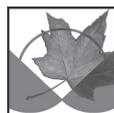


Expanding the Vision

Why Nova Scotia Should Look Beyond
Econocentric Immigration Policy

Alexandra Dobrowolsky and Howard Ramos





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Expanding the Vision

Why Nova Scotia Should Look Beyond Econocentric Immigration Policy

Executive Summary

Concern over immigration as a solution to an aging population and weak economy by the Nova Scotia government and the recently released Ivany report creates a potential opening for a different approach to immigration policy in the province.

Nova Scotia's immigration policy to-date has largely fallen into step with other governments (federal and provincial) by banking on the purported benefits of economic migrants and using an econocentric model to inform its policies. This approach is narrow, instrumental and epitomizes short-term thinking. It aims to maximize the economic contributions of immigrants to the province and minimizes the costs associated with attracting them; immigrants are expected to do all the giving, while the province does all the taking.

On one hand, this uni-dimensional economic model has increased the number of immigrants to the province and improved immigrant retention to some extent. It has also expanded temporary migration, by attracting Temporary Foreign Workers and international students, which now rivals permanent immigration streams.

On the other hand, however, econocentric immigration policies can be counterproductive. In Nova Scotia, they put the onus on immigrants to provide economic and demographic fixes and to generate the benefits of diversity. Moreover, these models are associated with moving immigration management to third-party consultants and corporations in place of government (which, in the past, contributed to disgruntled provincial nominees and legal suits against the province) and thus are linked to placing policy decisions into the hands of the private sector. They also have served to undermine gender, class and racial diversity. And perhaps most striking is the fact that although the numbers of immigrants to the province have increased with econocentric policies, the share of immigrants coming to Nova Scotia has not, and retention rates remain among the worst in the country.

For these reasons, this report reviews the Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Program (NSNP), immigration data, and the province's current immigration practices to see what has worked and what can be done to produce policies that are more innovative, and socially just.

Economic considerations are important, but what this report makes clear is that Nova Scotia needs truly creative thinking on immigration policy. Nova Scotia is competing with other provinces and regions around the world for immigrants based on the same econocentric policies, ones that try to attract the most educated, well-off immigrants, who are assumed to require the fewest government services. In order to distinguish itself from the pack, Nova Scotia needs to think beyond the economic to also consider dimensions that give it an advantage and where it is most rich — the social and cultural. Shaping policies with additional dimensions has the potential to create a more balanced approach to immigration, one that will truly make for more winners and fewer losers, for the government, and for all the people of Nova Scotia as well as for those who want to make it their home.

Summary of Recommendations

- **Invest in Immigration:** The province must invest in immigration including to allocate greater resources for the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI) and to settlement services provided by non-profit organizations in the province as well as libraries, schools and other public services that assist with integration.
- **Invest in Data Collection and Information:** The province and federal government need to invest in collecting data on immigrants to

Nova Scotia to generate evidenced based policies and to provide information that can be used by non-profit organizations and academic researchers to understand immigration patterns in the province.

- **Refocus the Nova Scotia Nominee Program:** The province should focus on immigrants who currently are not prioritized under federal immigration programs, and/or immigration categories common to other provinces.
- **Address Accountability, Transparency and Other Shortcomings in Temporary Foreign Workers' Programs:** Nova Scotia has come a long way in responding to Temporary Foreign Worker program shortfalls, but the province must make greater strides to ameliorate vulnerabilities. The province should identify human capital mismatches to better manage this program and offer opportunities to current residents of Nova Scotia.
- **Improve Supports for International Students:** Working with universities, the government must ensure that there are longer-term supports for international students that include but are not limited to the settlement sector, institutions of higher learning, or the private sector.
- **Begin to Re-Dress Gender Imbalances in Immigration:** Nova Scotia must be more attentive to gender imbalances in immigration wherein few principal applicants are women by, for example, seeking gender parity in the Provincial Nominee Program.
- **Facilitate the Immigration of Extended Families:** The province should make it easier for a wider array of family members, including extended relatives, to come and stay in the province thereby making Nova Scotia more of a home for newcomers, and eliminating potential pressures to return to home countries.
- **Broaden the Focus of Source Countries of Immigrants:** The province needs to focus on attracted immigrants beyond those already targeted by the federal government and other provinces encompassing a wider range of Atlantic countries, including South America and Africa. Avoid associating immigrants from particular countries with a limited range of occupations and thus engaging in racialized, ethnic streaming.

- **Establish an Immigrant Advisory Council:** The province should establish a Council that is representative of diverse individuals and groups to oversee research and data collection, as well as education and other initiatives.

Introduction

The October 8, 2013 Nova Scotia provincial election culminated in a clear mandate for a new Liberal government. The Liberals had campaigned on a platform that identified immigration as a key policy concern (Nova Scotia Liberal Party 2014), and endorsed several migration-related initiatives including the establishment of an Immigration Advisory Board and the launch of a revamped entrepreneurial immigration stream as part of Nova Scotia's Provincial Nominee Program (NSNP).

More recently, the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy issued its final report, *Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians*, which is also known as the Ivany report. It calls for a tripling of immigration to the province and concluded that the attraction of immigrant workers, entrepreneurs and students is key to the province's future (Ivany et al., 2014: 48).

The concern over immigration matters by a newly elected government and the Ivany report creates a potential opening for innovative policy thinking around such issues. It has already led to a number of op-eds in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* by a former provincial immigration director (Nurse 2013; 2013b), service providers (Attalah 2013), pundits (Hines 2013), the business community (Lynch 2013) and academics (Whalen and Davis 2014). The province's immigration strategy has also been the focus of national attention by think tanks and migrant advocacy groups (Seidle 2013; CCR 2013).

The time is thus ripe to reflect on the past opportunities and constraints of immigration in this province, and to inform the present and future policy agenda by providing concrete suggestions that help to pave a more promising and equitable road forward.

As the following report illustrates, a creative approach to immigration has not been the norm for Nova Scotia. Rather, the province has largely fallen into step with other governments (federal and provincial) by banking on the purported benefits of economic migrants. Such uni-dimensional economic calculations can be counterproductive, particularly for a province like Nova Scotia, whose socio-economic health is less than robust. Put

differently, why would highly mobile, migrant entrepreneurs and investors want to come, and stay, in what remains, relatively speaking, a sparsely populated province, with few immigrants and one that is, at best, economically marginal, and, at worst, economically vulnerable?

