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**Why Migrants Stay in Small and Mid-Sized Canadian Cities:
Towards a New Analytical Framework Using a Life Course Approach**

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Why Migrants Stay in Small and Mid-Sized Canadian Cities: Towards a New Analytical Framework Using a Life Course Approach

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Abstract

Existing literature on the regionalization of migration in Canada is limited in its understanding of migrants' decision-making processes regarding their location choices and settlement experiences in small and mid-sized cities because of its urban and mobility bias. While research has primarily focused on migrants' preference for larger centres, as indicated through their migration to metropolitan cities, there has been little attention paid to cases where immigrants and refugees have voluntarily decided to stay in small and mid-sized Canadian cities for extended periods of time. This paper proposes an analytical framework to study immobility that centres migrants' lived experiences and aspirations, using a life-course approach. The author argues that, asking why migrants stay, as opposed to why they leave, allows migration researchers to better understand the nuanced ways in which migrants form decisions to move to, stay in, build their lives in specific cities over time, in destination countries. By shifting the perspective to why some migrants stay in small and mid-sized cities, this paper encourages future research that goes beyond analyses shaped predominantly by methodological nationalism, neoclassical drivers of migration, binary explanations of mobility and immobility, and that which foregrounds the two-way relationship between migrants and local receiving communities in place-making and city-building.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Canada has a long history of efforts to distribute immigrants and refugees to less attractive regions and cities to promote economic and demographic growth. However, as most immigrants continue to gravitate towards Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, researchers and policy-makers have paid disproportionate attention to migrants' movement to and experiences in large metropolitan centres (Hou and Bourne, 2006; Zuberi and Ptashnick, 2011; Brown and Newbold, 2012). While some existing migration research has acknowledged the importance of migration to stimulate urban development in small and mid-sized cities and identified some of the challenges those cities face in attracting more people (Esses and Carter, 2019), it has not studied to the same extent why migrants and refugees voluntarily stay and build their lives in non-gateway cities. How did some Canadian cities become diverse hubs that continually attract immigrants while others struggled to retain its native-born residents? How have cities become more attractive over time as immigrants decided to stay in those cities and changed their social and economic fabrics? As all levels of Canadian government strengthen its promotion of regional migration, the question of why immigrants and refugees voluntarily stay in small and mid-sized cities becomes increasingly significant because official regionalization policies and programs often suggest that long-term retention is an end-goal (Krahn, Derwing, and Abu-Laban, 2003). Therefore, attraction that is only followed by short-term residence is insufficient for sustainable demographic growth in those cities.

A persistent and ongoing challenge to evenly redistribute migrants across the country is the limits to which provincial and municipal governments can control migrants' mobility following their arrival in Canada. For instance, in 2002, Dennis Codère, former Minister of Immigration, controversially proposed that temporary foreign workers sign a contract to settle in a community identified by the government for at least three years in exchange for permanent residence (Krahn, Derwing, and Abu-Laban, 2003). This was met with a lot of backlash. However, more recent regionalization programs still try to influence migrants' movements through similar disincentives. For example, through the Provincial Nominee Program, migrants are granted permanent residence status in Canada if they can prove that they have genuine intentions to live in that province (Dobrowolsky, 2013). Nonetheless, once they become permanent residents, the government cannot restrict their movement throughout Canada because they are granted rights to mobility (Department of Justice, 2018).

This paper argues that, since policies and programs are limited in their ability to control newcomers' movement in Canada, there needs to be a more holistic and long-term approach to attracting and retaining migrants that centres their agency, lived experiences, aspirations, and preferences. Policymakers, municipal communities, and researchers must recognize that, just as migrants' needs and expectations change over time, the cities that welcome them must also be flexible in its response and adaptation to those needs. Therefore, this paper reminds us that migrants are ultimately their own agents as they engage in complex and dynamic decision-making processes concerning where they live throughout their long-term settlement and integration in Canada. Although immigrants and refugees that have arrived in Canada have already moved across international borders, this does not suggest that they are more likely to participate in secondary migration following their arrival in a destination country.

