

Interprovincial Mobility and Secondary Migration in BC

This issue of *Migration Matters* presents statistics on the interprovincial mobility of newcomers to Canada. It explores the factors influencing the secondary migration of newcomers, as well as the available information about outcomes for newcomers who have moved away from their destination of landing.

Introduction

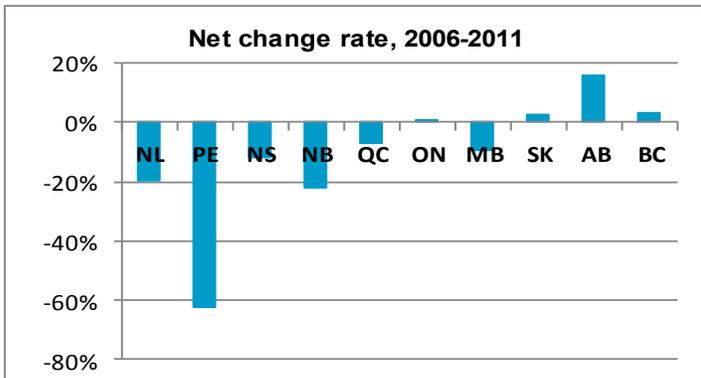
When newcomers come to Canada, their decisions about where to settle are affected by a number of factors. Although many newcomers do settle long-term in their original location of destination, others choose to move to a new location inside Canada in the weeks, months, or years after arrival. By better understanding newcomers' decisions to relocate, organizations can more effectively plan programs and services for these newcomers who have experienced secondary migration.

Interprovincial mobility in Canada

Around 10% of newcomers to Canada between 2006-2011 had left their destination province by 2011.¹ In general, newcomers are most likely to leave their province of destination in the first year after landing, with the likelihood of secondary migration decreasing the longer a newcomer has been in Canada. Three years in Canada seems to be a particular turning point, after which secondary migration is markedly less likely.²

Retention and net change rates in BC

For newcomers landing in Canada between 2006-2011, BC had the third highest retention rate among the Canadian provinces: 91.3% of newcomers remained there after five years. After taking interprovincial mobility into account, BC experienced a net change of 3.3%, meaning there were 3.3% more newcomers in BC than had been destined to the province during the time period. This is the second highest net change rate of the Canadian provinces.³



Source: Van Huystee and St. Jean (2014)

References

^{1, 2, 9, 10, 13} Van Huystee, M. and St Jean, B. (2014). "[Interprovincial Mobility of Immigrants in Canada 2006-2011](#)." *IMDB Research Series*. Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

^{3, 4, 6} Haan, M. and Prokopenko, E. (2016). [Overview of Secondary Migration of Immigrants to Canada](#). Pathways to Prosperity.

⁵ King, K. and Newbold, B. (2007). "[Internal Migration Dynamics of a Canadian Immigrant Gateway: Toronto as an Origin, Way-Station and Destination between 1991 and 2001](#)." *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*. Summer 2007: 243-262.

Glossary

- **Landing:** the process of a newcomer arriving in Canada. The **province of landing** or **destination province** is the province in which the newcomer indicated they would settle before they arrived.
- **Secondary migration:** the process of a newcomer moving for a second time. In the international context it can be used to describe moving between countries, but in Canada it most often refers to a newcomer moving within Canada.
- **Interprovincial mobility:** newcomers moving between provinces after arriving in Canada.
- **Retention rate:** how many newcomers stay in the province or community in which they originally landed.
- **Net change:** the difference between the number of newcomers destined to a province versus the number of newcomers actually in the province, taking into account secondary migration.

