than a year ago; however, no one in Fort McMurray falls into this category. Overall, 72% of adult refugees are optimistic that their financial situation will improve in the next year; 20% think that their position will be unchanged, and an average of 3% worry that they will be worse off.

Some significant differences across refugees groups are apparent when responses regarding income adequacy are grouped according to region of origin (see Table 7-14). More East Asians and Poles report having enough income to cover living costs (81% and 78% respectively) than do the other adult respondents, most notably the people from the Middle East (24%) and from Africa (30%). In addition, a minority of Central/South Americans (41%) think they have enough income to live on. Looking back over the past year, African, East Asian, and former Yugoslavians are significantly more positive about their financial situation (Table 7-14).

Significant differences were found in terms of the respondents' optimism for the future as well. Eighty-five percent of Africans predicted that their financial situation would improve, compared with only 49% of Central/South Americans, 53% of East Asians, and 56% of Middle Easterners. Three quarters of former Yugoslavians are optimistic that their incomes will improve; this is no doubt tied, in part, to the fact that they are the most recent arrivals.

To determine whether refugees' opinions about their current city of residence were parallel to those of the general public, we compared their responses on the following statements: (City) is a good place to live; (City) has good job opportunities; (City) is a good place to raise a family; and (City) people are friendly and welcoming (see Table 7-15). Interestingly, the refugees in Red Deer were as positive as and sometimes more positive about the community than were the local respondents to the public opinion survey (note especially that 92% of refugee adults feel that Red Deer residents are friendly and welcoming, while only 77% of the general public feel that way).

There was a noticeable difference between refugee adults and the public in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat in terms of whether those cities are perceived to be good places to live. Refugees' responses, although positive at 75% and 76% respectively, were considerably lower than those of the public. As for job opportunities, there was a clear difference between the refugees' and the public's perceptions. With the exception of those in Edmonton, the adult refugees in every community felt that their city had fewer good job opportunities than did the public. The youth responses differed from those of their parents in that the Edmonton and Calgary youth were very optimistic (86% and 84% thought that job opportunities were good), whereas the youth in the smaller cities were much more pessimistic (35% overall agreed that there were good job opportunities in their city).

Some intriguing differences appeared when people were asked whether their city of residence was a good place to raise a family. Refugees in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were less enthusiastic about those cities than were members of the general public, but the situation was reversed in Fort McMurray, where refugees were more likely to agree that that city is a good place to raise a family.

Finally, when asked whether people are friendly and welcoming, the opinions diverged strongly in Medicine Hat: 84% of the public agreed that they are, whereas only 70% of refugee adults did so. It should be noted, too, that this percentage was the lowest of all the cities. There is an interesting anomaly in the responses of the youth in Edmonton, where

only 59% agreed that people are friendly and welcoming, yet this is the city where 100% of youth reported that they had experienced no discrimination.

H. Looking Back

The adult refugees were asked to evaluate the degree to which their hopes and expectations had been realized since their arrival in Canada (See Table 7-16). Twenty-three percent of Africans felt that none or hardly any of their expectations had been met, compared with only 8% of East Asians. On the positive side, 56% of Central /South Americans and nearly half (49%) of former Yugoslavians felt that their hopes had been fulfilled completely or to a large extent.

When comparisons of the same responses were made by current city of residence, there were no significant differences. Nevertheless, Fort McMurray residents stood apart from other refugees, in that no one in that city felt that none or hardly any of their expectations had been realized, and fully 73% reported that their hopes have been met completely or to a large extent. Finally, we compared respondents' answers according to gender, and here there was a significant difference. Fifty-one percent of men stated that their expectations had been met completely or to a large extent, in contrast with women, only 39% of whom felt the same way. This gender difference may be due to the more difficult employment situations encountered by women (see Chapter 3).

We asked the adult refugees to indicate what the best and worst things were about living in their current city (see Table 7-12). The rank ordering of responses for the top five "best things about living in (City)" were: location (parks, climate, cleanliness); employment; freedom (democracy, safety); community (family friends, compatriots); services and educational opportunities. Interestingly, the "worst thing about living in (City)" also included location; followed by unemployment (economy, costs); isolation, culture shock; services and education; and finally racism, discrimination and crime. It is here that we see an accurate reflection of the perceptions of the service providers in Calgary and Edmonton regarding the importance of a compatriot community. Not only is the existence of a group of friends/family from the same background an indicator of satisfaction within a given community, as evidenced by the "best thing about (City)"

classification, but the isolation/culture shock factor also demonstrates the importance of having compatriot connections.

When we analysed the responses to the same question by city of residence, some notable differences appeared, although none were significant (see Table 7-17). The number one response to both the “best thing about living here” and “worst thing about living here” questions involved location/climate. Residents of Fort McMurray had the most responses in both the positive and negative categories. Jobs and the economy was the second highest ranking category under “best thing”: refugees in Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray and Medicine Hat were far happier with this factor than the people in the other cities. Under the “worst thing” category, unemployment/the economy/costs was mentioned most often by residents of Medicine Hat, followed by people in Fort McMurray. Isolation was felt most strongly by people in Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Calgary, while residents of Grande Prairie and Red Deer thought the best thing about their community was having family, friends and compatriots nearby. The people in Edmonton, Calgary and Fort McMurray were happiest about the services and educational opportunities available to them; in contrast, 67% of refugees in Grande Prairie, 30% in Medicine Hat and 29% in Red Deer were dissatisfied with the services and education opportunities in their communities.