This paper contributes to the literature on the regionalization of migration in Canada by discussing how a shift in perspective, from why migrants leave, to why they stay in non-gateway cities, can inform research and policy-making agendas to better respond to and balance the needs of newcomers and municipal communities outside of major metropolitan centres. It will elaborate on why this question is relevant in two different ways, by looking first at immigrants and refugees' decision-making process on their mobility. Second, it will consider the impact of lived experiences in the receiving communities. The paper will then elaborate on how the analytical and empirical question of why migrants stay can be utilized to study secondary

migration in destination countries and inform future research and policy agendas. Overall, the discussion will be framed by a life-course approach, which allows us to better understand how migrants' aspirations, expectations, and life experiences shape their decisions regarding their location of residence.

Conceptual Framework

Life Course Approach

Migrants' life experiences play a significant role in their decision-making when it comes to their preference for specific geographical areas. Nonetheless, few migration scholars in Canada have applied life course theory to try to understand why migrants leave or stay in specific cities. According to Christensen, a life-course approach is based on the classic sociological idea of a relationship existing between biography and history, that is, people's lives are informed by "…certain conditions and options at specific historical times and places" (2017, p.635). De Jong and Graefe explained that life course theory looks at how "…people formulate and pursue their life goals, and how they may be enabled or constrained by structural opportunities and limitations in their lives" (2006, p.268). In this way, the life course approach balances both macro and micro level perspectives (Zetterberg, 2017). Life-course theory is relevant to studies on migration because, for many people, migration serves as a tool allowing them to negotiate various circumstances and transitions in their lives as they relocate to different social or institutional contexts (Lewis, 2014). Migrants' decisions to move often involve thinking about changes in their lifestyles, including transitions in their families, the pursuit of employment opportunities, starting an education, and finding housing (Bettin, Eralba, and Fokkema, 2018). This study analyses migrants' decision-making and lived experiences through a life-course approach to better understand the nuances in migrants' location choices and mobility in Canada, beyond traditional neoclassical arguments.

Concept of Staying

While some studies have explored the concept of immobility and why some migrants choose to stay, they have mainly looked at case studies of migrants staying in their countries of origin or in the context of international migration. Schewel (2015) examined the concept of staying in the Global South, specifically through the case of young adults in Senegal. She explained that the factors that retain or repel migrants are often non-economic. In her study, the participants' decisions to stay, work, and succeed in Senegal, were often tied to their family ties, religious values, and desire to contribute to Senegal's development. Schewel explains that immobility can be "…distinguished by continuity in one's center of gravity, or place of residence, relative to spatial and temporal frames" (2019, p. 329). In other words, people are immobile when there is a "…continuity in [their] place of residence over a period of time" (ibid, p.344).

In Canada, stories of migrants residing for extended periods of time, including a decade or longer, in non-gateway cities are featured more often in newspapers than academic articles. This could be interpreted as branding strategies to make specific municipalities appear to be welcoming and inclusive. For example, the Calgary Herald featured an article about migrants who have stayed in Winkler, Manitoba since they first arrived in the late 1990s (Dharssi, 2016). Those migrants stayed because of the availability of jobs, the welcoming community, and because of the good environment to raise their

children in (Ibid). While some academic articles mention that there are cases when immigrants and refugees do stay in their initial destinations, including small and mid-sized cities (Khan and Labute, 2015), the articles often do not consider in great depth the concept of "staying" in their analysis. In that way, existing literature on the regionalization of migration in Canada expresses a mobility bias since it focuses on people's mobility, at the expense of analyzing other moments in which "…further movement is renegotiated, resisted, or restrained" (Schewel, 2019, p.330). This paper aims to address the research gap by exploring the analytical significance of cases of immobility throughout Canadian immigration and settlement history for migration studies.