For the period of 2000-2005, 47% of newcomers who left BC moved to Ontario and 35% to Alberta. At the same time, 40% of newcomers leaving Alberta moved to BC. Around 20% of newcomers leaving Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario moved to BC.⁴

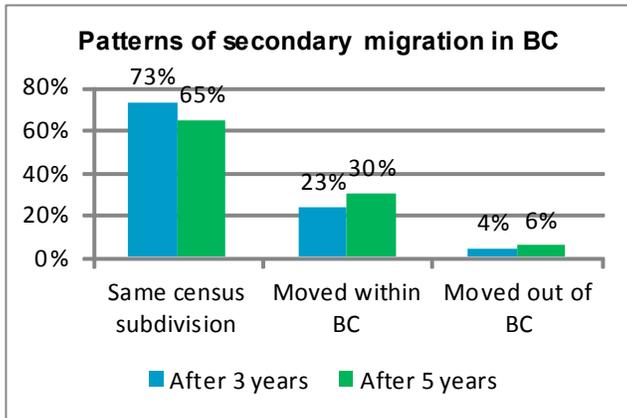
Secondary migration in context

Interprovincial mobility is only one type of secondary migration; newcomers may also move within the same province, often due to their preferences to move to either a larger or smaller community than the one in which they originally landed.

In either case, it is important to remember that Canadian-born people also sometimes make the decision to relocate to a new community or new province. Research has found that migration patterns for newcomers and the Canadian-born share three characteristics:⁵

- Migration tends to be out of the Atlantic provinces and into Ontario, Alberta, and BC.
- Migration tends to be from less to more populated provinces.
- Migration patterns are impacted by economic factors like regional differences in unemployment rates and wages.

Patterns of newcomer mobility in BC



Source: Haan, M. and Propolenko, E. (2016)

Community factors

Communities themselves have a significant influence on secondary migration. Retention rates tend to be higher in larger Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), meaning that newcomers are less likely to secondarily migrate away from a large CMA.⁶

Specific factors which influence the migration decisions of newcomers include:⁷

- Economic/educational/employment opportunities
- Accessibility of services
- Receptivity of the community-at-large
- An established ethnic community
- General quality of life factors

Research has also shown that newcomers are less likely to move from the community in which they settle if the community already has a high proportion of newcomers and visible minorities, and are more likely to relocate away from areas with high poverty.⁸

Individual factors

In addition to community factors, a number of individual factors influence the likelihood of a newcomer moving from their province of landing, including:

- **Immigration class:** From 2006-2011, newcomers who came to Canada through the Provincial Nominee Program were most likely to move to a new province (15%), followed by skilled workers, then family class, then refugees and live-in caregivers (4%). In BC, there was a net increase in skilled workers and refugees, and a net decrease in provincial nominees and live-in caregivers.⁹

References

^{7, 8} Pruegger, V. and Cook, D. (2007). *An Analysis of Immigrant Attraction and Retention Patterns Among Western Canadian CMA's*. Prairie Metropolis Centre.

¹¹ Simich, L. et al (2001). *Paved with good intentions: Paths of Secondary Migration of Government-Assisted Refugees in Ontario*. University of Toronto.

- **Sociodemographic factors:** Males were slightly more likely than females to move to a new province, and younger newcomers are more likely to move than older newcomers. Education level had only a small effect on BC's retention rate, with more educated newcomers slightly more likely to leave the province. In BC, official language ability did significantly affect a newcomer's likelihood of leaving the province.¹⁰

Refugees

The factors shaping secondary migration of refugees resettling in Canada are unique, since refugees have far less control over their province of landing than other newcomers. Qualitative research with government-assisted refugees has found that refugees most often move away from their province of destination because:¹¹

- Their stated destination preference was not accommodated
 - They did not have sufficient information about their assigned destination
 - To be closer to family, friends, or cultural community
 - To be in an area with better perceived opportunities
- Privately-sponsored refugees' landing province is also constrained by the location of their sponsors. In some cases they may have a family connection to their sponsors, but in other cases they may have no connection.¹²

Outcomes of secondary migration

There is currently insufficient research that examines the outcomes for newcomers who have moved away from their province of landing. For newcomers originally landing in British Columbia, most who left the province had higher earnings than those who stayed. This applies across every immigration category except provincial nominees and live-in caregivers.¹³ However, more research is needed to truly understand how secondary migration impacts outcomes.

