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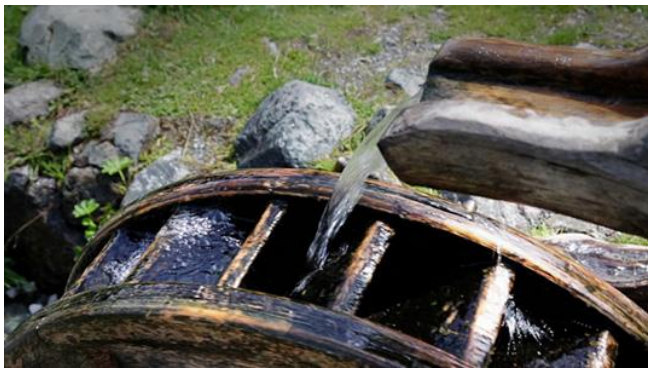
MIGRANT INTEGRATION IN SMALL COMMUNITIES



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Immigrant integration in small and medium-sized towns and rural areas: local policies and policymaking relations

in Canada

Country Reports on multilevel dynamics

By Maissaa Almustafa, Kathryn Barber, and Willem Maas

York University

REPORT

https://whole-comm.eu

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Abstract

This report looks at multilevel governance dynamics and at the integration policies targeting migrants developed by six small and medium-sized towns and rural areas in Canada between 2016 and 2021. Primarily based on interviews conducted in each of the selected municipalities, it provides an overview of 1) national, regional, and local integration policies targeting migrants in Canada; 2) policymaking relations among the key actors involved in these policy processes in the six localities and key features of policy networks within which these actors interact; 3) how these actors perceive and define integration. The report finds that the political orientation of the federal and provincial governments in Canada greatly influenced the dynamics of multilevel governance of immigrant integration in the selected Canadian localities, whereas municipalities, which could voluntarily elect to play a role in integration, were not obligated to do so as part of their formal political mandate. In Ontario and B.C., selected municipalities had conducted multiple initiatives intended to assist newcomers. These initiatives were unintegrated into municipal integration strategies and were done in an *ad hoc* manner in response to specific appeals from the local communities. In Quebec, selected municipalities towns had existing integration policies and infrastructure, including municipally or regionally-sponsored integration dialogues that were intended to coordinate social service delivery for newcomers. Immigration was characterized by all interviewees as the primary solution to labour shortages and population decline in the selected localities. Yet, factors like housing availability, affordability, housing size, and transportation were key issues of concern for immigrant integration. Familiarity between actors and active community mobilization facilitated immigrant integration despite the lack of ethnic diversity and the limited resources of integration particularly in smaller localities.

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Introduction

This report explores how six small and medium sized towns and rural areas in Canada have responded to the presence of migrants. In particular it assesses, first, which policies have been developed and implemented in these small and medium sized towns and rural areas, or, in other words, how have SMsTRA mobilized vis-à-vis the new challenge and in relation to the policies and funding schemes put forward by other levels of government. In doing so, the project looks at the embeddedness of local actors in multilevel frameworks in which regional and national policies and stakeholders may play a decisive role in shaping local integration policymaking. Second, the report focuses on the interactions between the actors involved in integration policymaking, asking: what different patterns of interaction can we identify between local (policy) actors and regional/national/supranational authorities and stakeholders? Which factors have led to the emergence of collaborations as well as tensions between actors at different government levels? Are new cooperative relationships eventually emerging and, if so, what are the key features of resulting policy networks? Third, the report asks how the actors involved in these policy networks perceive and frame the integration of immigrants, under the assumption that frames can play a key role in influencing policymaking processes.

In these localities – which differ in terms of their size, the political affiliation of their local government, their experience with cultural diversity, their economic and demographic situation and that are located in different regions – a total of 38 interviews have been conducted with actors involved in local integration policymaking, including members of local government, local officials, street-level bureaucrats local councilors and a wide range of non-governmental actors. Insights derived from the interview material have been complemented with an in-depth analysis of policy and legal documents.

The report crucially finds that 1) the political orientation of the federal and provincial governments in Canada greatly influenced the dynamics of multilevel governance of immigrant integration in the selected Canadian localities. 2) Municipalities, which could voluntarily elect to play a role in integration, were not obligated to do so as part of their formal political mandate. In Ontario and B.C., selected municipalities had conducted multiple initiatives intended to assist newcomers. These initiatives were unintegrated into municipal integration strategies and were done in an *ad hoc* manner in response to specific appeals from the local communities. In Quebec, selected municipalities towns had existing integration policies and infrastructure, including municipally or regionally-sponsored integration dialogues that were intended to coordinate social service delivery for newcomers. 3) Immigration was characterized by all interviewees as the primary solution to labour shortages and population decline in the selected localities. 4) Factors like housing availability, affordability, housing size, and transportation were key issues of concern for immigrant integration. 5) Familiarity between actors and active community mobilization facilitated

immigrant integration despite the lack of ethnic diversity and the limited resources of integration particularly in smaller localities.

This Report is a deliverable of the Whole-COMM Project, which focuses on small and medium sized municipalities and rural areas in eight European and two non-European countries that have experienced and dealt with the increased arrival and settlement of migrants after 2014 (for more information about the project see: Caponio and Pettrachin, 2021).

MLG

The term governance describes a clear shift in public action and public organization which is increasingly characterized by the reliance on private and voluntary sector actors to "devise, manage, and deliver policies and services" (Bevir & Rhodes, 2016, 2). The process of governing consequently involves not only state actors, but a diverse range of organizational forms and actors which collaborate with each other at different level, or to put it differently, in a multilevel framework.

Following Adam and Caponio (2019), MLG can be defined as the "process of dispersion of authority away from the nation state and across interdependent, and yet autonomous, public authorities and non-public organizations placed at different levels of government" (p. 27). Scholten and Penninx (2016) stress further that in order to be able to speak of MLG some minimal degree of "interaction and joint coordination of relations between the various levels of government" (p. 95) needs to be involved. Consequently, the MLG concept may serve as a suitable lens through which interactions and relations between the supranational, national, regional, and local level can be examined. This is especially relevant since migrant integration policies are not 'just' negotiated at the national level, but rather at different government levels and between various public and non-public actors (Adam & Caponio, 2019; Caponio & Jones-Correa, 2018). The understanding that multiple actors are involved in the governance process concomitantly challenges the predominant idea that the nation-state is the 'natural' frame of reference for immigration policies or (policy) analysis. This, in turn, underlines the need to look at the local level as "independent level of policy development" (Van Breugel, 2020, 1) (and not just policy implementation) to better understand the outcome of integration policies (for a nuanced analysis of local-level politics addressing immigration see for instance Schiller, 2015).

Methodology

Amongst the countries evaluated in this project, Canada is an outlier. It is the only North American case study and possesses different migratory trends and reception infrastructure from the other countries in the Whole-Comm project. While the majority of individuals who arrived in Europe post-2014 were asylum seekers who made "irregular" journeys to seek protection in European destinations, Canada received resettled refugees through regular immigration channels and a targeted policy intervention called the *Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative* (Almustafa, 2021). This initiative occurred in very late 2015 and early 2016 and resettled approximately 40,000 people over a two-year period. Although small in size relative to post-2014 immigrants received in Europe, the Syrian Initiative was the second largest resettlement initiative ever undertaken by Canada after the Indochinese movement of the late 1970s and 80s which welcomed approximately 60,000 people and launched the Canadian private sponsorship program (Molloy and Simeon, 2016).

Table 1: Variables used to select studied localities

Population size	Medium town: 100,000 – 250,000 Small town: 50,000 – 100,000 Rural area: 5,000 - 50,000 and low population density
Number of currently residing immigrants	Time period: arrived during and after 2016
Share of Foreign Residents	Time period: in 2006 (SF2006)
Variation of Unemployment level	Time period: 2006-2016 (VARUN)
AND/OR Unemployment Levels	Time period: 2006 and 2016
Variation of number of inhabitants	Time period: 2006-2016 (VARNI) and 2016 -2021
Regional variation	Provinces
Local politics	Most local politicians run as independents in Canada

Following the project methodology, populations of selected medium towns ranged from 100,000 to 250,000 inhabitants and from 5,000 to 50,000 inhabitants for selected small towns. All towns were not linked to a larger city. *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada* (IRCC) data indicated that they had all received resettled refugees (Syrian and other) during the study period. Finally, politically liberal and conservative towns were selected using federal and provincial elections information.

Several selection criteria were modified to reflect the Canadian context. The regional variation variable was changed to provinces (not North/South or East/West) because they are the most relevant regional political variation. Two case sites from each of the three most populous provinces in Canada – Ontario, Quebec, and B.C. – were selected. This means that six towns were examined. A different study period, 2016 to 2021, was also used. This was done because the majority of refugees resettled through the Syrian Initiative arrived in the country during

this period (alongside other resettled refugees and immigrants from other countries). Census data from the 2006 and 2016 censuses were used to calculate VARNI and VARUN scores because the Canadian census cycle happens every five years and these iterations were closest to the 2005-2014 period used by the Whole-COMM literature.

Table 2: Types of localities

Type A	Characterized by a recovering local economy and an improving demographic profile and migrants' settlement before 2016
Type B	Characterized by an improving economic and demographic situation and no remarkable arrivals of migrants before 2016
Type C	Characterized by demographic and economic decline and migrants' settlement before 2016
Type D	Characterized by economic and demographic decline and no remarkable arrivals of migrants before 2016

VARUN and VARNI were taken into consideration when selecting the Canadian towns alongside Statistics Canada census profile information and IRCC immigration data. The three small-sized towns selected for this study have VARUN and VARNI values that are lower than the national average. Kelowna, B.C. (a medium-sized town) possesses a VARUN score that is higher than the national average, but it also has a very high VARNI score and had also been recognized as the fastest growing CMA in Canada. The two other medium-sized towns have VARNI scores that exceed the national average and VARUN scores that are lower than the national average.

The case study towns do not fit the Whole-COMM typology very well because the variations in demographics, economy and immigration that were used to define the four different types do not reflect the Canadian context. All of the Canadian towns possessed increasing population rates. This made Types C and D inapplicable. Additionally, the VARUN scores for Ontario and Quebec were lower than the national average and were negative, in the case of Quebec. Finally, Canada is a country that has relied heavily on immigration for population growth for quite some time. Although asylum seekers do arrive in Canada, most immigration, including resettled refugees, occurs through "regular" channels that are heavily controlled by the state and managed through immigration targets. The distinction between arrival/no arrival of immigrants is difficult to qualify for these reasons.

Table 3: VARNI and VARUN variables for Canadian localities (2006 – 2016)

	VARNI	VARUN
Canada	**11.19**	**1.10**
Ontario medium-sized locality (Guelph)	19.66	0.80
Ontario small locality (Stratford)	3.29	0.30
Quebec medium-sized locality (Sherbrooke)	13.45	-0.20
Quebec small locality (Victoriaville)	0.52	-0.40
B.C. medium-sized locality (Kelowna)	20.09	2.00
B.C. small locality (Vernon)	10.67	1.60

The empirical material for the report is based on a *policy analysis* and *qualitative interviews*. Canada did not participate in the quantitative survey, ethnographic observation, or focus groups. This study was approved by the York University Research Ethics Board and ethics consent to publish the names of the localities was received. The analysis is supplemented with information from the 2016 and 2021 Canadian censuses as well as relevant academic literature. Whenever possible, data from the 2021 census was used. However, most of the census profiles, particularly the immigration and diversity profiles, for the 2021 Canadian census have not been released by Statistics Canada. When 2021 data was not available, 2016 data was used. IRCC data was collected through the *OpenCanada* data portal. Information about Quebec was collected through the *Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration* and the *Statistical Institute of Quebec* websites. Information about Ontario and B.C. was collected through various provincial ministry websites and municipal websites.

This study observes that a variety of terms are used by Canadian actors at different levels of governance to refer to the process that the Whole-COMM literature defines as “integration”. These terms include “settlement”, “resettlement”, “inclusion” and “integration”. The federal literature tends to use the term “settlement” when referring to services offered to newcomers but uses “resettlement” to refer to services offered to refugees. In the provinces of Ontario and B.C., the term “resettlement” is used to refer to services offered to all newcomers including refugees. The term “integration” is not commonly used when referring to service delivery. In Quebec, “inclusion” and “integration” are the preferred terms.

Ontario is Canada's most populous province and its western region is the fastest growing in the nation. The province attracts the highest number of immigrants in Canada. Toronto is the capital of the province and is the biggest CMA in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021a). Quebec is the second most populous province in Canada, containing 23.0% of the Canadian population and is the third largest host of immigrants to the country (Statistics Canada, 2016a). Along with Ontario, it also receives high numbers of asylum claims. Quebec has an arrangement with the federal government that is different from every other Canadian province and it possesses its own provincial immigration ministry called the *Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration* (MIFI) that is responsible for administering economic and humanitarian immigration as well as integration activities. British Columbia (B.C.) is the third-most populous province in Canada, containing 11.4% of the national population. Vancouver is the biggest city in the province and it is one of the world's most expensive cities, with the highest cost of living in North America. In 2021, the Vancouver CMA's population was estimated at 2,606,000, an increase of 5.5% from 2016. Immigrants made up to 40.8% of the city's population in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016a).

Report Structure

The *first section* introduces the Canadian national, provincial, and municipal contexts. Specifically, it provides a very basic overview of federal and provincial demographics, decision-making structures, responsibilities, political parties and policies/legislation related to immigration and integration. It then provides a brief summary of the population (including migratory trends) and economy as well as the integration infrastructure present in each locality.

The *second section* provides an analysis of MLG around resettlement and integration in each of the localities. Each sub-section combines the discussion of Ontario and B.C. (while, of course, noting their differences) and discusses Quebec separately. This was done because immigration in every province is administered by the federal IRCC except for Quebec which controls its own immigration system and possesses separate refugee resettlement agreements with the UNHCR. This geographic division is consistent with the way that immigration is discussed in IRCC literature.

Canadian census and IRCC definitions

This report relies on census material that uses terms that are unique to the Canadian context and require definition. Below, these key terms are defined.

Blended Visa Office-Referred Program (BVOR): Defined by IRCC as "refugees referred to Canadian visa offices abroad directly by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The Government of Canada will generally provide up to six months of income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program, while private sponsors will provide another six months of financial support and up to a year of social and emotional support. Refugees are also covered under the Interim Federal Health Program for the duration of the sponsorship (one year), in addition to provincial health coverage".

Census metropolitan area (CMA): Defined by Statistics Canada as "a census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core based on adjusted data from the previous Census of Population Program. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000 also based on data from the previous Census of Population Program".

Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR): Defined by IRCC as "a person who is outside Canada and has been determined to be a Convention refugee and who receives financial and other support from the Government of Canada or Province of Quebec for up to one year after their arrival in Canada. GARs are selected from applicants referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other referral organizations".

Local Immigration Partnership (LIP): Defined by IRCC as "community-based partnerships designed to foster a systematic approach to engage Service Provider Organisations SPOs and other institutions to integrate newcomers, support community-based knowledge-sharing and local strategic planning and improve coordination of effective services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration. LIPs do not provide direct services to newcomers. Rather, they seek to increase the absorptive capacity of host communities by engaging a range of stakeholders including employers, school boards, health centres, levels of government, Service Provider Organizations, professional associations, ethno-cultural and faith-based organizations, and the community and social services sectors to enhance collaboration and strategic planning at the community-level".

National Occupation Classification (NOC): A list of all the occupations in the Canadian labour market. It describes each job according to skill type and skill level. The NOC is used to collect and organize job statistics and to provide labor market information. It is also used as a basis for certain immigration requirements.

Privately-Sponsored Refugee (PSR): Defined by IRCC as "a person outside Canada who has been determined to be a Convention refugee or member of the Country of Asylum class and who receives financial and other support from a private sponsor for one year after their arrival in Canada. Private sponsors are Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), Groups of Five or Community Sponsors".

Refugee Assistance Program (RAP): Defined by IRCC as "a federal program through which the Government of Canada helps government-assisted refugees (GARs) and other eligible clients when they first arrive in Canada by providing direct financial support, and funding the provision of immediate and essential services. Financial support includes a one-time start up allowance and monthly income support typically provided for up to one year or until clients can support themselves, whichever comes first. RAP Service Provider Organizations, located in communities across the country except Quebec, deliver RAP immediate and essential services to clients generally within four to six weeks of arrival in Canada".

Visible minority: Defined by the *Employment Equity Act* as: "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

Section 1.0: introducing the cases

Table 4: Overview of main policies and actors

	LAWS/ACTS	POLICIES/ PROGRAMS	MAIN ACTORS	ROLE/ RESPONSIBILITY OF ACTORS	FUNDING
NATIONAL (FEDERAL) LEVEL	Citizenship Act (1985); Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1985); Canadian Human Rights Code (1985); Accord Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall (1991); Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001); Safe Third Country Agreement (2004)	Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative; Provincial Nominee Programs; Bilateral Immigration Agreements with provinces	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB); Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)	IRCC: Development and coordination of federal immigration programs and organizational policies, sets numerical targets selection of immigrants for all provinces except Quebec, funds of settlement service programs and organizations IRB: Adjudicate all refugee claims and unsuccessful immigration applications CBSA: Polices all regular border crossings.	Federal
REGIONAL (PROVINCIAL) LEVEL	ON: Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act, 1990; Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006; Newcomers Employment Opportunities Act, 2010 (Bill 89); Ontario Immigration Act, 2015; Ontario Anti-Racism Act, 2017 (Bill 114)	ON: Adult language training Program; Newcomer Settlement Program NSP; Bridge training programs; Municipal Immigration Information Program; Ontario Immigration Nominee Program (OINP); Municipal Nominee Program (MNP)	ON: Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services; Ministry of Colleges and Universities; Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development	Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism: Ontario's anti-racism and inclusion initiatives under the Antiracism Act 2017 (Bill 114); Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services: Division of Immigration and Citizenship; Ministry of Colleges and Universities: Immigration training programs; Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: Ontario Immigration Nominee Program (OINP); Bridge program	Federal / provincial
	QC: Accord Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall (1991); Quebec Immigration Act	QC: Selection of economic and humanitarian immigrants; Administration of immigration programs;	QC: Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration (MIFI)	MIFI: Immigration programs (Qualified permanent workers; Business class; Temporary foreign	Provincial

	(2016); Bill 9; Law 96; Bill 21	Provision of settlement programs		workers; Temporary to permanent foreign workers; Foreign students; Family sponsorship; Humanitarian immigration) Settlement programs (Program of collective support; Program of accompaniment and support for integration; Program Soutien à la mission; Credential recognition program)	
	B.C.: Ministry of International Business and Immigration Act of 1990; Immigration Programs Act of 2015 (Bill 39),	B.C.: Welcome B.C.; Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP); Entrepreneur Immigration Pilot Program; Regional Pilot (BC PNP); Refugee Readiness Program; Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP)	B.C.: Ministry of Municipal Affairs; Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation; Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training; Immigrants Service Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC)	B.C.: Ministry of Municipal Affairs: Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot (B.C. PNP), Refugee Readiness Program; Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation: Entrepreneurs Pilot Program; Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training; Welcome BC. Immigrants Service Society of British Columbia ISSofBC: Resettlement services for immigrants and refugees	Federal / Provincial
LOCAL (Municipal) LEVEL	ON: No municipal policies or mandates for immigration, resettlement, or integration services	ON: Local equity, diversity, inclusion initiatives; Municipal Nominee Program (MNP)	ON: Social service divisions at counties; Community-based, non-profit resettlement agencies; Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs)	ON: Counties and resettlement agencies: Orientation sessions; language training, translation and interpretation, subsidised housing, employment resources, and advocacy; Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs): Coordinate and support the work of immigration and resettlement service providers	Federal, provincial and municipal
	QC: Municipal policy is present	QC: Sherbrooke policy on the reception and	QC: Integration centres; community non-profit	QC: Economic integration; francisation; interpretation; housing;	Provincial and municipal

		integration of immigrant people (2009); 2018/19 Sherbrooke Action plan on immigration; 2020/21; Sherbrooke action plan on immigration; MRC-Arthabaska Policy of reception, integration and retention of immigrant people (2012)	organizations; Municipal integration officers	transportation; accompaniment; cultural activities and festivals	
	B.C.: No municipal policies or mandates for immigration, resettlement, or integration services	B.C.: local initiatives of Equity, diversity, inclusion; Regional Pilot (B.C. PNP); Refugee Readiness Program; Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP)	B.C.: Regional Districts; Community-based, non-profit resettlement agencies; Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs)	B.C.: Regional Districts and resettlement agencies: Orientation sessions; language training, translation and interpretation, subsidised housing, employment resources, and advocacy; Local Immigration Partnership (LIPs): Coordinate and support the work of immigration and resettlement service providers	Federal, provincial, and municipal

1.1 Brief profile of Canadian demographics, political structures and political parties

Basic population characteristics

In 2021, the Canadian population reached 38.2 million people, increasing from 35.1 million in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2022a; Statistics Canada, 2016b). The majority of the population are of working age (15-64) and the average age is 41 (Statistics Canada, 2016b). In 2016, the median income per private household for individuals 15 years and older was $34,204[1] and the unemployment rate was 7.7% (Statistics Canada, 2016b). The National Occupational Areas (NOCs[2]) that employed the highest numbers of Canadians include: 1) Sales and service occupations (4,265,895); 2) Business, finance and administration occupations (2,874,305); 3) Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (2,668,875); 4) Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services (2,138,445) (Statistics Canada, 2016b). Visible minorities (excluding Aboriginal people) make up approximately 22.0% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2016b). The largest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) in Canada are Toronto (6.2 million), Montreal (4.3 million) and Vancouver (2.6 million) (Statistics Canada, 2022b).

