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Immigrants' perspectives
on their first four years
in Canada

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by Grant Schellenberg and Hélène Maheux

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Immigrants' perspectives on their first four years in Canada:

Highlights from three waves of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada

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Introduction

The experiences of immigrants during the settlement process can be examined from a number of different perspectives. Over the past 15 years, settlement in Canada has most often been examined in terms of immigrants' labour market and financial experiences. Among the topics investigated are the earnings trajectories of immigrants after arrival, the economic returns to their foreign credentials and experience, their ability to find employment in their area of specialization, and their incidence of low income.

Settlement has also been examined in terms of communities and social networks; for example, geographic patterns of settlement and the formation of 'immigrant neighbourhoods' have been the subject of research for over 30 years. More recently, the roles played by social networks and community-

based organizations have been a central focus.

In this report, we examine settlement in terms of the subjective assessments and perceptions of immigrants themselves. After having been in Canada for four years, what do immigrants like and dislike most about living here? What types of difficulties do they face? Do they still believe that coming to Canada was the right decision? Their views provide an important perspective on the settlement process and are a useful complement to existing studies.

The report is divided into three sections. In the first section, immigrants' perceptions regarding their first four years in Canada are examined. We consider aspects of Canadian life that they like and dislike, their reasons for remaining in Canada and their perceptions of their quality of life and material well-being.

In the second section, we examine the difficulties that immigrants face during their first four years in Canada. The section begins with an overview of the issue, followed by more detailed information on difficulties faced finding employment, accessing language training, finding housing and accessing health care.

In the third section, immigrants' assessment of their overall experience in Canada is considered, including the extent to which life in Canada has met their expectations, whether they believe coming here was the right decision and their citizenship intentions.

Overall, the report provides a broad overview of new immigrants' perceptions. Emphasis is placed on their responses to a broad range of questions rather than focusing on a single issue in great detail. Given the breadth of the report, differences in the perceptions of new immigrants

are examined across a limited set of characteristics, with particular emphasis on immigration admission categories.

Canada's immigration policy has been guided by three broad objectives: to reunite families, to fulfill the country's international obligations and humanitarian tradition with respect to refugees; and to foster a strong viable economy in all regions of Canada.

These objectives are reflected in the three main admission categories of immigration through which people are admitted to Canada as permanent residents: family class immigrants, refugees, and economic immigrants. People admitted through the economic category include principal applicants and accompanying spouses or dependants of skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial/territorial nominees and live-in caregivers.¹

Throughout this report, the perceptions and assessments of immigrants are shown separately for individuals in these three categories.

Methodology

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) was designed to study how newly arrived immigrants adjust over time to living in Canada. During the first LSIC interview, some 12,000 immigrants aged 15 and over were interviewed between April 2001 and March 2002, about six months after their arrival. During the second LSIC interview, about 9,300 of the same immigrants were interviewed again in 2003, approximately two years after their arrival, and in 2005, about 7,700 of the same immigrants were interviewed a third time, approximately four years after their arrival. We refer to these three interviews as Waves 1, 2 and 3 of the LSIC. The sample of approximately 7,700 immigrants that was tracked over all three waves of the LSIC is the focus of this study. This allows us to examine how the perceptions

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Time since arrival in Canada	Approx 6 months	Approx 2 years	Approx 4 years
Reference period	Approx 0 to 6 months after arrival	Approx 7 to 24 months after arrival	Approx 25 to 48 months after arrival

and experiences of new immigrants changed over their first four years in Canada. The terms 'LSIC respondents' and 'new immigrants' are used interchangeably to refer to this group.

On some questions, LSIC respondents are asked about their views at the time of the interview – for example, if you had to make the decision again, would you come to Canada? On other questions, they are asked about their experiences during a specific period of time – for example, did they seek housing since their last interview? The reference periods for these questions are shown in Table 1.

It is important to note that the characteristics and experiences of the LSIC immigrant cohort may or may not be the same as those of immigrants who arrived in Canada at earlier or later points in time. For example, the downturn of the high-technology sector and the repercussions of September 11 were two events that may have had particular consequences for immigrants arriving in Canada in 2001-2002. Furthermore, the source countries from which immigrants arrive – particularly refugees – vary over time, introducing compositional differences between landing cohorts. In short, readers should note that we are examining the settlement experiences of a specific group of individuals. That being said, the successes and challenges faced by this group shed light on the process of immigrant settlement more broadly.

Newly arrived immigrants are a highly mobile population and relocating each of the initial LSIC

respondents two and four years after arrival posed a difficult challenge. To study immigrant perceptions and assessments of Canada, the loss of approximately 4,300 of the initial 12,000 respondents raises important questions: is sample bias introduced into the LSIC by the loss of some of the initial respondents? Were the initial LSIC respondents who were not relocated for a follow-up interview the ones who were most dissatisfied with life in Canada? If so, the perceptions of the LSIC respondents remaining after 4 years may be more optimistic than those of the sample initially interviewed six months after arrival.

To address this issue, the characteristics of Wave 1 respondents who were and were not relocated for a follow-up interview during Waves 2 and 3 of the survey were analyzed. Characteristics associated with not being relocated were identified and used to create a longitudinal weight that is applied to the data set. This makes some adjustment for bias that may be introduced by sample attrition.

In spite of this adjustment, it is prudent to be mindful of the loss of immigrants from the LSIC sample. All in all, the results of this study are representative of the immigrants who arrived in 2001-2002 and who were relocated over the four year course of the survey. The approximately 7,700 LSIC respondents who were relocated are representative of approximately 157,600 new immigrants, of whom 104,400 are economic immigrants, 42,600 are family class immigrants and 9,700 are refugees.²

Section one: Perspectives on life in Canada

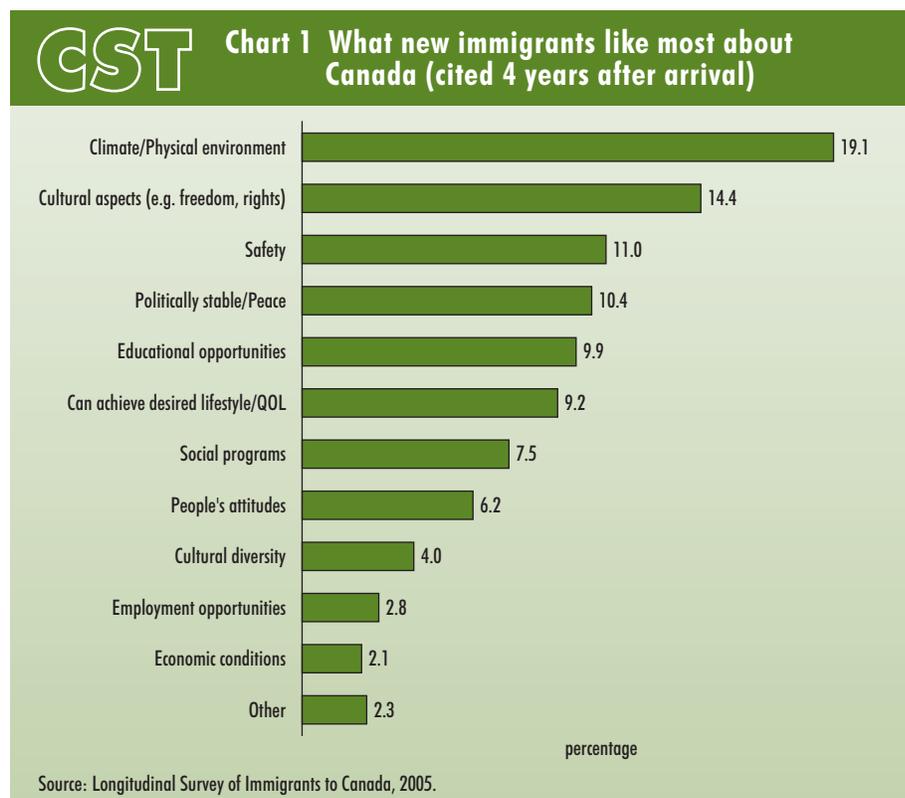
What new immigrants like and dislike about Canada

Four years after arriving in Canada, LSIC respondents were asked what they like and dislike most about living here.³ Freedom, rights, safety and security, and prospects for the future were among the things they like most, while lack of employment opportunities was one of the things they dislike most.

The largest share of immigrants (19%) said that the climate/physical environment in Canada was what they like most (Chart 1).⁴ This was the case for almost half (48%) of LSIC respondents living in Vancouver compared with 10% of those in Montréal and 14% of those in Toronto.

Many immigrants identified the social and political environment in Canada as what they like most about this country: 14% said they like cultural aspects such as rights and freedoms, 11% said they like the safety they experience, and 10% said it's the peace and political stability they like most. While these responses were cited by immigrants in all admission categories (Table 2), they were most prevalent among refugees. Refugees come to Canada to escape the dangers and hardships associated with war, political upheaval and social unrest and the social and political environment they find here likely stands in contrast to what they left behind.

Some new immigrants said that it is the opportunities in Canada they like most. For example, 10% said it's the educational opportunities for themselves or their family they like most, while 9% said it's the opportunity to achieve a desired lifestyle or quality of life. But while opportunities for education and lifestyle were cited by many, far fewer said they like the employment opportunities (3%) or economic conditions (2%) here. In this respect, new immigrants appear to be some-



what more positive about their prospects for the future in Canada than they are about their recent experiences in the labour market.

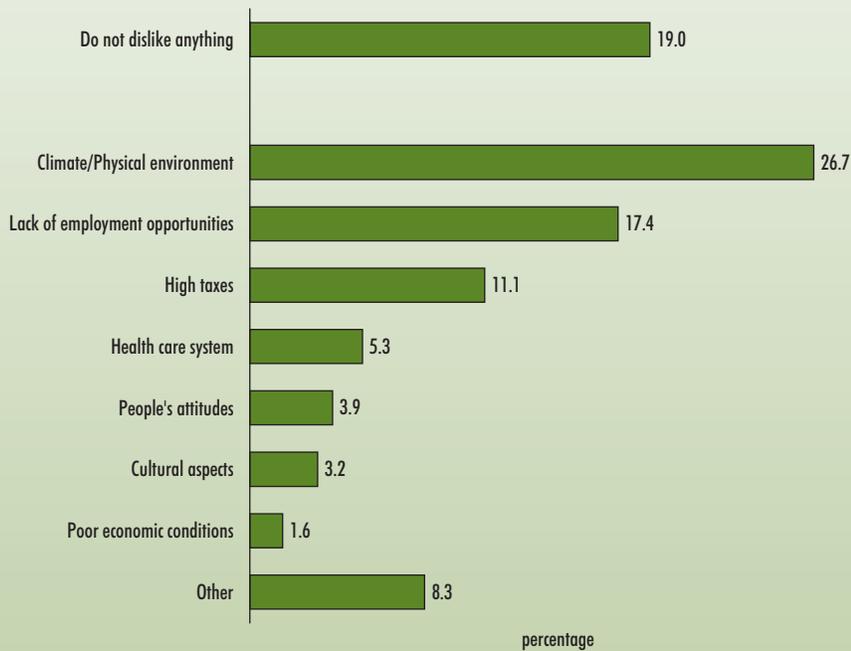
Immigrants were also asked what they dislike most about life in Canada after four years. The climate again featured prominently in this regard, with 27% of new immigrants saying this is what they disliked most (Chart 2).⁵ This was the case for 27 to 30% of those residing in Montréal and Toronto compared with 7% of those in Vancouver.⁶ The economic challenges facing immigrants were also evident, with 17% saying that it's the lack of employment opportunities and 11% saying it's high taxes they dislike most. Immigrants in the economic category were more likely than family class immigrants and refugees to cite these factors (Table 3). Finally, almost one-fifth of new immigrants (19%) said there isn't anything they dislike about Canada.

Overall, new immigrants value the social and political environment in

Canada, characterized by its rights, freedoms and security. While this was particularly the case for refugees, such reasons were also prevalent among immigrants in the economic and family categories. On the other hand, aside from the weather, it is the lack of employment opportunities that immigrants dislike most. These views were reflected in the reasons why immigrants remain in Canada.

Reasons for immigrating and for staying

During their interview 4 years after landing, LSIC respondents were asked about their plans to stay in Canada. Most (81%) said they plan to settle permanently in Canada, 5% said they plan to maintain residences here and elsewhere, 2% said they plan to live in Canada for some time and then return to their home country, and less than 1% said they plan to move to another country. Finally, 10% were uncertain of their plans.



