

# Migration Nation Advantages: Lessons from Canada and Around the World

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**PATHWAYS TO  
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Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

# **Migration Nation Advantages: Lessons from Canada and Around the World**

Report submitted to the Pathways to Prosperity Project

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Recent events such as the European refugee crisis, Brexit, and the 2016 US election, and COVID-19 global pandemic have drawn intense debates over immigration and refugee policies worldwide. While the executive order signed by U.S. President Donald Trump suspending refugee admissions and blocking citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations (Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen) from entering the country has rightly earned him widespread condemnation from many, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment is on the rise in many parts of the world, and even Canada is not immune, as the recent violence and discriminative behaviors again recent immigrants and visible minorities have sadly shown. However, Canada as a nation remains one of the countries that are most welcoming to immigrants. In the aftermath of Trump's action, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has repeated and reinforced his position welcoming immigrants and refugees to our shores. Canadians from coast to coast are coming to recognize that bringing in newcomers from overseas is not only a just and compassionate response to human need but also is in our own interests, and vital to secure the future prosperity and cultural richness of the nation. Canada's aging population and the low birthrate among those that remain pose significant challenges for the nation's future. Without intervention, employers may find themselves unable to expand due to labour and skill shortages, and the retirement and medical needs of its older people will have to be paid for by a diminishing workforce. The most recent Census data has shown Canada has reached a new record population – we have over 35 million people in 2016, up 5% in just five years according to newly-released census figures in 2011. This is the highest growth rate in the G7 group of nations, and two thirds of the growth was attributable to international migration.

In the last three decades, the world is becoming more interconnected and interdependent than ever. It is a new phase of globalization where tremendous progress has been made to form alliances and cooperation rather than strike out alone as a single entity. Through this interdependence, countries are able to trade rather freely in global markets, build multi-

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national corporations supported by global revenue, and develop projects in emerging countries like China and India and consequently sell their products to the world markets. The free flow of goods and services, as well as financial and human capital was greatly facilitated by the international trade agreements such as NAFTA and WTO. Globalization, therefore, has stimulated much growth in local and global economies. The power of globalization, however, can also pull the world together (for better or for worse) for global issues that ultimately affect many of us regardless of the origin of the issues. This was evident in the 2008 global financial crisis where the fall of the Lehman Brothers almost brought down the entire financial system (Economist, 2013). Years later, the world's economies are still recovering from the fallout of the international financial markets. The Syrian Refugee crisis is becoming the *greatest humanitarian crisis of our time*; a conflict that has been brewing for the past 4 years with over 11.6 million people forced to flee from their homes (UNHCR, 2016). Currently, Canada is one of the few countries leading in accepting Syrian refugees. The Trudeau government accepted 25,000 refugees (November 2015-Feburary 2016) and will continue to accept more (Government of Canada, 2017). In fact, in 2017 Canada will allow 300,000 new immigrants to enter the country which is in stark contrast to Trump's immigration ban of 7 countries (Time, 2017). Only time will tell if Canada will continue to be the last few countries who lead in immigration policies and benefit from them while other countries like Britain and the US scale back immigration and revert to closed borders.

*Migration Nation Advantages* will make a strong case for immigration for a country like Canada and the great benefits immigration can bring to Canadians and to citizens in many other countries in the world. The question is how will countries choose to survive and sustain themselves in our current world of geopolitical risks and uncertainties? How do countries adjust their immigration policies and programs for their best national interests and the socioeconomic benefits of their citizens?

These global issues are just a few of the many the world faces. Other pressing problems such as climate change, poverty, war, global diseases, and depleting natural resources also threaten the security of our future. Another global crisis of a different nature, the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic shook the world with the effects of more than a million dead globally and close to 40 million being infected by the deadly contagious virus, including the US President Donald trump and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Consequently, countries pulled together in a united attempt to stop the virus and save lives (Johns Hopkins University, 2020). The current COVID-19 global pandemic is an ongoing global event that has dramatically reshaped policies, practices, and our ways of life. Countries cross the globe have enforced social distancing polices in an attempt to slow the spread of the highly contagious virus. The resulting economic impacts on businesses have been unprecedented. With the rise of consequential issues pertaining to translating the crisis into the economy, businesses and all levels of governments have respond by drastically changing operations and public policies. Delving into the nature of these impacts, efficacy of the varied business responses and policy changes is paramount to providing better solutions for businesses as well as delivering effective recovery policies and programs in response to the global pandemic.

Although Coronavirus can affect anyone, but statistics have shown that some vulnerable groups, including recent immigrants, visible minorities, and senior citizens especially those with pre-existing medical conditions appear to be affected more than others. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that less than 20 percent of black workers and

roughly 16 percent of Hispanic employees could work from home and remain compensated. About two-thirds of employed Hispanic adults would not get paid if the coronavirus caused them to miss work for two weeks or more. Non-citizen immigrants make up approximately 7 percent of the workforce in the U.S. and 26 percent in Canada. Some of them work in jobs that were deemed essential fighting the virus, and many of them also work in industries that have seen the large layoffs and slowdowns since the outbreak started. According to Current Employment Statistics by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and monthly Labour Force survey by Statistics Canada, accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, administrative and waste services, and retail trade are the industries that experienced the biggest layoffs—on average three in four non-citizen immigrants work such industries had lost jobs. Obviously one-size-fit-all policy instrumentals may not generate the optimal policy effects to all industries, regions, and population groups. Effective policy interventions should be more targeted during and after the unprecedented challenging time to ensure long-term social harmony and economic prosperity for North America.

