

## Summary

In recent years, the number of temporary foreign workers admitted to Canada has more than doubled. In this study, Delphine Nakache and Paula Kinoshita examine the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, in order to determine the Canadian and Albertan approaches to integrating and protecting these migrants. They consider three possible policy perspectives on the legal status of temporary foreign workers, according to whether the country of employment (1) sees temporary labour migration as an opportunity to integrate the workers; (2) is indifferent to their future position in society; or (3) tries to prevent their integration. In order to determine into which policy perspective Canada fits, the authors analyze three important integration mechanisms: employment, family unity and access to permanent residency.

In the field of employment, there is a discrepancy between policy and practice in regard to temporary foreign workers' rights. A significant factor is the restrictive nature of the work permit (temporary foreign workers are often tied to one job, one employer and one location), which can have the practical effect of limiting their employment rights and protections. Other problems include illegal recruitment practices, misinformation about migration opportunities and lack of enforcement mechanisms. In the context of employment, Canada seems indifferent to temporary foreign workers' future position in society.

On family unity and access to permanent residency, there are significant differences in their treatment, depending on their skill levels. The spouses of highly skilled workers are able to acquire open work permits, and highly skilled workers have the opportunity to get permanent residency from within. In contrast, the spouses of lower-skilled workers must apply for a restricted work permit, and lower-skilled workers, with few exceptions, have very limited opportunity to migrate permanently. Yet they can renew their temporary status so long as they have employment. Nakache and Kinoshita conclude that Canada encourages the integration of highly skilled workers and is indifferent to that of lower-skilled workers.

The authors argue that the short-term focus of Canada's temporary labour migration policy will not help the country realize its long-term labour market needs and is unfair to the vast majority of temporary foreign workers, who are expected to spend years in Canada without contributing to society in the long run. They offer a number of recommendations. To mention a few, they recommend that the work permit be restructured to allow these migrants greater mobility; that enforcement mechanisms be used to protect them from abusive practices; that communication between different governmental players be improved; that a policy be adopted to support the integration of temporary foreign workers; and that public debate about the recent changes in Canada's labour migration policy be encouraged.