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Those individuals who said they plan to settle permanently in Canada or to maintain a residence here were asked about their reasons for staying. Many of the things that immigrants like most about Canada were reflected in their responses (Table 4). Considering all reasons cited, over half of these respondents (55%) said they plan to stay because of the 'quality of life' in Canada while 39% plan to stay because of the positive future for their family here.

Other responses testify to the importance of the social and political environment. For example, almost one-third (30%) said the peaceful nature of Canada was a factor in their decision to stay, with this reason cited by 54% of refugees. New immigrants also pointed to Canada's public institutions, with access to education and the social system (such as health care and other programs) mentioned by 23% and 18% respectively. Political and religious freedoms were another consideration in the decision to stay, cited by 16% of new immigrants.

Social and familial networks were also an important consideration, with 31% of LSIC respondents staying in Canada to remain close to family and friends. This reason was most prevalent among family class immigrants (59%).

Fewer new immigrants pointed to the importance of economic factors as a reason for staying: 16% cited job opportunities and 22% cited one or more employment-related reasons, including job opportunities, working conditions, salary or pay, and/or business climate/free market.

LSIC respondents were also asked to identify which of the reasons cited was the *most important* in their decision to stay in Canada (Table 4). What is striking is that almost 80% of respondents cited one of four reasons – quality of life (32%), the desire to be close to family and friends (20%), the future prospects for their family (18%) and the peaceful nature of the country (9%).

In many cases, the main reasons for planning to stay reflected the

unique circumstances of immigrants in different admission categories: 30% of refugees cited the peaceful nature of Canada as their *most important* reason for staying while 46% of family class immigrants cited the desire to remain close to family and friends. Five percent or less of immigrants in each admission category cited employment-related reasons.

Finally, the small proportion of immigrants who said they planned to leave Canada (3%) was asked about their reasons for doing so. The most frequently cited responses were the desire to be close to family and friends (37%) and the desire to return to their home country (25%). About one-third of those planning to leave (32%) cited employment-related reasons, including better job opportunities, pay, working conditions or business climate elsewhere.⁷

Quality of life and material well-being after arrival

It is interesting to note that while some new immigrants express dissatisfaction with their economic experiences in Canada, most provide positive assessments about the quality of life here. Further light can be shed on this using information that LSIC respondents provided during their second interview.

After having been in Canada for two years, LSIC respondents were asked if their level of material well-being (such as home, car and disposable income) is better, about the same or worse than it had been prior to coming here (Chart 3). Among economic immigrants, about one-third (35%) said their level of material well-being is better than it had been prior to arrival, about one-third said it's about the same (31%) and about one-third said it's worse (34%). In contrast, family class immigrants and refugees had more favourable assessments of their material well-being, with 58% and 69% respectively saying their situation in Canada (after two years) is better than it was before coming here.

The material well-being immigrants experienced before coming to Canada is shaped by many factors, such as the countries from which they came (e.g. Afghanistan, China or France), their socio-economic position in their source country (e.g. being at the bottom, middle or top of the income or occupational distribution), and the circumstances of their emigration (e.g. migrating via a refugee camp). In 2002, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan were the top three source countries for refugees arriving in Canada and Gross Domestic Product per capita was below \$3,600 in each of those countries compared with \$29,865 in Canada.⁸ India, the People's Republic of China and the United States were the top three source countries for family class immigrants, while the People's Republic of China, India and Pakistan were the top three source countries for economic immigrants, specifically, principal applicants in the skilled worker category.⁹

LSIC respondents were also asked about the quality of life in

Canada (such as safety, freedom and pollution) compared with their situation before coming here. Responses to this question were more positive than those regarding material well-being. Indeed, 84% to 92% of immigrants in each admission category said that their quality of life is better in Canada than it was prior to coming here. Among economic immigrants, 84% said their quality of life is better here, although only 35% said their material well-being is better. The same pattern is evident among family class immigrants and refugees, although the difference between these two measures is smaller in magnitude.

Immigrants' assessments underscore the benefits associated with rights and freedoms, safety and security, and political stability. These social benefits are enjoyed by all members of society and they are available to new immigrants immediately upon their arrival in Canada – as reflected in their responses after two years. In contrast,

material well-being is shaped to a great extent by labour market participation and its outcomes and in this respect is more 'individual' in nature. Given that it takes new immigrants time to get established in the workforce, improvements in their material well-being may take more time as well. A key question is how long it takes new immigrants to get established in the labour force and how quickly their material well-being improves.

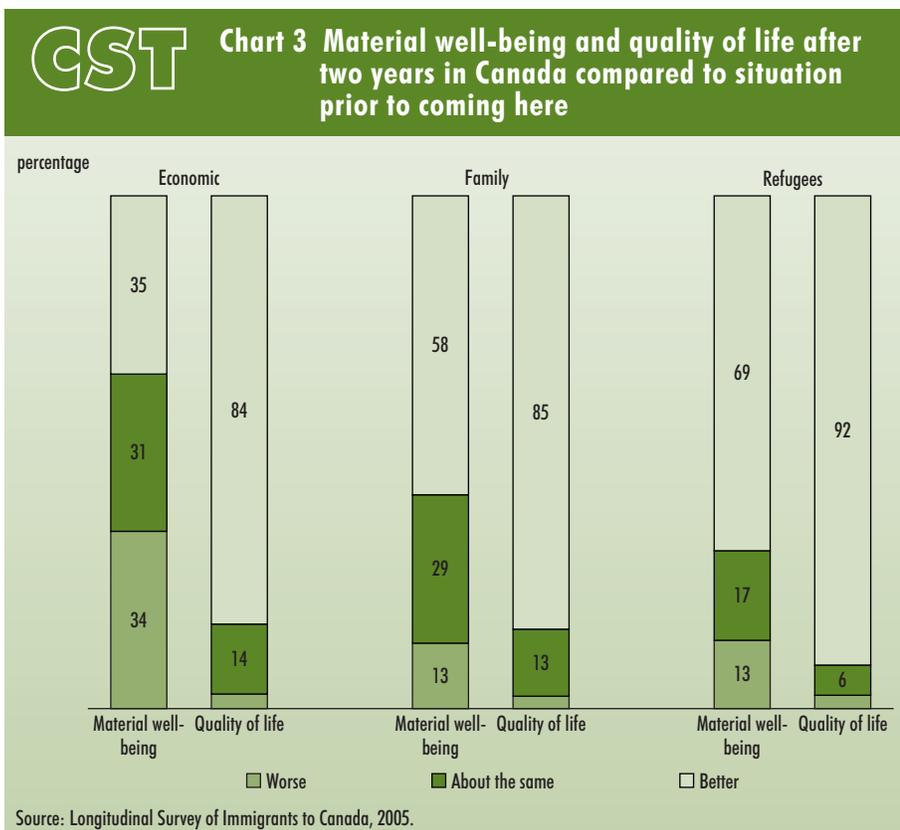
Quality of life and material well-being after being in Canada four years

Labour market research shows that in the years immediately after arrival in Canada, immigrants have earnings below those of similar Canadian-born workers, but that over time this earnings gap is reduced (Frenette and Morissette, 2003). Given this general pattern, how do immigrants perceive the gains they make in their material well-being once they're in Canada?

Four years after arriving in Canada, LSIC respondents were asked if their material well-being was better than, the same as, or worse than it had been two years earlier (i.e. two years after arrival). In short, how had things changed over the course of their third and fourth year here?

Just over one-half of new immigrants in each admission category reported that their level of material well-being was better in year four than it was in year two (Table 5). Information is not available regarding the magnitude of this improvement. Conversely, 5% to 6% of immigrants in each category said their material well-being was worse. Between these extremes, 37% of economic immigrants, 39% of refugees and 44% of family class immigrants said their material well-being was about the same in year 4 as it had been in year 2.

LSIC respondents were not directly asked about how they felt about the gains they had or had not made over this period. However, as will be shown in Section 3, immigrants who said



their material well-being 'remained about the same' or worsened were more likely than others to say that life in Canada has fallen short of their expectations. This suggests that they had expected to make material gains during this period and were disappointed that their situation had remained 'about the same'. We will return to this point in Section 3.

LSIC respondents were also asked if their 'quality of life' 4 years after arrival was better than, about the same as, or worse than it had been 2 years after arrival. About one-half of new immigrants said their quality of life remained about the same over this period, while 44% said it improved (Table 5). Perceived changes in quality of life were also associated with whether or not immigrants felt that life in Canada had fallen short of their expectations.

Summing up

During the 1990s and early 2000, a considerable number of studies documented the difficulties that new immigrants face in the Canadian labour market. These difficulties are evident in the subjective assessments provided by new immigrants themselves. For example, a considerable share said it's the lack of employment opportunities they dislike most about Canada.

Nonetheless, immigrants in all admissions categories have very positive assessments of the quality of life here. Safety and security, rights and freedoms, and opportunities for themselves and their families are some of the things they like most. This underscores the value they place on the social and political environment in Canada and the importance of this to their sense of well-being.

Section two: Difficulties encountered

We now turn to the difficulties new immigrants encounter during the first four years of settlement in Canada. We start by examining their overall assessments of the difficulties faced, followed by difficulties in

specific areas, including finding suitable employment, accessing language training, finding housing and accessing health care.

An overview of difficulties encountered

Four years after arrival, new immigrants were asked about the difficulties they had encountered in Canada, and to identify which of these difficulties was the most serious. Chart 4 provides an overview of their responses, while Table 6 shows the responses of immigrants in each admission category.

Finding an adequate job¹⁰ was the most often cited difficulty, mentioned by almost half of new immigrants (46%). Economic immigrants were most likely to cite employment difficulties (54%), followed by refugees (35%) and family class immigrants (29%).

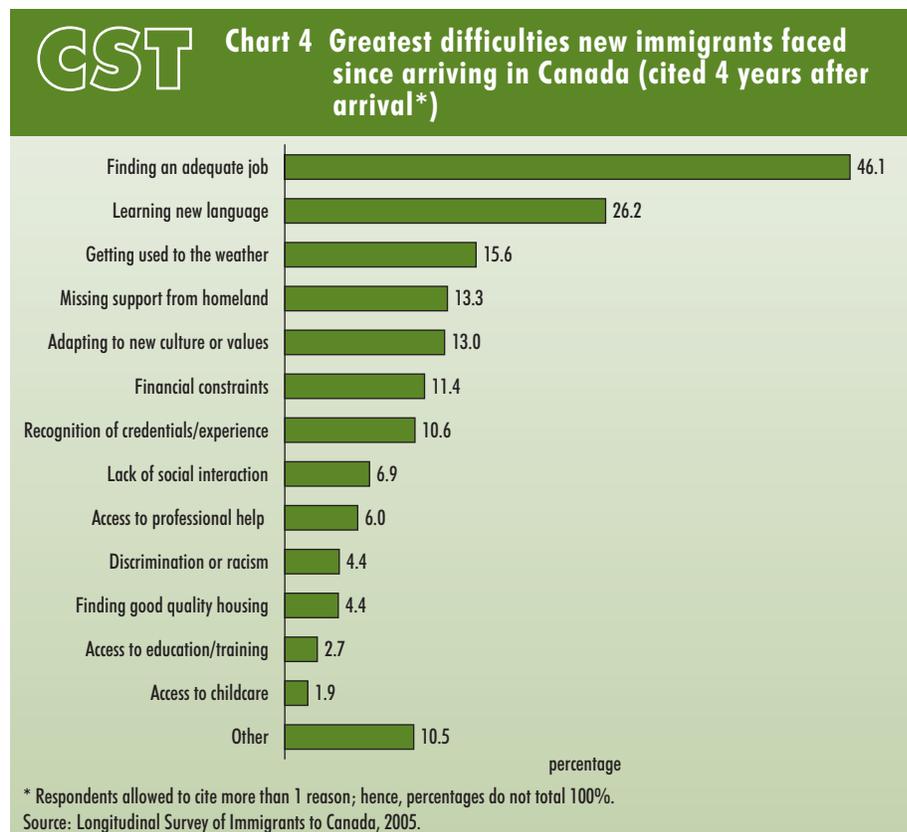
Linguistic and cultural adaptations were a challenge for many. About one-quarter of new immigrants (26%) said that learning a new language was a

difficulty while 13% mentioned the challenge of adapting to new cultures and values. Linguistic challenges were most prevalent among refugees (41%), although they were also cited by many economic immigrants (23%).

