

Mexican Immigrants and Temporary Residents in Canada: Current Knowledge and Future Research

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ABSTRACT

The migration of Mexicans to Canada is a new phenomenon, but it represents one of the most significant increases in the movement of people from Latin America. Since the mid-1990s, the number of Mexicans in Canada has been growing rapidly because of the return of the descendants of Canadian Mennonites who emigrated to Mexico and the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which eases the entrance requirements for Mexican nationals. This article looks at the number of Mexicans in Canada, the timeframe of entry, and the number of temporary migrants admitted, and it suggests areas for future research.

Keywords: 1. international migration, 2. Mennonites, 3. NAFTA, 4. Canada, 5. Mexico.

RESUMEN

La migración de mexicanos a Canadá, aunque es un fenómeno reciente, ha tenido uno de los incrementos más significativos entre los movimientos de personas de América Latina. Desde mediados de los noventa, el número de mexicanos en Canadá ha estado creciendo rápidamente como resultado del retorno de los descendientes de la población menonita que emigró a México y de las disposiciones del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte (TLCAN), que facilita el ingreso de ciudadanos mexicanos. En este artículo se examina el número de mexicanos en Canadá, el tiempo de su ingreso y el número de migrantes temporales admitidos, y sugiere áreas de investigación para el futuro.

Palabras clave: 1. migración internacional, 2. menonitas, 3. TLCAN, 4. Canadá, 5. México.

The most studied human movement in the world may be that of Mexicans entering the United States. Mexican and American academics and policy makers have paid considerable attention to this migration, which has been one of the largest in history. Recently, however, Mexican migration to Canada has been quietly increasing. The current number of Mexicans residing in Canada is minuscule compared to their numbers in the United States, which has some 8.5 million Mexican-born residents.¹ Nevertheless, between the 1991 and the 2001 Canadian census, the number of Mexicans in Canada increased dramatically, making it the largest group of immigrants from Spanish-speaking Latin America, and among the fastest growing from any country. It remains to be seen if the recent increases in Mexican migration documented here are temporary or constitute a longer-term trend, but certain geopolitical and domestic demographic changes make it likely that flows of Mexican migrants to Canada will continue into the foreseeable future.*

Although the Canadian literature is rich with studies on immigrants, little attention has been paid to Mexican migration, with a couple of notable examples (Whittaker, 1988; Samuel, Gutiérrez, and Vázquez, 1995). One reason is that most studies of Canadian immigration are based on aggregated data or on data disaggregated by immigration cohort or region. Both approaches obfuscate the experience of Mexicans. (For examples, see Baker and Benjamin, 1994; Bloom, Grenier, and Gunderson, 1995; Akbari, 1999; Grant, 1999; Green, 1999; Schaafsma and Sweetman, 2001; Frenette and Morissette, 2003; and the empirical work contained in Beach, Green, and Reitz, 2003.) Given the recent increase of Mexican immigration to Canada, the lack of information on the group represents a serious gap in our knowledge.

The importance of studying Mexicans in Canada is underlined by the likelihood that their numbers will continue to increase over the foreseeable future. This will be owing to advanced economic integration resulting from the full implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), demographic shifts in the Canadian population that will increase the need to import low-skilled labor, the arrival of increasing numbers of Mexican temporary workers and students, and even the continuing return of the Mennonite population from Northern Mexico.

¹ These figures, based on U.S. Census data, are from "Indicadores seleccionados de la población nacida en México residente en Estados Unidos de América, 1970-2000," Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI), available at <http://www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/rutinas/ept.asp?t=mpob65&c=3242>.

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Table 1. Number of Foreign-Born in Canada, 1991, 1996, and 2001.

<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i># change 1991-</i>	<i>% change 1991-</i>
<i>Mexico</i>	22,035	30,085	42,740	20,705	93.96
Antigua and Barbuda	2,005	2,105	2,335	330	16.46
Bahamas	1,315	1,215	1,285	-30	-2.28
Barbados	15,245	15,620	15,005	-240	-1.57
Cuba	1,965	3,395	5,320	3,355	170.74
Dominica	1,670	2,450	2,825	1,155	69.16
Dominican Republic	3,215	4,875	5,155	1,940	60.34
Grenada	5,550	7,805	8,975	3,425	61.71
Haiti	41,695	51,145	53,905	12,210	29.28
Jamaica	105,390	117,790	121,795	16,405	15.57
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1,635	2,500	2,495	860	52.60
Saint Lucia	2,005	2,555	3,245	1,240	61.85
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4,965	7,505	8,835	3,870	77.95
Trinidad and Tobago	56,425	63,565	65,145	8,720	15.45
<i>Caribbean (total)</i>	<i>245,650</i>	<i>285,515</i>	<i>299,290</i>	<i>53,640</i>	<i>21.84</i>
Belize	1,005	1,595	1,395	390	38.81
Costa Rica	1,735	1,875	2,500	765	44.09
El Salvador	33,315	40,180	39,200	5,885	17.66
Guatemala	10,180	13,965	14,095	3,915	38.46
Honduras	3,150	3,935	4,505	1,355	43.02
Nicaragua	9,285	8,960	9,535	250	2.69
Panamá	2,325	2,515	2,520	195	8.39
<i>Central America (total)</i>	<i>60,995</i>	<i>73,025</i>	<i>73,750</i>	<i>12,755</i>	<i>20.91</i>
Argentina	13,510	12,495	13,830	320	2.37
Bolivia	1,935	2,435	2,420	485	25.06
Brazil	8,645	10,200	13,455	4,810	55.64
Chile	24,440	26,945	25,210	770	3.15
Colombia	8,585	9,855	18,115	9,530	111.01
Ecuador	8,685	10,250	11,370	2,685	30.92
Guyana	67,810	78,280	84,160	16,350	24.11
Paraguay	5,050	5,140	5,020	-30	-0.59
Peru	12,435	16,200	18,105	5,670	45.60
Uruguay	5,770	5,955	6,300	530	9.19
Venezuela	4,065	6,730	8,035	3,970	97.66
<i>South America (total)</i>	<i>161,640</i>	<i>185,490</i>	<i>206,955</i>	<i>45,315</i>	<i>28.03</i>
<i>Latin America (less Mexico)</i>	<i>468,285</i>	<i>544,030</i>	<i>579,995</i>	<i>111,710</i>	<i>23.86</i>
<i>All countries (total)</i>	<i>4,566,300</i>	<i>5,137,785</i>	<i>5,647,125</i>	<i>1,080,825</i>	<i>23.67</i>

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 1991, 1996, and 2001, from the Migration Policy Institute website (www.migrationpolicy.org).