I. Refugees’ Perceptions and Recommendations

Financial Support

Several refugees were dismayed at the landing fees and the requirement to start paying back the travel assistance loan within the first year: “Many issues make our adjustment to Canada harder and slower, such as lack of understanding in Canadian income tax system; travel loan money misunderstanding on relationship between Ottawa (Revenue Canada) and newcomers about paying back travel loan” (0451); “Landing fees are not necessary – we have had already too much to pay” (1711); “I have learned that CIC indebts people not only for airfare (with extremely high price) but also collects something called ‘landing fee’. This is disgraceful and should be abolished” (1541). The adult refugees were asked for their opinions regarding payment of settlement services (see Table 7-18).

Table 7-16

**Adult Refugees: Realization of Hopes and Expectations by Region of Origin,
Current City of Residence, and Gender**

<u>Region of Origin*</u>	% of Respondents			
	Not at All (0%)	Hardly at All (1-29%)	To Some Extent (30-59%)	To a Large Extent (60-99%) Completely 100% #
<u>Africa</u>				
Central/South America	10%	13%	48%	16%
East Asia	10%	7%	27%	22%
Former Yugoslavia	6%	8%	76%	8%
Middle East	8%	12%	33%	31%
		10%	45%	10%
<u>Current City of Residence</u>				
Edmonton	12%	7%	30%	33%
Calgary	5%	14%	39%	20%
Lethbridge	4%	18%	33%	25%
Red Deer	11%	7%	48%	18%
Medicine Hat	11%	11%	38%	16%
Fort McMurray			27%	55%
Other Communities#	2%	11%	38%	31%
<u>Gender*</u>				
Female	7%	11%	31%	30%
Male	7%	11%	43%	20%
Total %	7%	11%	37%	25%
Total 'N' (480)	(33)	(53)	(177)	(120)

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Grande Prairie is included with other communities as N<10.

Note: Poland is included in Total as N<10.

Table 7-17
Adult Refugees: Best and Worst Thing About Living in Current City by Current City of Residence

Responses			% of Responses							
(N)	%		Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Deer	Medicine Hat	Grande Prairie	Fort McMurray	Other Cities
What would you say is the BEST THING about living here?										
Jobs/Employment/Economy	(134)	17	22	27	5	5	17	8	19	12
Services/Educational Opportunities	(87)	11	17	14	10	9	5	8	13	6
Everything/Way of Life	(65)	9	8	11	7	5	10	7	0	8
Community/Family/Friends/Compatriots	(100)	13	14	12	10	20	7	23	6	18
Location/Climate/Parks/Cleanliness	(277)	36	25	25	53	49	29	46	56	51
Freedom/Democracy/Safety	(106)	14	14	11	15	12	32	8	6	5
Total	(769)	100								
What would you say is the WORST THING about living here?										
Unemployment/Economy/Costs	(98)	23	19	14	25	23	39	0	33	33
Services/Education	(67)	15	13	9	16	29	30	67	8	13
Location/Climate/Size	(150)	35	46	38	38	15	4	33	59	35
Isolation/Culture Shock	(70)	16	12	19	12	27	20	0	0	13
Racism/Discrimination/Crime	(49)	11	10	20	9	6	7	0	0	6
Total	(434)	100								

Note: 475 respondents answered the "Best" questions while 380 respondents answered the "Worst" questions. Ten refugees from Poland are included in the total percentages, but results for these individuals are not presented separately because of the small n.

Table 7-18

Adult Refugees' Opinions Regarding Payment for Settlement Services by Region of Origin

	% of Total Sample					Total
	Africa	Central/South America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	
Should newcomers pay for ESL/LINC training?						
No	97%	92%	94%	98%	92%	96%
Yes	3%	6%	6%	1%	7%	3%
No Response		2%		1%	1%	1%
Reasons newcomers should or should not have to pay for ESL/LINC training. *						
Should Not: Can't afford to pay.	85%	65%	63%	75%	72%	73%
Should Not: Government's responsibility.	6%	15%		10%	7%	10%
Should Not: Newcomers contribute to Canada.	9%	8%	6%	10%	9%	10%
Other Responses		4%	19%	3%	8%	4%
Should: Various reasons.		8%	12%	2%	4%	3%
Should parents have to pay for their children's ESL training?*						
No	91%	90%	88%	95%	82%	92%
Yes	6%	10%	12%	3%	15%	6%
No Response	3%			2%	3%	2%
Is it fair to charge for any other services for refugees?						
No	100%	92%	88%	96%	90%	94%
Yes		6%	12%	2%	6%	4%
No Response		2%		2%	4%	2%
Total N	(34)	(49)	(16)	(329)	(88)	(525)

Total includes 9 Polish refugees.

* Differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

Table 7-19

Adult Refugees' Opinions Regarding Term and Amount of Financial Assistance by Current City of Residence

	% of Total Sample						
	Edmonton	Calgary	Lethbridge	Deer	Medicine Hat	Fort McMurray	Other Cities
<i>Should refugees receive financial assistance for longer than a year?*</i>							
No	54%	69%	73%	69%	65%	100%	65%
Yes	43%	27%	27%	31%	35%		35%
No Response	3%	4%					2%
<i>Reasons why refugees should/shouldn't receive financial assistance for longer than one year.*</i>							
No: No explanation	26%	40%	40%	30%	15%	42%	22%
No: Enough time to settle	16%	28%	24%	34%	38%	33%	29%
Yes: Needed to settle and adjust	19%	14%	15%	15%	24%		6%
Yes: For special needs	15%	9%	13%	13%	15%	25%	25%
Yes: No explanation	18%	7%	3%	6%	6%	14%	14%
No: It would spoil you and other funds are available	6%	2%	5%	2%	2%		4%
<i>Do you think the amount of money given to refugees (for a year) is enough?</i>							
No	50%	46%	34%	58%	39%	50%	29%
Yes	31%	36%	58%	40%	59%	50%	61%
No Response	19%	18%	8%	2%	2%		10%
Total N	(113)	(164)	(63)	(48)	(54)	(12)	(71)

* Differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

Grande Prairie is included with Other Communities since only 7 respondents currently live in Grande Prairie.

Table 7-20

Adult Refugees' Opinions Regarding Term and Amount of Financial Assistance by Region of Origin

	% of Total Sample						N
	Africa	CentralSouth America	East Asia	Former Yugoslavia	Middle East	Total	
Should refugees receive financial assistance for longer than a year?*							
No	59%	61%	88%	70%	51%	66%	(3)
Yes	41%	39%	12%	28%	46%	32%	(2)
No Response				2%	3%	2%	(0)
Reasons why refugees should/shouldn't receive financial assistance for longer than one year.							
No: No explanation	18%	29%	43%	35%	18%	31%	(155)
No: Enough time to settle	40%	25%	22%	25%	32%	27%	(134)
Yes: Needed to settle and adjust	15%	16%	14%	13%	21%	15%	(75)
Yes: For special needs	18%	16%	14%	13%	16%	14%	(71)
Yes: No explanation	9%	10%		9%	13%	10%	(48)
No: It would spoil you and other funds are available		4%	7%	5%		3%	(17)
Do you think the amount of money given to refugees (for a year) is enough?							
No	25%	57%	63%	49%	22%	44%	(221)
Yes	66%	37%	6%	41%	61%	44%	(217)
No Response	9%	6%	31%	10%	17%	12%	(60)
Total N	(34)	(49)	(16)	(329)	(88)	(525)	

Total includes 9 Polish refugees.

* Differences are statistically significant (p<.05).

An overwhelming majority of respondents (96%) felt that newcomers should not have to pay for their own ESL/LINC training or their children's ESL (92%). When we compared responses according to region of origin, some differences appeared in the reasons refugees gave for not wanting to pay for ESL. Although in all cases the majority said that they did not have any money to pay for it, 15% of the Central/South Americans and 10% of the former Yugoslavians stated that it was a Government responsibility, in contrast to the East Asians, none of whom offered this rationale. There was also a significant difference by region regarding payment for their children's ESL, in that only 82% of people from the Middle East thought that parents should not have to pay as opposed to an average of 92% across all regions. Finally, we asked if it was fair to charge refugees for any other services they had received. Again, nearly all respondents (94%) said that they should not have to pay. When we compared responses to each of the funding questions across the seven cities, we found no significant differences.

The adult refugees were also asked for their opinions regarding the term and amount of financial assistance provided. Across all cities, two thirds of respondents felt that assistance for more than a year was not necessary, but there were significant differences that are perhaps reflective of the employment rates in the respective cities (see Table 7-19). Fully 100% of individuals in Fort McMurray were against extending the current term of support, while 43% of refugees in Edmonton thought that a year was not long enough. When asked what the reasons were behind their responses, there was a significant location difference among those who felt that they needed more support. The residents of Medicine Hat (24%) were more likely to feel a need for more time to adjust than the individuals in other cities. There were also differences in responses according to region of origin (see Table 7-20). Although the majority of respondents from each region indicated that one year of assistance is sufficient, 46% of the people from the Middle East felt that it was not enough time, compared with only 12% of respondents from East Asia.

When asked about the adequacy of the amount of money provided to refugees, the responses were evenly split (44% enough; 44% not enough, 12% no response) (see Table 7-19). There were notable differences across cities, such that the majority in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat felt they had enough support (58% and 59% respectively) whereas

people in Red Deer (58%), Fort McMurray (50%) and Edmonton (50%) did not feel they received an adequate amount of money. Analyses by region of origin showed significant differences (see Table 7-20): 66% of Africans and 61% of people from the Middle East felt they could live on the amount provided.

Part of the difficulty for some refugees is tied to rising housing costs, in addition to the general cost of living. As one individual pointed out, "Money given to refugees needs to be increased, as do social services or welfare benefits. The prices for food and living have increased but the money received remains the same or is decreased" (0952). The CIC counsellor in Calgary explained that the living allowances allotted to refugees are tied to the Alberta provincial government social assistance rates. The federal government provides assistance at a rate that is commensurate with provincial rates, and therefore refugee support varies considerably from province to province. With the high level of housing costs in Calgary (see Chapter 4), CIC and settlement agency personnel have reported problems locating suitable housing for newcomers, and have acknowledged that some of the placements have been inappropriate, but unavoidable. From the refugees' viewpoint, this is difficult to understand. "Iraqis have always been put in bad apartments with broken furniture and bugs and no doors. Other refugees were put in nice clean places. Why is that so?" (2861).

