Towards the Integration of Immigrants in Quebec’s Qualified Workforce: An Overview of the First Years Following Their Arrival and the Effects of Selection Policies

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Research questions:
- Are immigrants able to obtain and maintain jobs commensurate with their education?
- How does their presence in the qualified workforce evolve over time?
- What kind of effect do selection policies have on their presence in the qualified workforce?

Background:
- The share of immigrants (5%) who settle in Quebec are skilled workers selected on a point system basis.
- Selection criteria are based on adaptability, language proficiency, education, work experience, immigration programs, age, spouse’s profile and presence of children.

Methods:
- Survey on skilled migrants in Quebec (n=1,541) (eligible for immigration selection 2012)
- Survey data on the post-migration job history
- Retrospective data covering 1 to 5 years of settlement
- Administrative data on points obtained by each level of the selection grid

Definition: Job qualification is determined by comparing the educational requirements for a given position with the National Occupational Classification to the level of credential upon arrival.

Various methodological approaches were taken to illustrate different aspects of the presence of migrants in jobs that match their credentials:
- Event history analysis
- Time series
- Sequence analysis
- Multinomial logistic regression

Results:
- Only 64% of immigrants have access to a qualified job as their first employment experience in Quebec.
- Once they have had an unqualified job, they will most likely stay in this type of job, and vice versa.
- After three transitions on the labor market, 95% of immigrants will have obtained jobs that match their skills.
- The proportion of immigrants in qualified jobs increases over the first three years of settlement: the most significant increase occurring during the first year.
- In Quebec, the proportion rises from 62% in the first year to 66% by the end of the third year.
- Six profiles of immigrants in qualified jobs were identified.
- Among these profiles, two of them show a direct access to qualified jobs within the first year and an original presence of 30% of the sample. Together, these two profiles represent 36% of the sample.
- The other four profiles raise questions about the ability of skilled workers to find and maintain jobs that match their credentials.
- They either show a late onset (profiles 4-5), an intermittent presence (profiles 3, 5, 7, and 9 respectively) or a complete lack of qualified jobs (profiles 6-8).

Conclusions:
- Not all migrants are able to easily find and maintain jobs that match their academic credentials.
- Local experience at all costs? For these newcomers, accepting an underqualified job might mean never finding a job commensurate with their education.
- Selection history only has a limited impact on the presence of migrants in the qualified workforce, despite the fact that the government tries to select candidates with the highest potential for future skilled integration.
- Future research will need to focus on the dynamics of settlement and the competing impact on the presence of migrants in the qualified and underqualified workforce.