

Family, Friends, Gender, and Migrant Resilience

Several projects by BMRC-IRMU partners show how family and friends affect migrant resilience. An intersectional approach that acknowledged the multiple dimensions of social identity characterized these studies. While many considered the effects of gender and immigration status, others focused on the interrelations between ethnicity and gender and race and immigration status. Together, the projects elucidate how migrants' family members and friends can enhance their capacities to overcome integration challenges and the circumstances in which these social relations intensify the challenges facing migrants.

With a team of community partners, graduate students and fellow university researchers, Nancy Mandell investigated how family ties can facilitate and undermine migrant resilience. Using information from semi-structured in-depth interviews with immigrant Chinese and South Asian households in York Region, [the study](#) documented how each generation in the household drew on family relationships to tackle settlement challenges. Each generation faced different challenges. For example, youth struggled to pay for post-secondary education and high living costs and had difficulty transitioning to paid employment, whereas their parents struggled to obtain full-time employment commensurate with their qualifications and experience. Grandparents and other elderly relatives often assisted younger generations by providing child care and crucial domestic labour. At the same time, seniors struggled to be independent of their adult children and to access information about healthcare and other services. The researchers identified some of the circumstances that enable supportive family ties and the circumstances where family relations impede resilience and migrant integration.

[“Building Resilience via Family Reunification for Newly Arrived Refugees in Ottawa”](#) uses interviews to demonstrate how family reunification enhances migrant resilience. Family separation causes significant physical, mental, and economic distress for resettled refugees. Reunited families achieve better economic integration, and family members who arrive first often support the integration of other family members, providing crucial information and assistance. The researchers recommend that the Canadian government review family sponsorship policies to provide more opportunities for faster family reunification in Canada for refugees, specifically.

In [“It Takes a Village: Building Resilience by Connecting International Students to the Broader Community”](#), Dr. Francine Schlosser and her team examined the intentions and experiences of international students from Windsor, Ontario. Interviews with community stakeholders and a survey of international students showed that community stakeholders should take account of international students' intention to stay in Canada to establish their careers. The findings confirm that students would benefit from more dialogue among

community stakeholders, policymakers, and campus administrators to ensure necessary services tailored to student needs are available at every stage of migration, settlement and integration.

A BMRC-IRMU research digest titled [Gender, Immigration and Commuting in Metropolitan Canada](#) evaluated gender differences in the transportation modes that immigrants use to commute. Analysis of 2016 Census information demonstrated that immigrant women still rely on public transportation and active commuting more than immigrant men. The gender difference is especially pronounced during immigrants' first ten years in Canada underscoring the need for safe, reliable and affordable public transportation to connect immigrant women to jobs.

Another project, "[EnGendering Resilient Pathways and Communities in the Long-Term](#)", identified how the challenges facing migrant women with temporary status can undermine individual- and system-level resilience. Highlighting the need for gender-responsive programming to facilitate migrant resilience, Jenna Hennebry and colleagues call for more accessible services, safe spaces for all migrants, especially women, and expanded access to social assistance for temporary visa-holders.

["Strengthening Resilience & Supporting Migrant Capabilities"](#) investigated how gender and precarious status affect the effectiveness of immigrant-serving agencies' programs and services. Based on qualitative interviews with women who held temporary visas, e.g., international students, the authors recommend that agencies take account of gender and precarity when designing their programs. The aim is to enhance migrant women's resilience by taking explicit account of gender and immigration status.

Dr. Luisa Veronis and collaborators investigated how the social and spatial characteristics of the neighbourhoods where immigrants live influenced their integration. "[The Role of Neighbourhood Context in shaping Migrant Resilience](#)" compared migrant integration across four neighbourhoods in Ottawa and Gatineau. Qualitative interviews and community consultations indicated that the built and social environment at the neighbourhood level affects many aspects of integration and migrant resilience.