

# Insights into the location choices of immigrants living in Canada:

Results from the *Established Newcomers Survey*

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## Overview:

- The *Established Newcomers Survey*
- Motives for secondary migration & retention
- Identifying characteristics of an « ideal » community



# Settlement & Retention Outside Montreal, Toronto, & Vancouver

The 2021 Census shows a strong rise in immigration levels, projecting 29-34% of the Canadian population will be of immigrant-origin by 2041.

- Over 90% of recent immigrants to Canada settle in urban areas with over 100,000 (i.e., CMAs).
- More than half (53.4%) settle in Toronto (29.5%), Montreal (12.2%), or Vancouver (11.7%)
- 4.4% settled in census agglomerations; 3.2% in rural areas.

Attraction increasing “Outside MTV,” but uneven growth in settlement and retention across and within regions.

What role can communication strategies play in individuals’ decisions to settle and stay in communities outside of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver?

# The Established Newcomers Survey

What factors influence immigrants' **location choices** and their **decisions** to remain or relocate, and what are immigrants' experiences **seeking out information** to learn about life in Canada?

The **Established Newcomers Survey** was designed to gain insight into these issues.

- An online survey distributed to ~ 100,000 former participants of PNP & AIP that have received Canadian citizenship between January 1, 2018, and July 13, 2023.
- Survey in the field between August 3 & September 11, 2023.

A non-probability sample of **14,186** responses were collected region of arrival (self-report).

- Ontario ( $n = 3,420$ ; 24%)
- Atlantic ( $n = 2,011$ ; 14%)
- Prairies ( $n = 6,376$ ; 45%)
- BC ( $n = 2,379$ ; 17%)

Program of permanent residency: PNP without EE ( $n = 9,572$ ; 78%)

- PNP with EE ( $n = 2,546$ ; 21%), AIP ( $n = 184$ ; 1.5%).

# The Established Newcomers Survey: Sample Characteristics

**Gender:** Most survey respondents self-identified as male ( $n = 8,145$ ; 64%).

- Female ( $n = 4,498$ ; 36%)
- Non-binary ( $n = 17$ ; 0.1%)

**Language:** Most respondents ( $n = 7,402$ ; 54%) report a first language other than English or French.

- English ( $n = 6,036$ ; 44%)
- French ( $n = 408$ ; 3%)
- Non-native French speakers ( $n = 1,396$ ; 10%)

**Age:**

- 18 – 34 years old ( $n = 3,460$ ; 24%)
- 35 – 44 years old ( $n = 6,742$ ; 48%)
- 45 – 54 years old ( $n = 3,109$ ; 22%)
- 55 years and older ( $n = 865$ ; 6%)

Why do immigrants relocate out-of-province and where do they go?

# Location choices: Retention in place of first settlement

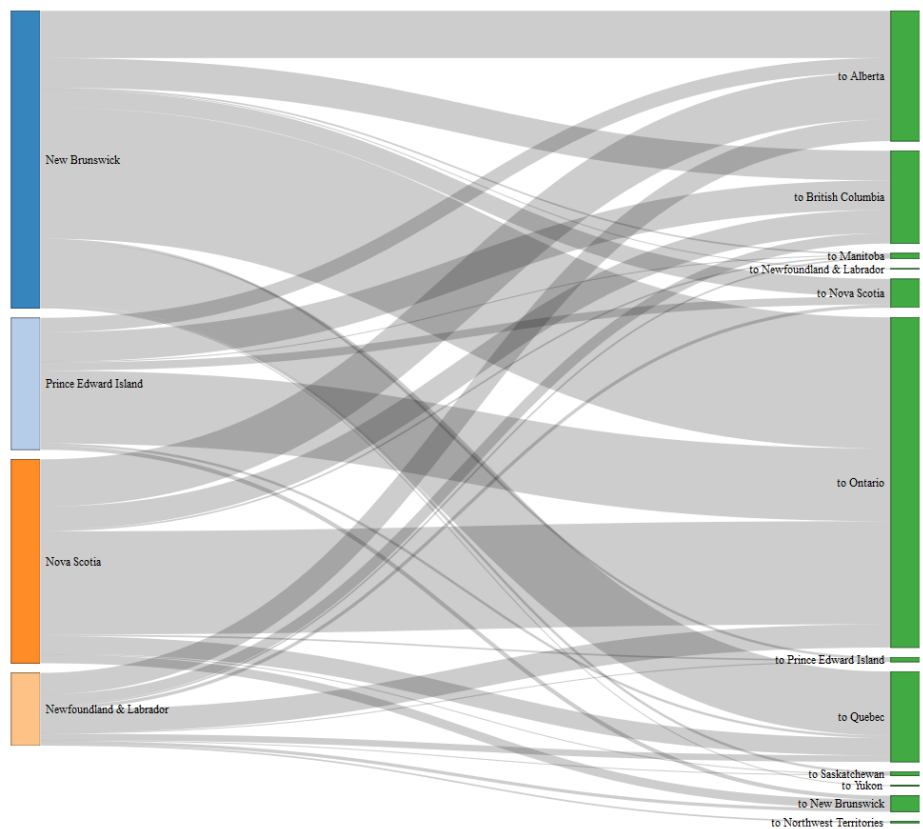
“Are you still living in the same community where you initially settled when you first moved to Canada?”

