

Settling Immigrants in Neoliberal Times: NGOs and Immigrant Well-being in Comparative Context

Karla Angelica Valenzuela Moreno,¹ John Shields,² and Julie Drolet³

ABSTRACT: Current events, such as the 2008 economic crisis, the large number of asylum seekers fleeing from conflict zones, terrorism threats, and the growth of right-wing anti-immigrant populism, all within the context of neoliberalism, raise questions regarding the settlement and integration of migrant newcomers in Western liberal democracies. This involves an increasing role for NGOs in immigrant settlement provision through state-NGO ‘partnerships’. By exploring immigration and settlement policy in a comparative context, our main objective is to analyze the role of nonprofits in settlement and integration service delivery, as well as their activities aimed at promoting immigrant well-being and social justice in neoliberal times.

KEYWORDS: immigrants/migrants; settlement services; integration; neoliberalism; NGOs; social justice; right-wing anti-immigrant populism

Introduction

The settlement of immigrant newcomers in Western liberal democracies in the current socio-economic and political context is challenging. Migrants have in many circles come to be viewed negatively and as a source of threat. Yet immigrants are also recognized by states as critical to address demographic, labour market and productivity challenges in advanced economies almost all of which have aging populations (Barrass and Shields, 2017). Hence,

¹ Karla Angelica Valenzuela Moreno is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the Universidad Iberoamericana. Email: karla_1215@me.com

² John Shields is Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University. Email: jshields@politics.ryerson.ca

³ Julie Drolet is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Social Work's Central and Northern Alberta Region in Edmonton. Email: jdrolet@ucalgary.ca

the issue of immigrant settlement and integration remains important. The dominance of a neoliberal governance framework also means that new actors have been engaged in providing services to the public. Within this setting NGOs are playing an ever larger role in offering supports to migrants. Given the way neoliberalism has structured its relationship with NGO providers, however, there are many points of tension with NGOs in their efforts to play progressive roles. Nonetheless, the social justice missions that guide most NGO service providers is an important resource for newcomers in these difficult and austere times. We examine settlement service provision and the place of nonprofit service providers in addressing the well-being of immigrant newcomers through a comparative examination of the literature, and a scan of settlement programs and their providers in fourteen countries, and offer a critical assessment of development in these areas.⁴

Setting the Context

The rapid changes triggered by significant events since the beginning of the 2000s have had major effects on public policy and on societal attitudes towards migrants and immigrant integration. The most salient event is perhaps the 9/11 attacks, which worked to frame migrants as a security threat, one that is claimed to be exacerbated by liberal migration regimes (Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015) with their supposedly overly generous and lax immigration laws. More recent incidents involving the participation of immigrants (or nationals of immigrant origin) in terrorist incidents have strengthened the arguments that consider them a danger to national security and that point to a failed integration strategy.

The 2008 global financial crisis also had effects on migrants and immigration policies. These impacts, however, were unevenly experienced. The 'Great Recession' hit countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland and the United States particularly hard whereas countries like Germany and Canada were

⁴ This paper draws upon John Shields, Julie Drolet and Karla Valenzuela, "Immigration Settlement and Integration Services and the Role of Nonprofit Providers: A Cross-national Perspective on Trends, Issues and Evidence", RCIS Working Paper (Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement), No. 2016, 1. The research was supported from a SSHRC grant entitled Immigrant Integration and Inclusion: Investigating the Canadian Partnership Model from a Complex Systems Perspective. Also, the authors wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their comments.

less negatively affected. Unemployment among Spain's immigrant population, for example, exceeded 30 percent (OECD 2012: 100). Everywhere, however, immigrant newcomers proportionately bore the brunt of job losses (Chaloff et al. 2012). But while immigrant populations were more negatively affected by the crisis they were often blamed for causing native-born job loss, feeding support for right-wing anti-immigrant populism in many places.

On the policy front there has also been mixed results. While all countries enhanced their security measures to address terrorist threats associated with migration, other migration policies varied considerably. Numerous EU countries adopted measures that made it more difficult for immigrant populations (this has been especially extreme in Eastern Europe). In the case of Germany and Sweden, however, there have been more progressive responses to migration as illustrated in their humanitarian acceptance of large numbers of refugees. In North America the election of Donald Trump as US President has brought with it a strong anti-immigrant policy agenda. By contrast in Canada the election of the Liberal Party under Justin Trudeau in 2015 has seen the reversal of the more extreme immigration laws and measures introduced by the previous Conservative administration (Barrass and Shields, 2017).

As a general trend, however, it is fair to conclude that overall there has been a movement toward a stronger anti-immigrant atmosphere, greater restrictions on migration and austerity driven immigration reform (Barrass and Shields, 2017). In this context, immigrants are targeted for being a threat to both national and economic security. The rise of right-wing populism in Europe and the United States, as well as the increasing numbers of asylum seekers reaching some EU countries, have revived the perception of immigrants as being an economic risk, since not all are able to rapidly join the labour market, and thus they may become a "social burden" for the receiving states. Some governments have restricted welfare benefits to newcomers (Carmel et al., 2012). While immigration remains hotly debated in policy communities and has been restricted in many ways it is also the case that countries need immigrants, especially those with high human capital, as well as temporary migrants to do low paid work native-born populations are not willing to do (Gottfried et al., 2016).

These developments have taken place and in part been shaped in a world dominated by neoliberal ideas. As a policy orientation, Nihei (2010) notes that neoliberalism is based on belief in the value of the free movement and

accumulation of capital, minimal state intervention in the private sphere of markets and individual rights, and a restructuring of the public domain with the aim of shrinking the state and undoing the Keynesian logic embedded in government after the Second World War (Evans and Shields, 2010). Neoliberalism came to be the hegemonic policy paradigm in industrialized countries in the 1980's, when policy trends such as the retreat from government planning in favour of more purely based market economies, privatization of services, and a constraint on social and economic rights began to be embraced (Burke et al., 2000). One of the salient aspects in state restructuring is the hollowing out of the welfare state (Jessop, 2002) and the devolution of many of its support and service functions from the central government to sub-national jurisdictions and the nonprofit sector (Shields, 2014). Lester Salamon writes about this process as the 'nonprofitization of the welfare state' (2015a). These developments have had major implications for immigrants in the global north. This is particularly evident in the growing role of nonprofits in social provision as illustrated in immigrant settlement services.