Canadian weather again loomed large, with 16% of new immigrants stating that adjusting to the climate was the greatest challenge they faced.

Social supports and interactions were another challenge for new immigrants, with 13% citing the absence of support from their home country as a difficulty and 7% citing the lack of social interactions/new friends in Canada.

Just over 10% of immigrants cited financial constraints and the recognition of credentials and experiences as difficulties faced since arrival. As will be documented below, many job seekers identified foreign credential recognition as a problem when they were asked about specific difficulties they faced in the labour market.



When asked which of these difficulties was the most important, the largest shares of new immigrants cited the challenge of finding employment and of learning English or French. Together, these two responses were cited by 44% to 59% of immigrants in each admission category (Table 6). Almost half (45%) of economic immigrants said finding employment was the most important difficulty they faced, while this was the case for 22% and 26% of family class immigrants and refugees respectively. Almost one-third (30%) of refugees said learning a new language was their greatest challenge, while this was the case for 14% and 22% of economic and family class immigrants respectively.

Given the extent to which employment and language are challenges faced by new immigrants, we now examine these areas in more detail.

Challenges in the labour market

Over the past 15 years, many studies have documented the deteriorating labour market and financial characteristics of recent immigrants. In the initial years after arriving in Canada immigrants have long had earnings below those of their Canadian-born counterparts, with the size of this 'earnings gap' narrowing as time passes. However, through the 1980s and 1990s the size of the initial earnings gap increased considerably, raising questions about whether the earnings of immigrants would ever catch up to those of their Canadian-born counterparts (Frenette and Morissette, 2003). Furthermore, since the early 1980s the share of recent immigrants in low-income increased markedly, in spite of rising levels of educational attainment among this group (Heisz and McLeod, 2004; Picot, Hou and Coulombe, 2007).

The types of obstacles immigrants experience when seeking employment

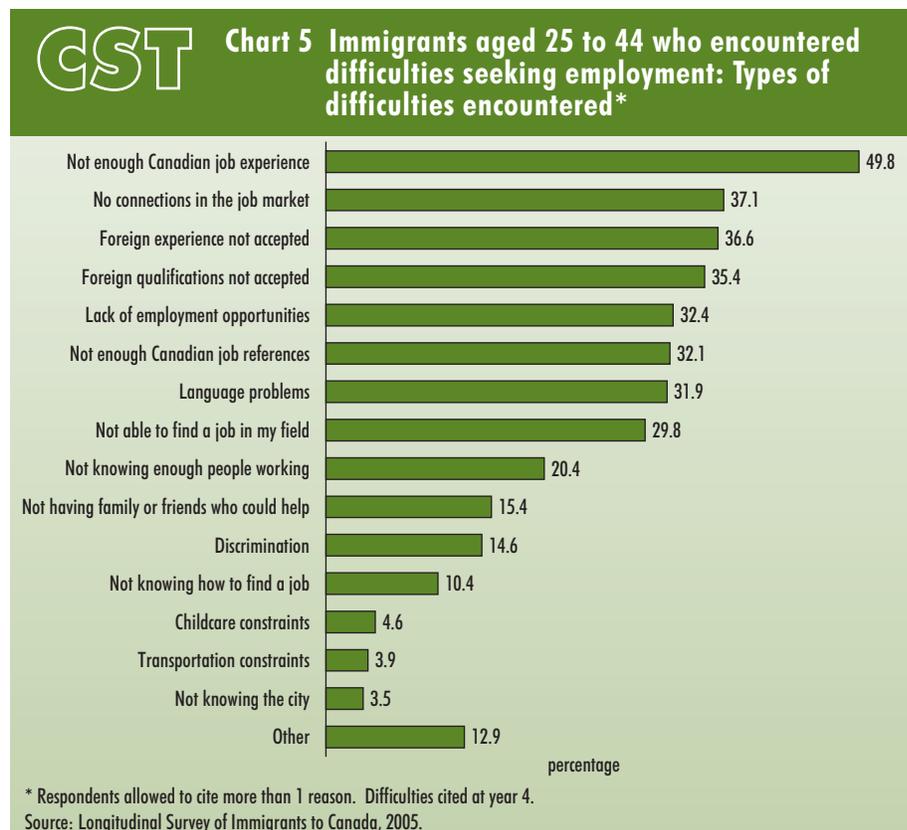
The perspectives and assessments of new immigrants seeking employment provide insights on the challenges and obstacles they face in the labour market. Our discussion is limited to LSIC respondents who were aged 25 to 44 upon their arrival in Canada. Immigrants aged 15 to 24 and aged 45 or older were excluded to remove the effects of students, late labour market entrants and retirees from the analysis. Furthermore, information regarding job search activities is not strictly comparable across all three waves of the LSIC so caution must be exercised when comparing results from Wave 1 with those from Waves 2 and 3.

During the period between 7 and 24 months after arrival, 62% of all new immigrants aged 25 to 44 looked for a job; during the period between 25 to 48 months after arrival 53% did so. The majority of job seekers reported that they experienced a

problem or difficulty when searching for employment (Table 7). They were asked to identify all of the problems or difficulties they encountered, as well as the one they consider to be the most serious.

Considering all difficulties cited at Wave 3, lack of Canadian work experience was mentioned most often (50%), followed by lack of contacts in the job market (37%) and lack of recognition of foreign experience (37%) and foreign qualification (35%). About one-third of job seekers who experienced difficulties (32%) cited language barriers as a problem (Table 8). The prevalence of other problems is shown in Chart 5.

Considering the most serious difficulties cited at Wave 3, LSIC respondents pointed to a number of important issues. First, work experience is central. Of the job seekers who encountered a problem, 19% said their most serious difficulty was their lack of Canadian job experience (reported during Wave 3) and another 9% cited the lack of



recognition of their foreign work experience (Table 9). There is likely a well-worn 'catch-22' here as new immigrants need appropriate Canadian work experience to find a suitable job, but encounter difficulties finding a job to gain this experience.

Second, language barriers are another challenge. Of the job seekers who encountered a problem, about one-in-six (16%) cited language problems as their most serious difficulty. The 2001 Census shows that 18% of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1996 and 2001 spoke English or French as their mother tongue, while this was the case for 40% of immigrants who arrived during the 1970s.¹¹ Given this trend, language barriers are likely to be an increasingly prevalent challenge for immigrants in the labour market.

Third, lack of acceptance of foreign qualifications was cited as the most serious challenge faced by 12% of job seekers.

Fourth, job seekers also underscored the importance of contacts and networks in the job market. Of the job seekers who encountered a problem, 9% said their most serious difficulty was their lack of connections in the job market, 3% cited a lack of Canadian job references and 1% cited not knowing enough people working. This suggests that 'social capital' – the networks and contacts an individual can draw upon – as well as 'human capital' – the qualifications, experience and skills that individuals offer – are both ingredients for labour market success.

Finally, job seekers pointed to a lack of employment opportunities as the most serious challenge they face. Almost 12% cited a general 'lack of employment opportunities' and another 7% mentioned the challenge of finding a job in their field.

All in all, these responses suggest that the challenges new immigrants face in the labour market are multifaceted.

Multiple barriers to employment

In many cases, new immigrants experience multiple difficulties when seeking employment. To document this, we limit our analysis to four potential problems: 1) lack of work experience 2) language problems 3) lack of foreign credential recognition and 4) lack of job contacts or networks. Eight of the responses listed in Chart 5 were used to construct these groups.¹² Table 10 includes job seekers aged 25 to 44 who encountered any problems when looking for work, and shows the proportion who encountered none, one, two, three or four of these four problems under consideration.

Overall, the majority of these job seekers reported multiple difficulties. Considering the period 25 to 48 months after arrival, 30% of these job seekers encountered two of the four problems and 26% encountered three or all four of them. In short, lack of work experience, language problems, lack of foreign credential recognition and lack of job contacts are often 'overlapping' problems facing immigrant job seekers. For example, almost two-third of job seekers who reported a language problem also reported that work experience was a difficulty. Considering the remainder of Table 10, 29% of job seekers encountered only one of these four problems, and 15% did not encounter any of them.

Accessing language training¹³

Many new immigrants say that learning a new language is a challenge they face in Canada. In this context, difficulties encountered *en route* to language training are an important consideration.

During their second and third interviews (two and four years after arrival), LSIC respondents of all ages were asked if they had taken any language training or had looked for information about language courses during the preceding 18 to 24 months.

Comparable information was not collected during the first interview 6 months after arrival.

Between 7 and 24 months after arriving in Canada, 26% of new immigrants took at least one language course and another 12% looked for information regarding language training (Table 11). Refugees were more likely to have taken a course (49%) than immigrants in the economic class (25%) or the family class (23%). This is consistent with the fact that refugees were most likely to say that language barriers pose a difficulty for them. During years three and four, 10% of new immigrants had taken language training and 9% had looked for language training information. Again, participation was most prevalent among refugees.

LSIC respondents who had taken language training or had sought information regarding language training were asked about problems they had encountered in this area. Between 25 and 48 months after arrival, about 20% of new immigrants who had taken a language course experienced a problem, while 42% of new immigrants who sought information regarding training (but did not take a course) did so (Table 12).

Time constraints and financial constraints were among the most serious problems encountered by new immigrants en route to language training (Table 13). In this respect, their experiences are much like those of Canadians in general. Statistics Canada's 2003 Adult Education and Training Survey shows that financial and time constraints are the barriers to training most frequently cited by Canadians with unmet training wants and needs (Peters, 2004). Again, such constraints are prevalent among new immigrants seeking language training. The availability of language courses was also near the top of the list, cited as the most serious difficulty by 14% of new immigrants who encountered a problem en route to language training.

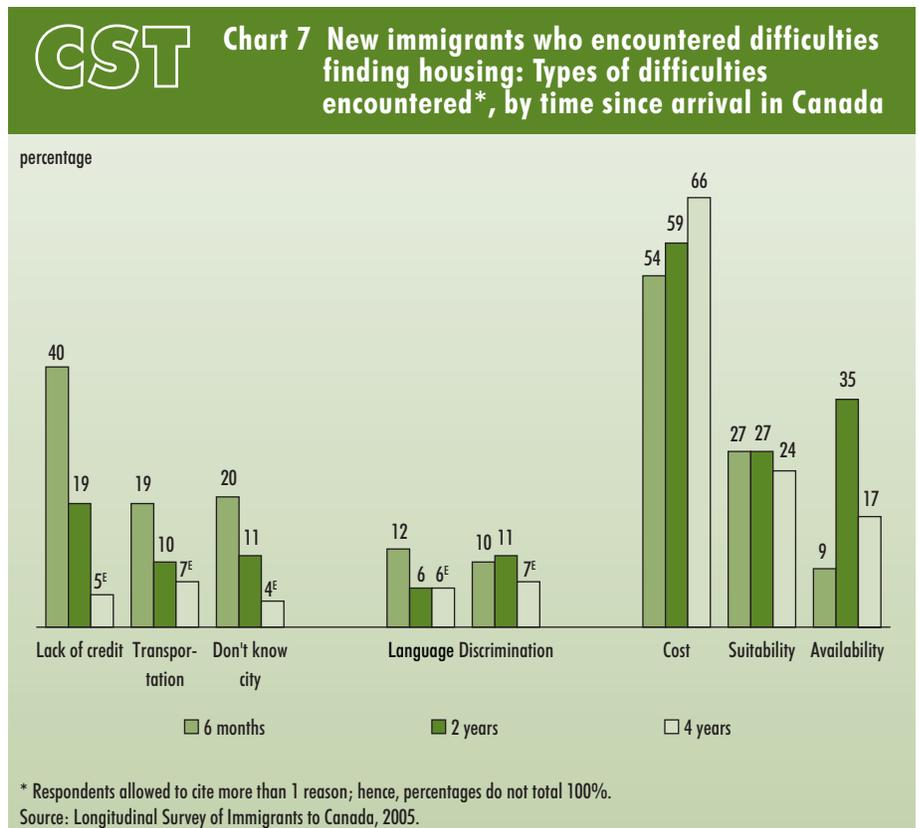
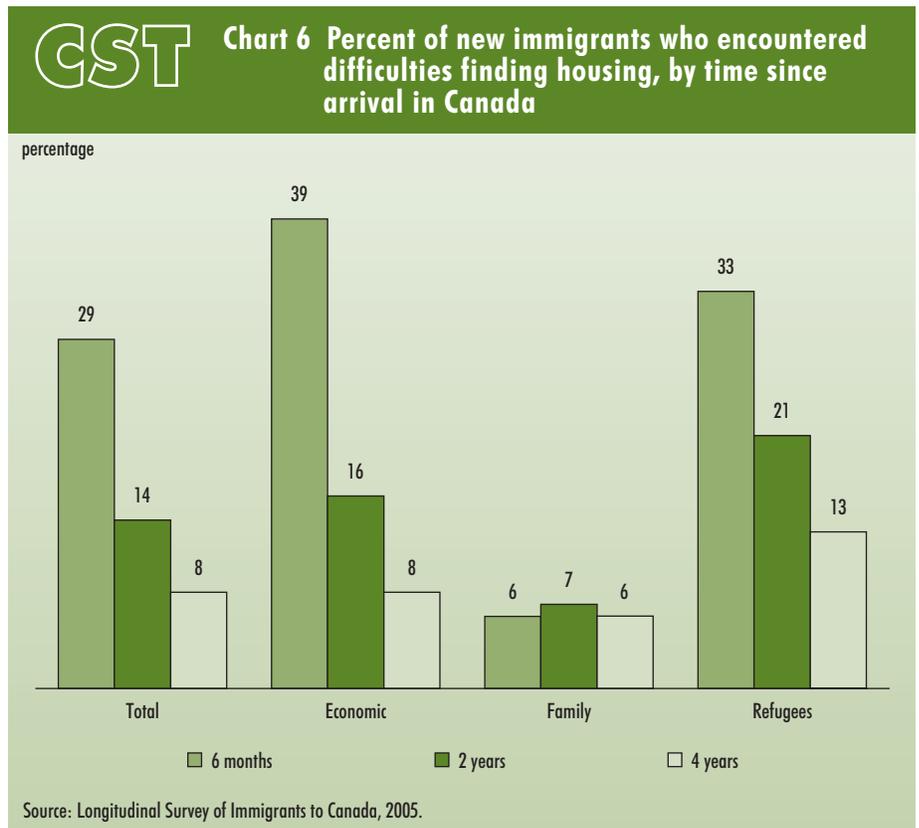
Finding housing

