
Coming and going: the impacts of precarious work and non-citizenship on immigrant in- and out-migration in New Brunswick

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Abstract: Based on the qualitative analysis of data collected from 52 immigrant women who lived in the province of New Brunswick, Canada, this article describes how their experiences of precarious employment and precarious non-citizenship intersect with factors unique to the provincial context. The women's experiences of precarity in this context help to explain immigrant out-migration. Although engaged in low skill occupations, women who arrive in New Brunswick with temporary work permits are more satisfied with the particular conditions of precarity than those with higher education levels or with high skill professional experience. This is largely due to a segmented labour market and a lack of social citizenship in the province. All immigrant women report anxiety and stress concerning the precarious pathway to full legal citizenship. Immigrant women are attracted to the province by the government's population growth strategy yet the particular intersections of precarious work and precarious non-citizenship push them elsewhere in Canada in search of greater economic and social security.

Keywords: immigrant women; precarious work; precarious non-citizenship; Canada; New Brunswick.

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1 Introduction

This article is based on qualitative studies of immigrant women who have landed in the province of New Brunswick in the last decade, some of whom have stayed and others who have left for elsewhere in Canada. The research participants came to the province for employment, education, or marriage purposes through a permanent residency pathway or with a temporary work or study permit that enabled them to apply for permanent residency. They were attracted by a provincial government that views immigration as a means to address issues of population decline, labour market demand and economic development (GNB, 2014b). Yet like many immigrants who have come and gone over the years, contextual factors related to precarious work intersect with factors related to non-citizenship to push many immigrants to go elsewhere in search of greater economic security and social integration.

While research has begun to identify the factors that contribute to precarious work and non-citizenship for immigrants in Canada, less is known about the specific factors related to these issues in contexts outside of popular immigrant receiving contexts of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. New Brunswick is a non-traditional immigrant destination and retention of those who initially arrive here is a perennial concern. This research can add to the knowledge of the issues that face immigrants who settle outside of the major urban centres in Canada.

The research focuses on the experiences of precarious work and non-citizenship of immigrant women and highlights the segmented, gendered and racialised nature of the labour market in New Brunswick. Immigrant women are both pulled and pushed into precarious work and few transitions into secure employment. Those who have secure work experience non-citizenship due to experiences of cultural insensitivity in the work place and social isolation. We conclude that experiences of precarious work as well as non-citizenship contribute to immigrant out-migration and make some recommendations for change.

2 Theorising precarious work and precarious non-citizenship

Precarious work consists of jobs that have little or no long-term security such as part-time, limited contract, and shift work which, for example, characterises much of the work found in service industries. There are also occupational sectors in which jobs that require high levels of education and expertise are increasingly tied to limited term contracts with few benefits and no long term security. "The proliferation of precarious employment – work that is unstable and insecure, offers limited rights, protections, and benefits, and allows workers limited autonomy, recourse, or control – is symptomatic of a global shift in the very nature of work" [Goldring and Landolt, (2011), p.326].

Precarious work is gendered. Vosko (2000) posits that the shift away from the post-Second World War ‘standard employment relationship’ in Canada (secure, full-time jobs with benefits) began in the 1970s and was accompanied by the rise of the ‘precarious employment relationship’. These shifts in employment relationships reflect the ‘feminisation’ of work. According to Vosko, feminised work has its historical roots in the temporary employment relationships developed to accommodate white middle-class women in the nations of the North after the Second World War. White middle-class men were considered the primary economic providers and women took on part-time work to supplement their husbands’ incomes while at the same time maintaining their responsibilities for unpaid care work in the home. Poor, immigrant, visible minority and Aboriginal men and women have always had limited access to the ‘standard employment relationships’ enjoyed by white, Canadian-born men. Vosko argues that white women have not simply entered the Canadian labour market in greater numbers, but feminised employment relationships characterised by their temporary, insecure and casual nature, are becoming the norm for increasing numbers of workers. Immigrant, visible minority, and Aboriginal women bear the brunt of gender segregation and therefore income and occupational polarisation in the Canadian labour market (Creese et al., 2008).