Settlement Services in Cross-National Perspective

There is no set definition of settlement services but there is a general understanding that they encompass programs and supports designed to assist immigrants to make the necessary adjustments for a smooth transition to fully participate in the socio-economic life of their host society. Most migrant serving agencies would agree that settlement should be a two-way process in which both immigrants and the majority society "...are expected to adapt to each other and create a new intercultural basis for mutual identification and solidarity" (Hellgren, 2015, 4).

In practice settlement is a staged process involving: 1) *adjustment*, where newcomers become acclimatized to their new country, culture, language and environment, so they can adjust and cope with their new situation; 2) *adaptation*, which involves deeper learning about and managing with their new situation without need for high levels of assistance; and, 3) *integration*, which constitutes immigrants' ability to actively and meaningfully participate in society and contribute as full citizens of their new country (OCASI and COSTI, 1999, Chpt. 2, 1). From a progressive vantage point the goal of settlement supports is to enable newcomers to achieve full integration. However, most settlement services are focused at stage one and to a lesser degree at stage two.

Drawing from a broad literature review and a cross-national survey of

settlement and integration programs and policies this paper seeks to set a contextual and theme oriented assessment of the immigrant settlement landscape and the role of nonprofit agencies in the countries under review. When attempting to consider settlement and integration services and the role of NGO providers in their provision in a broad range of countries a number of challenges becomes clearly evident. To begin there are considerable gaps in readily accessible information from which to distill a comprehensive comparative picture of settlement and integration service delivery for newcomers even at a basic descriptive level. Moreover, the availability of hard data sources from which to consider different systems of services is highly uneven or in many instances unavailable. Given the problems of data and information collection the approach adopted in this paper has by necessity been more qualitative in character and focused at the broader level.

The research approach involves a critical review of the cross-national literature on immigrant settlement provision and the role of NGOs. In addition, using fourteen OECD countries – Australia, New Zealand, United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom/England, Ireland, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Italy and Spain – we conducted, through government websites, a scan of their settlement and integration programs and policies in order to identify the range and scope of settlement activities in these countries and their use of non-governmental delivery agents. The information gathered in the scan covers the period up to the early 2010s.

Each country is guided by a national integration approach. Different labels have been used to identify these models but broadly cast they can be said to range between an assimilationist model, where newcomers and minorities are expected to fully adapt to the norms and values of the adoptive country, to a multicultural model, where newcomers and minorities are free and encouraged to practice their own cultures and traditions in private and public spaces as long as they do not violate laws of the host country (Modood, 2011). Most nations have integration approaches that are situated between these two types.

Every country examined in our study had a well-defined government integration approach. One would assume that their offerings of immigrant settlement services would closely align with their integration model. While their integration strategies are set within a larger policy framework, our findings indicate, at least in terms of settlement services in the countries under consideration, that they have similar programming regardless of their integration models. They all place great emphasis on, labour market integration and

language acquisition whether they embrace assimilationist, as in France, or multicultural, as in Canada, models of integration. A constant found in all countries is the use of 'partnerships' for settlement service delivery between governments and NGOs. Generally, the nonprofit sector offers services tailored to the individual circumstances of newcomers and specific ethnic groups, as well as wide ranging programs spanning the areas of sports and leisure activities, language acquisition, citizenship test courses, community outreach, statistical data gathering, counseling on labour market inclusion, housing and employment, among others.

The countries we reviewed considered language acquisition and labour market inclusion services to be the core domains of integration. Hence, they focused on offering settlement services related to these areas. An emerging trend that stretches beyond the traditional horizons of settlement services is the formation of multi-ethnic sports teams as a means to integrate children and their parents. This innovation was pioneered in Europe by Germany, The Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark.

In general terms, the main areas of contemporary immigrant integration which includes settlement programming as well as broader supports and policies are (Koehler et al., 2010):

- **Language acquisition:** this along with labour market programming, is the most important feature of integration. Variations appear on whether the courses are mandatory and if they have a cost for immigrants.
- **Labour market attachment:** securing employment, especially jobs that closely match the skill sets and education of newcomers, is a central dimension of meaningful integration.
- **Education:** the enrollment of children of immigrant background in the school system is a key factor, one which also involves language acquisition. Clearly primary and secondary education and the schools this takes place in are prime sites in the integration process for children and youth newcomers. Schools are also sites where adult family members are able to interact with the broader community. There are many education related initiatives that can be supportive to newcomers. Sweden and some Canadian provinces, for example, offer heritage language classes to students.
- **Personalized Settlement Plans:** special programs tailored to the

immigrant's needs, whether within the framework of the introductory program or through programs offered at the local level (these can be found in Germany, France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, England and Australia).

- **Special Courses for Women and Children:** courses for women to overcome the barriers that may keep them from joining integration courses. Furthermore, some countries offer day care services to facilitate the enrollment of women in language and other integration courses. Equal opportunities for the education of children with immigrant backgrounds are also taken into account (Germany, France, Spain, USA, New Zealand Denmark, England and Canada provide such programing; Germany stands out here).
- **Anti-discrimination policies:** although not specifically designed for immigrants, these measures do contribute to the settlement process of many foreign-born by providing legal protections and supports for victims of discrimination. The majority of migrants to OECD countries today are from the developing world and are racial and ethnic minorities. Sweden, Canada, USA and UK Rank the highest in this area according to MIPEX (nd), a tool developed to compare integration policies for immigrants in several countries
- **Social security agreements:** many countries of destination have signed these agreements with some migrant source countries in order to ensure health services and pension plans. These are, however, almost exclusively reached between OECD countries and not with migrant-sending countries from the global south.

