

Methodological challenges for researchers interested in precariousness, poverty, and immigration.

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Prepared for the Ontario MCI

Fall, 2007



Presentation Outline

- **Part 1:** A note about Methodology
- **Part 2:** Introduction to our INE Project
- **Part 3:** Reviewing Available Research
 - Social Policy, Advocacy
- **Part 4:** Data Discussion
- **Part 5:** Concluding remarks

Part 1

A Note about Methodology

Methodology

- Spans theoretical framework, research questions, data collection strategies and techniques for analysis
- Delineates what questions are considered legitimate & interesting, what is in the “frame” and what is not, definition of “population”
- Temporal dimension, model of social interaction & causality, units & levels of analysis
 - Transnational optic: geographic dispersion, x-border flows, belonging in more than one nation
 - Feminist methodology: Gender, positionality of researcher
- Data do not define methodology: design, collection and use do.

Part 2

Introduction to the Project

Immigrant Workers in the New Economy

- Older cohorts of immigrants, some economic mobility expected over time (education, language as determinants)
- Regardless of education and language, new immigrants, particularly non-white immigrants, are more likely to encounter labour market difficulties in Canada's new economy
- Our research: How are newcomers faring in the new economy; an employment survey of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in the GTA (N 300)

Research Project Focus & Goals

Conceptual focus:

- Understanding precarious work as a social process embedded in multiple arenas : labour markets, family obligations (transnational, local) etc; immigration and settlement policy; etc. Individual workers are also embedded in specific neighbourhoods, and have ties to institutions (faith based, settlement agencies, clinics) and organizations (unions, associations). The spatialization of social networks and interaction calls for attention to different units and levels of analysis

Goals

- Identify key factors associated with different types of employment trajectories (e.g. upward mobility, downward mobility)
- Develop a research instrument that is relevant for different of kinds stakeholders that conduct research (voluntary sector, academics, advocacy)
- Develop measures of precarious employment and identify determinants of prec.work for immigrants
- Document the strategies used by newcomers and their families to deal with employment challenges and opportunities in Canada
- Identify patterns of contact or lack of contact with institutions that mediate settlement, and examine the relationship between such mediation and outcomes (e.g. precariousness of employment)

Part 3

Reviewing Available Research

- Recent approaches: Social Policy, Advocacy
 - Poverty
 - Labour Markets, Workforce Participation
 - Workers in New Economy
- Highlighting data limitations

Labour Markets – Employment Research

Academics and government produce most research on the economic disadvantages faced by immigrants in the labour market

Focus of Analysis:

- Skills mismatch, the absence of soft skills
- The underutilization of immigrant skills, and the resulting costs to the Canadian economy
- Earnings disparities captured in terms of :
 - Immigrants vs. native born
 - Visible minorities vs. whites

Policy Frame:

- Target of policy is citizen, permanent resident; other categories of migrants left out
- Is immigration selection criteria/process working?
- Professional accreditation

Poverty Research

Poverty as Social Condition

- 1990s, Canadian Families, The Working Poor
- 2000s, Vulnerable Populations
 - Immigrants, Visible Minorities, Aboriginals
 - Spatial Analysis of vulnerable populations
 - e.g. Poverty by Postal Code (United Way, 2004)

Poverty as Inequality / The Income Gap

- e.g. The Rich and the Rest of Us, CCPA 2007

Policy target

- Citizens and permanent residences; individuals with less than full legal status, potentially long term residents left out
- Spatial strategies shifts policy approach toward “healthy communities”
- www.colourofpoverty.ca :
 - novelty challenges division of policy targets based on overarching experiences of racialization
 - Limitations of census data; can't really say much beyond descriptions based on homogenizing category (non-whites)