Research on precarious work in 12 countries by Oxfam indicates that women are over-represented in labour-intensive industries and the more precarious jobs within them (Kidder and Raworth, 2004). Employers cling to the myths that women are better suited for work that requires manual dexterity and concentration on repetitive tasks for long periods of time as well as paid service and care work. Kalleberg (2013) argues that work is being restructured on a global scale and the rise of precarious work in industrial economies has an impact on workers, their families and communities. Many women value precarious work as families struggle to pay the rising costs for education and healthcare, even though the work is insecure, stressful and includes experiences of subordination and harassment. Fudge claims that “women’s disproportionate responsibility for the work necessary to sustain families and households helps to explain why women disproportionately have precarious personal work profiles” (2014, p.16). Precarious work often gives women the flexibility to combine their responsibilities for unpaid care work in the home with paid work. Many people feel pushed to leave their countries of origin in search of precarious work and a better future for their families.

In Canada the growth of precarious work throughout the labour market is accompanied by the conditions of precarious non-citizenship for immigrants (Goldring and Landolt, 2011). Precarious non-citizenship is the uncertain pathway to legal citizenship for immigrants whose formal rights and entitlements are limited and conditional. The citizenship status of immigrants is precarious until they are granted legal citizenship by the federal government. This situation has arisen due to changes in Canadian immigration policy in the last decade by which the federal powers for the selection and admission of immigrants have become shared with provincial and territorial governments (Baglay, 2012). The provincial nominee program (PNP) enables provinces to select immigrant applications for nomination. The nominated applicants then apply to the federal department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada which makes the decision about whether to issue or refuse a permanent resident visa. Full citizenship is only granted to permanent residents who have lived and paid taxes in Canada for at least four years and who have passed a citizenship test. Immigrants can apply for the PNP and permanent residency either from outside the country or from within after they have entered on a temporary permit. The PNP principal applicants can include their spouses

and children as dependents on their application. Immigrants with legal citizenship can also sponsor the immigration of spouses, common-law partners and dependent children.

There are other important aspects beyond legal citizenship to consider. Nagel and Staehli (2004) make the distinction between legal citizenship and substantive citizenship, arguing that substantive citizenship entails the ability to exercise the rights and privileges of societal membership. When immigrants of any status do not feel that they belong to the new society or are unable to engage meaningfully with its citizens and institutions then they do not have substantive or 'social citizenship'. Torres et al. (2013) further describe social citizenship as a relational process in which members of immigrant groups are able to engage economically, politically and socially with individuals and institutions in the new society. Relational citizenship requires the participation of all people in a society, regardless of their country of birth.

Precarious non-citizenship is tied to the rise in precarious work in Canada as the federal and provincial governments and employers attempt to attract immigrants to deal with labour market shortages and population decline (Li, 2003). Without legal citizenship, immigrants can be denied access to certain types of employment, job security, labour protections, educational opportunities and public services and their mobility in and out of the country can be restricted. Without social citizenship, immigrants are hindered in the creation of the social capital necessary to get jobs commensurate with their education and experience, organise politically, or otherwise engage meaningfully in the societies in which they live and want to build a future for their families (Kazemipur, 2004).

The particularities of precarious work and non-citizenship vary according to national and regional contexts. The province of New Brunswick is part of the global proliferation of precarious work. The conditions of precarious work in the province attract some immigrant women but precarious non-citizenship and the lack of social citizenship contribute to the province's ongoing struggles to retain immigrants over the long term.

3 The New Brunswick context

Similar to other provinces in Canada's Atlantic region (Tastsoglou and Jaya, 2011; Akbari and Rankaduwa, 2010), there are a variety of factors associated with the province of New Brunswick that make it a distinct context for the study of the intersection of precarious work and non-citizenship of immigrant women. It is a non-traditional immigrant destination with a relatively small, rural and rapidly aging population, an economy largely based on natural resources, a segmented labour market, and there are high levels of unemployment.

