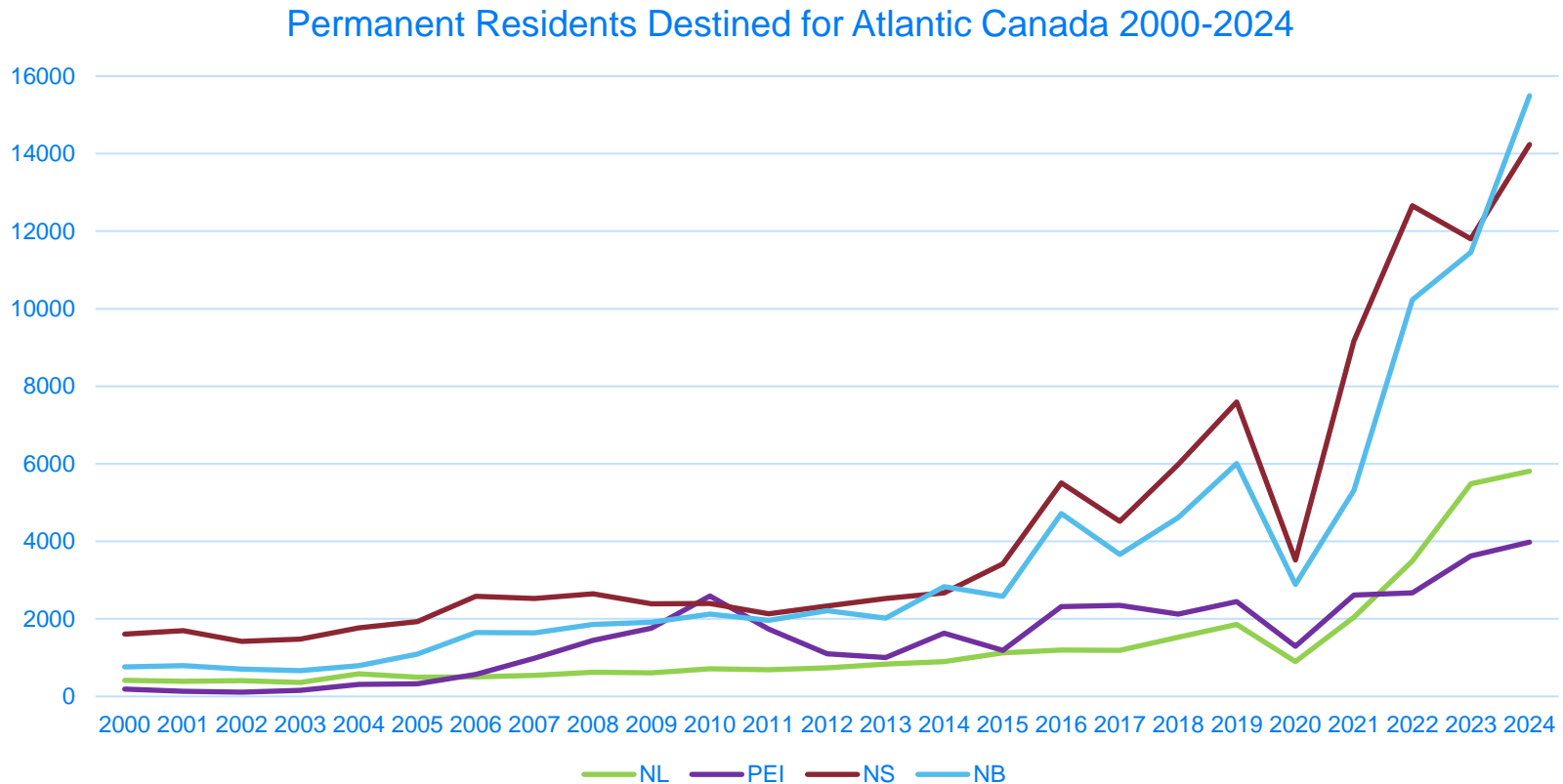


Immigration in Nova Scotia: Who comes, who stays, who leaves and why?

