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INITIAL LOCATION CHOICE OF NEW IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA

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Initial Location Choice of New Immigrants to Canada

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Abstract: This study examines the determinants of the initial choice of provincial destinations made by new immigrants who entered Canada during the period between 1996 and 2004. Separate analyses are conducted for economic, family, and refugee class immigrants who declared their intended provincial destinations at the time of their entry in Canada. Impacts of demographic characteristics of the population resident in the destination province, the economic climate of each province, and provincial welfare programs are examined in a regression model whose dependent variable is the annual immigrant arrival in each class. Data from landing documents of new immigrants, collected at the time of entry into Canada, are used. The study is timely and important, given the current interest of immigration policy makers in obtaining a more even geographic distribution of immigrants across Canada.

Keywords/Mots-clefs: Immigration, Regionalization, Welfare, Unemployment, Population

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent times, immigration has become an important topic of discussion in Canadian public and academic circles. It has been argued that immigration can be an effective tool to reverse the impact of the natural decline in Canadian population growth, as well as in population aging, which can have adverse impacts on labour markets.¹ This is especially true for the smaller provinces where declines in the natural growth rate and out-migration of youth have forced policy makers to adopt new initiatives to attract and retain new immigrants.²

1.1 *Purpose of the Study*

Previous research on immigrant location choice has primarily been conducted in the United States, Australia and Europe. In Canada, this research is relatively new. The present study will examine the determinants of immigrant location choice by focusing on those who entered Canada during the period of 1996 to 2004. Separate investigations will be undertaken for the three major immigrant classes: economic, family, and refugee. The impacts of demographic characteristics of resident populations, economic conditions, and welfare benefits on the initial location choice of newcomers will be examined in an econometric model.

¹ Natural component of population growth is measured by the difference between births and deaths in a given year. Potential adverse effects include a shortage of skilled labour and a decline in the population of tax payers, which may disrupt the distribution of public services.

² For example, many of the smaller provinces have established provincial nominee programs (in cooperation with Citizenship and Immigration Canada) to attract skilled workers to their provinces. The programs enable employers to hire permanent workers from other countries to fill positions in areas of labour demand. Manitoba initiated the first program, which began in 1998. Now, most provinces have a nominee program in place.

1.2 *Importance of the Study*

This study is important for at least four reasons. First, Canada admits about 250,000 immigrants every year. A large number of these immigrants come under the economic class with a potential contribution towards the economic prosperity of Canada. In many public circle debates in the smaller provinces and communities of Canada concerns have been raised that the economic benefits of immigration are unequally distributed because of the high concentration of immigrants only in large provinces, i.e., Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.³ Second, the high concentration of immigrants in Canada's three large cities; i.e., Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver; has resulted in increased demand for municipal resources to accommodate the large numbers of newcomers (CIC, 2001; 5).⁴ As noted by Schellenberg (2004; 7), immigration may have implications for the provision of public services and housing in urban areas that receive high numbers of immigrants⁵ as well as implications for elementary and secondary schools and the provision of other social services. Third, Canada's declining birthrate, aging population and out-migration of youth from smaller provinces, such as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, are expected to result in shortages of skilled labour and economic challenges for these provinces in the future.⁶ As a result, smaller provinces are now placing a greater emphasis on attracting and retaining immigrants to their areas. Last, but not the least, despite the growing interest in obtaining a more even distribution of immigrants in Canada, there is a dearth of Canadian studies

³ Concerns over unequal distribution of economic benefits of immigration are often expressed in news media and conferences. For example, presenters from smaller provinces expressed this concern in a conference organized by the economics domain of Atlantic Metropolis Centre. These presentations can be accessed on www.atlantic.metropolis.net.

⁴ The concentration of immigrants in Canada's major cities increased between 1980 and 2001. Toronto and Vancouver have become more likely destination choices of immigrants than two decades ago (Hou, 2005; 5). This is discussed further in Section 2.3 of the report.

⁵ Schellenberg gives an example of the Montreal Transit System, where the share of recent immigrants commuting to work by public transit is twice that of native Canadians. Large differences are also evident in Toronto and in virtually every CMA in which significant numbers of recent immigrants reside.

⁶ As per the APEC report "Immigration is seen as a means to increase population and labour force growth, enhance the stock of human capital and alleviate skill shortages" (APEC, 2001; 4).

analyzing immigrants' location choice. Understanding the nature and determinants of location choice within different admission categories of immigrants is important for regional policy makers who are interested in designing appropriate policies for immigrant attraction to their region.