Note: WHAT may differ somewhat for these data compared to official Statistics Canada data since aggregation may be done differently. Column totals may not add since numbers for each cell have been rounded to the nearest five. Source countries with small numbers were eliminated but appear in totals. These figures include both permanent and temporary residents and show flows by country of last permanent residence, which may misrepresent the true number of Mexican-born individuals in Canada. However, Whittaker (1988) showed that 95.1% of the 4,721 individuals of Mexican birth who immigrated to Canada between 1976 and 1984 also had Mexico as the country of last residence. Given data limitations, we will make the assumption that the majority of Mexicans who arrive from Mexico were born in that country.

Using the existing literature, this article identifies the state of knowledge about the Mexican-born living in Canada. To provide a profile and quantification of Mexicans residing both permanently and on a temporary basis in Canada, the article uses data from the 2001 Canadian census and recent data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).² The probable labor-market performance of Mexicans in Canada is also examined. Because we should not view Mexican migration to Canada in isolation, where possible, the article compares this group to other immigrant groups, including those from Latin America.³ Finally, the article also considers areas for future research that would help not only to close the knowledge gap but to enhance our understanding of this increasingly important immigrant group.

Recent Mexican Migrant Flows

To address the shortcomings in knowledge about Mexican immigration to Canada, the first task at hand is to quantify the extent of that migration. CIC disaggregates migrants to Canada into “permanent” and “temporary” residents. The members of the former group have permanent residence status and can ultimately apply to become Canadian citizens. The latter group includes visitors, workers, and students, all of whom are expected to return to their countries of origin.

In Canada, the number of permanent and temporary residents from Mexico almost doubled from 1991 to 2001, rising from 22,035 to 42,720. This was the largest numerical increase for any group from Latin America over that period (see Table 1). Even in percentage terms, this increase was dramatic; only Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, and Guadeloupe had larger percentage changes in that period. By 2001, Mexico had a higher percentage of its nationals living in Canada than did any other country in the region, except for Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Permanent Residents

The composition and timing of Mexican migration flows is interesting. About one-half of the 36,225 permanent Mexican immigrants in Canada reported in the 2001 census had arrived between 1991 and 2001 com-

² CIC is the federal government agency responsible for regulating immigration to Canada. It is akin to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) in the United States, formerly called the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

³ In this article, “Latin America” refers to all countries all countries south of the United States, including Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

pared to about one-third of immigrants from all other Latin American countries, a figure similar to other immigrant groups (see Table 2). In each successive ten-year period, the Mexican cohort has about doubled in size, from 2,140 entries in 1961-1970, to 18,115 in 1991-2001. Thus, Mexican immigration is much more recent than that from other areas. Why has there been a sudden surge in Mexican immigration to Canada?

Table 2. Immigrant and Non-immigrant Population in Canada, by Country of Birth and Period of Entry, 2001.

	Before 1961	1961- 1970	1971- 1980	1981- 1990	1991- 2001	1991- 1995	1996- 2001	Immi- grants	Tempo- raryres- idents	Total
<i>México</i>	1,441	2,140	4,865	9,660	18,115	6,650	11,465	36,225	6,525	42,740
Antigua and Barbuda	80	535	800	510	280	135	150	2,200	135	2,335
Bahamas	85	120	360	295	260	95	165	1,120	170	1,285
Barbados	1,190	4,635	4,680	2,185	1,960	1,220	740	14,650	350	15,005
Cuba	150	275	295	715	3,500	960	2,535	4,940	385	5,320
Dominica	80	460	765	710	680	365	315	2,705	120	2,825
Dominican Republic	65	80	310	1,670	2,845	1,695	1,150	4,965	190	5,155
Grenada	100	1,080	1,975	1,955	3,170	1,560	1,610	8,275	700	8,975
Haiti	235	2,520	17,055	15,535	17,275	10,110	7,170	52,625	1,280	53,905
Jamaica	2,790	17,030	41,290	28,210	30,890	18,725	12,165	120,210	1,585	121,795
Saint Kitts and Nevis	125	730	920	465	235	90	145	2,475	15	2,495
Saint Lucia	80	525	820	735	845	530	315	3,010	235	3,245
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	325	1,325	2,300	1,710	2,565	1,380	1,180	8,220	615	8,835
Trinidad and Tobago	1,095	12,465	18,635	13,340	18,605	12,220	6,390	64,145	1,005	65,145
<i>Caribbean (total)</i>	6,655	42,380	91,045	68,540	83,640	49,355	34,290	292,270	7,025	299,290
Belize	30	120	295	575	360	85	280	1,385	10	1,395
Costa Rica	30	60	75	850	1,220	610	605	2,230	270	2,500
El Salvador	15	60	1,145	23,780	13,455	10,690	2,770	38,460	740	39,200
Guatemala	40	125	930	6,215	6,360	4,360	2,000	13,680	415	14,095
Honduras	0	50	355	1,190	2,735	1,690	1,050	4,340	170	4,505
Nicaragua	0	45	125	4,695	4,510	3,560	950	9,380	155	9,535
Panama	30	60	220	640	1,450	1,130	325	2,400	125	2,520
<i>Central America (total)</i>	150	520	3,150	37,950	30,095	22,115	7,980	71,860	1,880	73,760
Argentina	645	1,200	3,180	2,790	4,200	2,140	2,060	12,015	1,815	13,830
Bolivia	50	160	320	775	970	475	495	2,270	145	2,420
Brazil	500	1,090	1,765	2,345	5,995	2,630	3,370	11,700	1,750	13,455
Chile	155	515	10,995	7,190	5,645	3,550	2,095	24,495	715	25,210
Colombia	175	520	3,520	2,935	8,360	1,880	6,480	15,500	2,615	18,115
Ecuador	65	385	4,285	2,165	4,000	2,195	1,805	10,905	465	11,370
Guyana	1,315	7,420	24,110	27,045	23,640	15,025	8,620	83,535	630	84,160
Paraguay	785	1,210	1,115	1,075	775	280	490	4,960	60	5,020
Peru	180	585	2,330	5,660	8,360	5,275	3,080	17,120	985	18,105
Uruguay	55	790	2,285	1,385	1,580	1,015	565	6,095	210	6,300
Venezuela	270	525	805	1,490	3,965	1,660	2,305	7,055	985	8,035
<i>South America (total)</i>	4,310	14,500	54,910	55,045	67,790	36,310	31,480	196,560	10,390	206,955
<i>Latin America (less Mexico)</i>	11,115	57,400	149,105	161,535	181,525	107,780	73,750	560,690	19,295	580,005
<i>All countries (total)</i>	894,465		936,275		1,830,680		963,325		198,640	
		745,565		1,041,495		867,355		5,448,480		5,647,125

Source: Statistics Canada - Cat. No. 97F0009XCB01002.

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding error. Source countries with small numbers were eliminated but appear in totals.

