

# • C A N A D I A N • DIVERSITY



A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES

About Immigration

## GOING BEYOND MYTHS



A COLLECTION OF TEXTS BY **VICTOR PICHÉ**

With contributions by Danièle Bélanger, Richard Marcoux,  
Jack Jedwab, Lama Kabbanji and François Crépeau





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## LETTERS

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# A WORD ABOUT VICTOR PICHÉ AND THIS EDITION OF CANADIAN DIVERSITY

Canada is often described as a nation of immigrants, as one in five Canadians is born outside the country. How knowledgeable are Canadians about the history of immigration to the country? How much do they know about the current process of immigration and the rules for acquiring citizenship? It is important for Canadians to possess such knowledge as immigration has a profound impact on our economy and identity. Being ill informed about immigration, newcomer settlement and integration makes it difficult for citizens to thoughtfully participate in national and local conversations about these very key issues. Worse yet, it makes citizens vulnerable to misleading notions about immigration and integration. The ability to check facts with sound empirical work is a challenge, but it must be done. And thankfully there are some champions that demonstrate leadership in attacking myths about immigration that circulate far too widely. One such champion is Dr. Victor Piché, who has dedicated considerable time and energy to this important cause. We are pleased to dedicate this issue of Canadian Diversity to the work of Dr. Piché, who has had a profound influence on many scholars, policy-makers and researchers in Canada and abroad. We hope that the content serves as a guide for our readers in taking up the continued challenge of dispelling myths about immigration.

Jack Jedwab

President & CEO, Association for Canadian Studies  
Publisher, Canadian Diversity

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

This text brings together a selection of my blogs published online in the Montreal METRO newspaper between September 2017 and February 2019.<sup>1</sup>

For the most part, the comments made in my blog are still relevant today. That said, a few have been updated where appropriate (see text boxes).

As a genre, blogs impose word limits. They are a far cry from the scientific research and academic articles with all their required references. That said, I have set myself the goal of drawing on systematic analysis and quoting figures wherever possible (I am a demographer by training).

The first two texts clearly outline my objectives: to dispel certain myths about immigration whether in Quebec or elsewhere in the world. The last election campaign in Québec (October 2018) was particularly revealing of the misconceptions that have been circulating and drove home the need to move beyond myths and address the issue of immigration in a factual way. The remaining texts are divided into four parts:

- myths about the economic impact of immigration;
- identity myths;
- the impact of surveys; and
- the global migration crisis.

I would like to thank the team at the METRO newspaper who opened their door to me and guided me through a métier that was, until then, unknown to me. I would also like to thank my colleagues and friends who followed me on this adventure: their comments and suggestions enabled me to explore some points in greater depth and to nuance others.

My special thanks go to the following people: Cris Bauchemin, Danièle Bélanger, Gérard Bouchard, François Crépeau, François Héran, Lama Kabbanji, Jack Jedwab, Richard Marcoux, Jean Poirier and Patrick Simon. Thanks also to the demographers of Statistics Canada and the Ministère de l'Immigration du Québec who diligently responded to my sometimes urgent requests for statistical information. A special thank you to Jack Jedwab for his support throughout my adventure and especially for opening the doors of the Canadian Diversity magazine to me.

I must also highlight the significant contribution of my demographer wife Louise Normandeau. She read each of my blogs and gave me the benefit of her implacable logic at times when strong feelings made me deviate from the point I was trying to make.

I am not the only demographer to attempt to deconstruct migratory myths. Here are some references from French demographers that will deepen certain themes discussed here:

- Cris Bauchemin et Mathieu Ichou (dir.) (2016), *Au-delà de la crise des migrants: décentrer le regard*, Karthala.
- François Héran (2016), *Parlons immigration en 30 questions*, La Documentation française.
- Hélène Thiolet (éds) (2016), *Migrants, migrations: 50 questions pour vous faire votre opinion*, Armand Colin.

On Quebec, see the section on language in Michel C. Auger (2018), *25 mythes à déboulonner en politique québécoise*, les éditions La Presse.

On the history of immigration in Quebec, see:

- Guy Berthiaume, Claude Corbo et Sophie Montreuil

<sup>1</sup> They are available on the following website: <https://dynamiques-migratoires.chaire.ulaval.ca/parlons-dimmigration-2/parlons-dimmigration>

(dir.) (2014), *Histoires d'immigrations au Québec*, Québec, Presses de l'Université du Québec et Bibliothèque et Archives nationales.

- Victor Piché (2019), "L'histoire de l'immigration au Québec: au-delà de l'idée de menace?", dans la revue *Enjeux de l'univers social*, vol. 15, no1, pp. 6-9.

Finally, our last book addresses a series of issues related to immigration, religion and ethnic relations in Quebec: Deirdre Meintel, Annick Germain, Danielle Juteau, Victor Piché et Jean Renaud (2018), *L'immigration et l'ethnicité dans le Québec contemporain*, Presses de l'Université de Montréal.

## WHY A SERIES ON IMMIGRATION?

I have been interested in migratory issues for over thirty years as a professor and researcher. My work has focused on integration issues in Quebec and Africa, and on migration policies in Canada and Europe.

In recent years, immigration has become a hotly debated topic around the world. The recent arrival in Quebec of Haitians from the United States who have become refugee claimants is a good example of an issue mired in confusion. For instance, these claimants were commonly referred to as "illegal migrants" while international law provides them with a legal process for seeking asylum. Demonstrations of far-right supporters and the slippages of a number of politicians have not helped to promote level-headed and constructive debates on the topic.

I have found that all too often ideas and perceptions about immigration are far from reality. Social media carries many myths despite the existence of scientific research that says the opposite. Several factors come to mind in explaining the gap between research and public opinion: the limited accessibility of informed publications, misconceptions, misinformation, lack of literacy (according to the report of the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies in December 2015, one in five adults in Quebec had very poor reading or writing skills, with almost half of the population having difficulty understanding a newspaper article).

It is discouraging to realize that even when confronted with the real facts, opinions do not change. Certainly, there is a section of the population that will always be impervious to the facts. On the other hand, recent studies, which have tried to classify the population according to their opinions and attitudes towards immigration, have proposed a typology ranging from a very open attitude (eg. "convinced multiculturalists" or "cosmopolitans") to the opposite extreme (hostile people and radical opponents). The population is therefore far from homogeneous with respect to views on migration. But,

what is most important, is the conclusion of a study according to which the position of the majority of the public would be ambiguous, thus between the two extreme positions.

It is to this segment of the population that these articles are mainly addressed. The objective of the series is thus to draw a portrait of immigration which frees it from its false association with threat. Because it is fear that feeds negative ideas and opinions about immigration, a fear that is all too often used and fed by certain politicians and far-right anti-immigration groups.

In the following columns, we will expose a number of prevalent myths about immigration and attempt to challenge these by presenting what the research says. Admittedly, in some cases, there is no unanimity among the researchers, but I will show that in these cases the debates are not so much about the facts as about the choice of facts and their interpretation.

## THE NEED TO DISPEL MYTHS

"Much of the conventional wisdom about migration is based on myths rather than facts. Migration policies often remain ineffective because they are based on these same myths". Peter Sutherland, the UN General Secretariat's Special Representative for International Migration (see Project Syndicate, 10 September 2014), expressed it this way. Despite the abundance of statistics and scientific studies, myths and misperceptions about migration are flooding the media and social networks. Why is this the case?

The first explanation that comes to mind is lack of knowledge. Indeed, surveys show that respondents' perceptions of immigration are far from reality. A few examples: in France, respondents think that immigrants make up 28% of their population, while the real figure is 10%. In Italy, the gap is even more pronounced: 30% (perceived level) vs. 7% (actual level). There are also significant differences in Belgium, Great Britain, the United States and Canada. This is also the case when people are asked about the proportion of Muslims in their country. To the question, "How many Muslims are there in your country?" The gaps between perception and reality are even greater. People commonly estimate that there are 4 to 5 times more Muslims than there really are, including in Canada. (Source: Nardelli & Arnett, 2014, "Today's key fact") According to an article in the Journal Metro of December 14, 2016 (citing the Pew Research Center), perceptions of the future are even more surreal: in 2020, Canadians believe that Muslims will represent 27% of the population while projections predict 2.8%.

Another finding: numerous studies around the world show that negative attitudes towards immigration are more prevalent in regions where there are very few, if any, immigrants

(for a very recent study, see the article by De Jong, Graefe, Calvan and Hasanali in N-IUSSP, October 2, 2017). In short, when contacts with immigrants are superficial or limited, individuals develop feelings of hostility that translate into anti-immigration opinions.

Of course, this does not explain everything, because misunderstanding is too often fuelled by misinformation from extremist groups and far-right political parties whose alarmist immigration rhetoric aims to provoke and sustain mistrust and fear on the basis of unfounded, even outright false claims.

It is this lack of knowledge and misinformation that has led many researchers and migrant advocacy groups to believe that conducting information campaigns would be sufficient to set the record straight and debunk myths. Unfortunately, there is a tendency in some quarters to see us as having entered a new era of “post-truth” where facts can be ignored. Indeed, even when faced with real figures, some people refuse to deviate from their positions. An article in *Le Monde* (5 May 2017) presented a study carried out among supporters of the National Front in France, which showed that “fact checking” contradicting the FN’s speech had no effect on opinions or voting intentions. Ignorance, even refusal, of the facts is enough to sow doubt and defeatism about the real effect of interventions on public opinion.

For my part, I think that this “defeatist” reaction underestimates the impact of scientific analyses and the presentation of real facts, however complex they may be. While a small number of people will always remain impervious to rational arguments, there is a large segment of the population that, while remaining ambiguous about immigration, has no fixed ideas about it. It is for this category of the population that we must continue to seriously study the migration phenomenon and dispel myths.



# WORK: MYTHS ABOUT THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION

## DO IMMIGRANTS STEAL OUR JOBS AND REPRESENT A BURDEN FOR OUR COUNTRY?

### THE MYTH OF IMMIGRANTS AS JOB THIEVES

The myth of immigrants as job thieves has three complementary aspects. First, there is a prevalent idea that immigrants come and take the jobs of the native-born. In other words, immigration is thought to have a negative impact on the employment of native populations. Yet numerous studies conducted in North America and elsewhere show that immigration has no effect on the employment of native populations.

The second aspect concerns the fact that immigration would have the effect of lowering the incomes of the natives. One of the most quoted American economists on this issue is George Borjas. His most important conclusion is that current research is unable to detect a single piece of evidence showing that immigrants would have a negative impact on the incomes and employment opportunities of the native-born in the United States. Why is this the case? This is because immigrants and national workers do not compete in the labour market but are rather complementary.

We could go further — and this is the third aspect — and affirm that not only do immigrants not take the jobs of the natives, but many of them - more so than natives - create their own jobs. This is particularly the case in the United States, but the same is also true for Canada. In addition, in many cases, immigrants also create jobs for nationals: according to a U.S. report, the entry of 1000 new immigrants creates 1200 new jobs, the majority of which are held by national workers.

But another way to look at the issue is to ask the question: what would have happened if some companies, or even some sectors, had not had access to migrant labour? Although it is not easy to answer this question statistically, we can nevertheless establish certain guidelines. Take, for example, the case of agricultural enterprises. It is recognized that without the Mexican labour force in the United States, the agri-food industry could not have survived. The impact is therefore not measured by considering only Mexican workers but all the actors involved in this industry: for example, other national workers who would lose their jobs as well as those from related services (transport, processing, wholesale and in detail, etc.). We can think that the impact would be enormous.

The example of temporary workers in the agricultural sector in Quebec is also interesting to consider. It is the employers themselves who are putting pressure on governments (federal and provincial) to set up worker recruitment programs without which, they say, they would have to close shop or triple even quadruple the prices of their products on the market, which would effectively make them uncompetitive. Whether we agree or disagree with temporary migration, no one would dispute the positive economic impact of this type of migration.

In short, not only are immigrants not job thieves, but they often create their own jobs and even create new jobs for the natives and fill job shortages in areas where it is difficult to find native workers.

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## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION: NEW RESULTS

Work on the economic impact of immigration has until recently produced mixed, sometimes contradictory results. Two basic methodological deficiencies greatly limited previous research. The most important is the cross-sectional nature of the data. Economic integration of immigrants is a long-term process, which necessarily involves longitudinal approaches. Another important gap was the inability to conduct firm-level analyses when looking at the impact of immigration on the economy and therefore the need to use aggregated data.