In light of globalization and the reality of limited and depleting resources, there has been an undercurrent of pushback against our shared, interconnected world. The decision for Brexit rather than against represents the terse conditions of an influx of refugees and immigrants that Britain cannot handle. Therefore, the tightening of the borders was one solution that many Brits voted for. Shortly after, the US followed suit by electing President Trump to lead the country with protected borders and isolation rather than the past policies of open borders and free trade. These policy decisions do not just have financial implications but also serious consequences to the very fabric of society, especially during the time of unprecedented global pandemic. Values such as pluralism and diversity are now being scrutinized and tested. These will be divisive and isolating politics that is heralding a new time where countries are focusing on their own businesses rather than the previous trend of interconnectedness and cooperation to deal with common challenges and crises.

*Migration Nation Advantages* is a timely and contemporary review and analysis of the literature that will explain global immigration policies and programs and its wide ranging effects from a historical, economic, and social perspective. In particular, the report will evaluate the major ingredients of immigration and refugee policies such as number of intakes, types of immigrants accepted, and the process of settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees since the onset of the Canadian “point system” in 1967 and the main goals of immigration such as maximizing national welfare, improving the lives of immigrants, and nation building. This report will further examine migration theories that evolve over time and correspond to settlement and integration programs across major migration countries. The results of this overview will provide the best immigration practices from countries like Canada, Australia, and the US, leading the world in immigration policy. The effects of immigration will be discussed with empirical evidence such as the short-term economic impacts on population and economic growth; and long-term benefits of immigration that affect social, economic, and cultural spheres of society. Some of the important benefits of immigration include the promotion of nation building, innovation and creativity, and multiculturalism.

## **Skilled Immigration: Social, Economic, and Cultural Integration**

Literature on this topic is varied in both the country in which the topic is researched and in the objective of the research. Some studies aim to examine the relationship between the conditions surrounding an immigrant's arrival or workplace and their integration and retention, while other studies examine the relationship between immigrant integration and the overall economy. For the purpose of this review, the section of literature that represents several different countries and studies has been selected.

Studies focused on Canada often highlight the country's difficulty in retaining immigrants. This is contrary to the widely believed notion that immigration process in Canada is relatively smooth; in fact, recent newcomers to Canada face various complex socio-economic barriers that inhibit their successful integration despite their high level of education and skill levels (Kaushik & Walsh, 2018). Relative to similar countries, skilled immigrants face inadequate economic and social outcomes in Canada, which has a demonstrable effect on their integration (Kaushik & Drolet, 2018). This focus on immigrant experiences seen in Canadian studies provides valuable insight to immigrant experiences which can inform policy. By identifying the challenges faced by newcomers in the workplace and in their daily life, policy makers can develop more effective policies and programs to mitigate these challenges and improve the integration and retention of skilled immigrants in the country. These studies converge on a central idea: the need for change in the Canadian immigration system; the need to evaluate current practices and update them to better suit immigrant needs. With Canada's labour force participation rate expected to decrease in the coming years due to an aging population, now is the best time to improve immigrant integration and retention to alleviate the looming labour and skill shortages.

In the United Kingdom, where immigration has risen considerably since 2000, integration is also a major issue. Despite being younger and better educated than UK natives, newcomers to the country have lower probability of gaining employment and higher probability of working in low-skill occupations (Frattini, 2017). These undesirable labour market outcomes are attenuated the longer a landing cohort lives in the country, which may indicate that the more newcomers learn country-specific skills (i.e. language and culture) the longer they stay in the country as suggested by Frattini. It may also factor in, however, that immigrants with poorer economic outcomes may leave soon after their arrival, thus impacting the average outcomes of their cohort that remains in the country. In either case, Frattini explains that policy should aim to prevent an immigrant's inability to advance out of an unskilled occupation, as this depreciates the value of their human capital.

Literature from Singapore, a small open economy like Canada, details the importance of labour market integration for the betterment of the domestic economy. Thangavelu (2017) used mathematical models to evaluate the relationship between inflow of skilled immigrants and effects on the domestic economy. It was concluded that due to skilled immigrants' tendency to bring more research and development (R&D) activities to the economy, they tend to promote growth in the long run. These benefits, however, return at a diminishing rate. The study determined that foreign workers would optimally make up 40% of the Singapore's

workforce with high capital intensity. Singapore is a vastly different country than Canada with differing circumstances and needs, but its economy is similar and heavily relies on immigrant workers. In Canada, just 26% of the labour force was born outside of the country in 2016 (16% in Singapore), but this number is expected to rise in the coming years (Martel, 2019). This indicates that Canada could benefit from an influx of skilled immigrants, as it has not yet reached its point of diminishing returns with regards to its labour mix.

New Zealand is a country where immigration is on the rise. Like Canada and Singapore, New Zealand is a small open economy, meaning they participate in global trade, but their policies do not influence world price. According to data from New Zealand censuses from 2001 to 2018, the percentage of foreign-born residents in the country has risen from roughly 19% in 2001 to over 27% in 2018. Amidst this massive increase in immigration to the country, newcomers are finding their settlement and immigration to be problematic. A research study recently sought to understand the factors at play in the obstacles faced by New Zealand immigrants (Ibqal, 2017). In depth, qualitative interviews with skilled immigrants in New Zealand showed various common barriers faced by newcomers. The most common factor was communication issues; when entering a new country many immigrants lack the language skills necessary to communicate with locals. Interviewees also cited discrimination as a major obstacle, and a lack of local work experience. Skilled immigrants in New Zealand must often begin at an entry-level position despite overseas experiences. Many employers in New Zealand do not hold overseas work experience in the same regard as local work experience; this is a major disadvantage for immigrants to the country. Additionally, without the advantage of a social network to support them and provide work or references, many immigrants become isolated, further inhibiting their social and economic outcomes. Some literature has suggested enclaves as a means of mitigating this isolation, as enclaves provide newcomers with an immediate social network that can help them find work and integrate, but may also create long-term integration problems (lowered language development, lack of exposure to new culture, less access to high-skilled positions).