At first glance, the numbers seem to support the hypothesis that the NAFTA has facilitated the flow of Mexicans to Canada. According to Philip Martin (2004), as reorganization of the Mexican economy following the implementation of NAFTA displaced workers, increased migration to the United States was expected. A reduction in those flows was also expected after the restructuring of the Mexican economy and the commensurate job creation. Certainly, those factors could be responsible for some of the increase in Canada, as well. The provisions of the NAFTA made it easier for Mexicans to enter Canada to work and do business.⁴ These NAFTA work permits are not immigrant visas and do not directly lead to permanent-resident status or Canadian citizenship, but they can lead to the increased flow of information from Canada to Mexico, which in turn can facilitate both temporary and permanent immigration by others.

The number of Mexican workers granted authorization to work in Canada increased by 112% between 1994 (the year that NAFTA came into effect) and 2001 (Table 3). This figure exceeds the growth in the number of work authorizations granted to American workers over the same period (Table 4).⁵ This growth in Mexican temporary workers has been across all entry types, but the largest numerical increase was in the intermediate and clerical categories, where almost all of the workers are employed in agriculture as a result of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). This does not mean that NAFTA has not had an impact on the flow of Mexican workers to Canada, only that the direct effect of NAFTA has been minimal in terms of Mexican workers arriving in Canada. By way of comparison, Mexicans and Canadians are entering the United States on a temporary basis in much larger numbers, in terms of both absolute numbers of entries as well as the percentage growth rates in the post-NAFTA period.

⁴ There are four categories of NAFTA workers. Business visitors are involved in international commercial activities and need to visit Canada to fulfill their duties. These individuals do not enter the Canadian labor market and they receive their compensation from outside of Canada. Intra-company transferees are Mexican or American citizens who, under certain conditions, can enter Canada with a work permit issued at the point of entry. Investors and traders are those individuals who intend to invest substantially in Canadian businesses, or who are involved in significant trade with Canada. These individuals are required to have work permits, which are usually issued outside of Canada. Professionals are those with advanced education, who work in certain occupations, and who have pre-arranged employment in Canada. They are compensated in Canada, and they enter with a work permit.

⁵ Of course, the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement was implemented in 1989 and the U.S. economy performed extremely well in the 1990s, both of which may explain the paltry growth in work authorizations for Canada over this period. Still, it should be noted that the issuance of NAFTA professional visas increased while all other work authorization categories declined.

Table 3. Flow of Temporary Workers and NAFTA Professionals to Canada from Mexico and the United States, Fiscal Years 1994 and 2001.

<i>Type of Entry</i>	<i>FY 1994</i>		<i>FY 2001</i>		<i>% change</i>	
	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
Non-NAFTA workers	5,207	16,791	11,011	15,613	111.5	-7.0
Management	4	1,053	11	592	175.0	-43.8
Professional	104	8,058	162	7,895	55.8	-2.0
Skilled and technical	28	4,896	83	4,879	196.4	-0.3
Intermediate and clerical	4,848	856	10,465	658	115.9	-23.1
Elementary and labourers	13	396	35	332	169.2	-16.2
Not stated	210	1,532	255	1,257	21.4	-18.0
NAFTA Professionals	34	6,385	101	8,236	197.1	29.0
Total	5,241	23,176	11,112	23,849	112.0	2.9

Source: Meyers and O'Neil (2004). *Note:* Numbers reflect individuals granted work authorization.

Table 4. Flow of Temporary Workers and NAFTA Professionals to the United States from Mexico and Canada, Fiscal Years 1994 and 2001.

<i>Type of Entry</i>	<i>FY 1994</i>		<i>FY 2001</i>		<i>% change</i>	
	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Canada</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Canada</i>
Non-NAFTA workers	24,885	23,922	113,856	61,437	357.5	156.8
Treaty traders and investors (E1/E2)	278	3,123	3,354	3,704	1,106.5	18.6
Speciality workers (H1B)	3,256	3,527	14,423	16,454	343.0	366.5
Intercompany transferees (L1)	2,632	6,482	15,723	22,838	497.4	252.3
NAFTA Professionals	11	24,826	2,571	92,915	23,272.7	274.3
Total	24,896	48,748	116,427	154,352	367.7	216.6

Source: Meyers and O'Neil (2004). *Note:* Numbers are for entries and not individuals. Individuals may enter may have multiple entries.

Another possible explanation for the sudden increase is that returning Mennonites have increased the Mexican-born population in Canada. Between 6,000 and 7,000 Mennonites emigrated from the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan to the states of Chihuahua and Durango in the 1920s, following attempts to impose mandatory English-language school attendance on Mennonite children and because of pressure from neighbors who responded negatively to the Mennonites' military exemption following the Conscription Act of 1917. Mexico promised them a continued military exemption as well as the right to operate their own schools in their own language. Although Mennonites have been moving between Canada and Mexico since the 1920s, the pace of return migration to Canada quickened during the last two decades of the twentieth century. This has been attributed to increased globalization (in general) and the NAFTA (in particular), as agricultural prices in Mexico have decreased while the cost of living

has increased. Land is also scarce and there are other non-economic factors, such as increased drug and alcohol use among the group's young people.⁶ Estimates suggest that at least 40,000 Latin American-born Mennonites and their descendents now live in Canada, many having returned from Mexico during the 1980s and 1990s. Since these individuals were born to parents of Canadian ancestry, those that the Canadian government considered to be citizens could bypass the normal Canadian immigration procedure. (Janzen 2004 explains how the Mennonites from Latin American countries were "repatriated" to Canada.)

The number of Mexicans entering Canada permanently has increased by 127%, from 786 in 1994 to 1,783 in 2003 (Table 5).⁷ Assuming that the immigration of the Mexican-born was comprised entirely of those who had to follow the normal immigration channels, the numbers in Table 5 should exceed those in Table 2, owing to return migration, migration to a third country, and deaths while in Canada. However, the numbers in Table 5 are smaller than the annual averages that can be calculated from Table 2, which suggests that the return to Canada of the Mennonite population has been sizeable since these individuals will show up in the census data but not in the immigration numbers.

Table 5. Permanent Residents Admitted to Canada, by Top Ten Latin American Source Countries in 2003, 1994-2003.