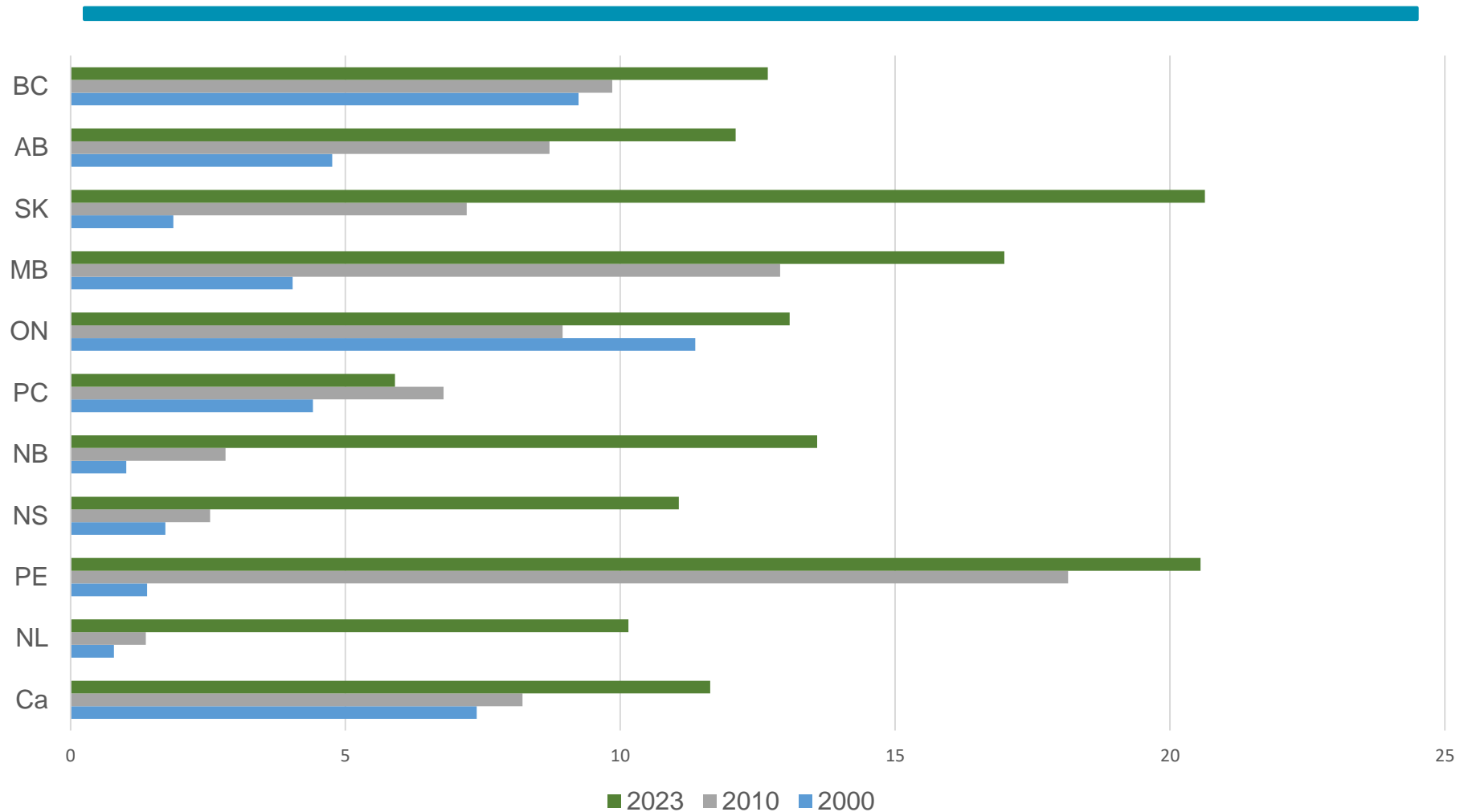
Ather H. Akbari

**(Presentation for 27th National Metropolis Conference, March 15, 2025,
Workshop G8)**

Permanent residents destined for Atlantic Canada 2000-2024



Permanent resident arrival rates, Canada and provinces



Top five source countries of immigrants

Countries	2000	Rank2000	2020	Rank2020	2024	Rank 2024
China, People's Republic of Total	220	1	945	2	1510	4
United States of America Total	210	2				
United Kingdom and Overseas Territories Total	140	3				
India Total	115	4	1555	1	11800	1
Iran Total	100	5				
Syria Total			440	4		
Philippines Total			845	3	5645	2
Morocco Total			305	5		
Nigeria Total					3035	3
Algeria					1070	5

