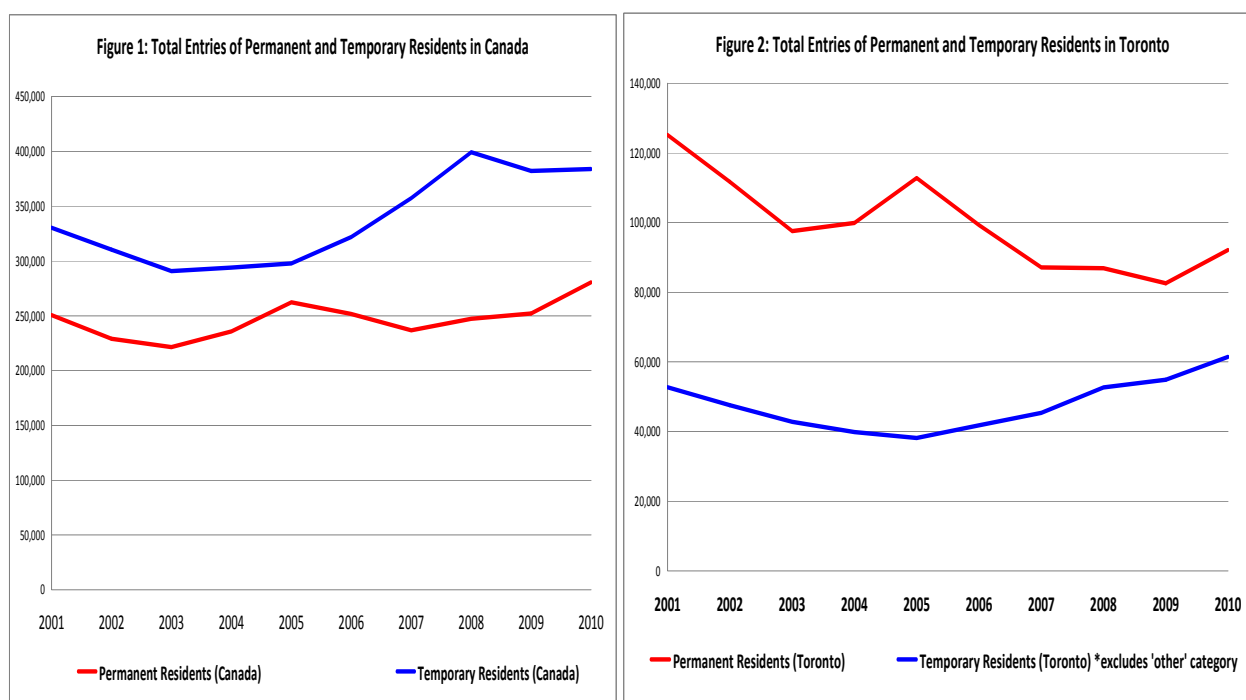


Pathways to Permanent Residence: The Impact of Changes to Immigration Policies and Categories on Immigrant Service Providers

What is the issue?