Migrants' Decision-making Process on their Mobility

This section looks at different components of migrants' decision-making when they decide whether to stay in a specific location. First, it will consider the extent to which migrants generate decisions based on rational motivations and tangible benefits that can be accrued through migration to a specific city. Then, it will consider how individuals' cognitive biases and perceptions add another dimension to decision-making. Finally, it will examine the role of family and the impact of attachments made in local communities in influencing migrants' mobility choices.

Rational Motivations

Research on people's decision-making to migrate or move to different cities have often focused on their access to economic opportunities and their ability to make rational or logical choices (Haan, 2008). Similarly, other authors explained that migrants would intend to stay if they were satisfied with the immigration process or if they believed the initial location was the best option and could not be improved somewhere else (Sapeha, 2016). However, not all migrants act on their ability to migrate or move towards the best economic, social or political opportunities (Thompson, 2016). For example, while the availability of jobs is often an important factor influencing people to move to or stay in a specific location, it is not always a strong enough reason. In places where there are similar opportunities, migrants will make decisions based on other preferences. This was seen in the study conducted on international physicians in Canada, where the authors found that migrant physicians would leave their jobs in rural areas for larger cities even though physicians in urban areas reported being underemployed (McDonald and Worswick, 2015). In this case, if highly skilled migrants can find jobs in small cities, why do some of them choose to leave those cities and move to larger ones where there is more competition and less availability of jobs? This suggests that there are nuances in migrants' decision making on mobility and secondary migration that go beyond tangible economic factors. Thrift acknowledged this when he said that, "Migration decision-making, no matter how rationally it seems to be calculated, has a history, a geography and a sociocultural dimension; it is always situated in the multiple currents of experience, sensation, emotion and encounter, and memory, reflection, hope and anticipation that is life" (2004, p.94-95).

Cognitive Biases

While previous studies have focused on economic motivations, push and pull factors, the role of migration industries and other historical contexts, few studies looking at migration in the Canadian context have considered the psychological aspects of migrants' decision-making (Koikkalainen and Kyle, 2016). This includes their biases, expectations, and perceptions, and imaginings of life in cities versus rural areas. Koikkalainen and Kyle (2016) refer to this as cognitive migration, that is imagining oneself living in a foreign place before physically moving there. The authors explain that when making decisions to participate in international or regional migration, the individual needs to explore the emotional and psychological consequences of those actions. Individuals may also do "affective forecasting", which involves imagining themselves in different situations to determine whether they could see their future self in that given context (Ibid). Another similar concept is "geographical imaginations", which consists of what people imagine a place to be like, including its non-tangible characteristics such as its culture, landscape, climate and distance, and other possibilities that push them to migrate (Thompson, 2016). The author explains that even though people may have positive imaginations of a specific place, they may only want to visit for tourism purposes but would not want to change their current realities to move there (Ibid).

People can conjure images of themselves in other destinations, without having been there themselves, based on the information they already have or out of their pre-conceived assumptions. Cardoso et al. (2019) analysed migrants' decision-making in conditions of uncertainty. The authors argued that "…the construction of our spatial preferences-- including those attracting us to cities and nudging us to stay in cities - can be interpreted as the product of decision-making under uncertainty, based on imperfect information, shaped by individual perceptions, values and desires, and relying on many contingent, non-economic factors" (p.454). They offered an important insight when they explained that narratives about urban areas have an advantage because of people's cognitive biases. In this way, when people are more aware of those biases, they can assess the benefits and costs of urban life and ultimately make more informed decisions about their location choices. The same logic could be applied to those who prefer to live in smaller cities because of the characteristics that they associate with those areas. For instance, Yoon (2016) shared that Korean entrepreneurs wanted to manage their businesses in small cities, such as Winnipeg, because they assumed that smaller communities would allow them to avoid competition with other Korean business-owners.