The conference organized by the QICSS (Quebec Interuniversity Center for Social Statistics) in October 2018 set as an objective the examination of the extent to which the twinning of several sources of information in new longitudinal databases could make it possible to provide new light on a highly debated issue, namely the economic impact of immigration.

Based on this new data linking companies and employees, the studies presented at this conference tackled the impact of immigration on entrepreneurship, productivity, international trade and exports. In all cases, the results show a positive impact of immigration (see Victor Piché, summary report available on the QICSS website).

That said, the effects remain weak. Should we be surprised? Not really. We need to think about what “weak” effects mean in the specific case of immigration. On the one hand, the demographic argument is important here: at the global level (for example at the national level), when we examine the impact of the number of immigrants, measured as the proportion of immigrants on the total population, the denominator (the national population) is very high, so adding immigrants to the numerator can only produce weak results. For this reason, firm-level analyses, now possible thanks to new databases, as seen in the studies presented at the conference, give better results.

On the other hand, another type of argument could be invoked to better understand the real significance of effects. Take the example of a company of 20 employees that hires two immigrant workers. The usual result would predict that these two workers would have a positive, but weak, effect on the company’s performance indicators (productivity, profits, etc.). Yet hiring these two workers may have allowed the company to survive and/or avoid decay. Current methodologies do not measure this type of effect. In short, in this context, the idea of a “weak statistical effect” makes perfect sense and could, on the contrary, be a significant result.

In fact, it is the opposite question that should be asked: what would happen if we removed immigrant workers from companies (the past) or if companies could not recruit the required workers (the future)? There is no real methodology for measuring this type of effect. For the moment, one possible approach would be to poll employers of immigrant workers, asking what would have happened without the input of these workers. In addition, beyond the firm, other unmeasured effects could indirectly affect the employment of native workers (job losses) and other service enterprises (transport, intermediate products, etc.).

The table is set for other innovative studies.

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## DO FEWER IMMIGRANTS MEAN BETTER ECONOMIC INTEGRATION?

During the Quebec election campaign (October-November 2018), two political parties, the PQ and the CAQ, suggested that immigration must be reduced to allow for better economic integration of immigrants. However, recent studies, both in the United States (see Villarreal and Tamborini’s 2018 study in the *American Sociological Review*) and in Canada (see Green and

Worswick, University of British Columbia, 2009), show that difficulties in economic integration are mainly due to “structural” factors, in particular labour market developments and discrimination. The impact of “numbers” is never mentioned as a factor of “non-integration”.

While governments have less and less control over labour market developments, they can play a key role in combating discrimination. Reducing immigration will have no impact on integration difficulties: there would be fewer immigrants discriminated against in absolute numbers, but the percentage would remain the same.

A final word on the state of the labour market: immigrants are not the only group who periodically face difficulties. Indeed, when the economy is in trouble (for example, in a recession), all new entrants, including young people, face the same difficulties. However, when the economy is doing well, as is currently the case in Canada and Quebec, there are job shortages, which can facilitate the economic integration of new entrants into the labour market.

It has nothing to do with the number of immigrants.

## **DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT EXISTS. THE QUESTION IS, WHAT CAN A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY DO?**

If there is one result that the many scientific studies have repeatedly confirmed, it is the existence of discrimination in the labour market. This is a very old tradition of research in Quebec, Canada, the United States as well as in several European countries. So, it is not a phenomenon specific to Quebec.

This tradition is based on a proven quantitative methodology that measures the economic gaps (e.g., income) between immigrant groups and native groups. Once the key factors of economic integration (age, gender, education, language, social class, etc.) are taken into account, if the gaps remain significant, we must factor in discrimination.

We are referring here to a “residual” definition of discrimination, an approach that has played a central role in exposing economic inequalities between men and women. It must be recognized, of course, that this approach remains limited in that it does not say what is behind the statistical finding of discrimination.

Our work has clearly shown that discrimination in employment is most prevalent in the initial stages of the process. How best to explain this fact? A first avenue of reflection concerns the hiring process and directly involves employers and selection committees. There is a complex process involved in a job search. The first step concerns access to information about available jobs. This process is often biased to the extent that employer networks, often informal, do not reach immigrant groups. This is particularly the case for unposted temporary positions, which are very common during periods of tight budgets, and which favour networks of friends and acquaintances from which recent immigrant groups are often absent.

Then there is the CV examination stage, which often leads to the rejection of some resumes for reasons specific to immigrant groups, such as the sound of names, but especially the non-recognition of diplomas, particularly those acquired abroad, as well as the non-recognition of previous experience outside Canada.

To some extent we are in unknown territory because the hiring process is confidential. The fate of immigrant groups' job applications is thus placed in the hands of employers and their selection committees. It is the strictly confidential nature of the hiring process that makes work on residual discrimination so crucial, as it measures the results of these selective and discriminatory practices on immigrant groups. This is a first priority issue that should be addressed by any commission of inquiry.

But we must go further. Many recent studies from the field of psycho-sociology have documented the importance of culture in the hiring processes, a phenomenon they have called cultural matching. Thus, discrimination may result from the sometimes unconscious and unintentional application of stereotypes that have permeated our cultural environment. We are talking here about deep mental structures that fuel indirect discrimination through the relative impacts of apparently neutral practices on racial, ethnic, gender or other groups.

A second approach for the Commission of Inquiry would therefore be to explore the issue of stereotypes rooted in organizational culture and propose measures to promote greater openness to diversity in the labour market.

For me, it is discrimination in employment that must be given the highest priority by a committee of inquiry, because it is through work commensurate with qualifications that true integration into any society begins.

A final crucial remark: the discrimination examined here does not automatically imply that there is racism. Our work has shown that levels of discrimination can be detected among groups that are not associated with being black.

## **INTEGRATION INDICATORS: CANADA AMONG THE LEADERS**

The OECD has just published its second report (2018) on integration indicators in OECD countries and some G20 countries. A total of 41 countries, including Canada, are compared with each other. In all cases, Canada is in the TOP 10, and very often in the TOP 5, along with other traditional immigration countries such as New Zealand and Australia.

This publication is one of the most comprehensive documents providing international comparisons of the integration outcomes of immigrants and their children. The performance of immigrants, defined here as those born abroad, is always compared to that of native populations. Overall, the good news, according to the report, is that in several countries, integration indicators have improved. That said, in almost all countries, including Canada, the labour market and social performance of immigrants still lags behind that of the native-born.

The indicators cover various dimensions of integration. With regard to economic integration, five indicators are used: the employment rate (percentage of the employed population out of the working-age population), the participation rate (percentage of the employed and unemployed population out of the working-age population), the unemployment rate, the percentage of workers with temporary contracts (a precariousness indicator) and the poverty level. In all cases, these indicators indicate that Canadian immigrants perform better than the OECD average (35 countries) or the European Union average (28 countries). This translates into higher participation rates, lower unemployment rates, less precarious work and lower poverty rates.

Another significant indicator is housing overcrowding: this phenomenon is almost non-existent in Canada (2% for immigrants), while it reaches 17% in the European Union countries.

On other non-economic criteria, Canada continues to perform well. For example, the percentage of access to citizenship in Canada is 90% compared to 59% for all European Union countries.

Immigrant voter turnout is also higher in Canada than in other European countries.

In terms of (self-reported) perception of their health status, immigrants to Canada rank first.

It should be noted that Canada's comparisons with other countries presented above for immigrants also apply to children with an immigrant background, that is, those born in the country to immigrant parents or to mixed marriages (see Chapter 7 of the same report).

The fact that Canada's immigrants perform better than most of the 41 countries examined should not overshadow the fact that the integration of immigrants in Canada is not smooth. As has often been demonstrated, immigrants continue to be disadvantaged, both economically and socially. Discrimination remains a real phenomenon. Moreover, it is in this dimension that Canada most closely resembles the 40 other countries examined - the proportion of immigrants who report having been victims of discrimination is 12% in Canada compared to 14% for the European Union countries.

For some time now in Quebec, we have regularly heard the slogan "fewer immigrants so as to better care for them". Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from this report is that immigrants and their children perform best in more diverse countries. This is the case in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Luxembourg, Switzerland and elsewhere.

These indicators are far from perfect. These are “raw” indicators, i.e. they do not take into account key factors that could explain the differences between countries. This is particularly true of the state of the labour market (for example, unemployment is much higher in Europe than in Canada). The most important criticism that can be made of these indicators is that they do not take into account the composition of migration flows and in particular the categories of immigration (economic, family, refugee, irregular). It should be noted that Canada’s immigration policy is one of the most selective and restrictive in the world, which means that immigrants are on average much more skilled and educated than those in European countries.

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## TEMPORARY WORKER PROGRAMS: THE WAY FORWARD?

There is currently a consensus that temporary foreign worker programs are a way forward to meet some labour needs on the market. This could legitimately be the case but only on condition that current human rights programs be improved.

The Global Commission on International Migration, the International Labour Office, the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank all advocate the use of temporary international labour mobility as the best way to address labour shortages. Many countries have followed suit, as shown by statistics on the increase in temporary foreign worker admissions around the world.

The case of Canada is particularly interesting, since the image of immigration has historically been closely associated with permanent residence. This is no longer true today. In 2016 (the most recent data available), approximately 287,000 temporary work permits were issued, a significant increase from the early 2000s when the annual admission of temporary foreign workers was about 70,000. Today, economic immigration to Canada has by far become a matter of temporary mobility. In comparison, there were only 156,000 permanent entries of economic class immigrants in 2016.

Can temporary worker programs be designed that are acceptable from a human rights perspective? Yes, but at least four conditions must be met:

- the temporary aspect must be a voluntary option on the part of the worker and the worker and the members of his or her family should have a real option of permanent residence and possibly citizenship;
- the worker must not be attached to an employer and must have the freedom to change employers;
- family reunification should be permitted at all times since the length of stay sometimes extends over several years;
- independent mechanisms must be put in place to ensure compliance with employment contracts by employers.

The current Liberal government has committed to reviewing temporary foreign worker programs. In September 2016, a Parliamentary Committee report proposed 21 recommendations to improve these programs. These are in line with compliance with the four conditions presented above. The report recommends, among other things:

- eliminating the requirement for an employer-attached work permit;
- facilitating access to permanent residence for temporary workers who meet a permanent need in the labour market;
- eliminating the regulation that prevents the renewal of a permit after four years of residence; and
- strengthening mechanisms to protect workers’ rights. This report was to my mind a significant step forward.

Unfortunately, a report remains a report full of good intentions as long as it is not implemented. The Government’s response came in April 2017 in a document presenting an action plan for temporary worker programs (see [www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/reports/plan.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/reports/plan.html)).

The only concrete measure adopted was the elimination of the prohibition on renewing a work permit after four years of residence. For the rest, we remain at the level of good intentions. Overall, the Government is formally committed to complying with all the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee, including improving the protection of temporary workers. On the other hand, the issue of access to permanent residence remains problematic in so far as this access is reserved for skilled workers.

Since April 2017, no further changes have been made to the temporary worker programs. It will be interesting to see if (and when) the new guidelines announced will actually be implemented.

P.S. A final point on the Parliamentary Committee's report and the Government's Action Plan: nowhere is there any mention of the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers (which Canada refuses to sign). In an interview with the Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration (October 4, 2016), I raised this issue: he was not even aware of the existence of this agreement.

■

# POLICIES CONCERNING TEMPORARY MIGRANT WORKERS IN CANADA AND QUEBEC

## THE END OF THE STATUS QUO?

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There is a consensus among academic researchers and migrant workers' rights organizations that current programs do not protect the fundamental rights of temporary workers who are subject to rules and restrictions that no other legal workers in the country are subject to. These include the obligation to work for only one employer in the case of persons with a closed work permit, lack of access to permanent residence and family reunification, and lack of recourse in the case of a removal decision.

However, significant changes were announced in 2018 and 2019 at both the provincial and federal levels. After years of the status quo, are we witnessing an opening to overcome these many well-documented problems? Here are some examples of these new developments from a policy perspective:

- Since 2018, Quebec has created an option for all temporary workers, regardless of their level of qualification, to apply for permanent residence under the Quebec Experience Program (QEP), which was not the case before, as this privilege was granted only to persons with a high level of qualification. There are three conditions to access this program: be legally in Quebec as a temporary foreign worker or as part of a youth exchange program (for example, a Working Holiday or Young Professional permit); have held a full-time job for at least 12 of the 24 months preceding the submission of your application and still hold the same job when you apply; and demonstrate a knowledge of

advanced intermediate level oral French. However, learning French at the required level rests entirely on the shoulders of the workers themselves, who do not have access to francization. Take the example of temporary workers working in restaurant kitchens and working long hours at low wages: learning French at the required level can be a difficult undertaking. In addition, very few institutions provide access to their French courses to people with a temporary status.