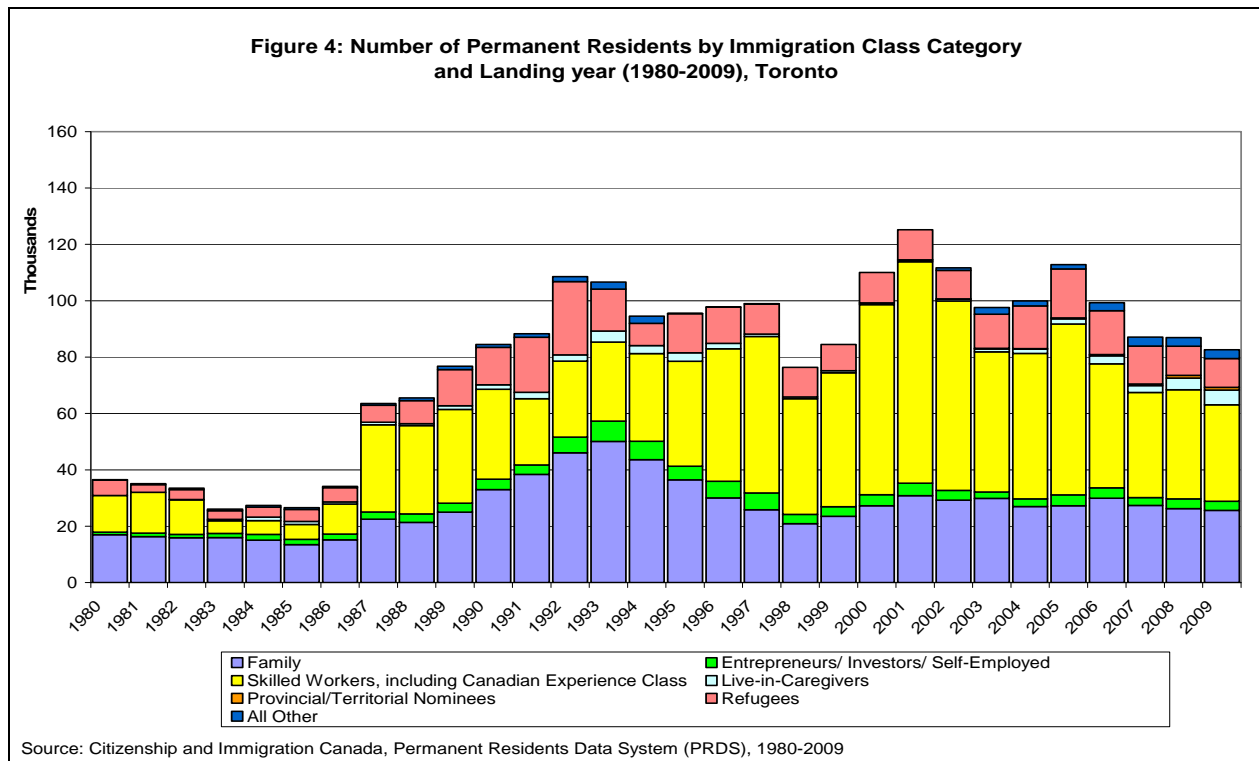
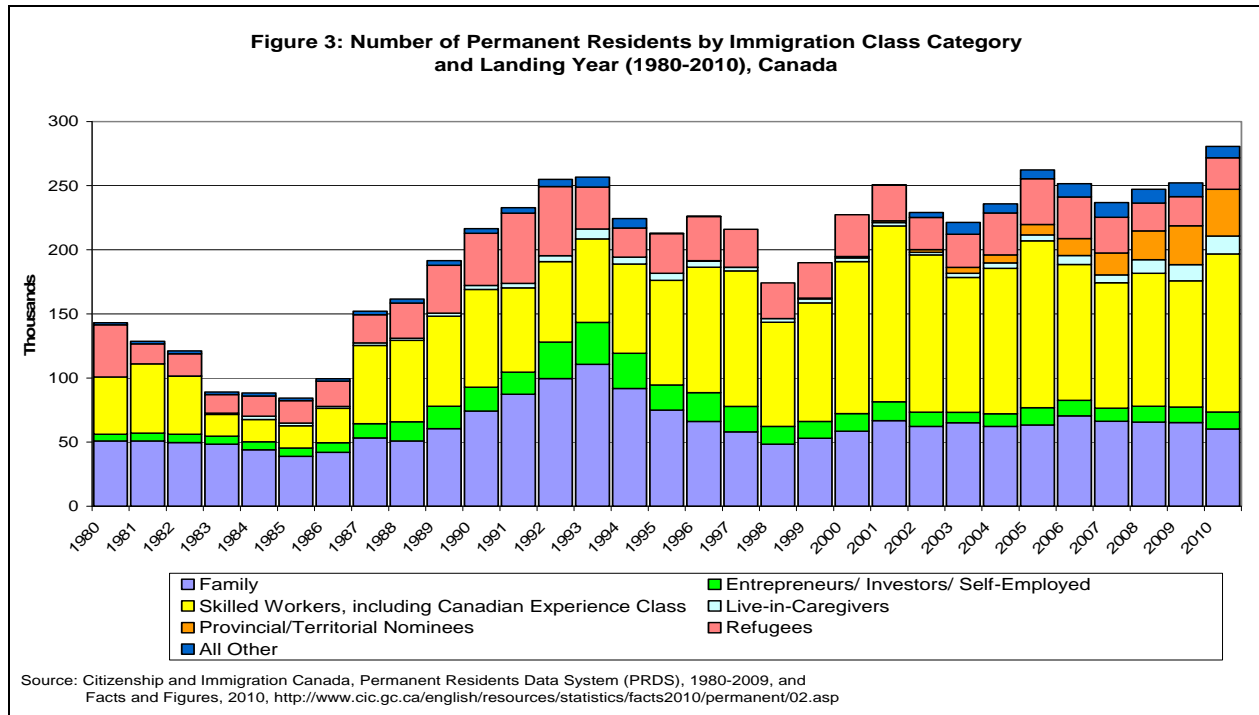
Over the years, Canada’s immigration programs have changed dramatically: entry requirements have been modified; new programs have been introduced; and the numbers arriving under different categories have shifted. In addition, temporary residents have increased significantly in number in Canada. In the Toronto CMA, while there are still more entries of permanent residents than temporary residents, this gap has been decreasing over the past decade. Increasingly (but selectively), temporary status is also a pathway to permanent residency.