What is more, this narrow economic focus has come at the cost of a more diversified and socially balanced take on immigration policy, one that recognizes both the economic and social needs of newcomers. The latter, we argue, demands creative policy and is where real and lasting inroads can be made with respect to attraction and retention. And so, in this report, we show why Nova Scotia should look beyond an economically blinkered immigration plan, and instead expand its vision with an innovative and more balanced immigration strategy that will benefit new immigrants and Nova Scotia as whole.

Nova Scotia’s Response to an Increased Provincial Role in Immigration

Canada’s three largest cities (Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver) attract the overwhelming majority of immigrants to Canada (Krahn, Derwing and Abu-Laban 2003: 1). To offset this trend, provinces (and later territories) began to lobby for more control over immigration through provincial nominee program (PNP) initiatives. This opportunity was pursued by Atlantic Canada, which historically has attracted few immigrants (Desjardins 2010: 295–96). Nova Scotia’s shortfalls with respect to immigration appeared especially acute and ironic given that it is home to Pier 21, through which about a quarter of Canadians can trace their migration to the country.

To elaborate, while Canada’s constitution specifies that immigration is a shared responsibility of the federal and provincial governments, historically, the national government has occupied this field. Since the mid to late 1990’s, however, this longstanding pattern dramatically changed, as PNPs (and, subsequently provincial and territorial nominee programs PTNPs), altered Canada’s immigration landscape by giving the provinces a much larger role in immigrant attraction and settlement.

Provinces (and now territories) “nominate” applicants who are then approved, federally, by the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). PTNPs thus shift a portion of the immigration selection scope to provinces. Granted, some provinces and territories had previously developed immigration agreements with the federal government, but PTNPs

are distinct in that they give provincial and territorial governments a significant and “formal role in the selection of immigrants” (Carter et al 2010:6).

PNPs are, first and foremost, an economic pathway for migrants and have contributed to a narrowing of the types of immigrants attracted outside of Canada’s largest cities. While PNP categories across provinces range in type and number, the bottom line is that PNPs seek out immigrants who have the skills, education, work experience “to make an immediate economic contribution to the province or territory that nominates them” (CIC 2013). It is for this reason that CIC classifies these migrants under the economic stream. PNP applications, moreover, are given “priority among applications for the Economic Class” (Seidle 2013:5).

PNPs give provinces a say in what kind of immigrants they need, a decision that is specifically tailored to the context and particular demands of each province. And so, the PNP was identified as a promising means to address Nova Scotia’s all too familiar socio-economic shortfalls: a population that fluctuates from low to no-growth; out-migration from rural areas within the province and out of the province altogether; an aging population; and an ongoing need for economic inspiration, diversification and expansion.

In response, the 2002 *Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement on Provincial Nominees* established a five-year pilot project with the aim of nominating 1,000 foreign nationals, and the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) was born with three designated streams: Skilled workers, Community identified individuals, and Economic nominees. Two additional categories were added in 2006 and 2007; one for family business workers and one for international students, respectively. The program was adjusted again in August 2009 as an answer to immigrants’ lobbying for more and better family reunification prospects (CBA, 2010). This led to the introduction of a Non-Dependent Children of Nova Scotia Nominees stream aiming “to attract non-dependent children of previous nominees, to help the province fulfill its demographic and labour market needs” (CIC 2009). Then, the next year (2010), an agricultural category was introduced.

By 2013, the agricultural, international student, and non-dependent children streams were all closed down, followed by the community identified stream which was subsequently replaced by the Regional Labour Market Demand Stream in March of 2014. As a result, as summarized in *Table 1*, Nova Scotia has reverted to only three functioning streams. The contraction of streams and the province’s current focus (on attracting skilled workers, family business workers, and filling regional labour market demands) epitomize the fact that, like federal immigration policies over the last dec-

TABLE 1 Nova Scotia Nominee Program (2014)

Skilled Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• requires a guaranteed, full-time, permanent job offer from a NS employer• applicant must have English fluency and a minimum of a Canadian grade 12 or equivalent years of education• employer must offer standard wages and working conditions for the work in question, and must have “exhausted all other options for finding workers” (Seidle 2013: 16)
Regional Labour Market Demand Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• applicant serves labour market needs by pursuing a regionally in demand occupation• applicant must have English fluency and a minimum of Canadian grade 12 equivalent years of education and/or training from a recognized institution as well as two years work experience in a field of work related to the intended occupation in Nova Scotia• applicant does not require a job-offer at the time of application, but must intend to pursue an occupation that is regionally in demand• applicant must demonstrate potential to become economically and permanently established in Nova Scotia• applicant must complete an Employment and Settlement Plan outlining “potential economic, labour market and social contributions to the community.” (NSOI 2014: 4).
Family Business Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• applicant must also have a permanent job offer, but, in this case, from a close relative who has a business in Nova Scotia• applicant require the skills, and qualifications, for the job in question• applicant must meet language standards and have a minimum of 12 years of education and/or training from a recognized institution or authority• applicant must demonstrate serious intention to settle and stay in Nova Scotia

ade, the NSNP has increasingly narrowed what was already a highly economically circumscribed approach.

While Nova Scotia has concentrated on its PNP, it has simultaneously also begun to rely more heavily on Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and international students as sources of labour and contributors to the economy. Both groups have received far less attention than PNPs, but like PNPs, the stated purpose of each is to increase the economic performance of the province and to offset stark demographic trends of an aging population and high levels of outmigration.

When most Canadians think of temporary foreign workers they likely think of agricultural workers or live-in care-givers, two traditional areas of employment for these migrants. Increasingly, however, TFWs work across a wide range of the Canadian labour market entering almost every job sector. The growth of the program has been especially noticeable in the “accommodations and food services” sector where there has been a 926 per cent increase in migrants between 2006 and 2014 (Curry 2014). Like other workers in Canada, TFWs are subject to income tax rules, pay employment insurance premiums, and pay into the Canada Pension Plan.

Unlike other workers, however, TFWs typically fail to receive the benefits of these programs because they do not stay in Canada long enough to draw upon them. In addition, while their work is covered by provincial labour codes, unlike permanent residents, TFWs are: “vulnerable to exploitation and abuse from their employers because of their temporary status, work permit restrictions, language barriers and isolation. There is no federal regulatory system in place to monitor and enforce the terms of programs and the obligations of employers. Provinces differ greatly with respect to measures taken to protect foreign workers” (Pang 2013: 7). Because of this, federal policy under the Conservative government on this program has been very fluid with many shifts and fast-patch solutions to problems spotted by academics, journalists and the public. Most recently the federal government has suspended applications for TFWs in the “accommodation and service” sector (Curry 2014). Generally, TFWs come through employer driven motivations and this has contributed to an increased role of third party consultants and the private sector in immigration policy.

