

Access and Entry to the Labour Market: Entry Barriers and the Job Search Process

by Dr. John Shields, Dr. Lucia Lo, Dr. Jelena Zikic, and Joan Atlin

What is the issue?

Integration of immigrants into Canadian society is strongly tied to barriers newcomers face in the labour market. Finding and securing appropriate employment and sustaining it is among the most important determinates of immigrant well-being and successful adaptation to Canada.

Primary issues are:

- immigrants continue to experience significant difficulties successfully integrating into the Toronto and Canadian labour market over both the short and longer terms;
- labour market outcomes differ by gender and immigrant class;
- immigrants experience significant problems having their professional credentials assessed and recognized resulting in occupational exclusion and underemployment; and
- dominant patterns of job search and recruitment for immigrants can negatively impact employment outcomes.

What did the researchers find?

Well Known Trends

TIEDI research findings reinforce a number of well-established labour market realities for immigrants. These include the following:

- As a group, newcomers, even after four years in Canada, have significantly higher unemployment rates than the Canadian-born, indicating deeper problems of labour market integration.¹
- Principal applicants in the skilled worker class have better labour market outcomes than immigrants entering from

other classes, including lower unemployment, fewer jobless spells, higher earnings, and taking less time in securing first jobs.

- Refugees experience the greatest difficulties in labour market integration among all classes of immigrants.²
- Gender differences in immigrant labour market outcomes persist. Immigrant women experience disadvantage in labour force participation rate, unemployment rate, pay, and education-job match.³

Issues of credential recognition continue to be an area where immigrants experience challenges and barriers to the labour market.

- About 40% of immigrants report difficulties having their credentials accepted. Immigrants planning to work in unregulated occupations fared only slightly better than those planning to work in regulated occupations.⁴
- Over half of the immigrants in the health sector experienced difficulties in having their credentials recognized compared to only a third in the natural sciences, engineering and architecture sector.⁵

With regard to the process of finding and securing employment:

- Immigrants and Canadian-born use similar methods to find jobs. The vast majority had found their current position through family or friend networks followed by personal initiatives.⁶ However, immigrants who found jobs in

¹ John Shields, Mai Phan, Fang Yang, Philip Kelly, Maryse Lemoine, Lucia Lo, Valerie Preston, Steven Tufts. Do Immigrant Class and Gender Affect Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants? *TIEDI Report 2: January 2010*.

² Ibid.

³ *TIEDI Report 2*

⁴ Jelena Zikic, Maryse Lemoine, Mai Phan, Philip Kelly, Tony Fang, Valerie Preston, Steven Tufts. What are Immigrants' Experiences with the Accreditation Process in Different Occupations? *TIEDI Report 15: Jan 2011*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ John Shields, Ann Marie Murnaghan, Maryse Lemoine, Philip Kelly, Stella Park. How do Immigrants find Jobs? *TIEDI Report 17: Feb 2011*.

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these ways earned less than the Canadian-born.⁷

- In order to secure their jobs Canadian-born and immigrant groups are required to complete many of the same tests in the hiring process.⁸

New Evidence

In a number of areas research and public awareness are still underdeveloped regarding immigrant labour market performance and barriers to the job market. These include the following:

- Over the initial years of settlement newcomers do see modest improvement in the matching of their training and education with their main employment, but for most immigrant classes matches are still poor.⁹
- Immigrants seeking work in regulated occupations four years after landing are more likely to have found work in their area of training and education than other immigrants (although their employment may not actually be in a regulated profession).¹⁰
- Less than one quarter of newcomers had checked before coming to Canada as to whether their credentials would be accepted.¹¹
- More immigrant men than women have applied to have their credential recognized.¹²

- The main reasons immigrants give for not checking their credentials was lack of time (especially by family class immigrants) or that it was not necessary (mostly by principal skilled applicants and business class immigrants).¹³
- Employed immigrants who found their current job through personal initiative, family or friends and Canada Employment Centres had the lowest average hourly wages.¹⁴
- Immigrants who had found their current job through news stories, job fairs, the internet, Canada Employment Centre, or help wanted ads earned more than the Canadian-born who found their jobs through these means.¹⁵
- For occupational categories like management and healthcare, immigrants were more likely to be required to undergo tests (e.g. security or personality testing) than the Canadian-born.¹⁶

Policy Questions?

- Why do immigrant women face persistently lower employment outcomes than immigrant men?
- Why don't the majority of immigrants investigate whether their credentials will be accepted before coming to Canada?
- Why do immigrants who rely on family and friends in their job search have worse employment outcomes?

⁷ Tony Fang, Nina Damsbaek, Philip Kelly, Maryse Lemoine, Lucia Lo, Valerie Preston, John Shields, Steven Tufts. Are Immigrants Wages affected by the Source of Job Search Information? *TIEDI Report 7*: March 2010.