The province of New Brunswick is located on the east coast of Canada and has a total population of just over 750,000 people (Statistics Canada, 2014). It is estimated that over 50,000 young adults have left the province in the past two decades (GNB, 2013) and this has resulted in a larger proportion of older adults than elsewhere in the country. Just under half of the province's population (48%) is rural (Statistics Canada, 2011b) and it has not been a popular destination for immigrants. Sall and Thomas (2015) describe the contemporary New Brunswick labour market as segmented. The primary labour market contains highly skilled and better paying jobs in urban centres and is dominated by Canadian-born citizens. There is a rising demand for investment and skilled workers in the emerging knowledge-based sectors of the Canadian labour market (Miner, 2010). The

Canadian Council on Learning argues that “the rising level of competition facing Canadian firms, changes in production technologies, and changes in the nature and organization of work are all driving increases in the knowledge intensity of jobs in Canada” (2006, p.2). Calculations by the then-called federal department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada show that in 2012, the province had a slightly higher proportion of its population 15 years and over with a high school diploma than in Canada overall – 28.5% versus 27.4%. At the same time, the proportion of the New Brunswick population 15 years and over with a university degree was 14.7%, the second lowest rate in the country. This is 7.5 percentage points lower than the Canadian average of 22.2% (HRSDC, 2012). This shows that New Brunswick is doing well in terms of graduating students from high school, but has a noticeably weaker performance than the rest of the country in terms of producing university educated workers for the primary labour market. According to Sall and Thomas (2015) the secondary labour market in New Brunswick is comprised of precarious work located mostly in rural and remote areas of the province. Canadian-born workers employed in the secondary labour market are aging and their children are unwilling to work in this sector as demonstrated by the high rates of youth out-migration.

Despite the demand for workers throughout the labour market, unemployment rates in New Brunswick are among the highest nationwide at 10.4% as of March 2015, while the national unemployment rate at that time was 6.8% (Statistics Canada, 2015). This has characterised the provincial labour market over the past 30 years and, according to Workman (2005), high rates of unemployment are among several factors associated with a global transformation of work that have driven down wages in the Atlantic region and contributed to the growth of precarious work. The value of the minimum wage decreased by 30% between 1976 and 2000 [Workman, (2005), p.92] and at \$10.30 per hour, New Brunswick currently has the lowest minimum wage in the country (GOC, 2015). One quarter of all hourly wage workers in New Brunswick earn within \$2.50 of the minimum wage with women comprising a substantial proportion of these workers. There is a demand for labour in a range of occupations – work that Canadian-born citizens are either unwilling or incapable of filling.

Over the past 15 years, the New Brunswick government has focused on recruiting and retaining immigrants in order to address population decline, labour demands and economic development. As a result there has been a rise in the number of people immigrating as well as an increase in the visible minority proportion of the population (Akbari and Rankaduwa, 2010). Data from the 2011 National Household Survey estimates that the total number of immigrants living in the province was 28,470 with over a thousand more females than males (Statistics Canada). Most of the immigrants who settled in New Brunswick between 2005 and 2010 were married and brought with them 3,875 children under the age of 18 (Haan et al., 2013). Slightly less than half of the immigrants in New Brunswick are from European countries of origin. Almost 22% are from Asian countries of origin and nearly 6% are originally from countries in Africa (Statistics Canada, 2011a). 78% of the New Brunswick population consists of people with European ethnic origins (Statistics Canada, 2008). The principle route to formal citizenship is the PNP which has been used by over three-quarters of the immigrants who land in New Brunswick (CIC, 2011). The provincial government prioritises the nomination of immigrants “who have the greatest potential to become economically established” in the province (GNB, 2014a) and selects immigrants with the skill sets and work experience to meet the needs of the labour market.

New immigrants have typically arrived in New Brunswick and then moved elsewhere in the country, usually to urban centres with larger immigrant populations (Okonny-Myers, 2010). New immigrants find the Atlantic region one of the most difficult areas to adopt as a home due to underemployment and the low density of immigrant social networks (Ramos and Yoshida, 2011; Wilson-Forsberg, 2012). The provincial government has increased its efforts to retain immigrants by establishing immigrant settlement services throughout the province. Immigrant service providers help transition newcomers into their new life in New Brunswick, which includes assisting them in integrating both economically and socially within communities through the provision of employment counselling and language training programs (Theriault and Haan, 2012).