- In June 2019, the federal government launched the "Pilot Program for Caregivers in the Home and Pilot Program for Live-in Caregivers", which provides an open work permit (allowing you to change employers) and to accompany close family members, who are entitled to a work or study permit. In addition, permanent residence may be granted after two years with temporary status. These changes will also result in tighter selection criteria so that only those who meet the requirements for permanent residence are selected. This program thus becomes more selective at the grassroots level and institutionalizes the granting of permanent residence preceded by a mandatory period as a temporary resident.
- The federal government launched a pilot project to expand its immigration services to temporary workers in British Columbia in 2019. The initiative has been a success and there is talk of expanding it to other

provinces. In Quebec, the latest provincial plan “Réussir l’intégration” of 2019–2020 provides for a certain extension of immigration services to temporary resident workers authorized to apply for permanent residence.

- In June 2019, the federal government introduced vulnerable workers regulations that give people who are victims of violence in the course of their employment in Canada or who are at risk of violence and who have a work permit requiring them to work for only one employer, to obtain an open work permit. The concept of violence covered by this regulation includes “physical violence, including assault and unlawful confinement; sexual violence, including sexual interference without consent; psychological violence, including threats and intimidation; and financial exploitation, including fraud and extortion.” ([www.canada.ca/fr/immigration-refugies-citoyennete/organisation/publications-guides/bulletins-guides-operationnels/residents-temporaires/travailleurs-etrangers/travailleurs-vulnerables.html#preuves\\_de\\_violence](http://www.canada.ca/fr/immigration-refugies-citoyennete/organisation/publications-guides/bulletins-guides-operationnels/residents-temporaires/travailleurs-etrangers/travailleurs-vulnerables.html#preuves_de_violence)). The worker has the responsibility to provide evidence of his or her vulnerability. The applicability of this regulation and the number of cases received and permits granted will be interesting to monitor.
- In June 2019, a proposal to create work permits for specific occupations under the Foreign Worker Program was announced on the Canada Gazette website. The purpose of this permit is to increase the mobility of temporary foreign workers who could leave an employer to take the same job with another employer. However, this labour market mobility must take place exclusively between employers already authorized to employ temporary workers and have vacant posts that have previously been approved by a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). This stipulation in the proposed regulatory change could significantly limit the applicability and usefulness of this new type of licence.
- Finally, in September 2019, the federal government announced a pilot program to provide access to permanent residence for temporary workers in the agri-food sector in order to retain the workforce in Canada over the long-term. This programme should be implemented in 2020.

jobs, particularly in the health, agriculture, hotel and restaurant sectors. The new task of researchers and rights protection organizations is to ensure vigilance in the implementation of these policies and to contribute to educating the general public about the fundamental rights violations faced by these workers. The new measures put in place suggest a willingness to change and finally, the end of the status quo.

These initiatives bode well and are to be welcomed, but their implementation and ability to improve the protection of the fundamental rights of people working in Canada and Quebec with a temporary resident permit remain to be assessed. At the same time, employers continue to press governments to expand opportunities for temporary workers given the scarcity of labour in some employment sectors and to fill low-income



# IDENTITY: MYTHS ABOUT PRESERVING OUR COMMON VALUES AND PROTECTING THE COMMON LANGUAGE IN QUEBEC

## DO IMMIGRANTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECLINE OF FRENCH IN QUEBEC AND POSE A THREAT TO OUR VALUES?

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### THE MYTH OF THE INVASION

The myth of migration invasion might be expressed as follows: international migration is reaching unprecedented proportions. This myth is based on the idea that developed or northern countries are invaded by “hordes” of migrants. This notion is closely associated with the fear of a threat, whether at the level of identity or the economy. Yet the figures far from support this perception.

The United Nations Population Division regularly publishes statistics on persons registered in a country other than their country of birth. The notion of migrant implies not only the crossing of an international border, but also settlement in another country. According to data provided by the United Nations, the proportion of people living outside their place of birth was just over 3% in 2015: 97% of the world’s population lives “at home”. So, we’re a long way from an invasion.

Another facet of this myth is that international migration has increased considerably in recent years. However, according to the same data, since the 1990s, the proportion of migrants (people born in another country) has remained relatively stable, still around 3%. For developed countries, this proportion increased from 7% to 11% between 1990 and 2015. This is a relatively small increase, which shows that nearly 90% of people in developed countries are “native”. That’s not my definition of an invasion.

If we consider the case of Europe, where anti-immigration ideologies are rampant, especially, but not only, by far-right parties, we might expect to find that there has indeed been massive migration. However, it can be seen that since the 1990s, the evolution of the proportion of “foreigners” in Europe has been comparable to that of all developed countries. In France, where the misconception of mass migration was at the heart of the National Front’s political arguments during the last presidential campaign, figures indicate that those who are French by birth were still at the 90% mark in 2011, a proportion that has remained almost unchanged since the 1920s.

The highest increase was in North America, from 10% to 15% between 1990 and 2015. Admittedly, even if 15% (in 2015) still remains a relatively small proportion, one might think that it was this increase that put immigration at the heart of the last American presidential campaign. In fact, it is Mexicans who have been singled out most often, even though the net migration (inflows minus outflows) between the United States and Mexico has reversed in recent years: more Mexicans are currently leaving the United States than are entering it.

One might think that the concern of governments and public opinion is rather centred on the idea of an invasion of irregular migrants. However, here again, many studies show that the notion of invasion does not correspond to statistical reality. Irregular

migrants constitute a very small proportion of the population despite a discourse that constantly refers to the need to address this category of migrants. In addition, it should be mentioned that the vast majority of irregular migrants have entered countries with a regular status. In this context, it is difficult to see how the construction of walls, real or virtual, and the investment of billions of dollars in border control technology to address a phenomenon that is “internal” to countries can be justified.

Finally, with regard to refugees, the figures here too are sobering. The common perception is that the world is facing a rising tide of people fleeing countries at war and that the situation can potentially become out of control. Yet, figures show that refugees constitute a small proportion of the world’s population (0.3%) and only 10% of international migration. That doesn’t mean there’s no problem. This means that the refugee issue is not a statistical problem in itself, but rather a matter of little respect for the Geneva Convention on Refugees and the refusal of countries to accept these populations in distress.

In short, the idea of invasion must be placed in the category of statistics bred by fear that are too often exploited by certain movements and political parties.

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## DIVERSITY: A FAIT ACCOMPLI EVEN WITHOUT IMMIGRATION

Diversity is now an indisputable reality and can only increase **even if all immigration were to be stopped today**. Quebec is already a resolutely pluralistic society.

Last year (2017), Statistics Canada published population projections based on various diversity indicators from 2011 to 2036. For the purposes of this discussion, we will examine the “zero immigration” scenario, that is, if between 2011 and 2036 Canada and Quebec were not to accept any immigrants. Already, it can be said that such a scenario is not realistic since, on the one hand, several thousand immigrants have already entered since 2011 and, on the other hand, it is clear that immigration levels will remain high for a few more years.

Nevertheless, what would have happened if all immigration had been blocked since 2011? Obviously, under such a scenario, the percentage of the immigrant population would decrease, but very slightly, from 13% in 2011 to 12% in 2036 for all of Quebec. For metropolitan Montreal, it would increase from 23% to 20%. However, all other diversity indicators would continue to increase. For example, if we combine the percentage of 1st and 2nd generation immigrants, numbers increase from 22% to 24% in Quebec and from 38% to 41% in metropolitan Montreal. The same is true for the share of visible minorities in the population of Quebec (from 11 to 16%) and Greater Montreal (from 20% to 27%). Finally, the evolution of religious diversity goes along similar lines, even if the increase in non-Christian groups is small: from 6 to 7% between 2011 and 2036 for Quebec and from 11 to 12% for metropolitan Montreal.

The diversification of Quebec’s population is not a recent phenomenon, it has been underway since the 1980s. Nevertheless, what matters today is that diversity is already an integral part of society and is there to last.

Reducing immigration, or even stopping it, would not change the fact that Quebec is no longer what it used to be, that is, homogeneous, and it is no longer possible to go back. All the current discussions on immigration levels overshadow the fact that the focus must now be on integration.

**UPDATE:** There was a lot of talk during the election campaign about the need to recruit Francophone immigrants. And the CAQ and the PQ want to considerably increase the share of Francophones in immigration to Quebec. One wonders where these immigrants would come from in such a scenario. According to projections made by Richard Marcoux and Laurent Richard of the Observatoire démographique et statistique de l’espace francophone (ODSEF, 2017), the largest pool of Francophones is to be found in Africa, especially in West and Central Africa. This scenario would further contribute to the diversification of Quebec’s population. The projections are not intended to be frightening, but to acknowledge and prepare for the future with integration programmes that take into account current and future diversity.

(On Marcoux and Richard's projections, see: [https://www.odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/sites/odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/files/rapport\\_cic\\_1\\_tendances\\_demographiques](https://www.odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/sites/odsef.fss.ulaval.ca/files/rapport_cic_1_tendances_demographiques))

## THE QUEBEC VALUES TEST: WHICH VALUES?

The October 2018 provincial election campaign raised the issue of Quebec values that immigrants should respect. In addition to the impression that immigrants already admitted would not respect these values, the debates also suggest that they would resist being subject to these values.

However, no one mentions the fact that since March 2015, immigrants have had to sign a declaration on the common values of Quebec society. What are these common values?

- Quebec is a free and democratic society.
- Political and religious powers in Quebec are separate.
- Quebec is a pluralistic society.
- Quebec society is based on the rule of law.
- Women and men have the same rights.
- The exercise of human rights and freedoms must respect those of others and the general welfare of all.
- Quebec society is also governed by the Charter of the French Language, which makes French the official language of Quebec. Consequently, French is the normal and customary language of work, education, communications, commerce and business.

Declaration:

“Understanding the scope and meaning of the foregoing and agreeing to respect the common values of Quebec society, I declare that I want to live in Quebec in accordance with and respect for its common values and I want to learn French, if I do not already speak it.”

Who says better? The common values mentioned in the declaration constitute a set of values on which there is broad consensus. Can we go beyond that statement? Perhaps, if there were other values in Quebec that would rally everyone. NO, if we are in the presence of a plurality of values.

To date, when it comes to Quebec values, no one I know has been able to establish a list of them that can be agreed upon beyond what is presented above. Even the notion of “majority culture”, at the heart of the notion of interculturalism, remains vague. I raised this question in my review of Gérard Bouchard's book (*L'interculturalisme*, Boréal, 2012): “The first question raised by interculturalism as proposed by Gérard Bouchard concerns the definition of majority, minority and common cultures. With regard to the latter, it is not clear what it is, apart from the fact that it must be expressed in French. For the rest, the notion remains vague and difficult to identify. Gérard Bouchard acknowledges this when he states (p. 70) that the contents of the common culture “do not lend themselves well to a precise definition of the order of the inventory, except those enshrined in legislation and the charter” (see *Cahiers québécois de démographie*, 2013).

Why are there so many difficulties in defining other common values? Because diversity in terms of values is not only tied to ethnocultural belonging, but also to social class, profession, gender and housing (urban/rural). The most important divide may well be intergenerational in nature. Each generation shapes its memory based on its own historical experiences.

Of course, signing a declaration does not guarantee that the fundamental values included in the declaration will be respected. Failure to respect these values remains unacceptable to everyone, including non-immigrants.

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## THE MYTH OF THE DECLINE OF FRENCH OR THE CORRECT USE OF LINGUISTIC INDICATORS

Journalist Michel C. Auger's comments on the myth of the decline of French in Quebec received considerable media coverage, including a prominent presence on Radio-Canada's "Tout le monde en parle" programme. Michel C. Auger uses several figures to justify his argument, in particular the figure of 94.5% of people who know enough French to conduct a conversation. Although this indicator can be criticized for its subjective nature, other more reliable indicators prove it right.

For several years, I have argued that the linguistic debate must be based on appropriate indicators. What are they? To assess the state of French in Quebec, there are several indicators and none are superior to another. It all depends on the objectives pursued.