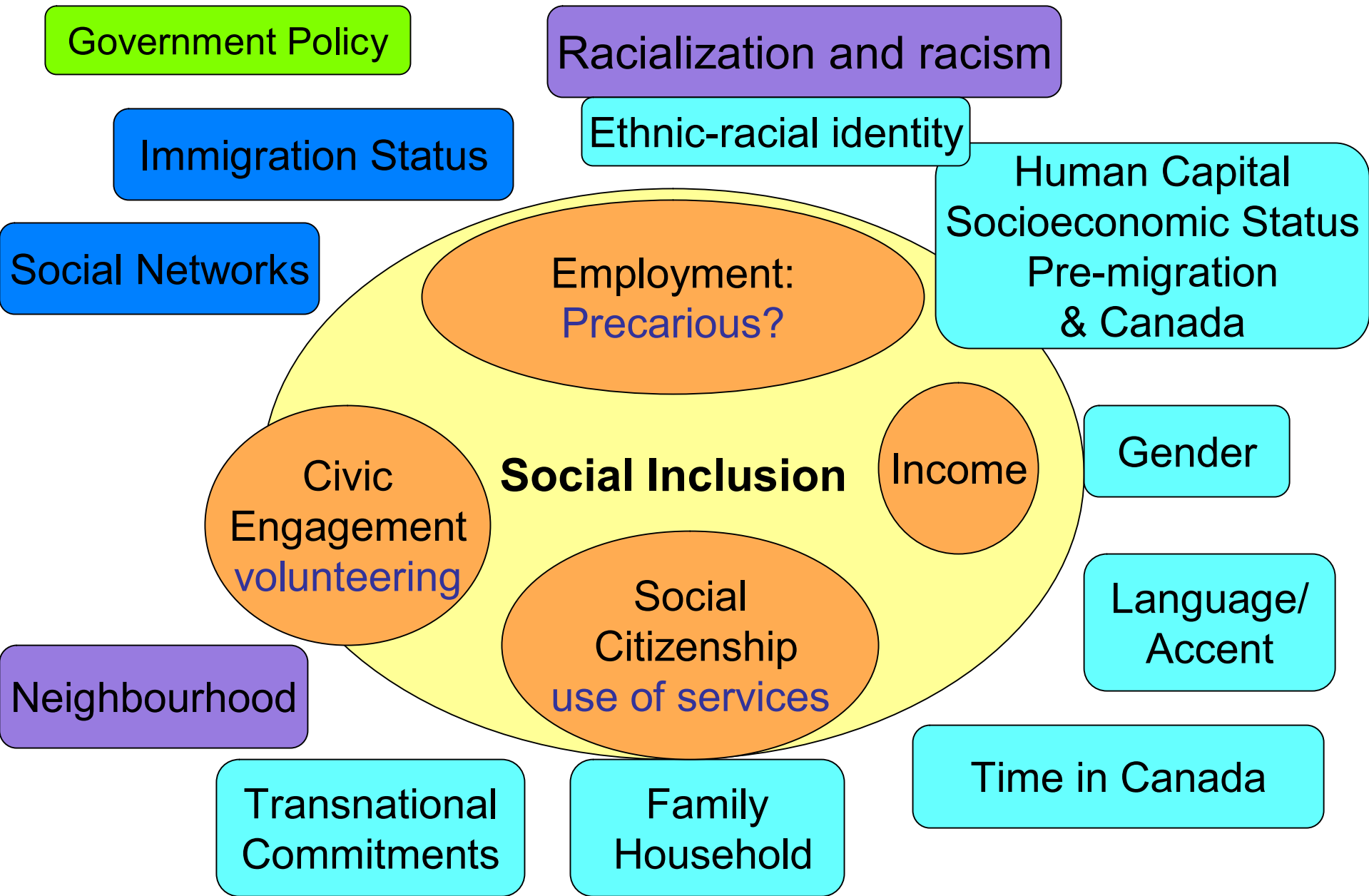
Work in the New Economy

- Precarious and Contingent Work
 - The local face of the global economy
 - Offers a multi-dimensional concept of precarious work
 - L. Vosko, Census plus → The Gender and Work Database (York)
 - W. Lewchuk & A. Dewolff, Mail out survey GTA, measure health effects of *p.e.* (Mac)
- Vulnerable Workers in the Risk Economy (csrn.ca)
 - Participation in the labour market leaves workers at risk
 - Difficult to access decent/living wage work; conditions of work have deteriorated
 - www.jobquality.ca
- Policy frame
 - Focus – the WORKER - little differentiation
 - Social norms → risk redistribution to include state and employers
 - Mismatch btw state regulation of labour standards and character of contemporary labour markets