Settlement Programs

As indicated in Chapter 6, the majority of refugees accessed ESL courses in their first year. In addition, they had help finding housing, initial orientation, and assistance with assorted tasks that involve learning the Canadian systems (e.g., banking, children's schools, shopping, health care). ESL and other language-related help continued to be the most utilized services beyond the first year.

Although many refugees expressed gratitude to the Canadian government and to the service providers, there were also some areas of dissatisfaction. Some of the problems they cited were idiosyncratic complaints about a specific incident that had happened to them, but in other cases the concerns were more general, particularly the sense that they were not recognized as individuals: "First days in Canada felt was treated like by one

standard. Wasn't treated like individual – all refugees were in same basket. Those helping did not understand our different backgrounds" (0302); "Make programs more flexible; match services to varying needs of refugees; agencies should be more willing to listen to comments and concerns of refugees" (3072). (The perception that there is a "typical" immigrant has been noted in both theory and practice, Joshee, R., Fitzpatrick, A., Lamba, N. & Wilkinson, L. (1997) Integrating diversity: Understanding the immigrant population of Edmonton, Unpublished document prepared for the Edmonton Social Planning Council).

Many refugees felt that they were not given the information they needed, a problem which was compounded by limited language skills: "Most of the information we needed was not accessible to us while we were living in Grande Prairie" (3031); "Canadian services should pay more attention to see if people know how to access services. There is no follow-up on those who are settled here" (0500); "People don't know where to look for information. It's very important for the newcomers" (2732); "One translator is not enough. When people don't know English language, a translator may translate sometimes wrong or misunderstand so that the immigrant or refugee gets wrong information or feels like not treated okay or well compared to others" (1652).

At the end of the interview, respondents were asked whether there were other things about their experiences they wanted to say. Many people mentioned the importance of ESL; some people objected to the current LINC programming because it is restricted to a low proficiency level: "English classes are so simple we do not benefit at that level" (0050); "I only need more English classes. I want to work. I am a hard worker but I need to talk and read very well" (3112). Furthermore, in smaller centres such as Red Deer, where there are fewer individuals who are assessed at the same proficiency level, programmers are obliged to place people of very disparate education backgrounds into a single class, despite differences in their learning. When some people in a class progress very slowly and learn almost exclusively from aural input while others use well-developed learning strategies, supplemented with strong reading skills, most of the students are likely to find the class unsatisfactory, regardless of other factors rates (see Gardner, S., Polyzoi, E., & Rampaul, Y. (1996). Individual variables, literacy history, and

ESL progress among Kurdish and Bosnian immigrants. *TESL Canada Journal*, 14, 1-20). “The immigration authority should think about specific programs for educated professionals, faster, shorter (a year is way too much), with co-op practice in companies” (1432).

Employment

It is very clear from the findings noted in Chapter 6 that employment is a top priority for refugees; indeed, it is the factor cited most often by “movers” and settlement providers alike as the reason for leaving the first city to which they were destined (see Chapter 5 for more details). Refugees were least satisfied with job-finding/job-training assistance; they very clearly wanted reform in this area.

The lack of recognition of credentials was an issue that came up repeatedly. The respondents were extremely upset that their skills are not being utilized: “When I applied for jobs here, on my résumé it says I am a doctor. Then nobody will hire me. They tell me to go to the hospital. I had to take it off my résumé that I am a doctor. I wrote that I cleaned the hospital, then the lodge gave me a cleaning job. I feel humiliated and depressed. All my years of education mean nothing at all in this country” (1780); “I would like to put a stress on diploma recognition/credit problem. I can’t believe that experience of some engineer or doctor from my country is that worthless” (1160); “When Canadian government let people come [should take care of] specific needs of people (people with education and experience should work in their profession). It’s frustrating. If that is not possible, then let them stay where they were” (1431); “[I want] to know why it’s so difficult to get certificates approved or qualified. They should provide an exam to test what people know” (0390); “It’s too bad that our people with a high education and big experience don’t get a chance to show what they know. Our diplomas have no value here” (1731); “This is a nice country, but there is a problem with jobs. They don’t trust our foreign certificates and experience. I see no justification for that” (2831).

Table 7-21

Adult Refugees' Volunteer Activities By Region of Origin

	Central/South		Former		Middle	
	America	Yugoslavia	East	Total		
Participate in volunteer activities	39%	32%	39%	34%		
Volunteers 'N'	(19)	(104)	(34)	(177)		
<i>Kinds of volunteer activities.</i>						
Services to newcomers	27%	23%	48%	30%		
Community events	16%	21%		14%		
School/religious/cultural	15%	16%	20%	19%		
Service Agencies	19%	4%	12%	8%		
Work Experience	19%	20%	10%	17%		
Other	4%	16%	10%	12%		
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%		
<i>Frequency of volunteerism.</i>						
Less than once a month	26%	24%	24%	23%		
Less than once a week	30%	44%	46%	40%		
1-3 times a week	33%	20%	24%	25%		
More than 3 times a week	11%	12%	6%	12%		
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%		

Note: Service agencies include: Red Cross, Food Bank, Bib Sisters. 'Other' includes less structured forms of volunteerism such as sewing, picnics, computer help. 177 volunteers reported participation in 180 activities. The number of volunteers from East Asia and Poland <10 but are included in Total. Specific responses (type and frequency of volunteering) for Africans were excluded for the same reasons.

