

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Temporary Residents in New Brunswick and their Transition to Permanent Residency

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With an aging population, inter-provincial migration losses, declining population growth, and persistent budget deficits, New Brunswick (NB) is seeking to increase the number of immigrants settling in the province. Temporary Residents (TRs) and Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) play an important role in the NB economy with many transitioning to Permanent Residency (PR).

Key Questions

A study from Statistics Canada (2017) revealed that the Atlantic region holds lower attraction for TFWs than the rest of Canada. To what extent has each Atlantic Province been able to attract TFWs and other TRs? Furthermore, how many TRs transition to PR and what are their characteristics? Different provinces might have varying levels of importance for the programs of TR intake, the type of TR they are attracting, and how many choose to transition to PR.

Why Should We Care?

By investigating the characteristics of TRs in NB and their transition to permanent residency, the Federal and Provincial Governments can identify gaps and opportunities with respect to immigration policies.

Trends

From 2000 to 2013, 55,215 permits for TRs in NB were issued. The number of permits issued for TRs in NB per year has been increasing, rising from 2,439 permits in 2000 to 5,698 in 2013.

The increase of TRs in NB follows the same growth rate as the rest of Canada. However, in proportion to its share of the Atlantic and Canadian populations, the number of TRs in NB is comparatively under-represented.

If NB's share of TRs in Atlantic Canada matched NB's share of the Atlantic population, then there would have been 2,300 more TRs in NB in 2013. This figure would increase to 6,000 if NB's share of Canadian TRs matched NB's share of the Canadian population.

Definitions

Temporary Resident (TR): Not a Canadian citizen but is legally in Canada for a temporary purpose (e.g., international students, and foreign workers).

Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW): A foreign national employed by a Canadian employer. It is based on the Temporary Foreign Workers Program established by the Federal Government in 1973.

Permanent Resident (PR): Made successful application to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), but is not a Canadian citizen.

International Student Program (ISP): Facilitates the entry of international students via the processing of study permits.

Characteristics of TRs

From 2000-2013, 35,127 permits were issued to male TRs and 19,497 to females - comparable with other Atlantic Provinces and the rest of Canada. Similar to both Canada and the Atlantic Region, two-thirds of TRs in NB were aged 18-34 at the time of permit issue.

Africa and the Middle East are increasingly important sources of TRs for NB. Of note, in 2000, there were more TRs from China in NB than in the rest of the Atlantic Region combined. However, by 2013, for every TR from China in NB, there were four TRs from China in the other Atlantic Provinces.

The International Student Program (ISP) accounted for 55% of all TRs in NB - a larger fraction than in the Atlantic Region (51%). However, NB has experienced lower ISP growth over this period. The share of ISPs in Atlantic Canada is greater than the share of population of those provinces. If NB matched this outcome there would have been 700 more university students in NB in 2013.

Transition from TR to PR, Retention and Labour Activity

There were 7,403 TRs in NB who became a PR somewhere in Canada from 2000-2013

64% of these TRs with permits for NB became PRs with an intention of landing in NB. Of the total TRs in the rest of the Atlantic Provinces, only 213 intended on landing in NB. For Canada overall, only 251 TRs not in the Atlantic Provinces intended on landing in NB, suggesting that PRs in the four Atlantic Provinces are a product of how many TRs are attracted to the province of intended landing.

The probability a PR in NB will be a resident of the province after five years is about 50%

40% of TRs who land with NB as the intended destination are not a resident of NB one year after landing. After the first year, retention of NB TRs who transition to PR is high with only a 10 point change in the probability of remaining a resident of NB between one and five years after landing.

Average total earnings of NB TRs who transitioned to PRs are stable in NB during the 5 year post-migration period

However, those who relocated to the Prairies and other Atlantic provinces after landing in NB generally have higher earnings. Ontario and British Columbia residing PRs do not show higher earnings than those residing in NB.

Final Thoughts

- **While NB attracts numerically fewer TRs than the rest of Atlantic Canada, it has a higher proportion who transition to PR. Thus, the rest of Atlantic Canada is better at attracting TRs, but a lower proportion transition to PR.**
- **However, it is uncertain if NB is under-performing in terms of attracting TRs or over-performing in terms of TRs transitioning to PRs.**
- **Possible Interpretations of this finding:**
 - Statistics Canada suggests low skill workers from developing countries are more likely to transition to PR. Therefore, if the number of TRs and their characteristics in terms of skill level and country of origin reflect labour market opportunities in NB then it may be difficult to increase the numbers to match the relative intake of the Atlantic Region.
 - NB's comparatively higher transition rates from TR to PR compared to the Atlantic Region could be due to the other Atlantic Provinces having too many TRs to accommodate. Thus, strategies for increasing TR numbers in NB would require policies that improve employment opportunities. In the absence of these opportunities, TRs will not be attracted to NB and when they are, they may not remain. Interestingly, if NB had TRs in proportion to the rest of Atlantic Canada but none of those additional TRs transitioned to PR, then NB would have the same transition rate as the other Atlantic Provinces.