Another element of cognitive migration and geographical imaginations involves considering how people's decisions may be linked to other aspects of themselves, including their age and values. Carling and Schewel (2017) elaborated on this when they explained that aspirations of migration are often influenced by people's perceived social norms and expectations. Lewis (2014) suggested that people's propensity to move can weaken as their lives progress or as they age. In his study on gay men's movement from small to mid-sized towns, such as Ottawa, Ontario, and Washington, D.C. Lewis noted that, men who were younger and in the earlier stages of their coming out journey, expressed a desire to move to larger cities where there was a more visible and strong gay community. However, older men were less interested in moving repeatedly and preferred to stay where they had already developed social support systems (Ibid). Therefore, it is important to consider how people's perceptions and biases change as they navigate through different stages of their life.

Belloni (2020) also contributed to this discussion by arguing that people engage in imagining migration by associating certain moral achievements in reaching or being in a certain destination. For example, if migrants were unable to fulfill their family's expectations in a specific location, then it is seen only as a transit place to better locations (Ibid). Similarly,

Halfacree and Rivera (2011) explained that, migrants may experience varying outcomes in their settlement in rural areas but may not be able to admit this failure of meeting expectations. By not admitting failure, migrants would not see the need to move elsewhere. They may also perceive it as a personal challenge to overcome adversity in that city as a predecessor for future success.

Importance of Family

Migrants' decisions to move or stay are often not made on the part of individuals alone. Rather, migrants consider how their decisions may affect the lives of those in their familial networks (Bettin, Eralba, and Fokkema, 2018). Many scholars have examined the role of informal support, including friends, families, and ethnic communities in immigrants and refugees' decisions to move to a city and stay there for extended periods of time (Maharaj and Wang, 2015; Ali, Dargy, and Valade, 2019). While existing studies have explored why some family members might stay in the origin country while other members move (Marta-Codesal, 2015), there have been few studies that have considered the mobility choices of families, following their arrival in destination countries. Migration usually solicits input from family members of all different generations. For instance, Nguyen's study (2018) found that Vietnamese privately-sponsored male refugees were more open to moving around to various cities to look for different jobs and lifestyles when they were still bachelors. However, when they started their own families, some of them, following consultation with their family members, decided to move back to Peterborough, where they had a tight-knit community, lower living costs, and a more peaceful and quieter environment. Another example can be seen in the case of Korean immigrants who were sent to Winnipeg through the Manitoba PNP and voluntarily stayed because of the promise of permanent residency, educational opportunities for their children, and lower living costs (Yoon, 2016). By looking at all the actors involved in the decision-making process on moving and staying, researchers can gain a wider sense of all the complex factors and diverse needs taken into consideration.

The Impact of Lived Experiences in the Receiving Communities

Migrants' Agency and Placemaking

The increasing presence of immigrant populations in small and mid-sized cities can stimulate economic and cultural growth in those communities by creating demands for new services and products, and at the same time, empower migrants. Syrian refugees living in small cities of Alberta explained that one of the downfalls of their experiences was their lack of access to religious spaces and culturally appropriate food (Drolet and Moorthi, 2018). While this might push some migrants to move to other cities where those resources are available, other migrants saw that as an opportunity to become involved. For example, Minh Van and Le Hoa drew on their experience of operating a grocery store in Vietnam to open Minh's Chinese Groceries in Peterborough in 1981. Long before corporate grocery stores offered similar goods, their store had and continues to give local customers access to Asian food items. Minh's ability to speak multiple languages also allows him to help immigrants arriving after him transition to life in Canada (Ball, 2002). Sanchez-Flores (2018) argued that, even though some small cities may lack "institutional completeness" (Raymond Breton, 1964), *because* the ethnic communities are not large enough for those resources to exist, this can encourage immigrants to interact more with the surrounding community. She

explains that cities can facilitate immigrant integration more effectively than large cities because it welcomes just enough migrants to help create a vibrant and socially diverse environment, but not enough to allow ethnic enclaves to form. In another case, Ann Hui, Globe and Mail reporter, (2019) covered her journey across Canada interviewing the owners of Chinese restaurants in small towns. She learned that Chinese immigrants gained a sense of belonging in the communities they lived in, as they operated their restaurants. Far from disappearing, Hui discovered that some of the businesses were run by fourth and fifth generations. Rather than passively waiting for specific resources and opportunities, migrants became active agents in identifying and filling in the gaps.