Finding housing is a key task for new immigrants, particularly those who are not joining family members already here. During their first six months in Canada, about three-quarters of new immigrants (77%) looked for housing, while during their third and fourth years in Canada, 43% of new immigrants did so (Table 14). The declining proportion seeking housing over this period suggests that many had gotten 'settled in' and were no longer in the housing market. Nonetheless, the fact that 43% of new immigrants had looked for housing during a two year period underscores the residential mobility of this group, especially considering that about 13% of all Canadians change residences in a given year.

Turning to difficulties encountered, the share of 'housing seekers' experiencing a problem declined from 38% during the first six months to 18% during years 3 and 4. Considering all immigrants (whether or not they sought housing), the shares experiencing a difficulty declined from 29% to 8% over these periods. This was attributable to both a decline in the share of immigrants looking for housing and a decline in the share of those looking who experienced a problem.

Across immigrant categories, refugees were most likely to experience difficulties finding housing while family class immigrants were least likely. Chart 6 shows these shares over the first four years in Canada.

The types of problems new immigrants encountered when trying to find housing changed over their first four years in Canada. During the first six months, lack of credit, poor knowledge of their city, and lack of transportation were among the problems encountered (Chart 7). However, these problems were far less prevalent two years and four years after landing. One explanation is that over time immigrants were able to establish credit records, learn about their city, and obtain their driver's license or become familiar with public



transportation thereby making these factors less problematic when seeking housing.

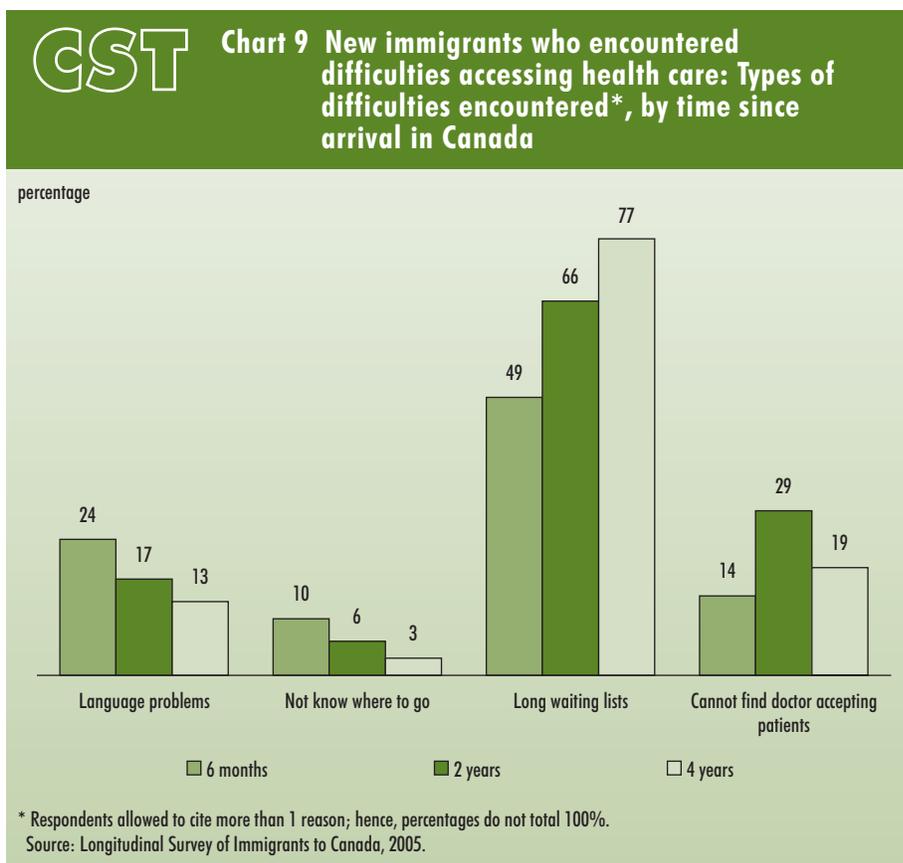
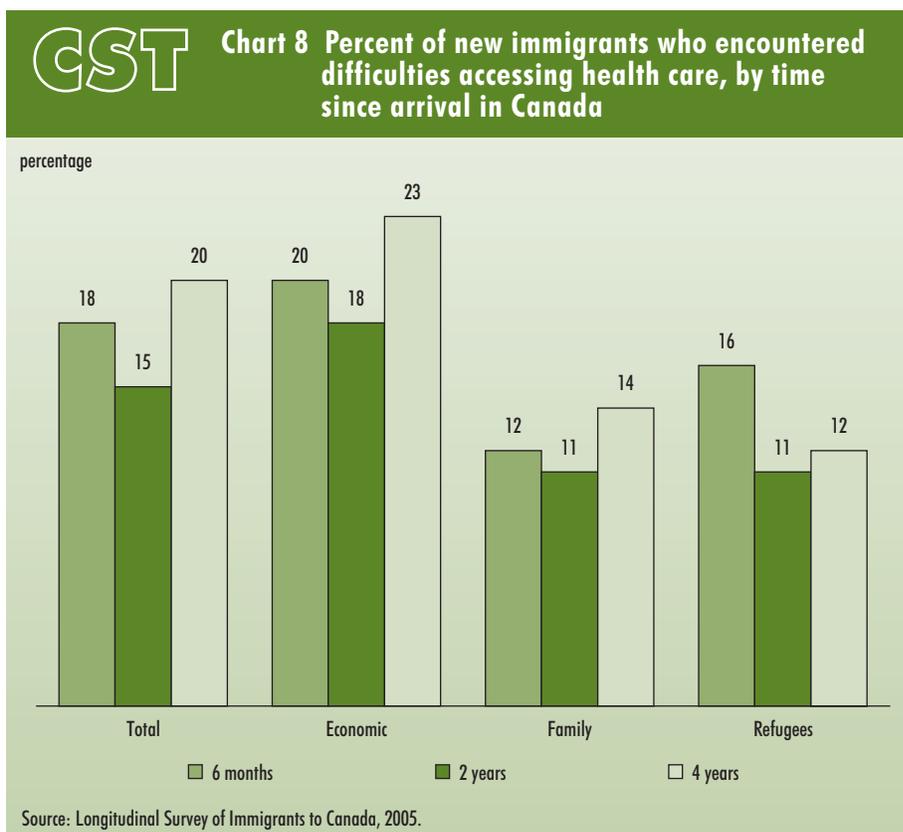
Conversely, the difficulties associated with housing costs were more consistently evident over time. Six months after arrival, about half of the housing seekers who had experienced a difficulty (54%) said housing costs were a problem and this still topped the list four years later. Likewise, the suitability of accommodation remained a challenge, likely reflecting the large size of immigrant households and the limited availability of larger units on the market.

Over time, the difficulties new immigrants encounter when seeking housing come to reflect the challenges facing Canadians in general. For example, affordability and suitability are two of the criteria Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) uses to define 'core housing need'. CMHC reports that affordability is the primary obstacle that Canadians encounter when seeking accommodation (CMHC, 2006).

Accessing health care

LSIC respondents were asked if they had experienced any problems or difficulties getting access to or using health services in Canada. At six months, two years and four years after arrival, about 15 to 20% of new immigrants say they encountered such problems or difficulties. Economic immigrants were more likely than family class immigrants and refugees to mention such difficulties (Chart 8).

Turning to the types of difficulties encountered, we again see that some problems are transitory in nature (Chart 9). For example, the share of immigrants citing language problems as an obstacle to health care declines from 24% six months after arrival to 13% four years after arrival. Similarly, the share of immigrants saying they did not know where to go for health care declined over this period.



Conversely, among the individuals who encountered a difficulty accessing health care, long waiting lists are increasingly prevalent – cited by one-half of individuals who had encountered a problem six months after arrival and by three-quarters of individuals who had encountered a problem four years after arrival. Finding a doctor accepting new patients is also a frequently cited problem.

Again, these problems are not unlike those facing Canadians more generally. As Statistics Canada's *Access to health care services in Canada* series shows, "...waiting for care remains the number one barrier for those [individuals] having difficulties accessing care" (Berthelot and Sanmartin, 2005).

Summing Up

When asked a general question about the challenges they face in Canada, the largest share of new immigrants say that it's finding a job that is most difficult. The detailed information provided by job seekers indicates that there are a number of factors at play here – including credential recognition, lack of Canadian work experience, language barriers and lack of social networks. Typically, these are not obstacles faced by job seekers born and raised in Canada and in this respect new immigrants face a unique set of challenges.

In other domains, such as accessing language training, finding housing and accessing health care, there are some obstacles that are unique to new immigrants. Lack of credit history, knowledge of the local area, language barriers and transportation constraints are challenges faced by some individuals, particularly during the initial stages of settlement.

In other cases, the challenges facing new immigrants are much like those facing Canadians more generally. In the area of training, time constraints and financial constraints are frequently cited challenges; in the area of health care, waiting times are a top priority; and in the area of

housing, affordability remains a key consideration.

Section three: Assessment of life in Canada

Overall, new immigrants experience highs and lows during their first four years in Canada. Their assessments of the quality of life here testify to the positive aspects of settlement, while the difficulties they encounter testify to the many challenges. On balance then, how does life in Canada measure up to their expectations? Do immigrants feel they made the right choice in coming here?