	Number of respondents (%) - Full Sample	Number of respondents (%) - BC	Number of respondents (%) - Prairies	Number of respondents (%) - Ontario	Number of respondents (%) - Atlantic
Yes, and I do not plan on moving	6,175 (44.6%)	1,036 (44.2%)	3,233 (51.9%)	1,068 (32.2%)	838 (42.5%)
Yes, but I plan on moving	1,355 (9.8%)	260 (11.1%)	559 (9.0%)	320 (9.7%)	216 (11.0%)
No	6,324 (45.6%)	1,047 (44.7%)	2,433 (39.1%)	1,927 (58.1%)	917 (46.5%)
Total	13,854	2,343	6,225	3,315	1,971

# Out-of-province secondary migration

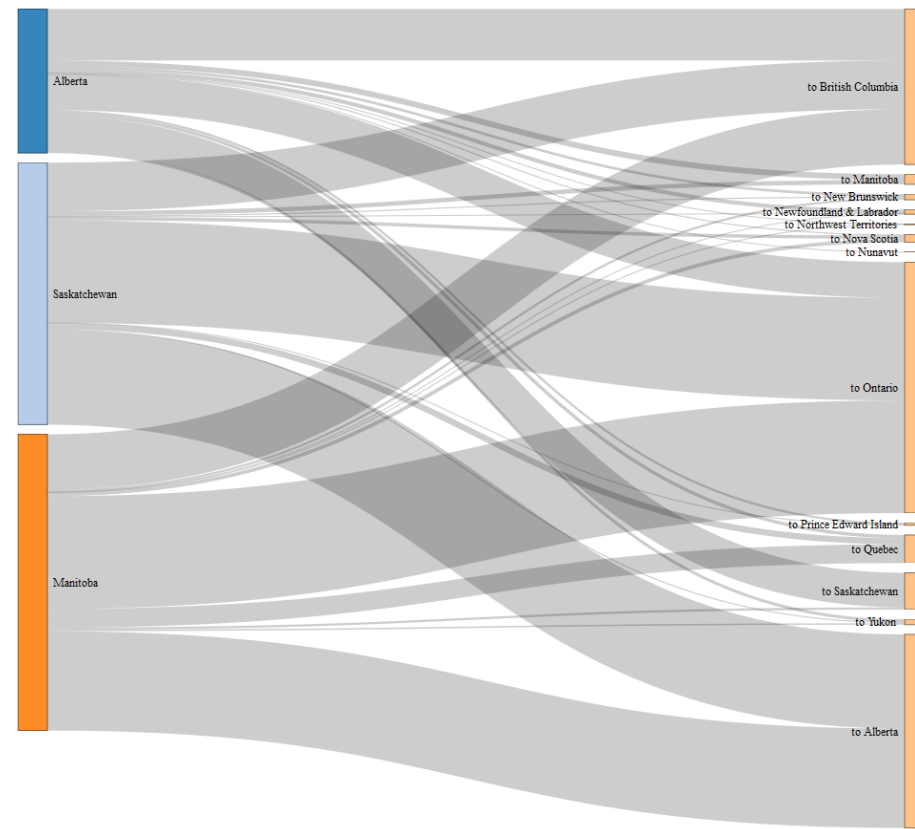
Atlantic region ( $n = 883$ )

(Province of landing → Province of residence)



Prairie region ( $n = 1.951$ )

(Province of landing → Province of residence)