To Nova Scotia’s credit, after consulting widely, the government passed a *Worker Recruitment and Protection Act* in May 2013 (see <http://novascotiainmigration.com/new-rules-for-recruiters-of-foreign-workers/>), to prohibit employers from eliminating and reducing TFWs wages, benefits, and terms or conditions of employment, as well as to implement a licensing system for recruiters of temporary migrants and a registration regime for their employers.

Like other provinces, Nova Scotia is also increasing the number of international students attending its universities. These students pay higher tuition fees which are not subject to fee caps and universities see these students as a counterbalance to an aging population and declining domestic enrollments as well as repeated funding cuts from both the federal and provincial governments. As a result, international students have become key resources in sustaining the province’s numerous postsecondary institutions. Some institutions, like Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, are now among the leaders across the country in the recruitment of international students, in that they now comprise almost 30 percent of the student body at that university (Dodds 2013).

What all these programs have in common, from the PNP streams to the rise of TFWs and international students, is that Nova Scotia, along with other provinces across Canada and the federal government, see immigrants and migrants as primarily homo-economicus (Weinfeld 2009).

In the following sections we look at recent immigration trends in Nova Scotia to examine the degree to which this is true and then question the costs of generating “econocentric” provincial immigration policies that are characterized by a narrow, instrumental, short-term approach focused solely on the economic benefits of attracting immigrants to the province. Alternatively, we call for a more creative, and multi-faceted understanding of immigration, one that not only valorizes the broader range of contributions immigrants bring to the province, but one that also moves beyond the current relational imbalance wherein (im)migrants are expected to do all the giving, while the province does all the taking.

Recent Trends in Nova Scotian Immigration

In recent years, Atlantic Canada has experienced substantial changes to its immigration flows, and Nova Scotia has been no exception. In fact, the province has seen about a 51 percent increase in the total number of immigrants between 2002 and 2011. Much of that increase can be directly related to the creation of the NSNP. Provincial nominees now account for approximately 40 per cent of immigrants coming to Nova Scotia (CIC 2011).

As *Table 2* shows, moreover, provincial nominees accounted for over half of the economic immigrants coming to Nova Scotia in 2011, up from just six percent in 2004 when CIC began tracking them as a category. As a whole, economic immigrants of all categories consisted of 54 percent of immigrants in 2002, just before the adoption of the provinces PNP, and now consist of 66 percent of immigrants to the province.

The rise of the PNP and economic immigrants has come at the cost of family, refugee and other immigrant streams which are all now a less significant proportion of immigrants to the province. The larger point to be made here is that the focus of Nova Scotian immigration policy is narrowing around economic concerns.

This can be seen when the province’s PNPs are examined in more detail, as attested by the figures reported in *Table 3*, using provincial data. The figures below differ from those offered by CIC because the provincial data only include “Principle Applicants” (PAs) and do not encompass the spouses and children that come with them, whereas all are counted together in CIC’s estimates of provincial nominees (PNs). Looking at the province’s data is useful because federal data collapses all PNPs together and does not offer insight on which areas are promoted by the province.

TABLE 2 Nova Scotia, Permanent Residents by Category

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Spouses, partners, and fiancé(e)s	241	298	411	376	401	336	444	393	387	351
Sons and daughters	19	14	10	10	15	23	16	24	19	15
Parents and grandparents	58	56	42	14	45	46	51	38	25	50
Other sub-categories	40	55	55	62	49	31	21	24	18	16
Family class	358	423	518	462	510	436	532	479	449	432
Skilled workers — principal applicants	251	215	280	302	346	329	356	271	309	178
Skilled workers — spouses and dependants	360	384	467	470	446	423	529	458	568	322
Canadian experience class — principal applicants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	19	31
Canadian experience class — spouses and dependants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5	13
Investors	20	51	81	64	42	105	38	67	97	54
Provincial/territorial nominees	0	0	64	326	863	900	866	833	638	779
Other sub-categories	134	84	108	61	77	33	39	43	49	34
Economic immigrants	765	734	1,000	1,223	1,774	1,790	1,828	1,690	1,685	1,411
Government-assisted refugees	189	135	147	146	149	134	155	123	146	194
Privately sponsored refugees	12	29	31	13	22	18	6	20	53	16
Refugees landed in Canada and dependants	23	29	21	43	46	28	32	23	19	15
Refugees	224	193	199	202	217	180	193	166	218	225
Retirees, DROC and PDRCC*	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All H and C cases/Public policy	68	124	54	40	84	113	97	89	56	70
Other sub-categories	0	0	0	2	1	4	1	0	0	0
Other immigrants	72	124	54	42	85	117	98	89	56	70
Category not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,419	1,474	1,771	1,929	2,586	2,523	2,651	2,424	2,408	2,138

Source: CIC custom table based on Facts and Figures

In 2010, skilled workers accounted for almost half of the primary applicants who came as PNPs. The drop in “economic” immigrants reflects the province’s decision to close one of its nominee streams because of mismanagement and controversies that arose from it. As explored in detail in the following section, Nova Scotia was far from alone with respect to problematic “investment” PN streams. Similar problems occurred in all Maritime provinces.

Concomitantly, over the last decade or so, Nova Scotia has increasingly tapped into temporary migration in place of permanent immigration. This dovetails with broader national trends, as temporary migration has spiked across the country and not just in Nova Scotia (Fudge and Macphail 2009;

TABLE 3 Total NSNP Nominees Landed (Principal Applicants Only) by Stream

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Economic	12	77	230	310	160	1	0	0
Skilled Worker	1	12	32	30	105	87	93	13
Community	8	20	32	36	47	100	79	10
International Graduate	-	-	-	-	38	49	53	2
Family Business Worker	-	-	-	-	11	12	6	2
Non Dependent	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0
Total	21	109	294	376	361	249	233	27

Source Nova Scotia Office of Immigration Nova Scotia Nominee Program Evaluation Report

TABLE 4 Nova Scotia, Entries of Temporary Residents by Category

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Foreign Workers	1,616	1,700	1,492	1,699	1,667	2,128	2,797	2,478	2,844	2,325
Foreign Students	2,163	2,010	1,999	2,024	2,167	2,522	2,601	3,353	2,900	3,175

Source CIC Facts and Figure 2012

Nakache 2010; Preibisch 2010). As shown in *Table 4*, the number of new TFWs in this province increased by about 44 percent between 2003 and 2012. At the same time, the number of international students in Nova Scotia increased by about 47 percent.

