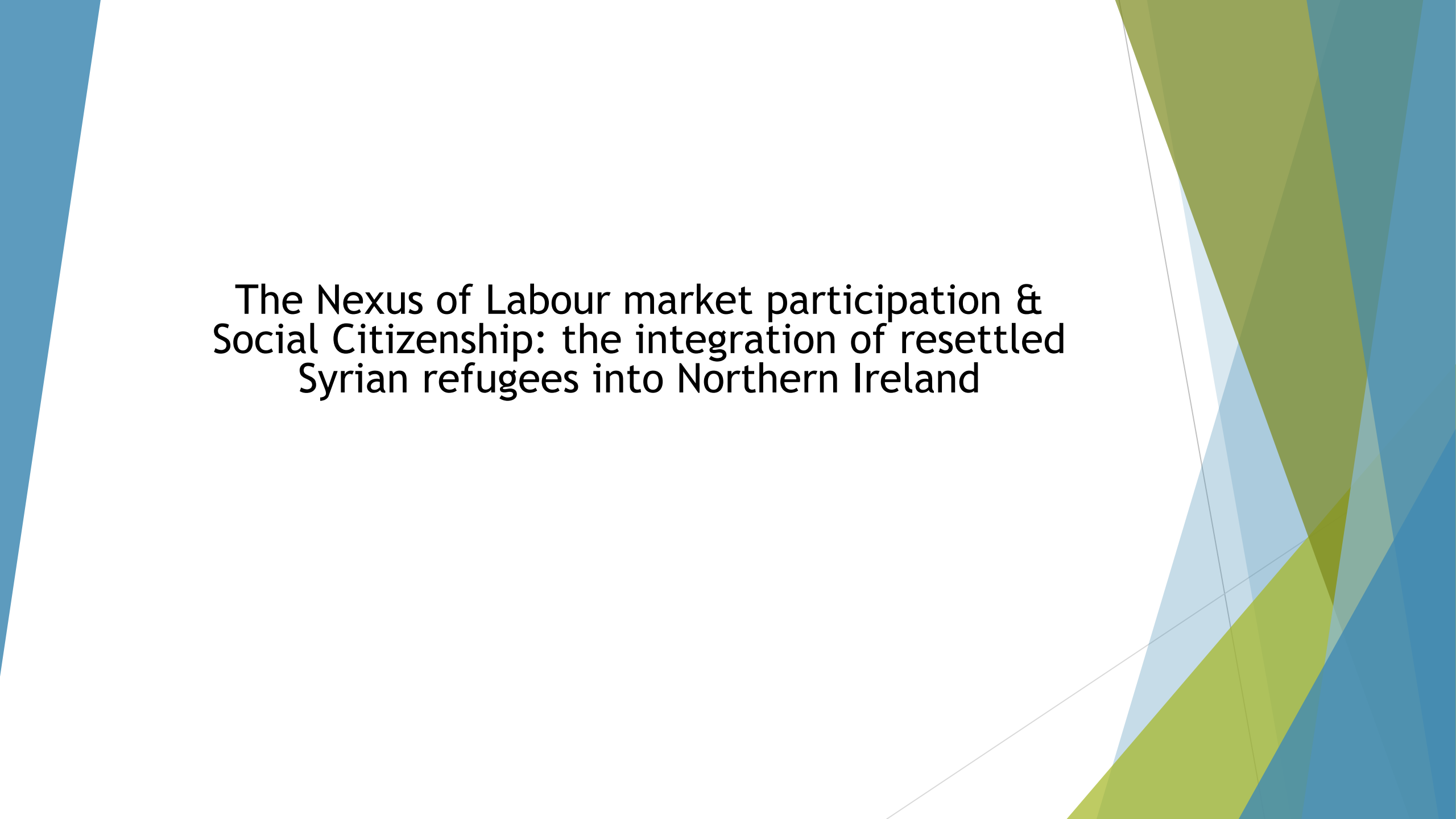




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NINE DTP (1+3) Collaborative Scholarship with The Executive
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The Nexus of Labour market participation & Social Citizenship: the integration of resettled Syrian refugees into Northern Ireland

Migration status - definition

- ▶ A refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” (United Nations General Assembly, 14th December 1950)
- ▶ An asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed.