2.0 WHERE IMMIGRANTS SETTLE

Virtually all immigrants who arrived in the decade preceding the 2001 census were destined towards one of Canada's 27 census metropolitan areas (CMAs). About 73 percent of these immigrants stated Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver as their initial destination choice (Schellenberg, 2004; 7). Hou (2005; 5) found that immigrant concentration in the major cities has increased between the years 1980 to 2001, and that Toronto and Vancouver have become more likely destination choices of annual arrivals than they were in the past. By immigrant class, between the years 1996 and 2004, 58 percent of immigrants were admitted in Canada through the economic class, 28 percent were admitted through the family class, and 12 percent were admitted as refugees (CIC, 2004). These percentages have remained about constant each year. Table 1 shows the number of permanent residents admitted by class to each province between the years 1996 and 2004. Table A1 in the appendix presents the same information in percentage format.

Table 1 - Distribution of immigrants across provinces and total number by admission category, 1996-2004

Admission Category/ Province	Family	Economic Immigrants	Refugees	Other Immigrants	Category not stated	Region not stated	Totals
NS	3,216	12,098	2,092	262			17,668
*Other Atlantic Provinces	2,565	5,696	3,443	231			11,935
QC	72,434	161,146	65,317	6,088	2		304,987
ON	312,369	640,422	123,433	18,365	1		1,094,590
MB	9,488	23,970	8,382	299			42,139

SK	3,729	6,775	5,031	177			15,712
AB	41,139	70,415	14,794	1,473			127,821
BC	105,913	224,313	19,285	4,662			354,173
**Territories	702	639	35	53			1,429
Totals	551,555	1,145,474	241,812	31,610	3	145	1,970,599
*Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick							
**Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut							

Source: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2004/permanent/19.html>. Retrieved Nov. 26, 2006

From Table 1, it is clear that economic immigrants made up the largest proportion of immigrants admitted to Canada, followed by family class and refugee class immigrants. As well, most immigrants selected Ontario as their initial destination choice (over 50 percent of each class).

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW - LOCATION CHOICE OF NEW IMMIGRANTS

Much of the research involving the determinants of immigrant location choice is based on data from the United States. Canadian research to date has mainly involved the concentration and movement of immigrants already within the country (McDonald, 2004; Newbold, 1996; Edmonston, 2005; Hou, 2005).

3.1 *Impact of Demographic Variables on Location Choice of Immigrants*

Major demographic variables that are expected to influence initial location choice of immigrants to Canada include the size of the foreign-born population and the total population of a community. The presence of foreign-born population has been shown to be an important determinant influencing immigrant location choice. Zavodny (1999) concludes that the most important factor determining location choice of recent immigrants to the United States is the presence of earlier ones. Bartel (1989) concludes that immigrants tend to be more geographically concentrated than natives and reside in cities with large ethnic populations (typically co-ethnics). Other researchers, including Jaeger (2000) and Buckley (1996), report similar findings for the

United States. McDonald (2004), who studied the role of ethnic clustering in the location choice of new immigrants to Canada, found that new immigrants choose to locate in a particular region because of the relatively high concentration of immigrants from the same ethnic group that already reside there. However, the magnitude of the effect varies by personal demographic characteristics. For example, ethnic clustering is the weakest for immigrants that speak either French or English at home and have a university degree. He concludes that due to the high concentration of new immigrants that originate from non-English speaking regions, it is likely that the geographic distribution of future immigrants will continue to be concentrated in Canada's largest cities where immigrants are currently concentrated. Newbold (1996) who studied the in- and out-migration rates of foreign born in Canada from 1981 to 1996 found that the foreign-born have higher in- and out-migration rates than Canadian born migrants, with Ontario and British Columbia having a strong ability to attract and retain the foreign-born (most likely due to large foreign born populations). Neither McDonald nor Newbold studied the impact of welfare generosity on immigrant location choice, which the present study does.

Similar to the above Canadian results are those reported by Chiswick, Lee & Miller (2002) who found there is a tendency for recent arrivals in Australia to settle in areas where others from their country of origin live. However, the degree of concentration depends on the source country of the immigrant population. Likewise, Aslund (2001) who studied immigrant location choice in Sweden found that immigrants are attracted to regions with high representation from the individual's birth country and large overall immigrant populations.

Presence of a foreign born population is an important attraction for new immigrants as this reflects the establishment of ethnic networks which aid in the integration process, job opportunities, information and guidance, and financial support. As well, a higher foreign-born population share could reflect experiences of the community in dealing with immigrant populations, and/or acceptance of foreign-born leading to less discrimination and alienation.

Another demographic determinant which has been found to influence immigrant location choice is the population size of a location (Bartel, 1989, Zavodny 1999, Jaeger 2000). Locations with larger populations in the host nation may be the only ones known to immigrants prior to their move to Canada, and they are usually gateways with international airports which make them more attractive to immigrants.

