

Deciphering the Discourse: Labour Shortage, Skill Mismatch and Employment-related Geographical Mobility in Canada

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The subject of a looming labour shortage has been prominent in Canada in recent months, as research institutes and government task forces have issued reports on the impact of Canada's aging population. Attention has also been directed to the related question of so-called skill mismatch and of the contribution different forms of labour mobility (internal migration, permanent immigration, and temporary foreign workers) can make to addressing labour market needs identified in these accounts. This paper critically reviews the dominant discourse and assumptions in current debates in Canada regarding whether or not we are experiencing a labour shortage, the relationship between labour shortages and perceived skill mismatch, and on the place of different types of mobility in causing/addressing labour shortages. Particular attention is paid to the neglect of gender and household dynamics and the under-theorization of mobility in these accounts.