



Economic Security for
Women with Precarious
Immigration Status:
Ensuring Labour Rights for All

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3 inter-related projects

- ★ 'Learning to be an Immigrant Worker'
 - Baltodano, Hanley, Jordan, Shragge, Singh, Steig
- ★ Ongoing work on access to social rights for migrants with precarious status
 - Oxman-Martinez & Hanley
- ★ Post-doctoral project on organising for the rights of undocumented migrants
 - Hanley

Presentation Outline

- ✦ Research collaboration with the Immigrant Workers' Centre
- ✦ Context for Immigrant Work
- ✦ Defining Precarious Status
- ✦ Immigrant Women's Work Experiences
- ✦ Defending Labour Rights
- ✦ Policy Implications
- ✦ Organising Implications

Immigrant Workers' Centre

✦ Origins

✦ General activities:

- Popular education
- Individual advocacy
- Collective advocacy
- Campaigns
- Research

✦ Research collaborations

Context for Immigrant Women's Labour

Feminisation of migration	Feminisation of poverty
Over-representation in low-paid jobs and unemployment	Sending countries increasingly dependent on remittances
Reversal of trend of upward mobility	Increasing 'flexibility' of labour demand
Increasing ethnic and racial diversity	Cutbacks to social prgms supporting integration

Defining 'Precarious Status'

- ✦ Responds to Canadian economic prerogatives
- ✦ Does not confer the permanent right to remain in Canada
- ✦ Imposes dependency on a 3rd party, usually employer or family member

Precarious statuses of Immigration & Refugee Protection Act

Majority women:

- ☀ Sponsored family members
- ☀ Dependent refugee claimants
- ☀ Dependent immigrant
- ☀ Live-in Caregiver Program
- ☀ Trafficked

Other forms:

- ☀ Work visas
- ☀ Student visas
- ☀ Refugees (accepted or claimants)
- ☀ Undocumented (smuggled, visa expired, rejected refugee claim)

Precarious Immigration Status increases Women's Economic Insecurity!

Majority of women enter Canada with such a status	Shapes eligibility for social benefits
Shapes coverage from labour protections	Fear of 'being a burden' on Canadian society
Fear of 3rd party intervening in status	Type of employment can block access
Difficult to unionise	Gendered experiences
Increased social isolation	Fear of losing employment



Experiences in the Labour Market: Problems & Resistance

- ✦ Domestic work becoming human trafficking
- ✦ Gendered discrimination
- ✦ Age discrimination & shoddy unions
- ✦ Good unions & factories closing



Defending the Labour Rights of Women with Precarious Status

- ✦ Limitations of Labour Standard and Health & Safety protections
- ✦ Limitations of Employment Insurance & Workers' Compensation
- ✦ Immigration Risks
- ✦ Employment Risks

Policy Implications

- ✦ Revision of Labour Standards, Health and Safety Acts & their implementation
- ✦ Revision of eligibility for EI and workers' compensation
- ✦ Revision of immigration categories

Organising Implications

- ✱ Popular education
- ✱ Individual advocacy
- ✱ Collective advocacy
- ✱ Policy campaigns
- ✱ Research