3.2 *Economic Variables*

The immigration literature considers a location's unemployment rate, wage rate, and welfare generosity as major determinants of initial location choice of new immigrants to the country. Economic variables such as unemployment rate and wage rate have been shown to affect the number of immigrants settling in an area, since improvement of economic well-being is a major motivation for migration. However literature suggests that the impact of economic variables varies by immigrant class. Zavodny (1999) found that economic immigrants in the United States are less likely to settle in states with higher unemployment rates and are attracted to states with higher wages, whereas family sponsored refugees and new refugees are less likely to settle in states with higher unemployment rates. Likewise, Jaeger (2000), found that wage levels matter to immigrants across all classes and that low unemployment rates and higher wages matter most to employment-class immigrants (similar to the economic class in Canada). To explain the attraction of economic immigrants to areas with low unemployment, Jaeger writes that

employment-category immigrants in the United States must be sponsored by an employer, and there is a strong association between local unemployment rates and the location of the sponsoring firm. Therefore, when local labour markets are tight (unemployment rates are low), a firm searches for workers outside of the United States. The location choice of family class immigrants, on the other hand, is typically based upon where their sponsoring families already live, resulting in less importance placed on labour market conditions. In contrast to Zavodny and Jaeger, Bartel (1989) found that immigrants in the United States are insensitive to local labour market conditions in their destination choice.

In terms of Canadian research, Newbold (1996) found that the foreign-born, like native-born Canadians, tend to gravitate towards provinces that have high income levels and employment growth rates, and are dissuaded by provinces which have high unemployment rates. Initially chosen provinces with high employment growth rates, high income levels, similar cultural make-up, and a large population size reduced the likelihood of departure. Likewise, Edmonston (2005) found that the foreign-born tend to move out of the Atlantic and Prairie provinces and into Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta, which are more populated provinces, in response to differences in unemployment rates, wage rates, and labour force characteristics. The foreign-born also tend to stay in provinces that already have a higher proportion of co-ethnics. However, Hou (2005) found that the size of a pre-existing immigrant community does not have a strong pull or retention effect on immigrants once other locational attributes are accounted for, even though the size of pre-existing immigrant communities does correlate strongly with the size of the city. He also found that redistribution was small in scale for most immigrant groups, even for immigrant groups and refugees whose initial settlement was not voluntary.

None of the above researchers (Newbold, 1996; Edmonston, 2005; Hou, 2005) examined the impact of welfare generosity on location choice which can be an important economic variable determining an immigrant's destination choice.

Previous research on the impact of welfare programs on the location choice of immigrants in the United States is inconclusive. Dodson (2001) found that welfare generosity has an effect on immigrant inflow into a state and is present across all admission classes. Likewise, Borjas (1999) and Bartel (1989) found that immigrants are attracted to states with generous welfare policies. However, Zavodny (1999) and Kaushal (2005) who also conducted research in the United States had contradicting results. Aslund (2001), when analyzing secondary migration in Sweden, found that immigrants tend to locate where there are many welfare recipients and a large public sector, but concludes there is no direct evidence that immigrants are welfare seeking in their destination choice. In comparison to studies completed in the United States, Baker and Benjamin (1995) who studied the participation rates in unemployment insurance for immigrants versus natives in Canada (they did not study welfare generosity in terms of determinants of initial location choice of immigrants), found that recent immigrants to Canada have lower participation rates in unemployment compensation insurance (now called employment insurance) and social assistance than natives. Adjusting for differences in skill level does little to change the results. As well, they found that social assistance participation is correlated with arrival from countries that were leading sources of refugees over the study period. One implication of this more general finding is that immigrants to Canada may not be welfare seeking in their location choice and the present study will investigate this matter more directly.

To sum up, previous immigration research has shown that both demographic and economic variables are important determinants for the initial location choice of immigrants. In general, researchers agree that demographics variables influence the initial location choice of immigrants. However, the results are inconclusive for economic variables. Bartel (1989) found that immigrants are insensitive to economic variables, whereas Zavodny (1999) and Jaeger (2000) found they are significant, though, the significance depends on the immigrant class which differed for each researcher. The results of the impact of welfare generosity are also inconclusive. Despite the differences in outcomes of previous research, both demographic and economic variables have been shown to be important determinants and will be included in the analysis for this study. No Canadian study has analyzed, to date, the impact of welfare generosity of a region (or province) on immigrant location choice in Canada directly.

4.0 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of selected demographic and economic variables in the determination of immigrant location choice within Canada.