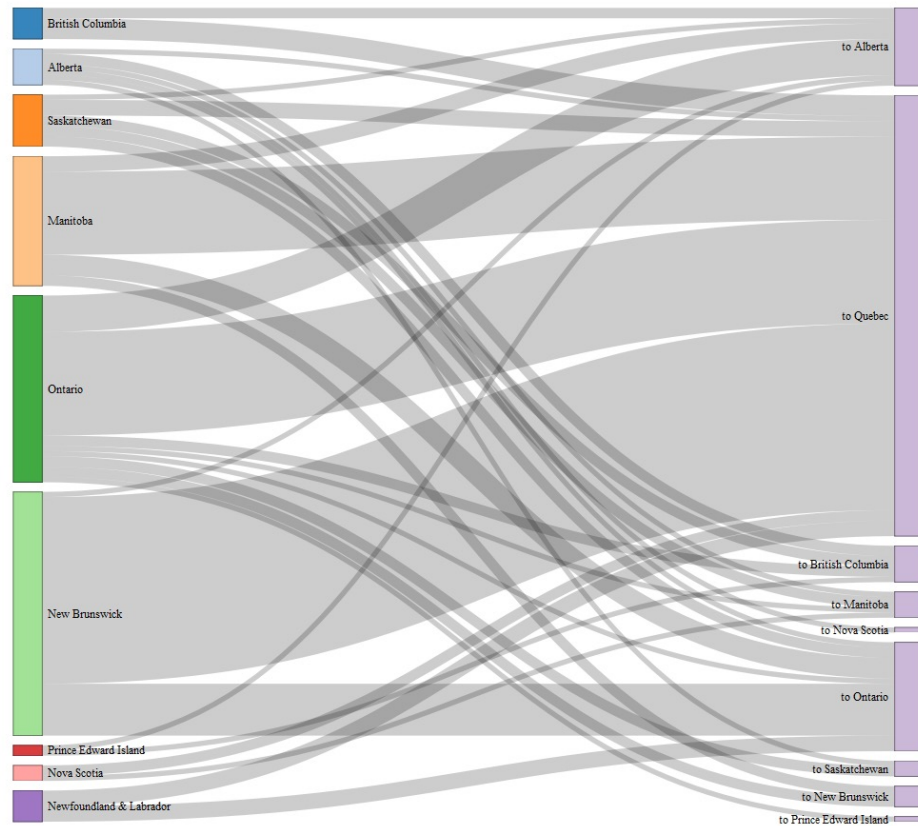




# Out-of-province secondary migration

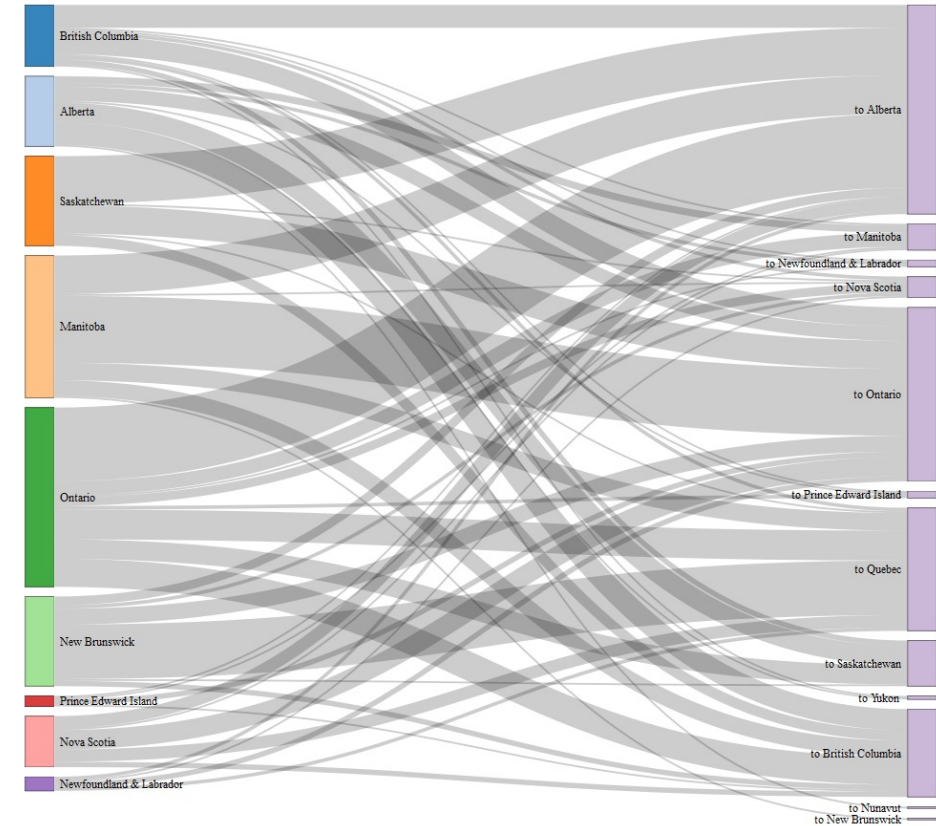
Francophones ( $n = 141$ )

(Province of landing → Province of residence)