INE Project as Response to Concept/Data Gaps

- How should we conceptualize labour markets?
 - THE PRECARIOUS WORK APPROACH : Political economy → labour process
 - Does immigrant precariousness look different from that of native born?
 - How does immigration status and its changes over time intersect with precarious employment?
- Data: big box for over-arching trends, can't get at important differences between immigrants and non-immigrants (disaggregation problem)
- What is the relationship between work and other spheres of social life (leisure, family, civic engagement)?
 - Poverty/income security – multi-dimensional approach but data is at high levels of aggregation;
 - Spatial analysis is important; but crude data can't capture issues of social citizenship as practice (relations with local institutions, engagement with neighbourhood)
- Work as social process; strategies of action
 - E.g. How do immigrants become concentrated in particular jobs, niches, sectors?; what are mechanisms for finding work; getting recruited, staying or moving on.
 - Requires longitudinal data, time-series data
 - Requires data on social networks, institutions
 - Requires discussion of strategies as human agency (open ended questions)

Concept Map: Differential Social Inclusion



Government Policy

Racialization and racism

Immigration Status

Ethnic-racial identity

Human Capital
Socioeconomic Status
Pre-migration
& Canada

Social Networks

Employment:
Precarious?

Civic
Engagement
volunteering

Social Inclusion

Income

Gender

Social
Citizenship
use of services

Language/
Accent

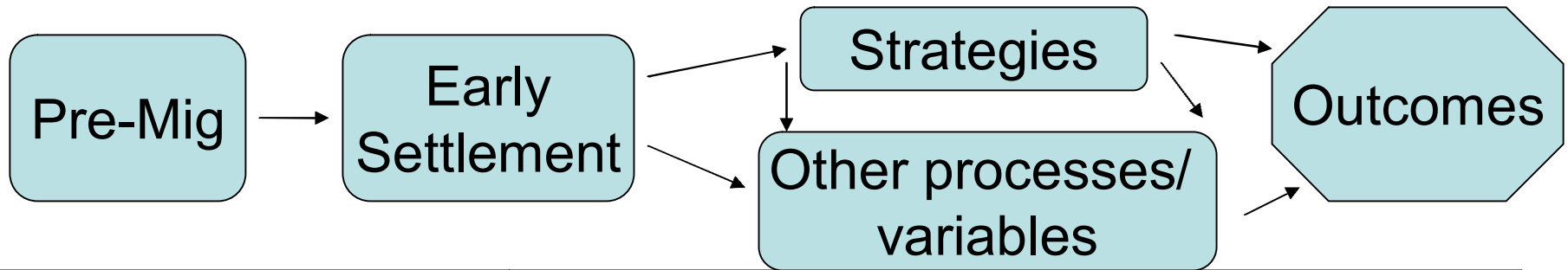
Neighbourhood

Transnational
Commitments

Family
Household

Time in Canada

Model: time, sequences



<p>Pre migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human capital • Class • Gender • Age • Reasons for departure • Context of departure 	<p>Early Settlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance status • Early jobs • Contact with institutions & service providers • Social networks • Neighbourhood 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions • Education • Volunteering <hr/> <p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precarious employment • Belonging • Future plans
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Part 4

Data Discussion: Approaches and Data

- Large N quantitative vs. Small N qualitative
- Comparing +/- of big box data sets

QUALITATIVE, Small N

- Frequent use of small N qualitative work, and/or focus groups
- Advantages:
 - Useful for analysing reasoning, decision-making, strategies, individual narratives, history of groups from individual perspective, etc.
- Limitations:
 - Generalizability
 - Capture range of immigration statuses?
 - Methodological nationalism (sometimes)