If we want to measure assimilation, the language spoken at home combined with the mother tongue makes it possible to see to what extent there has been a linguistic transfer to French. Thus, people whose mother tongue is not French and who speak French at home have made a transfer to French. These two indicators give an idea of the degree of assimilation into French. This type of approach has been widely used in the past to study the assimilation of French Canadians outside Quebec or to measure the weight of French Canadians from Quebec in Canada as a whole. The mother tongue is closely associated with national origin and makes it possible to monitor the evolution of ethnic groups.

However interesting they may be, these language categories are not appropriate to measure the state of French in Quebec in terms of Quebec's language policy. This policy, established by Bill 101 and the immigration and integration policy, has two basic objectives: to develop a model of pluralist integration (non-assimilationism) and to make French the common public language. (In a way, in terms of language intervention, the choice cannot be limited to the public sphere, because the government cannot legislate to change the mother tongue or force people to speak French at home.)

It is therefore to the linguistic indicators in the public sphere that we should turn. In 1997, the Conseil supérieur de la langue française proposed a new public language indicator based on a series of questions on the use of French in the public sphere. At that time, it was the indicator that gave the highest percentage of Francophones in Quebec (87%).

Despite the new need for linguistic indicators in relation to the political objectives of the 1990s, the Office québécois de la langue française, the institution responsible for monitoring French in Quebec, did not pursue its 1997 recommendation on the need to produce public language indicators. It is only very recently, in 2016, that the Office produced a series of indicators on the use of French at work and at school.

These indicators show that more than 80% of people use French at work. When it comes to schooling, French is used 90% of the time (preschool, primary and secondary levels): a significant increase since 1971, while French was only used at 64%.

We are far from the decline of the French language in Quebec.

**UPDATE:** See Victor Piché (2011), "Categories ethniques et linguistiques au Québec: quand compter est une question de survie", Cahiers québécois de démographie, 40 (1): 139-154.

## FAILURE OF FRANCIZATION OR FAILURE OF FRANCIZATION PROGRAMS?

We have heard a lot about “language” these days. In the media, “there has been talk of the failure of francization” following the report of the Auditor General of Quebec and of the “decline of French at work” revealed by the latest Statistics Canada data. These titles are biased. In some cases, they can even lead to identity-related excesses such as the one proposing to reduce immigration and to focus on the increase in the birth rate to preserve Quebec’s identity (see François Legault’s comments as reported in *Le Devoir* of November 25, 2017).

Two publications received particular media attention. The first document is the Auditor General’s document on the francization of immigrants. Two observations are worth noting: on the one hand, only one-third of immigrants who did not know French on arrival took French courses and, on the other hand, the vast majority of those who took the courses did not reach the threshold of language autonomy. However, can we talk about the failure of the francization of immigrants in Quebec? Shouldn’t we rather talk about the failure of the francization programs?

The Auditor General’s report provides us with other indications that help us to put the magnitude of the situation into perspective and qualify it. For example, following the evolution of a cohort (immigrants who arrived in Quebec in 2013) is very instructive in that it allows us to target those eligible for francization courses. Of the 51,976 immigrants in this cohort, those under 16 years of age (11,030 people) who are not targeted for the courses and those who already know French (25,991) must be excluded. This leaves 14,955 eligible persons, representing 29% of the entire cohort. It can therefore be seen that more than 70% of immigrants are not targeted by this finding of program failure.

Moreover, francization goes well beyond the performance of programs. It is part of the more global framework of Quebec’s francization policy. This policy is reflected in the “Statement on Immigration and Integration Policy” adopted in 1990. The objective of the policy is to promote French as the common language of public life. If we want to monitor this policy, we must use indicators of the common public language and not, as is too often the case, of the mother tongue or the language spoken at home.

It is in this context that the latest data provided by Statistics Canada on language of work must be considered. The main conclusion to be drawn from this publication is that French at work has declined by 2.7 points in ten years. This decrease is due to the increased use of English and French at work (bilingualism). It can be hypothesized that this evolution is not related to immigration, but rather to the significant labour market transformations associated with globalization and its effect on the use of English as the language of economic exchange.

A brief aside: without going into detail, the idea of the decline of French is based on a very small number. We are talking about 2.7 points in 10 years. However, from one census to another, the same person may evaluate working time spent in French or English differently. The question suggests four possible answers:

- occasionally (less than 50%);
- regularly (50–89%);
- generally (90–99%); and
- exclusively (100%).

Answers to these types of questions (e. g. time estimation) are subjective and very fluid over time. Therefore, great caution should be exercised in interpreting the differences over a 10-year period.

In addition to the language of work, another important dimension of public language concerns education. Two recent OQLF reports (2017) revealed that the use of French in school reached 90% in 2015 (preschool, elementary and secondary levels combined). The trend was particularly striking on the Island of Montreal, where the use of French in schools increased from 64% in 1971 to 80% in 2015.

In short, we cannot talk about the failure of francization in Quebec. On the other hand, the failure of francization programs remains worrying and calls for a radical revision of the current approach. According to the Auditor General’s report, this program failure is due, among other things, to the inadequacy of course offerings, the complexity of the registration process and the lack of an appropriate timetable. There are courses of action here that deserve immediate attention.

## IMMIGRATION, LANGUAGE AND RETENTION: THE FACTS

According to Premier, François Legault, the fact that Quebec lost 13,000 immigrants last year would demonstrate the failure of Quebec's immigration policy. That is not what the statistics indicate. A study by the Ministry of Immigration [see "Presence in 2016 of immigrants who landed between 2005–2014"] shows that the proportion of immigrants who arrived between 2005 and 2014 and are still present in 2016 (the so-called retention rate) has increased from 67% in 2005 to 75% in 2014. For metropolitan Montréal, the retention rate is currently 80.5%. So, recent figures show a significant improvement.

This improvement is mainly due to the change in the "linguistic" composition of immigration since the 2000s. According to the same study, between the two periods 1991-95 and 2011–2015, the percentage of immigrants who know French rose from 35 to 60.

What is important here, from the point of view of retention, is to point out that retention rates vary according to immigrants' knowledge of French: the more you know French, the less you leave Quebec. It is difficult with these statistics to talk about the failure of Quebec's immigration policy.

Recent figures, widely reported in the media, suggest that the proportion of immigrants who know French upon arrival is now in the order of 47% for 2016 and 42% for 2017. This decrease in knowledge of French on arrival is mainly explained by the significant increase in refugees during these two years (9% in 2010 compared to 17% in 2015).

The origin of skilled workers has also changed in recent years and could be another explanatory factor. There are more of them from Asian countries (and therefore fewer French-speakers). The Immigration Ministry's latest statistical bulletin mentions that changes were made in March 2017 to the selection grid to give more points to knowledge of French. It is still too early to measure the effects of these changes.

In short, it must be concluded that the last two years are not representative; it would be a mistake to draw political conclusions based on them.

The figures presented here do not allow us to conclude that Quebec's immigration policy has failed. If we want to talk about failure, we must turn to the integration policy, both linguistic and economic.



# ATTRACTING FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANTS: WHAT IF WE SEARCHED DIFFERENTLY?

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Before turning to the francization of immigrants, let us return to Francophone immigration, an idea that is constantly recurring in public and political discourse and is not specific to Quebec. In order to support its linguistic minorities, Canada is concerned to maintain the demographic weight of Francophones in its provinces and territories where residents of the other official language are in the majority. Since the early 2000s, the federal government has put in place various measures to encourage the influx of Francophone immigrants. Meeting in Whitehorse in July 2016 as part of the Council of the Federation, the Canadian provincial and territorial premiers went even further and endorsed a target for Francophone immigration outside Quebec that has never been reached to date, one of 5% (Orfali, 2016). For 2010, this target corresponds to approximately 6,500 people with a command of French who would settle annually outside Quebec among immigrants in the economic category. However, the most recent statistics indicate that the annual number of permanent resident and Francophone immigrants in this category living in Canada outside Quebec has fluctuated between 1,200 and 1,600 annually. So, we seem very far off the mark!

As noted in the previous chapter, in recent years, Quebec has seen a decrease in the proportion of immigrants who have a knowledge of French upon arrival. Yet the number of Francophones on the planet is constantly increasing and is currently estimated at 300 million. Could it be possible that Canadian and Quebec recruitment strategies are not in step with the

profound transformations taking place in the international Francophone space?

Since the early 2000s, we have constantly reminded ourselves that the demographic future of the Francophonie is in Africa. For example, in a group of about forty states, we were able to estimate that the number of Francophones increased by 36 million between 2010 and 2018, pointing out that 90% of this increase comes from the African continent. However, in their recruitment efforts, Canada and Quebec seem to be carrying a Eurocentric bias and have difficulty imagining that Francophone immigration could come from outside France and Europe, traditional basins of Francophone settlement immigration since ... 1608!

For example, "Destination Canada" is a federal program for Francophone candidates seeking opportunities in Canada outside Quebec. As part of this program, the Mobility Forum brings together prospective immigrants and potential employers from Canada on an annual basis in Paris and Brussels. Having had the opportunity to participate as an observer, there is no doubt that excellent candidates are to be found at these gatherings, but is this the way of the future to limit these activities to these two cities alone when more and more Francophones are to be found and will continue to be found south of the European continent?

Another example is the International Experience Canada

(IEC) programme, which provides young people with the opportunity to travel and/or work in Canada. It consists of three subprogrammes:

- Working holidays;
- Young professionals; and
- International cooperation internship. There is a list of 33 countries participating in this vast program, but there are only three French-speaking countries (France, Belgium, Switzerland) and no countries at all on the African continent.

Since the 1960s, in accordance with the Gérin-Lajoie doctrine, Québec has ensured its presence on the international scene, notably by setting up official delegations in a dozen cities — including Brussels, London, Mexico City, Munich, Rome, Tokyo and the United States in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles — as well as “Québec Offices” that offer services in a limited number of sectors in some fifteen other cities around the world. While the Délégation générale du Québec à Paris, inaugurated in 1961, is the oldest, it is only 55 years later that such a delegation was inaugurated in Africa, that is in Dakar. It was high time! With Quebec Offices opened in Abidjan and Rabat over the past two years, Africa only very recently seems to be a continent of interest to Quebec authorities. Better late than never!

In short, while the tectonic plates of the Francophonie are in motion and completely reconfiguring the international space, Canada and Quebec must review their approach to migration policies in order to adapt them to these new realities. The very strong growth of Francophones in West and Central Africa is most certainly driven by demographics, but even more so by significant investments in the education and training sector. In addition, these same investments are ensuring that more and more young Francophones in Africa have qualities that meet the criteria for immigrating to Quebec and Canada. In fact, these young people did not wait for policies to be put in place because the 2016 census data reveal that “Africa is now the second most important continent in terms of recent immigration to Canada, having surpassed Europe in this regard, which ranks third” (Statistics Canada, 2017: 4). The targets set by Quebec and Canada for migrants who speak French are very modest given the half a billion Francophones that could be counted on the planet by 2050 ... and the fact that 90% of young Francophones under 35 years of age will be found on the African continent.



# THE IMPACT OF OPINION POLLS

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## THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION: ARE SURVEYS USEFUL?

We are regularly confronted with opinion polls on immigration. Unfortunately, these surveys are not very useful in terms of their contribution to both public debate and migration policy formulation.

Let's take as an example the latest IPSOS survey (September 2017) which has been widely reported in the media recently. This survey focuses on the effects of immigration, particularly its economic effects. This is a very complex question which is indeed reflected in the answers: almost 40% of respondents say they have no idea about the question (they remain neutral) or say they do not know. Nevertheless, 60% of respondents have some ideas on the matter.

When you look closely, you can see that the results presented can be subject to several interpretations. Thus, to the question "What is the effect of immigration in general?", one could headline: "Only a minority (21%) think immigration is positive". But the title could also read: "Only a minority (42%) think that immigration is negative". It is clear that the two titles do not give the same impression to the reader. The first number can be used by opponents of immigration while those who are more open to immigration will use the second number.

When the questions are more specific, the answers are a little less clear-cut and negative opinions decrease significantly. For example, to the question "Do you agree or disagree that immigration is good for the economy, 36% answer "No" while 28% answer "Yes". To the question 'Do you agree with the statement that immigration makes it more difficult for the native-born to find a job', 31% answer "yes" and 27% "no". On these more specific issues, it can be seen that a solid third of respondents neither agree nor disagree (in addition to the 5% who say they do not know). So, when the questions refer to concrete situations (economy, employment), we see that public opinion is divided and that we cannot talk about polarization, as the answers to the more general question would suggest.