Other programmes that were found are: 1) introductory immigrant integration courses. The main areas that these programs focus on are: civic integration; social and historical information about the host country; and overall orientation to the new country (these are present in Germany, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, England, Australia and Canada); 2) pre-arrival courses – these are seen as a program innovation to enhance the effectiveness of settlement integration programming, particularly related to the labour market (these can be found in Canada, New Zealand and France); and, 3) mandatory integration contracts (only present in France and the Flanders region of Belgium).

Recent shifts on the immigration policy and program fields indicate

that they are moving towards the aims of: 1) devolving settlement services to sub-national jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations; 2) holding immigrants and their families themselves more responsible and accountable for their own settlement and integration (Root et al., 2014, 3) restructuring national welfare states to reduce services and often restricting or excluding newcomer access; 4) generally tightening rules around migrant access to countries; 5) a renewed focus on security and immigrant racialization (Anderson, 2013; Sharma, 2015), and; 6) promoting self-deportation strategies through periodical raids, and state and local laws targeting irregular migrants already in the country (Hannan et al., 2016).

These policy and program shifts not only respond to austerity brought on by the 2008 financial crisis, but they are also a reaction to a considerably more hostile political and social environment for immigrants (Kretsedemas, 2015), endorsed by rising nationalisms, particularly in some European countries and the United States. The rise of extreme right-wing anti-immigrant political parties and movements is having a significant impact on settlement and integration policies and programs (Traynor, 2015). One of the targets in Europe has been multiculturalism. For example, in Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands prominent declarations by their governments of the so-called failure of 'multiculturalism' and the need to rethink immigration and integration policies have been made, signaling important changes in the direction of immigration policy (Collet, 2011). Only in Canada has multiculturalism remained uncontested (Joppke, 2017). In the United States, recent attempts of President Trump to target Muslim communities and force sanctuary cities to cooperate with anti-immigrant federal measures are clear examples of attempts to further criminalize irregular forms of migration (Bauder, 2017).

In this anti-migrant environment nonprofits have gained more importance, since national and/or sub-national governments generally subcontract the delivery of many of these settlement services to third sector organizations and public educational institutions. Nonprofit delivered programming is centred on increasing the capability of the immigrant workforce through training and development and actively connecting newcomers with employers. They also offer programs tailored to give counseling on career planning; job-finding, resume writing and interview skills courses; workshops that would benefit the educational experience of immigrant youth; acquisition of technical language for certain professions; mentoring and short-term work placement programs; work permit workshops; career and employment personal

development plans; inter-cultural awareness training; credential recognition and information sessions, among others (Lowe et al., 2017).

NGOs and Settlement Service Provision in Neoliberal Times

All countries that were part of our scan have established some kind of partnership with nonprofit organizations for settlement and integration services. However, there remains considerable variation with regard to the depth and scope of services offered through NGOs. At one end of the spectrum is Canada which has a long record dating back to the 1970s of government funding of a broad range of settlement services and a deep network of nonprofit settlement agencies across the country (Richmond and Shields, 2005). At the other end is the United States whose funding of NGOs for such services is rather thin, as the state is guided by a *laissez-faire* approach to settlement which places the burden of settlement on individual immigrants, their families and the private activities of civil society (Shields and Bauder, 2015). Some other countries, like Sweden, have provided generous support for the settlement of largely refugee populations but this has primarily been done directly by the state. Overall, there is a growing trend for government to partner with NGOs to provide for social, health and human services, including immigrant settlement services, as part of the so-called “global associational revolution” (Salamon et al., 2004, 3-4).

The nature of these partnerships consists of short term competitive program-based contracts governed by strict accountability rules and regulations that manage how funds are spent and programs delivered (Rudman et al., 2017). In this way states have moved to institutionalize their relationship with NGO service providers since the 1980s.

It is important to note that civil society organizations have been involved in settlement and other immigrant services for a very long time in several countries. Even in the pre-welfare state period, there were remarkable efforts of nonprofit actors to address immigrants’ needs such as housing, health care, poverty and urban integration (Friedman and Friedman, 2006). However, the post-Keynesian neoliberal era has brought changes in the relationship between government and nonprofit service providers. So, the introduction of market mechanisms in the welfare system sheds light on different forms of regulation and cooperation between these actors. As Ascoli and Ranci (2002) argue, the main new feature of privatization lies not in the involvement of private and nonprofit actors, but in the marketization of the regulatory models and partnering mechanisms.

Neoliberalism aims at modifying the government structures through deregulation policies and the adoption of certain practices of private actors that allegedly improve the efficiency of public institutions. Service provision has come to be guided under neoliberalism by New Public Management (NPM). NPM is featured by alternative service delivery by nonprofit bodies of publically supported services, the imposition of market oriented and private sector business practices for delivery agencies, short-term competitively sourced program financing, and strict accountability regulations (Rudman et al., 2017). While service delivery is downloaded to the 'community', government is able to maintain control from a distance through its funding and accountability measures, bringing with it market-centred and business values to nonprofit service operations. In this way NPM has become the transmission belt for neoliberal thinking into the NGO sector (Shields and Evans, 1998; Andrews et al., 2013).

There are contradictory tendencies regarding the involvement of NGOs in social and human services. On the one hand, some experts consider that they are not able to set common transformative goals because they are weak, heterogeneous and do not have enough human and economic resources to promote real change (Olvera, 2003). It is certainly true that the nonprofit sector does not have the capacity and reach to replace the state's ability to redistribute resources on a broad scale as in the case of "the Keynesian welfare state's near-universal [social and health] coverage" (Deverteuil, 2016, 10). At best on their own NGOs are able to provide supports that can fill some of the gaps left by a retreating welfare state.