### **Refugee Settlement and Integration Outcomes by Admission Scheme: Government-Assisted Refugees or GARs, Privately Sponsored Refugees, and Blended Scheme**

Today there are more displaced individuals than ever before (Amnesty International, n.d.). Amid this growing crisis, methods to address the issue have not kept pace with the exasperation of it. Refugees destined for Canada can obtain funding either from the government, private sources, or a mixture of the two. Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) were the norm until 1978, when Canada became the first country in the world to implement a system wherein private citizens could sponsor refugees (Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, n.d.). Since 1978, over 200,000 refugees have arrived in Canada through private sponsorship; in 2013, the number of PSRs (Privately Sponsored Refugees) admitted into Canada exceeded the number of GARs for the first time in decades (Hyndman, Payne & Jimenez, 2017). This program pioneered refugee settlement and influenced many other countries such as the UK and Australia to develop similar programs. How do refugees sponsored privately fare compared to their government-assisted counterparts? Recently, literature published in Canada has investigated the difference between these groups of refugees to determine which stream is more beneficial.

Government-assisted refugees are granted financial support from the government for one year after they land, but the government also provides them settlement support; language training, education, housing assistance, and employment support. This is essential to helping refugees integrate effectively in society, as it allows them a chance to better understand their new home. With private sponsorship, the one year of funding is provided by private citizens or/and organizations. Importantly, privately sponsored refugees receive settlement support from a group or organization of private citizens. It has been suggested that privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) could integrate better than Government-Assisted ones due to the increased human capital a refugee receives through relationships with their sponsors (Hynie et al., 2019).

Beyond a possible integration advantage, private sponsorship offers some other unique benefits compared to government assistance. All PSRs are sponsored in addition to the number of GARs, and the two do not impact each other's numbers. Simply put, it is not currently necessary to choose one method over the other, as an increase in PSRs will not bring down the number of GARs. Ideally, PSRs should not impact the government's refugee quota for this reason. Additionally, PSRs can be specifically chosen, so they are often brought in as part of family reunification. The IRCC found that 62% of PSRs were sponsored by a family member (Hynie et al., 2019).

A study designed to measure the effectiveness of private sponsorship vs government assistance was conducted across six different urban centres in Canada (Hynie et al., 2019). Through snowball sampling, 1,921 Syrian refugees who had arrived between January 2016 and June 2017 were interviewed. It was found that the majority (over 60%) of PSRs reported having established at least one Syrian friend, whereas under 40% of GARs reported the same. Additionally, the majority of PSRs reported having relied on their sponsors a great deal for information and help, while far fewer GARs did the same. Of those interviewed, 11% of the GARs had some form of employment at the time of the interview, compared to 34% of the PSRs; this is in line with the employment of Iraqi PSRs and GARs between 2009 and 2014 (Hyndman, Payne & Jimenez, 2017). Interestingly, GARs reported a slightly higher sense of neighbourhood belonging than PSRs. Finally, GARs are, on average, displaced twice as long as PSRs before emigrating to Canada (Hynie et al., 2019).

One major limitation of the 2019 study performed by Hynie et al was the insufficient number of Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVORs). Introduced in 2013, the BVOR program admits refugees who are funded in part by private sponsors and in part by the government, while private sponsors provide the settlement support (Hynie et al., 2019). Unlike PSRs, BVORs are not chosen by their private sponsor, and they allow the government to fulfil international commitments (Hyndman, Payne & Jimenez, 2017). Given that they cannot be chosen by their private sponsor, it can be assumed that fewer BVORs arrive in Canada for the purpose of family reunification, which may impact their integration outcomes; they do however have the benefit of the settlement support provided by a private sponsor, something shown to improve employment, human capital, and overall integration. They may, however, be selected based on their family situation, as the Canadian Government will prioritize vulnerable refugee families over lone individuals when selecting GARs.

The BVOR program came under criticism when it was announced as refugees admitted through it contribute to the government's international commitments. It was seen as the government "off-loading more resettlement responsibility to private sponsors" (Labman & Pearlman, 2018). Two major benefits of the PSR program are the additionality of it and the chance for the private sponsor to choose the refugee. The BVOR program removes both of these benefits.

Looking at data from refugee cohorts that landed from 1990 to 2007, it is found that GARs have a significantly lower average employment income than PSRs. Government-assisted refugee earnings for these cohorts average out to \$18,452 annually for female GARs and \$26,175 annually for male GARs. Privately sponsored refugee earnings for the same cohorts average out to \$21,015 annually for female SPRs and \$31,228 for male SPRs. Both refugee groups fare far worse than skilled immigrants in terms of employment income, and there is significant difference in earnings between genders (Mata & Pendakur, 2017).

Given the evidence, it seems that PSRs in general fare better than GARs. Not only this, but the influx of PSRs has other benefits to society, such as family reunification and increased refugee resettlement.

