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# WHY LONG-TERM WELFARE BENEFICIARIES?

A Study of Barriers to Employment for Refugees from the Horn of Africa  
Living in Auckland

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Master of Philosophy in Public Policy

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## ABSTRACT

The rationale for writing this thesis was prompted by years of working with displaced people and refugees in Africa. Though the African people north of the equator are generally regarded as transient people, very few move beyond the boundaries of the continent of Africa. The instability of the political and socio-economic conditions on the continent has exacerbated the current volatile cycle of poverty and human instability. The effects of the political and socio-economic conditions have resulted in a huge displacement of people and the emergence of refugees. Few refugees are able to be identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for resettlement outside Africa, while others take the courageous step of fleeing and seeking refuge on another continent as asylum seekers. In 1960 New Zealand ascribed to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of refugees and actively participated in a refugee quota programme and allowed asylum seekers to apply for refugee status.

In an endeavour to answer the question “why long-term welfare beneficiaries“ in relation to African people, this thesis analysed the integration process of African people and sought to establish what domestic or public policies impact or influence the settlement and integration of refugees and asylum seekers in New Zealand. While there are many factors that influence successful integration, however this study identifies barriers to sustainable employment as one of the major contributors. The literature review and the outcome of the research undertaken showed that barriers to employment do exist for refugees and asylum seekers.

The literature review analyses the legal aspect that defines a refugee and also outlines the process followed for the determination of quota refugees. The review further describes the journey of the study population to New Zealand.

New Zealand has an established welfare system therefore the study traces the discourse within welfare history and policy that relate to the criteria and obligations under which benefits are granted to refugees and asylum seekers. It is argued that present jobseeker

agreements and work test provisions when agreed upon does assist the development and work readiness of the refugee and asylum seeker and does not contribute to long-term welfare beneficiaries.

It is concluded that the absence of an overarching national domestic or public policy on settlement and integration could contribute to long-term welfare beneficiaries (as defined in the welfare policy of the Ministry for Social Development). In conclusion, policy changes to certain aspects of the Social Security Act 1964, language training, organs of civil society intervention and employer interaction need to be addressed in relation to refugees from the Horn of Africa living in New Zealand to allow them to become employable in a shorter period of time.

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## CONTENTS

	Page no
Abstract	II
Acknowledgements	IV
Content	V
List of abbreviations	IX
List of Figures and Tables	X
Map	XIII
 Introduction	 1
Implication of Policy changes	
Theoretical framework	
Purpose of the Thesis	
Organisation of the Thesis	
 Chapter 1: Settlement Process Of Refugees And Asylum Seekers	 10
1.1 Settlement Timeframe and Process	
1.2 Internationally	
1.3 Integration	
1.4 New Zealand	
1.5 Conclusion	
 Chapter 2: Barriers To Employment	 31
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 English Language Proficiency and Accent	
2.3 English Language Proficiency and Earnings	
2.4 Recognition of Qualifications and Experiences	
2.5 Labour Culture and Work Systems	
2.6 Discrimination	

<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<b>Theoretical And Legal Aspects Pertaining to Refugees</b>	<b>50</b>
	3.1 Internally displaced people (IDP)	
	3.2 Refugee Theory	
	3.3 Concept of Resettlement	
	3.4 Law related to African refugees	
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>Refugee Status Determination Process For Asylum Seekers</b>	<b>60</b>
	4.1: Introduction	
	4.2: The New Zealand Refugee Determination Process	
	4.3: Persecution; A Criterion for Refugee Status	
	4.4: Approval of Refugee Status Applications	
	4.5: Policy Implications	
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	<b>New Zealand Relations pertaining to Quota Refugees</b>	<b>74</b>
	5.1: Background	
	5.2: Review of the New Zealand Refugee Quota Programme	
	5.3: Resettlement in New Zealand	
	5.4: Conclusion	
<b>Chapter 6:</b>	<b>Study Population Origin And Migration</b>	<b>85</b>
	6.1 Introduction	
	6.2: Refugee Camps	
	6.2.1: Kenya	
	6.2.2: Ethiopia	
	6.3: Settlement in New Zealand	
	6.4: Religion and Culture	
<b>Chapter 7:</b>	<b>Historical Overview Of New Zealand Social Welfare System</b>	<b>98</b>
	7.1: Introduction	
	7.1.1: Background to the Social Welfare System	
	7.1.2: Charitable and Benevolent Aid	
	7.2: The Expanding Role of the State in the Twentieth Century	
	7.3 Conclusion	