In addition, the level of negative responses (between 35 and 40%) can be interpreted in several ways. For many people, this percentage may seem high. But it can be interpreted differently: indeed, given the avalanche of negative discourses on immigration at the moment, whether in the media or in the words of politicians, it is perhaps even surprising that this figure is not higher.

What can we say about the differences in opinion from one country to another? For example, positive responses to the economic impact of immigration range from 50% in Saudi Arabia to 9% in Hungary. In Canada, this proportion is around 43% (Canada ranks 5th out of 24 countries), while the percentage for France is 16% (20th). Without an understanding of the specific political and economic contexts, these figures do not make much sense.

In addition, the differences could also be explained by the impact of public discourse, whether negative or positive: where public discourse is positive to immigrants, public perceptions will follow. And vice versa. It is not an accident that France finds itself in 20th place, with the politicization of immigration by right-wing and far-right parties, and that Hungary finds itself almost in last place. It should be remembered that this country has completely closed its borders to refugees and that many reports have documented police brutality at the borders.

In closing, let us quote a very important result that goes against preconceived ideas: indeed, the survey shows that there is a positive link between immigration levels and perceptions: the higher the level of immigration, the more positive the perceptions. This would explain why immigration countries (e.g., Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States) rank highly in rating the positive impact of immigration.

In short, responses to opinion surveys on such complex issues as the impact of immigration don't shed much light to deepen our understanding and assist in public policy development. On the other hand, opinion polls could be useful in guiding information and awareness programs on the real effects of immigration. Unfortunately, very few governments are moving in this direction.

## A SURVEY IN SUPPORT OF ACTION

I have already had the opportunity to write about how opinion polls (see above) on immigration are not very useful for some topics when they are not confronted with real facts. For example, respondents may well estimate that immigration has a negative impact on the economy or society, but it should also be remembered that this goes against the many studies that say otherwise.

On the other hand, a survey can be useful in developing measures that take into account the opinions of the people with whom we want to work. This is the case with the Léger survey sponsored by the Bureau d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants à Montréal (BINAM). This is an immigration survey, conducted between November 23 and December 2, 2017, among 1096 people aged 18 and over from the Montreal area. The BINAM is an organization attached to the City of Montreal and aims to develop an anti-rumour strategy (see update).

Several findings can already inform future actions. First, the survey shows that overall the results are very positive. Examples:

- few negative mentions of immigration (about 10%);
- 64% consider newcomers to be an asset to the city;
- 61% think that relations between Montrealers and newcomers as quite harmonious;
- the majority of respondents do not agree with the prejudices concerning inferior work skills of new immigrants (e.g., their lower productivity).

This rather positive picture is all the more surprising since more than half of the respondents (56%) say they do not have newcomers in their immediate circle, despite the fact that nearly 70% of them come from the island of Montreal where immigrants are concentrated. However, we know that negative perceptions are more widespread in regions where there are few immigrants.

It would be interesting in more in-depth analyses to see whether the perceptions of the group with immigrants in their environment are indeed more positive than others. If this is the case, actions could be concentrated in geographical areas with low immigrant representation.

Second finding: it seems that respondents' opinions are generally more positive than those circulating around them. Rumours heard by respondents over the past year would indicate that those around them are relatively more hostile to immigration. Some examples of rumours heard:

- "There are too many immigrants in Montreal".
- "Immigrants are a threat to the French language".
- "Immigrants are job thieves."

This result is difficult to interpret. This question will need to be further explored to see where these rumours come from, how they circulate and on what they are based.

Third finding: there is little mention of discrimination when it comes to labour market integration. The main reasons given for the difficulties of economic integration are language and non-recognition of diplomas. For a minority of people, the wearing of religious symbols is also mentioned as a factor that can negatively affect labour market integration. Racism and xenophobia do not appear as such as factors, even if respondents could give up to three answers. On the more general question concerning the welcome extended by Montrealers, only 6% of the sample mentions racism and xenophobia as reasons for a poor welcome.

This result is sobering. It seems surprising given the many recent debates about discrimination and racism in Quebec. It could be argued that if we asked the question directly — ‘do you think there is racism and xenophobia?’ — many people would answer ‘yes’. But when respondents are allowed to give their own reasons for integration difficulties, as in this survey, very few mention discrimination and racism ‘spontaneously’. This result, combined with positive perceptions about immigration, should influence the content of anti-rumour messages. Overly negative messages giving the impression that discrimination is widespread or that immigration is perceived negatively are often overwhelming and counterproductive.

Finally, the survey should make more targeted interventions possible. There is no need to intervene with people who are already convinced. Two groups should be particularly targeted. The first group concerns people who answer ‘don’t know’. Depending on the questions, this group can range from 10% to 20%. This is the group most likely to respond positively to anti-rumour interventions. Simply influencing this group would in itself represent an important outcome of the strategy.

The second group is more problematic and includes people who have negative perceptions based on ‘rumours’. If they are intractable, interventions may be less effective. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge for the anti-rumour strategy is to reach out to this group and try to influence it.

In both cases, an essential first step would be to characterize them: age, gender, national origin, social class, place of residence, education, etc.

A final usefulness of the action survey deserves to be highlighted. Indeed, any strategy must include evaluation mechanisms. The survey is a good starting point for monitoring actions undertaken. In this case, the survey should be repeated with the same methodology as much as possible.

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## ANOTHER SURVEY THAT IS DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET

IPSOS, an international opinion marketing company, has just delivered a new survey with some questions about immigration. One result in particular puzzled me and suggests that the negative perception of immigration, as measured in the survey, would be somewhat exaggerated.

Let’s take a closer look. This survey, reported in La Presse on May 27, was conducted between April 29 and May 2, 2018 among 2001 people. As reported by La Presse, 76% of those interviewed responded that ‘immigrants too often impose their values and religion’. This figure is surprising to say the least.

In another Léger et Léger survey conducted for the Bureau d’intégration des nouveaux arrivants à Montréal, only 42% of respondents from the Montréal region agreed with the following statement: “immigrants are trying to impose their culture on us”. It is the word ‘impose’ that makes the two issues very similar. However, if we retain this 42% for the Montreal region, even assuming that the rest of Quebec answered ‘yes’ to 100% (which is unlikely), we do not arrive at the percentage of 76%.

How can this difference be reconciled? Let us assume that both surveys are valid. Three factors can be used to explain the differences:

1. These are two different survey companies with their own methodology, in particular with regard to the choice of respondents (sampling).

2. The vocabulary is different: in one case (IPSOS), we speak of 'too often'; in the case of Léger & Léger, we do not mention frequency. It may be thought that the notion of 'too often' is very subjective and is understood differently by different people.
3. Opinions may change over time: there is a delay of about 5 months between the two surveys (23 November — 2 December 2017 versus 29 April — 2 May 2018).

Even if all three factors may have played a role, I would personally choose the second factor. With regard to sampling, both survey firms are generally recognized for their rigour. And I don't think opinions can change that much in 5 months, unless there was a catastrophic event that could harden opinions. I don't see any. That being said, I would not want to downplay the importance of negative perceptions about immigration in Quebec. These exist and concern a sufficiently large part of the population to be taken into account.

Another result also struck me in the IPSOS survey. The rate of trust in scientists (researchers and university professors) is 85%, compared to 18% for politicians! How to interpret the fact that perceptions are so negative when we see that scientific analyses generally give a positive view of immigration? Can we assume that political discourse presenting immigration as a problem rather than an asset had a major impact?

One point is reassuring: Montrealers' perceptions of immigration are generally positive. Shouldn't they be left with the initiative to 'manage their diversity'?

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## OPINION POLLS OR THE MIRROR EFFECT

According to the latest CROP survey sponsored by Radio-Canada, a majority of Quebecers (about two-thirds) would support a reduction in immigration and a law banning the wearing of religious symbols for people in positions of authority, including teachers.

Should we be surprised? Not at all. It's the mirror effect that plays out to the fullest here. With two major political parties — one of which is in power — telling us that there are too many immigrants and veiled women, it is no wonder that public opinion reflects the image shaped by political speeches. It is even surprising that one third of the people surveyed do not agree.

However, the facts do not justify this speech. Quebec is in a period of labour shortage. The francization rates of immigration have improved. Recent studies, with new and more appropriate data show that the economic effects of immigration are positive. The proportion of Muslims in Quebec is very low (about 4%). The wearing of religious symbols affects a very small part of the population. In short, there is no justification for the fear conveyed by the dominant political discourse.

In a previous blog, I asked about the usefulness of opinion polls in terms of their contribution to our understanding of immigration issues and public policy development. If these only aim to reinforce the dominant discourses, to the detriment of the facts, we enter a vicious spiral.

That said, opinion polls could be useful in guiding programs to inform and raise awareness among populations about the real effects of immigration. Unfortunately, this is not the path chosen by the current government.

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# WHAT'S IN A NUMBER? THE MEASURE OF PUBLIC OPINION ON LEVELS OF IMMIGRATION

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What do Canadians think about the numbers of immigrants entering the country annually? Survey firms in Canada have repeatedly asked questions that seek to explain how the population feels about the numbers. As a country that receives a relatively important number of newcomers, public opinion around immigration is monitored on a regular basis by Canadian policy-makers, researchers and media. In addition to being used to assess public support for levels of immigration. The surveys can provide valuable insights into issues of public perceptions about immigrant settlement and integration.

When survey results are released to the public, they can have an important bearing on debates about immigration. When evaluating the results of public opinion surveys on immigration and integration, it is critical to look at the manner in which the questions are formulated. Sometimes there can be assumptions/statements built into questions on how people feel about immigration levels and when this occurs misleading conclusions may arise.

Underlying questions about immigrant numbers is the extent to which respondents possess knowledge about how many people are actually coming to Canada annually. Until recently, survey questions about immigration levels have tended not to focus on knowledge about the numbers as the purpose of the question is getting at how people feel about the presence of immigrants. One might even wonder whether presenting the number of immigrants within a survey question will mean anything to the respondent, as many will have little ability to determine what the number represents. Another consideration

is the geography to which the survey question on levels refers when asking about feelings towards immigrants. Although it tends to go untested, that too may be a factor in the response. To date most national surveys that are commissioned and/or employed by policy-makers inquire into whether people feel that there are too many immigrants arriving annually in Canada-as opposed to say a specific province or a city.

That which follows will look at the results issued by five of Canada's leading public opinion survey firms on concerns around immigration levels. The surveys were conducted between 2018 and 2019. Although each of the surveys asks a range of other questions around immigration, our focus will be on the questions that pertain to the levels of immigration. We will attempt to explain what accounts for the differences in the results of the surveys and also look at varying interpretations of the results by survey analysts.