It is also argued that NGOs hinder the visibility of structural problems that cause inequalities, since NGOs may address certain immediate social issues and prevent them from escalating into more threatening political directions (Lewis, 2013). Additionally, the responsibility for population well-being under the neoliberal 'partnership state' also comes to be divided between the state and NGO actors. This can be counterproductive since it can enable the state to evade its accountability and transfer some of its social obligations to civil society. Finally, the dependence of NGO service providers on government funding also impacts the advocacy/'voice' role of these organizations. NGOs' freedom to advocate on behalf of the community and their clients can be greatly constrained because of the fear of offending the government hand that funds them – the problem of 'advocacy chill' (Evans and Shields, 2014).

From another perspective, government partnering with NGOs can be

viewed as beneficial. The nonprofit sector provides “a vehicle for social movements, citizenship and survival despite its notoriously asymmetrical, uncoordinated and uneven nature, best understood as a heterogeneous set of networks, sites and actors” (Deverteuil, 2016, 10). As such NGOs are not just service agencies of neoliberal governments but “sites of help, caring and sustenance for people” (Ibid). Partnering with government to provide programing engages NGOs who are often better positioned because of their special knowlege in working with local communities to provide services that can be more atuned to the special needs of clients, including racial and ethnic minority migrants. Also the fact that NGO service providers are not government means that groups, such as irregular migrants, are more likely to make use of their services as the fear of the reporting of their immigration status is diminished. Moreover, government funding of NGO agencies for service delivery has promoted the move to greater professionalization, which on the positive side, can promote improved service provision and implementation of a best practice culture (Saurugger, 2009).

The residential spaces that immigrants occupy, especially in larger cities where most newcomers settle, are sites of socio-economic polarization), but these spaces are also areas where NGOs establish themselves, often in “dense networks, to address the most negative effects of such polarization and as a source of social capital and networking” (Deverteuil, 2016, 174). These immigrant enclaves commonly develop into “extensive networks of immigrant-serving voluntary-sector organizations attuned to the needs of their specific immigrant clientele” (Ibid, 175). These nonprofit service hubs can serve as “spaces of social innovation, sanctuary and sustenance” fostering resilience within the immigrant population (Ibid, 10).

One of the broader trends in settlement services has been a movement to devolve settlement to regional and even local governments by the national state. This is part of the neoliberal drive to shrink central governments and shift financial burdens onto lower levels of government and the nonprofit sector (Ochs, 2015). However, it is also the case that integration occurs primarily at the local/community level and governments as well as NGOs located closer to the communities in which immigrants live and work are better positioned to provide and shape such services. However, problems arise when there is a lack of transfered resources from the central state to provide regional and local jurisdictions with enough funding to match expected settlement resource levels. This places those jurisdictions with large immigrant populations and an under

resourced network of nonprofit sector actors at distinct disadvantage (Shields, 2014).

Ongoing Issues and Challenges in the NGO-State Partnership

It is relevant to identify the control mechanisms that governments are able to impose on service providing NGOs, which derive from practices based on the NPM. Government funders are able to decide which NGO they fund based on market rules that often privilege narrow notions of 'efficiency' and 'accountability' over other values such as high quality service (Baines et al., 2014). This system endorses competition and business market values in the nonprofit sector. It also means that NGOs need to align their interests to those issues prioritized and funded by the government, even though they may not match well with the grounded needs of the population that NGOs serve.

Funding and accountability seem to be the root of many problems faced by the nonprofit sector. In immigrant settlement services NGOs suffer from lack of funding from private donors. This makes NGOs heavily dependent on government financing (Smith et al., 2005). The economic dependency of nonprofit service providers on public funding brings with it a considerable amount of government bureaucracy linked to accountability and reporting (Schmidt, 2005). Phillips and Levasseur (2004) note that government funding entails strict accountability measures, which place significant restrictions on NGOs' flexibility in delivering services reducing their abilities to be creative. Accountability rules under neoliberal governance have been used to regulate nonprofit settlement service providers to bring them in line with state objectives and to operate in a manner that mimics good private sector business practices but which are often not a good match with the cooperative and sharing ethic of the nonprofit sector.

Under such governance structures there is a risk of underserving specially vulnerable groups, such as irregular migrants, since the eligibility criteria imposed by public funding requirements oftentimes forbids nonprofits from serving those newcomers in government funded programs who are most in need, in particular migrants with less than full legal status (Goldring and Landolt, 2013). New outreach strategies are necessary to get to those migrants that have limited social capital and who find it more difficult to access settlement services. It has been suggested that a strategy coordinated in partnership with other organizations could better address this issue. A cross-national study conducted by Juzwiak et al. (2014), pointed out that while partnerships within

civil society are still more common, other kinds of alliances involving businesses are emerging.

The nonprofit sector is driven under NPM to increase its professional competencies in order to compete more effectively for public funding. While it has its advantages this also poses a danger of moving the nonprofit orientation away from its community roots toward business and managerial values that are more tailored to the efficiency and accountability ethics of neoliberal practices (Sidhu and Taylor, 2009). Additionally, as Richmond and Shields (2005) observe, government funding for settlement services is mainly for the first stages of settlement that concern immediate survival needs, while neglecting other longer term and more imbedded problems in the integration process that are in need of policy and programming attention. Budget shortages often result in organizations' difficulties in hiring and retaining highly skilled staff. Further, it means that workers in the immigrant NGO settlement sector are usually not well compensated. The sector's labour force is made up predominantly of female staff very often drawn from the very immigrant communities they serve. Under such conditions settlement services are delivered on the backs of a cheap and exploited workforce that is precariously employed.

As pointed out earlier, de-politicization is also a common issue that is identified with NGO dependence on government funding. Since advocacy actions are seldomly publicly funded, organizations frequently leave this aside and focus on funded service-based projects. The diminishing of NGO advocacy is the result of both lack of resources and time to conduct such activities and NGO hesitancy to put themselves in a compromising position with funders. This advocacy neutralization has a number of negative consequences. For one, it can undermine an organization's legitimacy with clients as the NGO voice of the community comes to be muted. Secondly, the nonprofit sector is losing ground because of lack of advocacy to influence governments regarding immigration policies and programs (Donhilow 2005). It is important to note that there are two core roles that nonprofit organizations play in society – one is its service role and second is its role as a voice for the community by filling its mission mandate to advocate for social justice (Feldman et al., 2017). The impact of state-NGO partnerships governed by neoliberal principles risks reducing NGOs to one dimensional service providers without effective voice.

