

Comparing Socioeconomic Systems in Australia, New Zealand and Canada

Supervisor: Mattea Saayman

Email: mattea.saayman@cic.gc.ca

Organization: Strategic and Horizontal Policy Branch, Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

December 16th , 2024

Description of the Project:

A Whole-of-Society Approach to Immigration Levels

Australia, Canada and New Zealand are advanced economies and liberal democracies with several key similarities, including shared culture and language through a connection to the Commonwealth, security interests in the form of membership to the “Five Eyes”, and each historically having immigration as a key pillar to their society. As of 2023, 30% of Australians were born outside Australia,ⁱ compared to 29% for New Zealandⁱⁱ and 23% for Canada in 2021.ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, these countries have human-capital models of selection for high-skilled immigrants as opposed to the American model which emphasizes the importance of a job offer.^{iv} Finally, both Australia and Canada saw a surge in immigration levels in recent years^v while at the same time dealing with a growing housing crisis and have in turn reduced immigration levels.

In light of the surge in population growth from immigration, the 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan references the need for a “whole-of-society” approach to managing immigration.^{vi} This means considering how immigration affects, and is affected by, different socioeconomic systems such as the housing market, healthcare, and the labour market.

To support this work, this Directed Research Project will focus on comparing the socioeconomic systems of Australia, Canada and New Zealand and their connection to immigration.

Socioeconomic Systems Warrant Deeper Investigation

Data on population growth, as well as on housing and macroeconomic indicators, illustrate similarities between these countries and hence the need for further investigation. All three countries have had high population growth compared to other developed countries, driven by immigration levels. “Net overseas migration” accounted for 84% of population growth for Australia in 2023^{vii}; in Canada, net temporary and permanent migration accounted for 95% of population growth.^{viii}

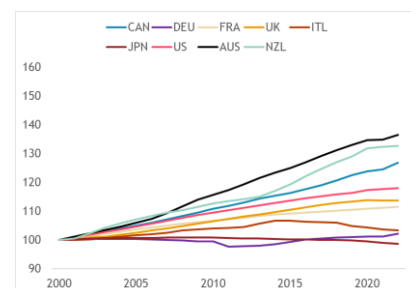


Chart 1 – Population Growth, Index of Change
Source: World Bank, [Statistics Canada 17-10-0009-01](#), IRCC

Similarly, both New Zealand and Canada have seen a sharp rise in the price-to-income ratio, a measure of housing affordability (Chart 2), especially compared to the OECD average and the United States. The household debt to disposable income has grown significantly for Australia and Canada (Chart 3). (Note, OECD average not available; US included for comparison).

By examining key housing and macroeconomic indicators such as these, the student will develop their understanding of socioeconomic systems – in this example, the housing market. From there, the student will be able to examine in what ways immigration interacts with the socioeconomic system. The same thinking can be applied to other socioeconomic systems, such as the labour market or healthcare.

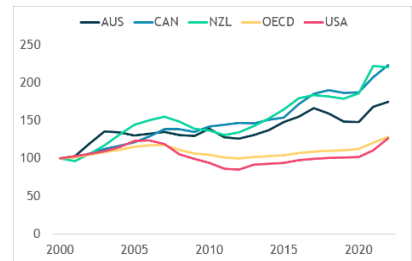


Chart 2– Price to Income Ratio
Source: [OECD](#), IRCC

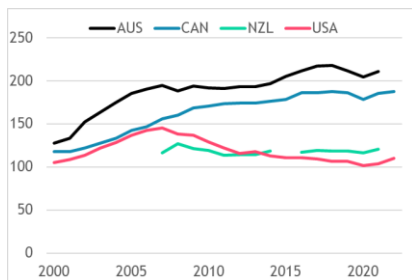


Chart 3: Household Debt to Disposable Income
Source: [OECD](#), IRCC

Benefits to the Participant and Requirements of the Project

An effective project can only be accomplished with an understanding of the complexity of the subject matter at the outset, as well as the policy relevance of research in this area. The supervisor will therefore spend time with the student reviewing the proposed project in greater detail.

This project will equip the student with a thorough understanding of Canada’s economic immigration programs, as well as its socioeconomic systems such as housing and healthcare, among others. Furthermore, it will enhance essential research, analytical, and writing skills. The student will be expected to have a working-level knowledge of Microsoft Excel and to be open to working with both qualitative and quantitative forms of information.

