The impact of COVID-19 on migration globally and in Canada

Dan Hiebert

OCASI
November 20, 2020
Agenda

• Covid as a triple-crisis
• Canada’s / IRCC’s response to Covid
• Data update ... what’s happening?
• And...what next? ... the 2021-23 levels plan
• Consequences?

• Note that nearly everything today will be about Canada but I’m happy to deal with global issues in the discussion
The Covid triple crisis

• Health
• Economic
• Equity / Humanitarian
  • Groups already suffering marginalization, suffer more during a pandemic, while groups already privileged, suffer less
Covid as a health crisis

Canada

Total cases: 310K (+4,276)
Recovered: 247K (+59)
Deaths: 11,165

Worldwide

Total cases: 55.6M
Recovered: 35.8M
Deaths: 1.34M
COVID as an economic crisis

• Previous recessions (1980s, 1990s, 2000s)
  • Peaks of monthly unemployment rate:
    1983 (13.1%); 1994 (12.1%); 2010 (8.7%)
  • Time to recover to pre-recession unemployment rate: 6, 6 and 8 years
  • Of all ‘temporary’ lay-offs, 45% were permanent job losses

• 2020 COVID situation
  • Peak unemployment rate:
    13.7% in May
    (Oct: 8.9%)
Note

• Canada has provided more economic stimulus than most other countries
• Therefore, the Canadian economy will be more exposed to shocks when fiscal stimulus ends
COVID as an economic crisis

Chart 4
Employment in accommodation and food services, retail trade and construction furthest from pre-shutdown levels
Unemployment rate by immigration status, Canada, monthly, 2020

- Total population
- Landed immigrants
- Born in Canada
Unemployment rate by immigration status, Canada, monthly, 2020

- Total population
- Immigrants, landed 5 or less years earlier
- Immigrants, landed more than 5 to 10 years earlier
- Immigrants, landed more than 10 years earlier
- Born in Canada
Unemployment among landed immigrants, 25-54 years old, by sex, Canada, monthly, 2020

- Both sexes 25 to 54 years
- Males 25 to 54 years
- Females 25 to 54 years
Unemployment among landed immigrants by region of origin, Canada, monthly, 2020

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, October, 2020: “...visible minorities continued to have a higher unemployment rate in October (11.7% combined) than Canadians who were not Indigenous and not visible minority (6.7%).”

…That is 75% higher!
Chart 2
Age-standardized COVID-19 mortality rates, by proportion of the neighbourhood population belonging to population groups designated as visible minorities, selected provinces

Sources: Data derived from provisional Canadian Vital Mortality – Death Database (2020) and the Census of Population 2016.

COVID-19 mortality rates in Canada’s ethno-cultural neighbourhoods
by Rajendra Subedi, Lawson Greenberg and Martin Turcotte
Release date: October 28, 2020
Covid as an equity and humanitarian crisis

- **Humanitarian side**
  - Vast numbers of stranded labour migrants
  - Food security issues among refugees
    - Forcing returns in some cases (e.g., Venezuela)
- **Global asylum system**
  - Crisis of *immobility*
  - 168 countries have closed borders
  - 70 countries have suspended asylum determination systems
  - Many examples of refoulement
The Covid triple crisis

• Things to worry about...
  • The disease itself, plus medical complications (e.g., mental health)
  • The economic ‘hangover’ of unemployment and colossal debt
  • Increased inequality and lingering humanitarian issues
What happens to Canadian migration and immigration during a crisis?

• Recent history

• What we know so far about the Covid era
Canadian responses to crisis

• Permanent immigration
  • 1980s recession
    • Significant drop in immigration targets (< 100,000 / year)
  • 1990s recession
    • Smaller drop in immigration targets (~ 200,000 / year)
  • 2000s recession
    • No drop in targets

• Temporary migration
  • Largely unaffected by these recessions
Consequences for immigrants arriving in previous recessions

• Immigrants and members of racialized groups face the most severe challenges in the labour market
  • Sectors with high immigrant participation tend to be the hardest hit
• Arriving newcomers face a double challenge (newcomer, racialized)
  • Triple challenge for women
• These disadvantages produced ‘scarring effects’ that endured for years
• The larger the incoming cohort, the larger these impacts
  • Why? Because immigrants mainly compete against other immigrants for jobs
• HOWEVER ... the demographic situation has changed and these impacts might not be as bad in the 2020s...
  • And the recovery could be quicker
IRCC and levels during Covid

• Context: unique situation
  • Recession plus severe limits to processing, plus border closure
  • ‘Covid productivity tax’ … majority of staff still working from home
  • Problems with in-person and paper elements of applications (e.g., medical tests)
  • Partial fixes through mass-digitization of records and digital meetings
    • New practice: ‘virtual landings’

• Planned level of immigration for 2020: 341,000
  • Given shortfalls since March, the latest expectation is approx. 180,000
    • I.e., close to half, with ~ 150,000 missing
    • Given the state of the labour market, this might be a good thing
  • This is not due to a conscious choice, but to circumstances IRCC could not control
    (i.e., not like the 1980s)
IRCC and levels during Covid

• Who is being admitted?
  • People already in Canada (‘inland immigration’)
    • TR->PR transitions are relatively straightforward as they don’t involve a border crossing
      • PNP, CEC, and some through family reunification and other categories
      • IRB has resumed in-person hearings
  • People who received a Letter of Invitation prior to March 18
    • They have been granted the right to land
    • Many face deadlines and lapsed permission
  • Temporary residents
    • Priority is on individuals deemed essential