Clearly the kind of partnerships developed between the state and NGOs in the settlement sector are far from being balanced. In essence they constitute service contracts with the power of funding giving the state the upper hand. In

their study of the San Francisco Bay Area, De Graauw et al. (2013) argue that NGOs in receipt of such funding weaken their ability to act as a counterbalance to government power diminishing civil society. However, Ruzza (2014) contends that in the EU context, the 2008 crisis has begun to create a vision of a more balanced state-civil society relationship. A relationship founded on common goals and mutual respect. State fiscal challenges have overlapped with a refugee humanitarian crisis. Under difficult circumstances and with limited funding NGOs have played a leading role in refugee relief. This has reinforced the central place of civil society in helping to address some of the most pressing societal challenges, emphasizing the value of more meaningful partnerships between the state and nonprofit actors. Instead of a relationship featured by hierarchy one of interdependence could be of mutual benefit.

As noted, immigrant settlement service NGOs are operating in a difficult political and socio-economic environment (Szalai and Gobl, 2015). Austerity has made government resources to support settlement generally harder to secure, anti-immigration forces have gained influence at the political level and public attitudes towards newcomers are more negative (Turner and Cross, 2015). In this context, aside from attempting to provide direct services to newcomers, nonprofits, where resources permit, are also often engaged in various community-based educational activities aimed at promoting the benefits of immigration and in challenging populist xenophobic attitudes. This is a form of soft advocacy directed at society rather than particular government policies. Such actions make NGOs more relevant both to migrant populations and society as a whole.

A feature of neoliberalism is how it reduces the individual to a narrow economic dimension, minimizing the social, cultural and political aspects of life and belonging (Aliweiwi and Laforest, 2009). This approach tends to view immigrants as passive recipients of public policies with little agency to challenge and reconfigure the political and social scenarios shaped by the integration policies of their countries of settlement. It also downplays the need of receiving communities to change in order to better accommodate immigrants. Hence, neoliberalism by adopting this more limited view of immigrants and their role in society can be counterproductive, since it may hinder integration and newcomers' capacity to actually become more positive economic assets for their communities. In this context, it is not uncommon for settlement services to be viewed as an investment that is not quite paying off, hence the retrenchment of public money for these kinds of programs can be justified. Furthermore, the

requirements for immigrant selection have shifted heavily towards migrants with high human capital who are deemed better able to provide for themselves and their families thus purportedly reducing their need for publicly funded settlement services. Jupp notes that under neoliberalism from the 1990's onwards the state's focus shifted increasingly from social support to self-reliance and migrant securitization (2011, 50).

Another feature of neoliberalism present in immigration policy is what Davison and Shire have called "neoliberal meritocracy", that is, the belief that those who have been able to thrive have done so based on their own merits, disregarding the existence of structural inequalities based on "...networks of advantage, patronage and power" (2015, 85). Following on this idea, if newcomers are unable to adapt, it is thought to be their responsibility, which invisibilizes the fact that there may be a lack of sufficient settlement support and/or that there are conditions of the receiving countries that hinder integration, such as negative public opinion towards migrants. It is important to recognize that the very act of government support for settlement and integration programs is important symbolically as it sends a message to society and immigrants themselves that newcomers are indeed welcome (Shields' Interview with Senior Ontario Provincial Government Official, 2012).

In sum, this neoliberal conception of success and failure as individually-driven, invisibilizes structural factors that make it more difficult for newcomers to integrate and that relate to unequal relations between members of society. It also obscures the sense of social responsibility among all members of a given community, touching upon issues of social justice. Of particular interest to us is how NGOs that provide settlement services to newcomers have responded to promote immigrant well-being and social justice.

Discussion and Conclusion: Settlement Services, NGOs and Social Justice

While NGO government supported service provision has been influenced by neoliberal practices, it is also the case that NGO organizations are generally progressive and demonstrate considerable creativity at working within a neoliberal context. Most NGOs' work is guided by a social justice mission. This is a powerful framework that motivates their workforce and channels NGO resources to support newcomer populations. This is especially important in the context of austerity and a more adverse environment for immigrants. As resilient organizations (Salamon, 2015b) nonprofit service providers are able to marshal considerable assets in support of settlement including voluntary labour,

donations, access to community-based resources, as well as government funded programming to the settlement cause. NGOs work within a larger network of government financed settlement programming as well as other nonprofit initiatives. This includes many smaller nonprofit ethno-specific organizations that work outside of the government funded system liberating them from the restrictions of government imposed frameworks and rules. They are particularly suited to address difficult to serve immigrant communities providing them with material support and the ability to advocate on behalf of their interests and rights. NGO settlement services offer immigrants a set of skills and tools that help them to navigate the labour market and society in the process of integration. These efforts aim at shaping a community in which all groups can participate equally and individuals have a sense of social responsibility and mutual understanding. Therefore, NGOs become essential not only for immigrants, but also for society as a whole.

A goal of social justice is the “full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (Bell, 2013, 21). Hence, social justice seeks equal relationships that have been negotiated by all members of the collectivity, and it rejects all forms of oppression such as those based on race, gender, sex, nationality and social class that may privilege certain groups over others. As noted above, we understand settlement services as programmes and supports provided to newcomers to promote their full participation in the socio-economic life of their host society. Ideally this is a two-way process, in which immigrants as well as the majority society are expected to adapt to one another. Given these contextualizations, there is a clear connection between settlement services and social justice. At their best they both pursue equal relationships that appreciate diversity and build upon it. Hence, NGOs, as core partners in settlement service provision have a significant role to play in social justice.