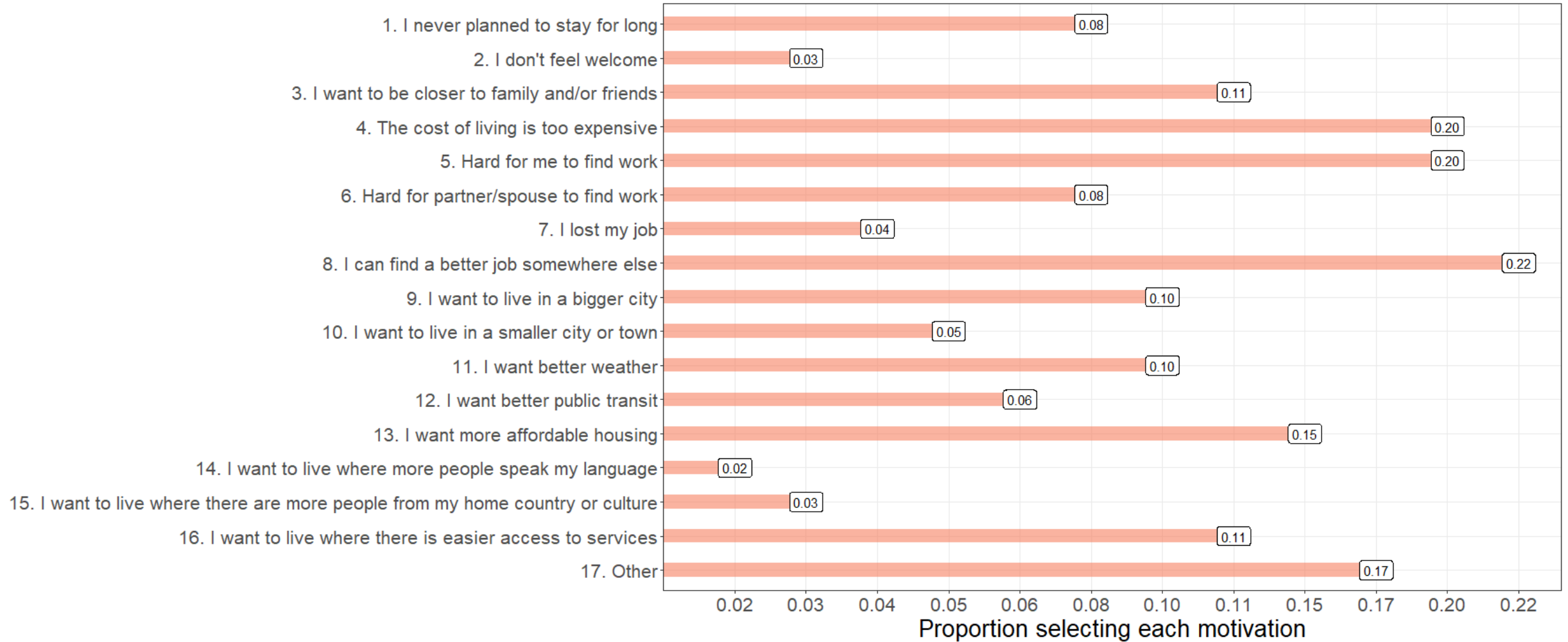


French speakers ( $n = 403$ )