An IPSOS survey conducted for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in February 2018, revealed that some 43% felt that there were too many, 40% said the number was about right, 8% said that there were too few, and 9% said they didn't know or preferred not to give an opinion. IPSOS followed up with this question: *currently, Canada aims to admit over 300,000 immigrants each year. Knowing this, do you feel there are too many, too few, or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?* When respondents were made aware of the number, the percentage that felt there were too many jumped by 10 points to 54% and the percentage saying the numbers of new arrivals were about right dropped

to 34% (the percentage saying that there were too few dropped to 6% and those saying they did not know or refusing to give an opinion).<sup>1</sup>

It remains unclear as to why the jump occurred when the number was made known, especially since we have no conception of what the respondents thought the number was prior to being informed. Hence, to some degree it is still uncertain as to what the value is of including the numbers of immigrants in the question when gauging opinion. In contrast to the two-part question asked by IPSOS, an Angus Reid Institute (ARI) survey, conducted in August 2018, found that half of Canadians surveyed would prefer a decrease in the federal government's current immigration targets of 310,000 new permanent residents for 2018. The question was put as follows: "First, some questions about immigration. In 2018, Canada is expected to accept 310,000 new permanent residents. These are people who were born in other countries who have immigrated to Canada on a permanent basis. What is your opinion on this? Would you say 310,000 new permanent residents in 2018 is too many — the number should be lower; is about right; is too few, the number should be higher; or not sure/can't say".<sup>2</sup>

ARI points out that as immigration targets rose from 260,000 to 310,000 between 2014 and 2018, so too, has the number of people saying there should be fewer immigrants to Canada with half (49%) being of that opinion now, compared with just over one third (36%) in 2014. According to ARI, the findings

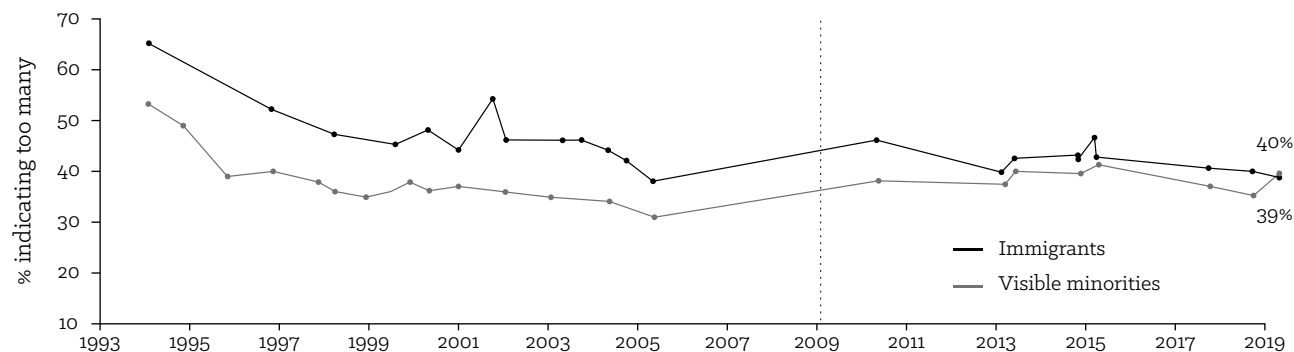
had to be understood in the context of 'increasingly fraught conversations about policy regarding immigration and migration to Canada' ARI further points out that over the course of four decades, the number of Canadians saying immigration is either at the right level or should be increased has remained above fifty percent, even as immigration levels have consistently risen, beginning under the Mulroney government in the 1980s. Over the same period of time, the number saying immigration levels should be decreased has fluctuated within the 40 to 50 per cent range, suggesting the issue has been a source of division for more than 40 years.<sup>3</sup>

Ekos arrives at a different conclusion around the evolution of opinion on immigration numbers. Similar to the ARI survey, Ekos employs a three-point scale (too many, about the right number and too few) but it doesn't include the number of immigrants in the question. Conducted in the spring of 2019, the EKOS survey finds that 'General opposition to immigration is not that different over the past several years.' Over 25 years of monitoring attitudes towards immigrant numbers, Ekos points to an important decline in opposition to immigration when compared with the early 1990s. The result for the spring 2019 Ekos survey points to results that are considerably better than what the ARI survey revealed some six months prior. It does, however, point out that opposition to immigration identified as visible minorities is on the rise and no longer trails opposition to general immigration (as it has historically). Racial discrimination is now as important a factor in views about immigration as the broader issue of immigration.<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE 1. ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION/MINORITIES (ADJUSTED)

Q: In your opinion, do you feel that there are too few, too many or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

Q: Forgetting about the overall number of immigrants coming to Canada, of those who come, would you say there are too few, too many or the right amount who are members of visible minorities?



1 Ipsos Report, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, March 2018 Qualitative and Quantitative Research about Newcomers and Immigrants, [http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/immigration\\_refugees/2018/091-17-e/report.pdf](http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/immigration_refugees/2018/091-17-e/report.pdf)

2 <http://angusreid.org/canadian-immigration-trend-data/>

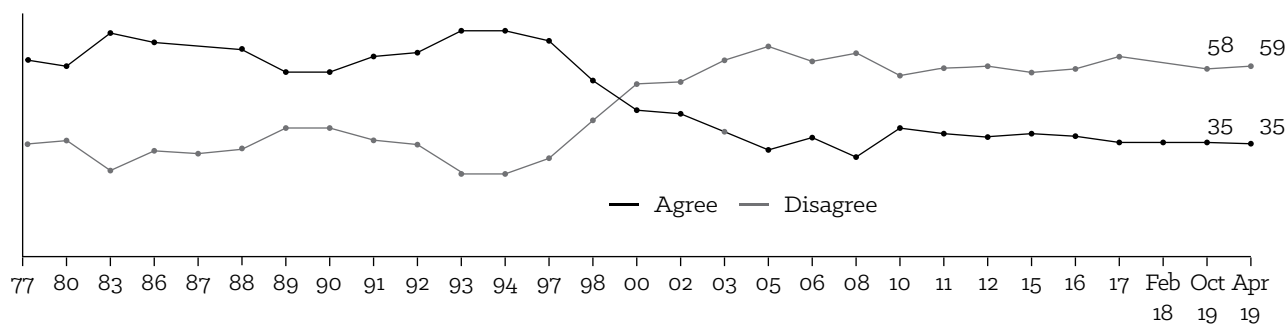
3 <http://angusreid.org/canadian-immigration-trend-data>

4 <http://www.ekospolitics.com/index.php/2019/04/increased-polarization-on-attitudes-to-immigration-reshaping-the-political-landscape-in-canada/>

Environics Institute surveys do not put the question about immigration levels on the three-point scale (too many, about right, too few), and rather asked Canadians whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: 'overall, there is too much immigration in Canada'. Some 59 per cent of Canadians disagreed with the statement, up from 58 per

cent in October 2018. Just over a third of Canadians agreed that there was too much immigration. As observed below, by contrast with the ARI findings, Environics Institute historic trend suggests that for "most of the past two decades, positive sentiments outweigh negative ones on such questions as the overall level of immigration."

FIGURE 2: QUESTION – IMMIGRATION LEVELS ARE TOO HIGH? (1977-2019)



Source: [https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada-spring-2019/environics-institute---focus-canada-spring-2019-survey-on-immigration-and-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=8dd2597f\\_2](https://www.environicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/project-documents/focus-canada-spring-2019/environics-institute---focus-canada-spring-2019-survey-on-immigration-and-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=8dd2597f_2)

Conducted in March 2019, a Leger Marketing survey for the Association for Canadian Studies has 36% of Canadians contending that there are too many immigrants, numbers which are not as high as the percentages reported on the same question in the surveys above. Unlike the other surveys, the question on the numbers of immigrants also offers varying options to respondents around the geographies where

concerns are highest. As observed in the table below, it is at the level of the country and of the province that Canadians are more likely to believe there are too many immigrants. They are less likely to do so at the level of their city, town or neighbourhood. Hence, proximity to immigrants is not the determining factor in opinion formation when one specifies geographical location.

TABLE 1: QUESTION – IN YOUR OPINION, ARE THERE TOO MANY, JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT NUMBER OR TOO FEW IMMIGRANTS IN THE FOLLOWING?

	Canada	My Province	My City or Town	My Neighbourhood
Too many	36%	34%	25%	19%
Just about the right number	48%	50%	57%	59%
Too few	12%	12%	14%	18%
I prefer not to answer	4%	4%	4%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies, February 25, 2019

Seldom have Canadians been asked in surveys to estimate how many immigrants there are in Canada, either on the whole or entering the country each year. Ideally, securing such estimates would help to provide context in establishing whether those saying there are too many, about the right number or too few immigrants have some sense of the number. Survey questions that present respondents with the number of

immigrants that arrive in a given year don't necessarily offer any insight into the rationale behind respondents' beliefs that there are too many or too few. The Leger-ACS 2019 survey asks Canadians to estimate the number of immigrants that there are in the country. In 2016 the census of Canada reported that there were 7.7 million immigrants in the country. The table below reveals that over one third believe that there were fewer

than 3 million immigrants and another third believe there were between 3 and 7 million. Some one in five Canadians estimated that there were more than 7 million immigrants in

Canada. It is worth noting that the estimates in the number of immigrants are roughly similar amongst those saying there were either too many, too few or about the right number.

TABLE 2: QUESTION – ACCORDING TO YOU, APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY IMMIGRANTS ARE CURRENTLY LIVING IN CANADA?

	Too many	Just about the right number	Too few
Less than 1 million	9.4%	9.4%	10.3%
Between 1 million and 2.9 million	27.3%	23.8%	28.1%
Between 3 million and 4.9 million	20.8%	22.9%	20.9%
Between 5 million and 6.9 million	16.8%	16.2%	16.8%
Between 7 million and 9.9 million	5.7%	9.4%	9.6%
10 million or more	11.8%	11.5%	8.6%
I prefer not to answer	8.1%	7.0%	5.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies, February 25, 2019

Not surprisingly those Canadians that feel there are too many immigrants in Canada are also far more likely to agree that there are too many immigrants in their neighbourhood. This further suggests that knowledge about the actual numbers of immigrants and the extent to which such knowledge influences

opinion is highly uncertain. It may indeed be that a person who believes there are too many immigrants will believe it regardless of being informed of the actual number or the consideration of the geography to which a survey question refers.

TABLE 3: QUESTION – ARE THERE TOO MANY, JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT NUMBER OR TOO FEW IMMIGRANTS IN THE FOLLOWING?

Neighbourhood	Canada		
	Too many	Just about the right number	Too few
Too many	41.7%	6.7%	3.8%
Just about the right number	50.4%	74.7%	36.1%
Too few	6.1%	17.5%	59.1%
I prefer not to answer	1.8%	1.1%	1.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies, February 25, 2019



## THE CASE OF QUEBEC

Surveys over perceptions about levels of immigration rarely examine the degree to which the actual numbers of immigrants in a given area affect opinion about the desired level. Admittedly, it's not simple to establish causality in that regard. But it is clear that there can be high opposition to immigration in places where there are very few persons that are foreign-born. This is well illustrated in the case of Quebec where the provincial party that formed government in 2018 campaigned on a 20% reduction in the annual

admission of newcomers (from approximately 52,000 in 2018 to 40,000 in 2019.) Surveys suggest that the reduction was especially attractive to the people in the province's smaller centres where as observed below the share of immigrants is particularly low. It is entirely possible that persons in such cities believe there is too much immigration elsewhere in the province and not in their cities or towns. Or they may believe that, whatever the number, there are too many. Either scenario needs to be examined if we are to properly comprehend how the question around numbers of immigrants is interpreted.

TABLEAU 4: TEN CANADIAN CITIES WITH THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANTS IN 2016

	Total Population	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of Immigrants
Dolbeau-Mistassini	14880	100	0.007%
Alma	31800	300	0.009%
Bay Roberts, NFLD	11030	115	0.01%
Baie-Comeau	27000	305	0.01%
Mines Thetford	27065	340	0.01%
Saguenay	157165	2035	0.01%
Rivière-du-Loup	27720	405	0.015%
Saint-Georges	31450	480	0.015%
Matane	17245	270	0.015%
Shawinigan	52180	830	0.015%

Source: Statistics Canada, special compilation, Census of Canada 2016

## CONCLUSION

Esteemed demographer and colleague Victor Piché has contended that there is nothing scientific in establishing the numbers of immigrants that a state is able to accommodate/receive in a given year.<sup>1</sup> Piché points out that at the end of the 1980s, the Quebec Immigration Department attempted to justify the desired level of immigration on the basis of the concept of receiving capacity which was supposed to be determined “scientifically” by demographic and economic

models measuring the impact of immigration. This effort was abandoned as the models in question were unable to define thresholds based on the impact of immigration. Examining the contribution of public opinion on immigration levels supports the argument that Victor Piché has made over the past few decades and his emphasis on the need to carefully consider the evidence base when employing surveys to gauge opinion over purported capacity to receive a “certain number” of immigrants.

1 <https://cjf.qc.ca/vivre-ensemble/webzine/article/immigration-et-integration-existe-t-il-un-seuil-optimal>

# MIGRATION CRISIS

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## THE MIGRANT CRISIS IN CANADA AND QUEBEC: WHAT CRISIS?

For some time now, some media have been reporting on the migration crisis in Canada (see, for example, TVA News, May 6, 2018). To speak of a crisis, two conditions must be met: a significant flow of migrants coinciding with the refusal to receive them. Neither of these conditions exists in Canada. There is therefore no migration crisis in Canada.

First the numbers. In the new article mentioned above, a claim is made that ‘50,000 people crossed the border illegally last year alone.’ There are two confusions in this statistic. First, there were 50,000 asylum seekers (in 2017), nearly 60% of whom entered legally. Secondly, it is incorrect to talk about illegal entries when it comes to asylum seekers.