Service providers from all cities agreed that professionals have a hard time initially. They are not able to reenter their professions quickly, if at all, and yet they generally have high expectations on arrival.

Even when refugees have what are deemed “acceptable” qualifications, they are caught in a bind because they do not have Canadian experience: “Lots of people come with experience and diplomas. Here, everybody asks for Canadian experience – we can’t have that when we come” (1221); “Problem: newcomers search for job – the question of Canadian experience – newcomers cannot have Canadian experience. Experience is experience – it’s the same all over the world” (2671).

Because getting Canadian experience poses problems, many people have opted for volunteerism as a way to obtain references. About one third of all refugees (34%) reported having participated in some form of volunteer activity (see Table 7-21). A number of individuals from Central/South America (19%) and former Yugoslavia (20%) cited work experience as their volunteer work; included in these numbers are people who are participating in formal placement programs organized as part of a training course (either skills training or ESL) in addition to people who have sought out volunteer work experience on their own. In the case of refugees from Middle East, the largest participation rates are in services to other newcomers (48%). Some refugees volunteer in “mainstream” service agencies such as the Red Cross and the Food Bank. At 19%, Central/South Americans are most likely to work in such organizations; this may be a reflection of the fact that as a group, they have been here the longest. Twelve percent of respondents from the Middle East also work in mainstream agencies, compared to 4% of former Yugoslavians. When we asked respondents how much time they devoted to their volunteer activities, about 12% said that they participate more than three times a week.

Some striking differences surface when the volunteerism rate is compared across the seven cities (results not shown in a table). Although the overall average percentage of refugees who volunteer is 34%, the volunteerism rates in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat are significantly higher (55% and 57%, respectively). Lethbridge stands out in that over a third of the refugee volunteers reported that they were participating in work experience,

and that they were volunteering more than three times a week, more than double the volunteer rate in other cities. Again, 'work experience' may signify a work placement as part of a course, or experience that the refugee has sought out alone. Unfortunately, no distinction was made during the interviews; nevertheless, the interviewers recalled a combination of both types of experience. There were instances in which employers took advantage of the newcomers by capitalizing on free full-time volunteers for months at a time, with the promise that eventually there might be an opening for a paying job. It is impossible to say, however, how many refugees are this category.

Advice to Other Refugees

The adult refugees were asked what advice they would give to other refugees who are planning to come to Canada. Table 7-22 indicates very consistent responses across region of origin, city of residence and gender. By far the most frequent advice was related to employment and education. Individuals urged other newcomers to "take ESL classes in their country and Canada" (0951); to "get good training for a job like carpenter, welder, baker" (3112).

The category of responses cited most often after education and employment was advice regarding attitudes; a quarter of the comments were of this type: "Be patient, persistent" (3131); "Be a fighter with a positive attitude"(3141); "Forget about the past and all the bad memories" (2632); "Lower your expectations" (0490); "Be optimistic but realistic" (0830). There were also suggestions regarding the use of services (7% of all responses). "Don't be afraid to ask for help - they are willing to help you" (0433); "Use the help you get from the government but do not misuse it" (2182); "Take every opportunity that has been given to you" (1501). Finally, 6% of the responses urged people to establish relationships with others: "Become a part of the society; network" (3042); "Get rid of television, go outside and meet people" (1042).

Advice to Canadians

The advice that refugees had for Canadians was coded into four main categories: acceptance and understanding; practical assistance; education and employment; and Canadians are doing all they can. There were no significant city differences in terms of

Table 7-22

Adult Refugees: Advice to Other Refugees by Region of Origin and Current City of Residence

	% of Responses					N
	Employment Education Financial	Learn about & Use Services	Adjust Attitudes & Behaviours	Keep/Establish Relationships	Other:s	
<u>Region</u>						
Africa	54%	2%	37%	5%	2%	(46)
CentralSouth America	48%	14%	27%	8%	3%	(73)
East Asia	57%	13%	30%			(23)
Former Yugoslavia	60%	6%	27%	6%	1%	(472)
Middle East	59%	7%	20%	9%	6%	(122)
<u>City of Residence</u>						
Edmonton	58%	6%	29%	6%	1%	(201)
Calgary	62%	6%	22%	7%	3%	(154)
Lethbridge	53%	9%	28%	8%	2%	(19)
Red Deer	58%	9%	23%	7%	3%	(135)
Medicine Hat	62%	7%	24%	7%		(98)
Fort McMurray	69%	5%	21%		5%	(107)
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	57%	7%	27%	7%	2%	(369)
Female	60%	7%	25%	6%	2%	(382)
Total %	59%	7%	26%	6%	2%	
Total Responses	(440)	(53)	(194)	(49)	(15)	(751)

Note: 485 respondents with 751 responses.