Immigrants and refugees may also want to stay in small and mid-sized cities because they see themselves contributing to progress and social change that those cities need or are working towards. In these cases, individuals aim to help the communities they live in to become more responsive to the needs of specific groups. Migrants then serve as important actors in placemaking as they "…produce, reproduce and sometimes contest the multiple practices, logics, and ideologies that lead to the constant making of places" (Desille, 2019, p. 442). For instance, a participant in Lewis' article expressed their desire to participate in activism work in one of the mid-sized cities by saying, "…the things that I expected or sought were the things that I was creating or helping to create" (2015, p.230). Halfacree and Rivera (2011) explained that activism may come from a sense that the imagined and the desired have yet to be realized in those settings. Therefore, migrants must commit to the work to be done to profit from their investment in their decisions to move to those small cities.

Furthermore, although small and mid-sized cities might not have anticipated immigrants' needs prior to their arrival, they can still mobilize and adapt to the changes needed for immigrants' successful integration. Mulholland (2017) highlighted how church groups and volunteers from religiously affiliated agencies and faith-based organizations transformed into not-for-profit agencies to fund programs that delivered services to newcomers in communities that previously did not have ethnically diverse populations. Therefore, migrants may not always be at the forefront or directly involved in building businesses or organizing in social movements, but their presence within the community signals the need for more diverse services and representation.

Social Supports and Immigrant Ties

Compared to the gateway cities, the relatively smaller size of immigrant populations and number of newcomer-serving organizations in small and mid-sized cities, do not always drive people to larger metropolitan centres. Rather, the opportunities to develop more personal relationships and contacts in smaller communities often influence migrants to stay in those locations. Chadwick and Collins (2015) conducted interviews with three large and three small urban census metropolitan centres (CMAs) in Canada, to understand whether city size affects the availability of social supports and migrants' health statuses. Through their mixed-methods study, they found that settlement service organizations in small urban centres offered intensive social support for migrants. The participants explained that this was due to the development of personal relationships in the small cities and the ease of connecting with different agencies for other necessary supports. Carter, Townsend, and Pandey explained that the "… program has capitalized on these ethnic and cultural connections by marketing itself in the source regions and countries of these groups" (2008, p.32). For example, in a city near Winnipeg, the Jewish community, with a population of 15,000, attracted Jews from Argentina. They did this by sending delegations to Argentina, assisting with job interviews and English lessons, as well as ensuring that prospective migrants could eat Sabbath dinner during exploratory visits (Krauss, 2002). Carter, Morrish,

and Amoyaw (2008) further elaborated that it was important to establish personal linkages and to bridge information gaps for migrants. This was conducive to creating a welcoming community and for the goal of migrant retention.

Comparing Lived Experiences in Different Cities

Some studies have acknowledged that migrants refer to their pre-arrival experiences and life stages to assess how they feel living in cities in the destination countries. For example, Caidi et al. (2018) observed that older Chinese immigrants to Australia and Canada made sense of their local environment by constantly comparing it with their experiences from "back home". Kim and Belkhodja (2012) looked at Korean migrants in Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John, New Brunswick. They noted that small cities with less Korean co-ethnics, and therefore less intra-group competition, were more appealing to families, specifically their children, because they "…have the advantage of living an absolute life, not a relative one" (p.81). Their experiences of education in Canada contrasted the education system in Korea that was ultra-competitive and exerted a lot of pressure on children. In addition, the literature on newcomers' access to housing in small and mid-sized cities suggests that adopting a comparative approach would provide some insights into how those cities can continue to attract and retain migrants. This is because migrants tend to evaluate their experiences in non-gateway cities by comparing it to their experiences and perceived conditions of the housing market in larger cities. Brown (2017) explained that, in addition to educational opportunities at post-secondary institutions, family reunification, and smaller populations, the lower costs of living were what initially attracted immigrants to North Bay, Ontario. However, the participants in Brown's study shared that North Bay offered limited, older housing stock and that the rental prices were not significantly cheaper than the prices in the larger cities that they had left. In this way, small and mid-sized cities can improve their retention of newcomers by ensuring that they offer more comparative advantages to living in larger cities.