4 Data and methods

The data upon which this article is based comes from two qualitative studies: the first study (S1) is a study of newly arrived immigrant women conducted in 2012 in New Brunswick and their social support networks (N = 89) and the second study (S2) is a study conducted in early 2014 of immigrant women who had originally landed in New Brunswick but moved elsewhere in Canada (N = 10). Approval for both studies was obtained from the University of New Brunswick's research ethics board. Participants in the second study were recruited using contacts made during the first study. Only data from women who were permanent residents or sponsored by Canadian citizens at the time of data collection were analysed for this article (N = 52). The data was collected through face-to-face, semi-structured personal interviews and focus group discussions. Some of the interviews were conducted with the help of a translator. The personal interviews with the women who had left the province were conducted over the phone. The interviews and focus group discussions were digitally recorded (with permission) or through hand written notes. The transcriptions of the data removed most personal identifiers except for participants' countries of origin. The countries of origin include Argentina, Cameroon, Chad, China, Ecuador, Germany, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Ukraine, and Vietnam. A description of the sample is found in Table 1.

Table 1 Research participants and initial immigration categories

<i>Initial immigration category</i>	<i>N</i>
Provincial nominee program	41
Temporary work permit	4
International student visa	3
Family sponsorship program	4
Total	52

Data from the transcripts were coded into the categories of precarious work and non-citizenship. These categories were analysed in two ways: first we compared the experiences of women who came to New Brunswick for reasons related to education (N = 18) and marriage (N = 4) with those who had come primarily for employment (N = 30); and secondly we compared those who were living in the province during the time of the interview (N = 43) with those who had left and were living elsewhere in

Canada (N = 9). The comparisons were done in this way in order to identify patterns in the impacts of precarious employment and non-citizenship based on the research participants' intentions for immigration and whether or not they were living in the province of New Brunswick at the time of the data collection.

The findings below outline the following four themes that arose in the analysis: precarious work in the secondary labour market, inaccessibility of the primary labour market, non-citizenship and substantive issues, and non-citizenship and social issues.

5 Findings

5.1 *Precarious work in the secondary labour market*

Many of the women indicated that they chose to immigrate to New Brunswick because they had learned through their social networks that the pathway to legal citizenship was quicker here. Nevertheless, the application processes involve long and unnerving waiting periods. This is particularly the case for immigrants who arrived with temporary work permits. For several research participants, the application processes involved amassing a great deal of documentation and subsequent bureaucratic errors. For example, one woman accompanied her husband who had arrived in the province with a temporary work permit for a trucking company. Her husband was offered a permanent position by the company and since she was an experienced engineer from Romania, the family applied through the New Brunswick PNP for permanent residency. Her experience dealing with the provincial government was upsetting:

“They lost my documents! Then they did mistakes ... I sent the file here in [the city] in April and after two months I received an email where the lady from there told me that I need to provide a criminal record check from FBI, from West Virginia. This is the procedure, it's a normal procedure, it's right on the website, for people who are living more than six months on United States territory ... The criminal record contains two pages ... And she showed me the first page. I said, ‘Listen to me, if this page exists, of course I put it with the other one’. ‘I’m sorry it’s not here’, [she said.] My husband had to schedule another appointment for finger prints ... so we lost another two months and the money, of course ...” (S1, Participant #18)

Even without bureaucratic errors, the process of applying for citizenship is lengthy due to backlogs in the federal system. This creates a great deal of anxiety for immigrant women.

Although the low skill jobs in New Brunswick are deemed less precarious than elsewhere in the world by immigrant women, these are jobs that New Brunswickers are unwilling to take (Sall and Thomas, 2015). Many of the women cross the globe for precarious work in order to care for their families. Many Filipinas are sending remittances home to pay for their children's education, their parent's retirement or healthcare expenses. One woman explains why she sought work in New Brunswick after her husband died:

“He went on dialysis for one year and six months ... We have to spend five thousand for dialysis and medicine and injections ... So that leaves me broke and back to zero and everything mortgaged, whatever ... So when he died I was left with nothing and two kids.” (S1, FG1, Participant #1)