Table 7-23

Adult Refugees: Advice to Canadians by Region of Origin and Current City of Residence

<u>Region*</u>	% of Responses			
	Canadians Doing All They Can	Give Practical Assistance	Education & Employment	Acceptance & Understanding
Africa	12%	27%	18%	43%
Central/South America	7%	27%	15%	51%
East Asia	9%	27%		64%
Former Yugoslavia	18%	23%	21%	38%
Middle East	3%	33%	39%	25%
<u>City of Residence</u>				
Edmonton	8%	32%	18%	42%
Calgary	16%	25%	28%	31%
Lethbridge	13%	17%	12%	58%
Red Deer	15%	38%	12%	35%
Medicine Hat	15%	15%	28%	42%
Fort McMurray	20%	20%	20%	40%
Total %	13%	25%	23%	39%
Total 'N' (411)	(55)	(104)	(94)	(158)

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Note: Poland and Grande Prairie are not reported individually as $N < 10$.

the distribution of comments, although Lethbridge was the only city where a majority of respondents asked for increased understanding (see Table 7-23). The East Asians' responses were significantly different from those of the other groups in two respects: they more often asked for acceptance and understanding (64%) and none of them gave advice relating to education and employment. The following are exemplars from the largest category, acceptance and understanding: "Listen to my stories, accept us for who we are" (1270); "Don't make refugees feel like they don't belong" (1283); "Do not see us as rivals" (1362); "Don't get offended if people speak in their own language" (1022); "Don't tease people with accents" (1160); "Don't judge people by what you see on TV" (2410); "Put yourself in our shoes. Life is difficult" (1421); Realize that refugees want to contribute to Canada" (3042); "A real Canadian is and can be more open" (0820).

The comments that dealt with practical assistance included advice such as "Try to volunteer in the host matching program" (1531); "Give refugees a chance with financial support, jobs, English" (2631). The employment and education comments raised some of the same issues that were discussed above, for example, "Don't ask for Canadian experience from people who have just arrived" (1192). Thirteen percent of the respondents indicated that "Canadians are already helpful – Canadians care about refugees" (0360) and "Canadians are friendly and understanding" (0473).

In sum, the general sentiment in the advice to Canadians was an appeal to be treated fairly and to be given the opportunity to live a normal life in which refugees can fulfil their potential as contributing members of society.

J. Citizenship

Taking out formal citizenship is viewed by the federal government as an indicator of integration, that is, it represents successful settlement. Although it can be argued that there are purely instrumental reasons for obtaining Canadian citizenship, for example, obtaining a passport, as was the case for approximately 6% of the respondents in the survey, it is still a large commitment for an individual to make. When we asked the refugees whether or not they had taken out citizenship, 45% said that they had not been in Canada long enough. Of the remaining individuals, 26% reported that they had obtained

citizenship, and another 48% had already applied. We asked all of these individuals if it had been a difficult decision to apply for Canadian citizenship; 95% said that it had not. When the 26% of eligible individuals were questioned as to why they had not applied, nearly half of them (46%) said that they did not have enough money to pay the fees. One respondent commented that “People shouldn’t have to pay to become citizens; we already have to pay a head tax of \$1500. Refugees should be exempt from these payments as they have lost everything” (0900). Another 16% of those who had not applied for citizenship reported that they had not had enough time to do so; and 21% said that there was no reason in particular for not applying (results not shown in a table).

Thus, the eligible respondents in this survey appeared to be quick to take out citizenship. They listed many reasons for becoming Canadians, including the following (in rank order from most often cited): this is my home now; I need a passport; I don’t have a home country; I want to be Canadian/feel Canadian; there is more security/safety here; I want the same rights as other Canadians.

In the public opinion survey we asked whether immigrants/refugees value their Canadian citizenship, as an indication of the public’s perception of newcomers’ degree of integration (see Table 7-24). Seventy-one percent of the public thought that immigrants and refugees do appreciate their citizenship; 16% noted that “some do and some don’t” and 10% stated that they do not. Of the 10% who answered negatively, 41% said that the newcomers refuse to change or become like Canadians. In a related response, another 30% claimed that they don’t respect Canada’s laws or culture. Forty-five percent of the people who responded positively stated that the reason newcomers value their Canadian citizenship is because Canada is a better country than their home country. Another 11% attributed immigrants’ appreciation to freedom found in Canada, and 7% linked it to the benefits Canada offers. Five percent of the public surveyed suggested that the newcomers worked hard for their citizenship and therefore valued it.

K. Summary

The settlement experiences of the respondents in this study are diverse and illuminating. They are not, however, new. Taken across all respondents in this study, the settlement

Table 7-24
Public Opinion Survey: Respondents' Opinions about Whether Immigrants/Refugees Value their Canadian Citizenship

Do you think that immigrants and refugees value their Canadian citizenship after they get it?	
Yes	71%
No	10%
Some do, some don't	16%
Don't know	3%
Total	100% *
Reasons provided by those who answered positively. #	
They value it - no reasons provided.	32%
Canada is better than home country.	45%
Freedom in Canada.	11%
They worked hard for it.	5%
Because of the benefits Canada offers.	7%
Total	100% (of 764 responses)
Reasons provided by those who answered negatively. #	
They take it for granted.	17%
They refuse to change/ to become like Canadians.	41%
They don't respect Canada's laws/culture.	30%
They take whatever they can get.	12%
Total	100% (of 158 responses)

* City differences were not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Up to two responses to the "Why" and "Why not" questions were recorded.

experiences, positive and negative, have been catalogued many times before, and the barriers to successful settlement and integration faced by refugees in this study are the same ones identified elsewhere (e.g., Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues, 1988, After the Door has been Opened, Ottawa: Minister of Supplies and Services Canada.) What is distinctive here are the differences among the host communities, and refugees' perceptions of the fit between their needs and the communities' resources. There were not many city differences, but those that emerged are suggestive of a difference in the quality of life experienced by the refugees.