The student will be required to investigate and examine the existing literature, and must also be prepared to discuss key findings or ask the supervisor questions about the material in scheduled meetings – an open discussion will help the student develop their ideas and outline for their paper.

Examining the immigration and socioeconomic systems of Australia, Canada and New Zealand may appear grand in scope, but the supervisor will help guide the student in their research to ensure the work is focused while still able to provide key insights on the key socioeconomic systems outlined above.

Project Deliverables and Timelines

February 10th

Annotated bibliography of relevant research (properly sourced)

- A minimum of 15 sources is required (1-2 paragraphs summarizing key findings, strengths, and limitations of research piece).

February 17th

Key data sources compiled for production of data visualizations and working excel file developed to conduct analysis

- A minimum 10 separate data tables (should be from multiple sources, but some may be from the same source) for analysis + development of visualizations to support research project

March 31st:

Draft report of major findings for each suggested section identified below:

A. High-level overview of the immigration systems of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand

This section will examine:

- *An overview of the different immigration systems, noting key differences and similarities*

B. Analysis of housing market of Australia, Canada and New Zealand

This section will compare the housing markets of Australia, Canada and New Zealand according to metrics such as, but not limited to:

- *Household debt as a percentage of GDP*
- *Inflationary trends (shelter inflation and overall inflation)*
- *Housing prices over time*
- *Home ownership rate, by age group*

C. Analysis of the Labour Market in Australia, Canada and New Zealand

This section will focus on comparing the labour markets of Australia, Canada and New Zealand according to metrics such as, but not limited to:

- *Labour market participation overall, by immigrant status, age, and other demographic indicators*
- *Labour market participation in different sectors*

D. Whole-of-Society Approach to Managing Immigration Levels

- Have these three countries introduced policies around the above socioeconomic system to take into account immigration and if so how might that change in future?

April 22nd:

Submit final report to supervisor including:

- Major findings
- Bibliography
- Annotated bibliography
- Excel File (Separate document)

April 24th:

After making any final suggested changes by the supervisor, submit final report to director, which will include:

- Final report
- Bibliography
- Annotated bibliography
- 1-2 page write-up of experience in the Directed Research Program (assigned by the Director at the beginning of the semester)

Meeting Schedule and Course Milestones

- Teleconference or in-person meeting once a week (or more frequently, if required) for approximately 1 hour to discuss project and to identify any issues or concerns.

Milestone	Winter 2025
Final list of projects posted on website	January 8
Sponsors and students informed about outcome of matching	January 9
Student interviews with sponsors	January 10-16
University of Ottawa Reading Week	February 16-22
First draft submitted to supervisor	March 31st
University of Ottawa Exam Period	April 8-25
University of Ottawa Easter Break	April 18-21
Final Draft Submitted	April 24th

ⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Australia's Population by Country of Birth." June 2023. [Australia's Population by Country of Birth, Jun 2023 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

ⁱⁱ Collins, Francis. "New Zealand: From Settler Colony to Country Reliant on Temporary Immigration." Migration Policy Institute. October 16th, 2024. [Article: New Zealand: From Settler Colony to Count... | migrationpolicy.org](https://migrationpolicy.org)

ⁱⁱⁱ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "An Immigration System for Canada's Future: Strengthening our communities." December 10th, 2023. [An Immigration System for Canada's Future.](https://www.ircc.gc.ca)

^{iv} Zhang, Tingting, Rupa Banerjee, and Aliya Amarshi. "Does Canada's Express Entry System meet the challenges of the labor market?." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 21.1 (2023): 104-118.

^v Remeikis, Amy. "Dutton's plan to cut immigration would cost Australia's economy 'billions', treasurer says." The Guardian. May 19th, 2024. [Dutton's plan to cut immigration would cost Australia's economy 'billions', treasurer says | Peter Dutton | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com)

^{vi} Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "Canada's Immigration Levels." November 4th, 2024. [Canada's immigration levels - Canada.ca](https://www.ircc.gc.ca)

^{vii} Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Overseas migration drives Australia's population growth." September 14th, 2023. [Overseas migration drives Australia's population growth | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

^{viii} Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. "Question Period Note - Immigration Levels Plan For 2023-2025." September 22nd, 2023. [Question Period Note - Immigration Levels Plan For 2023-2025 - Canada.ca](https://www.ircc.gc.ca)