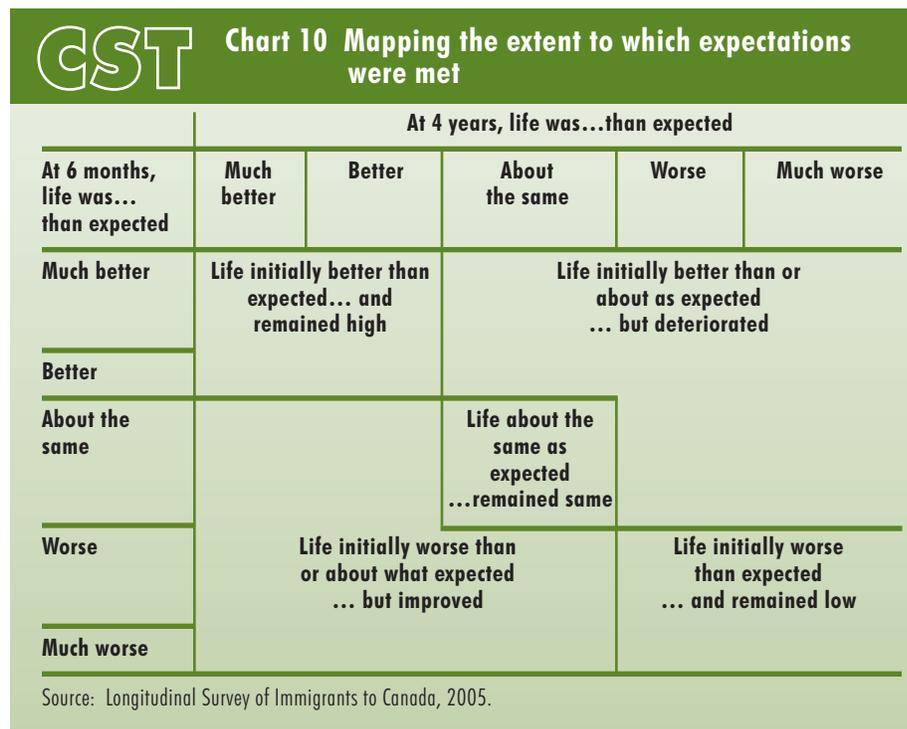
Extent to which expectations about life in Canada were met

Immigrants come to Canada with expectations – whether realistic or not – about what life will be like here. To what extent are these expectations being met? To address this, LSIC respondents were asked whether life in Canada is better than they had expected, about what they had expected, or worse than they had expected. By comparing their

responses at 6 months and 4 years after arrival, some insights regarding their experiences can be gained.¹⁴

The possible responses to these expectation questions are shown in Chart 10. In the top left hand corner of the matrix are individuals who, six months after arrival, said that life in Canada was 'much better' or 'better' than they had expected and who still felt the same way after four years. In short, their expectations of life in Canada have consistently been exceeded. Along the downward diagonal to the right are individuals who, at six months and four years after arrival, said that life in Canada was about what they expected it would be. And in the bottom right corner are individuals who said, at six months and four years, that life in Canada had fallen short of their expectations.

Two additional groups are identified in the matrix. At the bottom left are individuals who, at six months, said that life in Canada was worse than or about what they had expected, but who had a more positive assessment



after four years. In other words, their assessment of life in Canada improved over the four year period. And at the top right are individuals who, at six months, said that life was better than or about what they had expected, but who had a more negative assessment after four years. In short, their assessment of life in Canada deteriorated.

The distribution of new immigrants across these five categories is shown in Table 15. Several points can be made. First, about two-thirds of new immigrants reported a fairly positive congruence between their expectations of life in Canada and their experiences here. More specifically, 21% of them said their expectations of life in Canada have consistently been exceeded, and another 16% said their expectations have consistently been met. In addition, another 29% reported that life in Canada was initially worse than or about what they had expected, but that their situation improved over time. In this respect, their assessment was positive. Combining these three groups, the expectations of two-thirds of new immigrants have been exceeded, met or improved upon.

Conversely, there is a low or declining degree of congruence between the expectations and experiences of about one-third of new immigrants. More specifically, 11% reported that life in Canada has consistently fallen short of their expectations, and 23% reported that life in Canada was initially better than or about what they had expected, but this assessment deteriorated over time (Table 15).

Second, there are noticeable differences in the congruence between expectations and experiences reported by immigrants in the different admission categories. More specifically, 15% of economic immigrants reported that their expectations have consistently been exceeded, while this was the case for about 33% of family class immigrants and refugees. Conversely, economic immigrants were more

likely than others to feel that their expectations have not been met. One possible explanation is that economic immigrants had higher expectations than others regarding their employment prospects in Canada but have experienced difficulty realizing these. On a positive note, economic immigrants were more likely than others to say that although their life in Canada initially fell short of their expectations, things have improved since (31%).

In Section one, immigrants' assessments of the changes in their material well-being and quality of life were documented. These assessments are correlated with whether or not they feel their expectations of life in Canada have been met (Chart 11). Of the immigrants who said their material well-being improved between year 2 and year 4 (i.e. it was 'better'), 73% said their expectations of life in Canada have been exceeded, met or improved upon.¹⁵ In contrast,

immigrants who said their level of material well-being stayed the same or worsened were less likely to have a positive assessment in this respect. This pattern is evident among immigrants in all categories.

Most believe that coming to Canada was the right decision

During each of the three LSIC interviews, respondents were asked, "If you had to make the decision again, would you come to Canada?" Overall, 72% of new immigrants said 'yes' to this question each of the three times they were asked it. Another 12% said 'no' or expressed uncertainty during at least one of the first two interviews, but by the third interview felt they had made the right decision in coming here (Chart 12). Altogether, 84% of immigrants were positive about their decision to come to Canada after being here four years. This figure was 80% among economic immigrants and over 90% among refugees.

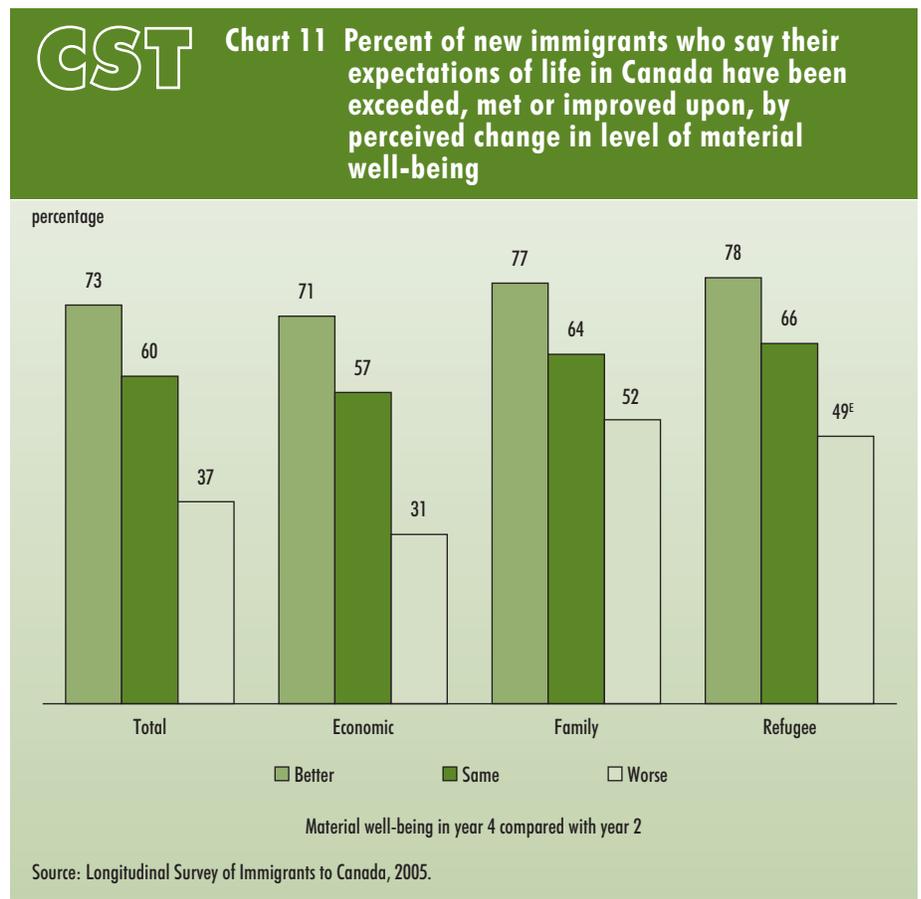
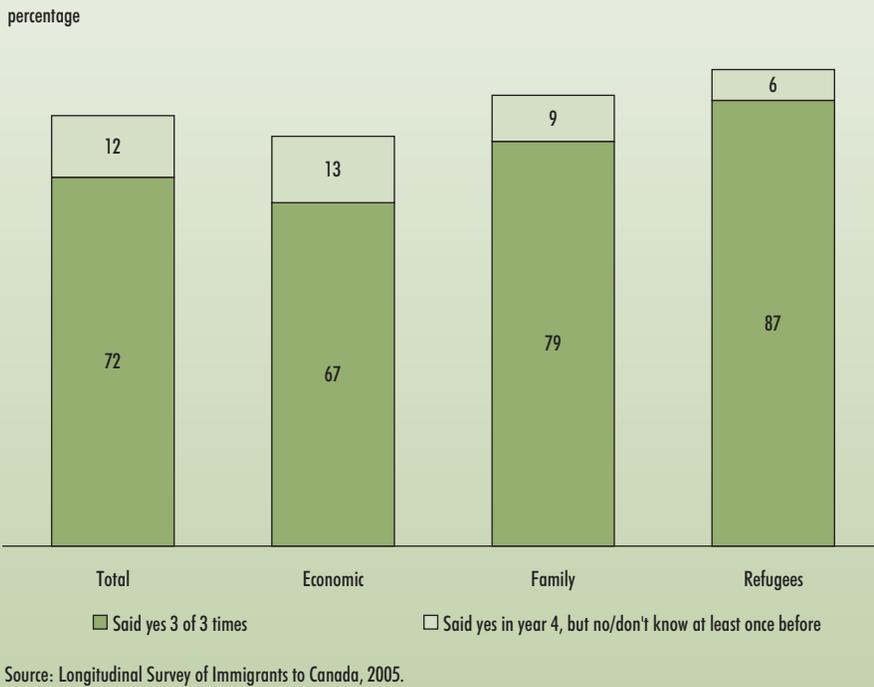


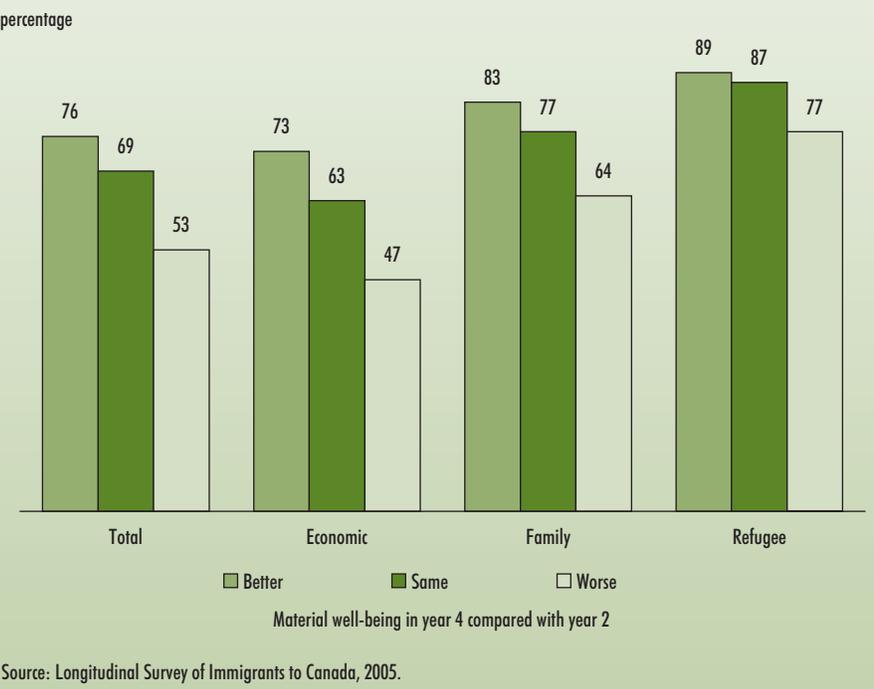
Chart 12 New immigrants' perspectives on whether they would make the same decision to come to Canada again



While most new immigrants believe that coming to Canada was the right decision, those who did not experience improvements in their material well-being or quality of life were less positive in this regard (Chart 13). For example, among economic immigrants whose material well-being improved between year two and year four, 73% consistently said that coming to Canada was the right decision.¹⁶ Among those whose material well-being stayed the same, 63% consistently said that coming to Canada was the right decision, while this was the case for 47% of those whose material well-being deteriorated between years two and four. The correlation between perceived changes in material well-being and positive views about immigrating to Canada is stronger among economic immigrants than family class immigrants and refugees. The same pattern is evident when perceived changes in quality of life are considered.