These figures report new entries and not all temporary residents. If the latter is examined the numbers are almost double for TFWs and triple for students (CIC 2012). This has led Nova Scotia community service providers to point out that much of the increasing diversity found in the province stems not from immigrants coming through more high profile PNPs, but from the growing numbers of temporary residents who have fewer rights and far less access to services (Attalah 2013).

TFWs are often recruited to work in rural areas in Nova Scotia. They are appealing to the province and the business community because of their low cost, quick match of human capital to needs, their extreme “flexibility” (Fudge and McPhail 2009) as well as their presumed, more robust, “work ethic” (Gollom 2014). Most international students, by contrast, can be found in Halifax, which hosts five universities but institutions across the province are increasingly attracting these migrants. For example, Cape Breton Uni-

versity (CBU 2012) boasts that it is now home to 1,000 international students from 25 different countries.

As noted above, both groups of temporary migrants are appealing to governments (federal and provincial) because third parties process these migrants, businesses in the case of TFWs and universities in the case of international students, and this requires less direct government investment into immigration. While in Canada, moreover, both groups pay taxes including payroll taxes, but they generally do not draw on the provincial social welfare systems nor can they access many of the integration programs available to permanent residents. One exception in Nova Scotia is that the province allows both groups to access Medical Services Insurance (MSI) after meeting certain criteria. Generally, however, temporary workers and many international students leave before they cost governments and this constitutes another “plus” in the economically driven migration calculus.

Yet, despite the growth of immigration to Nova Scotia, from a national vantage point, only about one percent of all immigrants to Canada land in this province (CIC 2012). This has continued to be the case even with the introduction of the PNP pathway. The inability to retain immigrants, moreover, is an ongoing concern for Nova Scotia. In the 1990s, almost half of all immigrants left the province (Akbari 2011). Although there have been improvements on this front, it is estimated that between 20 and 37 percent of immigrants still do not stay (Al-Abbasi 2013; Akbari 2011; Nova Scotia Office of Immigration 2011). The wide range in estimates reflects on the poor quality of immigration data on Atlantic Canada. The ever more frequent resort to temporary migrants to fill short term labour needs likewise does not ameliorate this situation.

In sum, even though several immigration initiatives were launched in Nova Scotia since the early 2000s, attraction and retention rates are still the among the lowest in the country. In fact, CIC data shows that Atlantic Canada comes dead last in immigrant retention (CIC 2010). This calls into question the viability of economically driven immigration policies for Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia Policies in Comparison

Most of the trends identified thus far are not unique to Nova Scotia. Over the course of the last decade, all Canadian provinces and territories have developed PTNPs, save Quebec and Nunavut. The same can be said with the turn toward temporary migration and increasingly econocentric poli-

cies. However, various factors — stemming from Nova Scotia’s distinctive socio-economic, political and political cultural context — have resulted in less than satisfactory returns on an array of economic immigrant investments. As a result, it is important to consider the similarities and differences of Nova Scotia’s approach, and its context, vis-à-vis immigration policy experimentation across the country.

Provincial Nominee Program

Although almost all provinces and territories have adopted PTNPs, they vary considerably in their detail with a plethora of different categories and requirements. Some, however, have been considered more successful than others, with the Manitoba and British Columbia nominee programs typically receiving the most favourable reviews.

Like Manitoba, the hope was that PNs could improve Nova Scotia’s demographic ills of out-migration, declining birth rates, an aging population, rural depopulation, and recurring problems with the attraction and retention of newcomers. It is a hope still echoed by the Ivany Commission (Ivany et al. 2014: 47–48) and provincial policy makers.

Nova Scotia public officials looked approvingly at the ‘successes’ of Manitoba’s program but nonetheless developed their own approach, which sought to emphasize investment and entrepreneurial migration through its economic stream. Unfortunately for Nova Scotia its, now defunct, economic stream was met with numerous problems (Dobrowolsky, 2011, 2012). “Economic stream nominees either did not come to the province or left after recouping all or part of their \$100,000 contribution” (Seidle 2013: 16). Many of the problems were linked to outsourcing management of the program in pursuit of economic gain.

The original stream did not adequately consider the needs of immigrants, their settlement process, the recognition of their skills and credentials, and the needs of their families. It also did not invest enough in facilitating transition into the Nova Scotian economy and society, and likely had a negative impact on the province’s attempt to attract and retain immigrants in subsequent years.

Nova Scotia stopped accepting new NSNP economic category applications in 2006. Then, in 2007, and again in 2008, in response to nominees’ advocacy for redress for failed delivery on the terms of migration, the provincial government announced that it would issue economic PNs refunds (Jeffrey 2007: B1). The Nova Scotia’s Office of the Auditor General’s (OAG’s)

released a two-volume report in 2008 containing a detailed critique of the economic stream's irregularities, from extreme occupational mismatch to non-existent placements (OAG, 2008a, 2008b). A year later, the first legal dispute by nominees was settled, and a class action suit was resolved in autumn 2011 (Canadian Press 2011; Nova Scotia 2011).

Nova Scotia is not an isolated case, as PNP scandals have come to light across the region. Allegations of mismanagement and corruption can also be found in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. An Auditor General's report in New Brunswick found that the PNP in that province failed because immigrants would pay a processing fee, with the promise of starting a business, and then relocate to other regions once landing in Canada (CBC 2011). Before Prince Edward Island was forced to shut its PN investor stream, "more than \$500-million had flowed into local businesses, immigration consultants, lawyers and government coffers, the province's auditor-general later found, a huge sum in a province whose annual operating budget is \$1.5-billion" (McMahan 2011).

These examples underscore the common motivation among the Maritime provinces' PNPs to attract investment and resources from immigrants. They also illustrate public officials' very narrow and instrumental approach to immigration, not to mention the private sector's efforts at profiteering. It is an econocentric approach seen in many provinces (see Ley 2010 for analysis in BC), and one that has backfired in the Maritimes.