<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>% change 1994- 2003</i>	
Colombia	377	377	362	571	921	1,289	2,224	2,964	3,218	4,273	1,033.42	
Jamaica	3,910	3,607	3,278	2,835	2,234	2,339	2,453	2,769	2,448	1,981	-49.34	
Haiti	2,087	2,008	1,936	1,621	1,283	1,427	1,653	2,482	2,214	1,941	-7.00	
Argentina	442	482	545	474	414	402	455	623	843	1,783	303.39	
Mexico	786	763	1,231	1,720	1,392	1,720	1,656	1,934	1,915	1,737	120.99	
Guyana	4,136	3,870	2,288	1,760	1,193	1,320	1,267	1,664	1,425	1,390	-66.39	
Peru	978	831	830	666	472	545	605	842	858	1,018	4.09	
Cuba	373	445	512	560	525	689	852	966	866	875	134.58	
Brazil	553	583	592	601	550	637	840	854	759	862	55.88	
Venezuela	350	415	548	725	522	485	473	572	555	709	102.57	
<i>Total Latin America (less Mexico)</i>	<i>20,697</i>	<i>19,701</i>	<i>17,647</i>	<i>15,706</i>	<i>12,652</i>	<i>13,509</i>	<i>15,314</i>	<i>18,226</i>	<i>17,501</i>	<i>18,584</i>	<i>-10.21</i>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>All Countries</i>	<i>224,399</i>	<i>212,866</i>	<i>226,072</i>	<i>216,039</i>	<i>174,196</i>	<i>189,963</i>	<i>227,459</i>	<i>250,616</i>	<i>229,036</i>	<i>221,352</i>	<i>-1.36</i>

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005).

⁶ See Linda Wilcox Young (1995) for a discussion of some of the expected displacements to agricultural labor in the post-NAFTA period, most of which have been borne out with time. See also the Mennonite Central Committee website (www.mcc.org) for a brief background about the migration of Mennonites throughout the world, and Pedro Castro (2004) for detailed discussion of these returning Mennonites.

⁷ The percentage increases of Colombians, Cubans, and Argentines to Canada over this same period are larger. The first two cases are likely the result of increased refugee flows, and the latter, the result of the economic crisis in Argentina.

As further proof of the importance of this return migration, the Mennonite population in Canada is concentrated mainly in Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta, primarily in those provinces' rural areas. Comparing the provinces and cities of where Mexican-born residents reside with those where the Canadian-born and immigrants from other groups reside may be useful in determining the nature of the Mexican migration. Immigrants to Canada tend to live in the largest Canadian cities. Indeed, in 1996, almost 85% of all immigrants lived in one of Canada's 20 largest cities, and in 2001, the figure was nearly the same, 86%. Both figures are about 25 percentage points higher than the same figures for all Canadian residents (both immigrants and natives). As of 2001, only 48% of the Mexican population lives in the 20 largest cities, however.

Another interesting comparison is that just over half of all Canadian residents lived in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario in 2001, whereas over 70% of the Mexican-born lived there and only about 30% lived in the three provinces' 12 urban areas. Those figures are consistent with a large migration of Mennonites from Mexico. Together with the evidence presented above, this suggests that a sizeable number bypassed the usual immigration channels.

A back-of-the-envelope calculation allows us to estimate the numbers of Mennonites and non-Mennonite Mexican-born individuals living in Canada in 1996 and 2001 (see Table 6). Assuming that Mexicans of non-Mennonite background would be distributed throughout Canada in the same proportions as immigrants from all other source countries, we can estimate the number of Mennonites and non-Mennonites who entered from Mexico: In 1996, 11,934 of the 27,485 Mexican-born residing in Canada were Mennonites and 15,551 were not. In 2001, approximately 14,012 were returning Mennonites compared to 22,213 Mexican-born non-Mennonites.⁸ This represents increases of 17.4% and a 42.8%, respectively, among the Mennonite and non-Mennonite population of Mexican-born individuals in Canada.

⁸ These numbers are calculated by assuming that the proportion of non-Mennonite Mexican who immigrated to Canada and were distributed throughout the country in the same proportions of those who emigrated from all source countries. If we assume that all Mexicans in Canada in 1996 had the same settlement patterns as the group of all immigrants, then 65.59% of the Mexican born would live in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, and 15.71% of these individuals would live in rural areas. In other words, 2,836 of the 27,484 Mexican-born individuals in Canada ($27,485 \times 0.6559 \times 0.1571 = 2,836$) would have lived in rural areas in these three provinces. The actual number of Mexican-born living in these areas was 14,770. The difference is 11,934 and is an estimate of the number of Mexican Mennonites living in these areas. An estimate of the number of non-Mennonite Mexicans living in Canada is 15,551 ($27,485 - 11,934$). Using the same methodology and the 2001 data, we estimate the number of Mexican-born Mennonites to be 14,012 and the number of Mexican-born non-Mennonites at 22,213.

Table 6. Province and Census Metropolitan Areas of Mexicans, All Immigrants, and All Canadian Residents, 1996 and 2001.

	1996			2001		
	<i>Mex-icans</i>	<i>All immi-grants</i>	<i>All resi-dents</i>	<i>Mex-icans</i>	<i>All immi-grants</i>	<i>Resi-dents</i>
Canada	27,485	4,971,070	28,846,761	36,225	5,448,480	30,007,094
British Columbia	3,300	903,195	3,724,500	5,130	1,009,815	3,907,738
Vancouver	2,015	633,740	1,831,665	3,785	738,550	1,986,965
Victoria	200	57,800	304,287	205	57,590	311,902
Alberta	2,685	405,140	2,696,826	3,885	438,335	2,974,807
Calgary	445	170,880	821,628	760	197,410	951,395
Edmonton	400	158,370	862,597	435	165,235	937,845
Saskatchewan	280	52,315	990,237	285	47,825	978,933
Regina	75	15,230	193,652	55	14,015	192,800
Saskatoon	85	16,455	219,056	130	16,865	225,927
Manitoba	4,350	135,945	1,113,898	4,580	133,660	1,119,583
Winnipeg*	455	111,690	667,093	565	109,390	671,274
Ontario	13,690	2,724,490	10,753,573	17,805	3,030,075	11,410,046
Hamilton	315	145,660	624,360	535	154,655	662,401
Kitchener	395	82,760	382,940	590	90,570	414,284
London*	420	79,105	416,546	405	80,410	432,451
Oshawa	40	44,110	268,773	120	46,150	296,298
Ottawa-Hull (PQ)*	610	161,275	998,718	850	185,005	1,063,664
St. Catharines-Niagara	425	67,285	372,406	480	66,045	377,009
Sudbury (Greater)	15	12,250	165,618	15	10,780	155,601
Toronto*	2,510	1,772,905	4,263,759	4,370	2,032,960	4,682,897
Windsor*	380	57,965	286,611	340	67,880	307,877
Quebec	3,005	664,495	7,138,795	4,330	706,965	7,237,479
Montreal*	2,175	586,465	3,326,447	3,370	621,885	3,426,350
Quebec	225	17,390	671,889	260	19,685	682,757
New Brunswick	55	24,380	738,133	75	22,470	729,498
Nova Scotia	95	41,960	909,282	80	41,315	908,007
Halifax*	55	23,865	342,966	40	24,390	359,183
Prince Edward Island	10	4,395	134,557	20	4,140	135,294
Newfoundland & Labrador	0	8,490	551,792	10	8,030	512,930
St. John's	0	5,070	174,051	0	4,885	172,918
Yukon	10	3,190	30,766	0	3,020	28,674
North West Territories*	0	2,615	39,672	10	2,380	37,360
Nunavut*	0	460	24,730	10	445	26,745
Total - Top 20 CMAs	11,240	4,220,270	17,195,062	17,310	4,704,355	18,311,798
% of total immigration	40.90	84.90	59.61	47.78	86.34	61.02
Total - AB, MB, ON	20,725	3,265,575	14,564,297	26,270	3,602,070	15,504,436
% of total immigration	75.40	65.69	50.49	72.52	66.11	51.67
Total Urban-AB, MB, ON	5,955	2,752,565	9,463,956	8,900	3,097,100	10,281,722
%	28.73	84.29	64.98	33.88	85.98	66.31
Total Rural-AB, MB, ON	14,770	513,010	5,100,341	17,370	504,970	5,222,714
%	71.27	15.71	35.02	66.12	14.02	33.69
Total	27,485	4,971,070	28,846,761	36,225	5,448,480	30,007,094