Focusing on Staying as an Analytical and Empirical Question

Schewel (2019) elaborated on the importance of challenging the mobility bias in migration research by expanding on the aspiration-capability framework. Her article was significant in advancing discussions on the need for more rigorous immobility studies as she argued that, to understand "real-world migration trends" (p.329), it is necessary to conduct analyses of why actors may stay in their origin countries as a response to structural forces that influence migration. In particular, she proposed three categories to explain people's immobility preferences, including retain factors, repel factors, and "internal constraints" on decision-making (ibid, p.339). Retain factors consist of the conditions at home that influence migrants to voluntarily stay. On the other hand, repel factors are conditions outside of individuals' homes that lessen their desire to migrate. Lastly, internal constraints include aspects of individuals' psychology that affect their decision-making on whether to stay or leave. While Schewel focused mainly on immobility in the context of individuals in their origin countries, she explained that it should also be studied in other spatial and temporal frames, including internal migration and throughout the life course of migrant actors. To further Schewel's work, this paper aims to shift perspectives on migrants' decision-making on locations of residence following their arrival and over the course of their permanent residence in destination countries.

By exploring the question of why migrants stay in small and mid-sized cities, we suggest that research should move beyond the lens of methodological nationalism, which focuses on the nation-state as the main analytical unit. While immigrants and refugees move to different countries, their experiences as newcomers are shaped significantly by the conditions and structures at the local city level. This aligns with Glick-Schiller and Salazar's article (2013) on regimes of mobility as they explored how people and their cultural practices extend across "multiple spatial networks and temporal linkages" (p.185). By exploring why migrants stay in small and mid-sized cities voluntarily, we can better understand the nuanced ways and methods in which they simultaneously maintain their connections to metropolitan centres, origin countries, and other imagined destinations. Although migrants may live in one specific city, this does not mean that they are confined to that one fixed territory. Migrants' continual stay in a small and mid-sized city does not necessarily mean that they are isolated from other places.

To understand why migrants stay for extended periods of time in specific cities, it is necessary to challenge binary approaches to mobility and immobility studies. According to Mata-Codesal (2015), mobility and immobility are a "…mutually constituted unit". While she discussed this in the context of Mexican immigrants who stayed behind in the home country in order for the other family members to move to and work in the United States, this can also be applied in the context of internal migration. For example, while a family is rooted in one city, some family members may commute back and forth to work in another nearby metropolitan centre. In this way, migrants' geographical proximity to other larger cities and the opportunities that proximity generates serve as an interesting area for future research. In other cases, migrants may engage in periods of international mobility and then choose not to participate in secondary migration once they settle down in their destination country.

Rather than just considering migrants' immediate settlement needs to explain their location choices and mobility trajectories, this framework places emphasis on migrants' long-term future aspirations to enhance understanding on when migrants choose to stay. Stockdale, Theunissen, and Haartsen (2017) explained that migrants understood staying, often referring to potential future events. In this way, migrants' relationship to place is influenced not only by their day to day experiences but also by their sense of future in those specific cities. While it is important to address newcomers' specific needs upon their arrival in a city, we should not overlook the concerns that they may develop over time, as they continue to adjust to their new homes. Thus, this paper suggests that more migration studies using life course approaches would allow us to see what migrants prioritize in their decision-making, at various stages in their lives. For single bachelors, this may include prioritizing locations that would give them opportunities to advance their careers or form connections with wider social networks. In the case of families, their intentions to move to specific cities could be linked to their desire for quality education and smaller social environments. By asking why migrants stay, we suggest that the reasons are far more nuanced than just migrants' economic motivations to accumulate capital.