Canada has historically relied on immigration for population growth and continues to do so. Consistently, between 2016 and 2021, Canadian population growth was driven by international immigration as opposed to births in Canada (CIC, 2022). In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that roughly 23.0% (8,219,555) of the Canadian population were first generation (defined in the census as "persons who were born outside Canada. For the most part, these are people who are now, or once were, immigrants to Canada") and 17.0% (6,100,725) were second generation (defined in the census as "persons who were born in Canada and had at least one parent born outside Canada. For the most part, these are the children of immigrants") (Statistics Canada, 2016b). The top ten countries of origin for immigrants to Canada were India (668,565), China (649,260), Philippines (588,305), the United Kingdom (499,115), the United States (253,715), Italy (236,640), Hong Kong (208,940), Pakistan (202,260), Viet Nam (169,250) and Iran (154,425) (Statistics Canada, 2016b).

Housing prices in Canada have increased significantly in recent years, creating a housing crisis in many urban and rural areas. The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) reports that between December 2016 and December 2021, the average cost of a house in Canada nearly doubled, rising from $495,200 to $814,200 (CREA, 2021). Over the same period, the Statistics Canada New Housing Price Index[3] indicated an overall increase of 20.8% in the price of a new

[1] All references to dollars are in Canadian dollars.
[2] 'National Occupational Areas' or NOCs are the official Statistics Canada job classification system used for the census.
[3] A Statistics Canada index based on a monthly representative that tracks *relative* increases in the price of a *newly constructed* home.

home for all of Canada. Broken down by the provinces of interest over the same period, Ontario increased 24.4%, Quebec increased 35.5% and B.C. increased 24.1% (Statistics Canada, 2022e). In terms of absolute prices, in September 2021, the average price of a home in Ontario was $887,290, $459,955 in Quebec and $913,471 British Columbia (B.C.) (CREA, 2021).

Basic Canadian decision-making structures

Politically, Canada is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy based on the Westminster system and, like the bicameral British parliament, members of Canada's upper house, the Senate (Senators), are appointed while members of the lower house, the House of Commons (Members of Parliament, MPs), are elected in single-seat constituencies. Each MP is elected to represent a specific constituency in a plurality, first-past-the-post election for a term not to exceed five years. When a seat becomes vacant between general elections, a by-election is held and the winner serves until the next general election (Maas, 2015). The head of state is the king or queen, represented by the governor general in Canada, and the head of government is the prime minister. There are ten provinces and three territories, each with its own provincial legislative assembly, provincial cabinet, administrative regions, and electoral system (Parliament of Canada, 2022b). Two legal systems are present at the provincial level – the *civil code* in Quebec and *common law* at the federal level and every other province and territory (Government of Canada, 2022b). The federal and provincial governments share responsibilities for generating legislation and municipalities can modify legislation through bylaws and resolutions (Government of Canada, 2022e).

The **federal** government is responsible for generating policy and legislation related to national defence, foreign affairs including immigration, the postal service, employment insurance, copyright law, banking, federal taxes, and criminal law (Parliament of Canada, 2022c). *Federal policy* (and some legislation) is made by the Prime Minister's Cabinet. The Cabinet is made up of the prime minister and their cabinet ministers who are MPs selected by the prime minister and generally belong to the same political party. Each cabinet minister heads a federal ministry and makes policy decisions related to the operation of that ministry. The federal immigration ministry, *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada* (IRCC), is led by a cabinet minister (Parliament of Canada, 2022a).

A similar decision-making structure is present at the **provincial level** (with the caveat that there are no provincial senates). The province is responsible for developing policy and legislation related to provincial taxes, hospital, prisons, education, property and civil rights (Parliament of Canada, 2022d). Each province has a *provincial legislative assembly* that decides provincial legislation and a *provincial ministerial cabinet* that makes policy decisions. Provincial legislative assemblies are made up of elected provincial representatives whose formal title varies by province. In Ontario, Quebec and B.C., they are called *Member of Provincial Parliament* (MPP), *Member of the National Assembly* (MNA) and *Member of the Legislative Assembly* (MLA) respectively. The provinces are headed by premiers, who select a provincial cabinet of ministers who are usually elected to the legislature. The cabinet

ministers act as the head of the provincial ministries (Parliament of Canada, 2022a). The provincial ministries responsible for matters related to immigration and integration differ by province. In Ontario, they include the *Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism*, the *Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services*, the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities* and the *Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development*. In Quebec, most matters related immigration and integration are addressed by the *Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration.* Finally, in B.C., the ministries include the *Ministry of Municipal Affairs*, the *Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness* and the *Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training*.

Decision-making at the **municipal level** is slightly different. The municipalities are responsible for building permits and zoning, public transportation, city parks, waste disposal and sewers, fire service and maintenance of roads and sidewalks. The basic political structure of a Canadian municipality includes a *mayor* and *councillors* who are elected in municipal elections. The number of councillors and specific protocols for election depend on the municipality. There are different types of municipalities depending on the province and different regional hierarchies or federations that municipalities can form. Municipalities perform *both* legislative and policy functions by generating *bylaws*, *resolutions* and *policy*. Bylaws are enforceable legal decisions passed by the city council and resolutions are more minor administrative or management decisions that are also passed by council (Parliament of Canada, 2022a). Compared to cities in many other countries, Canadian cities have very little constitutional autonomy and are considered "creatures of the provinces" (Good, 2019, 1).

Finally, many Aboriginal communities in Canada have their own forms of local government that are different from the municipal system discussed above. Typically, Aboriginal governance structures since colonization were imposed by the *Indian Act* (1985) and include a *chief* and *band council* decision-making structure. Increasingly, Aboriginal groups are moving away from this style of political organization towards various forms of *self-government* developed by the individual Aboriginal community themself (Government of Canada, 2022g).

Elections in Canada's ten provinces and three territories are governed under the legislation of each respective province or territory, each of which has its own elections administration body. Elections to the unicameral provincial and territorial legislatures follow the calendars of each jurisdiction, with many having adopted fixed election dates, though these are subject to deviation (Maas, 2015). Federal legislation passed in 2007 also provides fixed election dates, but the prime minister (sensing political opportunity) or governor general (for example in the case of a vote of non-confidence against the government) often result in earlier elections, most recently in 2021 (less than two years after the 2019 elections). Municipal elections tend to occur on a fixed date set by the province or territory, usually every four years.

Political parties

The major political parties at the **federal** level are the *Conservative Party of Canada* (centre right), the *Liberal Party* (centre), the *New Democratic Party* (NDP) (centre left), and the *Bloc*

Québécois (BQ) (Quebec sovereigntist party which contests seats only in Quebec). The single-member plurality electoral system makes it difficult for smaller parties to enter parliament. For example, in 2019 the Green Party won 6.6% of the votes but only three seats (out of 338). Similarly, the *People's Party of Canada* (right-wing populist) won 4.9% of the votes but zero seats in the 2021 elections. Those elections resulted in the continuation of a minority government led by Liberal leader Justin Trudeau.[4]

Canadian political parties are *not* strongly centralized across governance levels and can differ significantly in terms of their policy and funding structures. For example, the policies of the provincial B.C. Liberals share more in common with the federal Conservatives than the federal Liberal party; a former federal Progressive Conservative cabinet member and deputy prime minister (Jean Charest) later became Liberal Premier of Quebec and is currently seeking the leadership of the federal Conservative party (which itself resulted from the merger of Progressive Conservatives and the Canadian Alliance, which succeeded the Reform Party that had its origins in western Canada). In addition to federal parties, many provincial political parties have won seats in provincial legislatures and are not present at the federal level. At the provincial level, *Coalition avenir Québec* (CAQ) won a majority government from the Quebec Liberals in 2018 in Quebec. In Ontario, the Ontario Conservatives took power from the Ontario Liberals in 2018 with a majority. Finally, the BC NDP replaced the BC Liberal government in 2017 and won a majority in 2020.

At the **municipal** level, most politicians run as independents and, with some exceptions, are *not* affiliated with a political party. As a result, *political parties are generally not present in Canadian municipal-level politics*.

[4] The 2021 election results were: Liberal 160 seats with 32.6% of votes; Conservative 119 seats with 33.7% of votes; NDP 25 seats with 17.8% of votes; BQ 32 seats with 7.6% of votes; Green 2 seats with 2.3% of votes; PPC zero seats with 4.9% of votes.

1.2 Federal immigration infrastructure

FEDERAL LEGISLATION GOVERNING IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

Federally, the legislation governing immigration and integration in Canada includes: the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) (2001), the *Citizenship Act* (1985), the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1985) and the *Canadian Human Rights Code* (1985). Internationally, the *Safe Third Country Agreement* (2004) is also relevant to discussions of immigration. Below, these acts and agreements are briefly described.

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001):

The main federal legislation structuring **immigration** in Canada is IRPA (2001) which came into force in 2002, replacing the *1976 Immigration Act*. It is administered by Canada's federal immigration ministry, the IRCC (formerly the *Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration*), Canada's independent tribunal on immigration, the *Immigration and Refugee Board* (IRB), and the federal policing agency responsible for immigration, the *Canadian Border Security Agency* (CBSA). Broadly, IRPA establishes: 1) the authority, enforcement and organizational structures related to immigration in Canada; 2) federal immigration policy including admission, selection and appeal processes; 3) the division of responsibility for immigration between Canadian provinces as well as between Canada and various international partners. IRPA incorporates both the *Refugee Convention* (1951) and the *Convention against Torture (1984)* into its text. It also details the distribution of settlement services funding.

Safe Third Country Agreement (2004):

In addition to IRPA, the *Safe Third Country Agreement* is an international treaty between the governments of Canada and the United States that came into effect in 2004. It is relevant to discussions of irregular immigration because it mandates refugee claimants (with some exceptions) to make their claim in the *first* safe country in which they arrive. This means that refugee claimants who pass through the United States on their way to Canada can be returned to the United States and instructed to make their refugee claim there. This is not considered *refoulement* because the United States is deemed a safe country. The Safe Third Country Agreement has been heavily criticized by the Canadian immigration studies community (see, for example, Macklin, 2004; Gonzalez Settlage, 2012; Hyndman & Mountz, 2020).

Federal legislation that can be used to address issues related to **integration** in Canada include the *Citizenship Act* (1985), the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1985) and the *Human Rights Code* (1985). With the exception of the *Citizenship Act* (1985), it is important to note that these acts apply to *all* Canadian citizens and permanent residents, not only to people who have immigrated. There is no specific federal 'integration' legislation intended only for people who have immigrated to Canada. Briefly, the *Citizenship Act* (1985) sets out the various parameters for the acquisition, loss and resumption of Canadian citizenship. The *Multiculturalism Act*

(1985) is a piece of federal legislation intended to "recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society". This act "acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" and mandates all federal Canadian institutions to "promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society", collect statistical data reflective of this multicultural reality and "generally, carry on their activities in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada" (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1985).

Finally, the *Human Rights* Act (1985) is the federal legislative framework that identifies grounds for discrimination (including discrimination on the basis of race, nationality or ethnic origin). Its stated purpose is to:

> extend the laws in Canada to give effect, within the purview of matters coming within the legislative authority of Parliament, to the principle that all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

There are three main federal organizations responsible for immigration and integration in Canada: IRCC, the CBSA and the IRB. IRCC is the federal ministry responsible for immigration. It is headed by the *Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship* who is a federal cabinet minister and member of parliament. The CBSA is the policing agency responsible for enforcing all immigration matters, particularly those related to immigrant detention, deportations and policing of regular border crossings. Finally, the IRB is the independent tribunal responsible for evaluating all refugee claims and unsuccessful immigration claims. Below, the mandates, operations and, when appropriate, funding structures, of these organizations are discussed.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):

The IRCC's mandate is to:

> [d]evelop and implement policies, programs and services that: facilitate the arrival of people and their integration into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country while protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians; maintain Canada's humanitarian tradition by protecting refugees and people in need of protection; enhance the values and promote the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship; and reach out to all Canadians and foster increased intercultural

> understanding and an integrated society with equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, ethnicity and religion. Advancing global immigration policies in a way that supports Canada's immigration and humanitarian objectives (Government of Canada, 2022f).

Organizationally, the IRCC includes a *settlement services* division which "aim[s] to provide newcomers with the information required to make informed decisions, language skills adequate to their settlement and integration goals, and the support they need to build networks within their new communities" (Government of Canada, 2022f). It provides *direct* settlement services to clients and *indirectly* funds settlement activities both within and outside of Canada for all provinces except Quebec (whose settlement services are run by the provincial immigration ministry). The IRCC is the largest funder of settlement services in Canada (Government of Canada, 2022f; IRCC, 2021a; Conference Board of Canada, 2022).

Direct settlement services consume the bulk of IRCC settlement services funding. They include: a) support services that enable client access to services (ex: childcare, translation, interpretation, transportation assistance, disability provisions); b) needs and assets assessments and referrals (ex: personalized settlement plans and referrals to settlement services); c) information and orientation services (ex: web or print-based materials, information sessions, promotion and outreach); d) language training (ex: placement tests, language classes); e) employment-related initiatives (ex: employment bridging programs, mentoring and networking, skills development and training); f) community initiatives (ex: community activities, cross-cultural activities, mentoring and networking) (Government of Canada, 2022d; IRCC, 2019; Conference Board of Canada, 2022).

Indirect settlement services are also funded by the IRCC through grants and contributions (called 'service agreements') to individuals and organizations including provincial/territorial or municipal governments, not-for-profit organizations, businesses (who provide indirect services) and educational institutions. In 2021, examples of the types of organizations who had active service agreements with the IRCC included: the *YMCA-YWCA de la region de la capitale nationale*, the British Columbia Construction Association, the Syrian Canadian Foundation, Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCESS), Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House and the *Société de la francophonie manitobaine* (IRCC, 2021a). The grants are flexible and can be used for a range of institutional purposes (ex: salaries, conduct training, research, travel, capital expenditures, etc.). They are also quite sizable, valuing up to 20 million dollars, and can last for up to five years. These program-based grants and contributions are dispersed according to specific IRCC programs including pre-settlement services, service delivery improvement, or the action plan for official languages francophone integration pathway (a program intended to promote francophone immigration to regions other than Quebec) (Government of Canada, 2022d; IRCC, 2019; Conference Board of Canada, 2022).

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA):

The CBSA is the federal government agency responsible for policing immigration. It is mandated with "ensur[ing] the security and prosperity of Canada by managing the access of people and goods to and from Canada" (Government of Canada, 2022c). CBSA officers are present at all *regular* Canadian land, sea and air borders. Amongst other responsibilities, they detain and deport people who are deemed inadmissible to Canada. The federal police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) are responsible for patrolling all *irregular* border crossings.

Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB):

The IRB is an independent, administrative tribunal responsible for evaluating refugee claims, refugee appeals and unsuccessful immigration application appeals. It is made up of four separate divisions: the *Refugee Protection Division* (that adjudicates refugee protection claims), the *Refugee Appeal Division* (that evaluates appeals), the *Immigration Division* (that evaluates claims made by foreign nationals or permanent residents referred by the CBSA who are deemed inadmissible or removable) and the *Immigration Appeal Division* (that evaluates unsuccessful immigration claim appeals) (IRB, 2022).

1.3 Canadian migration pathways and migratory trends (2016-2021)

Immigration to Canada is overwhelmingly controlled by the federal government (with the exception of Quebec) which sets annual numerical targets for each immigration category in multiyear *Immigration Levels Plans*. The Canadian immigration approach is internationally associated with the "points system" or the *Comprehensive Ranking System*. Briefly, the points system assigns numerical values to different social characteristics including age, education, language, and others. The total number of points and their distribution varies by immigration program. Each program has a minimum 'pass mark'. Applicants are 'graded' based on these criteria. Different versions of the points system have been adopted by other former English colonies (IRCC, 2022c).

There are three different migratory statuses and different rights associated with these statuses: *temporary resident status*, *permanent resident status* and *naturalized citizen*. People with temporary resident status are legally in the country for reasons such as study, work, or tourism. People with permanent resident status have successfully met all of the criteria of an immigration program. They have the same rights as Canadian citizens but cannot vote or hold some high-security positions. They must also physically stay in Canada for certain minimum periods (currently 730 days over the preceding five years). Permanent residents can apply for Canadian citizenship if they have spent three of the last five years in Canada and meet a series of other requirements (IRCC, 2022a). The remainder of the report will only discuss permanent resident immigration programs and trends.

Between 2016 and 2020[5], Canada received an average of 285,908 permanent residents with an annual minimum of 184,600 (in 2020, due to the pandemic) and a maximum of 341,135. In 2021, Canada received 401,000 permanent residents, the most it has ever received in its history (Government of Canada, 2022). The provinces surveyed for this study (Ontario, Quebec, and B.C.) accounted for more than two thirds of immigration to the country over the years evaluated. The major immigration categories for permanent residents include: 1) Economic Immigration; 2) Sponsored Family; 3) Resettled Refugees & Protected People; and 4) Other. These categories are made up of a variety of specific immigration streams that can vary over time as programs are piloted, cancelled or the selection criteria changed. Below these categories are explained in more detail.

Table 5: Permanent residents by year, immigration category, and provincial destination

Immigration Category and Province/ Canada	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Economic						
Ontario	45,120 (15.2%[6])	53,330 (18.6%)	73,680 (23.0%)	82,145 (24.1%)	43,445 (23.5%)	297,720 (20.8%)
Quebec	31,605 (10.7%)	30,270 (10.6%)	29,195 (9.1%)	23,130 (6.8%)	12,770 (6.9%)	126,970 (8.9%)
B.C.	20,310 (6.9%)	22,255 (7.8%)	26,690 (8.3%)	30,060 (8.8%)	18,390 (10.0%)	117,705 (8.2%)
Rest of Canada	58,995 (19.9%)	53,430 (18.7%)	56,810 (17.7%)	61,320 (18.0%)	31,790 (17.2%)	262,345 (18.4%)
Sponsored Family						
Ontario	35,145 (11.9%)	36,750 (12.8%)	37,865 (11.8%)	42,570 (12.5%)	22,230 (12.0%)	174,560 (12.2%)
Quebec	11,125 (3.8%)	12,135 (4.2%)	12,285 (3.8%)	9,685 (2.8%)	7,795 (4.2%)	53,025 (3.7%)
B.C.	12,975 (4.4%)	13,360 (4.7%)	14,775 (4.6%)	16,255 (4.8%)	8,030 (4.3%)	65,395 (4.6%)

[5] The IRCC immigration and ethnicity profile for 2021 had not been released at the time this report was written.