<b>Chapter 8:</b>	<b>Social Security Act And Its Policies Pertaining To Quota Refugees And Asylum Seekers</b>	<b>113</b>
	8.1: Introduction	
	8.2: Refugee Convention and Welfare Benefits	
	8.3: Welfare Policy and Benefits Related to Refugees and Asylum Seekers	
	8.4: Welfare Benefits and Long-term Beneficiaries	
	8.5: Refugees Receiving a Benefit	
	8.6: The Movement of Beneficiaries on and off an Unemployment Benefit (Hardship)	
	8.7: Transfer to Unemployment Benefit	
	8.8: Conclusion	
<b>Chapter 9:</b>	<b>The Work Test</b>	<b>138</b>
	9.0 Introduction	
	9.1: Historical Overview of the Work Test	
	9.2. Exemption from Work Test	
	9.3: Current Work Test Process	
	9.4: Conclusion	
<b>Chapter 10:</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>152</b>
	10.1: Study Design	
	10.2: Sampling	
	10.3: Generalisability	
	10.4: Anonymity and Confidentiality	
	10.5: Ethical consideration	
	10.6: Data collection	
	10.7: Validity	
	10.8: Reliability	
	10.9: Data Analysis	
<b>Chapter 11:</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>163</b>
	11.1: Individual Participants Composition and Characteristics	
	11.2: Themes	
	11.3: Ranking of Barriers and Number of Participants	
	11.4: Education and Skills in Relation to Barriers	
	11.5: Barriers in Relation to Family Structure	
	11.6: Focus Groups	
	11.7: Analysis of Results	
	11.8: Delimitation	
	11.9: Limitation	



<b>Chapter 12: Discussion</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Chapter 13: Conclusion</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Addendums</b>	<b>189</b>
Addendum 1: OAU Convention	189
Addendum 2: UNHCR Convention	194
Addendum 3: Letter: Confirmation of application for refugee status	208
Addendum 4: Letter: Confirmation of refugee status	209
Addendum 5: Table of Work Test Sanctions	210
Addendum 6: Exemption from Work Test	213
Addendum 7: Consent letter from Somali and Migrant Concern Organisation	219
Addendum 8: Individual Consent Form	220
Addendum 9: Individual participation composition	221
Addendum 10: Responses from participants	222
Addendum 11: Analysis of participants interviews	225
Addendum 12: Data of study population for periods on the benefit	226
Addendum 13: Interview Schedule	234
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>237</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARRA	Administration for Refugee Returnee Affairs
ICRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IRO	International Refugee Organisation
MRRC	Mangere Refugee Reception Centre
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
RAA	Refugee Appeal Authority
SSA	Social Security Act of 1964
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USAID	United Nations Agency for International Aid
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand

## LIST OF DIAGRAMS

	Page no
Diagram 2.1: The Settlement/Integration Continuum	11

## LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1.1	Phases to Fulltime Employment for Refugees and Asylum Seeker in New Zealand	27
Graph 4.1	Refugee Status Applications	70
Graph 8.1	Main Source of Income for Different Refugee Groups	126
Graph 8.2	Comparison between Quota Refugees arriving in the country and Refugee welfare Beneficiaries from 1 January 2001 and 30 June 2003	128
Graph 8.3	Comparison of duration Beneficiaries spent on the Benefit	129
Graph 8.4	Comparison between the National and Auckland Region Beneficiaries by Nationality receiving an Unemployment Benefit (Hardship) Benefit from 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003	130
Graph 8.5	Percentage Proportion of the study population receiving a benefit for 26 weeks and more from 1 July 2002 – 30 June 2003 in the Auckland Region	131
Graph 8.6	The movement of Ethiopians receiving an Unemployment Benefit (Hardship) for the period from July 2002 - 30 June 2003	132
Graph 8.7	The movement of Somalis receiving an Unemployment Benefit (Hardship) for the period from July 2002 - 30 June 2003	133
Graph 8.8	The movement of Sudanese receiving an Unemployment Benefit (Hardship) for the period from July 2002 - 30 June 2003	134

## LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 8.1:	Welfare Benefit Flow Chart For Refugees/Asylum Seekers	119
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1:	The New Zealand Refugee Quota Programme Selection Process	80
Figure 6.1:	Steps Taken to Become a Refugee in Kenya	93
Figure 6.2:	Steps Taken to Become a Refugee in Ethiopia	96

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1:	Settlement processes for Refugees and Asylum Seekers	24
Table 2.1:	Prioritisation of barriers by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and Refugees	32
Table 2.2:	Barriers to employment from refugees point of view	33
Table 2.3:	Barriers to employment from employers point of view	33
Table 3.1	Rogge's Typology	57
Table 4.1:	Africans applications for residence under the Refugee Status Appeals Authority	69
Table 5.1:	New Zealand/UNHCR Agreements	75
Table 5.2:	Study population accepted as Quota Refugees	79
Table 8.1	Study population who received an Unemployment benefit (Hardship) between 26 - 103 weeks for the period 1 July 2002 – 30 June 2003 in the Auckland Region	135
Table 9.2:	Table of work test sanctions	147
Table 11.1:	Parental status of individual participants	163

Table 11.2:	Education and skills	164
Table 11.3:	Same or similar work	166
Table 11.4:	Participants identifying barriers	167
Table 11.5:	Ranking of barriers and number of participants	168
Table 11.6:	Education and skills in relation to barriers	169
Table 11.7:	Barriers in relation to family structure	170
Table 11.8:	Focus Group 1	170
Table 11.9:	Focus Group 2	171
Table 11.10:	Focus Group ranking of barriers	171

MAP OF AFRICA

