

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS LIVING IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

POLICY PREVIEW

By Valerie Preston and Marshia Akbar

April 2020



*Valerie Preston is a professor in the department of Geography at York University and principal investigator for the BMRC-IMRU Partnership

**Marshia Akbar is a post-doctoral research fellow in the Department of Geography at York University



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

A temporary foreign worker is “a foreign national engaged in work activity who is authorized, with the appropriate documentation, to enter and to remain in Canada for a limited period of time” (Elgersma 2014: 1). Since the mid-2000s the number of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) present in Canada has increased dramatically. The TFW programme was introduced in Canada to fill local labour market shortages on a temporary basis. It has transformed into a permanent and large-scale stream of temporary workers holding several different types of work permits. In 2014, TFW was organized into two distinct programmes: the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and the International Mobility Program (IMP) (Ci, Hou and Morissette 2018). All work permits under the TFWP require a labour market impact assessment (LMIA)¹ and apply only to one specific job, employer and location, which can limit their employment rights and protections. The TFWP has four streams: higher-skilled occupations, lower-skilled occupations, the seasonal agricultural workers and the Live-In-Caregiver Program (Elgersma 2014: 4). In contrast, the IMP applications are not subject to an LMIA and most workers hold an open work permit that is not tied to a specific employer. IMP holders tend to be more highly skilled and better paid than TFWP permit holders (Elgersma 2014: 7).

The precarious legal status and limited rights to social services of many temporary foreign workers affect their transitions to permanent status. Access to permanent residency differs based on skill level and type of work permit. Holders of open work-permits and live-in caregivers are more likely to gain permanent residency than other groups of temporary workers (Ci, Hou and Morissette 2018). In addition, highly skilled workers may apply for permanent residence from within Canada. In contrast, lower-skilled workers, with few exceptions, have very limited opportunities to migrate permanently (Nakache and Kinoshita 2010). Although variations in access to permanent residency have been discussed at length, little information is available regarding the social characteristics of foreign workers who transition from temporary to permanent status in different provinces. The distribution of foreign workers is uneven across Canadian provinces. In addition, different rules and regulations are often applied at the provincial level to hire temporary foreign workers². Provincial analysis is, thus, important to understand the social characteristics of foreign workers in relation to specific social and policy contexts.

Using the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB),³ this brief report compares the distributions

¹ LIMA refers to an assessment of the need for a foreign worker to fill a position due to the lack of suitable workers in the domestic workforce. Before hiring a foreign worker under the TFWP stream, employers are required to obtain it from the federal government (Elgersma 2014: 2).

² The procedures for hiring temporary foreign skilled workers in Quebec differ than those in the rest of Canada. The government of Quebec has implemented some provisions to obtain exemptions from the requirement of a LMIA for a foreign worker who possesses a valid work permit; holds a skilled worker Certificate of Selection in Quebec (CSQ); currently resides in Quebec; and has applied for permanent residency under the Quebec Skilled Worker Program. In addition, Quebec has developed a list of target skilled occupations for which applying for a LIMA is not required since there is a labour market need for these occupations in the province. Due to these

provisions, the hiring process of foreign workers in certain skilled occupations is much easier and less time consuming in Quebec than in other provinces (<https://www.canadavisa.com/temporary-work-permits-in-quebec.html#gs.uu7xq0>).

³ The IMDB integrates administrative immigration data since 1980 with tax data since 1982. It provides detailed and reliable information on socioeconomic outcomes of immigrants after their admission. Along with connecting short-term and long-term outcomes with characteristics at admission, such as immigrant admission category, source country and knowledge of official language, the data base also provides pre-admission experience in Canada, such as work, or study permits. Several files are required in order to produce the IMDB. The Immigrant Landing File is a

of temporary foreign workers in Ontario and Quebec, their social characteristics and their transitions from temporary to permanent status.

Two IMDB data files are used in this analysis: Non-permanent Resident File (NRF) and Integrated Permanent and Non-permanent Resident File (PNRF). The NRF contains information about people who entered Canada as non-permanent residents between 1980 and 2015. It allows us to examine trends in destination province. The PNRF contains detailed data about the social and demographic characteristics of immigrants who landed in Canada between 1980 and 2015 including those who were non-permanent residents prior to landing. The data provide a snapshot of temporary foreign workers in Ontario and Quebec who transitioned to permanent residence.

KEY FINDINGS

- Ontario was the destination for almost half of temporary foreign workers arriving in Canada between 1980 and 2015.
- Most temporary foreign workers did not become permanent residents. Between 1980

and 2015, only a minority, 36%, obtained permanent residence in Canada.

PLACE MATTERS

- Unlike in Ontario, men comprise the majority (57%) of foreign workers who became permanent residents in Quebec.
- About one third of foreign workers that become permanent residents are university educated in both provinces.
- Men are more likely to gain permanent resident status as principal applicants, but the gender gap is larger in Quebec than in Ontario.
- Almost one third foreign workers are bilingual in Quebec compared to only 3.3% in Ontario.