Furthermore, new immigrants who feel their expectations about life in Canada have been met have more positive assessments of their decision to come here than individuals who feel their expectations have not been met. As shown in Chart 14, 81% of immigrants who said their expectations have been exceeded, met or improved upon consistently said that coming to Canada was the right decision. In contrast, 55% of new immigrants whose expectations remained unmet or have deteriorated are consistently positive about their decision.

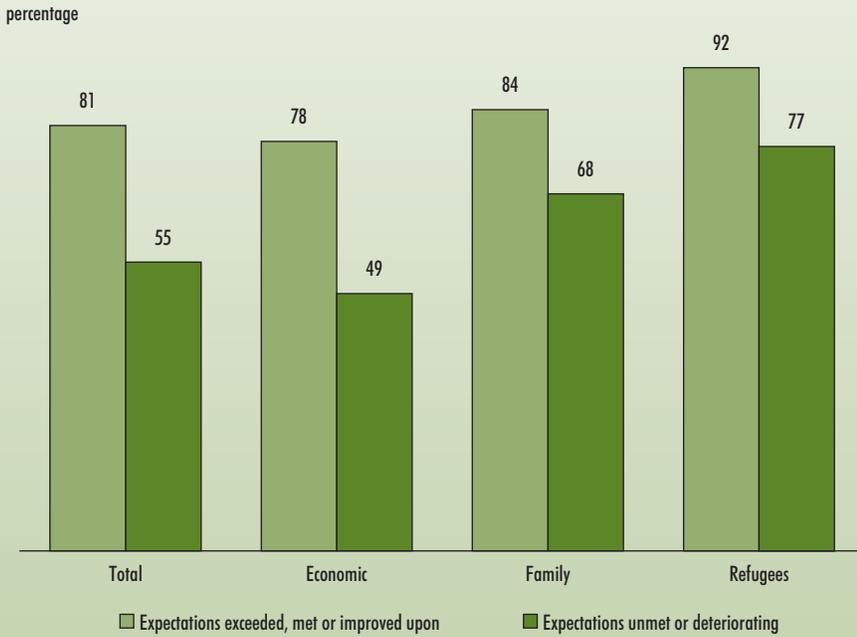
Chart 13 Percent of new immigrants who consistently say they would make same decision to come to Canada, by perceived change in material well-being between year 2 and year 4



Most already taken steps to become Canadian citizens

The generally positive views that new immigrants have regarding their decision to come to Canada are also reflected in their plans to become Canadian citizens. In order to become a Canadian citizen, landed immigrants must reside here for at least three years. By the time they were interviewed four years after landing, 15% of new immigrants had

Chart 14 Percent of new immigrants who consistently say they would make same decision to come to Canada, by whether or not expectations about life in Canada were met



Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

already obtained Canadian citizenship and another 56% had already initiated the process (Chart 15). Combining these two groups, over 70% of new immigrants had already completed or had initiated the citizenship process. Another 22% said they intend to become Canadian citizens but had not yet started the process. The remaining 7% either said they were uncertain about their citizenship intentions or did not intend to apply for citizenship.

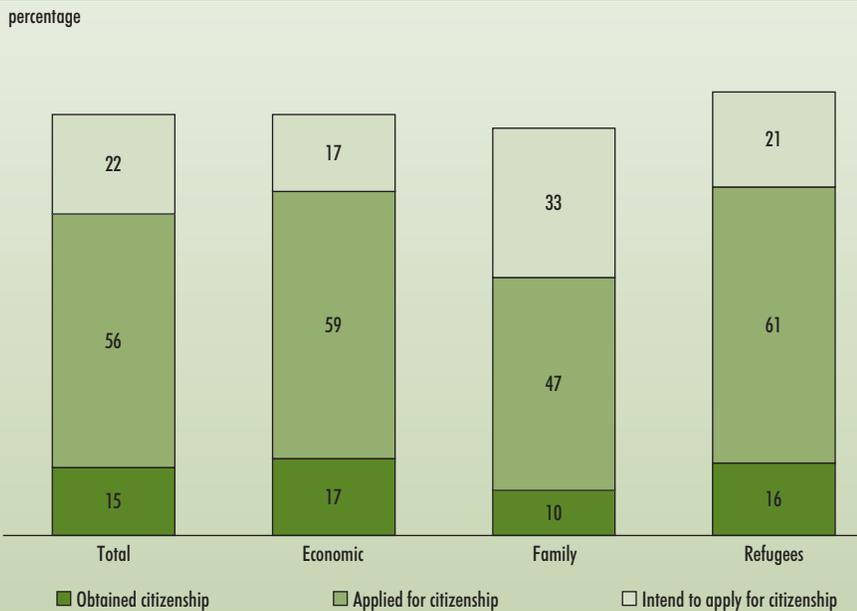
While perceived changes in material well-being are associated with views about whether coming to Canada was the right decision, changes in material well-being and 'met expectations' were not strongly correlated with citizenship intentions (see Tables 16 and 17).

Conclusions

Overall, most new immigrants have very positive views about the social and political environment in Canada. They point to the importance of safety and security, rights and freedoms, peace and stability and public institutions as aspects of Canadian life that they like most. These are important considerations in many new immigrants' decisions to stay in Canada

However, new immigrants have less favourable assessments of their experiences in the Canadian labour market, with difficulties finding suitable employment remaining the problem they most frequently encounter. This is consistent with a growing body of economic research that documents the deteriorating financial and labour market characteristics of new immigrants. The perspectives of new immigrants also testify to the multi-dimensional nature of the problem. Individuals seeking employment report numerous difficulties, including lack of recognition for their educational credentials obtained abroad, lack of Canadian work experience and lack of recognition of work experience obtained abroad, language barriers and lack of contacts and social

Chart 15 Citizenship status of new immigrants*, 4 years after arrival in Canada



* The remaining share includes immigrants who are uncertain of their citizenship intentions or do not intend to apply for citizenship. Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

networks in the work force. In many cases, new immigrants seeking employment face two or more of these barriers.

In other domains, such as finding housing, getting language training or accessing health care, new immigrants face challenges. Some of these are transitory in nature and are experienced during the initial stages of settlement, such as lack of credit history, transportation constraints and lack of knowledge of their city. After four years in Canada, the challenges facing new immigrants in these areas look much like those facing Canadians in general – concerns regarding housing affordability, waiting lists for health care services and financial and time constraints to training.

In spite of these challenges, most of the new immigrants who remain in Canada for four years are positive about their decision to come here. Most consistently say they would make the same decision to come here again and the majority has already initiated the process to become Canadian citizens. Furthermore, about two-thirds of them feel that their expectations of life in Canada have been exceeded, met or improved upon. That being said, the outlooks of new immigrants who have not made material gains while in Canada express less positive views. These individuals are more likely than others to feel their expectations about life in Canada have not been met and that coming here was not the right decision.

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1. Within the economic category, research focused on the labour market experiences of skilled workers often distinguishes between principal applicants and spouses/dependents. Economic immigrants are selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy, and only principal applicants in the skilled worker category are assessed on the basis of selection criteria in place at the time of the application. For this reason, their labour market performance is expected to be different than that of spouses and dependents. Given the focus of this report on immigrants' broader perspectives and assessments of life in Canada (rather than labour market performance), the distinction between principal applicants and spouses/dependents has not been made. This reduces the number of comparisons made throughout the analysis and simplifies the discussion.
 2. A fourth immigration category of 'other' exists and is comprised of post-determination refugee claimants, sponsored humanitarian and compassionate cases outside the family class, people granted permanent residence status based on public policy considerations and other groups. The number of LSIC respondents in the 'other' category is too small to provide reliable statistical estimates for this group. However, individuals in the 'other' category are included in the 'total' figures reported in the charts and tables, along with individuals in the other three immigration categories.
 3. Regarding what they liked about Canada, respondents were asked to choose one item from a list of thirteen possible responses; they could also choose an 'other' category and provide an alternative response.
 4. Less than 1% of respondents cited 'good quality of housing' and 'absence of interracial, ethnic or religious tension'. These responses are not included in the chart. The figures in the chart do not total 100% for this reason.
 5. Several responses were cited by less than 1% of respondents and these are not included in the chart. The figures in the chart do not total 100% for this reason.
 6. Of the LSIC respondents who did not live in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver, 35% said the climate/physical environment was what they disliked most about life in Canada.
 7. Individuals were allowed to choose more than one response.
 8. GDP per capita (current international dollars) based, on purchasing power parity methodology, World Bank estimates. <http://unstats.un.org>. Accessed January 24, 2007.
 9. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Facts and Figures 2002*. Retrieved on March 1, 2007 at www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2002/index.html.
 10. Since the response categories regarding difficulties encountered in Canada were not read to respondents, the category "Finding adequate job" may include cases where respondents said they had had difficulty finding a job, without specifically referring to the appropriateness of the job.
 11. See Statistics Canada website. Retrieved on February 13, 2007 at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&PID=68533&GID=517770&METH=1&APATH=3&PTYH=E=55496&THEME=43&AID=0&FREE=0&FOCUS=0&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=&GC=99&GK=NA&SC=1&SR=1&RL=0&CPP=99&RPP=9999&d1=0&d2=0&d3=0>.
 12. Several different categorizations of the eight questions were tested for this analysis. In scenario one, language problems and lack of recognition of foreign credentials were both based on single response items in the LSIC; specifically, "language problems" and "Your qualifications from outside Canada were not accepted". Lack of work experience included two possible responses: "Your job experience from outside Canada was not accepted" and "Not having enough job experience in Canada". Lack of job contacts or networks included four possible responses: "Not having enough job references from Canada", "Not having connections in the job market", "Not knowing enough people who were working" and "Not having family or friends who could help". In scenario two, language problems and lack of recognition of foreign credentials were based on the same items as scenario one. In contrast, lack of work experience included three possible responses: "Your job experience from outside Canada was

not accepted”, “Not having enough job experience in Canada” and “Not having enough job references from Canada”. Lack of job contacts or networks included three possible responses: “Not having connections in the job market”, “Not knowing enough people who were working” and “Not having family or friends who could help”. In the third scenario, language problems were again based on a single item. Lack of recognition of foreign credentials included two items: “Your qualifications from outside Canada were not accepted” and “Your job experience from outside Canada was not accepted”. Lack of work experience included two possible responses: “Not having enough job experience in Canada” and “Not having enough job references from Canada”. And finally, lack of job contacts or networks included three possible

responses: “Not having connections in the job market”, “Not knowing enough people who were working” and “Not having family or friends who could help”. Overall, the results varied only slightly between the scenarios. The share of all job seekers experiencing only one of the four problems in Wave 3 varied from 29% to 30% depending on the classification used; the share experiencing two problems varied from 26% to 30%; and the share experiencing three or four problems also varied from 26% to 30%. The results presented in Table 10 are based on the second scenario listed above.

13. The LSIC contains a large battery of questions pertaining to all types of education and training taken or sought by respondents. Our discussion of language training is limited to a subset of these questions.

14. There was a slight change in the English wording of this question between Wave 1 and Wave 3. In Wave 1, respondents were asked “Generally speaking, would you say that your experience in Canada has been ...much better than you expected, somewhat better, about what you expected, somewhat worse, much worse than you expected?” In Wave 3 respondents were asked “Would you say that your whole experience in Canada has been much better than expected, somewhat better than expected, about what you expected, somewhat worse than expected, much worse than expected?”

15. The other 27% say their expectations have remained unmet or have deteriorated.

16. In other words, these individuals said ‘yes’ to the question “If you had to make the decision again, would you come to Canada?” each of the three times they were asked it.

