

Once Fractured, Twice Politicized: How Immigrant Women From War-Torn Regions Find Political Agency In Canada



Seemal Akhtar Sheikh
Research Advisor: Professor Geoffery Dancy
Laidlaw Scholars Undergraduate Leadership and Research Programme



01 Introduction

Women migrating from war-torn regions may carry experiences of conflict, political instability, and institutional distrust into new political environments. Yet, little is known about how these experiences evolve after migration and shape women’s political integration and agency in Canada.

02 Objective

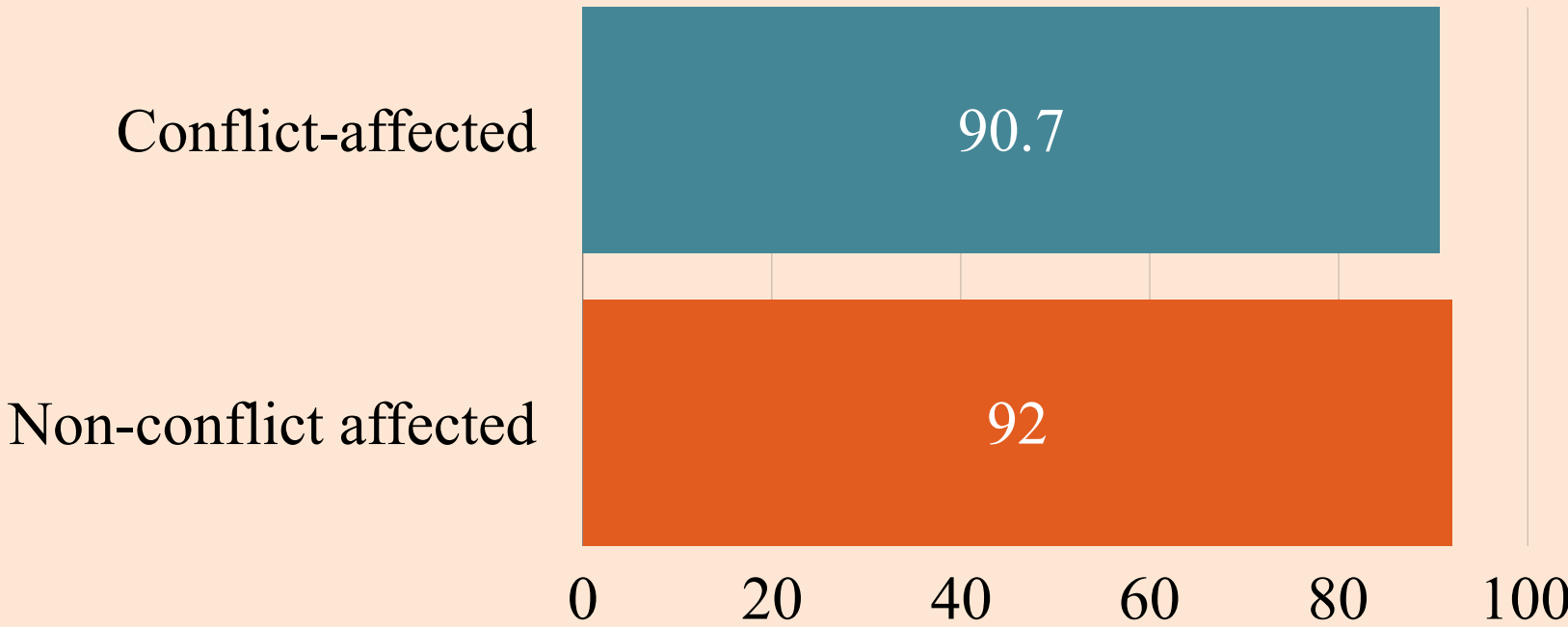
This study aims to explore how immigrant women from war-torn areas find political agency in Canada.

03 Methodology

- 1. Quantitative Research
 - a. 2025 Canadian Election Study (CES) respondents classified using UCDP conflict data
- 2. Qualitative Research
 - a. 7 individual interviews with conflict-affected immigrant women who have been eligible to vote for at least 1 election cycle

04 Quantitative

Only a 1.3 percentage-point difference was observed, and the association between conflict-origin classification and turnout was not statistically significant
 $\chi^2(1) = 0.53, p = .467$.



05 Qualitative

- Important Findings:
- Political participation is widely valued, although opportunities for participation and feelings of political inclusion remain uneven
 - Political experiences are carried across borders but are transformed through experience in Canada
 - Newcomer and settlement services provide important support but are perceived as offering insufficient political and civic orientation

06 Limitations

- 1. Conflict classification is a context proxy, not proof of personal victimisation
- 2. Conflict and non-conflict groups may differ in age, education, income, time in Canada, or citizenship history
- 3. Unweighted analysis describes the CES analytic sample, not population estimates
- 4. Small sample size for individual interviews

07 Policy Implications

Settlement organizations could strengthen civic orientation through workshops and accessible materials on voting, political institutions, civic rights, and opportunities for participation.

08 Takeaway

Conflict-affected immigrants’ political journey into Canada is a dynamic process shaped both by past experiences and current realities. There is no uniform way in which experiences of conflict impact political integration.