Source: Statistics Canada - Cat. No. 97F0009XCB01003. Notes: * denotes an adjusted figure due to boundary change. Numbers may not add due to rounding. A number of jurisdictions do not include Indian reservations since these were not enumerated.

In sum, the increase in Mexican migration to Canada appears to be due to both the sizable flows of Mennonites of Canadian descent returning to Canada as well as a general increase in the number of Mexican-born residents in Canada. According to this rough estimate, in recent years, the group of Mexican-born non-Mennonites in Canada is larger and has been growing faster than has the Mexican-born Mennonite population. The increase in the number of temporary workers due to NAFTA may possibly also explain a portion of this flow, although the direct effects of NAFTA are small, as will be seen next.

Temporary Residents

Canadian temporary-migration permits are available in four main categories: (1) student, (2) temporary worker, (3) humanitarian (refugee) arrival, and (4) "other." Temporary migrants can hold more than one permit (Zlotnik, 1996:86). Although the "other" group is sizeable—some 72,024 of the total 244,922 admittances in 2003, primarily visitors—there is scant information on the group (CIC, 2005). Below, we will discuss the first three categories.

Students

The flow of Mexican students to Canada is high, but the stock of Mexican students is not (CIC 2003). This indicates that many Mexicans come to Canada to study for a short period (Table 7).⁹ In 2001, 4,847 Mexican students came to study in Canada (almost 7% of all foreign students) while stocks (4,475 Mexican students) accounted for only 3% of Canada's foreign students. Although these stocks are small, they have increased fivefold since 1990 when there were only 882 Mexican students in Canada. This increase is likely due to the NAFTA, expedited medical procedures for foreign students, the appreciation of the Mexican peso since 1997, and the establishment of three Canadian Education Centres (CECs) in Mexico, which promote Canadian educational institutions (CIC 2003). Between 1990 and 2001, the number of Mexican students in Canada increased 400%, compared to only about 56% between 1980 and 1990. In the latter instance, the increase was consistent with the increase in the numbers of students from all countries, but the increase from 1990 to 2001 is about three times greater for Mexican students compared to students from all countries. The in-

⁹ Newer data are available (CIC, 2005) that support the supposition that many Mexican students are taking part in short-term exchange and/or language-training programs. These data show a decline in both the stocks and flows of Mexican students in 2002 and 2003, probably because of the June 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). IRPA dropped the requirement that students obtain a visa to enter Canada if they are coming to study for six months or less.

crease has come as the result of higher enrollments in all types of training courses, but predominantly in trades, universities, and other post-secondary institutions (colleges and technical institutes).

Table 7. Stocks and Flows of Foreign Students in Canada, Mexico and All Countries, Selected Years, 1980-2001.

	<i>Fiscal Year</i>						<i>% Change</i>	
	<i>1980</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>1980-1990</i>	<i>1990-2001</i>
<i>Stocks Mexico</i>								
Total	567	565	882	1,115	3,747	4,475	55.56	407.37
Secondary or Less	261	277	429	416	1,092	1,231	64.37	186.95
Trade	39	50	180	219	633	822	361.54	356.67
University	170	164	241	383	1,180	1,347	41.76	458.92
Other Post-Secondary	0	11	17	75	433	642		3,676.47
Other	97	63	15	22	409	433	-84.54	2,786.67
<i>All Countries</i>								
Total	36,751	38,356	56,722	63,131	107,961	133,022	54.34	134.52
Secondary or Less	11,507	12,488	22,020	19,802	27,781	31,568	91.36	43.36
Trade	4,518	4,186	5,355	8,255	14,757	17,291	18.53	222.89
University	19,677	20,872	25,683	29,352	49,006	58,979	30.52	129.64
Other Post-Secondary	0	198	2,472	3,549	9,851	17,046		589.56
Other	1,049	612	1,192	2,173	6,566	8,138	13.63	582.72
<i>Flows</i>								
Mexico	601	776	857	1,119	4,259	4,847	42.60	465.58
All Countries	20,620	18,716	30,711	32,538	63,684	73,979	48.94	140.89

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2003).

Notes: Students are classified by country of last permanent residence, not country of citizenship. Numbers are as of December 1 of each year.

This sharp increase has important implications for permanent immigration to Canada since foreign students often seek permanent residency upon the completion of their studies, adding an important source of talent to the Canadian labor market. As immigration minister Joe Volpe told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration:

International students also represent a current and future pool of talent for many businesses right across Canada. That's why my Department is currently looking at ways to make sure Canada can attract more foreign students to come and study at Canadian universities and colleges and to better integrate into the labor market those who wish to gain Canadian work experience.

Training foreign students in Canada also overcomes the problem of foreign credential recognition that so often plagues immigrants with foreign education and experience.

Temporary Workers

Mexico is second only to the United States in the number of foreign workers who entered Canada annually from 1994 through 2003 (Table 8). In each of those years, Mexicans form the second or third largest stock of foreign temporary workers (Table 9). The fact that Mexico places second in the flow of workers, but third in the stock of foreign workers is likely due to the fact that these flows of immigrants are quite different. The Mexican migration is comprised of males working under the auspices of the SAWP. The program initially bought farm workers from the Caribbean to reduce seasonal domestic-labor shortages on Canadian fruit and vegetable farms, which had been experienced since the Second World War. In 1974, Mexican workers were allowed to join the program. (See Basok 2000, 2002, 2003 for a review of the program details as well as its outcomes in terms of living standards, treatment of workers, and investment in Mexico by these workers with money earned in Canada.) In 2004, this program brought 18,755 farm workers to Canada; about 10,000 of whom were Mexicans. Most work 10- to 12-hour days, six days a week for four to eight months. The job market for nannies and domestics in Canadian households, by contrast, is dominated by temporary workers from the Philippines. Most Mexican farm workers have returned home by December 1, when the stock of foreign workers is enumerated.