[6] Percentages were generated using annual totals.

Rest of Canada	18,760 (6.3%)	20,220 (7.1%)	20,240 (6.3%)	22,790 (6.7%)	11,250 (6.1%)	93,260 (6.5%)
Resettled Refugee and Protected Person						
Ontario	27,960 (9.4%)	19,905 (6.9%)	23,660 (7.4%)	25,545 (7.5%)	15,080 (8.2%)	112,150 (7.8%)
Quebec	9,425 (3.2%)	9,155 (3.2%)	8,835 (2.8%)	7,250 (2.1%)	4,185 (2.3%)	38,850 (2.7%)
B.C.	4,595 (1.6%)	2,660 (0.9%)	3,215 (1.0%)	3,710 (1.1%)	1,830 (1.0%)	16,010 (1.1%)
Rest of Canada	16,525 (5.6%)	9,355 (3.3%)	9,770 (3.0%)	12,005 (3.5%)	4,400 (2.4%)	52,055 (3.6%)
Other						
Ontario	1,810 (0.6%)	1,970 (0.7%)	2,235 (0.7%)	3,130 (0.9%)	2,215 (1.2%)	11,360 (0.8%)
Quebec	1,085 (0.4%)	845 (0.3%)	810 (0.3%)	500 (0.1%)	475 (0.3%)	3,715 (0.3%)
B.C.	195 (0.1%)	165 (0.1%)	195 (0.1%)	205 (0.1%)	240 (0.1%)	1,000 (0.1%)
Rest of Canada	685 (0.2%)	640 (0.2%)	785 (0.2%)	835 (0.2%)	475 (0.3%)	3,420 (0.2%)
TOTAL[7]	296,315	286,445	321,045	341,135	184,600	1,429,540

Source: IRCC, March 2021

Table 6: Permanent Residents by province and immigration category (2016-2020)

[7] Statistics Canada typically does not report numbers lower than five in their data tables. This means that some totals are slightly different from totals reported in the Statistics Canada data tables. Similarly, those immigrants whose province or territory of destination was not stated are not included in this table.

Immigration Category	Ontario	Quebec	B.C.	Rest of Canada	TOTAL
Economic	297,720 (50.0%[8])	126,970 (57.0%)	117,705 (58.8%)	262,345 (63.8%)	804,740 (56.3%)
Sponsored Family	174,560 (29.3%)	53,025 (23.8%)	65,395 (32.7%)	93,260 (22.7%)	386,240 (27.0%)
Resettled Refugee and Protected Person	112,150 (18.8%)	38,850 (17.5%)	16,010 (8.0%)	52,055 (12.7%)	219,065 (15.3%)
Other	11,360 (1.9%)	3,715 (1.7%)	1,000 (0.5%)	3,420 (0.8%)	19,495 (1.4%)
TOTAL	595,790	222,560	200,110	411,080	1,429,540

Source: IRCC, March 2021

As Table 6 indicates, the relative distribution of people by immigration category and province was different over the study period (2016-2020). Economic immigration was always the largest category across Canada, accounting for at least half of all immigration. However, it accounted for a significantly larger proportion of immigration to B.C. (58.8%) and Quebec (57.0%) as opposed to Ontario (50.0%) – all proportions lower than the rest of Canada, which possessed a much higher proportion of economic immigrants (63.8%). Conversely, refugees and protected persons constituted a much larger proportion of Ontario immigration: roughly 18.8% over the period, versus roughly 17.5% for Quebec, 8.0% for B.C and 12.7% for the rest of Canada. The fact that refugees and protected people accounted for almost one-fifth of all immigration to Ontario and Quebec - proportions higher than the rest of Canada - but less than one-twelfth in B.C. is a noteworthy difference with real political impacts.

1) **Economic Immigration Categories**

Between 2016 and 2020, the majority of immigrants who entered Canada were selected through this category. Often, although not always, economic immigration is contingent on a Canadian offer of employment. The most frequently used economic immigration programs were the *Provincial Nominee*, *Skilled Worker*, *Caregiver* and *Canadian Experience* programs. Briefly, the Skilled Worker category is used by people who have secured an offer of employment from a Canadian establishment. The Caregiver category is used by people who provide home care for children, the elderly or people with special needs and the Canadian Experience Class program is intended to recruit people who have already worked in Canada for at least a year (IRCC, 2022d).

Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and the Municipal Nominee Program (MNP)

The PNP allows the provinces (excluding Quebec) to develop their own provincial immigration streams and recommend candidates selected through them to the federal government for immigration. Although these streams differ by province, PNPs tend to be made up of economic and study streams. The Ontario PNP program, for example, is made up of three

[8] Percentages were generated using the cumulative geographic totals.

immigration streams: the *Foreign Worker* stream, the *International Student* stream and the *In-Demand Skills* stream (Government of Ontario, 2022a). Often, people who immigrate through the PNP must stay in their province of destination for a set period of time, but this requirement varies (or does not exist) depending on the province and specific PNP program stream. In addition to the PNP, in 2020, IRCC began community consultations to develop a municipal version of this program. Although this program *has not been initiated*, if implemented it would allow municipalities to nominate applicants to the IRCC for immigration (IRCC, 2020a).

2) Sponsored Family

This category allows Canadian citizens to sponsor different members of their family such as parents, grandparents, spouses and children for permanent resident status.

3) **Resettled Refugees & Protected People**

This category includes people living outside of their country of origin who meet the 1951 Convention definition and people living outside of their country of origin who do not meet the 1951 definition but who are either denied basic human rights or in need of aid due to conflict. Both refugees and protected people can be privately sponsored through one of three streams: 1) *Government-assisted refugees* (GARs); 2) *Privately-sponsored refugees* (PSRs) or 3) *Blended visa office-referred refugees* (BVORs). The majority of resettled refugees arrive through either the GAR or PSR streams (IRCC, 2022b; Macklin et al., 2018; 2020). The following section refers only to the federal IRCC refugee resettlement program in all provinces except for Quebec. (Quebec has its own refugee resettlement program that is discussed in the Quebec provincial section.)

GARs are usually referred to the Canadian government by the UNHCR and are selected on the basis of need (rather than ability to integrate). They tend to require much more support than other resettled refugees for this reason (IRCC, 2022c; IRCC, 2016). PSRs are community organizations or individuals who unite to sponsor a group of Convention refugees or protected people and will be responsible for providing financial and social support for resettled refugees. They require a significant amount of community mobilization because PSRs must demonstrate that they have raised a certain amount of money before they sponsor a group and must provide that support for up to one year. (Sponsors will sometimes continue to provide support for longer.) Support includes activities such as: finding and financing housing, financing basic necessities (i.e. food and transport), accompanying services, assistance securing employment, language practice, childcare and so on (IRCC, 2022c; IRCC, 2016). PSRs can take one of three forms: *Sponsorship Agreement Holders* (SAH), *Community Sponsors* or *Group of Five* (G5). SAHs are community organizations, such as churches, who sponsor multiple groups of resettled refugees and sign a formal sponsorship arrangement agreement with the IRCC. Community Sponsors are also community organizations who sponsor a group of resettled refugees, however, they do not have a sponsorship agreement with the IRCC because they do not intend to sponsor multiple groups of people. Finally, G5s are groups of five or more private

Canadian citizens or permanent residents who sponsor a limited number of resettled refugees and act as their guarantors (IRCC, 2022c; IRCC, 2016). BVORs are sponsored by a private sponsor and the government of Canada who each provide six months of funding and support for the resettled refugees whom they sponsor. The BVOR program is much less frequently used than the other two resettlement programs (IRCC, 2022c; IRCC, 2016).

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative

Occasionally, the IRCC will develop specific federal immigration policy initiatives. Between 2016 and 2021, the *Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative* (the 'Syrian Initiative') was one such initiative that formally began in November 2015 and sought to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees within 118 days. It was the second largest resettlement initiative in Canadian history after the Indochinese resettlement of the late 1970s and 80s that led to the foundation of the Canadian private sponsorship program (Molloy and Simeon, 2015). The majority of Syrian Initiative sponsorships were GARs (21,750), followed by PSRs (18,925) and BVORs (3,940) (IRCC, 2020b; 2019; 2022). , Ontario received the highest overall number of Syrian resettled refugees by a margin of almost 10,000 people (19,865). GARs (9,535) followed closely by PSRs (8,190) made up the majority of sponsorships. Quebec received the second highest number of Syrian resettled refugees (9,355). Syrian refugee sponsorships were overwhelmingly driven by private sponsors (7,355) with some government-assisted refugees (1,980). The program was suspended twice over the 2016-2021 period due to concerns about the integrity of some of the private sponsors. In B.C., the overall number of Syrian resettled refugees was quite low (3,680) relative to the other two provinces. GARs also made up the majority of sponsorships (2,460). Below, the distribution of Syrian resettled refugees by sponsorship type are listed.

Table 7: Admissions of Syrian refugees under Canada's Syrian Refugee Resettlement Commitment by province/territory of intended destination and immigration category (November 4th, 2015 – February 28th, 2022)

	Intended Destination				
Sponsorship Type	**Ontario**	**Quebec**	**B.C.**	**Rest of Canada**	**Total**
GAR	9,535	1,980	2,460	7,785	21,760
PSR	8,190	7,355	745	2,635	18,925
BVOR	2,150	20	475	1,295	3,940
Total	19,875	9,355	3,680	11.715	44,625

Source: IRCC, February 28, 2022

In addition to the sizable number of people resettled over a relatively short period of time, the Syrian Initiative also possessed a number of other unique operational features. Specifically, it involved a high degree of collaboration between IRCC and other Canadian governmental bodies at the federal, provincial, and local levels in addition to international and non-profit organizations. The Canadian government worked closely with the UNHCR in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey to identify vulnerable Syrian refugees who were categorized as low security risks. They established three processing centres in Beirut, Amman, and Ankara

where immigration applications, medical exams, and security scans for selected refugees were completed. Successful refugees were issued permanent resident visas that allowed them to travel to Canada on international flights arranged by the *International Organization for Migration* (IOM). Upon their arrivals at the airports of Toronto or Montreal, Syrian refugees received their permanent residence cards and social insurance numbers, which facilitated immediate access to resettlement services that were prepared for them at their final destinations through local *Resettlement Assistance Program* (RAP) service providers. They were also able to access social services such as provincial health care and education services immediately upon arrival in Canada. Refugees sponsored through this initiative were also exempt from paying back their immigration loans, which included the costs of their medical exams and international flights to Canada (IRCC, 2016).

1) Other

This category includes any immigration programs not included under economic, family immigration or resettled refugee or protected person category.

ASYLUM CLAIMS IN CANADA

In addition to resettled refugees and protected persons (which are regular forms of immigration), asylum claims (irregular immigration) are also made in Canada. Asylum seekers enter Canada through regular or irregular immigration channels. Regular entries occur at an official air, land or sea port. Irregular entries can happen either through irregular border crossings (air, land and sea ports) or by overstaying a visa. Table 7 provides a breakdown of asylum claims made at all ports of entry from 2016 to 2021. By far, Ontario and Quebec received the largest numbers of irregular crossings. Notably, the number of asylum claims made in Quebec almost quadrupled in 2018 and 2019 and decreased in 2020. Ontario has been reported to be the ultimate destination of these people (Schertzer & Paquet, 2019).

Table 8: Asylum claimants processed by CBSA by province and year for all ports of entry (air, sea, land)

	Year					
Location	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Canada (total)	10,420	15,515	27,610	28,620	7,535	12,420
B.C.	325	560	445	580	235	350
Ontario	6,380	7,930	7,190	7,000	2,240	4,485
Quebec	2,980	5,560	19,140	20,475	4,920	7,295
All other provinces and /Territories	735	1465	835	565	140	290

Source: IRCC (2022)

1.4 Provincial and municipal descriptions

1.4.1 Provincial context: Ontario

Table 9: Ontario summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Provincial Political Orientation (2016-2021)	Ministry responsible for immigration/ integration
2021: 14,223,942 2016: 13,242,160	2016: 29.1% (3,852,145) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 48.3% (1,364,380); Family sponsored immigrants 33.3% (940,405); Refugees 17.1% (482,665)	5.8%	Unemployment: 7.4% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 22.9%; Business, finance, and administration 15.7%; Trade, Transportation and equipment operators 13.0%	2021: Conservative Party (elected in 2018) 2016: Liberal Party (elected in 2014)	2021: Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism; Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services; Ministry of Colleges and Universities; Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development 2016: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Census of Population.

Population

Ontario is Canada's most populous province and its western region is the fastest growing in the nation. According to the Government of Ontario, the province population reached 14,951,270 million on January 1, 2022, accounting for 38.7% of Canada's total population. (Government of Ontario, 2022a). Toronto is the capital of the province and according to the 2016 census, the population of Toronto CMA, which is the biggest CMA in Canada, was 5.9 million, of which 46.1% are immigrants. The second biggest CMA in Ontario is Ottawa, the national capital, with a population of around 1.3 million, of which 19.7% are immigrants. The third biggest CMA is Hamilton, that had a population of 747,545, of which 24.1% are immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2021a). In 2016, visible minority groups in Ontario made up 29.3% of the provincial population, which exceeded the national rate (22.3%). The largest visible minority groups were South Asian 7.6%, Chinese 5.0%, and Black 4.3% (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Economy

Ontario has the largest economy in Canada. In 2020, it produced 39.3% of Canada's GDP with a 65.0% participation rate in the labour market. The unemployment rate increased from 7.4% in 2016 to 8.0% in 2020 (Government of Ontario, 2022b). Ontario's economy is primarily driven by the service industry. In 2016, services made up 77.4% of Ontario's GDP and goods made up 22.5% (of which 11.0% were manufacturing goods). In 2016, the three top employing sectors in the province were sales and service occupation, attracting 22.9% of the labour force, business, finance, and administration, attracting 15.7%, and trade, transportation and equipment operators, attracting 13.0% of the labour force (Statistics Canada, 2021a).

Politics

The Liberal party secured a majority government in the Ontario provincial elections of 2014, winning 58 seats to the Conservatives' 28 and the NDP's 21. Premier Kathleen Wynne, who became the leader of the party in 2013, was Ontario's first woman premier. Yet, her popularity declined dramatically over the course of her tenure and the Ontario Liberal party lost the subsequent 2018 provincial elections, winning only seven seats in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a result so poor they were unable to maintain their official party status. The Conservatives, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, obtained a majority government in the 2018 provincial elections, winning 76 seats to the NDP's 40 (which gained them official opposition status). The Green Party also won their first seat in this election for the riding of Guelph (Elections Ontario, 2022). Under the leadership of Premier Ford, who has the reputation of promoting corporate interests to "make Ontario open for business", Ontario has witnessed what has been described as austerity measures including budget cuts sectors such as environment, healthcare, education and social services including immigration and resettlement programs (Canada's National Observer, 2019).

Immigration and integration

Ontario attracts the highest number of immigrants in Canada. The high level of immigration to Ontario was considered the driving factor behind the province's high growth rate over the 2016 to 2021 period (5.8%), which exceeded the national rate (5.2%) (Statistics Canada, 2022a). In 2021, the total new immigrants in Ontario reached 198,530, a sharp increase from 82,963 in 2020 (Government of Ontario, 2022a). The largest source countries of origin for immigrants to Ontario were India 9.4% (360,545), China 8.2% (317,225), the United Kingdom 6.9% (264,120), Philippines 6.0% (31,760), Italy 4.1% (157,815), Jamaica 3.1% (119,840), and the United States 2.8% (109,005 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

In Ontario, like in other Canadian provinces (except Quebec), immigration and resettlement services are mainly funded by the federal government; however, the province also plays a role. Between 2016 and 2018, during the Ontario Liberals' time in government, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) was the main provincial ministry responsible for working with the federal government on immigration, resettlement and integration. The ministry

funded provincial programs intended to facilitate newcomer integration. They included: the Adult Non-Credit Language Training Program which was used to deliver English and French language training to adult immigrants in the public and Catholic school boards[9]; the Newcomer Settlement Program which provided orientation services and resources to access education, housing, and employment services; the Bridge Training Program that assists internationally trained immigrants to obtain employment certification in highly skilled profession; and the Municipal Immigration Information Program which provides funding for municipalities to develop website material to attract and integrate immigrants (Government of Ontario, 2017).

In response to the federal Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative, the former MCI issued a Refugee Resettlement Plan in September 2015 and established the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariate in 2016 to assist with the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Ontario. This body enhanced private sponsorship by coordinating resettlement activities between actors including the provincial ministries of health, education, and children and youth service. By August 2016, the MCI's allocated budget for refugee resettlement reached $10 million, supporting 33 organizations and 43 initiatives to enhance service delivery to refugees in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2016a).

The arrival of the Conservative government in 2018 brought radical change to the provincial governance of immigration and resettlement in Ontario. Most importantly, the MCI was dissolved as a provincial ministry on June 29, 2018 and its services transferred to three other provincial ministries, including the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development and the Ministry of College and Universities (Government of Ontario, 2020; Praznik and Shields, 2018). The Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services created a new division for citizenship and immigration that was responsible for setting policies related to immigration and resettlement in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2021b; Praznik and Shields, 2018). The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development took over the management of the Ontario Immigration Nominee Program (OINP), the joint federal and provincial immigration program, as well as the Bridge training program in 2019. Immigration training programs became the responsibility of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

In 2021, resettlement services continued to be provided through different provincial ministries under the Conservatives. In June 2021, as a part of a provincial cabinet shuffle, a Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism was established to lead Ontario's anti-racism and inclusion initiatives under the Antiracism Act 2017 (Bill 114). Its formal mandate is not publicly available due to a Conservative initiative to keep all mandate letters confidential (Government of Ontario, 2021b; CBC, 2022). In 2021, the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services' strategic plans for 2021-2022 did not mention citizenship and immigration and the

[9] Ontario has two schoolboards funded by the state: the Catholic board and the public board.

ministry's organizational chart no longer included a citizenship and immigration division (Government of Ontario, 2021c). Further, in its 2021 annual progress report on anti-racism, the Ontario government announced the allocation of $7.7 million to the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development to support 2,700 newcomers qualify for in-demand jobs and assist employers to find skilled workers. This initiative was a further contribution from the Ontario government to enhance the inclusion of newcomers (Government of Ontario, 2021a). Despite these initiatives, the Conservative government also imposed budget cuts targeting some resettlement and integration programs and services in Ontario. These include a 30.0% cut to the general legal aid budget of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) as well as the termination of legal aid for refugee and immigration cases (a cost that was deferred to the federal government).

Relevant legislation and policies

Immigration, resettlement, and integration of newcomers is governed through a set of provincial legislation and policies. Before June 2018, immigration, resettlement and integration services in Ontario were governed through bilateral agreements between the federal government of Canada and the province of Ontario. The first Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) was signed in 2005. The five-year 2017 COIA agreement articulated federal and provincial roles with regards to the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), foreign workers, French-speaking immigrants and international students. The agreement also included Annex (D) on the partnership with municipalities which articulates federal and provincial authorities' commitment to working with municipalities to attract and retain immigrants and support resettlement and integration. This is notable because municipal governments have no constitutional responsibility for immigrant selection, resettlement and integration. Other legislation includes the Ontario Immigration Act (2015) outlines the Government of Ontario's immigration and resettlement commitments and relationships with the federal government and municipalities. The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Act (1990) defines the roles and responsibilities of the minister and deputy minister and the operational aspects of the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture that was first established in 1982 as the main provincial ministry responsible for immigration and resettlement.