⁸ John Shields, Philip Kelly, Ann Marie Murnaghan, Stella Park, Maryse Lemoine. What kind of tests are required for immigrants to get hired? *TIEDI Analytical Report 19*: March 2011.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Steven Tufts, Maryse Lemoine, Mai Phan, Philip Kelly, Lucia Lo, Valerie Preston, John Shields, What are the Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants Planning to Work in Regulated and Unregulated Occupations? *TIEDI Report 5*: February 2010.

¹¹ *TIEDI Report 15*

¹² Jelena Zikic, Nina Damsbaek, Mai Phan, Philip Kelly, Maryse Lemoine, Tony Fang, Valerie Preston, Steven Tufts. How Does

Immigrant Class Affect Immigrants' Experiences with Credential Recognition? *TIEDI Report 10*: June 2010.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Report 7.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Report 19.*

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Figure 1: Unemployment rate by Immigration Class, 6 months, 2 years and 4 years after landing, Canada

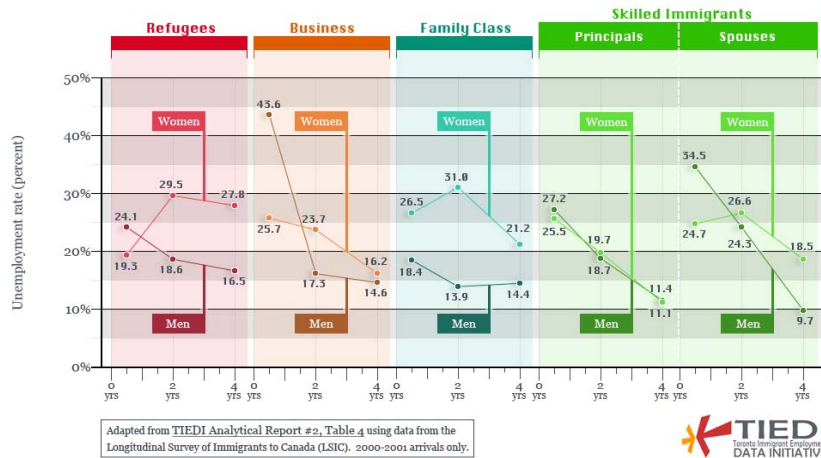


Figure 3: Percentage of main job related to Training or Field of Study by Immigration Class, 2 years and 4 years after landing, Canada

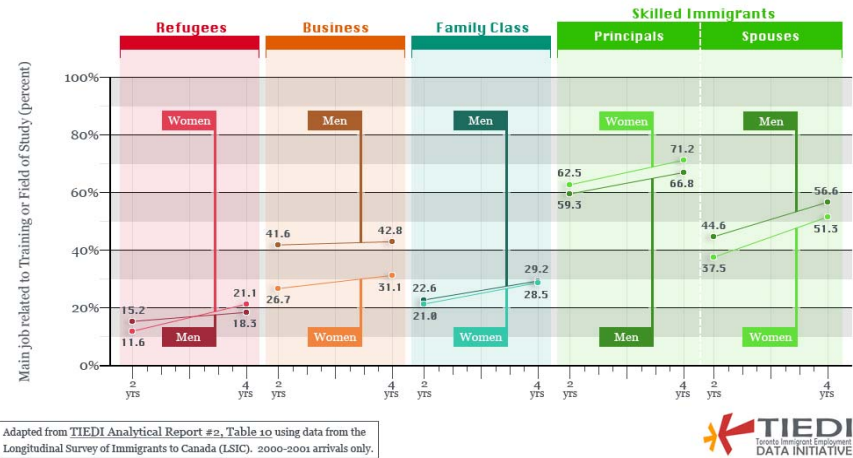


Figure 2: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) by Immigration Class, 2 years and 4 years after landing, Canada