NGOs, as noted, face several limitations due to their dependence on public funding, which directly impacts their capacity to advocate for social justice. Still there is some ground left for action in this field. On the positive side, NGOs serve as mediators between the government and the individual migrant (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007), as they comply with the state’s settlement responsibilities towards newcomers while enforcing migrants’ rights. They do so mainly by addressing migrants’ most immediate and practical needs, such as language acquisition, career counseling, and training for the labour market. They also serve to refer migrants to other public or private institutions that may

be able to provide additional services, such as public libraries, community centres, health clinics or other NGOs. Nonprofit organizations serve as the first contact of immigrants with the receiving society, so NGOs set the ground for a smoother transition of migrants into society. Given the neoliberal state's aim to reduce costs through alternative service delivery, NGOs have greatly expanded their in-settlement services in the last number of decades, even in the context of austerity.

The NGO approach goes beyond the neoliberal paradigm that considers labour market attachment to be the most salient aspect of the settlement process, shedding light on other domains. For example, sport activities as part of integration programmes reveal that there are universal languages and values appropriated by both migrants and locals. It also speaks for the role that recreational activities play in the everyday lives of newcomers in three key areas: intercultural communication, the struggle against racism and oppression, and contact with the majority society. Kenneth (2005), makes the point that when immigrants are able to practice the traditional sports of their hometowns and involve other ethnic groups and native-born community members, it is possible for them to maintain their identity while adapting to mainstream society. It also builds their social capital within the broader community.

On the negative side, public funding does affect the nonprofit sector's capacity for advocacy and policy change. This situation is made more challenging by the contextual issues in which NGOs are working nowadays, namely neoliberalism, economic crisis, securitization of migration and anti-immigrant sentiments and policies. A good example to illustrate these circumstances is the reception of refugee claimants in the EU. Under this difficult and polemic situation, NGOs juggle between collaborating with the EU – especially regarding FRONTEX – in order to guarantee a secure border crossing, versus being critical about and attempting to influence security policies that have contributed to many migrant deaths in their transit attempts to reach 'safe havens'. According to Irrera (2016), many NGOs "...that had initially worked on migration responded to the end of legal immigration and to the growing dominance of control and admission issues by shifting their focus to integration, anti-racism and multiculturalism" (26). Furthermore, the "refugee crisis" promoted further collaboration between government institutions and NGOs, improving their relations and coordination with member states (Irrera, 2014). Nevertheless, the actual impact of NGOs on EU policy is far from clear. There is a need for a greatly elevated voice for NGOs and their social justice

message. NGOs stand for an integration paradigm that respects ethnic diversity and the ability of migrants to integrate at their own pace, taking into account the supports provided by the country of destination (Jupp, 2011).

An example of a broader role for NGOs in settlement is the case of ethnic migrant organizations. Within the countries studied, ethnic-based settlement organizations are very common and active. In the case of refugee settlement in the US, for instance, these organizations perceive themselves as not only serving refugees, but the wider community. Some of their functions are: service provision; civic and political representation for refugees; fostering mutual understanding and cross-cultural relationships; acting as intermediaries between government institutions and the community; and partnering with the state and non-state actors in attempting to achieve its mission (Newland et al., 2007, 10). Such organizations have moved beyond standard service provision embracing a broader role in society that includes an active advocacy agenda and community/ relationship building and outreach. Paralleling such developments at the local level, cities have taken an increasing progressive lead in settlement support. In the US there are already 26 cities with offices of immigrant integration working closely with migrant organizations (USC Center for the Study on Immigrant Integration, 2015).

In sum, settlement services work towards adaptation while at the same time they address social justice aims valuing social and cultural differences and opposing social inequality (Chi-Ying et al., 2011). A narrow focus on economic integration in the era of neoliberalism, securitization and economic austerity is not enough. In the “Us versus Them” debate, local populations are concerned not only about their jobs and wages, but also about their security and the transformation of their physical and social spaces and cultural practices with the arrival of immigrants and refugees. Under such circumstances public sentiments and public policy are highly susceptible to anti-immigrant right-wing populist influences. In this context the social justice missions promoted by settlement sector NGOs become critical to migrant social integration. This is not only demanded by immigrants, but necessary for the creation of a more just society in which all benefit.

References

- Aliweiwi, J. & Laforest, R. (2009). Citizenship, immigration and the conservative agenda. In Laforest, R., ed., *The new federal policy agenda and the voluntary sector: On the cutting edge*, (137-153). Montreal: McGill-

Queen's University Press.

- Anderson, B. (2013). *Us and Them? The Dangerous Politics of Immigration Control*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Andrews, R., Downe, J., Guarneros-Meza, V. and Van de Walle, S. (2013). *Public Management Reforms and Emerging Trends and Effects on Social Cohesion in Europe*. COCOPS, December; <http://www.cocops.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Deliverable-6.1.pdf>.
- Ascoli, U. & Ranci, C. (2002). The context of new social policies in Europe. In Ascoli, U. and Ranci, C., eds., *Dilemmas of the welfare mix: The new structures of welfare in an era of privatization*, (1-24). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Baines, D., Campey, J., Cunningham I. & Shields, J. (2014). Not Profiting from Precarity: The Work of Nonprofit Service Delivery and the Creation of Precariousness. *Just Labour: A Canadian Journal of Work and Society*, Vol. 22, Autumn, 74-93.
- Barrass, S. & Shields, J. (2017). Immigration in an Age of Austerity: Morality, the Welfare State and the Shaping of the Ideal Migrant. In Evans, B. and McBride, S., eds. *Lived Experience of Austerity*, (pp. 195-221). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bauder, H. (2017). Sanctuary Cities like Toronto are Democracy's Last Stand. *Huffpost: TheBlog*, June 15; http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/harald-bauder/sanctuary-cities_b_17102376.html
- Bell, L.A. (2013). Theoretical Foundations. In Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W.J., Castañeda, C., Hackman, H.W., Peters, M.L. & Zúñiga, X., (eds., *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, Third Edition, (pp. 21-25). New York: Routledge.
- Burke, M., Mooers, C. & Shields, J., eds. (2000). *Restructuring and Resistance: Canadian Public Policy in an Age of Global Capitalism*. Halifax: Fernwood.
- Carmel, E., Cerami, A., & Papadopoulos, T., eds. (2012). *Migration and Welfare in the New Europe: Social protection and the Challenge of Integration*. Bristol: Polity Press.
- Chaloff, J., Dumnot, J-C., Liebig, T. (2012). *The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Migration and Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrants in OECD Countries*. CESifo DICE Report; https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254398183_The_Impact_of_the_Economic_Crisis_on_Migration_and_Labour_Market_Outcomes_