4.1 *The Model*

Based on Zavodny (1999), the econometric model is specified as follows:

$$\text{Immigrants}_{kt} = f(\text{Demographic}_{kt-1}, \text{Economic}_{kt-1}, R_n, T_t, e_{kt}) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Immigrants_{kt} is the number of immigrants who settled in province k in year t . This variable is modeled as a function of a vector of demographic characteristics ($\text{Demographic}_{kt-1}$), a vector of economic activities (Economic_{kt-1}), a region effect (R_n), a fixed year effect (T_t), and a random

error (e_{kt}). The Demographic vector includes the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per province as a proxy for total population and the proportion of foreign born population in each province. A rationale for using GDP, instead of population, will be provided shortly. The Economic vector includes the unemployment rate, manufacturing wage rate, and the dollar amount of social assistance per user. The region effect controls for any time-invariant effects common to a group of neighbouring provinces, and the time effect controls for any effects that are common to all provinces in a particular year. A detailed explanation of the rationale for including each variable is provided in the next section.

4.2 The Data

The study is based on pooled cross-sectional and time series data. Its main data sources are Statistics Canada's socio-economic database (CANSIM tables) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Variables for the analysis were chosen based upon the demographic and economic variables that were identified as being important determinants in initial location choice of immigrants in the literature review section above. A description of each variable follows:

Number of Immigrants - The dependant variable used in the equation is the number of immigrants who have settled in a particular province in a particular year (between 1996 and 2004). Data were obtained from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). CIC data are for the intended destination of immigrants, not the actual place in Canada where they live.

Provincial GDP – As discussed in the previous section, total population has been shown to be an important factor in determining immigrant location choice (Bartel, 1989; Zavodny, 1999; Jaeger, 2000). However, since the effects of population have already been accounted for within foreign-born population share (which is given as a percentage of total population), provincial GDP, which is highly correlated with a province's total population is used instead as a proxy to prevent

any double counting.^{7,8} The GDP series was deflated using the Consumer Price Index (1992 = 100) for each province to disregard the effects of inflation over the period of study.

Foreign Born Population Share - The percentage of the foreign-born population in each province has been shown to be an important determinant in immigrant location choice (Zavodny, 1999; Jaeger, 2000; Buckley, 1996; Bartel, 1989, MacDonald, 2004; Newbold, 1996; Aslund, 2001). It is expected to be an important determinant across all immigrant classes, especially for the family class immigrants who are expected to live close to relatives. Foreign-born population share was computed for the years 1996 and 2001 based on the population census data for these two years. For inter-census years, these data were linearly interpolated, and for post-2001 years the data were linearly extrapolated.

Unemployment Rate - The provincial unemployment rate reflects employment opportunities within each province. When the unemployment rate is high there are fewer employment opportunities. It is expected that economic immigrants will be less likely to settle in areas of high unemployment and that family class and refugee class immigrants will be indifferent, as they tend to choose a location of residence based upon the location of family members or sponsors.

Manufacturing Wage Rate - The provincial manufacturing wage rate⁹ is another reflection of economic conditions in each province. Manufacturing wage rate was used as the manufacturing sector is the largest goods-producing sector in terms of its GDP contribution in Canada (approximately 17% of GDP each year) and employs a large number of Canadians across the country. As well, it provides a good indication of the movement of wages in the country. The

⁷ GDP is used as a proxy for Total Population (TP). A regression equation using GDP as a function of TP resulted in an R-square value of 0.96, indicating a high correlation between the two variables.

⁸ When the model (1) was estimated using the log of TP instead of GDP, as independent variable, the results were similar to those obtained using the log of GDP.

⁹ Provincial manufacturing wage rate, excluding overtime, was used as it is a less complicated measure. For example, overtime could be paid as straight time, time and a half, double time, etc.

series was deflated using the Consumer Price Index (1992 = 100) for each province. This variable is expected to have a positive effect on the choice of economic immigrants locating in a province.

Provincial Spending on Social Assistance - Social assistance (welfare) helps people in need who are not eligible for other benefits. Like Aslund (2001) who used the take-up rate for social assistance as a direct measure of the local welfare systems generosity, the average social assistance income of recipients in dollars is used. Based on the inconclusive results of the impact of welfare programs in the United States studies and upon previous indirect results of Baker and Benjamin's (1995) Canadian study this variable is expected to be insignificant across all immigrant classes in their location choice. The present study is the first Canadian study to directly analyze the impact of welfare generosity on location choice of new immigrants.

Fixed Effect Variables - Fixed effects are used when there is a need to control for omitted variables that differ between cases but are constant over time.¹⁰ For this analysis, two fixed effect variables have been included to account for any unobserved factors that differ between provinces and that may affect location choice. The region variable, R_n , controls for any time-invariant effects common to all provinces, such as the tendency for immigrants to not settle in a particular area of Canada because of location or climate. Provinces were divided into three distinct regions: Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick), Ontario and Quebec, and the Western Provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan). The time variable, T_t , controls for any effects that are common to all provinces in a particular year, such as the impacts of federal economic and immigration policies, but may change over time. For this variable: 1996 = 1, 1997 = 2, 1998 = 3, and so on.

¹⁰ http://dss.princeton.edu/online_help/analysis/panel.htm. Retrieved November 28, 2006.