Unlike many local workers who have few other choices (Good and McFarland, 2005; Workman, 2005), these women are glad to have precarious work (Kidder and Raworth, 2004). Local employers indicate that they like hiring foreign workers because of their work ethic and reliability (CBC, 2012). By prioritising permanent residency applications from immigrants working in low skill occupations, as suggested by Sall and Wade (2014), the government could reduce precarity for these women. Long and uncertain waits for legal citizenship and active deportations by the federal government create a revolving door, given that there are so many migrant workers globally willing to take precarious jobs. This is a compliant workforce who will likely not risk their jobs by organising to address low wages, uncertain hours, excessive production pressures, working conditions or their frustrations with immigration bureaucracy.

5.2 Inaccessibility of the primary labour market

Research participants, who applied through the PNP from abroad, came to New Brunswick with high hopes for finding employment, since their education and skills were deemed necessary for the provincial labour market. These hopes were eroded during a long and painful process of looking for work. For example, a woman with a master's degree in chemistry who had worked for 13 years in Lebanon as a medical representative for a pharmaceutical company, recalls her experiences looking for work in New Brunswick:

"I applied many times for government jobs. There was an online website that you register in and you have an account on this website and anytime there is an opportunity in the provincial government, having any opportunity for jobs I would get an alert or warning. I applied for many jobs that were; I believe that they were good for me given my qualifications. I didn't apply for positions that they required a PhD. I didn't apply for positions that required either like masters or anything. I applied for positions that were for high school degree or college degree. After all of them they send me a letter, 'No we did not take your application into consideration ... blah, blah, blah, but keep applying! Keep applying!' No one – even though – no one asked for an interview or phone me through the phone, you know what I mean? It didn't go anywhere." (S2, Participant #8)

She spent two years trying to find secure work while working night shifts at a call centre. This strategy of taking on precarious work, while searching for a better job was common amongst the highly-educated women in the sample. Within six months of moving to Ottawa with her family, she got secure work with the federal government. In the opinion of this research participant and many other high skilled workers who shared similar stories, the problem lies with the Canadian-born population. Both immigrant women in the province and those who moved elsewhere in Canada feel that the local population is not ready to accept foreigners. This was echoed by women who landed in the province having already secured high skilled work. Many Canadian immigrants struggle to have their credentials recognised by employers (Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Frank and Saunders, 2009; Yoshida and Smith, 2008). Immigrant women are more likely than Canadian-born women and men and immigrant men to be unemployed with rates of unemployment among immigrant women nearly twice that of Canadian women (Tastsoglou and Preston, 2006). This does not bode well for New Brunswick's population growth strategy of building diverse and inclusive communities [GNB, (2014b), p.15].

Research participants indicate that employers and fellow employees in New Brunswick: are insensitive to cultural differences in social interactions, provide little or no feedback about why their job applications are unsuccessful or why their work was suddenly terminated, and have problems with their strong accents. The language skills and accents of immigrants were identified by researchers in the province over 20 years ago as reasons for workplace and social discrimination (Miedema and Nason-Clark, 1989). Most of the women had studied English before arriving but admit that speaking in daily interactions is challenging. Native English speakers are often impatient with immigrants, interrupt frequently, speak about them in their presence, or speak to them as if they are children. The immigrant women also feel that the language classes provided by the local settlement organisations are not helpful, especially for those immigrant professionals in the workplace.

Some small business owners said that language barriers are the reason that they left the province. There is a lot of information and documentation required to run a business and sometimes numerous permits are required. When these immigrants encounter problems either meeting government regulations or negotiating contracts with suppliers, the women feel unable to explain themselves or fully understand the information provided. There was no one in government offices that offers translation services and there are few visible minority people working in front-line government services with whom immigrant women can identify. Immigrant business owners had to learn from their mistakes. One Korean woman felt that she was being over-charged by the suppliers for her florist shop. She felt her English ability was not good enough to argue and change the contracts. She said:

“When I was in Korea, if I felt that things were unfair, then I could complain through an organization or association or government office. I couldn’t find those kinds of associations or organizations to help me out in [a New Brunswick city]. There needs to be these helping organizations for immigrants because I had to cover a lot of expenses and lost money.” (S2, Participant #6)

As a single mother of school-age children, she could not afford these kinds of mistakes so she moved elsewhere in Canada. This woman acknowledges that immigrant business people need to work together to overcome challenges but the immigrant population in New Brunswick is small and not yet organised for this.