Existing data - big box quantitative & statistical

- Strengths / possibilities of large N, quantitative
- Need data on:
 - Income, COB, immigration (yr), citizenship/immigration status
- Challenge:
 - Difficult to find in one source, at correct level of disaggregation, geography, with easy access (not including RDC or special tabs)

Comparison of big-box data

	SLID	LFS	LSIC	EDS	GWD
Design; data sources	X-sec panel	X-sec Rotating panel	3 waves arr 2000-01 first 4 yrs	Post-censal 1 time 2002	Census, SLID
Sample/coverage	national	national	20,322 wave 1	42,476 respon	national
Work: occup, sector, hours, terms	√	√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PrevOcc • Intended • Current 	Some	√√√
PrecWork – X-time	√ some √	√	√	no	√ ?
Immigration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yr arrival • Entr. Status • Curr. Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no • no 		√√ entrance status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONLY landed from abroad 		√ no √
COB for analysis	0	Very new	Some	Some	Many
Incl. non-immig? Immig	√	Added in '06	No –only some landed immig		√
Vismin, racialization Ethnicity	√	0 (?)	√	√ √ limited	√ Census
Transnational	0	0	+/-	+/- √	0
Disaggregation –COB/region in available docs	Poor	Poor	Special tabs for LA	Poor -too general	Some
Networks	0	0 (hh yes)	√ (presence)	√ (presence)	0
Strategies	0	0	0	0	0
Access for analysis	RDC	RDC			√√

NB: IMDB not included as it surveys at landing (intended occupation).

Does not include information on new “Living in Canada” pilot survey, 1000 hh., will have some information on strategies

GWD: best option

- X-sectional, **not longitudinal**, census data, accessible
- Extensive work data, etc., e.g. occupation: 8 levels (managerial, professional, etc.); form of employment; etc.
- Immigration: Canadian or foreign birth, period of arrival, immigrant and non-immigrant
 - **No entrance status (refugee, etc.)**
- COB: most, not complete list

SUMMARY of big box limitations

- Not enough intersections (work and citizenship/immigration), or analyses at appropriate level of disaggregation
- Where available (GWD), lack of info on
 - Strategies, efforts to address needs, success and failure of these strategies, long term plans,
 - Transnational engagements

Part 4

**Contributions / Overview of Fieldwork
Our INE Research**

The Research Instrument

- Precarious immigration status indicators
- Intersections of precarious status and precarious employment
- Data on COB, migration history, hh comp. & location, racial/ethnic identity, racialization
- Quantitative and open-ended responses, face-to-face
- Information relevant to policy discussions re. income security, anti-poverty policy

The Recruitment Strategy

Immigrant Employment Study

We are looking for interview participants

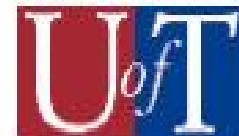
We will pay \$50 for a 2½ hour face to face confidential interview

1. Were you born in Latin America or the Caribbean?
2. Are you currently employed at least 20 hours/week (average)?
3. Have you been working in Canada for at least 1 year
4. Not a full time student in a 3 or 4-year undergraduate program
5. Arrived in Canada after June 1, 1990 and before June 1, 2004
6. Were you between 15 and 45 when you came to Canada?

If you qualify and want to participate in this York University and University of Toronto research project, please call to:

Martha at **416 978 07 08**

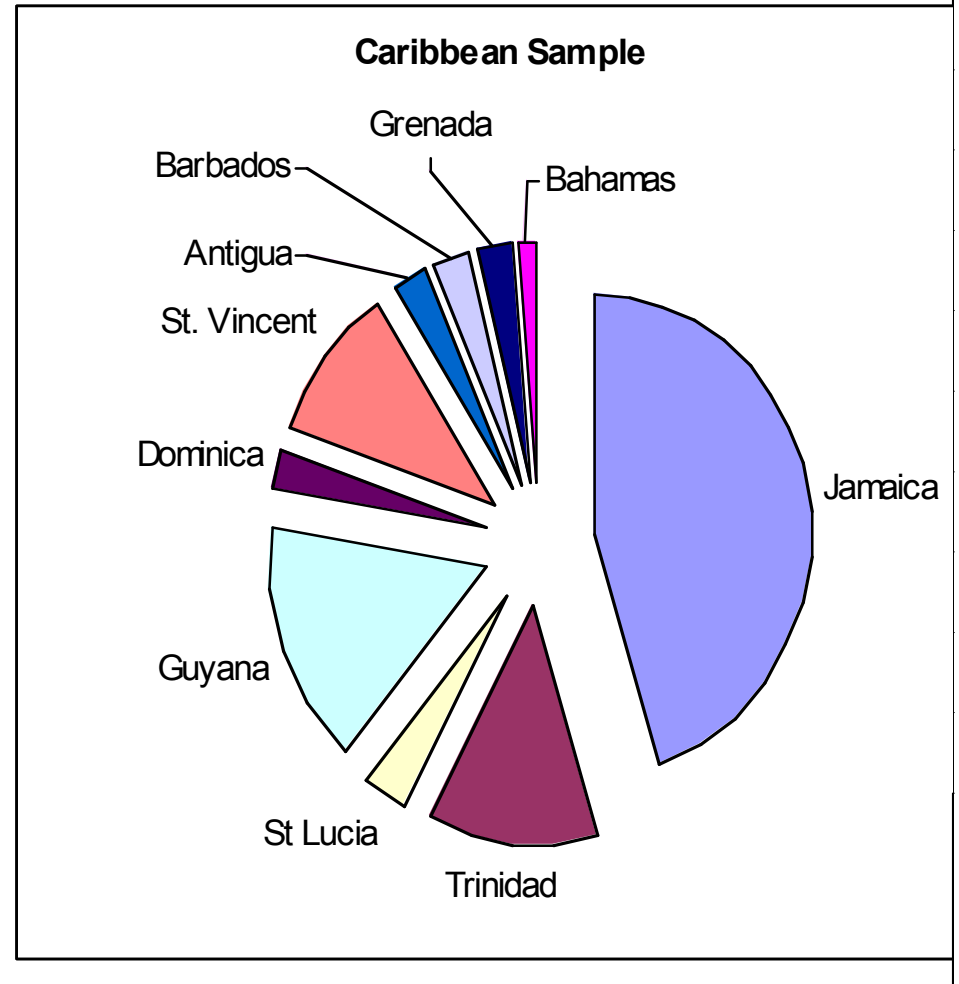
Or _____ at _____
(You may need to leave a message)