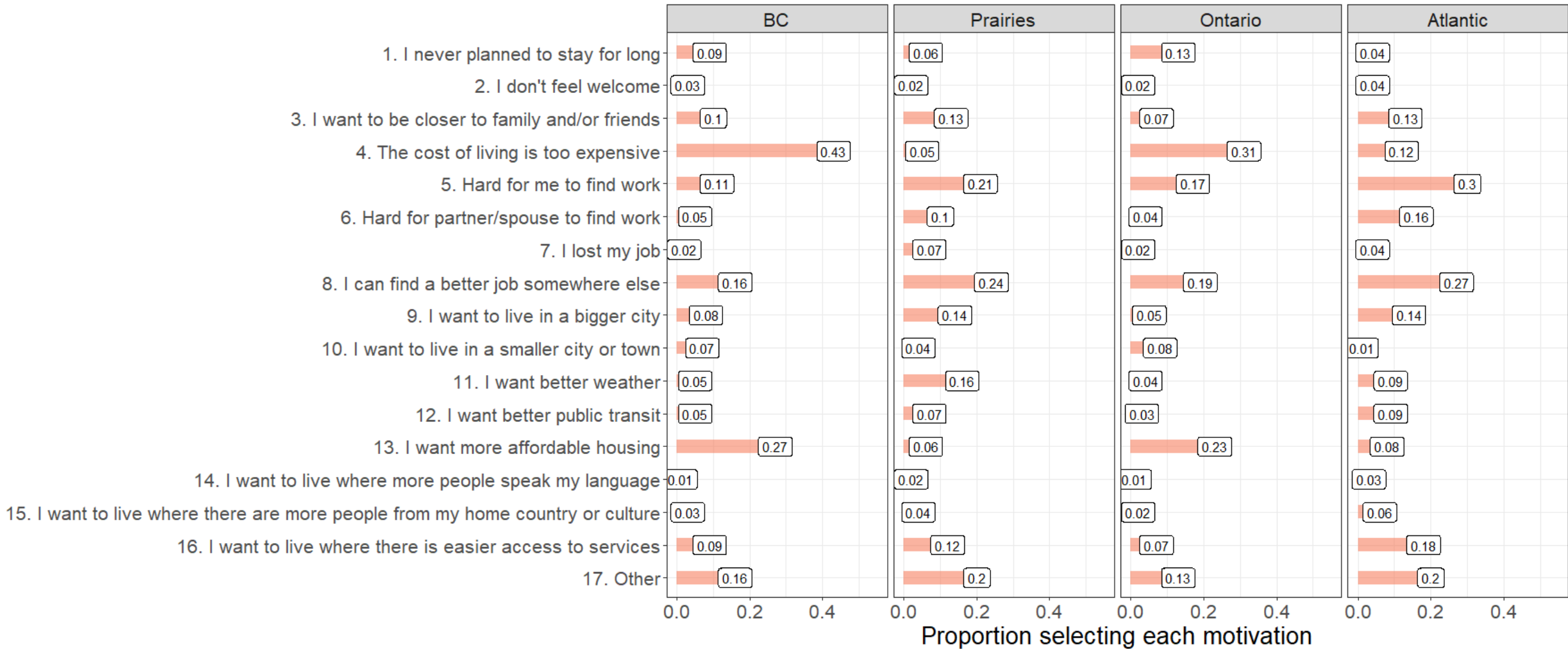
(Province of landing → Province of residence)