Other Variables - Other variables, such as provincial spending on education, labour and immigration; provincial marginal tax rate; and spending on elementary and secondary education were considered for use in the model. However, to keep the present analysis comparable to other studies, they were not used.

4.3 The Empirical Model

The model specified in Section 4.2 was estimated in log-linear form which is written below:

$$\ln(I_{kt}) = \beta_0 + \ln(GDP_{kt-1})\beta_1 + \ln(FBP_{kt-1})\beta_2 + \ln(UR_{kt-1})\beta_3 + \ln(MW_{kt-1})\beta_4 + \\ + \ln(SA_{kt-1})\beta_5 + T_t + R_n + e_{kt}$$

Where:

I_{kt} : The number of persons immigrating to province k in year t.

GDP_{kt-1} : Gross Domestic Product for each province at t-1.

FBP_{kt-1} : Foreign-born population share for each province at t-1.

UR_{kt-1} : Unemployment rate for each province at t-1.

MW_{kt-1} : Manufacturing wage for each province at t-1.

SA_{kt-1} : Provincial spending on social assistance per user, for each province at t-1.

The above variables were lagged because it is assumed that the latest information available on these variables to a potential immigrant is at period t-1. Intended destination in Canada is assumed to be based on this information.

T_t : Nine year effect - controls for effects that are common to all provinces in a particular year of the study.

R_n : Region effect - Corresponds to 3 regions within Canada: Atlantic Canada, Central Canada, and Western Canada.

e_{kt} : Error term

Transforming the data to log form addresses the issue of heteroskedasticity.¹¹ Hence all estimated coefficients, with the exception of those of the fixed effect variables, are corresponding elasticities of the dependent variable.¹² Wage rate and GDP variables were deflated using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for each province to disregard the effects of inflation (social assistance payouts were already in constant dollars). Data for ten Provinces were used. The Territories were omitted from the analysis because of their significantly lower levels of immigration compared to the provinces.

The equation was estimated using two-stage least squares (2SLS). Annual data on the number of permanent residents settling in each province during 1996 to 2004 were used. A two-way causality exists between the estimated share of foreign-born in the total population of a province (an independent variable) and the total annual immigrant arrivals in that province (dependent variable). This is a concern, because when the dependent variable has an effect on one of the independent variables in a regression model, ordinary least-squares regression will result in biased parameter estimates and biased estimates of the standard errors (Allen, 1997; 188).¹³ To obtain unbiased estimates, 2SLS regression method of estimation was used.

¹¹ Heteroskedasticity arises in the data owing to its cross-sectional component which is likely to result in greater dispersion of error terms. The data tests positive for heteroskedasticity. However, since log-form transformations were already performed the distribution of errors has been condensed.

¹² As an example for this study, keeping all other variables constant, a 10 percent rise in foreign-born population share (independent variable) will result in a 16 percent increase in the number of economic immigrants (dependent variable) to that area.

¹³ Due to biased estimates of standard errors, the t-test of statistical significance becomes unreliable.

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the two stage least squares regression estimation is presented in the following table.¹⁴

Table 2 - Results of the 2SLS Regression Analysis

	Family		Refugee		Economic	
	β	t-stat	B	t-stat	β	t-stat
Demographic Variables						
Foreign-Born Population Share	0.813	9.204	0.608	4.707	1.613	9.442
GDP as proxy for Total Population	0.777	12.137	0.510	7.315	0.931	7.388
Economic Variables						
Unemployment Rate	0.308	2.182	0.212	1.456	0.728	2.616
Manufacturing Wage Rate	2.203	5.207	-0.680	-1.624	-0.398	-0.476
Social Assistance	0.0367	0.239	0.141	0.896	-0.002	-0.007
Fixed Effect Variables						
Time Effect	-0.097	-5.561	0.012	0.670	-0.016	-0.463
Region Effect – in comparison to Western Provinces						
Atlantic Provinces	-0.613	-4.655	-0.621	-4.479	0.593	2.285
Ontario and Quebec	0.261	2.052	1.154	9.083	0.089	0.353
Constant	-8.997	-6.501	0.099	0.068	-6.076	-2.228
No. of Observations	90		90		90	
Adjusted R ²	0.98855		.98093		0.95564	
F-Test statistic	961		573		241	
p-value	0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

The Table 2 results indicate that immigrants across all classes are attracted to provinces with a higher number of resident foreign-born population. Keeping other variables constant, a 10

¹⁴ Estimates using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) was also performed. The results are similar to 2SLS and are included in the Appendix.

percent rise in foreign-born population share results in an 8 percent rise of the number of family class immigrants, a 6 percent rise of the number of refugees and a 16 percent rise of the number of economic immigrants. As well, immigrants across all three classes are attracted to provinces with larger total populations, as proxied by the provincial GDP. Unemployment rate is positive and significant for both family class and economic class immigrants, and manufacturing wage rate is statistically significant only for family class immigrants. The results also show that immigrants to Canada are not welfare seeking as social assistance payouts are statistically insignificant for each immigrant class.¹⁵ Fixed region effects were included in the analysis to account for any differences between regions. The results vary for each class of immigrants and are described in more detail below.