The Sample

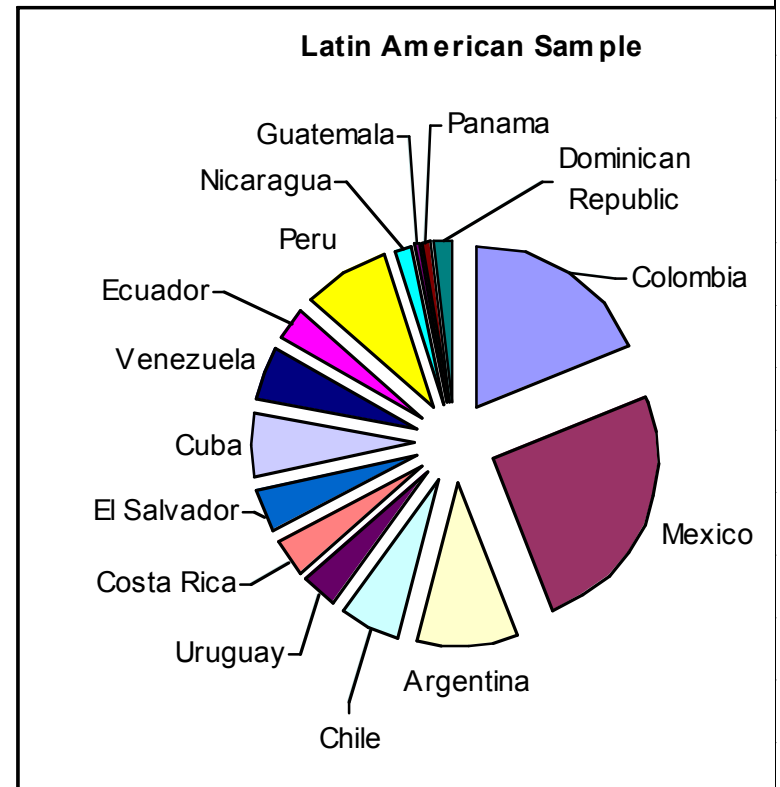
Caribbean sample

Country	M	F	Total
Jamaica	29	40	69
Trinidad	6	13	19
St Lucia	0	5	5
Guyana	13	12	25
Dominica	3	1	4
St. Vincent	3	13	16
Antigua	1	3	4
Barbados	2	2	4
Grenada	0	4	4
Bahamas	1	1	2
Total	58	94	152



Latin American sample

Country	M	F	Total
Colombia	17	11	28
Mexico	16	22	38
Argentina	6	9	15
Chile	4	5	9
Uruguay	2	3	5
Costa Rica	6	0	6
El Salvador	4	2	6
Cuba	5	6	10
Venezuela	5	3	8
Ecuador	4	1	5
Peru	4	9	13
Nicaragua	1	1	2
Guatemala	0	1	1
Panama	1	0	1
Dominican Republic	2	1	3
Total	76	74	150



Profile of respondents

	Caribbean	Latin American	Total (n)
Women	61%	46%	161
Married	38%	59%	146
Year of arrival			
1980-1994	39 %	11 %	76 %
1995-1999	31	16	70
2000-2004	37	73	174
Education			
Pre-mig High School	52 %	18 %	105
BA	5	29	52
MA	1	7	11
In Can Post-HS prog	45	18	93
Age			
30-39	42 %	35 %	117
40+	42	38	121

Immigration status upon entry

Table 1: Immigration Status Upon Arrival	Percent		Total Frequency
	Caribbean N= 148	Latin American N=152	
Landed Immigrant	53%	22%	111
No need for visa	20%	22%	63
Tourist Visa	16%	20%	54
Student Visa	7%	6%	19
Other temporary worker visa	0%	2%	3
Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program	1%	0%	1
Live in Domestic caregiver program	1%	0%	1
Refugee Claimant	1%	22%	35
Undetected at border	0%	2%	3
Smuggled in	1%	1%	2
Other	1%	4%	8
Total	100%	100%	300

Early work: first year

- Only 20% Caribbean and 23 % Latin Americans worked in their field of specialization in their first year in Canada
- 45% of Caribbean and 42% of LA paid in cash

First stable job

	Caribbean	LA
Sector		
Manufacturing	17 %	4 %
Construction	3	30
Health care / soc assistance	11	2
Accommodation / food	5	12
Unionized	24%	23%
Form of Payment		
Personal cheque and cash (cash)	11% (12)	64% (22)
Direct deposit/ company cheque	83	34

Individual annual income all sources

	Caribbean	LA	Total
Less than 10,000	11%	12%	35
\$10,000 to \$19,999	20%	29%	73
\$20,000 to \$29,999	17%	19%	55
\$30,000 to \$39,999	17%	20%	56
\$40,000 to \$49,999	14%	10%	36
\$50,000 to \$59,999	6%	2%	12
\$60,000 to \$79,999	7%	3%	15
\$80,000 and above	3%	1%	5
Refused	3%	3%	9
Total	100%	100%	299

Part 5

Concluding Comments

Current Status and Prospects

- Current Project Status
 - Data nearly ready for statistical analysis
 - Qualitative analysis: summer '08
- Public Outreach Grant (SSHRC)
 - In process
- Limitations in the data
 - Income data, some occupation/sector codes
- Future Possibilities
 - Discussions re. data collection - big box
 - Apply to broader sample of newcomers
 - Interdisciplinary work, e.g. with labour economists to refine labour market analysis