Migration Status

Asylum
Seeker

Allowance of £45 per week. NOT permitted to work while claim is being processed

Refugee

Can access benefits and the labour market

Resettlement Schemes in the UK

- ▶ January 2010 to 30th June 2020, 29,506 people were resettled in the United Kingdom under its four refugee resettlement programmes
- ▶ By 2020, 19,768 refugees were resettled under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The scheme began in 2015.

67%

Syrian vulnerable person's
relocation scheme

Syrian Refugees in Northern Ireland December 2015 - February 2020

1815

*Estimated 200-300
asylum seekers
per year*

Conditions of the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme

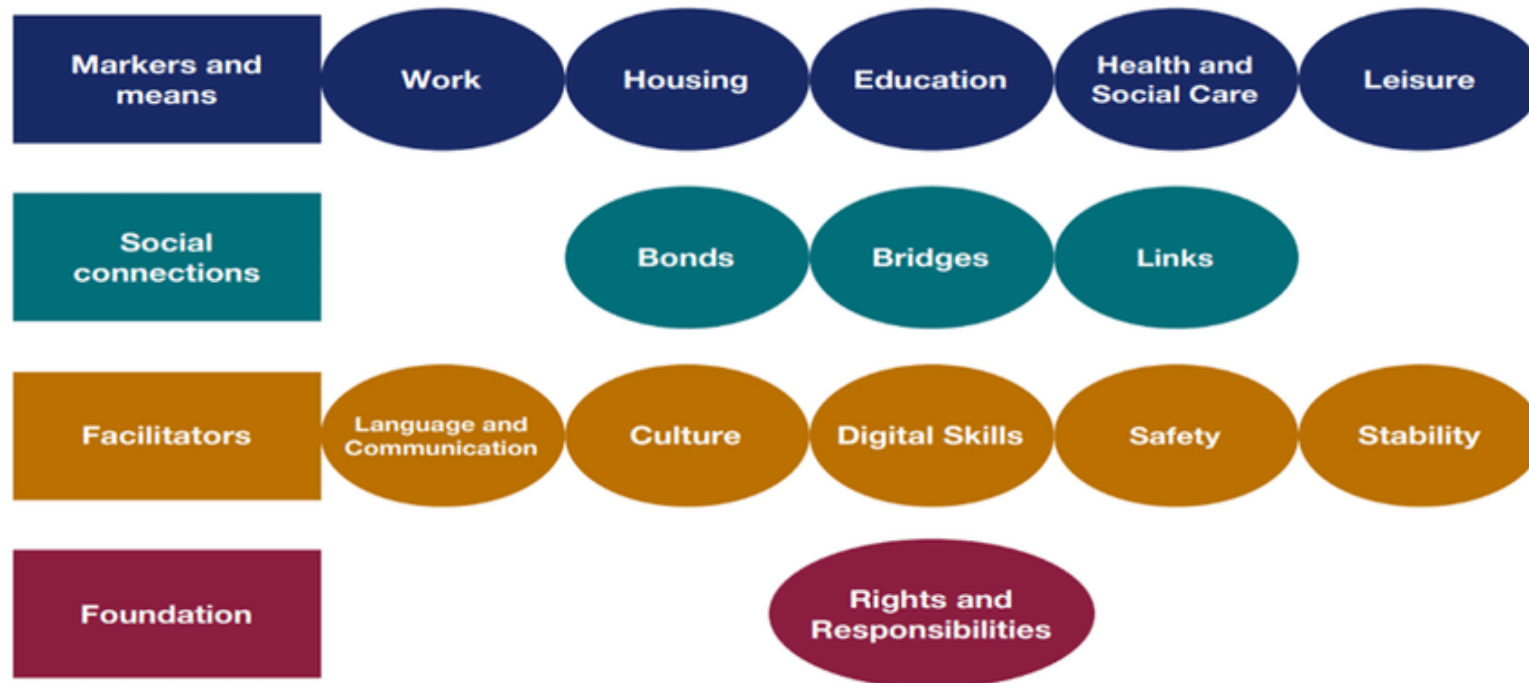
- ▶ Refugee status with five years leave to remain. After 5 years, they can apply for indefinite leave to remain or British citizenship
- ▶ The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme applies only to refugees still in neighbouring countries (i.e. in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey), not those who have travelled to Europe.
- ▶ Prioritised in terms of vulnerability which considered victims of torture, medical needs, women and girls at risk as well as family reunification and those in need of protection
- ▶ Refugee status provides access to benefits and entitlement to work
- ▶ They can travel freely throughout the UK but need to apply for a visa to travel outside of the UK