The city that differs most from the others is Fort McMurray. There are fewer services there than in many other places, and members of the public in that city see less of a need for settlement assistance than do people in the other locations. For refugees who have English language skills and an occupation that is needed in this resource-based city of newcomers, the atmosphere appears to be very welcoming in that 75% spend their time with other Canadian friends often or daily. They also report experiencing lower levels of discrimination than do their peers elsewhere. Refugees in Fort McMurray are far more likely to feel like 'real Canadians' than are refugees in the other cities. In addition, 67% of refugees there state that they have enough income to cover their living costs, compared to half the refugees in all the other cities save Medicine Hat. Finally, a higher percentage of refugees in Fort McMurray reported that their hopes and expectations had been realized to a large extent. All this said, Fort McMurray seems to be a suitable place only for individuals with a very specific employment profile (see Chapter 5).

In terms of integration, the youth in Calgary seemed to be more concerned about "fitting in"; they also reported being subject to more discrimination there than did the youth in Edmonton. Adult refugees reported low levels of discrimination in general; however, a majority of respondents in Medicine Hat felt that they experienced discrimination. Despite their perceptions of a negative reception, people continue to stay in Medicine Hat, likely because a high percentage (65%) feel that their income is sufficient.

As reported in Chapter 6, a larger percentage of people in the smaller cities accessed ESL in their first year than did refugees in Calgary or Edmonton; however, there were more complaints about the nature of ESL in the smaller cities because of a lack of range.

Finally there are differences by city in terms of volunteer participation. Refugees in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat are far more likely to participate in volunteer activities than their counterparts in any other city. A third of the refugee volunteers in Lethbridge are working at their unpaid positions more than three times a week.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN ALBERTA

A. Introduction

The experiences of refugees who were destined to seven communities in Alberta, namely Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie, suggest a number of policy changes in the area of refugee settlement in the province. Interviews with the refugees themselves, a public opinion survey, and interviews with service providers and CIC personnel have all contributed to the recommendations made here.

B. Destining

Several changes to the destining procedures are necessary to ensure a better match of individual and community.

Information Regarding Destinations

Canadian Immigration officials overseas should be provided with up-to-date information on the nature of the economies, labour market needs and settlement services in each of the receiving cities. They should also be supplied with information on the existence and size of ethnic communities in all refugee destinations. Furthermore, they should take into account the background of the refugees: sending people who have come from large cities in their home country to larger cities in Alberta would make sense. Sending those with specific professional credentials to larger cities might increase their chances of finding employment in their area of training.

Information for Refugees

More information should be given (in translation) to the refugees who apply to come to Canada. Not only do people need more details about places to which they may be destined, but they should also be made aware that it is appropriate to indicate location preferences based on family and friends already in Canada. Some service providers

suggested that refugees are sometimes afraid to express a preference because they believe that if they say they don't want to go where the federal government plans to send them, they won't be allowed to come to Canada at all. In addition, refugees who are professionals should be given realistic information about the possibility of re-entering their fields. Several refugees reported that they were told overseas that they would be able to work within their professions as soon as they arrived in Canada.

Recommended Destinations in Alberta

The results of this study strongly indicate that the practice of destining refugees not only to larger urban centres but also to mid-sized cities can work to the mutual benefit of the refugees and the host communities. However, some smaller centres may be able to accommodate refugees more effectively than others. (For example, the level of refugee satisfaction in Red Deer was high, and the cooperation amongst service providers was strong.) Thus, Citizenship and Immigration Canada should continue to destine refugees to the largest (Edmonton and Calgary) and the mid-sized (Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat) host communities. We recommend discontinuing the practice of sending refugees to Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie, at least for the time being, for a number of reasons. A lower probability of others from the same ethnic/cultural background being present, a shortage of suitable housing, a smaller range of educational and employment opportunities, a narrower range of available services, and difficulty adjusting to the climate all contribute to the high "leaver" rates in those two cities.

Family Status

We recommend that a balance of families and single males of the same ethnic origin be sent to smaller communities such as Medicine Hat, where there are good employment prospects. A mix of families and individuals would ensure that there are opportunities to socialize with compatriots.

C. Services

ESL

It has long been recognized that language proficiency is crucially important for finding work. For this reason, there should be more opportunity for language training, especially at advanced levels. As of January 2000, newcomers in Alberta will be able to extend their language training to LINC 4, (note that in Ontario, immigrants are able to access LINC 5 as well). We commend CIC's extension of language training to LINC 4, but recommend parity with Ontario. We also recommend that these higher levels not come out of the existing LINC budget. If no new money is invested in ESL, the effect of extended language learning opportunities to some will be restricted enrollments for others. We recommend federal programs that provide assistance to refugees be comparable across the country and that there be a greater emphasis placed on language and job training.

Culturally Sensitive Services

The adaptive advantages of compatriot communities commonly found in larger urban centres may be partly compensated for by greater emphasis on provision of culturally sensitive services in smaller centres. This is particularly important in Medicine Hat, where a majority of refugees reported having experienced discrimination.

Employment- related Services

There is a clear need for improved employment-related programs for refugees, both in terms of job training and job-finding. The unemployment rate for adult refugees interviewed in this study was 16%, more than twice as high as the provincial jobless rate. In Alberta, 18% of the working population has part-time employment, but for working refugees the average is 28%. Furthermore, 30% of currently employed refugees are working in temporary jobs, more than twice the national average. The refugees themselves reported a need for increased support in the area of employment. In all cities more effort must be put into assisting refugees to find satisfactory employment to enhance their economic and social integration. There should be provisions for additional

job training for those whose skills are not immediately transferable to the Canadian context.