Temporary Foreign Workers

When it comes to other forms of migration, Nova Scotia once more falls in line with country-wide patterns. The steep increase in the resort to temporary migrants is a case in point. However, it must be acknowledged that Nova Scotia has been more proactive than other provinces in Atlantic Canada, as well as Ontario and Quebec. As noted above, Nova Scotia passed a *Worker Recruitment and Protection Act* which brought in licensing for recruiters of temporary migrants and a registration regime for employers of TFWs. British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba, like Nova Scotia, have all taken steps to improve TFW policies, and the federal government also brought in new regulations in 2013 in response to a broad outcry of Canadians against the program.

Nevertheless, along with its recognition that Nova Scotia had taken considerable action on this front, the Canadian Council for Refugees (through its report card exercise evaluating provinces' TFW policies), also empha-

sized that significant gaps remain (CCR 2013). The fact that many of the TFWs coming to the province work in rural areas, means that many suffer from isolation (CCR 2013).

Beyond filling the gaps created by an aging population and local Nova Scotians leaving for better job prospects in other provinces, a widening range of employers are opting for “easy access” to workers in all sectors of the economy. In Nova Scotia, between January 2009 and April 2012, 1,029 employers applied for permission to use foreign workers in almost all job sectors such as restaurants, day cares, long-term care facilities, and even in large companies like Nova Scotia Power (CBC 2013).

The process of determining the need to bring TFWs is complex, involving different government agencies. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) offers a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) that determines if a labour gap exists. CIC offers visas to come to Canada. Provinces govern labour code standards. Unfortunately, there is little coordination among these agencies and levels of government and oversight has largely been lacking leading many to question whether requests for TFWs are “being approved too easily” (CBC 2014).

The increase of TFWs is a common trend in many provinces, and one that is, sadly, linked with exploitation of migrants. Across Canada, examples of TFW abuse include: “poor housing conditions, poor working conditions, long hours without overtime, withholding pay, and a failure to abide by the terms of an employment contract. If a worker faces a grievance with his or her employer, the employee must decide to either formulate a complaint or remain quiet. Holding a temporary visa may in itself influence workers’ perceptions of rights and entitlements” (Pang 2013: 7). As a result, some workers have even said that they feel as if they are treated like “slaves” (Tomlinson 2014).

In Atlantic Canada, such abuses have also occurred. Take for instance recent reports about TFWs in Labrador complaining of poor living conditions provided by their employer sparking a Canadian Border Services Agency raid on the business (CBC 2014). A worker at a nursing home in the province paid exorbitant fees to a recruiter to land a job here, then rented a shared room from an associate of the recruiter and paid 50 cents for every hour she worked to her local “hostess” to cover transportation to her job (Beaumont 2011). Such practices should now be eliminated because of the new standards and regulations currently in place in Nova Scotia. However, other provinces with similar regulations continue to see TFWs abused.

Most recently TFWs working at Tim Horton's British Columbia complained that the owner of a franchise that employed them asked them to pay back overtime earned as well as pay for processing fees for their work permit even though it is not the responsibility of the migrants (Edwards 2013). Workers at a McDonald's in Alberta had similar complaints as well as being asked to overpay for accommodations owned by the employer and not being given opportunities to work the hours they were promised (Tomlinson 2014). These are but a few stories, among many others, that have come to light across the country.

A troubling pattern that is associated with the rise of TFWs is the potential that their increased use in the labour market has come at the cost of native-born Canadians and immigrants that have adopted Canada as their home. A recent C D Howe report showed that the rise of TFWs is associated with increasing rates of unemployment, especially for those with lower levels of skill (Gross 2014). It has sparked debate over the need to attract TFWs and has potentially triggered dangerous xenophobic undertones and anti-immigrant sentiment.

International Students

Like other provinces, Nova Scotia is also increasing the number of international students attending its universities. These students pay higher tuition fees, which are not subject to caps, and are required to pay for private health insurance before gaining a visa. They can only access MSI after a residency period. Universities see these students as a solution to an aging population and declining domestic enrollments as well as repeated provincial cuts to the funding of universities.

International students have begun to mobilize for fairer tuitions and better services. At Dalhousie University, for example, international students recently mobilized against a proposed three per cent hike in the differential fees they pay, which would come on top of a proposed three per cent increase of general tuition for all students. International students were outraged because they already pay almost double the fees of domestic students. Ishika Sharma, Dalhousie Student Union's international student representative said the protesters wanted to "let the university know that we want to break out of this image, that we are not cash cows" (Willick 2014).

Common to each of these forms of immigration and migration are policies that ask immigrants and migrants to invest in the province with little cost or return by the province back to them. In many respects the econom-

ic-focused policies driving immigration in Nova Scotia, and Canada more broadly, are one-sided favouring the province and country without seeing that immigration is a mutual responsibility of give and take. Not just take. As a result, econocentric policies fail to see immigration as a long term commitment to the kind of nation and society building advocated by the recent Ivany Report.

Obstacles to an Economic-Focused Immigration Strategy

One sided and economic-focused immigration policies fail to recognize the untold anguish of immigrants that migrate to Nova Scotia. Before migrating, both the federal government and the provinces sell Canada's diversity (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002), its economic opportunities, and a better life. Much of that, however, is heavily dependent on whether immigrants and temporary migrants are able to generate it themselves.

In many instances, immigration to the province to rural communities and even Halifax means that the immigrant is the one that is creating diversity. The recent National Household Survey shows that about five percent of people in the province are immigrants and roughly five percent of the province is visible minority (Statistics Canada 2011). The province is less ethnically and racially diverse than the large multicultural cities promoted by immigration recruitment material. Immigrants to Nova Scotia, time and time again, remark on how difficult it is to break into social networks and the province's "down home" mentality (Grant and Kronstal 2013). The Ivany commission, moreover, cites studies that found Nova Scotians to be more welcoming to newcomers from other provinces, than to immigrants, and that many Nova Scotians, especially in rural areas, fear that immigrants will take way jobs (2014: 25–26). The commission concludes that more should be done to show the role that immigrants play in creating businesses and jobs.

Yet, with respect to economic opportunities, in 2012 the province's GDP contracted and the overall economy has remained weak since then (Nova Scotia Finance 2013). Unemployment sits at about 9 percent (Nova Scotia Finance 2014) and is worse in rural communities. In many job sectors there is oligopolization, if not outright monopoly, which makes starting a new business difficult for newcomers to the province. Because of poor economic conditions, outmigration of native born bluenosers has become a chronic problem, and immigration is seen as a potential fix.