Table 2 What immigrants like most about Canada, by immigration category (cited 4 years after arrival)

	Total	Economic	Family	Refugee
	percentage			
Social environment	32.1	31.6	32.4	35.4
Cultural aspects (e.g. freedom, human rights)	14.4	14.4	13.7	18.1
Social programs (e.g. health care)	7.5	6.4	9.7	8.4
People's attitudes	6.2	6.3	5.8	5.9
Cultural diversity	4.0	4.5	3.2	3.0 ^E
Opportunity	24.0	25.7	20.1	23.1
Educational opportunities for self and family	9.9	11.0	6.4	13.4
Can achieve desired lifestyle or QOL	9.2	10.0	8.4	5.1
Employment opportunities	2.8	2.6	3.1	3.1 ^E
Economic conditions	2.1	2.1	2.2	1.5 ^E
Safety and security	22.2	20.9	22.0	36.1
Safety for self and family	11.0	9.9	12.5	15.8
Peace, Political stability	10.4	10.3	8.4	19.6
Absence of ethnic, religious, racial tension	0.8	x	1.1 ^E	x
Climate and physical environment	19.1	20.1	20.4	3.8^E
Other	2.7	1.9	5.1	1.8^E
Good quality of housing	0.4 ^E	F	0.9 ^E	x
Other	2.3	1.7	4.2	1.6 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 3 What immigrants dislike most about Canada, by immigration category (cited 4 years after arrival)

	Total	Economic	Family	Refugee
	percentage			
Social environment	12.7	14.0	10.4	10.5
Cultural aspects (e.g. freedom, human rights)	3.2	3.0	3.3	5.0 ^E
Health care system	5.3	6.3	3.9	2.2 ^E
People's attitudes	3.9	4.4	3.0	3.1 ^E
Lack of cultural diversity	0.3 ^E	0.3 ^E	x	x
Opportunity	31.5	37.7	19.2	20.6
Lack of educational opportunities for self and family	0.6	0.8 ^E	x	x
Cannot achieve desired lifestyle or QOL	0.8	1.0	x	x
Lack of employment opportunities	17.4	21.8	8.3	12.0
Poor economic conditions	1.6	2.0	0.6 ^E	1.5 ^E
High taxes	11.1	12.1	9.6	6.2
Safety and security	1.5	1.4	1.6^E	1.8^E
Do not feel safe/family not feel safe	0.9	0.7 ^E	1.1 ^E	1.5 ^E
Ethnic, religious or interracial tension	0.6 ^E	0.7 ^E	x	x
Climate and physical environment	26.7	22.5	34.3	37.5
Other	8.6	9.3	7.2	7.4
Poor quality of housing	0.3 ^E	0.3 ^E	x	x
Other	8.3	9.0	7.0	6.2
Does not dislike anything about Canada	19.0	15.4	27.2	22.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 4 Reasons for staying in Canada cited by immigrants who plan to settle here permanently, by immigration category (cited 4 years after arrival)

	Total	Economic	Family	Refugees
	percentage			
All reasons cited				
Quality of life better in Canada	55.4	58.4	48.6	54.7
Improve future for family	38.5	42.7	27.3	43.3
Be close to family and friends	31.0	19.1	58.5	30.4
Peace / Absence of war	29.6	31.1	20.8	53.5
Access to education	23.4	26.9	13.6	31.6
Canada's social system	17.7	18.5	15.6	18.7
Political or religious freedom	15.8	16.7	11.1	28.5
Job opportunities	15.7	16.4	12.6	20.7
Cultural aspects	15.2	17.1	11.2	13.6
Working conditions	9.9	10.4	8.1	12.6
Salary/pay	7.7	7.7	6.7	10.7
Business climate/free market	3.7	4.4	2.3	3.2 ^E
Other	4.9	6.0	2.6	3.5 ^E
Main reason cited*				
Quality of life better in Canada	31.8	35.8	25.3	20.2
Be close to family and friends	20.2	9.8	46.3	12.9
Improve future for family	17.5	20.5	10.2	17.7
Peace / Absence of war	8.7	8.1	5.3	29.8
Access to education	5.9	7.1	2.7	6.6
Job opportunities	3.1	3.5	2.4	2.2 ^E
Cultural aspects	2.7	3.3	1.5 ^E	1.9 ^E
Canada's social system	2.7	2.8	2.6	1.3 ^E
Political or religious freedom	1.8	2.1	0.6 ^E	3.9 ^E
Working conditions	0.5 ^E	0.7 ^E	x	x
Business climate/free market	0.3 ^E	0.5 ^E	x	x
Salary/pay	0.3 ^E	0.3 ^E	x	x
Other	4.6	5.6	2.6	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 5 Perceptions of quality of life and material well-being four years after arrival in Canada compared to two years after arrival, by immigration category

	Compared to your situation two years after arriving in Canada, material well-being / quality of life four years after arrival is ...			
	Better	Same	Worse	Total
	percentage			
All immigrants				
Material well-being (e.g. car, home, disposable income)	55.5	39.0	5.6	100.0
Quality of life (e.g. safety, freedom, pollution)	44.3	52.5	3.2	100.0
Economic immigrants				
Material well-being (e.g. car, home, disposable income)	57.2	37.0	5.8	100.0
Quality of life (e.g. safety, freedom, pollution)	44.5	52.2	3.3	100.0
Family class immigrants				
Material well-being (e.g. car, home, disposable income)	51.1	44.0	4.9	100.0
Quality of life (e.g. safety, freedom, pollution)	42.8	53.9	3.3	100.0
Refugees				
Material well-being (e.g. car, home, disposable income)	54.9	38.9	6.2	100.0
Quality of life (e.g. safety, freedom, pollution)	48.7	49.3	2.0 ^E	100.0

^E use with caution

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 6 Greatest difficulties had to deal with since arriving in Canada , by immigration category (cited 4 years after arrival)

	Total	Economic	Family	Refugees
	percentage			
All difficulties cited				
Finding an adequate job	46.1	54.2	28.6	35.3
Learning an official language/language barrier	26.2	22.9	30.8	40.6
Getting used to the weather	15.6	13.5	20.8	15.4
Missing social/family support from homeland	13.3	12.9	14.3	12.9
Adapting to new culture or values	13.0	12.0	15.1	15.6
Financial constraints	11.4	11.8	9.7	14.8
Getting credentials/work experience recognized	10.6	13.1	5.1	7.2
Lack of social interaction/new friends	6.9	7.5	6.1	4.7
Getting access to professional help	6.0	6.2	5.4	5.8
Facing discrimination or racism	4.4	5.2	2.6	4.2 ^F
Finding good quality housing	4.4	4.3	3.7	7.9
Getting access to education or training	2.7	2.9	1.7 ^E	3.8 ^E
Getting access to childcare	1.9	2.3	x	x
Other	10.5	8.2	17.5	5.8
Most important difficulty*				
Finding an adequate job	37.6	45.1	21.7	25.7
Learning an official language/Language barrier	17.5	14.3	22.4	29.6
Missing social/family support from homeland	6.4	5.5	8.4	7.2
Getting used to the weather	6.3	4.5	11.1	4.7
Adapting to new culture or values	5.3	4.9	6.0	6.9
Financial constraints	5.1	4.6	5.4	9.1
Getting credentials/work experience recognized	3.9	4.7	2.1	2.4 ^F
Lack of social interaction/new friends	2.0	2.1	2.0 ^F	1.6 ^F
Getting access to professional help	2.0	2.0	1.9 ^F	1.9 ^F
Finding good quality housing	1.1	1.0	0.9 ^E	2.5 ^E
Facing discrimination or racism	1.1	1.2	0.7 ^E	F
Getting access to education or training	1.0	1.1	x	F
Getting access to childcare	0.6	0.9 ^E	x	x
Other	10.3	8.2	16.6	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

^F too unreliable to be published

* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 7 Job search experiences of new immigrants aged 25 to 44, by immigration category and time since arrival

	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage	
All immigrants aged 25 to 44		
% of who looked for a job	62.0	52.5
% of job seekers who experienced a problem	70.9	62.3
Economic immigrants aged 25 to 44		
% of who looked for a job	63.3	53.3
% of job seekers who experienced a problem	73.1	63.6
Family class immigrants aged 25 to 44		
% of who looked for a job	55.0	46.2
% of job seekers who experienced a problem	57.8	54.3
Refugees aged 25 to 44		
% of who looked for a job	61.4	58.0
% of job seekers who experienced a problem	71.6	63.1

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 8 New immigrants aged 25 to 44 who experienced difficulties finding employment: Types of difficulties experienced, by immigration category and time since arrival

	0 to 6 months	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage		
All difficulties cited			
All Immigrants			
Not enough Canadian job experience	62.6	62.4	49.8
No connections in the job market	33.1	37.1	37.1
Foreign experience not accepted	42.6	37.9	36.6
Foreign qualifications not accepted	39.2	38.0	35.4
Lack of employment opportunities	29.1	42.7	32.4
Not enough Canadian job references	33.2	34.8	32.1
Language problems	38.2	34.6	31.9
Not able to find a job in my field	14.9	34.8	29.8
Not knowing enough people working	15.5	20.1	20.4
Not having family or friends who could help	9.8	13.4	15.4
Discrimination	7.6	13.2	14.6
Not knowing how to find a job	9.7	10.1	10.4
Childcare constraints	n.a.	3.3	4.6
Transportation constraints	8.7	6.4	3.9
Not knowing the city	6.3	5.5	3.5
Other	9.0	9.5	12.9
Economic immigrants			
Not enough Canadian job experience	64.1	62.6	50.0
Foreign experience not accepted	44.1	39.7	38.8
No connections in the job market	34.7	38.4	38.2
Foreign qualifications not accepted	40.3	39.0	37.0
Lack of employment opportunities	30.9	44.2	33.6
Not enough Canadian job references	34.2	35.7	33.2
Language problems	37.9	33.7	31.3
Not able to find a job in my field	14.9	37.0	30.9
Not knowing enough people working	16.4	21.4	22.0
Not having family or friends who could help	10.8	14.3	16.9
Discrimination	7.7	13.6	16.0
Not knowing how to find a job	9.4	9.8	10.4
Childcare constraints	n.a.	3.3	4.2
Transportation constraints	7.9	5.8	3.5
Not knowing the city	5.6	5.2	3.1
Other	9.1	9.2	12.8
Family class immigrants			
Not enough Canadian job experience	54.6	63.6	49.8
No connections in the job market	24.6	31.6	35.5
Language problems	36.0	36.4	30.1
Not able to find a job in my field	13.4	25.6	27.5
Not enough Canadian job references	28.2	30.9	27.0
Lack of employment opportunities	18.5	35.2	25.0
Foreign experience not accepted	35.1	28.2	23.5
Foreign qualifications not accepted	33.1	31.0	22.5
Not knowing enough people working	10.1 ^E	12.9 ^E	12.3 ^E
Not knowing how to find a job	9.4 ^E	10.2 ^E	9.0 ^E
Childcare constraints	n.a.	x	x
Discrimination	7.0 ^E	10.8 ^E	6.8 ^E
Not having family or friends who could help	2.8 ^E	8.6 ^E	6.6 ^E
Transportation constraints	12.5	10.5 ^E	5.7 ^E
Not knowing the city	8.5 ^E	7.0 ^E	x
Other	8.0 ^E	8.5 ^E	14.2 ^E

Table 8 New immigrants aged 25 to 44 who experienced difficulties finding employment: Types of difficulties experienced, by immigration category and time since arrival (continued)

	0 to 6 months	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage		
Refugees			
Not enough Canadian job experience	51.2	57.8	45.1
Language problems	56.8	46.5	43.1
Foreign qualifications not accepted	32.9	35.4	35.8
Lack of employment opportunities	17.9 ^E	31.1	29.6
Foreign experience not accepted	30.5	28.0	29.1
Not enough Canadian job references	23.7	29.9	24.8
No connections in the job market	21.1 ^E	27.2	23.8
Not able to find a job in my field	20.1 ^E	17.1	18.5 ^E
Not knowing enough people working	12.3 ^E	15.6 ^E	13.3 ^E
Not knowing how to find a job	18.9 ^E	14.6 ^E	12.1 ^E
Not having family or friends who could help	7.8 ^E	9.3 ^E	11.7 ^E
Discrimination	5.3 ^E	12.4 ^E	9.3 ^E
Not knowing the city	16.4 ^E	7.1 ^E	F
Transportation constraints	15.1 ^E	7.3 ^E	5.1 ^E
Childcare constraints	n.a.	F	x
Other	9.3 ^E	14.2	13.3 ^E

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 9 New immigrants aged 25 to 44 who experienced difficulties finding employment: Most serious difficulties experienced, by immigration category and time since arrival