Northern Ireland as a research setting

- ▶ The Troubles dominated the socio-political debate and is regarded as one of the reasons why Northern Ireland received lower numbers of asylum seekers
- ▶ The Race Relations Order came into force in 1997 (30 years after its counterpart in Britain)
- ▶ Immigration and asylum policy are reserved to Westminster but education and employment are devolved powers
- ▶ There has been a growing diverse population in Northern Ireland where in the 2021 census, the minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland doubled since 2011 to 65,600 people, representing 3.8% of the population
- ▶ NILT research in 2018 shows that 58% of respondents supported the arrival of Syrian refugees with stronger support among urban dwellers (62%) than rural dwellers (50%) and stronger support among Nationalist (65%) compared to Unionists (47%)

Indicators of Integration

Home Office 2019



Employment and Integration

“employment as a marker of integration can serve as an indication of positive integration outcomes”

“success in this domain is likely to assist in the wider integration process”

(Home Office, 2019, p.18)

Employment Outcomes for Refugees

- ▶ Temporality has been deemed to be a precarious position
- ▶ Uncertainty can impact upon personal investment in skills
- ▶ Initial employment rates of refugees tend to be lower than that of other immigrant groups
- ▶ Many refugees who came to Northern Ireland through the asylum process remained unemployed

Social citizenship

“the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and the live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in society” TH Marshall

Development of citizenship

Civil Rights

Political Rights

Social Rights

Critiques of social citizenship

- ▶ Marshall's vision privileged British males
- ▶ It relies on the nation state which can freely decide distribution of income
- ▶ Paid work has been considered a primary citizenship obligation
- ▶ The social rights of citizenship have become increasingly conditional



Barriers to accessing the labour market

- ▶ Linguistic
- ▶ Bureaucratic - recognition of qualifications
- ▶ Perceptions of the 'refugee label'
- ▶ Assumptions of homogenised experiences overlook diversity
- ▶ Limited programmes due to funding challenges
- ▶ Awareness of opportunities
- ▶ Accessibility- transport, childcare
- ▶ Programme conditionality
- ▶ Paid employment can be a barrier for those who require further enhancement in language classes.

Recommendations for Positive Outcomes

- ▶ Refugee labour market participation is recommended to be complemented by an inclusive environment that allows for acceptance as well as access to services and opportunities
- ▶ Labour market prospects are important to consider
- ▶ Dissemination of infographics with information detailing language programme details to frontline providers
- ▶ The needs of those with lower literacy levels can be addressed through less formalised learning
- ▶ Funding needs to be allocated to support access to childcare
- ▶ Highly qualified individuals are driven by employment opportunities commensurate with their experience - tailored qualification programmes can support this transition

Policy layers

- ▶ Macro - asylum and immigration policy are reserved to Westminster
- ▶ Meso - devolved powers - includes education and employment
- ▶ Micro - how refugees access the labour market

Next Step - Research Focus

- ▶ How has the nature of labour market integration impacted on belonging for refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme?
- ▶ What are the implications of the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme for social policy concerning employment outcomes through a macro, meso and micro lens?
- ▶ How does conditionality prescribed by the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme impact on labour market access for Syrian refugees?
- ▶ What are the implications for operationalising the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme in Northern Ireland?
- ▶ What are the implications for integration for Syrian refugees who are unable to carry out paid work?



Thanks for your time and
attention!

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