Project methodology

Three stages:

1. Analyze data from Census 2016
2. Provide a literature review on mobility motivations
3. Conduct a survey of immigrants across Canada with Nova Scotia connection (focus of this presentation)

Survey methodology: Population covered

Target population:

Immigrants arriving in Canada who became permanent residents at age 18 years and over from 2011-2018 who are either living in Nova Scotia or have lived there and moved to live in other Canadian provinces.

Population size:

IRCC identified the target population of 28,760.

Population contacted:

27,126 had an email address on file.

4,000 were invalid or from immigrant consultants

Final count was 23,362 across Canada.

Survey methodology: Development of questionnaire

- Passed SMU's Ethics Review Board
- Survey company: Group ATN (Halifax)
- Inputs obtained from:
 - a diverse group of stakeholders including policy makers, academicians and new immigrants
 - Above also included workshop participants at Metropolis Conference, Calgary and focus group participants in Halifax and New Glasgow.
- Several test runs including one each at ISANS and YMCA.

Survey methodology: Administration of survey

- In both official languages.
- 21 sections, 79 questions. Most were multiple choice type but some were open ended which were coded.
- 5,129 responses, only 75 in French.
- Arbitrary filtered out those answering fewer than 5 percent questions.
- Ended up with 2,815 (9.8 percent of population).
- 2,110 were living in NS and 705 outside of NS.
- Five random prize draws of \$150 each.
- Focus groups held in Alberta and Ontario.

Overview of sample

About:

- 55% are men
- 80% are 44 or younger
- 66% had taken university education before arrival
- 91% have the ability to communicate in only one official language - English
- 45% came from India, China, Philippines, UK, and the US combined (top five sources)
- 30% lived elsewhere in Canada before coming to NS.

Information sources used to find out about Nova Scotia as an immigrant destination

Information source	%
Family or friend	71.4
Government Information (such as Canadian or Nova Scotia website or literature)	64.1
Government official (such as Canadian, Nova Scotian or foreign embassy)	19.3
Lawyer or consultant	12.7
Employer representative	12.1
Education representative	9.4
An event held in my home country (e.g., job fair)	6.2
Other (please specify)	23.0

Relative importance of factors in decision to move to Nova Scotia

Factor in decision	Average score
Safe community	4.3
Quality of life*	4.1
Employment opportunities for myself	4.1
Community without discrimination	4.0
Health care	3.9
Affordable cost of living	3.9
Access to good quality accommodation	3.8
To build a better life for my children	3.7
Employment opportunities for spouse	3.6
Education opportunities for my children	3.5
Recognition of my credentials	3.5
Education opportunities for myself or/ spouse	3.4
Organizations that help with access to services or the, government, etc.	3.2
Availability of culturally related experiences, products and services**	3.1
Family / friends close by	3.0
Local community settlement services	3.0
Access to language training	2.5

Immigrants' level of satisfaction with their decision to move to Nova Scotia

Feature	Average score
Safe community	4.4
Quality of life*	4.1
Building a better life for my children	4.0
Education opportunities for my children	3.9
Access to good quality accommodation	3.8
Community without discrimination	3.8
Access to language training	3.6
Education opportunities for myself / spouse	3.6
Organizations that help with access to services, government, etc.	3.6
Family / friends close by	3.6
Availability of culturally related experiences, products and services**	3.5
Local community settlement services	3.5
Affordable cost of living	3.4
Employment opportunities for spouse	3.4
Employment opportunities for myself	3.3
Recognition of my credentials	3.3
Health care	3.3

*Examples include: recreation, public transportation, natural beauty, uncrowded, wide-open spaces.

**Examples include: language, religion, food, clothing, entertainment.

Note: The option "Not applicable" is excluded in the above table for brevity.