Linked to the idea of seeing a future in specific cities, the question of why migrants voluntarily stay, suggest that there is room for more interdisciplinary research between urban planning and migration studies. This analytical and empirical question challenges urban bias along with mobility bias. While we should centre the lived experiences of migrants, we should also pay attention to the role of the city and local community in place-making and urban development. For instance, how can local communities improve immigrants' sense of attachment that extends beyond the newcomer sector? Shifting from a focus of why migrants leave to why migrants stay can offer insights into how to improve initiatives in municipal communities. In a study on Welcoming Initiatives in Windsor, George, Selimos and Ku (2017) argued that the initiative needed to promote more organic connections to be made that go beyond the settlement sector in order to strengthen immigrants' attachment to the

city. They focused specifically on the community's "attitudes towards immigrants and diversity; engagement between stakeholders and immigrants; and social engagement opportunities" (Ibid., p.31). Their observation was derived from interviews with community stakeholders who often did not have any meaningful direct interactions with newcomers despite the city's official discourse emphasizing its diverse and welcoming nature. The analytical and empirical question asked in this paper encourages further research on how to develop meaningful, two-way relationships between local community members and newcomers as they engage in placemaking and city-building processes.

Questions for Future Research and Policy Agendas

In addition to the analytical and empirical question of why migrants stay, this section provides some other questions for future research and policy agendas to consider. The author's aim in asking these questions is to improve the ways in which researchers and policymakers analyse and address the needs of both municipal communities and newcomers through regionalization and integration programs.

A) *How can regionalization programs and policies more effectively balance the social and economic needs of migrants and local communities?*

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) has been successful in redistributing immigrants and refugees to non-gateway cities in Canada. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, over half of recent immigrants were admitted through the PNP (Statistics Canada, 2017). Manitoba has been heralded as an exemplary case study for other provinces as it has demonstrated increases in the rates of immigration and retention not only to the province but to cities outside of Winnipeg, its capital. Carter, Townsend, and Pandey (2010) explained that the program's success was attributed to the provincial government's focus on matching potential immigrants with labour demands and involvement of the local community and employers in the planning, promotion, sponsorship processes. They also looked to the ethnic communities already present in Manitoba to recruit migrants from the same source countries. Over time, immigrants there bought houses, formed strong social networks, experienced social mobility through their careers, and supported their families. The success of the PNP led to the implementation of more recent programs including the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP), and the Rural and Northern Communities Immigration Pilot (RNIP).

Despite the success of the Manitoba PNP, some scholars raised concerns about the program's motivation and long-term outcomes. Carter, Townsend, and Pandey (2010) posed the question of whether the province continued to attract and retain immigrants during economic downturns. This could be a problem as immigrants are often selected based on their potential to address current labour shortages. Dobrowlsky (2013) also weighed in on this issue during her review of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. She explained that immigration policies must be formed to balance both economic and social needs, which would require more funding for social programs and networks on the local level, including supporting family sponsorship. In that way, these authors have pointed to the limits of a one-dimensional immigrant recruitment strategy, which prioritizes their economic contributions, at the expense of immigrants' multi-faceted needs and which does not consider the long-term commitments required for migrants' successful integration and sense of belonging. Raising the question of why migrants stay would allow us to better understand how to attract and retain migrants in less attractive areas for extended periods of time.