5.1 Family Class Immigrants

As expected, family class immigrants are attracted to provinces with a larger foreign-born population share and a larger total population. The location choice of family class immigrants is largely determined by the location of the sponsoring family members (as discussed in the literature review). As per Canadian migration research (Edmonston, 2005), the foreign-born tend to migrate from Atlantic Canada and the Prairie Provinces to Ontario and British Columbia; provinces that have higher proportions of foreign-born and larger total populations. This study appears to confirm that family class immigrants join family members who already live or have migrated to these provinces.

Previous research shows that economic variables are significant determinants of location choice (McDonald, 2004; Newbold, 1996; Edmonston, 2005). The present study results show that manufacturing wage rate is a positive and significant variable for family class immigration to a province. This finding could suggest that existing family networks already present in Canada

¹⁵ Corresponding t-values are below the critical value of 2.

help to obtain information on provincial labour markets. The analysis also shows that unemployment rate is positive and significant for family class immigrants, which implies that family class immigrants are attracted to provinces with higher unemployment rates, keeping all other variables constant. This is a surprising result. However, family class immigrants may simply be joining family and friends who coincidentally live in areas of high unemployment and are not necessarily attracted to the province specifically because of its economic conditions. Finally, keeping economic and demographic variables constant, family class immigrants are less likely to settle in the Atlantic Provinces (where foreign-born population share is low) compared with the Western Provinces and are more likely to settle in Ontario and Quebec compared to the Western Provinces. This latter finding, as discussed in the overall results for family class, could suggest that the presence of family networks attract family class immigrants to larger provinces.

5.2 *Refugee Class Immigrants*

The location choice of government sponsored and privately sponsored refugees is primarily determined by overseas government officials based on community profiles. Factors involved in the decision of where to locate a particular refugee include the unemployment rate, the immigrant population and the availability of language and job training programs in a particular community (CIC, 2001; 40). The results of this study show that once the effects of economic and demographic variables are isolated, refugees tend to settle in areas with a larger foreign-born population share and a larger total population. Economic variables were found to be statistically insignificant in their location choice. This result could be due to the fact that the initial location choice is not voluntary in case of refugees. As well, keeping all variables constant, refugees are more likely to settle in Ontario and Quebec and less likely to settle in the Atlantic Provinces compared to the Western Provinces. This implies that refugees could be more evenly distributed

across Canada. Refugees have the second highest rate of inter-provincial mobility, after business immigrants (CIC, 2001; 40). Therefore, analyzing the determinants of secondary location choice of refugees would give a more accurate picture of the factors that influence the voluntary location choice of this particular group of immigrants.¹⁶

5.3 *Economic Class Immigrants*

Economic class immigrants are attracted to provinces with a larger foreign-born population share and a larger total population. In contrast to previous studies conducted in the United States (Jaeger, 2000; Zavodny, 1999; Scott, 2005), the present study finds that economic variables such as manufacturing wage rate are statistically insignificant in location choice of economic class immigrants. This result is in contrast to Zavodny, who found that economic class immigrants are attracted to areas with higher wages in the United States. One possible explanation may be that economic class immigrants already have jobs lined up prior to arriving in Canada, and may be employed in jobs that require higher skill sets accompanied by higher pay levels and hence their provincial distribution in Canada is not influenced by the lower average wage rate of a province.¹⁷ The coefficient of the unemployment rate variable is positive and significant. As with family class immigrants, this result may reflect the tendency for economic immigrants to settle in provinces based on foreign-born population share where unemployment rate may coincidentally be higher.¹⁸ Keeping all demographic and economic variables constant, economic immigrants are more likely to initially settle in the Atlantic Provinces compared to the Western Provinces, and equally likely to settle in Ontario and Quebec compared to the Western

¹⁶ Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, all Canadians have the right to live anywhere in Canada.

¹⁷ As an area of future study, it may be worthwhile to measure the response of immigrant location choice to labour market changes.

¹⁸ The resident foreign born elasticity is the highest for economic immigrants, at 0.16.

Provinces. Reasons for the stronger likelihood of immigrants settling in Atlantic Canada could include recent aggressive promotion of the provinces. However, this finding warrants more detailed research.

A further analysis of business¹⁹ and skilled worker immigrants (subgroups within the economic class) was completed to determine if there were differences in the impacts of demographic and economic variables in their location choices. These two groups make up most of the immigrants admitted within the economic class.²⁰ Table 3 gives the results of this analysis.