The foregoing all played into the plight of Nova Scotia's economic PNPs who paid a high cost for a short-lived immigration policy experiment. The province demanded immigrant labour and money, and ultimately offered little for the nominees in return. As a result, this policy failed not only financially for the province, in legal fees and nominee compensation, but also economically, socially and psychologically for nominees and their families. It is precisely the inattention to the hard cold realities faced by immigrants to this province, both economic and cultural, that helps to explain why many do not stay.

To change this, the province will have to do more than merely ask for immigrants to come, to create jobs, and to save the economy. It will also mean that it will have to invest in them too.

Nova Scotia has a fledgling bureaucratic infrastructure for handling immigration matters, one that neither has been systematically developed, nor substantially supported. For example, since the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration was only established in 2005, the economic stream of the NSNP was managed by an office whose main mandate was economic development. Moreover, when it came to funding, the provincial government stressed the program would result in "no extra cost to the tax payers of the province" (Flynn and Bauder 2013: 10). Another stark contrast came with the fact that the Office of Economic Development assigned only three staff to handle the economic stream, as compared to the 75 personnel devoted to the Manitoba PNP at the time (Jackson 2003: A15). The latter is a similarly sized province that recognizes that it cannot outsource the management of its PNP. Instead it offers significant investment in research on immigration, policy development, and data collection.

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration thus finds itself stretched in terms of its personnel and constrained in terms of the services it can offer. Consider here that Catherine Blewett heads the Office of Immigration, but must share these responsibilities in conjunction with her duties as Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Affairs (NationTalk 2014).

In short, the combined weak institutional framework and lack of personnel and resources go a long way in explaining not only why the economic stream was a failed experiment, but also gives us more understanding of other short-sighted and economically circumscribed approaches to immigration in this province.

With respect to the policies pursued thus far, immigrants have been seen as the answer to various demographic and economic shortfalls. However, not just any immigrant will do. For example, with PNPs, the "ideal" im-

migrant must meet the conditions of being “entrepreneurial” or “skilled”, s/he must have financial means, and/or be highly educated or qualified. What is more, policy makers increasingly consider “ideal” migrants to be those that give to the province and country, but do not take anything in return (Barber 2008). The NSNP’s newly established Regional Labour Market Demand stream’s requirement of completing an “Employment and Settlement Plan” that elaborates on an applicant’s “potential economic, labour market and social contributions to the community” (NSOI 2014: 4), provides a case in point.

The same notion of “ideal,” which is defined by econocentric consideration, is also found in the discussion of TFWs. The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration “fact sheet” on temporary migrants makes a point of highlighting “a large number of workers are highly skilled in managerial, professional and technical professions” that 43 per cent of TFWs to the province come to work in “higher skilled occupations” and are not the stereotypical labourers associated with the agricultural sector (NSOI 2013b). Until very recently, less attention was paid to the fact that many TFWs come to work in the low paid service sector. This view toward TFWs ignores personal, social and political consequences for migrants. While some sacrifices are all too apparent, such as parents having to leave their children and families behind to work as “flexible” labour, others are less so. For instance, many TFWs that come are from middle-class and well educated backgrounds who deskill in order to qualify as TFWs (Barber 2008). And so, as with permanent residents who come with credentials that are not recognized and face underemployment, this means that when TFWs work in Canada there is lost human capital both in Canada and in their home countries and this ultimately perpetuates inequities for the migrants and host countries.

The economic-focused approach to immigration and attempt to attract the “ideal” immigrant also affects the recruitment of international students. They are seen as a solution to dwindling enrolments across the province because of an aging native born population. There is even evidence to suggest that there is indeed a short term economic gain for universities because of them (Siddiq et al. 2010). The long term benefits are less clear. With various “Experience” streams, existing and proposed, the assumption is that international students should be able to transition seamlessly into the Nova Scotian labour market and later permanent immigration. Evidence, however, suggests that this is not the case. The province and universities do little to support these students, particularly considering the higher tuitions they pay and in many cases the linguistic, cultural and social differences

involved (StudentsNS 2013). International students graduating from Nova Scotian universities, moreover, “often struggle to find adequate jobs, despite their high-tech skills and Canadian degree, [with] most leaving the province or taking up employment that does not match their skill sets” (Chira 2011).

Econocentric immigration schemes, unfortunately, also undermine gender and class diversity. Take for instance the fact that NSNP principal applicants tend to be male: in 2005: 85 men compared to 20 women; 2006: 197 men/56 women; and 2007: 201 men/86 women (Dobrowolsky 2011: 126). Fewer women enter “economic” or “entrepreneurial” streams given the simple fact that, around the world, men still make more money and have more resources than women do. In turn, more women enter via “familial” streams, which means that they are more likely to assume more family-related responsibilities and labour disruption.

Patterns of racialization are also a factor. In general, PNP applications mostly come from the Americas (47.7 per cent) and Asia-Pacific (38.1 per cent), with 9.4 per cent of applicants from Europe and only 4.8 per cent from Africa/the Middle East (figures are from 2009, see CIC, 2011: 18). The most recent figures available for Nova Scotia show that the top 10 source countries for PNs, in rank order from one to ten are: the UK, the Philippines, China, Israel, India, the USA, Iran, Germany, Egypt and Korea (NSOI 2013b).

Nova Scotia should take heed of growing evidence that immigrants from particular source countries are being streamed towards specific PNP subcategories. For example, Lewis recounts the cultural imbalances and forms of labour segmentation in the Manitoba context where “employer recruitment (a practice encouraged by the MPNP) focuses on particular ethno cultural groups for particular occupations... Filipina nurses, for example...[are] identified as an educated, skilled and adaptable or ‘desirable’ group... Similarly, Chinese and South Koreans are targeted for the business MPNP” (2010: 256). Of course, these preferences also have gendered ramifications because “Nursing is the most feminised of professions and has long been regarded as being one of the most extreme examples of the influence of gender on occupational choice” (Ball 2004: 119).

Similar patterns, where gender imbalances intersect with ethnicity and race, are found with TFWs. With respect to these migrants, most men who come through this stream work in the professions and tend to be American or European. In contrast, women who come to work as TFWs are mostly found in the caring and service industries, and are disproportionately Filipina and other visible minorities (Ramos 2012).