B) *Are some specific immigrant and/or refugee groups more likely to stay in small and mid-sized cities?*

Although refugees often do not have control over their initial destination in Canada, they are also less likely to participate in secondary migration after their arrival. Kaid, Stick and Hou (2020) studied long-term secondary migration in Canada by immigrant admission category. They noted that privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) chose to stay in their initial destination cities because of their attachment to their "adopted community". Furthermore, Nguyen's study (2018), looking at the resettlement experiences of Vietnamese refugees in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada from 1975 to the mid-1990s, found that most PSRs and government sponsored refugees (GSRs) that were directed to Peterborough for resettlement continued to build their lives there. Although some participants moved to nearby larger cities for a few years, they would eventually return to Peterborough to raise their families. In a case study on migrants' location choices in Australia, Sapeha (2016) found that different groups of migrants have different propensities to move or stay in their initial destination. She explained that, even though the Australian immigration programs target highly educated migrants, they are more likely to have intentions to relocate or reconsider their place of residence. More research on the refugee resettlement program could provide some insights into whether some immigrants coming to Canada are more likely to stay for extended periods of time in small and mid-sized cities. Are there aspects of the program that could be adopted for non-refugees?

C) *To what extent can we enhance newcomers' access to metropolitan centres through advances in transportation and communications technologies?*

Some regionalization policies and programs aim to promote migration to areas that are considered more remote and rural, such the Rural and Northern Communities Immigration Pilot (RNIP). These small and mid-sized cities may seem even further isolated if migrants only have limited knowledge about some of the larger metropolitan centres in the destination countries. Curiel et al. (2018) argued that distance has multiple meanings. Beyond being far from another place, distance also includes having a lack of information about a distant place, the costs of moving, and the differences in lifestyles. This study suggests that migrants may be more attracted to settling in small and mid-sized cities that are within reasonable distance to a larger city because they would have more access to opportunities and resources provided by both small and large cities.

Goldenberg and Haines (1992) argued that institutional completeness, can be achieved without being bounded by specific geographic limits because advances in transportation and communication technologies liberate the community from spatial constraints. This means that migrants in small cities can also access services in larger cities through various means. For example, the authors mentioned how one Jewish family living in a small city in Manitoba visited their family during road trips and maintained close contact with a rabbi in Winnipeg through mail (Ibid). Goldenberg and Haines suggest that institutional completeness, then, can also be measured by other properties such as their "…reachability, anchorage, composition, and also by frequency, intensity, multiplexity, and duration" (1992, p.310). Some migrants may choose to stay in small and mid-sized cities that offer more affordable housing and more tranquil environments but that are also within reach of a larger city for other purposes, such as entertainment and cultural events. Municipal governments should then ensure that migrants have access to public transportation if they do not own a car or have a driving license. Furthermore, the current global pandemic offers opportunities for us to continue finding innovative ways to bridge the

gap and distance between small, mid-sized, and large cities through advances in how we use communications technologies.

Conclusion

Throughout Canadian immigration history, immigrants and refugees have voluntarily stayed in small and mid-sized cities. While the flows to those small and mid-sized cities are not as significant as the populations going to larger metropolitan centres, we should not discredit the impact they can have on those communities. Often, their presence, long-term residence, and active involvement in those communities have helped to facilitate change to better welcome other newcomers, including by signalling the need for more diverse services and businesses. Some immigrants and refugees voluntarily stay in small and mid-sized cities because of their positive perceptions of those cities, their attachments to that city over time as they live there, their strong social bonds developed with personal contacts, the quality of life for their families, their ability to secure their livelihoods without stressing about competition with other co-ethnics, and their perceived ability to make social change and improve inclusivity for other newcomers in those cities.

As a result of this gap in research, this paper offers analytical and empirical questions that focus on asking why migrants voluntarily stay in specific cities for extended periods of time, using a life course approach. By asking this question, we aim to challenge existing approaches to studies on the regionalization of migration that rely on methodological nationalism, binary understandings of mobility and immobility, and neoclassical drivers of migration in their analyses. Rather, we aim to promote future research and policy agendas that take into consideration migrants' dynamic and complex lived experiences, aspirations, and agency in decision-making and place-making processes.

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