Several research participants felt that one of the reasons it was so difficult to find and keep suitable employment in the province was due to the closed social networks within the Canadian-born population. Each city in the province is small and networks are close-knit making it difficult to gain entry. If employers have to make a choice between an immigrant and someone they know or who comes recommended by someone in her/his network, they choose the familiar. Even those who manage to access the primary labour market struggle. Immigrants explained that in their workplaces they sometimes misread social cues and have a difficult time interacting socially with their Canadian-born co-workers. In the case of one woman from Argentina, the social isolation she experienced was so severe that she became depressed (S1, Participant #14).

Research has shown that the early years of the settlement process take a toll on Canadian immigrant women’s mental health (Holtmann and Tramonte, 2014). Evidence from the women in this study indicates that the primary labour market is inaccessible to immigrants due to racialisation, a finding confirmed by other research in the region (Ku et al., 2011; Ralston, 1996; Tastsoglou and Jaya, 2011). Although New Brunswick

employers in the secondary labour market like to hire immigrant women for precarious work, employers in the primary labour market are reticent to hire them for secure work. The government that attracted them to the province could do more to help them from being forced into the secondary labour market and precarious work (Creese et al., 2008; Man, 2004).

5.3 Precarious non-citizenship: substantive issues

Several of the research participants had been sponsored shortly after marriage to husbands (foreign and Canadian-born) who were already living and working in New Brunswick. These women were well-educated and came to Canada in pursuit of a better future. They explained that they were initially ineligible for government-funded language and employment counselling services offered through settlement service agencies. The early period of the settlement process is a critical time for the social integration of immigrants. These women had difficulty accessing social support networks and this led to experiences of isolation. This is particularly problematic in a context like New Brunswick with a low overall density of immigrants. Public transportation systems are underdeveloped in New Brunswick which exacerbates the women's experiences of disconnection, especially during a long, cold winter. A Ukrainian woman explains why it is difficult to meet peers at a local Orthodox faith group:

“For example Easter, I went there and there were other Ukrainians. So every Sunday it's a problem to go there because [the priest] serves at 8 o'clock am and from here like to go there for 8:00, it means we have to wake up at 6:00. My husband – I don't have a car and if I ask him to wake up at 6:00 every Sunday ...” (S1, Participant #20)

She did not want to inconvenience her husband and chose not to have regular contact with other Ukrainian immigrants. Yet social isolation is not only emotionally difficult for immigrant women, it is also risky.

One participant provided a text book example of domestic violence perpetrated by a Canadian-born man who isolated his sponsored immigrant wife from all social support. Immigrant peers and healthcare professionals did not advise her to seek safety when she disclosed the abuse. She remained in the violent marriage for years because she feared losing custody of her young children due to her precarious non-citizenship. It was not until she sought refuge in a shelter that she got information and reassurance from CIC staff about her citizenship status. This research participant's life was at risk because she was ineligible for early settlement services and unsure of her rights given her precarious non-citizenship status (S1, Participant #6). The structural dependency of immigrant women on the sponsorship of their husbands creates conditions of precarious non-citizenship in which they feel trapped in life-threatening situations (Cottrell et al., 2009; Fong, 2010; Mosher, 2009).

5.4 Precarious non-citizenship: social issues

Definitions of Canadian citizenship emphasise both the rights and responsibilities of all Canadians (CIC, 2012). According to the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadians have democratic, legal, mobility, equality, minority language and education rights as well as the fundamental freedoms of conscience, belief, expression, peaceful

assembly and association. Our responsibilities are to obey the law, respect the rights and freedoms of our fellow citizens and actively contribute to our diverse and prosperous society. Our responsibility to contribute to the flourishing of diversity can ensure social and economic prosperity.

