

**Title:** Between Here and There: Pre- and Post-migration Experiences and Generalized Trust among Recent Immigrants in Canada

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**Research Question:**

This study examines levels and origins of trust among recent immigrants in Canada. Three questions are asked: 1) How much trust do recent immigrants exhibit in comparison to other Canadians? 2) To what extent are immigrants' levels of trust structured by pre-migration experiences? 3) To what extent are immigrants' levels of trust structured by their post-migration experiences in Canada? The study investigates both the standard measure of generalized trust and trust in Canadians.

**Importance:**

Generalized trust can be thought of as a smoothing mechanism to social interactions between members of a given society. It allows people to engage with other people with the belief that they will be treated with respect and with honesty (Putnam, 1993). Greater trust is also associated with a greater satisfaction with democracy, with a greater compliance in paying due taxes (Scholz and Lubell, 1998; Zmerli and Newton, 2008), and with greater economic growth (Knack and Keefer, 1997).

**Research Findings:**

The study shows that there is no deficit of trust among recent immigrants in Canada. Quite the contrary, recent immigrants' higher level of education actually appears to provide them with a larger stock of generalized trust than the rest of the population. Moreover, the study indicates that the correlates of generalized trust and trust in Canadians are quite distinct. While the former appears significantly grounded in pre-migration experiences, the latter appears to correlate with post-migration experiences (mistreatments, citizenship acquisition, and length of residence).

**Implications:**

In terms of generalized trust, the study suggests that immigrants who arrive with a rich stock of generalized trust are to some extent inoculated against potentially negative experiences in the host society. These immigrants may well show greater resilience in the face of a more difficult integration experience. In terms of trust in Canadians, the study suggests that the Canadian government has a role to play. Fighting discrimination appears to be a profitable strategy from this perspective. Moreover, encouraging naturalization and supporting immigrants in the naturalization process (Bloemraad, 2006), is also a central element in ensuring a healthy trust relation among all Canadians, old and new.