Newcomers are also addressed in some employment -related legislation such as the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act (2006) which establishes guidelines for professionals trained in Ontario or internationally to comply with the Ontario regulations related to their professions. The Newcomers Employment Opportunities Act, Bill 89 (2010) focuses on improving employment opportunities for newcomers in Ontario. Finally, the Ontario Anti-Racism Act, Bill 114 (2017) sets anti-racism measures mainly targeting Indigenous, Black and Jewish communities and communities that are impacted by Islamophobia.

1.4.1.a Local case: Guelph, Ontario (Medium-sized town)

Table 10: Guelph summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Political Orientation (2016-2021)	VARNI & VARUN
2021: 165,588 2016: 151,984	20.6% (30,880) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 46.7% (9,775); Family sponsored immigrants 32.5% (6,805); Refugees 20.1% (4,200)	9.0%	Unemployment: 5.9% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 20.9%; Business finance and administration 13.5%; Occupations in education, law and social, community, and government services 13.3%	Federal PM (2021): Liberal; Federal MP (2019): Liberal; Federal MP (2015): Liberal; Provincial MPP (2018): Green; Provincial MPP (2014): Liberal	VARNI: 19.66 VARUN 1.10

Sources: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Guelph is located in southwestern Ontario. It had a population of 165,588 people in 2021, growing at a rate of 9.0% from 2016, the third highest rate in Ontario and one of the highest rates in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022a). The variation of number of inhabitants (VARNI) between 2006 and 2016 was 19.66. In 2016, immigrants made up 20.6% of the total population with 46.7% arriving as economic immigrants and 20.1% as refugees. In 2016, visible minorities constituted 17.0% of the population. The largest groups were South Asian (4.6%), Chinese (2.9%), Black (2.0%) and Filipino (2.0%). Between 2015 and 2019, Guelph received 470 PSRs, 1,345 BVORs, and no GARs (Statistics Canada, 2021). The town is not a centre for the federal RAP and does not host a reception centre for GARs.

The median income was estimated at $38,262 in 2016, with an unemployment rate of 5.9%, one of the lowest rates in Ontario and in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021). The variation of unemployment level between 2006 and 2016 was 0.80. In 2016, the participation rate was 70.4% with 20.9% of the labour force was involved in sales and services, 13.5% in business, finance, and administration, and 13.3% in education, law, and social, community, and government services. Guelph is known for its agri-food and biotechnology market sector, which is rated number one in Ontario. Guelph University is a major employer and host to the Ontario Agricultural College and Ontario Veterinary College.

Politically, Guelph is known to be left leaning at both the federal and provincial levels. The Liberal Party has won federal elections in Guelph since 2015. Provincially, the Ontario Liberals won the elections in 2014, but in 2018, Guelph elected the Green Party, offering them their first provincial seat at the Ontario Legislative Assembly. Municipally, the mayor and the 12 city councillors ran as independents.

Immigration and integration

Guelph is geographically located in Wellington County which provides social services to the residents of the town in addition to the county's seven other towns. These services include childcare, subsidized housing, income support programs, and resettlement services for permanent residents and individuals with Convention Refugee status in the county and town.

Guelph municipality has no mandate to offer resettlement or integration services to newcomers. However, the municipality provides resources to a charitable immigration services organization whose major funders include the federal IRCC and the provincial *Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services* (MCCS). This organization offers resettlement services to immigrants in Guelph and county. Its services include translation and interpretation, language assessment, settlement workers at schools, settlement orientation, employment services, and community connections. In 2020/2021, the organization served 3,243 clients of whom 52.0% were refugees, 20.0% family sponsored immigrants, and 3.0% from the federal skilled worker program (ISGW, 2021). Refugee claimants in Guelph also receive assistance from a faith-based organisation located in a neighbouring town (25.5 km from Guelph). This organization started in 1987 as a coalition of four Mennonite Churches and a Mennonite organization from the broader region. It assists and advocates for refugee claimants and offers them settlement services including orientation, housing, employment readiness session.

Guelph also hosts a LIP office (a federally funded community-based coalition) that was established in 2009. In addition to supporting the immigration services organization, the LIP aims to strategically enhance the co-ordination of immigrant integration services in both the town and county (GWLIP, 2022). Finally, the municipality of Guelph invests in a *Neighbourhood Support Coalition*, a community-based organization intended to foster an inclusive, engaging, and diverse neighbourhood communities. A city councillor confirmed that funding for this organization is an indirect way for the municipality to support integration and diversity, "*There haven't been any specific policies for us. It does not mean the city has no investment in integration. The city significantly funds the Neighborhoods Support Coalition to do this work, so that work has been delegated*".

1.4.1.b Local case: Stratford, Ontario (Small-sized town)

Table 11: Stratford Summary Table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Political Orientation (2016-2021)	VARNI & VARUN
2021: 33,232 2016: 31,465	11.3% (3,470) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 37.5% (555); Family sponsored immigrants 44.9% (665); Refugees 16.2% (245)	5.6%	Unemployment: 5.3% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 23.0%; trade, transportation, and equipment operator14.7%: Occupation in manufacturing 12.7%	Federal PM (2021): Conservative; Federal MP (2019): Conservative; Federal MP (2015): Conservative; Provincial MPP (2018): Conservative Provincial MPP (2014): Conservative	VARNI: 3.29 VARUN: 0.30

Sources: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Stratford is located in southwestern Ontario. In 2021, its population was estimated at 33,232 people, growing 5.6% from 2016. The variation of number of inhabitants between 2006 and 2016 was 3.29. In 2016, people with immigrant backgrounds made up 11.3% of the population, well below the Canadian national average (21.9%). Economic migrants made up 37.5% of total immigrants and refugees accounted for 16.2%, slightly higher than the national rate (15.1%) (Statistics Canada, 2016). Between 2016 and 2021, Stratford received 35 BVORs and no PSRs or GARs. Stratford is not a federal RAP centre and does not host a reception centre for GARs.

The average median income was estimated at $35,3552 in 2016, with an unemployment rate of 5.3%, one of the lowest rates in Ontario. Between 2006 and 2016, unemployment levels varied by 0.30. In 2016, sales and services employed 23.0% of the labour force, 14.7% work in trade and transportation, and 12.7% work in manufacturing occupations (Statistics Canada, 2016). Tourism is a major economic driver due to the annual Stratford theatre festival that routinely attracts around 1.7 million visitors (Ontario Art Council, 2022). The diverse economy and low rate of unemployment are in fact significant factors for attracting new comers to the community, as noted by a local faith group leader:

> *The economy is unique here… We have three pillars of our economy. We have manufacturing, we have agriculture and we have the festival theatre… What we are seeing is that Stratford is a desirable place to live and people are coming here for a number of different reasons. And it's across the spectrum in terms of ages, but also cultures and backgrounds. People are moving here simply because there's work available… We have a very significant workforce shortage. We've had it longer than the rest of the province. Stratford has had the lowest unemployment rate in Ontario for*

> *years. So that has been pushing us to try to attract newcomers of any kind to the region for a long time.*

Politically, Stratford is a conservative town at both the federal and provincial levels. The Conservative Party has held power federally since the 2015 and provincially since 2014. With its limited diversity, the city council reflected the political orientation of the community, as put by the faith group leader, "*we don't have any diversity on our council*".

Immigration and integration

Stratford is located within Perth County, but the municipality is separate from the county and has its own municipal government. The municipality has a social services department that is provincially mandated to provide income, housing, childcare and homelessness supports. It does not have a mandate to offer resettlement or integration services to newcomers or refugees. This was clearly noted by a city councillor, *"Our Social services department have welcomed and offered services to our newcomers. But once again, those are services that they would make readily available to all individuals and certainly to our newcomers as well".* However, some resettlement services are available through local community organizations. In 2011, a community-based charitable organization was founded by an immigrant from Ethiopia, with the aim of providing immigration, resettlement services to newcomers including orientation sessions, community networks, translation and interpretation and assistance with citizenship applications. This organization was the sole provider of resettlement services to newcomers to Stratford as explained by a local journalist:

> *So, I guess the big issue with the settlement and integration and that sort of thing in Stratford is for a very long time and even up until the last couple of years, anyone who needed settlement services had to rely pretty much solely on the multicultural association… and a lot of what they did was basically help new immigrants basically, access services usually by driving them to Kitchener or London. So, larger centres close by which really, they don't have any access to unless they have vehicle and they have a mode of transportation and up until recently there has no real regional public transit.*

In 2018, the YMCA also started to offer community settlement services to newcomers financed by the federal government. Programs include community settlement, language assessment, orientation sessions, settlement workers at schools, and mentorship programs. This development came as a result of a local advocacy campaign as explained by the local faith group leader, *'we were able to convince settlement services to actually come to Perth County physically for the first time. Theoretically the service was provided, but you had to go to Kitchener to receive it. It was the YMCA that provided it. And in all those years, we convinced them that they should have a worker here on a regular basis. And so that was a win for the community to have settlement service officially here".*

1.4.2 Provincial context: Quebec

Table 12: Quebec summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Provincial Political Orientation (2016-2021)	Ministry responsible for immigration/ integration
2021: 8,501,833 2016: 8,164,361	13.4% (1,091,310) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 54.1% (469,015); Family sponsored immigrants 27.8% (241,225); Refugees 16.9% (146,265)	4.1%	Unemployment: 7.2% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 23.2%; Business, finance and administration 15.9%; Trades, transportation and equipment operator 13.5%	2021: Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) (elected 2018) 2016: Quebec Liberal	2018: Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration (MIFI)

Sources: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Population

Quebec is the second most populous province in Canada, containing 23.0% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2021a). In 2021, the population was roughly 8.5 million people, growing 4.1% from 2016, an increase still below the national growth average of 5.2%. In 2016, approximately 11.0% of Quebec's population belonged to a visible minority group and the largest visible minority groups were Black (3.9%), Arab (2.6%) or Latin American (1.6%) (Statistics Canada, 2021a; Statistics Canada, 2016a).

Economy

In 2016, Quebec possessed an unemployment rate of 7.2%, slightly lower than the national average of 7.7%. Quebec's economy is driven by the service and manufacturing sectors. In 2016, the three largest economic employment areas were: 1) Sales and service occupations (23.2%); 2) Business, finance and administration occupations (15.9%) and 3) Trades, transport and equipment operators (13.5%) (Statistics Canada, 2021b). Since the early 2010s, Quebec has experienced a labour shortage that has garnered significant media and political attention (Government of Quebec, 2021; Commission nationale, 2011). Part of the provincial government's solution to this issue has been a 'targeted' immigration policy approach that seeks to fill labour gaps with both temporary workers and permanent residents (Government of Quebec, 2021).

Politics

In addition to the left/centre/right political divisions, Quebec politics have historically been defined by the issue of Quebec separatism and nationalism. Quebec has held two formal referendums on the issue - one in 1980 and another in 1995 - and the question remains evident in many recent political debates and actions. As a result, most political parties express an orientation on the issue of Quebec separatism. The federal *Bloc Québécois* (BQ) party, currently in power at the federal level, are a separatist, social democratic party. At the provincial level, the two parties that have dominated Quebec politics since the 1980s hold opposing views on the subject. The Quebec Liberal Party are a federalist, centrist party and the *Parti Quebecois* (PQ) are a separatist, social democrat party (Assemblée nationale du Quebec, 2022).

Two provincial governments have been in power over the 2016 to 2021 period. Between 2018 and 2021, the *Coalition avenir Québec* (CAQ) provincial party held a majority government. Led by Premier François Legault, the CAQ won 74 seats (of 125) followed by the Liberal Party of Quebec who won 31 seats and formed the official opposition. The *Parti québécois* and *Québec solidaire* both won ten seats (Elections Quebec, 2022). The CAQ are a new provincial political party, founded only in 2011, and are generally described as a centre-right party. They represent a notable departure from the provincial political norm. Their election campaign ran under the simple campaign slogan "*Maintenant*" ("Now") and promised significant and prompt changes to key Quebec institutions including health, education systems and the economy. It also included very clear political objectives related to culture and immigration, particularly the maintenance of Quebec 'national identity', the reinforcement of French as the spoken language of Quebec and the promotion of secular values (*laïcité*). One campaign promise, in particular, sought to *decrease* immigration to Quebec by 20.0%. Some of the CAQ's proposed cultural legislation has invited robust critique at the provincial and national level (discussed below) (Coalition Avenir Québec, 2022; Assemblé nationale du Quebec, 2022; Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 2022). The CAQ took power from the Quebec Liberals, led by Philippe Couillard, who also held a majority and were elected in 2014. Couillard's Liberals ran under the slogan "*Ensemble on s'occupe des vraies affaires*" ("Let's get down to business together"). Their election platform was primarily focused on the Quebec economy over questions of Quebec national identity or separatism (Parti Libérale du Québec, 2014).

Immigration and integration

Quebec is the third largest host of immigrants to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016a). Along with Ontario, it also receives high numbers of asylum claims. Amongst Canadian provinces, Quebec is unique because of the *Accord Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall* (1991) which established a different relationship between the federal government and Quebec on immigration matters. Normally, the federal government sets annual immigration quotas and makes the ultimate decision about who should be admitted through each stream (including PNPs). Quebec is the only province that selects certain streams of immigrants (economic and humanitarian) – an arrangement with the federal government that is different from every

other Canadian province. The federal government maintains the ability to set numerical quotas for *all* immigration categories in Quebec and it also controls the numbers of people who arrive through the family sponsorship stream. Knowledge of the French language is central to Quebec's immigration and integration policy and, as a result, most immigrants to Quebec tend to come from French-speaking places (MIFI, 2021). In 2016, the major countries of origin for immigrants to Quebec included France (7.4%), Haiti (7.4%), Morocco (5.6%), Algeria (5.4%), Italy (4.7%), China (4.5%) and Lebanon (3.6%) (Statistics Canada, 2016a).

As a result, Quebec possesses its own provincial immigration ministry called the *Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration* (MIFI) that is responsible for administering economic and humanitarian immigration as well as integration activities. Similar to the IRCC, the MIFI develops annual immigration plans and has an independent agreement with the UNHCR (UNHCR, 2017). The MIFI is responsible for administering Quebec's refugee resettlement program which includes a *government* and *private* stream. There are two different categories of private sponsors: *groups of two to five private individuals* or *non-profit organizations* (Blain et al., 2019; Government of Quebec, 2022).

During the 2015-2017 period, Quebec received 11,251 Syrian refugees through its refugee sponsorship program. The vast majority of those refugees (81.0%) were privately sponsored (9,064) and the remainder were sponsored by the Quebec state (Blain, Rodriguez del Barrio, Caron, Rufagari, Richard, Boucher and Lester, 2019). The MIFI suspended the program twice during the 2016 and 2021 period, once during 2017-2018 and again in 2020-2021. The program was just reopening when the interviews for this study were conducted in February 2022. These suspensions were due to concerns about the integrity of the sponsoring organizations or individuals. Specifically, there were reports that some private sponsors were exploiting people sponsored through the program, financially or otherwise. Based on its inquiries, the MIFI developed a 'blacklist' of sponsoring organizations and individuals who are banned from private sponsorship (Valiente, 2020; Bergeron and Gervais, 2022; Bélair-Cirino, 2022).

Relevant legislation and policy

Between 2016 to 2021, the Quebec provincial government introduced legislation and policy related to immigration and integration. It is important to reiterate that at the provincial level, Quebec uses the *civil code*, a completely different legal system from the rest of Canada. Below this legislation and policy is discussed.

As mentioned above, Quebec is unique amongst Canadian provinces because it holds a specific agreement with the federal government, the *Accord Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall* (1991), that allows it to select *economic migrants* and *humanitarian/refugees* who come to the province. People sponsored through the *family sponsorship* program are not included in this agreement. This arrangement is different from other Canadian provinces. While other Canadian provinces can set up different immigration streams under the PNP, their selected candidates must all be approved by the federal IRCC (MIFI, 2021). Quebec establishes its

criteria for the *selection* of temporary and permanent immigrants to Quebec, particularly their French language capacity, as well as the *integration* of these people into the province through the *Quebec Immigration Act* (2016) which was modified by the recent *Bill 9* (2019) *"An Act to increase Quebec's socio-economic prosperity and adequately meet labour market needs through successful immigrant integration"*. Introduced in February 2019 by the Premier Legault's CAQ government, and assented in June 2019, this bill restructured the MIFI and modified the Quebec Immigration Act so that more information about immigrant candidates' knowledge of French could be collected.

Law 96, "Law on the official and common language of Quebec" was introduced in 2021 by the CAQ government and has not yet been adopted. It is intended to cement French as the official and only language of Quebec. It establishes an institutional infrastructure to monitor and enforce the use of French, particularly in workplaces. It also reinforces the centrality of the French language and Quebec culture ("*francisation*") to the MIFI. This law is tremendously ambitious in scope and, if accepted, will modify a suite of existing policies and legislation at the provincial and federal level, including the 1867 Constitutional Law of Canada, the Quebec civil code, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and a series of municipal laws.

Finally, *Bill 21, "An Act respecting the laicity of the state"* is perhaps the most controversial piece of legislation suggested by the CAQ. It proposes a ban on any newly hired public civil servants (ex: elementary school teachers, members of the legislature and so on) from wearing religious symbols, head or face coverings (such as any type of Muslim *hijab*, *burka* or *niqab*, Jewish *yarmulke*/*kippa*, Sikh *pagri* and other religious items). Although this bill is not explicitly related to the integration of immigrants, it does impact any members of religious minorities who migrate to Quebec and hope to work in the civil service.

1.4.2.a Local case: Sherbrooke, Quebec (Medium-sized town)

Table13: Sherbrooke summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Federal, Provincial & Municipal Political Orientations (2016-2021)	VARNI & VARUN
2021: 227,398 2016: 212,105	7.1% (14,550) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 40.2% (5,035); Family sponsored immigrants 20.1% (2,515); Refugees 38.5% (4,820)	7.2%	Unemployment: 6.7% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 23.5%; Occupations in education, law and society, community and government services 13.9%; Business, finance and administration 13.7%	Federal MP (2021): Liberal Federal MP (2016-2021): NDP Provincial MNA (2018): Québec Solidaire Provincial MNA (2016): Liberal	VARNI: 13.45; VARUN: -0.20

Source: *2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data*

In 2021, the population of Sherbrooke included 227, 398 inhabitants, increasing 7.2% from 212,105 in 2016 (StatsCan, 2021). The VARNI rate between 2006 and 2016 was 13.45. Sherbrooke is located in the *Estrie* region which is primarily a manufacturing region (PERQ, 2021). The economy of the town itself is primarily driven by the service industry and the two universities (English and French) that are located there. The VARUN rate was -0.20. Sherbrookeis overwhelmingly francophone with a sizeable bilingual (English/French) population and was characterized as an urban centre ('*ville*') by interviewees.

Politics at the federal and provincial level tend to be either centrist or left leaning. Between 2016 and 2021, the MPs elected at the federal level belonged to either the NDP or Liberal parties. At the provincial level, the MNAs belonged to the sovereigntist, social democrat *Québec Solidaire* and the Quebec Liberal parties. At the municipal level, all councillors and mayors ran as independents or as the head of small, local political parties following the Canadian norm. Interviewees noted that the recent 2021 municipal elections had brought about a significant shift towards greater representation and inclusion on city council. The mayor elected in 2021 was a younger woman, the majority of the councillors were women and three of the councillors elected were from racialized groups, a notable departure from the makeup of previous city councils. A city councillor stressed the importance of these differences:

> *So the fact that this city council was pretty different from the last one, because the last one was like the regular city council in Canada, with like a majority of white male and some woman. And the fact that for the first time we get a woman elected as a mayor at thirty-three, we have a city council with a majority of women. So we got seventeen counsellors, we got like eleven women, out of seventeen and also the fact that for the first time, there's a black counsellor, there is a Latino counsellor, there is a counsellor who was adopted from China when she was 5 months old.... You have a whole shift, like from old to young, to women, to immigrants. It's recent. And there is also the feeling that there is a generational change. It's like we just came to the end of an era. And we're starting something new*.