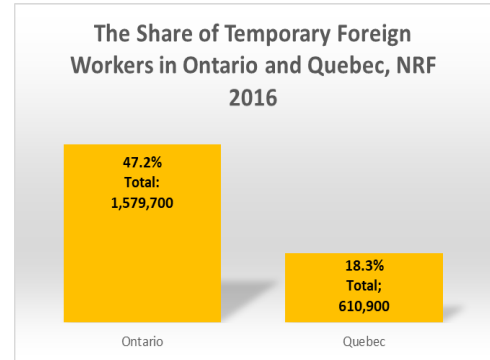
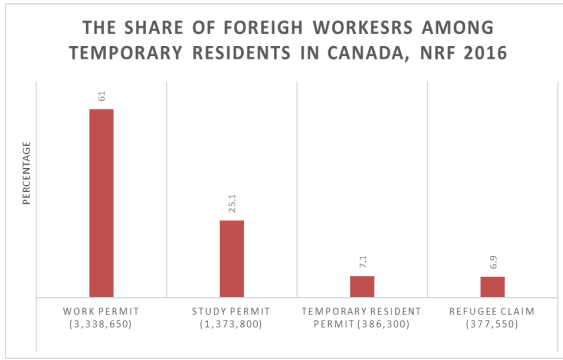
Currently, temporary foreign workers are not eligible for many settlement services before they become permanent residents, although they can now enroll in free French-language courses in Quebec. Immigrant-serving agencies and other non-governmental and public organizations may need to adapt programs and services due to provincial differences in the total numbers, gender and language fluency of foreign workers

SHARE OF TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

Between 1980 and 2015, 3,338,650 temporary foreign workers entered Canada. During this period, temporary foreign workers comprised the majority (61%) of all temporary residents (5,476,300) entering Canada. Ontario was the destination for nearly half of foreign workers entering Canada, while only 18.3% planned to work in Quebec.

census of the people who have immigrated to Canada as permanent residents since 1980; it holds information on their characteristics at landing. Data on immigrants with pre-landing experience who landed in 1980 and thereafter and who hold non-permanent resident status have been used to create the Non-permanent Resident File (NRF). The file includes the number of permits, the type of permit (work or study, for example), and the first year of temporary residence. Finally, the Integrated Permanent and Non-permanent Resident File (PNRF), which combines information from the ILF and the NRF at the person

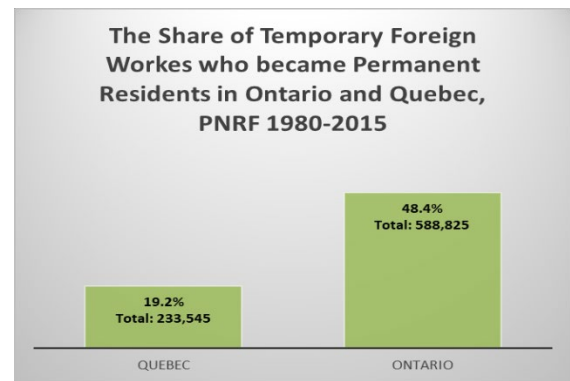
level. The PNRF provides users with the ability to follow the migration history of immigrants, including their pre-landing experience in Canada, and determine whether a person was a non-permanent resident prior to landing. It is to be noted that records of non-permanent residents who have not become permanent residents are not included in this file (Evra and Prokopenko 2018, pp. 10-11, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11-633-x/11-633-x2018011-eng.pdf?st=A-SiHrxb>).



Transition to Permanent Status

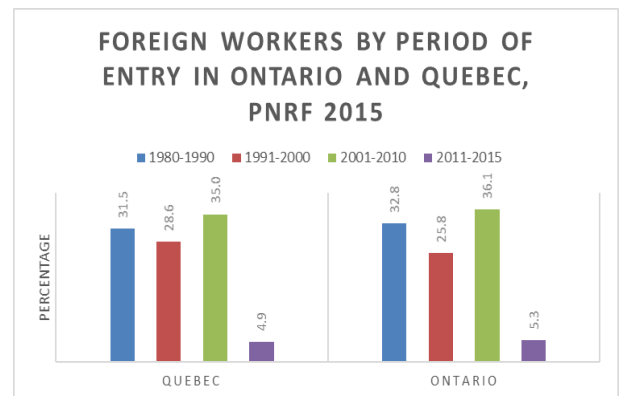
Of 3,338,650 temporary foreign workers who entered Canada between 1980 and 2015, 1,217,055 (36%) became permanent residents.

- About half (48.4%) of the foreign workers who became permanent residents lived in Ontario.
- About one fifth (19.2%) of them lived in Quebec.



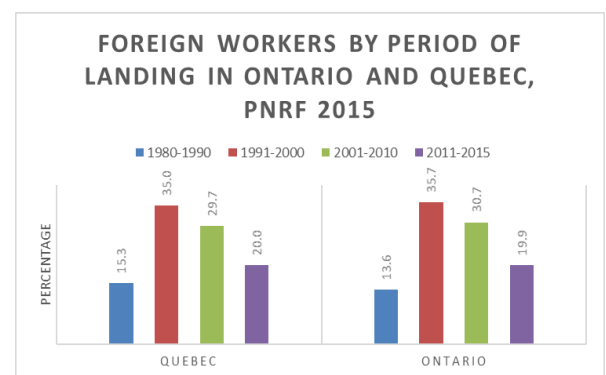
Period of Entry

About one third of foreign workers (35%) who became permanent residents in each province entered Canada between 2001 and 2010.