### **International Students: Ideal Candidates for Future Residents and Nation-building Exercise**

International students represent the ideal candidates for future residents in Canada. They are likely already proficient in either or both of Canada's native languages, they are familiar with Canadian culture and customs, they have post-secondary credentials from a Canadian institution, and they are typically very young. They meet all the criteria of a perfect immigrant, so why do they face barriers to permanent residence? In 2015, the Canadian Government enacted policies that incidentally hindered international students from becoming permanent residents (Dam et al, 2018). These barriers, in conjunction with other factors, have significantly reduced the number of international students who become permanent residents. Between 2007 and 2016, the number of international students studying in Canada doubled, but the number of new permanent residents who were previously international students has actually decreased (Dam et al, 2018).

This decrease is due in part to the new Express Entry program, under which international students must compete with all other immigration applicants. This program is designed to allow the government to manage immigration applications for all federal programs and is based on a points-based score system called the Comprehensive Rating System (CRS). For international students, however, it means an added layer of competition. Instead of competing with their peers, they are instead forced to compete with all other foreign applicants, meaning far fewer international students achieve permanent resident status than before Express Entry. Dan et al (2018) and Wang (2018) delve further into what can be done policy-wise to attenuate the barriers faced by international students under Express Entry. In 2016, reforms which were designed to help international students become permanent residents were made to the program, but the effectiveness of these reforms has yet to be determined (Wang, 2018).

Integration is a major factor for newcomers; it often affects their economic outcomes, lifestyle, and standard of living. Integration is easier for immigrants who arrive at a younger age for a variety of reasons: new languages become more difficult to pick as one ages beyond 18 years old (Smith, 2018), and younger migrants are more impressionable and also have more time to learn the culture and practices of a new country. International students' experiences are in line with these factors, as found in interviews from Chira (2017), where international students report that their family members who migrated to Canada when they were middle aged. These older migrants are underemployed or have trouble socially integrating into Canadian society, but international students would theoretically not have this problem. From this perspective, international students are a valuable source of newcomers, as they not only face fewer integration challenges due to their youth but are already integrated to some degree after their studies in Canada.

### **Temporary Foreign Workers: Transitioning from Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident**

Temporary foreign workers (TFWs) represent a large and important source of labour for Canada. They allow employers to fill short-term positions which they have been unable to fill with the local workforce. Up until 2016, temporary foreign workers were limited to a four-year work period in Canada and had to wait another four years in their home country before returning to work another four years. This was called the “four in four out” rule and it was abolished in 2016 by the Canadian Government; temporary foreign workers no longer have restrictions on the length of their work term in Canada (Salami et al, 2020). TFWs are given the opportunity to apply for permanent residence in Canada, which often enhances a newcomer's economic outcomes, making it a generally sought-after status.

Most temporary foreign workers who apply for citizenship do so for economic reasons; they feel their labour is better allocated in Canada, or that their economic prospects are more attractive there. There is a general trend upward in average earnings of temporary foreign workers in the years surrounding the attainment of permanent resident status. However, it is not accurate to assume that temporary foreign workers can be considered all in the same group, as there are many different factors that impact economic outcomes. The program they are in, whether they are high-skilled or low-skilled, even their gender impacts their wages, employment rate, and the average trajectory followed by these outcomes (Ci et al, 2018).

One potential issue with the temporary foreign worker program is the power it grants to the employers over their TFWs. The workers' visas and work permits are tied to their employer, which means these workers can be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from their superior. Their future in Canada depends almost entirely on the satisfaction of their employer (Binford, 2019). In one case, a woman reported that her employer underpaid her and her colleagues, contractually obligated them to live in an over-priced apartment which he owned and forced them to compete with one another for a nomination for permanent residence (Tungohan, 2017). This sort of behaviour takes advantage of the vulnerable situation many TFWs find themselves in by using the prospect of permanent residence as a means of keeping a captive workforce quiet about inadequate accommodation or even unsafe workplace conditions.

Simply put, the program relies on the benevolence of the employer. Many employers treat their employees fairly and with the respect they deserve, but the program ultimately leaves room for corruption and abuse. Changes made to the program in 2015 did not address this; in fact, they may have further restricted the rights of workers and opened them up further to exploitation. In 2018 however, the federal government claimed they intended to provide open work permits, which would theoretically help mitigate possible abuse (Salami et al, 2020).

Temporary foreign workers bring many benefits to the labour market: new skills, diversity, and the amelioration of skill shortages. It is therefore important that these benefits are in a way reciprocated with the rights and liberties that are deserving of this workforce. As it stands, temporary foreign workers are in an unfavourable position in terms of job mobility and wage negotiation. TFW interviewees in rural Nova Scotia stated various issues they dealt with, including limited leisure and downtime, as well as restricted sociability. Also noted was their precarious position as TFWs that is “inseparable from national and global economic and political contexts” (Horgan & Liinamaa, 2017).

### **Family Migration: Fulfilling Social and Humanitarian Obligations**

Migration often results in the separation of families for various reasons. Economic migrants may leave their family to pursue a better career or to support them from abroad, while refugees may be unwillingly separated from their family for any number of reasons. This often results in a feeling of emotional isolation (Martin, 2017). As one of the main goals of immigration is humanitarianism, it is only logical that maintaining family units is a priority.

