Mismatched expectations: reflecting on the “otherness” in the sponsors-sponsored refugees’ relationship among Syrian newcomers’ resettlement in Toronto

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This paper is based on an ongoing Ph.D. research project that addresses the resettlement of Syrian newcomers in São Paulo (Brazil) and Toronto (Canada). I focus this presentation on the field research in Toronto. Drawing on qualitative methods consisting of interviews with Syrian newcomers (n=15), sponsors (n=16) and resettlement professionals (n=7), I present preliminary results concerning the topic of the “otherness” in the sponsors-newcomers’ relationship. More specifically, I address the mismatched expectations they have and how they manage those. The analysis of the data is based on the constructive approach of the Grounded Theory1. First, participants’ statements are grouped in the following organizing scheme: the conditions that shape (inter)actions, the (inter)actions (how participants react to each other’ expectations), and finally the outcomes of those (inter)actions (which expectations are predominant). Second, I compare different strategies and outcomes. Next, I develop categories and properties. Finally, I present some preliminary results. The first preliminary result is that the earlier sponsors and newcomers communicate, the less they will have mismatched expectations. The second result is that there is a power imbalance between sponsors-sponsored refugees. However, sponsor’s expectations not always prevail over newcomers’. Finally, managing those expectations is one of the biggest challenges faced by both sponsors and newcomers.

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