With international students, questions of gender, race and ethnicity, come to the fore as well. For a start, women are again less well-represented. In 2012, approximately 62 percent of all international students in Nova Scotia were men, and China, Saudi Arabia and India were the top three source countries for these students (NSOI 2013b 4–5).

Consequently, new immigration plans should be drafted with greater awareness of the possible implications in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and class. Take, for instance, one of the province’s latest immigration efforts. The Nova Scotia’s Office of Immigration reported that it not only was working: “closely with partners and the business community to identify and anticipate Nova Scotia’s workforce needs and to address shortages of skilled labour that exist in identified sectors” (NSOI 2013c), but also, that it had targeted UK and Irish markets for a “multi-sector skills and recruitment mission” (NSOI 2013c). This practice appears to parallel efforts at the federal level over the last few years. What is more, it alarmingly evokes Canada’s historic preferences for “white” immigrants from the UK which was a feature of Canada’s pre-1960’s immigration policy, prior to the introduction of its point system (see Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002).

The consultation with business partners provides a stark contrast to the earlier (incoming Liberal government’s) foregrounding of consultations with an Immigrant Advisory Council. The reliance on the business community and lack of broader consultation perpetuates econocentric policies focused on short term goals which fail to see immigrants and migrants through more complex social and cultural dimensions. Considering these dimensions requires a more long term approach and thinking about immigration policy more creatively.

What Would Creative Immigration Policies Look Like?

Since the new provincial government came to office and the Ivany Commission issued its final report, many in the immigration sector have begun to lobby around the perceived opportunities opened by Stephen McNeil’s identification of immigration as a policy concern.

In two Halifax *Chronicle Herald* op eds, for instance, the former Director of Nova Scotia’s Office of Immigration, David Nurse (2013a) challenged the Premier to “think big about how immigration can support the government’s broader economic development priorities”.

Nurse encouraged the Liberals to make good on their promise to expand the Nova Scotia Nominee Program to include an entrepreneur stream. He also singled out international students as a “key pool of potential immigrants”, criticizing the federal government’s changes to the Canadian Experience category, and concluding that the province should create its own, Nova Scotian, Experience stream. These, like many of the recommendations offered to the new government and the Ivany commission, replicate the troubled econocentric policies that have characterized the last decade. They do not reflect the creative thinking that immigration matters deserve.

As this report makes manifest, Nova Scotia is not unique in striving to become a magnet for the “best and brightest” and reap the economic rewards. Governments across Canada and industrialized countries around the world, all now compete for these “ideal” migrants. Yet, despite some improvement, Nova Scotia still finds itself at the back of the pack given its less than stellar attraction and retention record (Ivany et al. 2014: 26). Nova Scotia is not well placed to compete on the same economic plane with other Canadian immigration hot spots like Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, or with provinces that have made much greater inroads with their nominee programs (such as Manitoba), let alone other global competitors. Why persist in simply chasing immigrant high-flyers, those who are most apt to fly away especially when they find themselves in a region with a patchy economic record?

Nova Scotia’s future immigration policy initiatives cannot pivot only on monetary profiteering. For example, immigrants possess countless non-monetary assets. As professors, we can attest to the benefits of having the knowledge, experience, creativity and ingenuity of diverse students from around the world in our classrooms. And it is exactly these kinds of non-monetary assets, when extended to the broader population, which make the province a more deeply “rich” and vibrant place.

At the same time, however, Nova Scotia immigration policy must factor in not only the benefits, but also the likely costs, both economic and social, immigrants will undoubtedly incur. These include probable outcomes such as economic migrants’ lack of credential recognition, downward class-mobility and de-skilling, along with multiple familial stresses and strains that come with migration, even in the best of circumstances.

Immigrants to this province face a society that is, at best, superficially welcoming. While Nova Scotia has many fine features, there is a side that is not as pretty. As the title of a recent article in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* attests: “Bluenose hospitality” can mask a “coolness toward Come-From-Ways” (Hines 2013). It points out that: “Too many Nova Scotians fear the

change that comes with new immigrants” (Hines 2013: 2). Indeed, a survey conducted by Corporate Research Associates after the release of the Ivany report indicated that there is only lukewarm support of the Report’s recommendation of increasing immigration levels to the province (CRA 2014). On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing “not at all important” and 10 representing “critically important”, those polled on average felt immigration was only 5 – illustrating ambiguous support at best.

This reticence is not only confined to the less populated areas in the province. As Sherwood Hines mused in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, Hali-gonians “aren’t keen on immigrants” (2013:1) and the problem with retention is “not just that they are heading off to points...[with] bigger and better economic opportunities” but that immigrants face both implicit and explicit racism. He added, “The young Korean couple who opened a new coffee shop down the street from me told me that most of the Koreans who have come to Halifax over the past five years become so frustrated with the racism they encountered that they have left” (ibid).

The prevailing econocentric approach to immigration policy fails to grapple with the province’s complex economic, social and cultural realities and needs to incorporate other dimensions of life whereby the economic is more attuned with the social.

Nova Scotia’s immigration vision deserves creative thinking. Why not truly diversify immigration by supporting a broader range immigrant streams that will attract a wider array of newcomers? Why not focus more on improving services that could serve as a unique, distinguishing feature of migration to this province? Why not create innovative policies that will attract immigrants that other communities ignore because of the predominance of econocentric focused policies? To do so would consider underlying patterns currently missed by policy makers.

The province, for instance, can make a point of factoring-in gender and the underlying costs of largely attracting men as the “ideal” immigrant. Innovative immigration policy recognize that men *and* women could be attracted to the province if there are supports for families, child care, and better access to educational and social programs.

Programs that facilitate more expansive familial immigration that include parents and grandparents, moreover, are worth considering. Counter to econocentric analysis that sees parents and grandparents as too costly, (Collacott 2013) these migrants are younger than one might expect and enter the paid labour force in high numbers (VanderPlaat et al. 2012). They also offer multiple, un-monetized but nonetheless invaluable, benefits to young-

er immigrant family members such as alleviating the stresses and strains of caregiving, providing a trusted network of support by having more extensive family networks in closer proximity, and, helping to create more of a sense of connection and belonging to Nova Scotia. In fact, one of the factors linked to outmigration from Atlantic Canada was family (Ramos and Yoshida 2011). By tapping into these migrants, Nova Scotia could offset its poor economic offerings with social and cultural benefits as incentives to stay.

