

Research Summary

Noncitizenship across the Life Course: Work, Social Entitlements and Belonging

INTRODUCTION

Whether they enter on temporary work visas, tourist visas, student visas, family dependents or as asylum seekers, many migrants in Canada spend time in a state of immigration status precarity. Although envisioned by official policy as short-term, precarious immigration status is increasingly becoming a form of de facto settlement in Canada, with precarious-status migrants living in economic vulnerability with limited access to social services and citizenship rights. As such, immigration status has the potential to become a primary fault line of social stratification in Canada.

OBJECTIVES

This project brings together social service agency partners with academic researchers in a community-based action research project to understand how precarious noncitizenship is transforming experiences and narratives of work, social citizenship and belonging in ways that impact society as a whole. Addressing both the goals of the Insight and the Connections programs, this project mobilizes the knowledge of frontline social service workers, advocacy organizations, and persons living with precarious legal status, and academic research to the mutual benefit of each partner.

The particular research aims are:

- To gain insight into how precarious noncitizen migrants build relationships, create social networks and engage different institutional actors to break down barriers and negotiate access to work and social citizenship as they integrate into local communities and labour markets
- To understand how negotiated access to work and social citizenship varies across the life course, specifically for precarious noncitizen youth, working women, and seniors
- To explore how precarious status noncitizenship intersects with social location, particularly racialization, sexual orientation and gender identity, in shaping experiences of negotiated presence and access, particularly for noncitizen youth and working women
- To learn how the de facto settlement of precarious noncitizens is transforming both citizen and noncitizens' practices and narratives of membership and belonging

Our concomitant knowledge mobilization goals are:

- To co-create knowledge with social service workers in frontline and advocacy roles, and with people living with precarious legal status, regarding both access and barriers to work and social citizenship experienced by precarious noncitizen youth, working women and seniors
- To co-create public understanding of practices and experiences of precarious noncitizens in Canada and increase awareness of the relationship between precarious noncitizen de facto settlement and social inequality in Canada

To advance these objectives, we will analyze survey data and conduct three community-engaged qualitative case studies; create a transformative knowledge exchange partnership between academics, frontline social service workers, and policy advocates with a long-standing focus on the barriers to work and social entitlements of precarious noncitizens; and extend public knowledge by producing a film on experiences of precarious noncitizen de facto settlement.

Research Leads

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Other Community Partners include

The 519

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic

FCJ Refugee Centre

Women's Health in Women's Hands