Table 8. Foreign Worker Population by Principal Country of Origin, Annual Flows, 1994-2003.

<i>Country of Origin</i>	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	<i>% change</i>
											<i>1994-2003</i>
United States	23,208	23,152	24,141	24,879	25,142	25,124	28,004	24,666	20,926	15,403	-33.63
Mexico	5,241	5,836	5,718	6,128	6,980	8,119	10,046	11,250	11,528	11,075	111.31
Australia	3,282	3,331	3,632	3,682	3,758	3,710	4,333	4,930	5,726	5,910	80.07
Jamaica	4,825	5,144	5,108	5,264	5,083	5,425	5,347	5,778	5,522	5,901	22.30
United Kingdom	4,578	4,506	4,717	5,101	5,352	6,381	7,001	7,338	6,530	5,859	27.98
Japan	4,281	4,255	4,134	4,513	4,549	5,047	4,292	4,431	5,341	5,426	26.75
Philippines	1,372	2,010	1,819	2,056	2,198	2,198	2,256	4,083	4,689	4,877	255.47
France	3,564	3,855	3,873	4,255	4,321	4,823	5,574	5,246	4,806	4,798	34.62
India	868	1,084	1,123	1,053	1,392	1,539	2,394	2,163	2,159	2,103	142.28
Germany	1,615	1,857	1,774	1,865	2,150	2,338	2,558	2,608	2,204	1,864	15.42
Trinidad and Tobago	1,482	1,584	1,630	1,739	1,746	1,663	1,799	1,830	1,679	1,600	7.96
China	1,518	1,099	1,058	984	1,187	1,464	1,618	1,549	1,441	1,021	-32.74
Total for Top Ten	53,594	55,080	56,546	59,482	61,279	64,818	71,805	72,493	69,431	63,216	17.95
Total Other Countries	13,989	14,596	14,945	16,160	18,786	21,727	24,241	24,936	21,603	18,935	35.36
Grand Total	67,583	69,676	71,491	75,642	80,065	86,545	96,046	97,429	91,034	82,151	21.56

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005). *Notes:* These are figures for primary country of last permanent residence. Seasonal workers are counted each time they enter the system. In 2003, 14,773 of the 82,151 entries were reentries of seasonal workers.

Table 9. Stock of Foreign Workers by Principal Country of Origin, 1997-2003.

Country of Origin	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	% change 1994- 2003
United States	17,483	17,675	18,536	19,880	20,324	19,841	20,940	20,684	20,034	20,449	16.97
Philippines	7,305	6,005	5,465	5,710	5,854	5,976	6,348	8,249	10,647	12,516	71.33
Mexico	4,958	5,375	5,294	5,807	6,753	8,099	9,973	11,141	11,621	11,649	134.95
United Kingdom	4,295	4,329	4,413	4,633	5,133	5,615	6,345	6,860	6,946	7,337	70.83
Japan	5,266	5,098	5,064	5,370	5,262	6,158	5,464	5,530	6,846	7,332	39.23
Australia	3,211	3,512	3,745	3,796	3,875	3,896	4,426	5,293	6,093	6,762	110.59
Jamaica	5,260	5,497	5,342	5,354	5,137	5,474	5,232	5,676	5,452	5,955	13.21
France	2,052	2,036	2,043	2,248	2,465	2,790	3,268	3,683	3,998	4,409	114.86
India	957	963	942	961	1,292	1,542	1,889	1,900	2,208	2,994	212.85
China	2,222	1,559	1,324	1,132	1,246	1,204	1,353	1,561	1,950	2,683	20.75
Germany	1,299	1,397	1,411	1,513	1,605	1,642	1,966	2,233	1,985	2,239	72.36
Trinidad and Tobago	1,543	1,640	1,588	1,742	1,775	1,644	1,761	1,761	1,645	1,644	6.55
Total for Top Ten	53,555	52,726	52,901	56,053	58,183	61,135	65,851	71,249	75,830	82,086	53.27
Total Other Countries	15,710	15,898	15,161	15,028	16,838	18,769	21,713	23,461	24,801	29,109	85.29
Grand Total	69,265	68,624	68,062	71,081	75,021	79,904	87,564	94,710	100,631	111,195	60.54

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005).

Notes: These are figures for primary country of last permanent residence and are workers in the system as of December 1 each year. Those who obtained permanent resident status are not included.

Whereas there is little information on most Mexican immigrants in Canada, recently, the SAWP has been studied extensively. Both Canadian and Mexican government officials have hailed the program as a success, often pointing to the return rate to Canada of Mexicans (who can be requested by name by Canadian employers). For example, Carlos Obrador, Mexico's vice-consul in Toronto, said that the Mexico-Canada guest worker program "is a real model for how migration can work in an ordered and legal way." According to the Mexican government, 80% of Mexican workers are repeat hires and very few stay on in Canada illegally. Then-Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, in Mexico in March 2003, said:

This program where your farmers can come and work in Canada has worked extremely well and now we are exploring (ways) to extend that to other sectors. The bilateral seasonal agricultural workers program has been a model for balancing the flow of temporary foreign workers with the needs of Canadian employers.

Still, there have been problems, most of which have arisen from the bureaucracy on the Mexican end of the program, as well as the expense and time of frequent travel to Mexico City to obtain the required documents. There have also been some complaints that workers are not treated well yet are afraid to criticize substandard working conditions for fear of not being able to return the following year. Still, the high-return rate suggests that the SAWP's beneficial aspects outweigh the problems, at least as far as the workers themselves are concerned.

Although the number of farm-related workers arriving in Canada in the 1990s has increased dramatically, there has been only a modest increase in the number of other Mexicans coming to Canada to work on a temporary basis (Table 3). The number of temporary workers coming to Canada from Mexico increased by 112% between 1994 and 2001, but most of this growth has come as a result of the increase in farm workers (intermediate and clerical workers). The numbers of workers admitted under many other categories (including those entering under the provisions of NAFTA) have increased more dramatically in percentage terms, although they are still small in absolute numbers.¹⁰

Still, one might have expected the number of NAFTA workers to have increased in Canada over this period, owing to the heightened restrictions placed on temporary Mexican workers entering the United States even under the provisions of NAFTA (Papademetriou, 2003). Canadian professionals have a much easier time crossing the border into the United States than do their Mexican counterparts. The Canadians only need to document their professional credentials and have an offer letter from a U.S. employer in order to obtain a TN (or NAFTA professional) visa. The application can be processed at any port-of-entry along the U.S.-Canadian border. By contrast, Mexican professionals must have a visa from a U.S. consulate, documentation of credentials, and an offer letter from a U.S. employer. In addition, the prospective employer must file a labor-conditions application. Furthermore, until 2004, no more than 5,000 TN visas that could be issued to Mexican nationals annually (although that limit may have not been binding). While a TN visa allows individuals to work in the country for one year at a time (with an unlimited number of extensions), an H-1B visa allows for three years of work (renewable once to a maximum of six years). For Mexican professionals, both the TN and H-1B visas require similar paperwork, yet for Canadians, it is much more time consuming and costly to apply for an H-1B visa than a

¹⁰ Table 4 shows the dramatic increase in both Mexicans and Canadians admitted temporarily to the United States. While the figures in this table represent admittances and not individuals, as in Table 3, they still show that there has been a dramatic influx of temporary workers to the United States. Thus, the United States continues to be a bigger draw for temporary legal workers from Mexico than is Canada, and both the absolute numbers and the growth rates attest to this fact.

