

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE

Why Do Migrants Stay? Migrant Retention in Small and Mid-Sized Cities in Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand

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Many small and mid-sized cities in Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand view international migration as a way to address labour shortages and to counter the effects of population decline. Smaller urban centres often face significant challenges to attracting and retaining migrants, however, as migrants often prefer to live in larger cities.

It is clear that stable and meaningful employment is a primary factor for immigrant attraction and retention in regional centres. A number of research studies have also found that educational opportunities, the creation of a welcoming environment, and the presence of amenities and services contribute to the successful attraction and retention of migrants. Smaller centres often struggle to meet all of these criteria simultaneously, however. Moreover, even when these requirements appear to be met, migrant retention rates may fall short of expectations.

Our goal with this special issue is to take a place-based approach and to delve deeper into the contextual factors contributing to newcomer retention in small and mid-sized cities. We want to examine how the characteristics of specific places shape migrant experiences and also try to turn the usual research and policy question (why do people leave?) on its head and ask those who stay in smaller centres – why do they do so? What is attractive or important for them? Are their motivations more instrumental/socio-economic, emotional/cultural or both? How do such motivations evolve in the different life stages of a family/household? Should we conceptualise the settlement process in a small or mid-sized city as one that can involve different localities and hence be a ‘mobile settlement’? And what then is the role of local practices, initiatives and policies in building connections between mainstream organisations (not necessarily settlement organisations) and newcomers? In terms of analytical framework the Special Issue engages with the relevant literature on multi-level, and de-centred governance, proposing a regionalised governance perspective.

This Special Issue focuses on Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand because in each of these countries, there is an active research and policy debate (whether at the federal level or the local level) on how to maximize the benefits of international migration by making smaller centres attractive and welcoming to newcomers. We therefore see great value in bringing scholars from all four countries together to share emerging insights and knowledge on this topic.

Papers in this special issue may contribute the following:

- Innovative analytical thinking about migrant integration governance that go beyond the multi-level governance approach to think creatively about a 'regional' perspective.
- Explorations of how geographical factors (such as city size, regional characteristics and the distance between small and mid-sized cities and larger urban centres) have shaped the lived experiences and integration trajectories of international migrants.
- Research on the role of local mainstream actors such as educational institutions, libraries, trade unions in providing support and services to newcomers.
- Intersectional analyses of how factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, race and class impact how different categories of migrants experience life in small and mid-sized cities.
- Studies that offer a biographical perspective looking at how life course factors and pre-migration experiences can shape migrants' preference for a small city context.
- Studies carried out using alternative methodologies such as Photovoice or digital storytelling or artistic/performative tools for investigating how migrants or refugees experience their small and mid-sized cities of residence.

Deadline for Paper Proposals:

Please submit a paper abstract of 500 words indicating the analytical framework, methodology and main preliminary findings, and a 200 word biographical note to melissa.kelly@ryerson.ca and m14nguyen@ryerson.ca by **10 May 2021** Monday, 8 pm Toronto time (EST). Please submit in one file labelled clearly with your last name and short title of paper.

We shall notify all authors (both those selected and those not selected) by end of May.

The time plan for the Special Issue is as follows:

Special Issue proposal submitted to relevant Journal (we are in contact with a couple of international peer-refereed, Scopus-indexed, journals in the field – information will be provided to the selected authors in due course).	June 2021
Advanced draft papers submitted to editors	15 September 2021
Comments from editors	15 October 2021
Final versions submitted to editors	30 November 2021
Special Issue submitted to the journal	January 2021