## Motivations for leaving place of first settlement

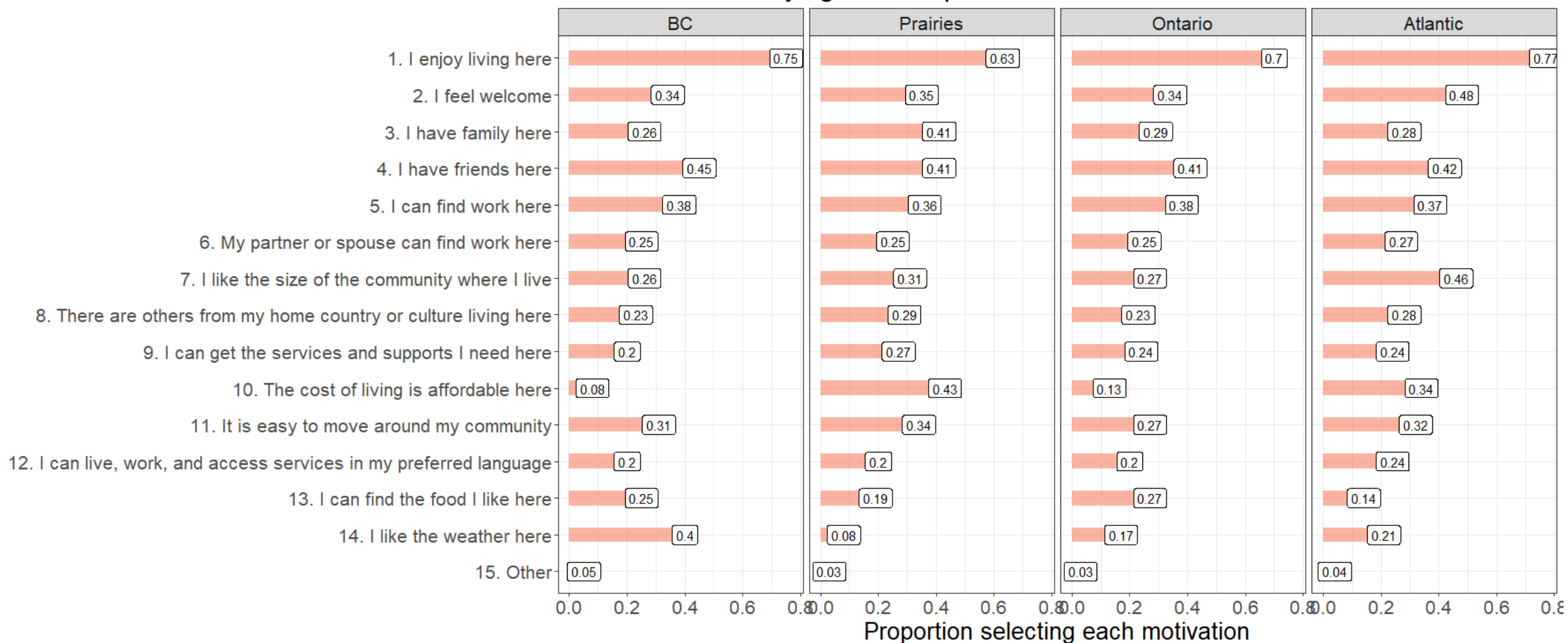


## Motivations for leaving place of first settlement



# Motives for community retention

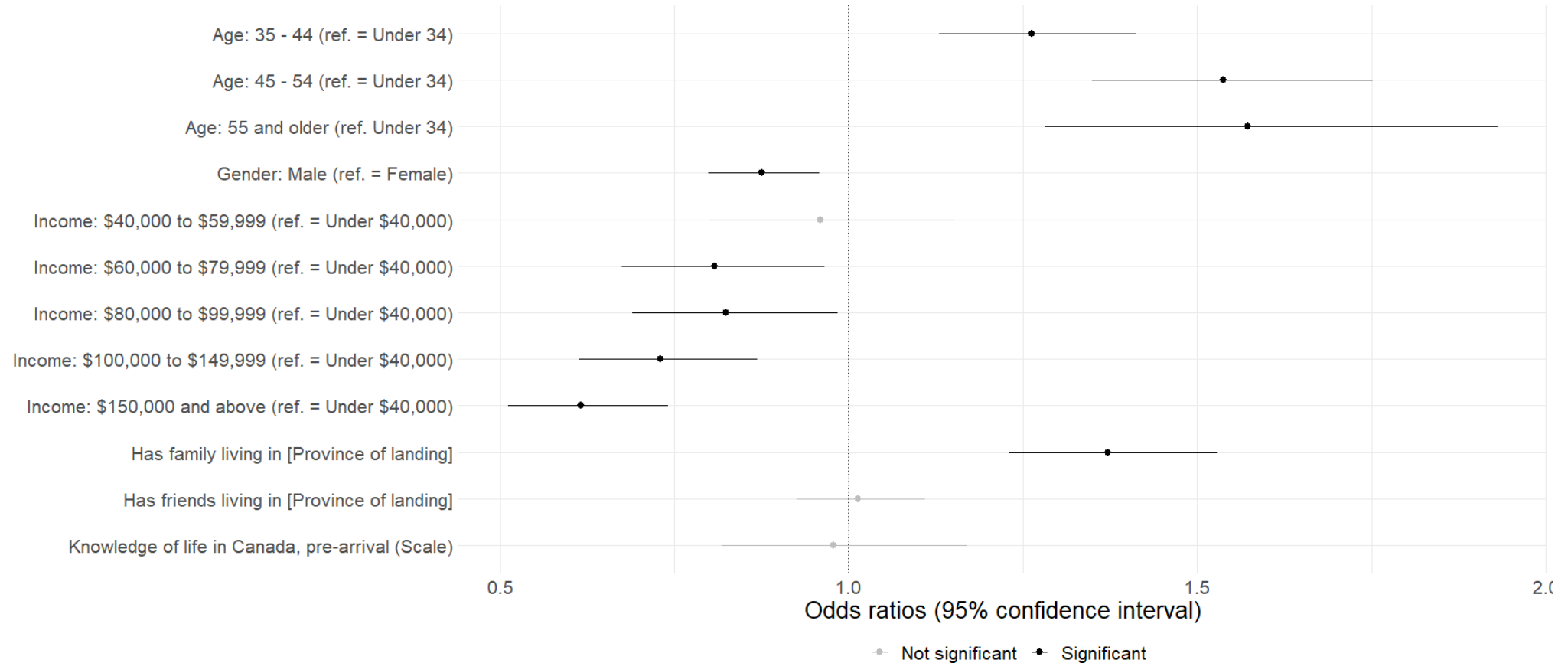
## Motivations for staying in initial place of settlement