TN visa (Jachimowicz and Meyers, 2002). For Mexicans, the opposite is true and evidence suggests that Mexican professionals have been following the traditional routes of temporary migration and applying for these visas which offer better security with about the same amount of paperwork (Papademetriou, 2003).

Humanitarian Arrivals

In 2003, Mexico ranked third on the list of humanitarian arrivals in Canada, with 2,428 individual cases, a figure about ten times higher than the same figures in 1994 (Table 10).¹¹ Over that nine-year period, Mexico ranked third in terms of growth rate (behind only Colombia and Costa Rica). Although current published sources do not disaggregate the reasons given by asylum seekers, we do know that the number of Mexicans seeking entry into Canada has increased.

Table 10. Flow of Humanitarian Population by Top Ten Sources Countries in 2003, 1994-2003.

<i>Country of Origin</i>	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	<i>% change 1994- 2003</i>
Pakistan	694	1,016	1,026	1,198	1,732	2,445	3,131	3,008	3,264	3,284	373.20
United States	258	249	241	315	225	246	333	397	836	2,527	879.46
Mexico	246	575	912	978	1,065	1,049	1,279	1,562	1,968	2,428	886.99
Costa Rica	81	72	92	96	173	459	314	694	1,496	1,738	2,045.68
Colombia	83	72	82	111	315	674	1,226	1,637	2,390	1,521	1,732.53
China	474	765	909	1,198	2,007	2,493	2,108	2,626	1,887	1,374	189.87
Sri Lanka	2,460	2,287	2,728	2,508	2,427	2,661	2,790	2,264	1,538	1,077	-56.22
India	1,193	1,269	1,426	1,261	1,173	1,547	1,492	1,466	1,197	1,024	-14.17
Nigeria	212	305	408	470	648	564	872	691	630	597	181.60
Guyana	65	76	92	120	175	226	288	468	515	542	733.85
Total for Top Ten	10,927	13,298	14,251	12,058	12,406	21,626	17,899	22,140	16,540	16,112	47.45
Total Other Countries	10,609	12,310	11,332	12,378	12,700	16,544	19,561	21,850	16,113	13,252	24.91
Grand Total	21,536	25,608	25,583	24,436	25,106	38,170	37,460	43,990	32,653	29,364	36.35

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005).

Notes: These are figures for primary country of last permanent residence.

Sebastián Escalante (2004) showed that sexual orientation and domestic violence were the two most common reasons given by Mexican

¹¹ Data that show only flows of refugee claimants by country of alleged persecution basically mirror those in Table 10. The exception is the United States, which does not rank in the top ten source countries in the case of refugees; recent increases from that country is likely due to those fleeing military service.

refugee claimants in Canada in 1996 and 1997. In 1996, Mexicans presented 951 claims to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), and in 1997, 926 (Mexico ranked ninth and sixth, respectively, in terms of the percentage of total claims). Most were either rejected, finalized by other means, or became part of the backlog of refugee claimants. Escalante argues that the widespread assumption that Mexicans refugee claimants are simply economic migrants or tourists is not true. However, he does not present evidence showing the positive determinations of Mexican cases versus other refugee claimants, so we do not know the success rate (and therefore, presumably the legitimacy) of these claims in comparison to other source countries. In 2004, the IRB finalized 2,684 claims by Mexicans. Only 25% were accepted, compared to an overall acceptance rate of 40%.¹²

Canadian Labor-Market Performance

Canada accepts the majority of its immigrants based on their ability to perform well in the labor market and to contribute to Canadian society. For Canadian economists and policy makers, the most important question is how immigrants perform in the labor market, both in absolute terms, and relative to other immigrant groups and native-born Canadians. For Mexican immigrants and temporary residents in Canada, however, there is almost no information about their labor-market assimilation. In other words, how well do Mexican immigrants adapt to the Canadian labor market? This dearth of information is largely owing to the inclusion of Mexicans within the aggregated group of “all Latin Americans” (for example, in the Canadian Census Public Use Microdata Files). What information exists is only of limited use for commenting on the successful labor-market assimilation of Mexicans in Canada.

David A. Green (1999) has shown that more recent cohorts are less skilled than were previous cohorts, and those immigrants who are not assessed on their skills or are not fluent in English at the time of arrival are less occupationally mobile. Although we currently have no idea about the number of Mexicans entering as economic immigrants (that is, those assessed by CIC on their labor-market skills), the increasing number of humanitarian arrivals from Mexico does not bode well for their potential success in the Canadian labor market. Elizabeth McIssac (2003) also shows that in the 1990s, newer immigrants in general had lower

¹² The Canadian Council for Refugees compiled these numbers from data supplied by the IRB, the government body that adjudicates refugee cases in Canada. A total of 40,408 claims were finalized, with 16,005 (40%) accepted, 19,108 (47%) denied, 2,809 (7%) abandoned, and 2,414 (6%) withdrawn or otherwise resolved. See www.web.ca/~ccr.

employment rates, higher unemployment rates, and lower wages, relative to both earlier immigrants and native-born Canadians, even though these recent immigrants have higher educational levels than the other two groups. She argues that this is due to problems with Canadians accepting or recognizing foreign credentials. Marc Frenette and René Morissette (2003) compared data from 2001 Census to earlier censuses and found that the most recent immigrants have lower wages, and prime-aged immigrant workers (those in the middle of their working lives) are mainly affected, which further suggests that foreign labor-market experience is not valued in Canada. A Statistics Canada (2003) survey showed that six of 10 recent immigrants to Canada worked in different occupations than the ones they had had before coming to Canada, and that many immigrants were concentrated in relatively low-skilled occupations, such as manufacturing and sales. Jeffrey Reitz (2005: 3) summarizes this nicely:

Although education credentials among recent immigrants have been higher on average than those of Canada's native-born workforce and are rising, and despite the fact that recent immigrants' levels of fluency in one official language have not changed, the trends in immigrants' employment and earnings are downward. This suggests that the real problem is not so much their skill levels, important as they may be, but rather the extent to which these skills are accepted and effectively utilized in the Canadian workplace.