A skills assessment process that takes into account prior learning should be put into place to identify the areas where newcomers need to update their skills. This process would expedite training programs by eliminating repetition of content areas with which the newcomers are fully familiar.

We urge the provincial and federal governments not to restrict job training to those who are EI eligible. Newcomers are caught in an impossible situation because of this restriction.

Host Program

There should be continued support for the host program, which matches refugees with Canadian-born residents. The majority of refugees who participated are satisfied with this program and maintain contact with their hosts.

Services After Year One

Many refugees indicated that there were additional services that they would have appreciated, particularly language training, employment services and general information services. The fact that refugees in Edmonton and Calgary accessed services after the first year indicates that there is a continuing demand, and also potential benefits to Canadian society, if additional services are available. It is important that individuals be provided with the opportunities to best utilize the skills they have brought with them. An extension of Resettlement Assistance Program beyond one year would accommodate the small minority of refugees who have special needs. Extended living allowances could be considered on a case by case basis.

Funding of Settlement Agencies

Settlement agencies are currently funded according to a complex formula. The nature of the formula is not clear to many service providers who believe that their funding is based only on the number of clients served, rather than taking into account the number of

sessions provided. (Providers' perceptions are based on the nature of the reporting form required by the funders.) This perception may make it problematic for agencies to provide the level of support necessary for those clients who have multiple barriers to integration. When asked what improvements are needed to services, the refugees noted that they needed more information in general. This task falls to settlement agencies that are already over-extended. We therefore recommend that the funding formula for settlement agencies be made transparent in terms of all the criteria used in the determination of funding level.

Quality of Services

Refugees in Lethbridge (and those movers who left Lethbridge), more than any other group of refugees in the host centres under study, reported a high degree of dissatisfaction with the settlement services they received, both in terms of availability and quality. These problems need to be addressed. Lethbridge appears to have many advantages in that the unemployment rate is low, the community in general is welcoming, and it is large enough to offer many amenities. However, the level of unhappiness with the existing settlement services is such that some people feel compelled to leave.

D. Employment

The refugees who participated in this study were very concerned about the fact that many were unemployed, underemployed, and working in part-time or temporary positions. As noted in the recommendations above, they indicated that there is a need for more assistance finding jobs, and better job training opportunities.

Lack of Canadian Experience

Several refugees stated that although they were qualified for certain positions, they were not considered because they had no Canadian experience or Canadian references. We recommend that an employer-government cost-sharing program be reintroduced to provide paid work experience for refugees. Although many refugees volunteer to obtain Canadian experience, there is no formal mechanism in place to ensure that they are not exploited or that they are able to acquire the type of experience they need.

Recognition of Foreign Credentials

There is a pressing need for a policy that addresses the recognition of foreign credentials. A large proportion of adult refugees had post-secondary training and some kind of occupational credentials on arrival, but almost 60% of those employed stated that they were underemployed. The failure to recognize the credentials held by refugees represents an unnecessary and debilitating waste of human resources. This is not an issue that can be resolved by the settlement service providers; we therefore recommend that CIC take the responsibility to open up discussions about this issue with employers, along with professional organizations, unions, and academic institutions.

E. Refugee Costs

In the course of the interviews with the refugees, it became apparent that they had serious concerns about some of the costs that they are required to pay.

Travel Loans

Several refugees stated that it is a hardship to be required within the first year of arrival to start paying back the travel loan that brought them to Canada. Furthermore, many refugees seemed to be unaware of the landing fee, and had therefore concluded that the travel loan (landing fees and airfare) was inordinately expensive. It is recommended that repayment not be required under any circumstances until after the first year. It is also recommended that refugees be given very clear information on the nature of these costs and their responsibilities. The people with whom we spoke had received contradictory information about their responsibilities. Shortly after the completion of this study, CIC proposed the elimination of the landing fee for refugees. We strongly endorse the proposal to eliminate this fee. We also recommend that under no circumstances should there be a requirement to start repayment of travel loans until after the first year.

Living Allowance

There are clear differences in the cost of living, and especially housing, from one city to the next. We recommend that housing allowances be scaled in accordance with the

actual living costs in a given city. This would require a change in the federal-provincial agreement regarding living assistance.

Refugee Sponsorship Information

Many of the refugees indicated that they received conflicting information about federal assistance. Some people felt that they were being asked to go to work as soon as possible, despite the fact that they were in need of further language/job training, and despite the fact that they were still within their first year of arrival. It is recommended that refugees be given explicit information about the terms of sponsorship at the outset.

Citizenship

Most refugees want to become citizens of Canada as soon as they are eligible. However, a significant proportion are unable to obtain citizenship because they do not have enough money to pay the fees. It is recommended that these fees be waived for refugees.

The recommendations put forward here, if implemented, should facilitate the integration of refugees into the communities to which they are destined and into Alberta society.

Refugees have already undergone tremendous disruption in their lives and are in need of support, especially in the areas of English language, employment-related services, and general settlement advice. Although these services are available in each city, the range and quality of programs vary. If the programs provided to refugees are improved, their lives and those of the people around them are likely to improve as well.