Economically, it is not necessarily advantageous to admit immigrants based on familial relations. A Swedish study found that employment outcomes for refugees and ‘family reunion’ migrants (migrants who come to reunite with their family) were lower than those for labour migrants and natives (Irastorza & Bevelander, 2017). These findings are backed up by a Canadian study which also found that family migrants are among the lowest earners of all migrants (Mata & Pendakur, 2017). If experts know this, then why are such classes of migrants allowed at all? The answer is simple: humanitarian obligations. Studies have found that contact with one’s family is irreplaceable (Martin, 2017), so to deny that contact to newcomers is detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing. Family reunion migration allows migrants to resettle as a family and mitigates the loss of social capital one faces when migrating.

Many immigrants who come from non-English speaking countries were raised with a culture of collectivism. This means they may value the well-being of the community over their own (Wali & Renzaho, 2018). Family and community are the most important things to many immigrants. Back home, this community supports and protects its members. When an immigrant arrives alone in a Western nation, this community is replaced by an individualist society where this sort of behaviour is less common. Another aspect to consider when a migrant is separated from their family is called acculturative stress. It refers to a struggle to adapt to a new and unfamiliar culture, and can often result in “poor psychological, physical, and social well-being” (Wali & Renzaho, 2018). Although the effects vary between different newcomers, it can be mitigated through social capital. This capital may be found in a

community, but it can also be from one's family. An Australian study found that newcomers who arrived with a family member had a better chance of making more friends (Cosgrave et al, 2019).

In countries where family migrants are treated in a separate immigrant class due to humanitarian obligations, border authorities may want to ensure that claims of family ties are true. In Canada, DNA testing can be used as a last resort to validate claims of family relations if no documentation is presented, or if documentation is deemed unsatisfactory. This practice raises questions of ethics and humanitarianism; should the definition of family include only those who are biologically related or related through marriage? Where do dependant children who are not biologically related fit into this system? Many family arrangements are not as straightforward as they seem but are just as valid and important as any other. DNA testing infringes upon these relationships and deems them lesser than biological familial relations. In addition, DNA testing is not 100% accurate and can result in errors that separate families. It may also reveal information that is damaging to families, for instance that a child's father is not biologically related. These ethical issues emphasize the need for change with regards to the practice surrounding the use of DNA testing to validate the familial status of migrants (Joly et al, 2017).

Despite the obvious social and humanitarian benefits of family migration, one must also consider the other perspective. During the Syrian refugee crisis, it was widely reported that single Syrian men were severely restricted from resettling in Canada. This was due to a variety of factors; resettlement officers' time is better used dealing with a refugee case that involves multiple refugees (such as a family) rather than a lone refugee, and single men are not considered as vulnerable as most other refugee subgroups (women, children, families, sexual minorities etc.) (Turner, 2017). These are logical considerations, especially when one is attempting to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources in the face of an overwhelming crisis. However, ethically it must be assessed if there is any way to mitigate the unfortunate position this puts a large portion of the refugee population in. The situation sheds light on the need for evaluation of the resettlement system in Canada.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Skilled Workers Including Newcomers and International Students**

Recruitment and retention are at the heart of the immigration debate; they are the measures by which immigration policy is evaluated, and they determine the effectiveness of immigration in a region. Recruitment is the result of both the efforts of a nation's authority to encourage immigration and the positive perception of that nation from migrant origin countries abroad. Retention is the cumulative result of multifaceted factors: economic and social outcomes, culture acceptance, affordable housing, health and wellbeing, and welcoming community are just a few of these factors. Understanding what should signal reform or what can be done to improve retention is central to the questions of immigration both as an economic tool as well as a humanitarian one.

Housing is one of the major factors in immigrant retention. In order to be sufficient, it must be both suitable and affordable. In Canada there is a "geographic imbalance" of immigrant

destination. In 2014, 57% of immigrants living in Canada resided in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Brown, 2017). This is problematic both for Canada and for migrants. Small, rural areas of Canada need immigrants the most due to the greater labour and skills shortages faced as a result of a less diverse and fast aging population, as well as significant out migration (New World Immigration, 2020). Immigrants are not being evenly allocated, and this is exacerbating the issue. It has also been found that immigrants who land in small and medium sized cities have a better chance at improving their housing conditions than those who land in massive urban centres (Brown, 2017). It is not necessarily beneficial for an immigrant to land in a dense urban centre, where they may end up with higher costs of living and poorer housing outcomes than if they had landed in a smaller area. All of this evidence points to the need to allocate more immigrants to the rural parts of Canada that do not receive nearly as many immigrants, as these places would benefit most from the increased immigration, and migrants may also fare better here (based on housing data). This is in line with a study that compared the earnings and demographics of immigrants that land in the dense urban centres (Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto) versus those who land in Atlantic Canada. It was found that immigrants had more lucrative returns on higher education in Atlantic Canada than in these urban centres. It was also found that Atlantic Canada was more accepting of foreign credentials than Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto, which was reflected in the earnings of immigrants with foreign education credentials in the two regions. Among other findings, these demonstrate both the need for skilled immigrants in the Atlantic Provinces, as well as the gains to be made by newcomers by landing in them (Sano et al, 2017).

Another important factor in the retention of newcomers is social integration; a newcomer's ease of making friends and forming connections may influence their decision to leave or stay in a certain country. Family migration is a convenient way to improve social integration outcomes for newcomers, as not only will the presence of one's family mitigate feelings of loneliness, but also help widen a newcomer's network of friends (Cosgrave et al, 2019). It has been argued that newcomers making friends with only other newcomers increases social vulnerability, as newcomers have less attachment to the area and are more likely to leave, so a healthy balance of local and non-local friends would maximize social integration (Cosgrave et al, 2019). A Newfoundland-based study involving interviews with service providers found that younger newcomers lack the English language support necessary to better integrate into Canadian society and also lack the recreational activities necessary socially integrate (Li et al, 2017). This may point to a need for evaluation of the services provided to newcomer families in the province. As younger newcomers are of particular importance to the future of the country, their wellbeing should be looked into.