Table 3 – 2SLS Results of analysis of groups within the economic class

	All Economic		Skilled Worker		Business Class	
	B	t-stat	B	t-stat	β	t-stat
Demographic Variables						
Foreign-Born Population Share	1.613	9.442	1.260	8.062	4.737	7.520
GDP as proxy for Total Population	0.931	7.388	1.213	11.272	-1.564	-1.603
Economic Variables						
Unemployment Rate	0.728	2.616	0.961	4.076	0.543	0.605
Manufacturing Wage Rate	-0.398	-0.476	0.557	0.792	0.667	0.249
Social Assistance	-0.002	-0.007	-0.063	-0.245	-1.564	-1.603
Fixed Effect Variables						
Time	-0.016	-0.463	-0.091	-3.127	-0.212	-1.904
Region Effect – in comparison to Western Provinces						
Atlantic Provinces	0.593	2.285	0.413	1.875	3.133	3.718
Ontario and Quebec	0.089	0.353	-0.128	-0.603	1.884	2.341
Constant	-6.076	-2.228	-10.753	-4.645	10.236	1.157
No. of Observations	90		90		90	
Adjusted R ²	0.95564		0.97234		0.74383	
F-Test statistic	241		392		33	

¹⁹ The business class immigrant group is comprised of entrepreneurs, investors, and the self-employed.

²⁰ The Economic class includes skilled workers, provincial and territorial nominees, business class and live-in caregivers. Provincial and territorial nominees were not analyzed separately as the data was not reliable (as provinces that do not currently have nominee programs in place had numbers assigned to them in the data). Similarly, the live-in caregiver class was not included in the analysis as the numbers of immigrants admitted under this class are small.

	All Economic		Skilled Worker		Business Class	
	B	t-stat	B	t-stat	β	t-stat
p-value	0.0000		0.0000		0.0000	

The results indicate that both classes are attracted to areas with larger foreign-born population share; however that is where the similarities end. Skilled worker immigrants also tend to settle in areas with a larger total population and in areas with high rates of unemployment. As well, keeping other variables constant, skilled worker immigrants are equally likely to go to the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario and Quebec compared to the Western Provinces. For business class immigrants, the total population variable is statistically insignificant, as are the economic variables. These findings are contrary to our expectations and warrant further study. Keeping demographic and economic variables constant, business class immigrants are more likely to initially settle in Atlantic Provinces and Ontario and Quebec compared to the Western Provinces.

To determine if the Provincial Nominee Programs have had a significant effect on location choice of economic immigrants, a separate analysis of economic class immigrants was completed with the addition of a dummy variable to represent provinces that have admitted immigrants under their nominee programs. By the year 2005, eight provinces and one territory had a Provincial Nominee Program program in place. These included: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Yukon Territory. The variable was found to be statistically insignificant and had little effect on the coefficients or t-values of the other variables. This was likely due to the small numbers of immigrants admitted under the Provincial Nominee Programs and the limited amount of time the nominee programs have been in place (since the late 1990's).

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined the factors that influence the initial choice of province by immigrants to Canada. The major finding is that demographic variables have a stronger effect than economic variables on the location choice of recent immigrants, as immigrants across all classes are more likely to settle in areas with a larger foreign-born population share and a larger total population.²¹

The results also show that immigrants to Canada are not welfare seeking as social assistance payouts are statistically insignificant for each immigrant class. With the decline in natural growth rate and out-migration of youth from the smaller provinces, policy makers in those provinces concerned with adopting new initiatives to attract and retain new immigrants, need not be concerned about the impact on welfare programs. To create effective policies to attract immigrants to these non-traditional host regions (everywhere but British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec) it is important to understand the factors that influence initial location choice and how these factors differ among immigrant classes. This is even more critical for the smaller provinces (such as Nova Scotia) that are experiencing high immigrant out-migration rates. As the location choice of family class immigrants is largely determined by the location of sponsoring relatives, and the location choice of refugees is pre-determined by government officials or private sponsors, policy makers must develop strategies for influencing the initial location choice of immigrants within the economic class. With a clearer understanding of what attracts immigrants to a province in the first place, effective strategies to retain immigrants from all classes can be developed.

6.1 Future Research

²¹ Stronger effects of demographic variables are indicated by their higher coefficients as compared to the economic variable coefficients.

An extension of this research could be to use more disaggregated data at the census division or at the census sub division level, instead of only at the provincial level. Such information can be useful for smaller communities who are taking interest in the attraction and retention of immigrants due to their own population declines. An analysis of location choice by country of origin could also be useful to confirm or deny the assertion that immigrants tend to gravitate towards regions with higher resident populations of the country of origin. This research has been conducted in the United States (Zavodny, 1999), however, it is lacking for Canada.