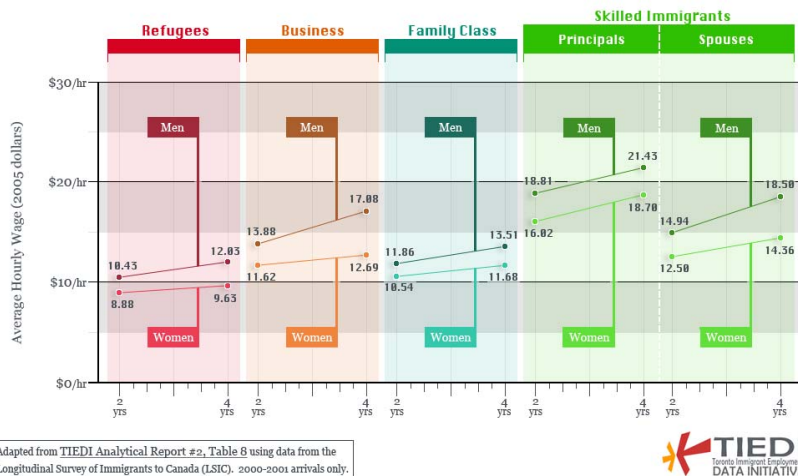
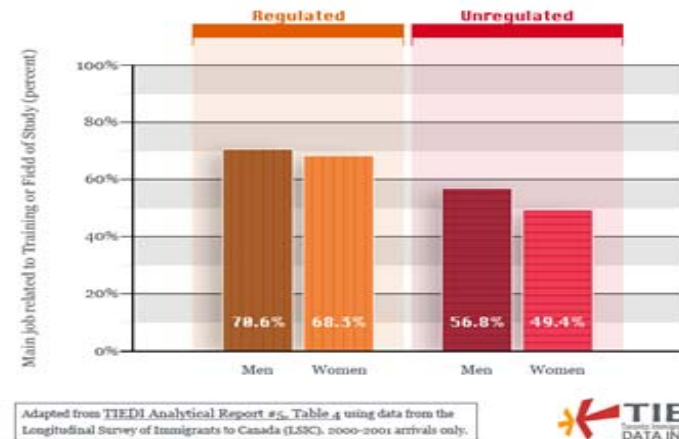
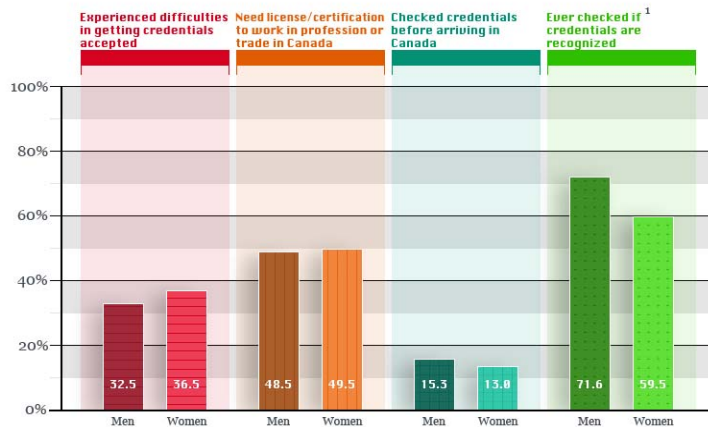


Figure 4: Percentage of main job related to Training or Field of Study for Immigrants intending to work in Regulated and Unregulated Occupations, 4 years after landing, Canada



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Figure 5: Credential assessment by unregulated occupation and gender, Canada

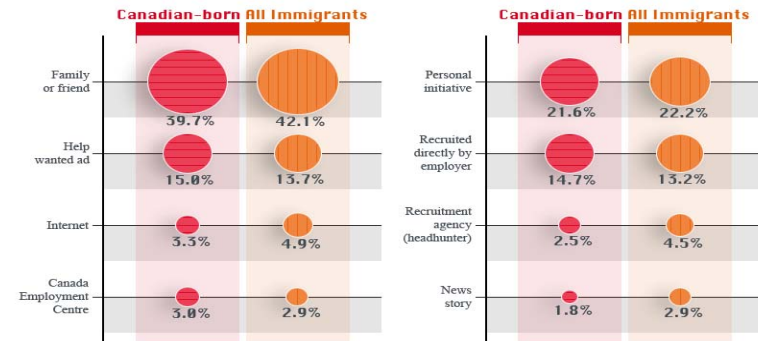


Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #15, Table 4 using data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), 2000-2001 arrivals only.

¹ Survey questions asked about checking credentials with any person, organization or employer. Recognition is not limited to credential recognition organizations



Figure 7: Canadian-born (as a percentage of all Canadian-born employees) and immigrants (as a percentage of all immigrant employees) per source of information, Canada**

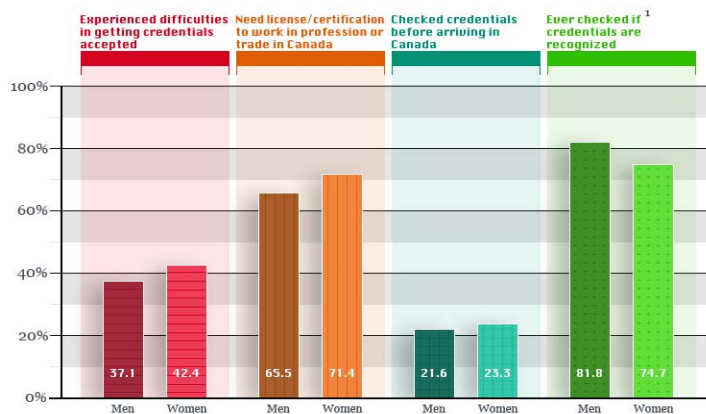


Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #7, Table 2 using data from the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) collected in 2005.

** Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple choices.



Figure 6: Credential assessment by regulated occupation and gender, Canada

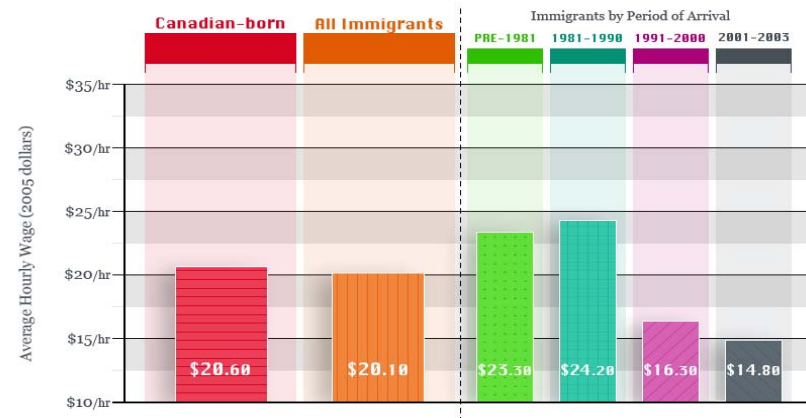


Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #15, Table 4 using data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), 2000-2001 arrivals only.

¹ Survey questions asked about checking credentials with any person, organization or employer. Recognition is not limited to credential recognition organizations



Figure 8: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) for Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of immigration and 'Family or friend' as source of information for finding current job, Canada



Adapted from TIEDI Analytical Report #7, Table 3 using data from the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) collected in 2005.

Current job found through 'Family or friend'



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Figure 9: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) for Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of immigration and 'Internet' as source of information for finding current job, Canada

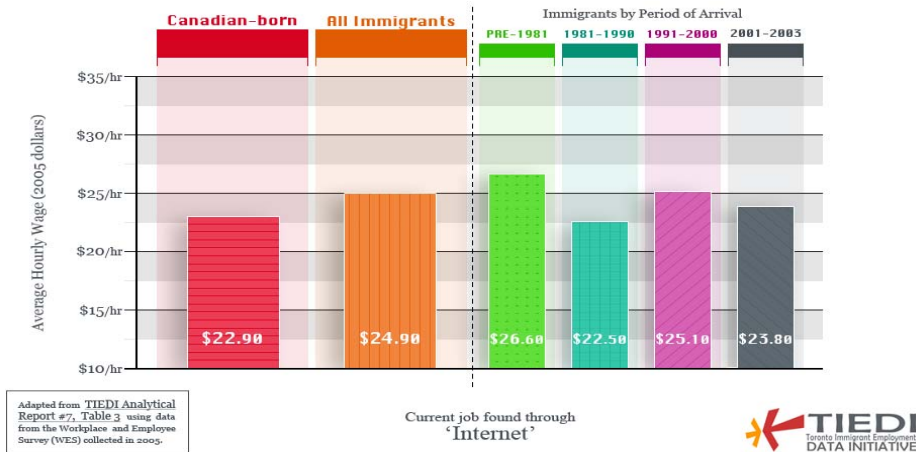


Figure 11: Most Common Tests or Procedures in Hiring Process of Current Job by Immigrant Status and Ethnracial Group, Canada, 2005

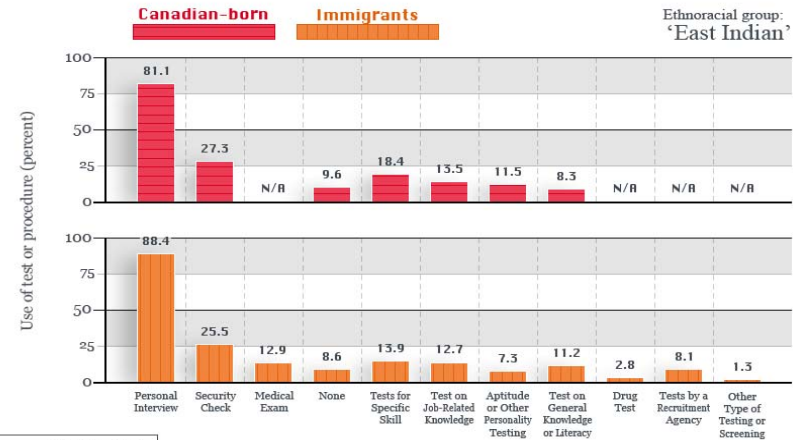


Figure 10: Average Hourly Wage (2005 dollars) for Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of immigration and 'News story' as source of information for finding current job, Canada