• Few landings outside these categories
  • But the admission process is up and running again
    • Delays between admission and landing
Summary of admissions and administrative data

• Temporary residents
• Permanent residents
• TR-PR transitions
• Provincial scale
Temporary resident admissions

• Study
• Work
• Asylum

• Also note website data
## Study visa admissions, April – September, 2019 vs 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>272,130</td>
<td></td>
<td>172,100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>85,940</td>
<td></td>
<td>52,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR China</td>
<td>63,865</td>
<td></td>
<td>47,405</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>11,570</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Korea</td>
<td>10,970</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>8,120</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,590</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>6,345</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,460</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>5,445</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>5,120</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4,615</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>4,465</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,165</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>3,710</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>3,235</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2,560</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,455</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Canada, Temporary Labour Migrants, Monthly Admissions, 2018-2020

TFW, Caregivers
TFW, Agricultural
TFW, Other
IMP, Agreements
IMP, Canadian Interests
IMP, Not stated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2019 Apr-Aug</th>
<th>2020 Apr-Aug</th>
<th>Index 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TFW, Caregivers</td>
<td>3,218</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFW, Agricultural</td>
<td>36,989</td>
<td>36,405</td>
<td>98.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFW, Other</td>
<td>16,443</td>
<td>9,573</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP, Agreements</td>
<td>11,845</td>
<td>5,635</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP, Canadian Interests</td>
<td>100,855</td>
<td>61,035</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP, Not stated</td>
<td>23,070</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study permits</td>
<td>228,430</td>
<td>118,240</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Canada asylum claims, total, and, for the 25 top source countries, by claim type, monthly, 2019-20
Permanent residents

• Admissions by category
• Source countries
• TR->PR transitions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Index values (to Average before Covid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan 18 - Feb 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC/FSW/FST</td>
<td>8,746</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>5,420</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other econ</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>7,293</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>3,859</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,057</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Canada, Permanent Resident Admissions, by Origin (%), Monthly, 2018-2020

Africa
Americas
W Asia
C Asia
S Asia
E Asia
SE Asia
W Europe
N Europe
E Europe
S Europe
Oceania
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Country</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>50,855</td>
<td>18,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR China</td>
<td>17,185</td>
<td>6,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>16,030</td>
<td>3,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>7,670</td>
<td>2,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>6,265</td>
<td>2,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>6,225</td>
<td>2,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>6,130</td>
<td>1,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>1,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>3,630</td>
<td>1,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea, Republic of</td>
<td>3,540</td>
<td>1,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>3,235</td>
<td>1,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>3,210</td>
<td>1,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2,645</td>
<td>1,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2,560</td>
<td>1,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>2,385</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1,990</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1,945</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>145,595</strong></td>
<td><strong>54,220</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>197,408</strong></td>
<td><strong>74,107</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refugee Admissions, by Major Type, Canada, 2018-2020

- Resettled refugees
- Protected persons in Canada
TR to PR transitions

• Immigration based on previous TR visa decisions
• ...i.e., ‘inland immigration’
Temporary Resident -> Permanent Resident Transitions, Monthly, 2018-2020

- International Mobility Program
- Temporary Foreign Worker Permit
- Study Permit
- Post-Graduate Work Permit
- Percent with Permits*

* Includes multiple counting
The provincial scale

- Ontario in context
- Permanent residents admitted to Ontario
- Refugees admitted to Ontario
PR admissions by major category, Ontario, monthly, 2018-2020
New levels plan

• Background realities
  • Humanitarian needs for global migration are higher than ever
    • Global ‘immobility crisis’
  • Canada’s demographic situation is not changing (low fertility)
  • Therefore, Canada will return to high immigration of both economic and humanitarian types ... not ‘if’ but ‘when’...

• New levels plan
  • This will happen immediately (401,000 in 2021 and then more)
  • How can this be achieved?
  • Consequences?
Canadian permanent immigration, 2015-2023
2015-20: actual (2020: January-August only)
2021-23: projected
Achieving Canada’s targets

• Positive factors
  • IRCC is efficient and normally meets targets
  • Global interest in Canada is very high
  • General public views and employers are favourable (though mixed)
  • Already, many approval letters dispatched

• But ... in the short term ...
  • Many borders will still be closed for much (most?) of 2021
  • Fragility of global transportation system (many airlines will fail)
  • Potential feedback if newcomers fail to find work
Achieving Canada’s targets

• Potential tools
  • Reach out to potential ‘inland immigrants’ (especially in 2021)
    • Students, TFW/IMPs, asylum seekers, amnesty for irregular migrants?
  • Ease border restrictions
    • Huge efforts under way, globally, in ‘health proofing’ borders
      • New term...‘hygiene theatre’
  • After borders reopen
    • May need to lower CRS score for the Express Entry system, temporarily
    • In the long run, numbers will rise as the economy rebounds
Consequences

• Sometime in 2021, fiscal stimulus is likely to end and we will see the real rate of unemployment (estimate... 1.5 million)
• 2021 plan would add >250,000 working-age adults to the labour force
  • But some would already be in Canada and have a job
• Integration issues will become critical
  • Labour market access
  • Credentialization
  • Entrepreneurship
• Major challenge for the support sector
  • Important question about the possibility of fiscal restraint
Possible agenda for positive change

• Expand eligibility for settlement services in light of increased TR->PR transitions

• Expand ‘guardian angels’ program to include more types of asylum seekers
  • E.g., anyone who has work

• Regularization of undocumented residents