Immigration and integration

In 2016, Sherbrooke contained 14,550 people with an immigrant background and a visible minority population of 11,990. It is one of the largest hosts of immigrants and refugees in the province after Montreal and Quebec. In 2016, the largest immigration streams used by people who had immigrated to the town were the economic category (5,035) followed by the refugee (4,820) and family sponsorship (2,515) (StatsCan, 2016). Although the economic category makes up the largest category of all people who have immigrated to the town, both the policy literature and interviews suggested that since the early 2000s, people arriving through the resettled refugee category have made up more than half of the total number of immigrants arriving in the town annually (Ville, 2019). The most common countries of origin for immigrants are Afghanistan (445), France (325), Colombia (250), Syria (235) and Congo (215) (StatsCan, 2016). During the 2016-2021 period, the largest countries of origin for refugees included Colombia, Syria and Afghanistan. A city councillor described migratory patterns in the town in the following way:

> *What is fascinating with the integration in Sherbrooke is it comes by wave, meaning you can trace families, depending on the different migration and specially the refugee wave. So, there is a lot of ex-Yugoslavian families like from Serbia, Kosovo who came here in the 1990s when there was a war in Kosovo. Same thing for some Afghani families who came here during the first time in Afghanistan war and then after that you have like the Syrian wave and then after that, the Congolese wave, so it's a city that was able to integrate well some families and to keep them*.

Another notable characteristic of the town is that it is quite close to the American border. Interviewees mentioned that an informal border crossing between the US and Canada was close and had been used quite frequently by irregular immigrants between 2016 and 2021. A community service representative observed, "*During that period that you mentioned* [2016-2021], *we really had an issue with irregular immigration because we had a lot of people coming over the border from US when Trump was in power*".

The community possessed two additional features worthy of note. First, it contained many faith organizations (churches, synagogue, a mosque), some of which were very active

organizational private sponsors of resettled refugees. Second, the town includes a small, historic Syrian community who first arrived in the late 19th century. They founded a Syrian Orthodox church that interviewees reported had been an active private sponsor of Syrian refugees over the course of the Syrian conflict. Sherbrooke has been recognized both within Quebec and internationally for its well-developed and innovative municipal integration policies. It is a part of the European Council's *Network of Intercultural Cities*, an international association of cities (with populations of 30,000 or more) who collaborate to produce inclusive municipal policy. Members can also access to Council of Europe experts to develop policy and attend study workshops. The network includes cities such as Barcelona (Spain), Lublin (Poland) or Modena (Italy) (European Council, 2019).

Sherbrooke was one of the first Quebec towns to implement a formal municipal policy on integration in 2009 and was in the process of renewing it when the interviews for this report were conducted in February 2022 (European Council, 2022). The policy defines the municipality's contribution to integration services in the following way:

> the city intends to ensure accessibility to its services, employment opportunities and different spheres of municipal life to all citizens from all origins and to promote a feeling of belonging to the community in collaboration with different relevant actors (Ville, 2009, 10).

The policy defines three specific roles for the municipality as part of its mandate. These include:

> 1) a facilitative role intended to welcome and retain the immigrant community; 2) an accompanying role intended to assist the immigrant community with their projects and to support initiatives emanating from this population; 3) a referral role intended to direct the immigrant community to other non-municipal resources (specialized or not) because the municipality cannot nor should not respond to all the demands made of it (Ville, 2009, 10).

Interviews with policy makers and local integration service representatives from Sherbrooke suggested that they understood the town as a leader in municipal integration policy. A city councillor, for instance, noted, "*We are the first city after the larger municipalities to develop an integration policy for immigrant people...and during the last year we performed an evaluation to renew this policy*". The municipality was also the site of multiple, ongoing academic studies on integration, interculturalism and municipal organization, some of which were done in conjunction with the municipality to inform municipal integration policy and approaches. A municipal representative remarked, "*We work extensively with* [researcher] *who has helped us quite a bit. Recently, we did a study of municipal trends for our renewal of the* [integration] *municipal policy to help us understand what we would like to see*".

In addition to its formal policy on integration, in 2015, the municipality also established a formal committee, the *Committee on Intercultural Relations and Diversity*[10] (CRID), intended to address issues related to integration and diversity. The committee is led by an elected city councillor and is made up of citizens from the community. Their goal is to develop municipal interventions that promote intercultural relations and inclusive practices. One of the major pieces of municipal policy to come out of this committee was the 2018/19 *Action Plan on Immigration*, adopted by the municipal council in 2017 and enacted by both the municipality and its community partners. The stated objectives of the plan were to "*respond to frontline workers who are confronted daily with the shortcomings of the reception and integration system as well as the 'néo-Sherbrookois(e.s)' who hope to permanently and harmoniously establish themselves in our community as citizens*" (Ville, 2019, 8). It defined integration as a shared community endeavour and developed specific goals intended to improve integration (Ville, 2019). Specifically, it identifies five intervention axes including: 1) Establishing connections between different actors and the immigrant population; 2) Economic integration; 3) Social integration; 4) Cultural inclusion and the fight against discrimination, racism, prejudice and extremism; 5) Transversality and complementarity (Ville, 2019, 12). The action plan includes detailed actions, specific actors and anticipated results. Practical actions include conducting intercultural seminars, an employment matching program and changes to municipal hiring practices to promote better inclusion of racialized and immigrant people. Sherbrooke continued to develop and pursue these objectives in the *2020/21 Action Plan on Immigration* (Ville, 2020).

In 2020/21, Sherbrooke also commissioned a formal study on racism and discrimination. The study was initiated largely in response to the global social movements against racism that occurred after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. While it goes without saying that not all people who immigrate to Canada are racialized and not all racialized people have immigrated, this policy does impact racialized immigrants. The study provides specific recommendations for the municipality to address racism and discrimination including:

> 1) Establish a policy and action plan against racism and discrimination in place in consultation with citizens, organizations and institutions; 2) Establish a recruitment plan that prioritizes representation of racialized people and the immigrant community at the heart of city employees and para-public societies that are associated with it; 3) Compile population statistics that allow the city to measure the differences between the racialized population and/or cultural and immigrant communities and the rest of the population in the areas mandated to the municipality (housing, public security, employment, democratic life, social and economic development); 4) Establish training seminars on racism and discrimination for all personnel of the municipality and para-municipal organizations (Blaise et al., 2021, 113-115).

[10] *Comité des relations interculturelles et de la diversité* (CRID)

There are three primary newcomer-serving organizations located in Sherbrooke. Generally, their major sources of funding come equally from the MIFI (province) and the municipality. These organizations offer essential services for people who have very recently immigrated, including activities such as French language courses, assistance finding employment, accompanying services (for health care) and translation services amongst other things. Community organizations that could be accessed by newcomers but are intended for the broader community include social and cultural organizations or tenant's associations. English language classes for newcomers are not funded by the MIFI but are provided by community organizations in the town. Finally, the municipality also contributed to the "week of intercultural exchange", a social event which was identified by multiple interviewees as a site for building awareness and cultural exchange.

1.4.2.b. Local case: Victoriaville, Quebec (Small-sized town)

Table 14: Victoriaville summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Federal, Provincial & Municipal Political Orientations (2016-2021)	VARNI & VARUN
2021: 52,936 2016: 51,336	2.9% (1,355) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 24.6% (290); Family sponsored immigrants 34.3% (405); Refugees 39.8% (470)	3.1%	Unemployment: 5.5% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 25.6%; Trades, transport and equipment operators 14.6%; Business, finance and administration 13.7%	MP (2016-2021): Conservative MNA (2016-2021): Coalition avenir Québec	VARNI : 0.52 VARUN : -0.40

Source: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Victoriaville is the second, smaller Quebec case study and was considered to be a more rural area ('*région*') by interviewees. In 2021, its population included 52,936 inhabitants, increasing 3.1% from 51,336 in 2016. Its VARNI score was 0.52. It is located in the *Centre-du-Québec* region and is part of the Regional Municipal of the County of Arthabaska (*Municipalité régionale de comté* or 'MRC'). Victoriaville is economically driven by manufacturing followed by agriculture and forestry (Government of Canada, 2022). The 2016 census suggests that its economy is primarily driven by sales and services followed by business and finance. Its VARUN score was -0.40. The town is overwhelmingly francophone (StatsCan, 2021). Politically at the federal level, the MPs elected belonged to the Conservative party, which is notable for Quebec because the Conservative party is not a major party and typically does not receive a high

number of seats. At the provincial level, the MNAs elected between 2016 and 2021 were all part of the centre-right, autonomist CAQ party. At the municipal level, mayors and councillors ran as independents following the Canadian norm.

Immigration and integration

In 2016, 1,355 people living in Victoriaville reported an immigrant background and 1,145 belonged to a visible minority group. Most immigrants came through the refugee (470) category followed by family sponsorship (405) and the economic category (290). It is worth noting that this distribution is very different from both Sherbrooke and Quebec at the provincial level. In 2016, the most common countries or regions of origin for immigrants were Colombia (225), France (150) and various African countries[11](195) (StatsCan, 2016). Victoriaville is notable because it is one of the destinations for government-sponsored (Quebec) resettled refugees who made up 80.0% of all resettled refugees in the county in 2012 (MRC-Arthabaska, 2012).

In 2012, the municipal region (including Victoriaville) adopted a regional-level policy on reception, integration and retention of immigrant people. It was developed in consultation with representatives from the province, the municipalities in the region as well as the regional integration centre. The rationale for the policy is explicitly anchored in the labour shortage, a feature of Quebec's economy for some time. The policy characterizes immigration very positively, suggesting that it "contributes to new knowledges, the creation of enterprises, the creation of new consumers and the growth of international economic networks" (MRC-Arthabaska, 2012, 6-7). The portrayal of all immigration (regardless of immigration stream) as an economic issue and the primary solution to the labour shortage was notable in Victoriaville interviews.

Outside of formal policy, interviews with municipal officials responsible for immigration and integration activities also mentioned the labour shortage when discussing immigration. They frequently suggested that the *retention* of immigrants was, by far, the largest concern for the town. The focus on retention (as opposed to attraction) of immigrants is likely related to the high number of government-sponsored refugees in the area who remain in the care of the state for one year. A municipal official noted that the municipal economic development corporation had funded programs specifically intended to reinforce immigrant retention:

> *...because the budget deployed by our governmental system is much bigger for the attraction of labourers or entrepreneurs but at the level of integration or retention, the budget is much smaller. So that can cause a problem for creating intercultural activities with the host community. So, for us, the economic development corporation, us, the 'corpo', we have created a department specifically for everything related to the*

[11] The census entry lists these entries as "Other place of birth in Africa". This category *excludes* Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Somalia and South Africa. Togo is listed in other government documents as a source country.

> *retention of immigrant labour. So, it is me who is in charge. So that has helped us a lot to do recruitment and integration, helping newcomers in their integration, creating activities and organizing in the case of work.*

Between 2016 and 2021, there were several waves of immigrants to Victoriaville. A municipal representative commented that, "*right now we have a lot of Colombians. A few years ago, we had* [people] *from Syria, we had Syrians and after that it was from Morocco*". The representative also noted that the resettled refugees from Syrian had not chosen to stay in the town. The municipal representative speculated that:

> *I think it's the level of 'francisation'. The 'francisation' process is very long for them. Contrarily, for people from Latin America, French is relatively easy. They can learn it within a year and people can manage. For those from Syria, I think their maternal language is often Arabic and the language is harder to learn*.

There is one major organization for newcomers in the community. It serves the region but is located in Victoriaville. This organization is responsible for supporting all immigrants (government-sponsored refugees, economic immigrants, family sponsored immigrants). Its major services include: job market integration, social and cultural integration, language training and referral services amongst others (MRC-Arthabaska, 2012).

A city councillor noted that Victoriaville was actively trying to recruit families from the Maghreb region (particularly Morocco) to come live and work in the town. The councillor noted that they were attempting to improve municipal services to make the town and region more attractive to people from this group. They noted that major issues being addressed by the municipality included housing, transportation and family services. They elaborated on the municipality's priorities for immigrant groups:

> *The first issue is housing. The profile of a Quebec family unit is two adults and maximum two children. Our profiles, because we already have a not insignificant number of people* [who have immigrated] *working in the manufacturing sector, so we know that we are attractive to people from the Maghreb, the Philippines and so we know that in those countries, in those cultures, that the family size is often two adults and maybe five, six children, maybe more. That does not correspond to the reality in our country and the size of homes. So now we are saying to ourselves, we have this transversal problem that is finding quality housing that can be adapted to the needs of* [incoming] *family units. How can we develop renovation projects to modify housing to respond to this need? We are, of course, working on community cooperative housing projects with a 'modified' housing design.*
>
> *The second transversal axis is transport. For newcomers, mobility often happens by public transit. In our municipality, we have a network of collective transport that is 'on-demand' transport that requires reservation. So, it is very complex for our newcomers, particularly when there is a language barrier, to access this service. So, we are reflecting on how we could modify our transport system so that it is more inclusive, easier as well,*

and because Victoriaville is a central city, in a MRC, a regional municipality of the county, that is very rural, transport is an inter-municipal challenge.

And the third issue that we have that is transversal is everything that is related to family services such that, we would like our immigrants.... In our international initiatives to attract people, when we do presentations and so on, we don't just want the worker, we want all of their family... So now, we arrive at children and family services. In certain cultures, I am speaking about the Maghreb, we see that it is often is the man who will be the employee, so our target is the man and the woman will be more at the home and more with the children. So that requires childcare services and a network of community organizations that can help the family to escape from social isolation.

1.4.3 Provincial context: B.C.

Table 15: B.C. summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Provincial Political Orientation (2016-2021)	Ministry responsible for immigration/ integration
2021: 5,000,879 2016: 4,648,055	2016: 28.3% (1,292,675) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 56.0% (537,875); Family sponsored immigrants 33.8% (323,440); Refugees 8.6% (82,360)	7.6%	Unemployment: 6.7% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 24.1%; Business, finance, and administration 14.9%; Trade, transportation, and equipment operation 14.6%	2021: BC New Democratic Party NDP (elected in 2020) (2017: BC NDP with BC Green's support; 2013: BC Liberal	2021: Ministry of Municipal Affairs; Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation; Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training2016: Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

Sources: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Population

B.C. is the third-most populous province in Canada, containing 11.4% of the national population. In 2021, the population exceeded five million people, with a growth rate of 7.6% that exceeded the national rate (5.8%). It has a high rate of linguistic diversity: approximately 29.6% of the population speaks a third language other than English or French, exceeding the Canadian rate of 22.9%. The major ethnic minority groups in B.C. are Chinese (11.2%), Filipino (3.2%), and Korean (1.3%) (Statistics Canada, 2021a). The province attracts the highest rate of interprovincial immigration amongst the provinces evaluated.

Vancouver is the biggest city in the province. It is one of the world's most expensive cities, with the highest cost of living in North America. In 2021, the Vancouver CMA's population was estimated at 2,606,000, an increase of 5.5% from 2016. Immigrants made up to 40.8% of the city's population in 2016. Victoria is the second biggest CMA in B.C. and the capital of the province. Its CMA population was estimated at 389,910 in 2021, an increase of 6.0% from 2016. Immigrants represented 18.3% of the population in Victoria in 2016. Kelowna is the third largest CMA in B.C. With its CMA population increasing at a very high rate of 14.0% from 194,882 in 2016 to 222,162 in 2021, Kelowna is the fastest growing CMA in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016; 2022a).

Economy

During the 2010–2018 period, B.C.'s GDP accounted for 13.5% of Canada's GDP. During the same period, B.C.'s GDP growth rate (9.3%) was almost double the average growth rate of other Canadian provinces (5.2%). Between 2015 and 2018, B.C. was the second fastest growing province in Canada. Due to this growth rate, the unemployment rate was below-average (5.3%), compared with the national average unemployment rate (7.6%) during the 2015 to 2019 period (Fraser Institute, 2020). The service sector drives the provincial economy, employing 24.1% of the province's labour force. An additional 14.9% are employed in business, finance, and administration and 14.6% in trade and transportation (Statistics Canada, 2021a). According to the Conference Board of Canada, immigration accounted for 90.0% of British Columbia's labour force growth during the 2011-2016 period (Conference Board of Canada, 2018).

Politics

B.C. was governed by B.C. New Democratic Party (NDP) from 1991 to 2001. The B.C. Liberal Party held power from 2001 up until the elections of 2017. As stated earlier in this study, the BC Liberal party is more conservative than the federal Liberal party. In the federal elections of 2017, the BC Liberals won 43 seats to the NDP's 41, with the remaining three seats won by B.C. Green party. The Liberals attempted to keep government but the NDP concluded a confidence and supply agreement with the Greens, making the BC NDP leader John Horgan premier. In the 2020 provincial elections, the B.C. NDP won a majority of 57 seats to the Liberals 28 and the Greens two, and Horgan continued as premier (Elections BC, 2022). The NDP's campaign focused on the housing crisis in B.C., promising to increase affordable housing and modernize the real estate sector. Additionally, they pledged to reduce childcare fees and eliminate medical services plan fees.

Immigration and integration

B.C. is the second largest receiver, after Ontario, of international immigrants to Canada, with 15.0% of the national total during the period of 2020-2021.In 2016, immigrants accounted for 28.3% of the B.C. population, exceeding the national rate of 21.9% (Statistics Canada, 2021b). The largest source countries of origin for immigrants to B.C. are China 15.5% (199,990), India 12.6% (162,650), United Kingdom 9.6% (123,810), Philippines 8.7% (112,100), Hong Kong 5.7% (74,210), United States 4.5% (57,780), and Germany 2.7% (35,045).

B.C. received the third highest number of resettled refugees in Canada during the period from 2015 and 2020 (8.4%). In 2019, B.C. received more than 7.6% of the total protected persons and resettled refugees admitted to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Between 2015 and 2020, B.C. received 12,924 refugees, of which 6,170 were GARs, 5,505 PSRs and 1,240 BVORs. In 2017, the number of GARs declined by 64.0% compared with the previous year (2016), a phenomenon that was coupled with a 76.0% increase in refugee claimants' arrivals to the province in 2017 (B.C. Refugee Hub, 2020). In 2021, 3,420 asylum claimant applications were processed in B.C., 13.6% of total asylum applications processed in Canada that year

(Government of Canada, 2022a). GARs in B.C. are mainly assisted by the *Immigrants Service Society of British Columbia* (ISSofBC), one of the largest newcomer-serving agencies in the province whose services include: orientation sessions, English language training resources, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities. ISSofBC receives federal, provincial, and regional funding. During the 1998-2014 period, the province was responsible for designing and delivering the federally funded settlement and integration programs for newcomers in British Columbia. In 2014, the federal government repatriated this responsibility (AMSSA, 2018).

B.C. has no dedicated ministry for immigration, resettlement, or integration. The *Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation* and the *Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training* are involved in immigration and resettlement activities in B.C. which are mainly conducted through the Welcome B.C. initiative, the three PNPs, the Immigration Policy and Integration Branch, and International Students programs. In 2021, the provincial *Ministry of Municipal Affairs* (MMA) represented B.C. in its bilateral immigration agreement with the federal government of Canada and was mandated with supporting resettlement and integration services for newcomers and facilitating economic immigration to the province (B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2021). To achieve this mandate, the ministry relies on B.C.'s *Immigration Programs Act* of 2015 (Bill 39) and the *Ministry of International Business and Immigration Act* of 1990.

The MMA is also responsible for administering B.C.'s PNP, which is the main economic immigration program used to attract international highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs. Like other Canadian PNPs, the federal government sets the annual quotas of the maximum nominees the province can select. B.C.'s allocations doubled between 2013 and 2017, with 6,000 nominees in 2017, of which 69 were entrepreneurs who invested $56 million and created 147 jobs. During the same year, the majority of the PNP nominees were from India, China, South Korea, Australia and the United Kingdom (Statistics Canada, 2022a).