Period of Landing

In both provinces, more than one third of the foreign workers who became permanent residents, (35%) landed between 1991 and 2000.

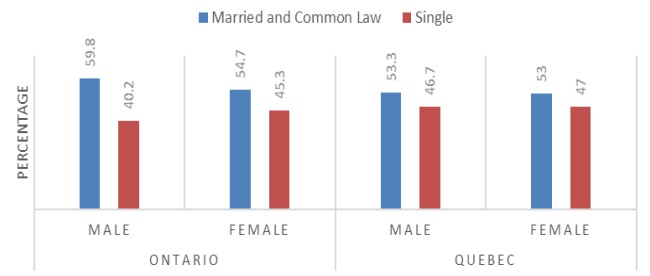


Gender and Marital Status

In Ontario, almost equal numbers of male and female foreign workers became permanent residents. In Quebec, men account for a larger percentage of the foreign workers that obtained permanent residence, 57%.

Unlike international students, in both provinces, more than half of male and female foreign workers who became permanent residents are married.

MARITAL STATUS OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC, PNRF 2015

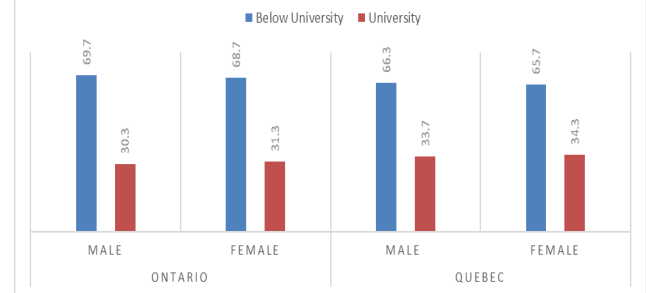


Educational Qualifications at Landing

When they became permanent residents, i.e., when they landed, about two-thirds in each province did not have a university degree.

Equal percentages of male and female foreign workers in each province were university-educated at the time of landing.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF FOREIGN WORKERS BY SEX IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC, PNRF 2015

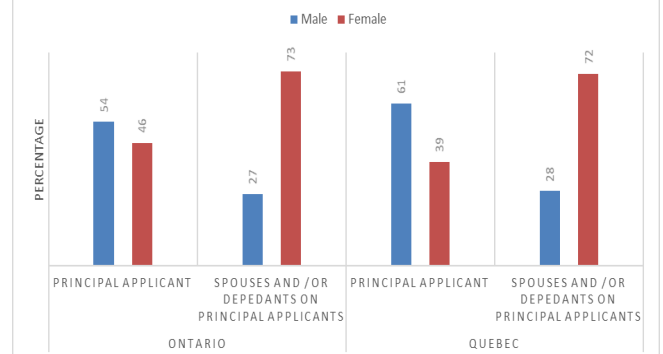


Share of Principal Applicants

The majority of foreign workers in Ontario and Quebec landed as principal applicants. Principal applicants are subject to the point system under which they are screened on the basis of factors such as education, specific job skills, job experience, occupation, arranged employment, age and ability to communicate in English or French, among other factors.

- In total, 505,710 foreign workers (85.9%) landed as principal applicants in Ontario. In Quebec, 202,965 foreign workers (86.9%) were principal applicants.
- Male foreign workers comprised a larger share of principal applicants than women in both provinces
- The gender gap is larger in Quebec than in Ontario where 54% of foreign workers who were principal applicants are men. Men

PRINCIPAL APPLICANTS AMONG FOREIGN WORKERS BY SEX IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC, PNRF 2015



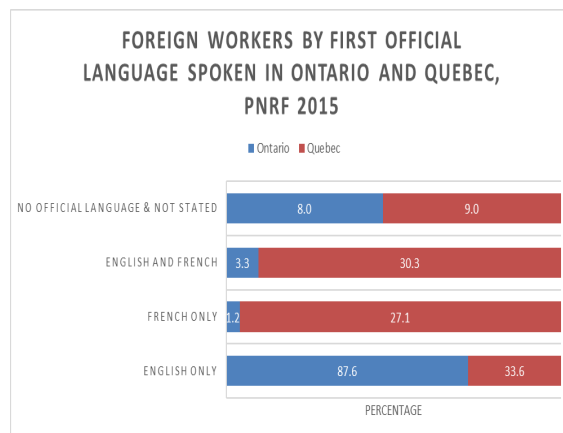
comprised 61% of principal applicants in Quebec

First Official Language Spoken

As expected, English is the first official language spoken by most foreign workers, 87.6%, in Ontario.

In Quebec, less than one third of foreign workers, 33.6%, identified English as their first official language.

- Bilingual foreign workers are almost one-third of foreign workers in Quebec, 30.3%.
- The comparable percentage in Ontario is 3.3%.



References

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