It should be recalled that in 2001 there were nearly 45,000 asylum seekers. Is this what could be characterized as a disaster?

Then the political answer. Apart from the request of a Conservative member of the Parliament of Canada to expel Nigerians, or that of the leader of the Parti Québécois to erect a wall or fence on Roxham road, there are currently no measures to close Canada’s borders to migrants, as there are in Europe. In fact, the debate is becoming an opportunity for federal-provincial confrontation over funding who will pay the bill?

And the human aspect in all this? The first reaction should be to ask who these human beings are behind the statistics. It should be noted that asylum seekers come from countries at war, where violent conflicts and persecution force the exile of thousands of people: from Iraq, Colombia, Burundi, Pakistan, Syria, Eritrea, Turkey, Nigeria... These are the main countries from which asylum seekers came to Canada in 2017.

The crisis is not a migration crisis, it is a political one.

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## MIGRANTS OR REFUGEES?

There is much talk of a “migration crisis” to describe the arrival of many people trying to cross European borders. This way of presenting things suggests that they are migrants. The choice of words is not neutral. If they are migrants, there is no obligation to let them in.

Let's take a closer look.

According to the Larousse dictionary, migration is defined as the voluntary movement of individuals or populations from one country to another for economic, political or cultural reasons. This dictionary definition is also the one used by scientific research in the social sciences. Thus, migration theories focus mainly on the causes of voluntary migration based on individuals' desire to improve their living conditions.

As for the definition of 'refugee', it is currently enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Protection of Refugees. According to this Convention, a refugee is a person who "has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, if he has no nationality and is outside the country in which he was habitually resident as a result of such events, is unable or, by reason of such fear, is unwilling to return to it". This definition makes it clear that this is "involuntary" travel. By extension, we can therefore speak of "forced migration". It should be noted that 148 countries have signed the Convention (including Canada).

Who are these supposed migrants? Three countries currently produce the vast majority of the people described as migrants who make the headlines almost every day. These are Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. In the case of Syria alone, about 4 million people have fled the country while another 10 million have been displaced within the country.

To these three countries, we could add Myanmar, where a conflict currently being played out, criticized as ethnic cleansing, and Yemen, which is in the grip of a civil war. But we must not forget the people of African origin whom the media show us crammed into boats on the Mediterranean and many of whom have drowned. These nameless faces also flee from countries at war: Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Southern Sudan. On this side of the Atlantic, we can think of Mexico, where many people threatened by conflicts between the army and drug lords are fleeing. It is clear that these people fearing for their lives are refugees.

One of the important points of the Convention concerns the principle of *non-refoulement*. It stipulates that none of the States that have signed the Convention shall expel or return a refugee to the borders of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened because of the threats mentioned in the previous paragraph. It is this principle that establishes a right of asylum and which in a way establishes the category of "asylum seekers". It is in the name of this international agreement that Canada allowed Haitians from the United States to cross the Canadian border, allowing them to claim refugee status. The principle of *non-refoulement* does not imply that all these persons have a right of asylum, but that they are entitled to an examination of their situation.

Unfortunately, this principle is currently threatened by many repressive measures by most States, measures associated with border closures.

The most common measure is to intercept refugees before they arrive at the border: either at sea to return them to where they came from, or by placing them on islands (as Australia does), or by setting up checkpoints several kilometres from the border as the United States does with the Mexican border. Another questionable measure was to invent the notion of safe "third countries". This policy requires refugees to apply for asylum in the first country of entry. Yet most Eastern European countries, members of the European Union, are often the first countries of arrival of refugees, and these countries have closed their borders altogether.

In short, there are many ways to circumvent international obligations of *non-refoulement*.

It is therefore wrong to talk about a migration crisis. Rather, it is a refugee crisis and it is for this reason that states must find ways to respect the spirit of the Geneva Convention for Refugees.

**P.S.:** A picture is worth a thousand words. A must see, the film "Human Flow" by Ai Weiwei. This documentary currently in theatres in Quebec tells the story of refugees in search of security and justice and covers more than 20 countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, France, Greece, Germany, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Mexico and Turkey. It also recounts the inhuman response of countries to the arrival of refugees.

## THE MYTH OF IMMIGRANTS AS TERRORISTS

There is no evidence that there is a link between immigration and terrorism. Despite the demonstrated absence of links, the “security” discourse largely dominates political discussions on immigration. The many repressive measures currently in vogue in almost every country in the world are still justified by the national security argument.

Generally, analyses suggest that the immigration security discourse has grown since September 11, 2001, with the attacks on the World Trade Center. While these attacks have exacerbated the discourse on the terrorist threat of migration, the national security approach to migration was present long before.

For example, in Canada, the adoption of a security vision in the management of mass migration movements was reaffirmed several times in the early 1990s. The terms used by Barbara McDougall, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1991 to 1993, leave no doubt that Canada needs to be more “aggressive and active” in the fight against transnational security threats such as terrorism and international mass migration (see Philippe Bourbeau’s study, 2013).

A recent report published by the White House attempted to demonstrate that this link exists, but the report has been so criticized as to make it unbelievable. According to the article by Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Ron Nixon (*New York Times*, January 16, 2018), the statistics used include irrelevant cases (e.g., persons extradited to the United States to stand trial for attacks committed outside the country) while omitting cases of “domestic” attacks committed, for example, by groups such as “white supremacists”. In addition, the conclusions presented in this report run counter to scientific studies on the security threat that show no convincing link between migration and terrorism.

One of the most extensive studies was one conducted in the United States on attacks that occurred between 1975 and 2015. During this period, the probability of an American being killed by a foreign-born terrorist was 1 in 3.6 million and the probability of being killed by a refugee attack was 1 in 3.5 billion. The annual risk of being killed by someone other than a foreign-born terrorist was 253 times greater than the risk of being killed by a foreign terrorist.

The other myth that falsely draws supposed connections between immigration and terrorism implies that the threat comes from outside. However, this is again a false link. In most cases, the attacks are committed by nationals who have become more radical on home turf. This is the case, for example, with the recent attacks in France (e.g. Charlie Hebdo, Bataclan), where the perpetrators were French nationals who were well known to the police and intelligence services. So we are faced here with an internal threat from radicalization rather than an external one.

**REFERENCE ON SECURITY DISCOURSE IN CANADA:** Philippe Bourbeau (2013), ‘Processes and actors of a security vision of migration: the case of Canada’, *European Journal of International Migration*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 21–41.

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## TOWARDS AN APARTHEID MIGRATION REGIME?

International migration could provide crucial economic and social relief for many in the world. Unfortunately, only a small minority of the privileged have access to it. For the poor and the low-skilled, including refugees, international migration is becoming less and less accessible.

We are living in the midst of a paradox. On the one hand, migration needs are recognized by almost all developed countries. On the other hand, anti-immigration sentiments are taking up more and more space and borders are sometimes closing abruptly.

However, three facts contribute to making immigration very attractive.

The first fact concerns the demographic revolution that took place in the second half of the 20th century. This demographic

revolution, now well documented, can be summarized by two major phenomena: a drop in fertility levels below the replacement threshold and an increase in longevity. These two phenomena combined have produced a significant ageing of the population.

Based on these major trends, demographic projections point to a decline in the population over the 21st century. This revolution is mainly affecting developed countries, but the process is currently underway in all regions of the world. This means that the migration component will be the main driver of demographic change.

The demographic argument becomes even more powerful when combined with a second economic argument. Indeed, the new demographic context implies a decrease in the labour supply (i.e. the proportion of people of working age), which, in itself, is not a problem if the demand for labour also decreases or at least remains low. But that is not the case.

Thirdly – and this is less well known – when one consults the United Nations database on desired levels of immigration and the policies put in place, one finds that the majority of countries tend toward and actually implement increasingly open immigration policies.

For the vast majority of countries, immigration levels are considered satisfactory (between 76–77%), and have been since the mid-1980s. The proportion considering the levels too high remains low and has even decreased slightly since 1986. In addition, the vast majority of countries report having policies that do not aim to reduce their immigration levels.

So how do we explain the paradox of border closures?

In fact, the closure of borders should be seen in parallel with the establishment of a new three-tier migration regime. The first tier opens the borders to migration of a select group, the rich and the highly skilled. This first form of recruitment is accompanied by a whole series of social rights, including the right of permanent residence and possibly citizenship.

The second form of recruitment is found in the many temporary worker programs that are proliferating around the world. These programs help fill jobs for which it is thought to be difficult to find candidates in the countries in question, while ensuring that these migrant workers do not have access to permanent residence, and therefore do not integrate into the destination society.

A third category of migrants remains - less skilled or low-skilled refugees and irregular migrants. It is these categories of migrants that are targeted by anti-immigration discourse and restrictive policies.

In short, most governments want higher levels of immigration, just not from any group. It is in this sense that we can speak of an apartheid migration regime.

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## FREE MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD: A UTOPIA?

“In any case, it is utopian to think of a world without borders”: this is the ultimate argument that is made when discussing the free movement of people. However, many developments suggest otherwise.

While all attention is focused on the ‘migration crisis’, which involves closures, expulsions and fortresses around the world, efforts continue to (1) establish political structures that allow the free movement of people and (2) develop increasingly open immigration policies to address labour needs.

Thus, in all the major regions of the world, political institutions, bringing together a group of countries, advocate the free movement of people:

- in Europe: since 1997, the European Union has created the Schengen area, which allows free movement between the 26 Member States.
- in Africa: free movement has long been achieved for West African countries; for Africa as a whole, at the meeting held in

Midland, South Africa (9 March 2017), the Pan-African Parliament asked Member States to approve the principle of the free movement of goods and persons.

- in South America: the Member States of MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) have allowed the free movement of people since 1991. In 2009, the Residence Agreement Project reiterated an open border policy for member countries.
- Asia: the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) adopted a human rights declaration in 2012 promoting freedom of movement in the region.
- in the Caribbean: CARICOM (Caribbean Community) provides for freedom of movement for certain categories of skilled workers; we are talking about the establishment of a single market.
- in North America: NAFTA (Canada, the United States and Mexico) provides for freedom of movement with employment contracts for professionals in 63 fields (see Chapter 16). Four categories of persons are covered by this agreement: business visitors; professionals; intra-company transferees; and investors. As a first step, these categories can obtain temporary visas without a labour market impact assessment. Secondly, obtaining permanent residence is greatly facilitated. We know that NAFTA is currently being renegotiated, but I doubt that the chapter on labour mobility will be significantly amended.

In short, a world without borders is already being built in all major regions of the world.

Another indication that the world is changing significantly — and little is said about it — is the fact that almost all countries have open immigration policies. According to the United Nations database on desired levels of immigration and policies implemented, the majority of countries are advocating increasingly open immigration policies. For example, the proportion of developed countries that consider their levels too high is low, and has even declined since the mid-1980s. In addition, the proportion of developed countries whose policies aim to increase immigration levels has risen from 2% in 1996 to more than 20% in 2015.

All this — the opening of borders and immigration policies — is reflected in an increase in international mobility in developed countries: from 3% in 1990, the proportion of people living in a country other than their country of birth increased to 11% in 2015. It is forgotten that in 2016 alone, the European Union welcomed 2 million immigrants from non-member countries.

This may seem contradictory with the proliferation of walls and the current crisis around migrants. In actual fact, this crisis is only affecting refugees. It should be recalled that these types of migration represent only a small part of all international migration (about 10%).

What is utopian, in my opinion, is to think that the world with its current borders is here to stay.

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## CLIMATE MIGRATION: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE AT OUR DOORSTEP

There are many excellent reports on the effects of climate change on migration. If nothing is done, according to a World Bank report, by 2050, millions of people will have to move because of climate change. The World Bank wanted to show migrants as the human face of climate change.

I deliberately chose the latest World Bank report, not only because it is the most recent (March 2018), but because the World Bank can certainly not be called leftist, extremist or alarmist.

The report focuses on three regions: sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America. These three regions represent 55 per cent of the population of developing countries. In these regions alone, World Bank projections estimate that more than 140 million people will have to migrate for environmental reasons by 2050: 86 million in Africa (mainly West and Central Africa), 40 million in South Asia and 17 million in Latin America. The report also concludes that after 2050, if nothing is done, climate migration will accelerate.

These can be considered minimalist estimates since the report covers only 55 per cent of the population of developing regions. If other developing and developed regions where people live near seas were added, the numbers of climate migrants would be even higher. The study by the International Organization for Migration (2015) suggests a figure of 200 million “environmental” migrants by 2050.