The MMA developed various PNP streams and the *Entrepreneur Immigration Regional Pilot* (B.C. PNP*)* to attract international talent and entrepreneurs to B.C. and contribute to its economic development. In 2017, the province launched the B.C. *PNP Tech Pilot* to fill the skills gap in the tech industry and assist local tech companies to recruit and retain international talent. In 2017, 923 tech workers were nominated through this program (Government of B.C., 2022). Another PNP pilot program was established in 2019 to invite international entrepreneurs to establish businesses in B.C.'s regions. The pilot fell under the mandate of the *Ministry of Jobs, Trade, and Technology* (MJTT) and aimed to address the economic development needs of regional communities in the province, outside the urban centres. Communities who enrolled in the program had to have less than 75,000 people and demonstrate their capacity to provide settlement and business support services to newcomers (Government of B.C., 2019). The MJTT also supports the integration of newcomers through employment matching programs such as *Career Path for Skilled Immigrants*, which

are intended to match newcomers and refugees with employment opportunities that correspond to their pre-arrival skills and education (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2021).

In September 2021, *Refugee Readiness Program* was established. This $2 million one-time investment, funded by the federal government, was allocated to the immigration division of the provincial MMA, to enhance refugee resettlement services provided by the province through the IRCC RAP. In addition to federal resettlement support, provincial services also included trauma counselling and a career path for skilled immigrants program. A similar model was established in 2015/2016 to welcome Syrian refugees in the province, when British Columbia received 4,595 refugees (Government of British Columbia, 2022). In 2015, the province allocated one million dollars of the provincial budget towards the establishment of five *Refugee Readiness Teams* intended to assist with the resettlement of Syrian refugees. The teams coordinated needs assessments and training in the receiving communities (AMSSA, 2018). In January 2022, B.C. was one of the provinces selected by the federal government to receive a share of the $21 million allocated towards the establishment of new resettlement assistance service providers. This came as a part of a new initiative by the federal government to expand settlement services for newcomers in small towns and rural communities (Government of Canada, 2022h).

1.4.3.a Local case: Kelowna, B.C. (Medium-sized town)

Table 16: Kelowna summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Political Orientation (2016-2021)	VARNI & VARUN
2021: 222,162 2016: 194,882	13.9% (26,455) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 52.6% (7,605); Family sponsored immigrants 37.2% (5,375); Refugees 9.5% (1,380)	14.0%	Unemployment: 7.1% Top 3 NOC: Sales and service 25.8%; Trade, transportation, and equipment operators 16.0%; Business, finance, and administration 14.3%	Federal MP: (2021): BC Conservative; Federal MP (2019): BC Conservative; Federal MP (2015): BC Liberal Provincial MLA (2020): BC Liberal; Provincial MLA (2017): BC Liberal; Provincial MLA (2013): BC Liberal	VARNI: 20.0 VARUN: 2.00

Sources: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Kelowna is located in the Regional District of the Central Okanagan, in the southern interior part of B.C. The municipality grew rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, becoming B.C.'s third major

population centre after Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria. It is the major town of the Okanagan valley. With a population growth rate estimated at 14.0% between 2016 and 2021, Kelowna (CMA) was ranked as the fastest growing in Canada. In 2021, its population was estimated at 222,162 people (Canada Statistics, 2022d). The variation of number of inhabitants between 2006 and 2016 was 120.1. The vast bulk of the population increase is driven by Canadians moving from other parts of B.C. or Canada. The community is especially popular with retirees from elsewhere in Canada, but the establishment of a university campus in 2005 has also brought more students from outside the region (almost 11,000 students as of 2020) (Global News, 2020). With a median age of 43.8 (compared to the Canadian average median age of 41.2), Kelowna is slightly older than the Canadian median (Statistics Canada, 2021). In 2016, immigrants made up 13.9% of the total population, with 52.6% arriving through the economic immigration stream, 37.2% family sponsored immigrants and 9.5% arriving as refugees. Visible minorities made up 7.8% of the population and the largest visible minority groups were South Asian (2.1%), Chinese (1.2%), and Filipino (1.0%). The VARNI between 2006 and 2016 was 20.09.

According to 2016 Census, the median income was $34,509, and the unemployment rate was 7.1%. The participation rate in the work force was 63.7% and the major employment areas were sales and services (25.8%), trade and transport (16.0%), and business and financial services (14.3%) (Statistics Canada, 2016). Marketing and distribution centres of fruit industry products, the UBC Okanagan university campus, and Okanagan College were also major employers. The main employment sectors are forestry, manufacturing, high tech, and tourism. The variation of unemployment level between 2006 and 2016 was 2.00. Politically, Kelowna has a history of electing conservative representatives. Provincially, Kelowna was the home of Social Credit leaders Bill Bennett and his father W.A.C. Bennett, and still Kelowna reliably elects conservative representatives (currently from the B.C. Liberal party, which is a conservative party). Federally, a Member of Parliament from the Liberal party headed by Justin Trudeau was elected in 2015, the first time in many decades that Kelowna was represented by a non-conservative politician, but he was defeated in 2019 and the current MP (who won 45% of the votes)[12] is a member of the federal Conservative party.

Immigration and integration

[12] Given its size, Kelowna is split into two ridings federally. The 2012 federal electoral boundaries redistribution placed Kelowna's downtown in the riding of Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola riding (represented by a Conservative MP since its formation, meaning the 2015, 2019, and 2021 elections); the federal riding of Kelowna-Lake Country included the other parts of Kelowna. As of this writing, the 2022 federal electoral boundaries redistribution is recommending that Kelowna be split differently, with Kelowna's downtown (including Kelowna city hall) being placed in a new Vernon-Lake Country riding, while half of Lake Country would be in the reconfigured Kelowna riding. Different boundaries would likely lead to different results: an urban riding covering only central Kelowna and the university would likely elect a more progressive candidate, while splitting Kelowna into two otherwise largely rural ridings makes it more likely conservative candidates will continue to come first.

A local multi-service agency provides immigration and resettlement services to newcomers in Kelowna as well as community, employment, and family services. In 2019/2020, the agency assisted 1,780 newcomers (KCR, 2019). The agency is also a centre for the *Building Capacity to Support Migrant Workers* project launched by a provincial multicultural association and funded by the federal *Migrant Worker Support Network B.C. Pilot*. The project started in 2019 to enhance the knowledge and capacity of settlement and migrant worker support organizations, unions, professional associations, volunteers, employers and all individuals supporting migrant workers by providing them with tools, resources and training opportunities. The centre provides employment skills training, orientation/information sessions, translation and interpretation, community connection, soft advocacy, crisis intervention, emergency transportation support, emergency access to food, workplace rights, and responsibilities information, open work permit application support, permanent residence application support, housing or supplies and referral services to other service providers including legal advocates. Kelowna also hosts another local organization that supports migrant workers and provides similar services (AMSSA, 2020).

Finally, the municipality is a member of a regional LIP, the federally funded organisation that supports and coordinates the work of local service providers involved in the resettlement and integration of newcomers. The LIP conducts research to identify needs of newcomers and gaps in service provision to enhance the strategic planning of member municipalities. LIP members include: municipal governments, cultural groups, immigrants, the school district, post-secondary education, employers, foundations, local media, umbrella organizations, and non-profit organizations from the four Central Okanagan communities (KCR, 2019).

1.4.3.b Local case: Vernon, B.C. (Small-sized town)

Table 17: Vernon summary table

Population	Immigrants (2016)	Demographic Growth (2016-2021)	Economic Development (2016)	Provincial and Municipal Political Orientation (2016-2021)	VARNI & VARUN
2021: 67,086 2016: 61,334	11.4% (6,785) Relevant categories: Economic immigrants 53.3% (1,735); Family sponsored immigrants 39,6% (1,290); Refugees 6.0% (195)	9.4%	Unemployment: 7.6% Top 3 NOC: Sales and Service 24.7%; Trade, transport and equipment operators 16.5%; Business, finance and administration 13.5%	Federal MP: (2021): BC Conservative; Federal MP (2019): BC Conservative; Federal MP (2015): BC Conservative Provincial MLA (2020): BC NDP; Provincial MLA (2017): BC Liberal; Provincial MLA (2013): BC Liberal	VARNI: 10.67 VARUN: 1.60

Source: 2021 and 2016 Canadian Census Data

Vernon is also located in the Okanagan valley in the southern interior part of B.C. In 2021, its population was 67,086, increasing at the rate of 9.4% from 2016 (61,334). It is one of the oldest communities in Canada, with a median age of 48.4. The variation of number of inhabitants between 2006 and 2016 was 10.7. In 2016, immigrants made up 11.4% of the total population. The largest categories of immigrants were the economic stream (53.3%), family sponsored immigrants (39.6%) and refugees (6.0%). The largest source regions for immigrants to Vernon were Europe followed by Asia. The main countries of origin for immigrants to the city area were the UK (1,535), Germany (780), the Netherlands (395) and India (360) (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Vernon's economy is primarily driven by the sales and services sector followed by trades, transportation, and businesses (Statistics Canada, 2021). In 2016, the median income was $32,615 (well below the Canadian median) and the unemployment rate was 7.6% and the main economic engines were agriculture, forestry, construction, tourism, and manufacturing industry. The variation of unemployment level between 2006 and 2016 was 1.6. Politically, Vernon is interesting in that it has generally had conservative representatives provincial (British Columbia Liberal party) and federal (Conservative Party of Canada) levels but in the

2020 provincial elections, the riding was won by a nurse who had immigrated to Canada from Punjab, India, in 2001 run unsuccessfully for NDP in the federal elections.[13]

Immigration and Integration

In Vernon, immigrants, refugees, and refugee claimants receive settlement services from a non-profit regional community service society. This society supports temporary migrant workers as part of the federal *Migrant Worker Support Network* (MWSN) and develops partnerships with local service providers to serve migrant workers and their employers from Vernon and other parts of the North Okanagan region. Additionally, newcomers in this town benefit from services and resources made available in the North Okanagan region and coordinated by LIP which is funded federally, provincially, and regionally.

Vernon is actively engaged in economic immigration programs. In its 2019-2022 strategic plan, the municipality adopted the goal of attracting and retaining entrepreneurial and skilled immigrants as a part of its business development plan. In 2019, the municipality participated in the provincial *Entrepreneur Immigration: Regional Pilot Program*, launched by the province of B.C. During the same year, Vernon also was one of the 11 Canadian municipalities selected for the *Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot* (RNIP), a five-year program funded by the federal government to help smaller rural and northern communities attract and retain foreign skilled workers to meet their economic development and labour market needs. It is characterized as an innovative, new community-based approach for attracting labour force because the selected community identifies candidates for the program and are responsible for candidate recruitment and endorsement for permanent residence (IRCC, 2019).

[13] Harwinder Sandhu (NDP) won 36.6% of the votes, compared to 35.1% for the BC Liberal incumbent.

Section 2: overarching themes

2.a) The (dis)connection between national, provincial, and municipal integration policies and approaches

In this section, the similarities and differences between national, provincial, and municipal approaches to immigration and integration are discussed.

Ontario and B.C.

In Ontario, there are several differences between federal and provincial immigration and resettlement policies. The arrival of the *Conservative* government in Ontario in June 2018 brought a different approach to immigration and resettlement policies, that was not in line with the federal position. The attitude of the Conservative government in Ontario was described by a director of a local NGO involved in assisting refugee claimants located in both Guelph and Stratford:

> *Canada is a federation, which means we're actually really governed by the provinces. And the federal government, their role is to really coordinate that governance of all the provinces and territories, right, and then to act on those policies that are common to all of them… We have a provincial government that doesn't understand what it means to be in a federation. And doesn't understand that Ottawa, is not like the Vatican in Rome… Immigration policies at the federal level need to be implemented at the provincial level. They're not executed by the feds… But the province* [Ontario] *says basically, 'You bring them, you pay for them'*.

As noted earlier in this report, the former provincial *Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration* (MCI) had a clear mandate to provide services to newcomers that complemented federally funded *Settlement Service Provider Organization* (PSOs) and RAP programs. MCI represented the province in its bilateral immigration agreement with the federal government of 2017. This agreement established the responsibilities of both parties towards immigration and resettlement policies and programs in Ontario. The new structure imposed by the Conservative government in Ontario - that eliminated the former MCI and distributed its responsibilities between other ministries, with no publicly announced ministerial mandates for immigration, resettlement or integration - resulted in limited clarity regarding resettlement and integration programs, with no clear coordination structures between the ministries or between them and the federal government. An opposition provincial parliament member highlighted this gap by noting:

> *So usually when you're a minister of the crown, you're given a mandate letter from the premier and those are supposed to be public. But the premier has been fighting against releasing those for four years*.

Under the Conservative government which arrived in 2018, Ontario did not sign a new bilateral immigration agreement with the federal government and as of this writing there are no clear indications of the province's strategies for resettlement and integration of newcomers to Ontario. This means that the relationship between the federal government and the province of Ontario lacked strategic vision and clarity regarding the mutual roles and responsibilities of both partners.

Since 2018, Ontario's provincial government imposed budget cuts targeting particular resettlement services for refugees and refugee claimants, including the publicly funded service of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO). The provincial government imposed a 30% cut of the general legal aid budget and stopped all legal aid to refugees and immigration cases through the LAO, deferring the costs to federal funds (WSWS, 2019). Additionally, the province reduced transition child benefits and prevented refugee claimants from accessing emergency shelters that are provincially funded. These cuts were discussed by a director of local NGO:

> *Immigration policies at the federal level needs to be implemented at the provincial level. They're not executed by the federals… But the province says basically you bring them, you pay for them. After 2017/2018 they* [the Ontario provincial government] *no longer provide legal aid support for refugees and refugee claimants… This provincial government went after refugee claimants.*

At the municipal level, both Ontario towns had no mandate to provide immigration, resettlement, or integration services to newcomers. Yet, our interviews demonstrated that municipal authorities were generally responsive to the attitudes of their communities. In both towns, the arrival of Syrian refugees during the 2016 – 2021 period was discussed as the most notable resettlement movement of that period. Syrian resettled refugees were received positively by both communities, a response that happens to be in line with federal positive messages with regards to welcoming Syrian refugees.

This influence was clearer in the case of Guelph, known for being a left leaning and welcoming community that received more than 470 PSRs. A local bureaucrat noted, "*They* [the community] *have a really good attitude. It is a welcoming community attitude and practices*". Yet, local actors and community-based organizations involved in refugee private sponsorship in Guelph, noted that despite their positive tone, federal resettlement policies lacked consistency and were not accompanied by sufficient resources for long term integration initiatives. A local Guelph business leader who sponsored 400 Syrian refugees noted that, "*They* [the federal government] *need to be more consistent and say we are going to help some people, but not very many…so we do need support from the federal government to allow more* [resettlement] *spaces*".

A similar observation was shared by an opposition provincial parliament member,

> "*We just like the idea of welcoming newcomers, but we're not willing to necessarily invest the resources to fully facilitate that process*". A municipal official commented on the same point confirming the positive tone but the slow actions of the federal and provincial governments, "*I don't see provincial or federal regulation following fast enough. They've increased the immigration levels and numbers… but it's just very slow moving and they want input, but they're not moving*".

The dynamics between the three levels of government and its impact on community actors and newcomers were powerfully described by a director of a local NGO involved in assisting refugee claimants:

> *At the municipal level in Guelph, there's a great sympathy and willingness to welcome and to make sure needs are met. At the provincial level there is no sympathy for refugee claimants. And at the federal level, there's limited sympathy. They provide legal aid and interim federal health. But that's pretty much it. So, you have three different systems, all trying to navigate and on the ground level what you end up is with your local service organizations and NGOs, pulling the best that they can from each of those to get the needs match right.*

In comparison to Ontario, the provincial government of B.C. generally has a more welcoming attitude towards immigrants and refugees, yet there is no dedicated provincial ministry for immigration and resettlement. Instead, the federal government assumes most of the responsibility for delivering settlement services to newcomers, including refugees, in the province. This has been the case since 2014 after the repatriation of settlement funds from the B.C. provincial government to the national settlement program. The provincial government of B.C. does allocate funding for some newcomer settlement services through various units that come under the mandates of different provincial ministries, including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training. This governance structure affects the communication and cooperation between ministries and actors involved in immigration and resettlement and hinders the province's ability to construct multi-year planning strategies.

At the municipal level, like the province of Ontario, neither case study site had a mandate to provide resettlement services for newcomers. A local official in Kelowna remarked that, *"There are more on the initiatives rather than policy side".* The same situation was clearly explained by a local immigration consultant in Kelowna, "*I can't give you an example of municipal policy, because migrant integration is not really a service delivered by the city. The closest I would come up with would be that the council has very strong support for social inclusion".* Both selected B.C. municipalities benefitted from federal and provincial pilot projects that were mainly designed to attract migrant workers and entrepreneurs. Additionally, the regional districts of both B.C. towns played an active role in offering resettlement services to newcomers both through regional resettlement organizations and by hosting LIPs which coordinate and support resettlement service providers.

Quebec:

In Quebec, the connection between national and provincial policy is very different from the rest of Canada. The provincial immigration ministry, the MIFI, is much more important for discussions of integration policy than the federal government in Quebec because it develops immigration policy and administers the province's economic and humanitarian immigration programs. Quebec can choose to align its policy with federal initiatives, but it is not obligated to do so. The MIFI take a very active and coordinated approach to integration that, since the 1990s, has employed a regional strategy designed to coordinate integration service-provider activities and encourage immigration to smaller regions (Blaise et al., 2021). Interviews with newcomer-serving community organizations commonly noted that the two major funders for their programs or organizations were the MIFI and the municipality. In particular, there is very generous funding for French language courses to the extent that newcomers are paid to enroll in French classes. A representative from a community-service organization noted that, "*Not only does* [a newcomer] *not have to pay* [for French language courses] *they receive money from government programs to take the course*". Between 2015 and 2017, the province of Quebec, under the Quebec Liberals, welcomed approximately 12,000 Syrian resettled refugees as part of the Syrian Initiative. The bulk of these sponsorships were done through the Quebec private sponsorship program by private citizens and community organizations and not through the (Quebec) government-sponsorship program (Blain et al., 2020).

Over the 2016-2021 period, an obvious tension was apparent in the provincial and municipal messaging regarding immigration and integration. Specifically, at the provincial level, one of the CAQ's key election promises was to *decrease* immigration to Quebec and heavily promote *francisation* and Quebec secularism (*laïcité*), including a proposal to banish all head coverings amongst newly hired public servants. Conversely, the integration policies of both Quebec towns actively sought to *attract* and *retain* immigrants in medium and small-municipal centres and build community resources to support and include new groups.

This tension between attracting and accommodating newcomers and the promotion of the French language and Quebec civic values was evident in interviews. Municipal representatives from the same communities took different positions on this issue. For instance, a former mayor understood integration and the municipality's responsibility towards newcomers in the following way:

> *I tell* [newcomers] *that us* [the municipality], *our responsibility is to accommodate you, to facilitate your learning of the language in the most rapid way possible, to collectively offer you the tools. That costs us as a society because it's a cost that we assume. But I will tell you* [newcomers] *clearly that you have an obligation to try to understand our culture* [and] *not to focus only on yourself, not to isolate yourself.... not to focus only on your own business, not to impose your vision on Quebecois because you think that*

> *your religion is good, because you think that what you eat is good, that your way of doing things is how they should be done. When I was mayor, I'll give you an example, a Muslim group came* [to see me] *because they wanted to have a place to pray. In Montreal, their request was accepted but in Victoriaville, I told them, "No". I was against it because it wasn't my role as part of the municipality. That is up to them. The Catholic church doesn't ask us to do that for them, to find them a church. That request, for me, it was unreasonable. It isn't up to the general population to find you a place to pray. That's your private life, like I don't tell you what to do in the bedroom. So that's my line.*

Conversely, a city councillor from the same municipality noted that:

> *When we received the wave of Syrians, we* [the municipality] *received 200 Syrians and I think we had a loss rate of 40% who left for the regions of Toronto and Montreal because we hadn't yet developed.... We didn't have a mosque until only very recently. These points could seem inconsequential to you but these are the political questions.... We didn't have a halal butcher! So, it's these small details like that we are trying to incorporate into our political vision, which says that the host community needs to be ready to welcome diversity... And not simply to have an approach to say to our immigrants, "Look, this is what a Quebecois is. We drink maple syrup and we eat poutine[14]". We need to prepare our host community. For us, it's really one of the most important guiding principles.*

Local integration actors and approaches and interaction with other levels of governance

In this section, we discuss the specific integration policies and initiatives present in the towns surveyed, stressing the interaction between levels of governance. We elaborate on the distribution of formal competencies across actors involved in integration.