The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to consider how recent and proposed changes to immigration programs are affecting employment outcomes for immigrants, and the settlement services that they require.

This primer briefly outlines some of the recent and proposed changes in Canada’s immigration programs. It also highlights some past studies that have examined the effects of such changes on immigrant economic outcomes.

Changes in Immigrant Entry Classes



Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the ways in which the size and profile of Canada's immigrant arrivals have changed over time, between 1980 and 2009.

Over the last decade, arrival numbers across the country have remained high, but have declined in the Toronto CMA. The profile of immigrants has also changed. In Canada as a whole the most notable trend has been the expansion of the Provincial Nominee Program (although arrival numbers under this program have been capped at low levels in Ontario). In Toronto, the main changes have been:

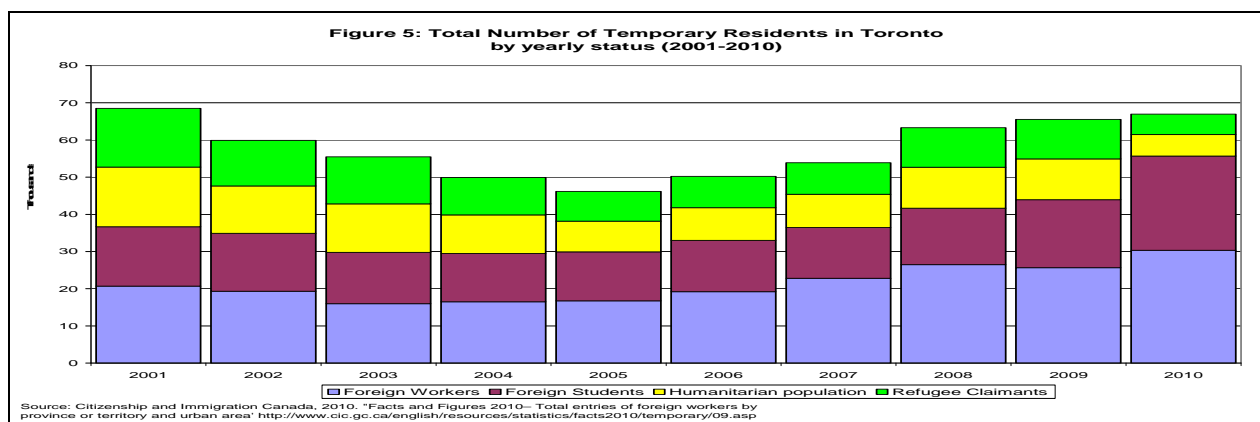
- an increasing proportion of immigrants arriving in refugee classes;
- a shift within the economic class away from the skilled worker category towards an expansion in those entering through other economic classes such as the live-in caregiver program.