Satisfaction with features of Nova Scotia chosen to move to the province

Feature	Satisfied population	
	Stayers (%)	Leavers (%)
Safe community	87.1	84.1
Quality of life*	76.1	72.0
Building a better life for my children*	73.3	57.7
Education opportunities for my children	69.8	60.4
Community without discrimination	68.7	67.2
Access to good quality accommodation	67.7	63.8
Access to language training	57.6	59.2
Organizations that help with access to services, government, etc.	57.5	56.1
Education opportunities for myself / spouse	57.0	59.3
Family / friends close by*	55.5	50.2
Availability of culturally related experiences, products and services	52.7	49.7
Recognition of my credentials	49.8	48.9
Local community settlement services	49.7	53.7
Employment opportunities for myself*	48.6	33.5
Employment opportunities for spouse*	48.5	29.1
Affordable cost of living*	47.5	58.6
Health care*	45.9	58.7

Access to settlement services offered in Nova Scotia

Service	Stayers (%)	Leavers (%)
Did not access settlement services*	42.1	54.7
Employment counselling*	32.6	26.7
Language training*	23.7	16.9
Pre-arrival settlement services*	22.2	17.0
Work experience program / Bridge to work	13.3	12.1
Credential recognition	9.6	7.4
Entrepreneurship support*	6.2	3.4
Other (please specify)	5.1	5.3

Satisfaction with settlement services

Service	Satisfied population	
	Stayers (%)	Leavers (%)
Language training	66.0	66.9
Pre-arrival settlement services	58.0	64.2
Employment counselling	46.5	44.5
Work experience program / Bridge to work	43.5	42.5
Credential recognition	40.2	49.1
Entrepreneurship support	38.3	33.9
Other	46.4	55.5

Social connectedness

Participation in religious, social and cultural activities

Activity	Stayers (%)	Leavers (%)
Volunteering*	33.7	29.4
Sports & recreation	29.0	30.9
A religious organization*	28.0	22.7
Social organization	25.4	25.8
None of the above*	31.5	40.0
Other (please specify)	4.0	2.5

Comparing Nova Scotia to other provinces

Feature	Better in Nova Scotia	
	Stayers (%)	Leavers (%)
Safe community	72.0	61.4
Cost of accommodation	62.0	63.6
Communities without discrimination*	52.0	46.0
Quality of accommodation	44.9	45.8
Local community settlement services	44.9	41.7
Access to quality education for my children	41.1	32.5
Access to quality education for myself	35.4	32.4
Cost of living (besides housing)*	35.3	44.0
Access to quality education for my spouse	32.9	30.8
Access to quality health care*	23.1	32.9
Job opportunities*	21.8	15.5
Wage rates*	9.5	12.3
Tax rates*	7.0	14.0

Labour market status

Status	Stayers (%)	Leavers (%)
Currently employed		
Yes*	77.0	83.7
No*	23.0	16.3
Holding multiple jobs		
Yes	15.4	12.8
No	84.6	87.2
Working in a preferred occupation		
Yes*	70.2	85.3
No*	29.8	14.7

Some major takeaways

- Economic reason is the major reason for outmigration
 - More information should be made available for potential immigrants about job availability and business prospects
- For potential immigrants family/friends government web sites are the main information sources about living in the province
 - One would expect greater immigrant population to result in attracting more immigrants
 - Immigrant residents can volunteer to connect to new comers before arrival

Major takeaways (contd.)

- The top six features of Nova Scotia that immigrants value the most are:
 - Safe community
 - Quality of life
 - Building a better life for my children
 - Education opportunities for children
 - Community without discrimination
 - Access to good quality education

(Useful information for immigrants making destination choice)

Major takeaways (contd.)

- A large percentage of immigrants do not access settlement services
 - Investigate:
 - if this is due to lack of access or lack of information
 - who uses these services?
- Most recipients are either neutral or just about satisfied with the settlement services they receive in Nova Scotia
 - Review service delivery

Major takeaways (contd.)

- Low social connectedness:
 - Encourage:
 - Volunteer participation
 - Sports and recreation activities
- Stayers and leavers rank Nova Scotia better than other provinces for different economic and noneconomic factors. Also the same percentages of them hold multiple jobs.
 - Highlight these factors in promotional material