Additionally, instead of competing for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) workers and upper-middle class migrants, sought after by almost every other country and province, why not try to attract immigrants from a wider range of economic backgrounds who will see the move to Nova Scotia as an opportunity to not only start a business or work for a company but a place to build a new and better life? Research repeatedly shows that the immigrants most likely to leave a region after migrating are those with the most economic and human capital. If that is the case, and the province struggles to compete on this front, why disproportionately focus policy on the immigrants least likely to stay? Why not also diversify the immigration portfolio to include a broader range of immigrants to Nova Scotia, from family to refugee streams, and invest in the long term?

Last, if diversifying the pool of potential immigrants becomes a goal why not consider attracting immigrants from a wider range of Atlantic countries. This means opening immigration to those from Europe but also those from Latin America and Africa. Brazil is now an economic juggernaut, and the fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. Currently Canada does little to attract immigrants from these regions, instead focusing on Asia. If Nova Scotia shifted its attention to these regions it would face less competition from other provinces and at the same time would build social and cultural inroads to the emerging economies of the world. When Nova Scotia thrived, it did so because it tapped into networks spanning the Atlantic.

Thinking creatively about immigration and incorporating other dimensions of life does not mean doing away with economic considerations altogether. Each of the alternatives we propose also brings economic rewards. Thinking creatively, however, calls for balancing the economic with the social and cultural.

Instead of thinking “big,” let’s think creatively. Let’s invest in people and not just businesses. For example, expand settlement services, invest in language training and credential recognition, promote liaison with among settlement organizations and the private sector to facilitate employment, and assist immigrants in bring their families to the province. This will truly

make for more winners and less losers, for the government, and for all the people of Nova Scotia.

Policy Recommendations

The foregoing report calls for substantial re-visioning of immigration priorities in Nova Scotia, and, in turn, is intended to spur deeper and wider immigration program development. Clearly, balancing economic concerns with social needs is not a short term project; rather, it necessitates making several long term commitments and investments. Nonetheless, the following list of recommendations offers several concrete suggestions that aim to bridge the gap from “here to there” on the long road to a more equitable and sustainable environment for immigrants to this province.

If immigration is truly a solution to a problem in Nova Scotia, then the province must invest in immigration.

- The provincial government should hire more staff and allocate greater resources for the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI).
- These resources should be used to provide potential immigrants with realistic information on opportunities and constraints around employment, cultural integration, and developing social networks.
- The NSOI should generate comprehensive and accessible data and evaluative mechanisms that can be used by settlement organizations, academic researchers, and potential immigrants.
- Like Manitoba, the province can request an oversampling of surveys dealing with immigration and rural issues to allow for meaningful analysis.
- The province should invest in creating formal liaison mechanisms with settlement organizations, potential employers, and universities to facilitate greater integration into the Nova Scotian labour market.
- The province should invest in promoting the value and importance of immigrants to Nova Scotia, particularly in rural areas where support for immigration is mixed and most needed.

Refocus the NSNP to include immigrants who currently are not prioritized under federal immigration programs, and/or immigration categories common to other provinces.

- Instead of competing for immigrants that are already set to immigrate to Canada and other provinces, NSOI should identify immigrants that are currently missed in the system. This will offer Nova Scotia a competitive advantage in the recruitment and retention of immigrants.
- A key mechanism to do this is to create a NS Experience stream that serves to transition temporary migrants, such as temporary foreign workers and international students, into permanent residents.
- The province could do this by investing in follow up mechanisms geared towards encouraging TFWs and international students to apply to become permanent residents.

Regarding TFWs: NS has come a long way in responding to TFW program shortfalls, but the province must make greater strides.

- The province should invest in tracking human capital mismatches for TFWs, and offer opportunities to current residents of Nova Scotia.
- Ameliorating vulnerabilities that come with issues such as isolation, and a minimally monitored private sector, are essential to transitioning these migrants into permanent residents.
- The province could work more closely to coordinate with ESDC and CIC to track employers applying for TFWs and tracking their treatment of workers after arrival.
- The province could advocate to CIC to provide work permits to family members of TFWs.
- Nova Scotia can do a better job of promoting how TFWs help bolster rural economies and societies.

Regarding international students: ensure that there are longer-term supports that include but are not limited to the settlement sector, institutions of higher learning, or the private sector.

- Provide additional funding to post-secondary education to offer better opportunities for all students, but to also lower international stu-

dent fee differentials and to assist in transitioning international students to immigration streams.

- Promote cross-sectoral cooperation for both job searches and social networking.
- Ensure immediate access to MSI for international students over the current practice of requiring a residency period.
- The province could advocate to CIC to provide work permits to family members of international students.

Be more attentive to gender imbalances in immigration.

- Reverse the trend of low numbers of women as principal applicants, and create immigration streams that are not solely based on capital/human capital contributions.
- This can be done through consciously tracking the proportion of female principal applicants and seeking gender parity in the NSNP.
- Gender balances can also be promoted by seeking to attract immigrant families rather than individuals.

Recognize that extended families are anchors and generators of chains of migration.

- Make it easier for a wider array of family members, including extended relatives, to come and stay in the province thereby making Nova Scotia more of a home for newcomers, and eliminating potential pressures to return to home countries.
- Attracting families, both immediate and extended, creates an incentive to immigrate to Nova Scotia because it offers opportunities not currently available through federal immigration streams and other provinces.
- Promoting the migration and reunification of TFWs and international students' families and not just those of permanent residents, PNs, or refugees.

Broaden the focus of source countries of immigrants, beyond those that are already targeted by the federal government and other provinces.

- Include a wider range of Atlantic countries as source countries, including South America and Africa. This will avoid competition with the federal government and provinces for immigrants and can potentially widen the province's social, cultural and economic networks to emerging economies of the 21st century.
- Avoid associating immigrants from particular countries with a limited range of occupations and thus engaging in racialized, ethnic streaming.

Act on Premier McNeil's election promise of establishing an Immigrant Advisory Council.

- Create an Immigrant Advisory Council that is representative of diverse individuals and groups including: immigrants (new and longstanding) and their associations; settlement service providers; universities; academic researchers; representatives from the business community and recruitment agencies; along with public officials from various government levels, including municipal and city officials.
- The council should be tasked with keeping track of immigration related issues, promoting research on them, and collecting data on the successes and failures of immigration practices in Nova Scotia.
- The council can also be tasked with promoting immigration and offering a more robust translation of the importance of immigration in renewing Nova Scotia – a key recommendation of the Ivany Report.

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