## **Migration Policy and Trends in Africa**

Migration policy varies massively across the globe, with each country taking a unique approach to suit their unique needs; population growth, economic growth, and humanitarian goals are three of many factors that must be considered when developing immigration policy. Each region's needs in these regards differ, and so too does their policy. In Africa, there is an increasing emphasis on intra-regional immigration within the continent, while individual countries within Africa have diverse and complex policies. The regions of Sub-Saharan

Africa and Northern Africa/Western Asia also boasted the two highest average annual rates of migrant stock change between 2005 and 2019 in the world, positions neither region held over the period of 1990-2005 (United Nations, 2019).

There is extensive literature researching migration in Africa – from the causes of intra-regional migration causes to policy and practice, it is academically well-documented. South Africa is of particular interest to researchers, due to its unique position as a desirable location for migrants from within Africa despite the rising xenophobia in the country, with South Africans fearing immigrants will work harder and for lower wages than locals, and official propaganda even claiming inflated illegal immigrant numbers in order to take action against immigration (Maharaj, 2002). Many intra-regional migrants in Africa choose to live in South Africa for reasons primarily regarding employment and safety (Degli Uberti et al., 2015). In addition, South Africa's migration policies with neighbouring countries are confusing and not always explicit, with implied objectives of migration not always backed by effective legislation (Nshimbi & Fioramonti, 2014). Stern and Szalonti (2006) also explore the inefficacy of South Africa's immigration policy, finding (among other negative impacts) that the number of skilled immigrants leaving the country increased eightfold between 1993 and 2003. This exodus of skilled workers or "brain drain" may be worsened still if South African policies do not encourage immigration from within Africa (Mountford & Rapoport, 2016). The African Union addresses the issue of brain drain in their 2018-2030 plan of action (African Union, 2018). As a member nation of the Southern African Development Community, South Africa socio-economically cooperates with 15 other Southern African nations and as a result experiences unique immigration opportunity. There is massive economic inequality amongst the member nations, and South Africa's position as one of the wealthier SADC nations makes it a popular destination for students and economic migrants. South America's position in the SADC as a high-GDP nation means that the country feels the need to be considered first when new regional policies are to be implemented, which may negatively impact the region's economic development (Mlambo, 2017).

African countries are adapting their immigration policies to achieve various goals as well as in anticipation of future issues. The Government of Nigeria's migration policy takes global warming into account, helping ease migration to mitigate the disproportionate effect that climate change will likely have on Africa. Ghana has also considered such issues as climate change and the environment with their immigration policy. Many African countries still face challenges in developing effective immigration policy; data collection and management pose resource barriers for lower-GDP nations, but several initiatives currently aim to strengthen immigration throughout the continent (Le Coz & Pietropolli, 2020). The African Union has attempted to implement an open migration system throughout Africa, hoping to combat a worsening economic situation with an increasingly mobile workforce. The AU has collaborated on several migration policies with the European Union, like the Cairo Action Plan, which aims to address the push factors of migration, as well as combating racism and xenophobia (Abebe, 2017).

Intraregional migration is a large part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA or Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine), however it has varied effects on the countries and regions within. One study found that regional migration in the UEMOA increased the average wage by 1.8% and generally diminishes inequality. The benefits are

not shared equally however, as migrant receiving cities like Abidjan experienced a fall in wages while its two main sources of immigration, Burkina Faso and Mali, experienced a rise in wages (Girsberger, Méango & Rapoport, 2019). In Sub-Saharan Africa, benefits could also be attained with intra-regional migration. However, the region is currently facing lower than expected rural-urban intra-regional migration, possibly due to a combination of the following factors: lack of coherent immigration policy, lack of official government stance on migration, financial cost of relocation, lack of education, inefficient property rights, and risk averse attitudes (de Brauw, Mueller & Lee, 2014).

## **Migration Trends and Policy in Africa**

During the colonial era, Africa experienced mass immigration from Europe. These migrants during the ‘mass transatlantic migration phase’ (in the half-century before World War 1) were influenced by “the prospect of substantial earnings gains for themselves and their children, by industrialization at home and by demographic pressure on the resource base (Hatton and Williamson 2003). After the colonial era, the number of emigrants from Africa to Europe, Northern America, Asia and Oceania has increased significantly due to development and social transformation in Africa (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016).

Migration policy in Africa has a varied and unique history which has seen immense change from the colonial era to the modern. Intra-regional migration in Africa is the dominant migration flow in the region. Intra-regional migration has also significantly increased between the 1900s to the present day with the development of the African Union’s migration policies (previously known as Organization of African Unity) (Tsion Tadesse Abebe 2017). Due to increasing acknowledgement of the significant impact of migration to economic development, policies focus on improving migration to and within Africa, with the African Union (AU) in charge of continental policies (Regional Economic Communities (RECs) like ECOWAS, ECCAS, and EAC provide complementary policies). There are various factors that drive migration in the continent, ranging from an increased focus to spur this from local governments to economic and safety reasons.

The 1969 OAU (now AU) Convention provided the policy framework for modern African humanitarian migration policies. This included protections, temporary residence/resettlement and humanitarian assistance for refugees fleeing conflict.