Thus, the Canadian labor market may be under-utilizing immigrants' skills, and this is reflected in their incomes. Bente Baklid (2004) conducted interviews with survey groups of immigrants and found that many who obtained Canadian education credentials or experience in Canada felt that this was essential to their labor market success. Similarly, Arthur Sweetman (2004) has shown that earnings for immigrants educated in their home countries is positively correlated with the general quality of education in those countries as measured by mean standardized international test scores. Unfortunately, Mexico does not rank well compared to other countries in these tests, implying that Mexicans who were educated in Mexico may be at a significant earnings disadvantage in Canada (the good news is that immigrants educated in Canada do not generally have this problem). Similarly, Naomi Alboim and her co-authors (2005) show that Canadian education increases the return to foreign education, but Canadian experience does not increase the return to foreign experience. Since the majority of Mexicans entered Canada during the 1990s, this recent decline in immigrant wages may disproportionately affect this group. Furthermore, the chances of emigrating from Canada appear to be higher for immigrants who have

had difficulty finding good employment in the Canadian labor market because of, among other things, credential recognition. These authors find that 4.3% of all permanent immigrants who landed in Canada in the 1990s had emigrated from Canada by 2000, based on an analysis of income tax returns. For those from South and Central America, this figure is only 2.6%, one of the lowest proportions for any source region (Dryburgh and Hamel, 2004:15).

Related to labor-market performance is the incidence of poverty among immigrant groups, both in absolute and relative terms. Immigrants are over-represented at both the high and the low end of the earnings distribution (Kazemipur and Halli, 2000:81). In 1991, the Canadian national poverty rate was 15.6%; Latin Americans had the highest poverty rate (41%) of any ethnic group (2000:83). These high levels of poverty might be due to the recent nature of migration from Latin America. Notably, Canada experienced a recession in 1991, which probably inflated the poverty rates for those newcomers as they had yet to fully integrate into the Canadian labor market. Moreover, the age-earnings profile of Canadian males, both high school and university graduates, deteriorated during the last quarter of the twentieth century, which might also affect labor-market assimilation (Beaudry and Green, 2000).

Mexico has allowed dual citizenship since 1996, and so one small positive development for assimilation is the number of Mexicans acquiring Canadian citizenship. Because Mexican migratory flows are fairly new and there is a long waiting period to acquire citizenship, the number of Mexicans granted Canadian citizenship is still not high: In 2000, only 1,286 individuals naturalized (Migration Policy Institute, no date). Still this represents an increase of 128% since 1996 and, given the propensity of immigrants with higher-than-average human-capital endowments to self-select into citizenship, this is a particular positive development for Canada (DeVoretz and Pivnenko, 2004).

Without the benefit of disaggregated data and a solid multivariate analysis, we can only speculate about the labor-market performance of Mexicans living in Canada vis-à-vis other immigrants groups and native-born Canadians

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

Mexicans, arriving in greater numbers as immigrants, temporary workers, students, and even refugees, have become increasingly important in Canada. Still, little is known about this group, aside from the fact that there are more Mexicans in Canada today than ever before, and that

this group has been growing at a rapid rate. This demographic change is likely the result of both the returning Mennonite population and the provisions of the NAFTA, which make entry into Canada less burdensome for Mexican nationals. The recent literature on immigration to Canada indicates that it will be difficult for these groups to succeed economically in the Canadian labor market. Unfortunately, much of what we can infer from this published research is speculative in regard to Mexicans since most of this research does not disaggregate immigrants by country of origin. As such, it is almost impossible to determine how Mexicans are doing economically in Canada, especially given the diversity of the Mexican immigrant population, which ranges from highly skilled professionals to low-skilled workers.

It is expected that the recent increase in Mexicans coming into Canada will continue for several reasons. Economic integration will deepen as the NAFTA provisions fully take effect. As the ranks of Mexican immigrants swell, migrant networks will form and consolidate, providing a demonstration effect and facilitating the flow of information back to Mexico about Canada as an alternative destination to the United States. Canada is facing demographic changes, including a skills shortage and the retirement of the baby boomers (Baklid, 2004). The shortage will particularly occur among low-skilled workers, which could put pressure on policymakers to expand programs such as the SAWP into areas beyond agriculture (Burstein and Biles, 2003).

Although the number of Mexicans desiring to migrate is expected to decrease in the longer term, as birth rates in Mexico fall and the Mexican economy improves and offers better employment opportunities to its citizens (Martin, 2004), over the near term, the potential for migration growth to Canada continues. This underscores the main point of this article: Little is known about this increasingly important group of migrants and this gap in our collective knowledge that should be closed. Directions for future research include:

- What are the characteristics of the Mexicans who immigrate to Canada? How does this group compare to other immigrants in terms of the main indicators for labor-market performance: age at arrival, education, language ability (in English or French), labor-market experience, and so forth?
- How have recent Mexican immigrants performed in the labor market compared to other immigrants? Is credential recognition, as well as other barriers to the Canadian labor market, a problem for Mexicans as it is for immigrants in general?
- Why are more Mexican students studying in Canada? What is their likelihood of remaining in the country following graduation?

- On what type of abuse or persecution do Mexicans base their claims for refugee status? Why is the proportion of successful refugee claims so low for Mexico compared to the success rates from other source countries?

Some of the data necessary to answer these questions do exist, but as noted above, they generally have not been exploited by researchers: CIC provides special tabulations to researchers, and every five years, Statistics Canada releases census microdata with detailed information on the foreign-born population in Canada. Statistics Canada also manages the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB), which combines the landing data on immigrants to their taxation records,¹³ and the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) contains similar data. Statistics Canada conducts numerous other surveys that may be useful as well.¹⁴ Finally, the Immigration and Refugee Board and other sources provide detailed information on many refugee cases.

The rapid increase in the number of Mexicans residing both permanently and temporarily in Canada is likely to increase over the next few years. Despite the relative importance of one of Canada's newest groups of immigrants, we understand very little about these migrants and how they are assimilating into the Canadian labor market. It is hoped that this article will inspire more research regarding this large and disparate group of immigrants to Canada.

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¹³ Landing data are those collected when immigrants enter Canada for the first time following obtaining permanent resident status. These data can be combined with income data from annual income tax returns to provide researchers with information on the economic experiences of immigrants over time in Canada.

¹⁴ Special tabulations by CIC, however, are not available without cost to researchers. Similarly, Canadian census data include Mexicans in Canada but only as part of a group that also includes other Latin American countries. Census data that allow researchers to identify Mexicans in Canada are available only at Regional Data Centres, under strictly controlled conditions. See Michael G. Abbott (2003), Martha Justus and Jessie-Lynn MacDonald (2003), and Doug Norris (2003) for more details about these data sets.

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