

## **An Ecological Approach to Refugee Youth Identity Development in a Small-Sized City**

### **Abstract**

Policy analysts, politicians, and newcomer agencies are currently trying to promote refugee resettlement in small to mid-sized cities in Canada. It is important to consider that almost half of the world's refugee population today are youth under the age of 18. Efforts to maintain resettled refugees in these smaller cities will only be successful if the barriers to successful integration for refugee youth are examined. Identity formation is a potential factor that can either support or inhibit the integration of refugee youth in small to mid-sized cities. Although identity is shaped throughout one's life, individuals begin the process of identity formation during adolescence. Where one lives and the social experiences they have between systems will affect identity development. While there is a plethora of research examining adolescent youth identity formation, there is limited research examining identity development in refugee youth, especially those living in these small cities. The current study will examine how resettlement in a small sized Canadian city affects refugee youth identity formation through their interactions between systems, including school, family, peers, social media, settlement services, and community organizations. The literature gap will be addressed through an exploratory case study of up to four refugee youth living in Winkler, Manitoba. Participants will be asked to engage in a semi-structured interview to share their lived experiences in Winkler. A narrative analysis approach will be used to examine the data collected. This presentation will focus on the literature review and proposed methods, as data will be collected during summer 2021.

### **Biography of Author**

**Carly McFall** is currently pursuing her Master's degree in the Immigration and Settlement Studies program at Ryerson University. She holds a BA (Hons.) in Psychology from the University of Manitoba. Throughout her studies, she has been involved in the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), serving as Chairperson for the University of Manitoba committee, and is currently the Graduate Student Assistant for the Ryerson committee. Her involvement with WUSC helped her develop a passion for supporting refugee resettlement. Carly's research interests include refugee identity development and mental health, newcomer integration, and the use of media within the field of immigration and settlement.