

Study: Are refugees more likely to leave initial destinations than economic immigrants?

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, January 28, 2020

Previous research has suggested that when resettlement programs place refugees in smaller cities, refugees quickly leave their initial destination. However, results from a new study released today show that, even though many resettled refugees do not get to choose where they settle in Canada, they are not more likely than economic immigrants to leave their initial city of settlement. This study is the first to compare long-term retention rates at the city level for different classes of immigrants.

Based on the Longitudinal Immigration Database, the study examined immigrants who landed in Canada between 2000 and 2014, and who were aged 20 to 54 at the time of landing. Census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations were used as geographic units (cities) to measure immigrants' mobility.

Because most economic class immigrants make their own choice about where to settle in Canada, they are more likely to end up in a large city, whereas the initial geographic location of refugees is strongly influenced by government resettlement programs. Government-assisted refugees (GARs) are assigned to one of many designated communities based on a pre-approved regional quota of refugee allocation and the match between a refugee's needs and community resources. Privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) are received by their sponsors, who are scattered across the country.

In the three gateway cities of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, refugees and other immigrants had essentially identical retention rates, with more than 85% remaining in their initial city of settlement 10 years after arrival, regardless of admission category.

Three-quarters of refugees and economic class immigrants remained in medium-sized CMAs (population over 500,000) 10 years after arrival. The retention rate was slightly higher among family class immigrants.

In small metropolitan areas, economic class immigrants had the lowest retention rate, at 58%, 10 years after arrival. The retention rate was 61%, 69% and 72% for GARs, PSRs, and family class immigrants, respectively.

About two-thirds of economic and family class immigrants initially settled in one of the three gateway cities, compared with 41% of PSRs and 33% of GARs. Since PSRs and GARs were more concentrated in small and medium-sized cities, where mobility was higher than in gateway cities for all admission classes, they had a higher overall mobility rate than other immigrants.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5057](#).

The research paper "[Are Refugees More Likely to Leave Initial Destinations than Economic Immigrants? Recent Evidence from Canadian Longitudinal Administrative Data](#)," part of the *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series (11F0019M)*, is now available.

For more information contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Feng Hou (613-608-4932; feng.hou@canada.ca), Social Analysis and Modelling Division.

