Twenty Years and Still Becoming
Bosnian Social and Economic Integration in St. Louis

Between 1993 and 2012, approximately 50,000 Bosnian refugees migrated to the St. Louis region.

Challenging political and economic conditions have presented barriers for those who may have wanted to return home following the war, while children born and raised in St. Louis now call Missouri home. Using qualitative data from 26 interviews with former refugees and non-Bosnian community leaders involved with resettlement, stories of resettlement explore successes and challenges to long-term social and economic integration. The data illuminate narratives of resilience that have been sustained by both internal advantages and external supports.

BOSNIAN ADVANTAGES

Community
Many people from other states in the United States moved to St. Louis because of the community. They know they want to look for a job, a Bosnian will help them.-- Samira, 02/01/13

Education
Our high school in Bosnia is the same as an Associate Degree... We studied college algebra in our first year of high school. -- Filip, 11/03/12

Multi-skilled
People ask me if I know any Bosnians looking for housing. They love renting to us because we fix up their buildings. -- Alem, 01/18/13

Appearance
Being European and also secular Muslim...renders Bosnians racially 'invisible' in American society. -- Hisako Matsuo in American society.

Financial Planning
...if you clean for cash, it's fine, you have money, but you're not building up social security. -- Anna Crosslin, 1/4/13

Recertification
He used to be a computer programmer back home... he didn't accept his degree so he had to go work in a factory. -- Kadika, 1/8/13

Meaningful Work
He was doing such a good job in Bosnia. He was his own boss, he owned a store. I guess going to a different country and doing a lower level job... -- Esed, 2/11/13

Coping with Trauma
...a lot of women are still afraid to press charges... -- Kadika, 1/8/13

ST. LOUIS EFFORTS

Banks
"The owner of the bank... started employing Bosnians and accepting Bosnians as customers even though they did not have established credit history. -- Liliana, 1/7/13

Municipal Support
I got asked by Mayor Slay and other people involved to produce a Bosnian TV show. -- Filip, 11/13/12

County Schools
The current principal... he took care of us, everything we needed... -- Esed, 2/8/13

The economic mobility of St. Louis Bosnians is demonstrated by the community’s migration from St. Louis City to St. Louis County since the 1990s.

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Homeland Wanted (2005)

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