[14] A popular type of Quebec food made of French fries, gravy and cheese curds.

Ontario and B.C.

The selected municipalities in Ontario and B.C. have no mandates to provide settlement services to newcomers. These services are generally offered by community-based, non-profit settlement agencies and usually funded by federal or provincial governments. While services were very limited in Stratford, Vernon benefits from the active role of its regional district in settlement services. Vernon also benefits from the federal and provincial immigration pilot projects present there, although they mainly target economic immigrants. A city councillor in Kelowna discussed the active role of the regional districts in settlement services, emphasizing the increased resources that this arrangement brought to the town:

> *The regional district system of governance here is very unique to the province of British Columbia. It has a service delivery model… each municipality does have their own specialists that work in their own communities. But if you go to Central Okanagan Economic Development website, there's information that each municipality couldn't afford to deliver. You know, you might have one person in Kelowna, half a person in Vernon. At the regional district they have an office.*

Municipal support was generally offered through social programs designed for low-income community members that could be accessed by newcomers. This was confirmed by a municipal official from Guelph:

> *I don't know if I could say that there were specific policies that were created for newcomers, but I think the scope of many existing policies was expanded… There are always policies that municipal governments have to assist low income or supportive housing, but I think they expanded that to include migrants.*

The same tone was echoed by a city councillor in Stratford, "*Our social services department in Stratford has welcomed and offered services to our newcomers. But those are services that they would make readily available to all individuals and certainly to our newcomers as well*". Thus, resettlement initiatives (not policies) adopted by the selected towns were generally welcoming but responsive, with limited strategic vision, and performed on an *ad hoc* basis, as noted by a local bureaucrat in Guelph:

> *When the federal government welcomed Syrian refugees, the city and the community were very responsive and welcoming… When newcomers arrived, they started getting support here and there. This became more a priority for some of the community partners…. most of those organisations connect and communicate between each other but there's nothing formally structuring them… There isn't any umbrella organization up there, but it's a small community, they know each other, so it's kind of everyone knows everyone when it comes to community partners.*

The interviews demonstrated that newcomers in the selected towns were generally welcomed and received with a positive attitude. Yet, there were references to racism and discrimination which, in some cases, were mainly linked to the limited degree of ethnic diversity in the

studied localities. A city councillor in Kelowna explained, "*In the 2011 census, 96% of Kelowna was white… It is a serious decision-making challenge for folks if they want to come here. If they don't look like people here".* A faith group leader in Stratford highlighted the issue of discrimination against newcomers in smaller towns, "*We were welcoming, but we weren't particularly great in integration…people in our community who come from any kind of background that is non-Anglo and non-white, experienced discrimination*". A local journalist from Stratford confirmed these difficulties and noted the challenge of retaining people in such communities when services are not available:

> *In such smaller communities, there isn't an organized push to resettle and integrate newcomers… Sometimes language barriers get in the way, sometimes cultural differences get in the way. It's difficult… It has been very difficult to access services from smaller centres and a lot of the immigrants that have come to Stratford and surrounding Perth County, specifically surrounding Perth County, live in sort of isolation… it's been difficult to retain people*.

A private sponsor in Kelowna described discrimination against temporary foreign workers specifically, *"Certainly we see a lot of migrant workers in Kelowna and, unfortunately, as seems to be true of migrant workers anywhere you look, they are exploited".* A similar tone was heard from an opposition provincial parliament member in Ontario who commented, "*Particularly in small and rural and northern communities, the settlement piece is made more difficult by systemic discrimination and racism".* This MPP explained:

> *In the agricultural sector and those workers have been denied basic employment rights while working on farms… Passports are removed from employees; work hours and breaks are not compliant with Ontario's laws. Shelter and housing are often insufficient and inappropriate…These are migrant workers within the context of Ontario… They are treated as second class workers.*

It is worth noting that when asked about immigration to their town over the 2016-2021 period, interviewees from Ontario often mentioned the arrival of sponsored Syrian refugees as a notable movement. This was not observed in the B.C. interviews where respondents tended to focus their discussion more on economic immigration. For example, a city councillor in Kelowna explained:

> *A lot of migration in Kelowna comes through two pathways. Maybe three. I would say economic development when we're attracting foreign businesses and foreign investment in our community… the university…and then the Agricultural Worker Program… Our population, the demographics… are old and it's through migration that we're seeing youth come to the community*.

In fact, the arrival of Syrian refugees in Ontario was received with a very positive attitude and Guelph offers a powerful example of a welcoming community. One business leader privately sponsored 400 Syrian refugees and was able to mobilize local actors and organizations to join him in welcoming them and providing them with settlement services. The business owner

commented on the positive response from the municipality, yet the lack of municipal policy: "*The city helps… But we settle without them, but when we need their help, they help… The municipality has no specific plan... They are not part of it, nor they should be part of it*". A local bureaucrat described the atmosphere in Guelph around the arrival of Syrian refugees, noting how the positive attitude towards them changed the municipal approach towards newcomers in general:

> *When the whole national things started about bringing Syrian refugees, the community here responded amazingly. There were lots of groups that were formed and a lot of ad hoc tables that were formed to support, to coordinate… different organisations, different societies coming together to see what to do… they were all coming together to support the Syrians and there were a lot of privately sponsored groups… all the Syrian refugees who came to Guelph are privately sponsored… Even the municipal government responded by having their program for "Welcome to Guelph". I think this set the tone for how things moved forward. So, after that, they started to being aware of the needs of newcomers and welcoming them.*

In response to the awareness of the need to support newcomers, the town initiated the "*Welcome to Guelph*" program that included six months free bus-passes and free passes to recreational centres and libraires for resettled Syrian refugees. This program was then extended to one-year passes for any newcomer to Guelph. A municipal officer explained:

> *With the large number of Syrian newcomers that we saw… the municipality was taking a more active role … getting out more resources like bus passes so then they expanded it to all… Programming isn't really under municipality but I think they worked hand in hand with those kinds of programming to try to expand space and try to get more appropriate locations and things like that and try to coordinate efforts. Our libraries expanded a lot of their programming around including conversation circles and other programs to try to make spaces available.*

A local bureaucrat highlighted the generally positive attitude in the town and explained how the city council started to consider enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion as elements of a welcoming community:

> *The mayors and councillors overall, are supportive even if there's no actual settlement program under the municipality, but there is always this support and whenever it comes to advocating for equity, diversity, and inclusion, it's something that comes on the agenda of the municipal government*.

In 2019, the municipality of Guelph issued their *Community Plan*, a document that articulated the municipality's vision on inclusivity and welcoming. The initiative was mostly targeted towards visible minority groups and indigenous community members, but newcomers were also considered potential beneficiaries. The municipality allocated resources to improve diversity on the city council, within the municipality, and in the community. In 2021, the municipality selected a Muslim community leader, who is also a member of the *Guelph*

Wellington Local Immigration Partnership (GWLIP), as the first senior advisor for equity, anti-racism, and indigenous initiative at the municipality. This advisor explained the initiative in the following way, "*There is a recognition that the demographics are changing, and work can be done at a municipal level … Racism and hate are becoming a growing issue, but I think there's a recognition now that municipal government can also be a part of the solution, rather than just taking a back seat*". This initiative was adopted as a step towards becoming a more welcoming and accepting municipality, as explained by a city councillor:

> *We* [the council] *are not directly supporting efforts for immigration or for settlement in Guelph… we are working on making Guelph a more welcoming community through our community plan and through making the municipality a more diverse and welcoming organization. So, by making Guelph an easier place for people from diverse backgrounds to find employment, I think that signals that we are a city that is welcoming of immigrants… that includes making the municipality of Guelph a diverse and inclusive employer.*

In 2016, the community of Stratford (the smaller Ontario town) was involved in sponsoring initiative for Syrian refugees initiative that used what a city councillor described as a "*whole of community approach of resettlement*". The community raised more than $240,000 in a period of three months hoping to sponsor five Syrian refugee families and ultimately sponsored seven. In the absence of official resettlement agencies, local actors like school boards, faith groups, private businesses, and healthcare professionals were involved in providing the families with social support including: transportation, translation and interpretation, housing, access to healthcare, and employment. The municipality of Stratford was supportive of the initiative and involved in coordinating fundraising campaigns and information sessions about sponsoring refugees. It also initiated a *Stratford Welcomes Refugees* campaign on its website and offered free-bus passes and enrolment at summer camps for children of the sponsored families. According to the city council, the arrival of Syrian refugees increased the awareness of cultural differences and the importance of diversity. Thus, the municipality allocated resources for publishing reports on social issues by the *Social Research and Planning Council*, a community-based research council operated by the regional United Way.

Federally funded LIP teams were present in both Kelowna (B.C.) and Guelph (Ontario) facilitating access to resettlement services for newcomers and enhancing the coordination between various local actors involved in offering resettlement activities on the ground.

This inquiry also notes that the positive attitude of the communities towards newcomers facilitated informal resettlement activities despite the absence of official resettlement resources or programs. This was confirmed by the Guelph business leader, "*I think in a smaller community, we actually get more support than in a larger community. There is a sense of community… We have very good support from the churches, the mosques, the synagogues. They're all willing to help us. All we have to do is ask*". Additionally, small and medium towns benefited from the familiarity between actors which facilitated their ability to work together

and compensated for the lack of structured organization. A local NGO leader in Guelph emphasized that, "*They* [the community actors] *do have strong collaboration between the different organizations and I think part of it is because it is a smaller community, they just seem to work together really well. Everybody seems to know each other*".

Yet, with the absence of resettlement services in smaller communities like Stratford, newcomers faced difficulties navigating the system in general and accessing needed services. A local NGO representative who is involved in supporting refugee claimants in Guelph and Stratford observed:

> *Small towns may be attractive to refugees who maybe came from a more countryside, rural, small areas… The challenge with some of the smaller places is they don't have the services. They don't have the immigration offices… They don't have a fully funded social network. So that's where it relies more than on the community.*

Low unemployment rates and aging populations in the municipalities examined in Ontario and B.C. were key factors that pushed businesses to seek new labourers through immigration or resettlement programs. In B.C., immigration has been widely perceived as the key tool to fill this gap and, thus, pilot projects have been funded federally and provincially to attract migrant workers. Yet, the need is still dire at both B.C. towns who are facing the additional challenge of retaining the migrants that they manage to attract. A director at an economic development commission in Kelowna noted, "*We have seen a rise in the number of businesses that are looking to immigration programs to recruit employees. And then the question once they arrive is how can we keep them here".* In Ontario, the absence of such pilot projects and other municipal resettlement and integration initiatives was highlighted by business owners in Guelph and mentioned frequently by interviewees in Stratford who viewed newcomers as a potential worker. A faith group leader in Stratford confirmed, "*We have a very significant workforce shortage. We've had it longer than the rest of the province. Stratford has had the lowest unemployment rate in Ontario for years. So that has been pushing us to try to attract newcomers of any kind to the region for a long time*". Yet, the municipality does not seem to have met business demand for workers. As noted by a CEO of a private company in Stratford:

> *Stratford is made up to be a theatre town that has a huge industrial base. I believe immigration is where we are going to find labour. I haven't seen a lot happening as far as policies along these lines… There has not been a lot of communication from the municipal government… We're desperate to find labour. The municipality doesn't seem to offer much.*

This inquiry notes that housing availability and affordability is a major challenge for newcomers in the Ontario and B.C towns. A city councillor from Stratford confirmed, "*Housing is a challenge. Finding housing is a challenge. Competition for housing will continue to be a challenge for us*". During 2021, the county containing Stratford witnessed an increase of 35% in the average price of a detached home and an 18% increase in the average rental cost of a two-bedroom unit (United Way, 2021). Rents and housing are no better in Guelph, as

confirmed by the business leader, "*Rents in Guelph have gone up dramatically and housing is more difficult than it was five years ago*". The housing crisis in B.C. is affecting integration of newcomers as well. A city councillor in Kelowna noted, "*We did have lack of supply of housing. Our housing costs have almost doubled in that time we're talking about*". Another city councillor from Kelowna explained:

> *The biggest factor that would affect migrant integration in Kelowna is housing availability and affordability… Housing assessments jumped 30% in the last year, so an average house in Kelowna is just about $1,000,000, which is similar to Toronto, Vancouver. We've kind of well exceeded what housing price should be in a community of our size.*

An Ontario opposition MPP confirmed that municipalities should play an active role in terms of enhancing affordable housing options for their communities and for newcomers in particular:

> *Municipally, the intersection primarily is around housing and shelter… the biggest intersection at the municipal level would be on housing… municipalities can make decisions about having developers build larger units for larger families… they can encourage more flexible housing like multi-unit levels.*

Finally, despite all the challenges that were discussed, a positive attitude towards newcomers and integration was shared by all our interviews in Ontario and B.C. The director of a local resettlement society in Kelowna commented, "*The more that our community welcomes newcomers, the more success we're going to see and that just benefits the families. But it also benefits the community as a whole. And so the more we continue to do that work, the better off we will be".*

Quebec:

Formal local integration policies and approaches were present in both Quebec municipalities. This, in and of itself, is notable because there is considerable ambiguity surrounding the role that municipalities should play in integration services in Canada. Sherbrooke had a specific municipal integration policy that had been in place since 2009 and was being revised at the time that the interviews were conducted (February 2022). This policy clearly defines the municipality's role in integration services, the principles driving their approach, municipal 'orientations' and practical actions. The guiding principles include: the recognition of immigrant people as full citizens; equity; reasonable accommodation; proactive management of ethnocultural diversity; facilitation of the adaptation of immigrant people; promotion of a pluralist reality of society; and collaboration and partnership. The orientations identified by the municipality include: a) prioritizing access to municipal services for all citizens regardless of immigration status; b) encouraging representation of immigrant people in all sectors of municipal activity; c) prioritizing cultural exchange; d) developing partnerships. Examples of practical actions identified in the policy documents that could be used by the municipality to improve integration include activities such as developing an intercultural education program

for elected representatives and their employees or putting various measures in place to invite job applications from immigrant people (including visible minorities) for municipal positions.

Victoriaville also had a formal policy on integration that had been in place since 2012 and was part of a regional county-level policy. This policy identified several challenges related to integration and principles guiding municipal action. The challenges included: a) need for more openness on the part of the local associations and population; b) lack of recognition of foreign professional certifications by provincial professional orders; c) social isolation experienced by people who have migrated; d) acquisition of the French language; e) a need for more active cultural exchange (establishment of religious institutions and cultural centres) and cultural awareness on the part of host community; f) difficulties around collective transport and appropriate housing size; and g) lack of awareness of available community resources. The policy suggests several broad principles intended to address some of these challenges, including: a) recognizing the importance of developing interventions that favour immigrants; b) recognizing immigration as a source of economic, social and cultural enrichment; c) recognizing the importance of cultural awareness and diversity training; d) recognizing the importance of coordination, communication and partnerships.

Sherbrooke also developed three-year action plans in conjunction with the provincial MIFI plotting out their integration policy goals and organizational funding distribution related to reception and integration. A municipal representative noted that, "*We don't do reception or integration of immigrant people themselves*". Instead, the representative suggested that the municipality's role was to "*support organizations in a different way, often financially, because we have a plan, an initiative with the Ministry of Immigration, where we put a plan of action in place each year through a triannual action plan*".

Both municipalities also referred to a *community dialogue* ("*concertation")* on integration efforts that was intended to better coordinate service delivery to address redundancies, improve service-delivery and make the region more attractive to immigrants. The major funders for these initiatives tended to be the municipality (or municipal region) and the provincial MIFI. In Sherbrooke, the community dialogue was coordinated by a cultural community organization responsible for community health and sport that had been mandated by the municipality in 2018. The initiative was funded by the MIFI and municipality. A representative from that organization reported that the community dialogue had successfully coordinated the activities of multiple newcomer-serving organizations:

> *You should know that officially there has never been community service dialogue in Sherbrooke. It never worked. So that, in and of itself, was a challenge. There was one with maybe seven or eight organizations sat around the table and today but today we are talking about 40 people from 25 different organizations*.

A municipal representative from Sherbrooke clarified:

> *It isn't the city itself that directs, that coordinates* [these dialogues]. *The city finances them and the city is certainly there for funding but it isn't the city that coordinates*

> *them, plus it is done on a voluntary basis. We wouldn't want the city to coordinate the initiative and organizations to feel compelled* [to join] *because 'we* [the city] *are paying and it is us who decides'*.

The work conducted at the dialogues addressed a variety of topics related to integration:

> *We work on the waiting lists and francisation, racism and discrimination, employability. So, I think that my organization's contribution is… We are experts in facilitating processes and dialogue and not experts in immigration. We actually work on the issues. For us, our 'core business' is transversality, intersectorality, it's horizontal governance. So that's what we have tried to build at the centre of the dialogue on integration.*

Victoriaville also had a community dialogue but it was a more recent initiative, was regional in membership and appeared to focus more on economic actors. A representative from an economic organization noted that the meetings were focused on preliminary, essential questions such as, "*What are the needs* [of newcomers]*? What do we, as businesses, need to do to help them*?". Actors invited to take part included the regional Boards of Trade, the provincial Board of Trade, the local CEGEP (a post-secondary college specific to Quebec) and community organizations.

At the organizational level, each town contained at least one primary "integration" community organization. This organization was responsible for providing basic services to recently arrived newcomers such as: assistance finding housing and establishing basic services (like hydro), assistance finding employment, accompanying services for health appointments, assistance navigating the educational system, French-language classes, taxes, translation services, citizenship preparation classes, a newcomer/Quebec cultural exchange program ("*jumelage interculturel*") and basic introduction seminars.

Each municipality also employed people who were specifically responsible for facilitating the attraction, integration and retention of newcomers. There were also a number of community organizations and private businesses intended for the general community whose services were also used by newcomers. Examples of these organizations include private and public employment connections organizations, tenant associations and cultural organizations.

2.b) Frames of integration

This section discusses how integration was understood in the different towns.

Definitions of integration:

Ontario and B.C.

Theoretically, successful integration for newcomers involves equitable access to opportunities and resources, participation in the community and society, and feelings of security and belonging in their new homes (Ager & Strang, 2008; Hynie, Korn, & Tao, 2016; Phillimore & Goodson, 2008). When asked about their understanding of successful integration, interviewees in Ontario reflected on all these elements, yet there was a consensus that a successful model of integration had not yet been achieved. Some interviewees also observed that "integration" was a complicated term that they did not use in their daily work. Instead, many interviewees suggested that most strategies and applied polices focused on "resettlement", which they understood as the technical process of meeting the basic needs of newcomers such as access to housing, language training, healthcare, and employment. They proposed that these activities represented a very early stage of the long process of integration and suggested that successful integration should refer to establishing a sense of belonging, feeling welcomed, and achieving a degree of meaningful participation and contribution to the community, and the ability of changing systems that are not working. Some interviewees also discussed the importance of adopting a holistic approach to integration and referred to the importance of building more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming communities for newcomers in Canada. This was particularly linked to the presence of varying degrees of discrimination and systemic racism against newcomers that hindered their integration in their new Canadian destinations.