In 1991, the Abuja Treaty provided free movement of persons across Africa. It was the first legal migration framework to allow this, fostering integration and permitting Africans the right residency anywhere in the continent (especially within RECs).

2006 saw many advancements in African migration policy; the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) was yet another progression in labour mobility, obligating the mutual recognition of qualifications for job purposes across Africa as well as free movement and integration of migrant workers including facilitating their social protection and social security. The same year, the African Common Position on Migration and Development was implemented, requiring African countries to incorporate mainstream migration strategies into their developmental plans and allocate the finances needed to implement those strategies.

This improved migration accountability among African states. The Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development was a collaborative policy between Africa and Europe which strengthened the relationship and migration between the regions.

In 2009, the Kampala Convention, or the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa expanded on the humanitarian framework of the 1969 OAU Convention by providing obligatory framework for protection, temporary residence or resettlement, and humanitarian assistance to be adopted by host African countries or communities for IDPs.

The 2015 Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) complemented the 2006 MPFA which was revised in 2018. It provided international policy which aimed to strengthen effective labour migration within the continent and protect migrant workers with policies including fair recruitment practices.

The latest update on the African Union's migration policy framework was introduced in 2018, which addressed several key issues within the region, such as migration governance, labor migration and education, diaspora engagement, border governance, irregular migration, forced displacement, internal migration, migration and trade (Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030) 2018). Despite the encouraging steps towards integrating Africa as one economic community, several regional economic communities, especially in the SADC region are opposed to the idea of free flow of labor and trade due to existing treaties, security concerns and lack of institutional or political will (Achiume and Landau 2015).

Today, newcomers to Africa do not face strict migration laws or policies due to the limited and near-ineffective policy implementation and law compliance levels in the region.

### **Migration Trends and Migration Policy in South America**

There is a wealth of literature investigating migration in South America – policy, effects, and economics are all subjects of interest for researchers there. As an incredibly diverse continent, South America experiences unique trends in migration with many different factors at play. On the global stage the continent plays a large role; while western nations are restricting their borders, South American countries are relaxing them (Arcarazo & Freier, 2015), primarily attributed to the democratization of the region (Haas et al., 2020). This “liberal tide” of South American immigration policies has come with progressive legislation to improve treatment of newcomers, however many countries that have passed such legislation have not followed through with it (Freier & Arcarazo, 2016). These shortcomings have resulted in various human rights violations and are becoming more and more present due to the recent surge of migration to the region from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and even the United States (Cernadas & Freier, 2015; International Organization for Migration, 2017; De Ferrari & Feline, 2016).

Despite the massive influx of migrants from other continents, around 70% of immigration in South American is intra-regional (International Organization for Migration, 2017), up from 60% in 2011 (Garcia, 2016). This is likely due to a combination of the increased job

opportunity in the region and the increasingly restricted borders of the United States and Europe. The top 4 destinations for intra-regional migrants in South America were Paraguay, Argentina, Venezuela, and Chile. There is also significant emigration from the region however, as economic migrants travel to the United States, Spain, Italy, Canada, and Japan in search of economic prosperity (International Organization for Migration, 2017).

Much of the increased intra-regional migration in South America is due to women migrating (Garcia, 2016), as decreasingly restrictive migration policies in the region allow for women to escape oppressive traditional restrictions and migrate to nations where they are less restricted (Cerrutti, 2009).

In Brazil, a study found that illegal immigration has put pressure on the state to control the inflow of illegal immigrants, which in turn has posed a threat to the mental and physical health of illegal immigrants. They are forced to live in sub-optimal conditions to avoid persecution, resulting in LGBT individuals unable to access proper medication and parents unable to access childcare services. The authors of the study argued that anti-immigration policies must take human rights into account (Martinez, et al., 2015). Brazil, along with Mexico, was the only country on the continent whose migration flow primarily consisted not of intra-regional migration, but of immigration from outside the region (Garcia, 2016). Ecuador's migration policy, on the other hand, is often heralded as an excellent example of an open-door policy. Since the country's new migration policy was implemented, immigration from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean has more than doubled (De Ferrari & Feline, 2016).

There is need for unified policy to improve migration in the region as current policies in the area are outdated, but major barriers exist in implementing this. Particularly, the bureaucracy of each individual South American country hinders the progress of such an agreement (Margheritis, 2013). Mercosur, a South American trade bloc, promotes free trade and improves the movement of goods, people, and money throughout its member nations. Full members are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, while several other South American nations are associated members and Mexico and New Zealand are observer members. Argentinian policy, which has evolved from trying to attract European migrants in the 1900s to recently encouraging intra-migration (Bastia & vom Hau, 2014), often influences the member states of Mercosur (Culpi & Pereira, 2016; Pereira et al., 2018). Pereira et al., (2018) examines examples of Argentinian policies being directly emulated by Uruguay. This cooperation could be key in the unified policy the region needs.

### **Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Immigration and Immigrants**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had immense impacts on the world; travel has been largely locked down, many businesses have been forced into closure, and the world's population is in the midst of a deadly health crisis. To prevent the spread of the virus, most countries have restricted their border access and have mandated a two-week quarantine period for anyone entering from abroad. In Canada, the pandemic has impacted immigration negatively. Canada welcomed 13,645 new permanent residents in July 2020, down from 36,615 in July 2019 (a 63% decrease) (El-Assal, 2020a); While not entirely halted, immigration is noticeably

diminished as a result of the pandemic. Some have speculated that immigration numbers may not return to normal, even once the pandemic is dealt with (Omidvar, 2020; El-Assal, 2020b). As the pandemic encompasses the world and the issues arising from it elbow their way to the forefront of global attention, more and more literature is created aiming to analyse and understand the crisis's unique effects on different populations. A common theme emerging from this literature is that groups who faced more challenges before the pandemic, like women and diverse groups, seem to have been affected more by the pandemic than others. In this time of uncertainty, immigrants are among the worst affected either healthily, economically or socially.