of Immigrants in OECD Countries

- Chi-Ying, R., Bemak, F. & Grabosky, T.K. (2011). Multi-cultural-Social Justice Leadership Strategies: Counseling and Advocacy with Immigrants. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology*, 3(1), 86-102.
- Collet, E. (2011). *Immigrant integration in Europe in a time of austerity*. London, UK: Migration Policy Institute.
- Davison, S. & Shire, G. (2015). Race, migration and neoliberalism. *Soundings*, 59, 81-95.
- De Graauw, E., Gleeson, S. and Bloemraad, I. (2013). Funding Immigrant Organizations: Suburban Free Riding and Local Civic Presence. *American Journal of Sociology*, 119(1), 75-130.
- Deverteuil, G. (2016). *Resilience in the Post-Welfare Inner City: Voluntary Sector Geographies in London, Los Angeles and Sydney*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Donhilow, R. (2005). Caught in the middle: The state, ngos, and the limits to grassroots organizing along the US-Mexico border. *Antipode*, 37(3).
- Evans, B. & Shields, J. (2014). Nonprofit Engagement with Provincial Policy Officials: The Case of Canadian Immigrant Settlement Services and NGO Policy Voice. *Policy and Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2: 117-127.
- Evans, B. & Shields, J. (2010). The Third Sector and the Provision of Public Good: Partnerships, Contracting and the Neo-liberal State. In Dunn, C., ed., *The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration*, 2nd edition, (pp. 305-318). Oxford University Press, Toronto.
- Evans, B., Richmond, T. & Shields, J. (2005). Structuring neoliberal governance: The nonprofit sector, emerging new modes of control and the marketisation of service delivery. *Policy and Society*, 24(1), 73-97.
- Feldman, Guy, Strier, Roni & Michal Koreh, Michal. (2017). Liquid Advocacy: Social Welfare Advocacy in Neoliberal Times, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, Vol. 26:3, 254-262.
- Friedman, M. & Friedman, B. (2006). *Settlement houses: Improving the social welfare of America's immigrants*. New York: Rosen.
- Gottfried, K., Shields, J., Akter, N., Dyson, D., Topkara-Sarsu, S., Egeh, H. and Guerra, S. (2016). Paving Their Way and Earning Their Pay: Economic Survival Experiences of Immigrants in East Toronto. *Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research*, Vol. 27: 137-161
- Hannan, C.A., Bauder, H. & Shields, J. (2016). 'Illegalized' Workers and the Struggle for a Living Wage. *Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research*, Vol. 27: 109- 136.

- Hellgren, Z. (2015). *Immigrant Integration as a Two-Way Process: Translating Theory into Practice*. Working Paper Series (23). Universitat Pompeu Fabre & Interdisciplinary Research Group on Migration.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2007). *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007.
- Irrera, D. (2014). Humanitarian NGOs and EU emergencies response policy: Continuity or change? In A. Filipiak, A., Kania, E., Van den Bosch, J. and Wiśniewski, R. eds., *R/Evolutions*, (100-124). Revolutions Research Center, Poznań.
- Irrera, D. (2016). Migrants, the EU and NGOs: The “Practice” of Non-Governmental SAR Operations. *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 16(3), 20-35.
- Jessop, B. (2002). *The future of the capitalist state*. Oxford: Polity.
- Joppke, Christian. (2017). *Is Multiculturalism Dead? Crisis and Persistence in the Constitutional State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jupp, J. (2011). Politics, Public Policy and Multiculturalism. In Jupp, J. and Clyne M., eds., *Multiculturalism and Integration: A Harmonious Relationship*, (pp. 41-52). Canberra: ANU Press.
- Juzwiak, T., McGregor, E. & Siegel, M. (2014). *Migrant and Refugee Integration in Global Cities: The Role of Cities and Businesses*. Policy Brief. United Nations University; www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1400742054.pdf
- Kenneth, C. (2005). *Sport, Immigration and Multiculturalism: A conceptual analysis*. The Olympic Studies Centre-Autonomous University of Barcelona; olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp103_eng.pdf
- Koehler, J., Laczko, F., Aghazarm, C. & Schad, J. (2010). *Migration and the Economic Crisis in the European Union: Implications for Policy*. International Organization for Migration: publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/migration_and_the_economic_crisis.pdf
- Kretsedemas, P. (2015). The Transformation of US Immigration Policy. In Bauder, H. and Shields, J., eds., *Immigrant Experiences in North America: Understanding Settlement and Integration in North America*, (pp. 60-92). Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.
- Lazaridis, G. & Wadia, K., eds. (2015). *The Securitisation of Migration in the EU. Debates Since 9/11*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lewis, D. (2013). Building the welfare mix or sidelining the State? Non-