On the use of the term 'integration', a local bureaucrat noted, "*I think most of community organizations don't use those terms*". A director of a resettlement service agency in B.C. commented, "*I don't typically love the word integration. I like the word settlement better. Only because integration to me feels that the individuals coming to Canada need to change or modify their ways in order to fit in here".* A director of a local organization in Guelph also explained, "*I guess integration is a complicated word and one we may not use probably*". When asked about the successful model of integration, the director noted, "*Successful integration would be that people would feel a sense of care and belonging in their community. And a sense of participation and kind of autonomy within their lives*". Achieving the sense of belonging while resettling in a small municipality with a limited degree of ethnic diversity was addressed by our interviewees as a key issue. A local researcher in Kelowna explained, "*Immigrants usually want to go to communities where they have established communities, friends, relatives"*. This need for an established community was discussed by a local councillor in Kelowna, who made a clear connection between integration and the ability to establish roots:

> *It's about, can someone move to Vernon and have a good quality of life. Can they get a decent job? Can they get good housing? Can they access good schools for their kids? Do they feel a sense of belonging, in particular, if you're an immigrant who is a person of colour coming into a predominantly white community, 96% Caucasian community, how do you feel? Do you feel welcome? Do you feel a sense of belonging? Do you feel this is a place where you can put roots, that you can raise your kids, that they can become a first generation?*

The same understanding of integration that focuses on belonging and autonomy was shared by a local journalist in Stratford, "*The most important part of integration is being a part of your community. Feeling like a part of your community and actually feeling like you're contributing and the community has your back*". The sense of independence and autonomy while accessing resources was raised by many interviewees. A city councillor noted, "*Integration is living independently within our community and be able to navigate accessible services on their own*". This feeling of independence was linked to the notion of wellness and ability to engage, as put by a local NGO director in Guelph:

> *It's about wellness. Things affect wellness: identity, engagement, food security, being able to engage in the life of the community through leisure and culture, right, spirituality, living independently, not needing to be on the many systems of support.*

A city councillor in Guelph connected the ability to engage and participate in a community with newcomers' ability to secure professional achievement that exceeds the ability of finding a decent job. It is more about the recognition of newcomer's previous successes, "*Successful integration is to see people that are coming from other parts of the world within a couple of years being able to find the level of their careers that they had when they left home… bringing them back up to the skill level so that they can participate fully*."

Many interviewees discussed the responsibility of host communities and the need to welcome newcomers to achieve a successful model of integration as explained by a city councillor, *"I think integration would mean these families are part of the social fabric".* A local NGO director articulated this idea clearly, *"Integration depends on a community that wants you there… It's not just a matter of settling, it's a matter of contributing… Integration is a combination of independence but also interdependence"*. This sense of belonging was addressed by a municipal official in Guelph, who linked welcoming attitudes towards newcomers to their ability to participate and give back to their communities:

> *We really try to emphasise a holistic approach in that integration happens when people feel welcomed and people feel secure enough to start investing themselves in a community in that they're starting to give back or even there starting to enrol their children in recreational programs or make longer term plans because they feel secure or safe enough in their situation, whether it be work, housing, food security, all of those things are indicators that everything is successful.*

Some interviewees distinguished between resettlement and integration and confirmed that most of the programs currently available in the towns were tailored towards assisting newcomers with their resettlement and not integration. A local bureaucrat noted, "*Most of the work that's being done usually is at the settlement level, not at the integration level. Because we help newcomers find a job and their kids going to school… I think most of the support happens at this settlement piece than the integration*". Feeling settled is essential to feeling at home and integrated, *"I think integration is when the newcomer starts to feel home… The settlement happens earlier when they start to feel kind of, okay, things are going at ease, now we have a house, we have a place to go, the kids are going to school etc. but the integration happened when it starts to feel home"*. A faith group leader confirmed that successful integration had not yet been achieved by resettlement programs and linked the achievement of integration to its normalization:

> *I think we're at the beginning of understanding what integration means and what would success look like. I think success would be when we're not talking about it, I think success would be when it's normalized. When integration is happening, just on a day-to-day basis. And to be honest, we're a long way away from that.*

The sense that a successful model of integration had not been reached in small or medium municipalities was sometimes attributed to a lack of resources by interviewees. A local researcher in Kelowna observed:

> *Integration is much easier in large urban centres… because they have a richer, larger network of services that may all help immigrants integrating… You have those well-established communities, you have a network of institutions, whether they are community ethnic organisations, immigrant organizations, immigrant organization.*

Quebec:

Both Quebec municipalities possessed official policy documents that formally defined integration and clearly elaborated on the integration process. One municipal integration policy document made clear distinctions between *reception,* conceived as the initial welcoming process, and *integration*, a longer-term process. *Reception* was defined as:

> Referring generally to acclimation and the initial stages of adaptation. It is a short-term process in which the newcomers make their elementary adjustments to life in the new country, notably finding accommodation, beginning to learn the local language, finding employment and orienting themselves in the new society with which they are not familiar (Ville, 2009,10).

Integration was defined as:

> The result of a dynamic and evolving process in which time plays a central role; the result of a multidimensional process (linguistic, economic, social, cultural and political) that affects the individual on multiple levels; intercultural exchange includes cultural exposure; the site of interaction between immigrant people and the receiving society (reciprocal adaptation); a process of adaptation realized over the long-term by various rhythms and means that vary according to the characteristics of the concerned group and the nature of the obstacles to overcome. What is more, we are discussing equitable integration, for example, on the economic plane when an immigrant person finds employment that corresponds to their previous professional profile (generally, a realization or renewing of professional competencies is necessary before the person can access employment). Also, in this domain, it is important to make a distinction between employment integration and economic integration. Effectively, the first corresponds to the first entry on the job market without accounting for the type of employment, while the second is a function of the professional capacities and qualifications of the person. (Ville, 2009, 10).

One of the major differences between Quebec and the other Canadian provinces is the centrality of the concept of *francisation* to the integration experience, which is a unique feature of the Quebec integration experience. The Superior Council for the French Language (*Conseil supérieur de la langue française*) of Quebec defines *francisation* as follows: "*Francisation* of adult immigrant people is understood here as a process in which a person learns and adopts French as their regular and habitual language in different domains of social life" (Gagnon & Dion, 2018, I). Often *francisation* is also associated with the adoption of specific values like secularism. Interviews with officials and community organizations often mirrored aspects of these definitions. They often stressed the multifaceted nature of integration and the unique aspects of integration in Quebec, and frequently stressed the importance of French language and *francisation* to the integration process. One community representative noted, "*Quebec, well, integration plays out differently here than it does in other places, I think. Here, integration is very much linked to the language and a strong cultural heritage that needs to be acquired by the people who arrive here in Quebec*". Another government representative stressed the importance of *francisation* to the integration process as well as the mutual responsibilities of both newcomers and the host community:

> *If we talk about the question of Quebec, the biggest issue is 'francisation'. That is where we are confronted with the problem that yes, they* [newcomers] *will come to the countryside but they will leave as soon as they have the opportunity to regroup and that creates mini-ghettos and that makes the integration situation worse. That creates all kinds of frustrations in the majority who feel that the minority have privileges that they don't because they know how to organize politically and have a political voice because of their situation. So, in terms of integration, I think we have a responsibility...*

> *We cannot just say that we are looking for immigrants to respond to an economic need. We can't just say that we will accept humanitarian immigrants because it hurts us to watch people who are dying from hunger on television. It's important, it should be done* [but] *we have a role to play. We must be capable of welcoming them as community members and we must put resources towards their integration. What significance does saying 'we have doubled our number of immigrants to Quebec' have if we are not capable of giving them the resources to 'franciser' as they should? If we want them to integrate as they should, we must permit them to integrate in our society. We can benefit from their culture and we can connect with each other.*

Finally, interviewees from both Sherbrooke and Victoriaville were quick to suggest the use of the term '*inclusion*' in lieu of '*integration*'[15]. The rationale often given was that the term inclusion suggested a more dynamic process involving accommodation and learning by the host and newcomer communities. A municipal official, for instance, elaborated on this difference, "*I prefer the term inclusion* [not integration] *.... When we talk about inclusion the responsibility is shared to live together...* [Integration] *is like you come to our culture, period. But I think it is a shared responsibility*". This viewpoint was echoed by another municipal official:

> *I think the word 'integration' should be replaced by inclusion because when someone integrates, ... It's as if you are saying come with us, you are with us, that's alright. You can do your thing while you integrate into our group. But when you 'include' that is when someone knows that you are there, we are working with you. We are working positively so that your culture and mine interact and… positively influence one another*.

A city councillor from Victoriaville put similar emphasis on the term 'inclusion' stating:

> *We will discuss integration but I prefer the word 'inclusion' over 'integration' to destigmatize the attitude towards immigrants as opposed to other minorities that we could have. So, we really use an inclusive approach, it's the slogan of our city, 'an inclusive city'. We are interested in all minorities whether they be immigrants or otherwise. So, we try to have an inclusive approach with our policies, our programs and our approaches to facilitating what we call 'inclusive access'*.

[15] Most Quebec interviews were conducted in French. Both of these terms are the same in French as they are in English (integration and inclusion, *intégration et inclusion*).

TABLE 18: Dominant frames in different localities

Municipality	Dominant Frames used by local policymakers	Dominant frames used by other actors (might be slit in more columns, distinguishing per different types of actors)
ON medium-sized locality (Guelph)	Newcomers can receive social services offered to other community members; Immigration is the solution to labour shortages; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Very positive attitude towards refugees	Integration is a longer-term process and relates to making people feel "at home"; Immigration is the solution to labour shortages; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Very positive attitude towards refugees
ON small-sized locality (Stratford)	Newcomers can receive social services offered to other community member; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Lack of diversity is a barrier; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Generally positive attitude towards refugees; Immigration is the solution to aging population and labour shortages; Retaining newcomers is a challenge; Lack of resettlement services	Integration is a longer-term process and relates to making people feel "at home"; Lack of diversity is a barrier; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Generally positive attitude towards refugees; Immigration is the solution to aging population and labour shortages; Retaining newcomers is a challenge; Lack of resettlement services
Quebec medium-sized locality (Sherbrooke)	Francisation, specifically adoption of the French language and knowledge of Québec culture is absolutely essential; Integration is a process that is shared between the host community and newcomers; Immigration is the solution to labour shortages; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Very positive attitude towards refugees; Municipal policy on integration; Coordinated integration services with clearly defined community organization roles; Newcomers included in community-based cultural activities	Francisation, specifically adoption of the French language and knowledge of Québec culture is absolutely essential; Immigration is the solution to the labour shortage; Integration is a process that is shared between the host community and newcomers; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Very positive attitude towards refugees; Coordinated integration services; Newcomers included in community-based cultural activities
Quebec small-sized locality (Victoriaville)	Francisation, specifically adoption of the French language and knowledge of Québec culture is absolutely essential; Welcoming attitude towards refugees; Immigration is the solution to the labour shortage; Regional policy on integration; Coordinated integration	Francisation, specifically adoption of the French language and knowledge of Québec culture is absolutely essential; Immigration is the solution to labour shortages; Coordinated integration services; Retaining migrants is a challenge; Newcomers included in community-based cultural

	services; Retaining migrants is a challenge; Newcomers included in community-based cultural activities;	activities; Newcomers included in community-based cultural activities;
B.C. medium-sized locality (Kelowna)	Newcomers can receive social services offered to other community members; Lack of diversity is a barrier; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming; Immigration is the solution to aging population and labour shortages; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Retaining migrants is a challenge	Integration is a longer- term and relates to making people feel "at home"; Lack of diversity is a barrier; ; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming to address institutionalized racism; Immigration is the solution to aging population and labour shortages; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Retaining migrants is a challenge
B.C. small-sized locality (Vernon)	Newcomers can receive social services offered to other community members; Immigration is the solution to aging population and labour shortages; Lack of diversity is a barrier; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Retaining migrants is a challenge	Integration is a longer-term process and relates to making people feel "at home"; Lack of diversity is a barrier; Small migrant community is a barrier; Initiatives towards making the community more inclusive and welcoming; Immigration is the solution to aging population and labour shortages; Housing availability and affordability is a challenge; Retaining migrants is a challenge

Specificities of integration in small-sized and medium-sized towns

Each province included a medium and small-sized town. The smallest communities surveyed tended to be older and less diverse with declining population growth rates. The study noted some particularities of immigrant integration in smaller and medium-sized towns. These particularities include: a) *Characterization of immigration as the solution to labour shortages and aging population*; b) *Limited resettlement services offered by small municipalities and issues accessing housing and transportation*; c) *Familiarity without diversity*.

A) Characterization of immigration as the solution to labour shortages and aging population

Most discussions of immigration in all provinces stressed the importance of attracting immigrants for economic growth. Immigration was often characterized as the primary solution to labour shortages and population decline. This characterization was very common regardless of the immigration stream used to enter the country (ex: resettled refugees were discussed this way) and was particularly prominent in the smaller communities evaluated. This report suggests that their smaller size and slightly older population meant that labour shortages were likely felt more acutely. In both Ontario and Quebec, the types of workers sought tended to be manual labourers, tradespeople and engineers to fill positions in agriculture and manufacturing. Conversely, the towns in B.C. were attempting to attract entrepreneurs and young workers in health and technology.

B) Limited resettlement services offered by small municipalities and issues accessing housing and transportation

Resettlement services offered by smaller municipalities in Ontario and B.C. tend to be limited. Most of the services that did exist were provided by regional administrations and were infrequently connected with municipal services. This was not the case for Quebec where both municipalities had formal integration policies and community dialogues on integration that invited economic, social and cultural organizations to coordinate their integration activities. Transportation was reported to be an issue for newcomers in all the smaller towns of all three provinces, where access to a car is necessary to meet daily needs. This was also an issue in Victoriaville where an on-demand, regional public transportation infrastructure existed but the reservation system was reported to be complicated for newcomers. Housing availability and affordability were both major concerns in Ontario and B.C. where the housing crisis is most acute. This was not of the case for Quebec, where housing prices had increased but remained relatively affordable. Instead, housing size and availability of social housing were the key issues of concern for Quebec towns.

C) Familiarity without diversity

The smaller towns, in particular, were characterized in interviews as having stronger social bonds and less social anonymity. This social dynamic enabled greater community mobilization for refugee private sponsorships providing robust social support where settlement services were often lacking. Nevertheless, integration was reported to have remained a challenge for newcomers when people from the same cultural and linguistic background had limited presence or were not present at all. This was not connected to any political orientation, but rather to the historic waves of immigration that had shaped the ethnic diversity of the town. For example, most of the Syrian resettled refugees who arrived in Victoriaville did not stay, however, Syrian resettled refugees did stay in Sherbrooke where there was an established Syrian community.

CONCLUSION

In Canada, decision-making regarding immigration and integration policy falls most clearly under the mandate of the federal IRCC. This ministry is the primary government body responsible for developing immigration policy, administering immigration programs, and funding and/or providing resettlement services for all provinces except Quebec. Quebec administers its own immigration (except family sponsorship) and integration programs through its provincial immigration ministry, the MIFI. Other Canadian provinces are responsible for offering provincial resettlement programs that complement federally funded resettlement services such as language training, access to health services, and funding for legal aid, but these services vary by province (and by the political orientation of provincial governments) and by the ministries responsible for offering them. Municipalities can voluntarily elect to play a role in integration services but they are not obligated to do so as part of their formal political mandate.

While the majority of individuals who arrived in Europe post-2014 were asylum seekers who made "irregular" journeys, Canada received resettled refugees through regular immigration channels and a targeted policy intervention (Almustafa, 2021). The Syrian Initiative was the second largest resettlement initiative that Canada has undertaken in its history. It brought approximately 40,000 Syrian people to Canada over a period of two years. To assess the multilevel governance dynamics of integration in the six selected towns in Canada during the study period between 2016 and 2021, this report examined the responses to the Syrian initiative as well as other migrants in small and medium-sized towns in Canada's three most populous provinces.

Ontario and B.C.

Ontario and B.C. selected towns had no municipal mandate to provide immigration, resettlement, or integration services to newcomers and had no immigration or integration strategies. Instead, their response to the arrival of newcomers during the study period were largely community-driven with support from the existing resettlement and other social support organizations. Integration services were generally offered by community-based, non-profit settlement agencies and usually funded by federal or provincial governments. Municipal support was generally offered through social programs designed for low-income community members that could be accessed by newcomers. Ontario medium sized town benefited from hosting an LIP office, which coordinated and supported resettlement service providers. This was the case for the two evaluated towns in B.C. which also benefited from the active role of their regional districts in offering resettlement services to newcomers both through regional resettlement organizations.

Although no formal municipal integration policies were present in the B.C. and Ontario towns, they both had conducted multiple initiatives intended to assist newcomers. These initiatives were done in an *ad hoc* manner in response to specific appeals from the local community and

were unconnected to each other and unintegrated into a broader municipal "integration" strategy for newcomers. They also tended to be very practical in scope, providing newcomers with access to services traditionally offered by the municipality (such as access to public transport) and addressed more immediate needs related to the initial arrival process. Municipal representatives reported that they were enthusiastic to participate in these initiatives but were unsure how to contribute as resettlement did not fall within their mandates.

Our interviews demonstrated that in both Ontario towns, the Syrian Initiative was characterized as the most notable migratory movement of the 2016-2021 period. Interviewees described tremendous community mobilization to support Syrian refugees, a finding consistent with the overwhelming use of private sponsorships in both towns and a response that happens to be in line with federal positive messages with regards to welcoming Syrian refugees. These initiatives were discussed very positively as an opportunity for community building for both the host community and sponsored group.

Conversely, discussions about immigration in B.C. tended to focus on attracting and retaining economic migrants, particularly entrepreneurs/investors and recruiting temporary migrant labour to fill the labour force gaps. This tendency could be explained by multiple factors. First, economic immigration is more common than humanitarian immigration in the region. Second, GARs were also much more common than PSRs in B.C. and do not involve local community mobilization in the same way. Finally, it could also be reflective of the high housing and living costs in B.C. which may be viewed as uninviting or unmanageable to resettled refugees. This also suggests that community volition to conduct private sponsorships may have been relatively lower in B.C. than the two other provinces evaluated.

The policy review and interviews also suggest that most resettlement services were either provided by regional service providers funded by the federal IRCC or by the province. Interviewees from both Ontario and B.C. suggested that the term "integration" was not commonly used. Instead, they used the term "resettlement" to describe these activities, suggesting a shorter-term process occurring at the very beginning of the immigration experience. Service-provider organizations expressed frustration at this emphasis and suggested that resettlement organizations understood what was needed for longer-term integration but did not currently have sufficient resources to support these projects.

Quebec

Both towns selected in Quebec had existing integration policies and infrastructure, including municipally or regionally-sponsored integration dialogues that were intended to coordinate social service delivery for newcomers. Integration in Quebec was conceived as a long-term process related not just to the satisfaction of basic necessities but the acquisition of a particular Quebec cultural and linguistic heritage and regional identity. This is very different from Ontario and B.C., where the focus of "resettlement" services did not include a strong cultural component. Municipal and service-provider representatives in Quebec often

preferred the term “inclusion” over “integration”. They suggested that the term “inclusion” better recognized the process of mutual cultural exchange that must occur for successful integration. The primary factors behind the adoption of these policies appear to have been the provincial administration of immigration (except for family sponsorship), Quebec nationalism and political identity, ample provincial funding for French language and *francisation* activities, the ongoing labour shortage and the desire to reduce secondary immigration to other parts of Canada.

In conclusion, MLG integration dynamics in the selected Canadian small and medium towns were most influenced by the political orientation of the federal and provincial governments whose mandates most clearly cover immigration and integration. The municipalities were generally responsive to the attitudes of their communities towards newcomers. Despite the lack of ethnic diversity and limited integration resources, particularly in small communities, familiarity between actors and active community mobilization facilitated the integration process.

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