	0 to 6 months	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage		
Most serious difficulty			
All Immigrants			
Not enough Canadian job experience	26.4	27.0	19.2
Language problems	19.1	15.1	15.9
Lack of employment opportunities	8.9	13.4	11.7
Foreign qualifications not accepted	12.4	11.1	11.6
No connections in the job market	4.7	5.3	9.2
Foreign experience not accepted	13.5	10.7	8.6
Not able to find a job in my field	3.0	6.0	6.9
Discrimination	1.3 ^E	2.5	3.8
Not enough Canadian job references	2.4	2.4	3.1 ^E
Not knowing how to find a job	1.8	1.1 ^E	1.6 ^E
Not knowing enough people working	0.5 ^E	0.5 ^E	1.1 ^E
Childcare constraints	n.a.	0.6 ^E	0.7 ^E
Not having family or friends who could help	x	x	F
Transportation constraints	1.0 ^E	x	x
Not knowing the city	x	x	x
Other	4.8	3.5	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Economic immigrants			
Not enough Canadian job experience	26.9	26.7	19.1
Language problems	17.9	14.2	14.7
Lack of employment opportunities	9.3	13.5	12.4
Foreign qualifications not accepted	12.2	10.7	11.2
Foreign experience not accepted	14.6	12.2	9.5
No connections in the job market	4.7	5.5	9.4
Not able to find a job in my field	2.7	6.3	6.7
Discrimination	1.4 ^E	2.4	4.4
Not enough Canadian job references	2.5	2.5	3.4 ^E
Not knowing how to find a job	1.8	0.9 ^E	1.5 ^E
Not knowing enough people working	0.5 ^E	x	1.1 ^E
Not having family or friends who could help	x	x	F
Childcare constraints	n.a.	0.7 ^E	x
Transportation constraints	x	x	x
Not knowing the city	x	x	x
Other	4.8	3.4	5.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Family class immigrants			
Not enough Canadian job experience	25.2	30.1	21.9 ^E
Language problems	23.2	15.5	19.6 ^E
Not able to find a job in my field	x	x	10.8 ^E
Foreign qualifications not accepted	14.8	13.7 ^E	9.9 ^E
No connections in the job market	x	x	9.0 ^E
Lack of employment opportunities	x	14.9	8.1 ^E
Foreign experience not accepted	7.7 ^E	x	x
Childcare constraints	n.a.	x	x
Not enough Canadian job references	x	x	x
Not knowing how to find a job	x	x	x
Not knowing enough people working	x	x	x
Discrimination	x	x	x
Not knowing the city	x	x	x
Not having family or friends who could help	x	x	x

Table 9 New immigrants aged 25 to 44 who experienced difficulties finding employment: Most serious difficulties experienced, by immigration category and time since arrival (continued)

	0 to 6 months	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage		
Family class immigrants (continued)			
Transportation constraints	3.1 ^E	x	x
Other	4.5 ^E	4.4 ^E	7.3 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Refugees			
Language problems	38.7	30.7	26.6
Foreign qualifications not accepted	7.5 ^E	10.7 ^E	19.6 ^E
Not enough Canadian job experience	17.8 ^E	25.8	13.9 ^E
Lack of employment opportunities	x	7.0	10.4 ^E
No connections in the job market	x	x	6.6 ^E
Foreign experience not accepted	F	x	x
Discrimination	x	x	x
Not able to find a job in my field	x	x	F
Not knowing how to find a job	x	x	x
Not enough Canadian job references	x	x	x
Not knowing enough people working	x	x	x
Not having family or friends who could help	x	x	x
Transportation constraints	x	x	x
Childcare constraints	n.a.	x	x
Not knowing the city	x	x	x
Other	F	F	7.7 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 10 New immigrants aged 25 to 44 who experienced difficulties finding employment: Number of specific problems encountered (Range 0 to 4)*, by immigration category and time since arrival

	0 to 6 months	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage		
All Immigrants			
None	9.5	11.5	15.3
One	29.1	29.1	29.1
Two	31.0	28.5	29.6
Three or four	30.3	30.9	26.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Economic immigrants			
None	9.1	11.3	15.0
One	27.6	28.3	27.8
Two	31.3	28.8	30.8
Three or four	32.0	31.6	26.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Family class immigrants			
None	12.8	13.4 ^E	19.3 ^E
One	37.8	33.6	33.8
Two	30.0	27.0	23.2
Three or four	19.4	26.1	23.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Refugees			
None	8.7 ^E	9.2 ^E	11.8 ^E
One	37.8	34.3	41.2
Two	27.1	27.5	23.9
Three or four	26.4 ^E	29.0	23.2 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

^E use with caution

* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

* Number of following difficulties encountered when seeking employment 1) lack of work experience 2) lack of foreign qualification recognition 3) language problems and/or 4) lack of job contacts.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 11 Language training activities of new immigrants during first four years in Canada by immigration category and time since arrival

	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage	
All immigrants		
Took a language course	25.8	9.9
No course but looked for information	11.5	8.8
Did not take training or look for info	62.7	81.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Economic immigrants		
Took a language course	24.9	9.6
No course but looked for information	12.0	9.1
Did not take training or look for info	63.0	81.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Family class immigrants		
Took a language course	23.1	8.5
No course but looked for information	10.1	8.1
Did not take training or look for info	66.9	83.5
Total	100.0	100.0
Refugees		
Took a language course	49.2	19.2
No course but looked for information	11.1	8.8
Did not take training or look for info	39.7	72.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 12 Percent of new immigrants who experienced a difficulty accessing language training by immigration category and time since arrival

	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage	
All immigrants		
% of course takers who experienced a problem	17.9	20.3
% of information seekers who experienced a problem	35.3	41.7
% of all immigrants who experienced a problem	8.7	5.8
Economic immigrants		
% of course takers who experienced a problem	16.7	18.8
% of information seekers who experienced a problem	33.3	42.6
% of all immigrants who experienced a problem	8.2	5.8
Family class immigrants		
% of course takers who experienced a problem	20.7	24.4
% of information seekers who experienced a problem	40.6	38.6
% of all immigrants who experienced a problem	8.9	5.2
Refugees		
% of course takers who experienced a problem	19.0	20.4 ^E
% of information seekers who experienced a problem	40.6 ^E	39.9 ^E
% of all immigrants who experienced a problem	13.8	8.2

^E use with caution

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 13 Difficulties encountered when taking or seeking language courses*, by immigration category and time since arrival

	7 to 24 months				25 to 48 months			
	All immigrants	Economic	Family	Refugee	All immigrants	Economic	Family	Refugee
percentage								
All problems cited regarding language training								
Time constraints	39.0	40.4	36.9	36.2 ^E	41.3	43.0	34.0	47.0 ^E
Financial constraints	27.3	33.9	13.8 ^E	23.7 ^E	28.1	31.7	20.1 ^E	22.3 ^E
The lack of courses/courses are full/ waiting list too long	30.3	35.6	23.6	15.8 ^E	23.5	25.3	17.0 ^E	26.6 ^E
Not knowing how to find out about language training	16.3	18.1	9.0 ^E	25.5 ^E	17.7	18.4	x	x
Communication problems	17.4	13.3	24.3 ^E	24.3 ^E	16.1	14.5 ^E	18.0 ^E	24.3 ^E
Not knowing where to find courses or programs	15.9	17.9	11.0 ^E	15.8 ^E	15.8	17.0	x	x
Transportation constraints	13.0	x	22.5 ^E	x	10.0	x	12.5 ^E	x
Childcare constraints	10.2	11.1 ^E	x	x	9.0	x	9.8 ^E	x
Not understanding the process or system	8.9	x	x	17.9 ^E	7.0 ^E	8.3 ^E	x	x
Discrimination	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Other	11.5	10.8 ^E	12.7 ^E	13.1 ^E	8.7 ^E	6.4	13.9	F
Most serious problems cited regarding language training*								
Time constraints	25.5	24.0	29.1	25.2 ^E	27.3	28.4	22.5 ^E	29.6 ^E
Financial constraints	14.5	17.0	8.2 ^E	16.3 ^E	16.4	18.1	14.8 ^E	9.0 ^E
The lack of courses/courses are full/ waiting list too long	17.4	19.3	15.5 ^E	10.9 ^E	14.3	14.4 ^E	10.3 ^E	23.2 ^E
Communication problems	10.2	7.2 ^E	15.0 ^E	16.1 ^E	10.9	10.0 ^E	11.4 ^E	18.0 ^E
Not knowing how to find out about language training	4.9 ^E	5.9 ^E	x	x	7.8 ^E	8.0 ^E	x	x
Not knowing where to find courses or programs	6.7 ^E	8.1 ^E	x	x	4.5 ^E	5.3 ^E	x	x
Childcare constraints	4.2 ^E	4.5 ^E	x	x	4.3 ^E	4.1 ^E	x	x
Transportation constraints	4.5 ^E	x	9.5 ^E	x	4.0 ^E	x	x	x
Not understanding the process or system	x	x	x	x	F	x	x	x
Discrimination	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Other	9.3	8.6 ^E	10.0 ^E	11.9 ^E	8.8 ^E	7.1 ^E	13.9 ^E	F
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act

^E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005

Table 14 Selected housing characteristics of new immigrants, by immigration category and time since arrival

	0 to 6 months*	7 to 24 months	25 to 48 months
	percentage		
All Immigrants			
% looked for housing	76.5	53.7	42.8
% housing seekers experienced difficulty	38.4	25.5	17.5
% all experienced difficulty	29.4	13.7	7.5
Economic immigrants			
% looked for housing	90.3	60.3	46.4
% housing seekers experienced difficulty	42.9	26.1	16.7
% all experienced housing difficulty	38.8	15.7	7.7
Family class immigrants			
% looked for housing	42.5	37.4	33.3
% housing seekers experienced difficulty	14.1	19.5	16.5
% all experienced housing difficulty	6.0	7.3	5.5
Refugees			
% looked for housing	82.2	56.1	46.5
% housing seekers experienced difficulty	40.3	36.6	28.7
% all experienced housing difficulty	33.2	20.5	13.4

* Questions in LSIC Wave 1 regarding looking for housing are slightly different from the questions in Waves 2 and 3. Consequently, changes over time should be interpreted with caution.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 15 The degree to which expectations about life in Canada were met after 6 months and 4 years in Canada, by immigrant category

	Total	Economic	Family	Refugee
	percentage			
Better than expected... remained high	21.1	15.3	32.2	33.0
About what expected... remained the same	16.0	17.0	14.7	11.8
Worse than or about what expected... but improved	28.8	31.2	23.5	26.8
Worse than expected... remained low	11.0	14.4	3.8	6.0
Better than or about what expected... but declined	23.1	22.1	25.8	22.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 16 Canadian citizenship status and intentions* by change in material well-being between year 2 and year 4, by immigration category

	Material well-being in year 4 compared to year 2		
	Better	Same	Worse
	percentage		
All immigrants			
Obtained or applied for citizenship	72.4	68.7	70.5
Intend to apply for citizenship	22.4	21.2	20.3
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	5.2	10.1	9.2 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Economic immigrants			
Obtained or applied for citizenship	77.8	73.8	75.9
Intend to apply for citizenship	17.6	17.1	15.1
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	4.6	9.1	9.0 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Family class immigrants			
Obtained or applied for citizenship	56.3	57.0	52.1
Intend to apply for citizenship	35.9	29.2	36.8 ^E
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	7.8	13.8	11.1 ^E
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Refugees			
Obtained or applied for citizenship	79.7	74.3	78.4
Intend to apply for citizenship	19.4	23.6	17.1 ^E
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	x	x	x
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

* Citizenship status and intentions 4 years after arrival.

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.

Table 17 Canadian citizenship status and intentions* by degree to which expectations have been met by immigration category

	Expectations about life in Canada	
	Expectations exceeded, met or improved upon	Expectations unmet or deteriorating
	percentage	
All immigrants		
Obtained or applied for citizenship	71.0	70.9
Intend to apply for citizenship	22.8	19.8
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	6.3	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Economic immigrants		
Obtained or applied for citizenship	76.6	75.6
Intend to apply for citizenship	18.0	15.7
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	5.4	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Family class immigrants		
Obtained or applied for citizenship	56.9	55.6
Intend to apply for citizenship	33.5	31.7
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	9.6	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Refugees		
Obtained or applied for citizenship	78.0	76.1
Intend to apply for citizenship	20.8	21.1
Do not intend to apply/Uncertain	x	x
Total	100.0	100.0

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

^E use with caution

* Citizenship status and intentions 4 years after arrival.

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005.