- governmental organizations in developing countries as social policy actors. In Surrender, R. and Walker, R., eds., *Social Policy in a Developing World*, (58-80). Chetlenham, Massachusetts: Edward Elgar.
- Lowe, Sophia, Richmond, Ted and Shields, John. (2017). Settling on Austerity: ISAs, Immigrant Communities and Neoliberal Restructuring”, *Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research*, Vol. 28: 14-46.
- Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). (Nd). <http://www.mipex.eu/>
- Muller, Thomas. (1997). Nativism in the Mid-1990s: Why Now? In Perrea, J.F., ed., *Immigrants out!: the new nativism and the anti-immigrant impulse in the United States*. New York: New York University Press.
- Modood, T. (2011). *Multiculturalism and Integration: Struggling with Confusions*. European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- Newland, K., Tanaka, H. & Barker, L. (2007). *Bridging Divides: The Role of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations in Refugee Integration*. Migration Policy Institute; <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/bridging-divides-role-ethnic-community-based-organizations-refugee-integration>
- Nihei, N. (2010). Reconsideration of the problem of complicity between volunteering activities and neoliberalism. *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, 19(1), 112- 124.
- Ochs, H.L. (2015). *Privitizing the Polity*. Albany, NY: Suny Press.
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) & COSTI. (1999). The development of service and sectoral standards for the immigrant services sector: Discussion document; <http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/other/holder1/cover.html>
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2012). *Settling In: OECD indicators of immigrant integration 2012*. Paris: OECD.
- Pazzanese, C. (2017). In Europe, Nationalism Rising. *Harvard Gazette*, February 17; <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/02/in-europe-nationalisms-rising/>
- Phillips, S. & Levasseur, K. (2004). The Snakes and Ladders of Accountability: Contradictions between contracting and collaboration for Canada's voluntary sector. *Canadian Public Administration*, 47(4), p. 451-474.
- Richmond, T. & Shields, J. (2005). NGO-government relations and immigrant

services:

- Contradictions and challenges. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 6(3- 4), 513-526.
- Root, J., Gates-Gasse, E., Shields, J. & Bauder, H. (2014). *Discounting Immigrant Families: Neoliberalism and the Framing of Canadian Immigration Policy Change*. RCIS Working Paper, No. 2014/7.
- Rudman, D., Aldrich, R.M., Grundy, J., Stone, M. Huot, S. & Aslam, A. (2017). “You Got to Make the Numbers Work”: Negotiating Managerial Reforms in the Provision of Employment Support Services. *Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research*, Vol. 28, 47-79.
- Ruzza, C. (2014). The Ideology of New Public Management, Associational Representation and the Global Financial Crisis. *Partecipazione e Conflitto: The Open Journal of Sociopolitica Studies*, 7(3), 490-508.
- Salamon, L.M. (2015a). Introduction: The Nonprofitization of the Welfare State. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, Vol. 26, No. 6, December, 2147-2154.
- Salamon, L.M. (2015b). *The Resilient Sector Revisited: The New Challenge of Nonprofit America*, 2nd edition. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.
- Salamon, L., S.W. Sokolowski, S.W. & R. List, R. (2004). Global Civil Society: An Overview. In Salamon, L.M., Sokolowski, S.W. and Associates, eds., *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, (pp. 3-60). Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press Inc.
- Saurugger, S. (2009). *Analyzing Civil Society Organizations' Changing Structures in the EU. Lessons from the social movement and party politics literature*. ECPR Joint Sessions, 15-19 April 2009, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Schmidt, R. (2007). Comparing federal government immigrant settlement policies in Canada and the United States. *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 37(1), 103-120.
- Sharma, N. (2015). Immigration Status and the Legalization of Inequality. In H. Bauder, H. and Shields, J., eds., *Immigrant Experiences in North America: Understanding Settlement and Integration in North America*, (pp. 204-222). Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.
- Shields, J. (2014). Constructing and ‘Liberating’ Temporariness in the Canadian Nonprofit Sector: Neoliberalism and Nonprofit Service Providers. In Latham, R., Preston, V. and Vosko, L., eds., *Liberating Temporariness? Migration, Work and Citizenship in an Age of Insecurity*, (pp. 255-281).

- Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Shields, J. (2010). Personal notes taken at the settlement services field trip, 15th International Metropolis Conference - Justice and Migration: Paradoxes of Belonging, The Hague, October 4-8, 2010.
- Shields, J. & H, Bauder. (2015). Introduction – Understanding Immigration, Settlement, and Integration in North America. In Bauder, H. and Shields, J, eds., *Immigrant Experiences in North America: Understanding Settlement and Integration*, (pp. 11-33). Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press Inc.
- Shields, J., Drolet, J. & Valenzuela, K. (2016). Immigration Settlement and Integration Services and the Role of Nonprofit Providers: A Cross-national Perspective on Trends, Issues and Evidence, *RCIS Working Paper* (Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement), No. 2016: 1, February.
- Shields, J. & Evans, B.M. (1998). *Shrinking the State: Globalization and Public Administration 'Reform'*. Halifax: Fernwood.
- Sidhu, R. K. & Taylor, S. (2009). The trials and tribulations of partnerships in refugee settlement services in Australia. *Journal of Education Policy*. 24(6), 655-672.
- Skeldon, R. (2010). *The Current Global Economic Crisis and Migration: Policies and Practice in Origin and Destination*. University of Sussex, Brighton, UK: Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.
- Smith, S. R., Ferlie, E., Lynn Jr, L.E. & Pollitt, C. (2005). NGOs and contracting. In Ferlie, E., Lynn, L.E. and Politt, C., eds., *The Oxford handbook of public management*, (591- 614). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Szalai, A. & Gobl, G. (2015). *Securitizing Migration in Contemporary Hungary*. Working Paper. Centre for EU Enlargement Studies; <https://cens.ceu.edu/sites/.../szalai-goblmigrationpaper.final.pdf>
- Traynor, I. (2015). Europe dices with nationalism, *The Guardian Weekly*, December 11-17, 1, 7.
- Turner, T & Cross, C. (2015). Do Attitudes to Immigrants Change in Hard Times? Ireland in a European Context. *European Societies*, 17:3, 372-395.
- USC Center for the Study on Immigrant Integration (2015). *Opening minds, opening doors, opening communities: Cities leading for immigrant integration*. Americas Society/Council of the Americas; <http://www.as->

coa.org/sites/default/files/USC_Report_LayFinal2_17_WEB.PDF