The three migration factors identified in the World Bank report are declining agricultural productivity, water scarcity and rising water levels. Only significant actions to reduce greenhouse gases can reduce the pressure on massive population movements. The three projection scenarios adopted in the report give an idea of what would result if strong environmental action were taken.

The first scenario described is referred to as “pessimistic” and is the reference scenario in the document. It is this scenario that would produce more than 140 million climate migrants. The second scenario involves development actions while maintaining high levels of greenhouse gas emissions: this scenario would produce 100 million migrants by 2050. If, on the other hand, both development actions and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are combined, the number of projected migrants would decrease to 50 million.

The report mainly talks about internal migration, but significant spillover effects can be expected that will produce a considerable number of international refugee migrations.

There is an urgent need to broaden the definition of a refugee to include climate refugees.

## GLOBAL MIGRATION PACT: A HISTORICAL CONSENSUS

Dispelling migration myths can give the impression that there is only bad news. The idea that everything is going from bad to worse is actually another myth, because there is also good news. The adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Global Compact for Secure, Orderly and Regular Migration is one of these examples of good news.

A little reminder. By September 2016, all 193 countries around the world had agreed on the need to develop a comprehensive framework for the management of international migration. This is known as the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. Following this declaration, a series of intergovernmental negotiations took place (early 2018) leading to the adoption of a new migration pact on 13 July.

To my mind, it is the most important document in terms of comprehensive migration policy since the adoption in 1990 of the United Nations Convention for the Protection of the Rights of Migrants. We can even speak of a historical consensus.

The recently adopted Migration Pact contains 23 commitments. I would like to highlight four of them:

- Facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration to stem the impact of irregular migration;
- Protect the safety, dignity and fundamental human rights of all migrants;
- Develop research tools to support evidence-based policies;
- Avoid detention except as a last resort.

Obviously, adoption by the United Nations General Assembly does not guarantee the implementation of these commitments. For example, the Migrants Convention, adopted in 1990, was only implemented in 2003 after the required 20 signatures were obtained. However, no developed country has signed the Convention to date.

We should remember that the United States withdrew from the New York Declaration after the event. Australia has just announced that it will not sign the new migration pact (see *The Guardian*, 25 July 2018).

Nevertheless, the Global Migration Pact, adopted by the General Assembly, is a crucial historical milestone that gives all those working in the field of migrants' rights a new tool for the development of migration policies that respect fundamental rights.

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## THE MIGRATION SOLUTION: FIVE PROPOSALS THAT ARE EASY TO IMPLEMENT

Rather than talking about a migration crisis, let us talk about solutions.

It should be recalled that the migration crisis is above all political: it is the result of conflicts and wars producing large flows of refugees, combined with border closures.

Here are five proposals that would end the crisis without revolutionizing anything. They are mainly aimed at governments in northern countries (the European Union, the United States, Australia, etc.). What it takes:

- Recognize at the outset that there are a significant number of people in urgent need of protection. This implies acknowledging that flight migration is caused by situations of conflict and war and by the existence of oppressive political regimes where human rights are violated. Ultimately, it means recognizing the legitimacy of asylum claims.
- Avoid alarmist discourse that conveys false impressions. Political discourse should be based more on scientific analysis and conclusions. In particular, the notions of invasion and threat should have no place in public discourse.
- Recognize the positive effects of immigration, including refugee immigration, since studies show that refugees admitted to countries do not constitute an economic burden on society.
- Give the Geneva Convention back its full weight in the field of asylum. The principle of non-refoulement is particularly important and measures such as interception, aimed at preventing migrants from approaching borders, must be recognized for what they were, namely violations of the Convention.
- Enable refugees to integrate into the labour market. Temporary camps or shelters are unnecessarily expensive, stigmatize migrants and prevent them from taking care of themselves.

These proposals are easy to implement: they require only a minimum of goodwill.

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# SHOULD INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BE CHARGED MORE?

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Student mobility is the type of migration that has increased most rapidly in relative terms in recent decades. In 2018, the four main destination countries according to Campus France data are the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and France. Attracting more and more international students has become a priority for many states around the world. For some OECD countries, whose populations are increasingly ageing, this is a key demographic issue: international students can provide a pool for recruiting a young and skilled workforce. However, these countries do not all adopt the same strategies. While some have chosen to charge very high tuition fees, as is the case in the United Kingdom or the United States, but also in Canada, others have chosen to apply the same fees to everyone. This is the case in Germany, which recently introduced free access to higher education for all students and is becoming an increasingly popular destination. Germany has also facilitated labour market access procedures for international students and graduates.

On the other hand, in France, the government has developed a new strategy for "attracting international students", which it ironically called "Bienvenue en France" and in which it has chosen to multiply by 15 the tuition fees for international students (outside the European Union) in bachelor's and master's degrees from the start of the 2019 academic year. According to the government, this increase would attract more international students, improve their selection, create financial equity between national and international students and give more value to French diplomas abroad.

Let us take a look at this argument. This shift corresponds above all to a commodification of higher education and ignores the many other factors that guide international students' choices: geographical, cultural and linguistic proximity; historical links between the country of origin and destination; the reputation of the education system; the difficulty/ease of obtaining or renewing a visa/residence permit; or post-graduate employment prospects.

According to a survey we recently conducted in France (AIMS Survey: Academic International Migration Survey) among international students enrolled in master's or doctoral studies, these students came to France for two main reasons: the value of the French diploma on the labour market and the reputation of its higher education institutions. It is therefore not necessary, contrary to what the "Bienvenue en France" plan would have us believe, to increase tuition fees so that the "excellence" of French higher education can be recognized internationally. Other reasons considered important include funding and the low cost of education as well as knowledge of French.

Secondly, the participation of international students in the French national economy is much higher than the cost they represent for the State, as shown by a study commissioned by Campus France in 2014. It is also important to remember that France has been ranked for decades among the top countries of destination in the world for international students. What has changed in recent years is the emergence of new

attractive countries such as Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands and Turkey. International students therefore have a wider range of choices, which is all the more reason for France to lose its current position if the increase in tuition fees for foreign students is implemented this year.

In the end, this strategy merely proposes cosmetic and discriminatory measures by claiming to address the issue of underfunding of French higher education and the general decline in public funding allocated by the Ministry. This increase in tuition fees presages the transition to a new model of higher education, indexed more to market forces than to the intrinsic value of knowledge, and the gradual and widespread increase in tuition fees as has occurred in the United Kingdom.

In deciding to increase tuition fees for international students, is the government not rather aiming to find additional ways to select candidates for immigration?

Everything seems to suggest that this is the case. Indeed, the policy for attracting students presented in the Welcome to France Plan is in line with the chosen immigration policy implemented in the early 2000s by the then Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, aiming, among other things, to better select migrants according to France's economic needs. Among the migrants sought are students and researchers perceived to be more economically profitable. The objective is to attract the most "talented" students in the context of global competition for highly skilled workers. The "Welcome to France" strategy goes even further in the money-based selection of international students through the introduction of tuition fees differentiated according to geographical origin. For economic and diplomatic reasons, the Welcome to France plan aims to reconfigure the geography of student mobility by giving priority to students from so-called emerging or developed countries, such as China, Brazil and Russia. However, half of the foreign students in France come from the Maghreb or sub-Saharan Africa where French diplomas have a well-established social value on the labour market. The latter are already turning to new poles such as China, Saudi Arabia or Turkey. France is therefore in danger of losing even more students by increasing its tuition fees.

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# “FACILITATING MOBILITY” TO TRANSFORM THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON MIGRATION

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Migration is a complex phenomenon. Basically, it is as complex as life itself. It is estimated that there are about one billion migrants on earth: more than 250 million international migrants and more than 750 million internal migrants. Each has a unique history and a specific trajectory. The reasons for migrating, in any sense, are as diverse as individuals. People in similar circumstances will make different choices.

For a long time, migration was considered a transitory phenomenon, between two “normal” situations of sedentary life. However, it is much more accurate to consider the human species as a migratory animal species. Mobility is the norm: our species was born in Africa probably 300,000 years ago and has conquered the planet, settling only in the last 10,000 years. Sedentariness is considered a mark of civilization, but we often do not recognize that sedentariness is generational and that grandchildren rarely live in the birthplace of their four grandparents.

The complexity of migration and the difficulty of understanding a transitory phenomenon mean that we have very little precise data on migrants, and particularly on international migrants. The sociology of migratory movements is still poorly studied, unlike the sociology of the integration of new citizens. National statistical systems record little information on people who are not theoretically part of the social group. Security intelligence systems, on the other hand, have, for the past 30 years or so, been recording and exchanging a lot of

very specific data on these foreigners, who are increasingly considered to be potentially dangerous.

Moreover, migration policies, unlike most public policies, are not designed to better serve the populations they primarily target. Indeed, they are generally made by non-migrants (politicians) and addressed to non-migrants (voters), without generally consulting migrants. All in all, they are made in the same way that men used to adopt policies on women, or heterosexuals adopted policies on gays and lesbians, or Caucasians adopted policies on Aboriginal people. All these policies were — and often still are — based on myths, stereotypes, fantasies and threats constructed by racist, sexist or homophobic exclusion speeches.

It was only when these “minorities,” using the strength of their citizenship and vote, decided to actively participate in public debates to contradict fears and stereotypes, to explain the complexity of their situation and the diversity they represent, and to infuse a dose of realism into the political discussion, that politicians began to listen, modify their language, avoid stereotypes, in short, to court their vote. A sexist or homophobic joke is now a dark spot on a politician's career path. This is not yet the case for stereotypical anti-immigration discourse.

Migrants — and especially migrants with precarious status, such as irregular migrants or temporary single-employer

migrant workers — generally do not participate in public debates, protest little, rarely contest in court, do not join unions. The constant fear of being sent back to their country of origin leads them to silence. Many have migrated to provide a future for their families: they have many people relying on them. Many have incurred debts to finance the migration journey: these must be repaid, sometimes over several years, before sending a penny to the family. Any action that could jeopardize the migration project is unthinkable: bending your back and making yourself invisible is a survival strategy.

It is therefore not surprising that data on their condition are so rare and inaccurate. In most countries, the number of irregular migrants is not known. This is a comfortable situation for the Minister of Immigration, who cannot be blamed for the increase or decrease in this number. Indeed, if we had an accurate count, we would know the names of the millions of employers who, in all the countries of the Global North, too often exploit them illegally: attacking these employers on a massive scale would seriously undermine the competitiveness of many non-relocatable economic sectors — such as agriculture, construction, mining, hotels and restaurants, fisheries and healthcare — which have often only survived for the last thirty years thanks to the comparative advantage of reducing labour costs offered by the exploitation of cheap labour.

We will at some point have to end up considering migrants as “citizens,” people who, whatever their status, live here, pay taxes, raise families, and are therefore part of society, even if they are not yet “citizens” with our nationality. Some cities have begun to do so, such as New York, which offers identity cards to “all New Yorkers.” It may also be necessary to consider giving them the right to vote after one year of effective residence. “No taxation without representation,” said the American revolutionaries. Migrants live here sustainably, pay taxes and contribute to society like all other citizens: they should have a say in the exercise of power and public finances.

This will require the development of migrant empowerment that allows them to speak out publicly without fear. Illegal labour markets will have to be significantly reduced by targeting exploitative employers — attacking migrants themselves drives them even deeper into hiding and increases their vulnerability to all criminal exploitation — and by instituting massive regularization programmes, so as to ensure that almost all foreigners have legal status with real legal guarantees.

Action will be needed to ensure that migrants participate in public debates without fear of losing their status. Their experience will have to infuse migration policies. These must be based on specific factual data and not on unfounded fears. Only then will we have the capacity to concurrently develop information systems on these migrants that can serve as a basis for public policy debates.

Apart from the right to vote, this is what the *Global Compact on Migration*, adopted in December 2018 in Marrakesh, invites us to do. “Facilitating mobility” over the coming decades is the central message of the Pact: through a collective effort of international cooperation, making mobility less complex, less costly, faster and less dangerous for the vast majority. Offer travel documents to all those who are looking for work and are willing to travel: offer them work permits if they find a job. Offer places for refugees. Treat them in almost every respect as citizens. Enable everyone to make real choices about their future, which is one of the essential components of dignity and implements the Kantian categorical imperative never to “treat others only as a means, but always also as an end.”