It is also important to note that changes have also occurred *within* all of these programs in the last decade, for example:

- new systems of refugee status determination;
- changes to the 'points system' for selecting skilled workers;
- modified conditions associated with the live-in caregiver program.

CIC's 2011 *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration* foresaw a decline in the Economic Class as a whole for 2011, primarily through shrinking the federal skilled worker class – although other economic categories such as the Canadian Experience Class, the Provincial Nominee Program, and the Live-in Caregiver Program have continued to grow¹

At the same time, there has also been an expansion of temporary foreign worker programs, such that permanent resident arrivals will continue to decline relative to temporary admissions.² In the Toronto CMA, the numbers of temporary resident arrivals has risen steadily in the last five years – the majority arriving as foreign workers or international students (see Figure 5).



¹ Auditor General of Canada (2009) *Report to the House of Commons: Selecting Foreign Workers Under the Immigration Program*. Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). 2011. *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. Ottawa:CIC

² Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). 2011. *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. Ottawa:CIC

Research on the Effects of Immigration Class

There is relatively little research that examines the relationship between immigration class and economic performance. In part, this is because major sources of data, such as the census and the labour force survey, do not differentiate immigrants according to the class through which they arrived. Other sources, such as the IMDB (the Longitudinal Immigration Database) and the LSIC (Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada) are therefore very significant, although both have drawbacks.

Past studies examining the effect of immigrant category have examined the following questions:

- The earnings of different classes of immigrants arriving in the 1980s.³
- The effects of economic, family and refugee categories on income, employment, and social assistance claims.⁴
- The short term labour market participation, employment and earnings outcomes according to immigrant selection criteria⁵
- The difficulties faced by business class immigrants in establishing enterprises in Canada.⁶
- The relative earnings of arrivals through the Provincial Nominee Program.⁷
- The convergence of earnings among different immigrants classes over time.⁸

Questions for discussion

This roundtable discussion will focus on how changes to immigration programs, numbers and selection criteria affect the work of service providers. Some questions to consider include:

- 1) How have changes to immigration categories and selection criteria over time affected the work of your organization?
- 2) What impact do you anticipate as a result of recent trends, and changes in categories and selection criteria?
- 3) Do you plan to modify any programs or service changes to meet the changes to recent immigration class categories?
- 4) What kind of data that is currently not available would be useful for your organization?
- 5) What policy changes would help in serving the needs of a changing population immigrants and temporary residents?
- 6) How have the increases in temporary residents relative to permanent residents, affected the work of your organization?

³ DeSilva, A. 1997. Earnings of Immigrant Classes in the Early 1980s in Canada: A Reexamination. *Canadian Public Policy*, 2 (3):179-99.

⁴ Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). 1998. *The Economic Performance of Immigrants: Immigrations Category Perspective*. Ottawa: CIC.

⁵ Aydemir, A. (2011) Immigrant selection and short-term labor market outcomes by visa category. *Journal of Population Economics*, 24:451-475

⁶ Ley, D. (2003) Seeking *Homo Economicus*: The Canadian State and the Strange Story of the Business Immigration Program. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93:2 426-441.

⁷ Pandey, M. and Townsend, J. (2010) *Provincial Nominee Programs: An Evaluation of Earnings and Retention Rates of Nominees*, Department of Economics Working Paper Number: 01. <http://ideas.repec.org/s/win/winwop.html>

⁸ Wanner, R. A. 2003. "Entry Class and the Earnings Attainment of Immigrants to Canada, 1980-1995," *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques* 24(1): 53-69.