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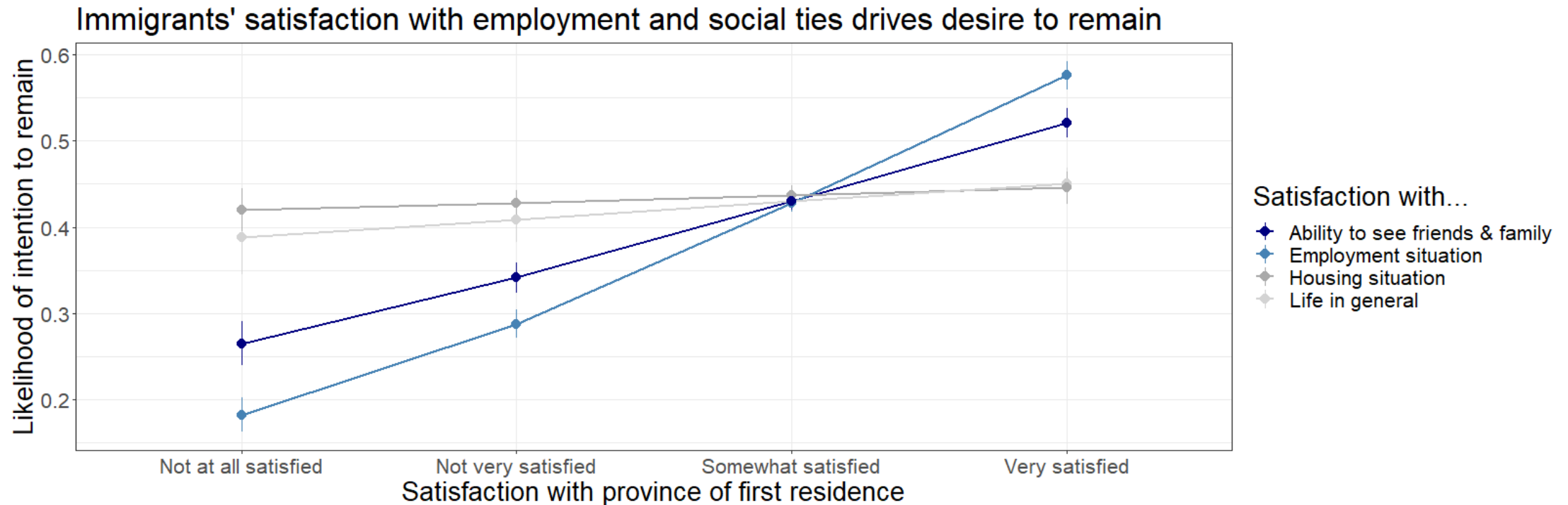


# What are the odds? – “I still live in the community where I initially settled and I do not plan on moving.”



Odds ratios estimated using logistic regression. Covariates for education, first language, province of landing, satisfaction in province of landing, not shown. N = 10,310.

# Satisfaction with **social ties** and **employment** drive intention to remain.



Likelihood estimated from a logistic regression model controlling for respondents' age, gender, education, income, first language, satisfaction in province of landing, having family & friends living in province of landing, and reported pre-arrival knowledge. N = 10,310.



What type of communities do established immigrants recommend to future newcomers to Canada?

A conjoint experiment: What do new immigrants recommend others do?

“Based on your experiences as an immigrant to Canada, which of the following two communities would you most likely recommend to someone else who is about to move to Canada? Choose your preferred community below:”

- Choose between 2 communities that randomly vary in different attributes. Repeat 5x.

Calculate a **preference share** for each characteristic:

The probability that a level would be chosen over another, with all other feature components held constant.

Attribute	Possible levels
1. Community size	(i) Bigger city, with a population of about 1 million people. (ii) Mid-sized city, with a population of about 100,000 people. (iii) Small town, with a population of about 50,000 people.
2. Cost of living	(i) Average rent is about 55% of your monthly salary. (ii) Average rent is about 30% of your monthly salary. (iii) Average rent is about 20% of your monthly salary.
3. Availability of public transportation	(i) Most buses arrive every 15-20 minutes. (ii) Most buses arrive once every hour.
4. Linguistic diversity	(i) Residents speak English, French, and a number of different languages. (ii) Residents are mostly English speakers. (iii) Residents are mostly French speakers.
5. Social connections	(i) You do not know anyone from this community. (ii) You have some family members living in this community. (iii) You have some close friends living in this community. (iv) You have some acquaintances living in this community.

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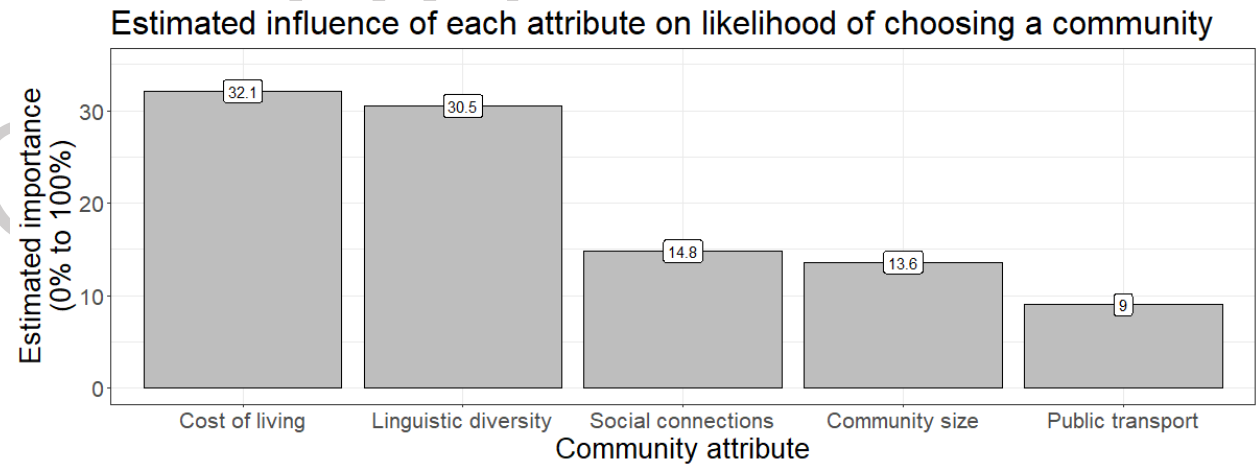
Calculate a **preference share** for each characteristic:

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	Community 1	Community 2
Community size	Small town, with a population of about 50,000 people	Small town, with a population of about 50,000 people
Cost of living	Average rent is about 30% of your monthly salary	Average rent is about 20% of your monthly salary
Availability of public transit	Most buses arrive every 15-20 minutes	Most buses arrive every 15-20 minutes
Linguistic diversity	Residents are mostly English speakers	Residents speak English, French, and a number of different languages as well
Social connections	You have some close friends living in this community	You do not know anyone in this community
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

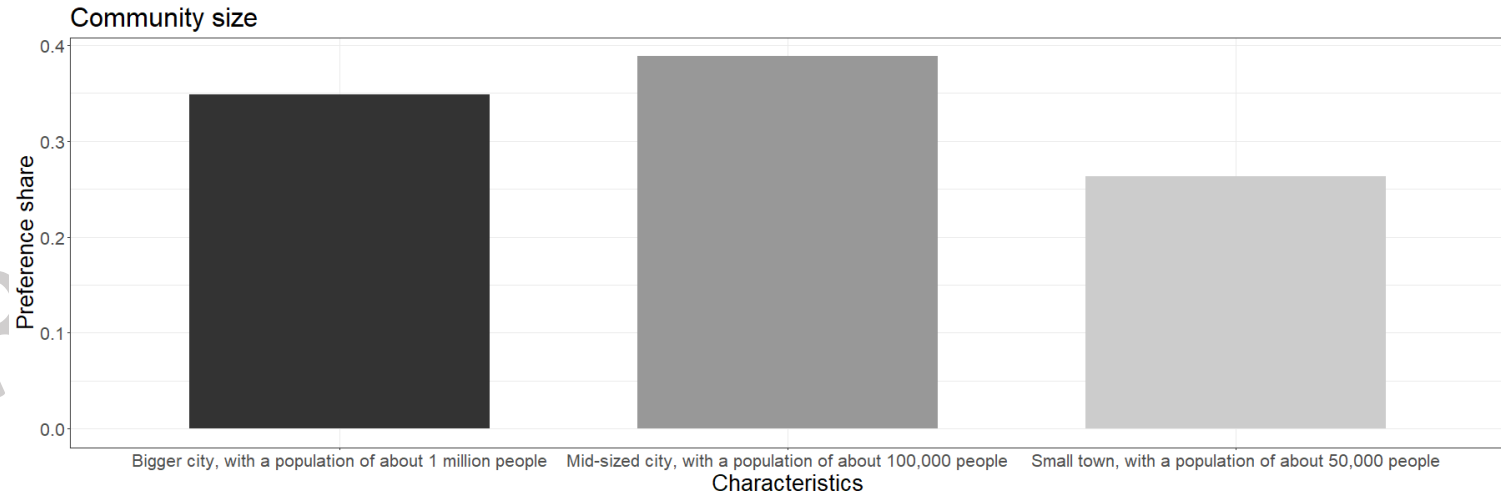
# What factors weigh on immigrants' location choices?

- Cost of living and linguistic diversity of a community are the best predictors of location choice.
- Community size weighs relatively little on recommendations of established immigrants



# Feature importance – Community size

- Surprisingly, community size is of relatively little importance, compared to other community attributes.
- Respondents show slight preference for a mid-sized city.
- Nonetheless, respondents are open to many different types of communities.



# Insights into the location choices of immigrants living in Canada

- An assortment of factors are relevant for different people – who is the audience, and what are they looking for?
  - Community size **is not** the core consideration.
  - Rather, economic and social factors, plus lifestyle choices, are central to decision-making
  - A need to understand audience « segments » & tailor messaging
- Different regions have different strengths and weaknesses
  - Relative affordability and lifestyle benefits of the Atlantic and Prairie regions, but Atlantic provinces challenged by perception of worse job opportunities and access to services.