Studies have shown that immigrants are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to barriers to physical distancing (Langellier, 2020) and their overrepresentation in the essential workforce (Ross et al., 2020). They also have a higher prevalence of risk factors for severe COVID-19, like hypertension, diabetes, and asthma (Maya et al., 2020; Ross et al., 2020), and have more difficulty accessing care than the local population (Greenaway et al., 2020; Prime et al., 2020).

Another issue becoming more prevalent in recent years is mental health; societies around the world are now recognizing the effects of mental health especially due to the pandemic when the ensuing policies of social distancing have exacerbated mental health on a massive scale, causing increased incidence of depression and anxiety as people are forced to isolate from social contact to preserve the physical wellbeing of the community. The whole world is seeking out ways to ameliorate it. Given the added stresses that immigrants are facing compared to the average native individual, the COVID-19 pandemic is especially taxing on the mental health of non-natives (Rothman et al., 2020; Kapilashrami & Bhui, 2020). Many immigrants work to support their families, so the prospect of losing work due to the virus is especially worrying. Immigrants who are refugees are more anxious about the economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic than Canadian-born individuals (Charles, 2020). Furthermore, many low-skilled immigrants come from the global south region, in which many countries are inefficiently handling the virus, causing widespread death and crisis (Mia & Griffiths, 2020).

This undoubtedly has an effect on those with loved ones across the globe in a place of danger.

Another consideration with the pandemic is access to medical information; with the quickly evolving nature of the situation, access to precise and correct medical information is paramount. However, not all groups have equal capacity to access this information. For example: limited health literacy, non-reliance on the internet for information, and lower levels of formal education are characteristic of the immigrant Latinx community (and particularly the older immigrant Latinx community) in the United States. All of these factors play an important role in information gathering and may leave this group at a disadvantage when it comes to preparing for COVID-19 and staying up to date on outbreaks and updates (Calvo, 2020).

The impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market have left immigrants in further precarious positions than they were pre-COVID. Since the start of the pandemic, job losses and income

shortfalls have largely been evidenced across disadvantaged groups and the differentiated COVID impacts have exacerbated existing inequalities (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Blundell et al., 2020). Although the white population faced similar levels of job loss as racialized groups, racialized groups are more likely to have precarious or lower paying jobs, resulting in the financial impact of this job loss to be more severe than in the case of the white population, who more commonly hold more stable financial position (Mo et al., 2020). Immigrants have experienced the largest losses in employment and income given that they are employed in the sectors hardest-hit by COVID (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Cho & Winters, 2020; Cortes & Forsythe, 2020). About 31% of employed immigrants had their jobs for less than a year prior to COVID – two times more than the rate for their Canadian-born counterparts and 22% had hourly earnings of less than two-thirds of average wage of \$24.04/hr (Hou et al., 2020). With the disproportionate job losses, reduced hours and lower income due to lower labour demand, and slower recovery in specific industries and occupations where vulnerable groups are concentrated, inequality may continue to rise.

Immigrant entrepreneurs face the impacts of unemployment and loss of ownership more severely than non-immigrant entrepreneurs. This is felt even more severely depending on how recently the immigrant landed in the country. This is due primarily to structural inequalities, like the difficulty associated with accessing credit for a new migrant who has a smaller network than an earlier migrant or non-migrant. This is backed by data, as Canadian immigrants reported a higher incidence of difficulty meeting financial obligations and essential needs when compared to non-immigrants (Mo et al., 2020).

Despite the immense difficulty many immigrants are facing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (especially in comparison to the native-born population), anti-immigrant sentiment and discrimination against immigrants has increased as a result of the pandemic around the world (Kibaroglu, 2020; Pianigiani & Bubola, 2020) and in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2020; Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2020). Domestic unemployment has risen considerably, which may also contribute to anti-immigration sentiments (CTV News, 2020). Refugees and other vulnerable groups are the target of misinformation and hate speech regarding the disease (IOM, 2020). Also, the Canadian public has developed a more negative attitude to immigrants due to COVID-19. In a public survey conducted in August 2020, most respondents agreed that immigration had a positive impact on Canadian economy, culture and society, but more than half of them also felt immigrants were not adopting Canadian values, and 46% believed the Canadian social-welfare system is at risk because of immigrants (Newbold, 2020).

In the United States, President Donald Trump has played a role in the recent growth of anti-immigrant sentiment. Following on his election promise to constrict immigration to the country and build a wall along the US-Mexico border, the country has entered a state of controversy and turmoil amidst clashing migration policies and ideals. The coronavirus pandemic has fueled the flames of the country's opposition to immigration; in a speech in late February of 2020, just as the virus was beginning to gain worldwide notoriety, the President renewed his opposition to open borders, adding that this policy is now a direct health threat to Americans (Altheide, 2020). In early March, Trump began to shape a xenophobic narrative of the virus' spread, labeling it the "China Virus," further contributing

to the mounting anti-immigrant sentiment in the country (Rosenberg & Rogers, 2020). In September 2020, Trump doubled down on this narrative, urging the UN to hold China accountable for the pandemic (Toronto Star, 2020).

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