While this research focused on the determinants of the initial choice, future research could analyze the factors that determine the final choice of home province and the role of public policy and settlement agencies in this regard.

Finally, researchers in Canada have not yet studied how the retention of immigrants differs between immigrant classes. Immigration to Nova Scotia has been on a general downward trend since the 1970's (APEC, 2002; 2). As well, almost half the immigrant tax filers destined for the Atlantic Provinces between 1980 and 1995 had moved out of the region by 1995²² (APEC, 2001; 4). Understanding why the retention rates differ between the skilled worker, business class, nominee program and family class immigrants would provide important information for policy makers when developing strategies to retain those immigrants. If immigrants can be retained in the smaller provinces, these immigrants may eventually be joined by other family members, thereby increasing the foreign-born population share which may in turn attract more immigrants from similar source countries in the future.

²² Refugees were the most likely group to migrate out of the Atlantic Provinces, followed by business immigrants and skilled workers (APEC, 2001; 4).

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APPENDIX

Table A1: *Distribution of immigrants across provinces by admission category, 1996-2004*
(shown as a percentage of total number of immigrants admitted to each province)

Admission Category/ Province	Family	Economic Immigrants	Refugees	Other Immigrants	Category not stated	Region not stated
NS	18	68	12	1	0	0
*Other Atlantic Provinces	21	48	29	2	0	0
QC	24	53	21	2	0	0
ON	29	59	11	2	0	0
MB	23	57	20	1	0	0
SK	24	43	32	1	0	0
AB	32	55	12	1	0	0
BC	30	63	5	1	0	0
**Territories	49	45	2	4	0	0
*Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick						
**Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut						

Source: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2004/permanent/19.html>. Retrieved Nov. 26, 2006

Table A2: *Averages of Independent Variables used in the Regression Models*

Years: 1996 to 2004

Variable/ Province	Total Population	Foreign- born Population Share	Un- employment Rate	Manu- facturing Wage Rate	Social Assistance	Provincial Gross Domestic Product
	#	percent	percent	\$	\$/capita	\$/province
Newfoundland and Labrador	532,113	1.6	17.1	13.22	5,780	12,779
Nova Scotia	933,728	4.6	10.2	14.73	6,210	22,487
New Brunswick	751,004	3.1	10.9	14.57	6,160	17,837
Prince Edward Island	136,577	3.1	13.0	12.01	5,440	3,019
Quebec	7,375,074	9.8	9.7	14.88	6,760	196,496
Ontario	11,724,350	26.6	7.1	17.51	7,680	394,851
Manitoba	1,148,488	12.2	5.6	13.97	6,050	31,931
Saskatchewan	1,006,998	5.1	5.8	15.44	5,590	30,951
Alberta	2,999,608	15.0	5.4	15.63	3,870	130,571
British Columbia	4,044,330	25.7	8.1	17.60	6,700	118,083

Notes:

MW: manufacturing wage rate, deflated using provincial CPIs (1992=100)

GDP: Gross Domestic Product per province (x 1,000,000), deflated using provincial CPIs (1992=100)

Table A3: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis Results

	Family		Refugee		Economic		Skilled Worker		Business	
	B	t-stat	β	t-stat	β	t-stat	β	t-stat	β	t-stat
Demographic Variables										
Foreign-Born Population Share	0.536	9.646	0.267	5.399	0.983	9.433	0.753	8.437	2.346	7.854
GDP as proxy for Total Population	0.865	16.190	0.617	12.972	1.130	11.284	1.373	16.003	0.344	1.200
Economic Variables										
Unemployment Rate	0.178	1.475	0.053	0.488	0.433	1.913	0.724	3.729	-0.575	-0.886
Manufacturing Wage Rate	2.362	6.404	-0.484	-1.474	-0.036	-0.052	0.847	1.430	2.037	1.028
Social Assistance	0.168	1.270	0.302	2.568	0.296	1.195	0.176	0.831	-0.435	-0.613
Fixed Effect Variables										
Time Effect	-0.114	-7.589	-0.008	-0.598	-0.053	-1.893	-0.121	-5.039	-0.353	-4.391
Region Effect – in comparison to Western Provinces										
Atlantic Provinces	-0.758	-6.787	-0.799	-8.033	0.262	1.254	0.148	0.827	1.880	3.133
Ontario and Quebec	0.196	1.765	1.073	10.876	-0.061	-0.296	-0.248	-1.396	1.314	2.208
Constant	-10.490	-2.923	-1.737	-1.658	-9.470	-4.299	-13.476	-7.138	-2.644	-0.419
No. of Observations	90		90		90		90		90	
Adjusted R ²	0.991		0.988		0.969		0.980		0.828	
F-Test statistic	1254		907		344		545		55	
p-value	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000	

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