

Economic Integration

The economic integration of migrants preoccupies service providers, policymakers and migrants themselves. Several BMRC-IRMU studies investigate the challenges that migrants face due to their immigration status, accents, employers' demands for Canadian experience, HR practices, and accreditation processes. The findings underscore the key role of policies to reduce discrimination for supporting migrant resilience. They also demonstrate once again that location matters. Where migrants live affects their economic integration.

The BMRC-IRMU project "[Resiliency of employers and migrants: Evaluating change in industrial sector employment](#)" led by Dr. Brian Ray examined immigrants' employment in industrial sectors marked by growth and decline. Using employment data from two Canadian censuses, the study documented how immigrant employment shifted across industrial sectors between 2006 and 2016 in Ontario and Quebec.

Highlighting municipal variations in immigrants' industries of employment, [Industry of Employment: A Comparison of Major Cities in Ontario and Quebec](#) published in 2019 focused on employment patterns in major metropolitan areas in Ontario and Quebec. Provincial and metropolitan data indicated that employment opportunities varied across metropolitan areas for immigrants and the Canadian-born.

"[More than Numbers: Labour Market Experiences and Immigrant Resilience in the interprovincial and bilingual context of Ottawa-Gatineau, Canada's National Capital Region](#)" led by Dr. Luisa Veronis and Dr. Christina Gabriel investigated how skilled immigrants navigated the Ottawa-Gatineau labour market. Interviews with male and female immigrants revealed numerous individual strategies from using social media and their own social networks to learn about job openings to taking advantage of programs offered by immigrant serving agencies. Employers' demands for Canadian experience and knowledge of French and English constrained skilled immigrants' economic integration. Although targeted programs proved useful to many participants, recent policy interventions such as limiting calls for Canadian experience in job ads have the potential to reduce many immigrants' labour market disadvantage.

In the "[Brazilian Canadian Brain Circulation](#)" project, Dr. Marcia Carvalho de Azevedo, Dr. Francine Schlosser, and Dr. Deborah McPhee, used interviews with Brazilian professionals who migrated to work in Canada, to examine how in-person and IT-connected social networks affect their identify the varying impacts of in-person Canadian networks influence career resilience. After migrating, Brazilian professionals were largely disconnected from their previous professional contacts. In Canada, social media networks

rather than in-person social networks were used to build personal and professional support networks that enhanced professional activities.

A related study of skilled economic immigrants led by Dr. Jelena Zikic investigated the relationships between migrant resilience and sense of belonging in a specific city. [“Exploring individual resilience: Unpacking individual, institutional, and social forces in building migrant resilience”](#) analyzed how familiarity with the urban context influenced migrant narratives of settlement and integration. Analysis of in-depth interviews showed that local connections increased skilled immigrants’ resilience and reinforced their sense of belonging at their destinations. While some skilled immigrants concentrated on functioning effectively enough to satisfy their individual needs, others embraced a more holistic view of integration that emphasized contributing to local activities and priorities.

Dr. Zikic also led a study of “The Role of SMEs in Supporting Diversity in the Workplace” that investigated how small and medium employers (SMEs) develop and integrate a diverse workforce that includes migrants into their organizations. Semi-structured interviews with HR professionals and line managers explored diversity and inclusion policies/initiatives as well as day-to-day experiences of diversity. The study highlighted how SMEs currently understand and manage human capital diversity. It provided key insight into the role of employers in enhancing employee resilience and integration.

In [“Sounding Different, but Still Equal? Assessing Discrimination against “Audible Minorities”](#) in Urban and non-Urban Settings in Quebec and Ontario”, a team led by Dr. Antoine Bilodeau, assessed how accent and ethnic identity affect the public’s trust in migrants and their credibility. Data from an online survey in Ontario and Quebec showed that having a foreign accent and being racialized reduce the trust and credibility of climate change experts. There were striking differences between Ontario and Quebec residents with the latter focusing more on accent than the former.