Some research participants are from countries of origin (Chad, Ukraine, Philippines, Romania, Vietnam, Iran and Pakistan) where they experience precarious non-citizenship because their particular ethnic origins or socio-economic status place them in situations of civil unrest and social insecurity. Several mothers sought out social stability based on Canada's international reputation as having a peaceful and just society and spoke of how much more safe it is for their families to live in New Brunswick. Everyday social interactions at work, in educational institutions, and in their neighbourhoods are important opportunities for immigrant women to engage in social citizenship. Many of the research participants indicate that they do not feel like full members of New Brunswick society. A woman originally from Vietnam describes the situation well:

"[M]y husband share his experience to me, he told me he has a feeling when he has nothing to do, he has a feeling like he is in a prison, in jail like no freedom at all and I could understand him. And I recognize that for the people, not only for food, they eat every day, but they need to work. Because a lot of Vietnamese they prepare things for them [for immigration], they have money, they still have money from their country but they are not happy. What they need to work, their social life is very important." (S1, Participant #8)

The study included mothers who immigrated via the PNP in order to parent their children through the provincial public education system. Their hope is for their children to gain entrance to a good Canadian university. Their husbands continue to work and support the families financially from their country of origin. The families are successful with the PNP applications because of their financial stability, the children do well in school and there is a plan for the husbands to eventually migrate. However, the women do not believe that their husbands or children will find secure work in New Brunswick. Transnational family situations and transnational mothering have an emotional and social cost for these women, as highlighted in other research (Preibisch and Grez, 2013). Their time in New Brunswick is a period of social limbo. The immigrant women are not wholly committed to settling in the province and in their view the local born population is not embracing them. The women like living here – they appreciate the clean environment and the small size of the cities, but they long for social acceptance. Those that moved away to an urban centre elsewhere in Canada explain that their social interactions have become easier. One woman said that she no longer feels like a monkey in a zoo (S2, Participant #5).

6 Conclusions and recommendations

The findings from the analysis of qualitative data from 52 women who originally immigrated to New Brunswick provide evidence that the impacts of precarious work and precarious non-citizenship contribute to the province's difficulties in retaining immigrants. Precarity, as experienced by the immigrant women in this study, is a structural and social problem in New Brunswick. The practice of hiring immigrant women for precarious work in the secondary labour market is driven by a global trend of companies seeking a flexible and compliant workforce. Recent changes to federal immigration policies with the intention of curbing abuses of the foreign worker system by

employers have led to deportations, but the New Brunswick government also assists local employers in perpetuating precarious work by keeping wages amongst the lowest in the country. The province also helps to attract immigrants to precarious work by dangling the promise of a pathway to permanent residency in front of immigrant women but the processing of applications is mired in bureaucratic inefficiencies.

The movement from precarious non-citizenship to permanent residency in New Brunswick does not correspond with a movement to secure work for immigrant women. Permanent residents experience gendered racialisation and are shut out of the primary labour market and forced to take on or continue with precarious work. The few research participants who did manage to get secure work are impacted by cultural insensitivity in their work places. Well-educated women who arrive with high hopes for their futures in New Brunswick report mental health problems as a result of the intersection of precarious work and precarious non-citizenship in this context.

Immigrant women who arrive in the province having secured precarious work from abroad are more satisfied with their situation here than are those who are pushed into precarious work. The working conditions in New Brunswick are less precarious than elsewhere in the world and women can earn more money to support their families. Both groups of immigrant women take on precarious work in order to care for their families. The conditions of precarious non-citizenship in New Brunswick create a social limbo enticing highly skilled immigrant women to uproot in search of better possibilities for their families elsewhere.

New Brunswick provincial authorities and other parties involved in immigration issues should pay attention to possible workplace adjustments and public education campaigns that might facilitate the integration of immigrants, many of whom are women. At the federal level there is an obvious need to speed-up the bureaucratic process leading to permanent residency. In general, it is important to address dependency and social isolation among immigrant women in Canada and to offer them immediate and improved services for learning official languages, finding employment and accessing information concerning their rights. One is tempted to call for an 'immigrant advocate' (akin to the provincial child advocate system) or an ombudsman for immigrants in New Brunswick to offer them a single window to navigate the different forms of precarity they encounter.

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