

**Atlantic Metropolis Centre ~ Working Paper Series
Centre Métropolis Atlantique ~ Série de documents de recherche**

**A Preliminary Investigation of the Contributions of Sponsored Parents and
Grandparents in Canada**

Madine VanderPlaat
Saint Mary's University

Howard Ramos
Dalhousie University

Yoko Yoshida
Dalhousie University

2009

Working Paper No. #- 25-2009

Série de documents de recherche 25-2009



Centre Métropolis Atlantique
Atlantic Metropolis Centre

**The Atlantic Metropolis Centre's Working Papers Series
Série de documents de recherche du Centre Métropolis Atlantique**

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Atlantic Metropolis Centre or its funders.

Les opinions contenues dans cet article sont celles des auteur(s) et ne sont pas nécessairement partagées par le Centre Métropolis Atlantique ou ses partenaires.

Copyright of this paper is retained by the author(s)
Copyright de cet article est maintenu par l'auteur(s)

AMC Working Papers Series / Série de documents de recherche du CMA
Attention: Gloria Brazeau-Schiebel
Suite 213, The Atrium, Saint Mary's University
923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3C3
E-mail / courriel: gloria.schiebel@smu.ca
Website / site Web: <http://atlantic.metropolis.net/>

We are pleased to acknowledge the AMC's partner organizations:

Federal Government Partners:

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Border Services Agency, Canada Economic Development for the Regions of Quebec, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Canadian Heritage, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, FedNor, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Safety Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, The Rural Secretariat, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Statistics Canada

Three Lead Universities:

Saint Mary's University, Dalhousie University,

Le CMA tient à remercier chaleureusement les partenaires suivants pour leur soutien:

Partenaires fédéraux:

Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique, Agence des services frontaliers du Canada, Développement économique du Canada pour les régions du Québec, Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement, Patrimoine Canada, Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada, FedNor, Ressources humaines et Développement social Canada, Ministère de la Justice Canada, Agence de la santé publique du Canada, Sécurité Publique Canada, Gendarmerie royale du Canada, Le Secrétariat rural, Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines, Statistique Canada

Les trois universités à la direction:

and Université de Moncton.

Community Partners:

Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS), New Brunswick Multicultural Council, PEI Association for Newcomers, Multicultural Association for the Greater Moncton Area, Association for New Canadians (ANC) of Newfoundland, Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC), YMCA Newcomer Service.

Saint Mary's University, Dalhousie University et l'Université de Moncton.

Nos partenaires communautaires:

L'Association multiculturelle de Nouvelle-Écosse, Le Conseil multiculturel du Nouveau-Brunswick, L'Association multiculturelle du Grand Moncton, Association métropolitaine pour l'établissement des immigrants, PEI Association for Newcomers, L'association des nouveaux canadiens de Terre-Neuve, Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés, Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre, YMCA Newcomer service.

A Preliminary Investigation of the Contributions of Sponsored Parents and Grandparents in Canada

Madine VanderPlaat
Saint Mary's University

Howard Ramos & Yoko Yoshida
Dalhousie University

Abstract/Résumé:

In recent years Canada has increasingly favoured immigration policies informed by human capital theory and economic outcomes. Consequently, while immigration itself is on the increase there is a downward trend in the number of family class entrants admitted to the country. The group most seriously affected is sponsored parents and/or grandparents who are also the most vulnerable to criticisms that call into question family class immigration. The discussion is centered on the perceived lack of potential economic contributions of these immigrants; however, such a focus overlooks the gendered nature of this type of immigration and the many non-economic contributions these immigrants make. Unfortunately, little large scale empirical analysis has informed these discussions, not to mention conclusions. Our paper engages this by analyzing data on recent immigrants collected in the first and second waves of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Canada. Using logit regression modeling we examine economic and non-economic contributions of sponsored parent and/or grandparent immigrants and compare them to immigrants of similar age migrating under other categories of immigration. We find that sponsored parents and/or grandparents make significant economic contributions to Canadian society as well as other non-economic ones that are often overlooked. We also find that their contributions increase over time and are heavily gendered, with female sponsored parents and/or grandparents making more non-economic contributions than their male counterparts or other immigrants of similar age migrating under other categories of immigration.

Keywords/Mots-clefs: Sponsored parents and grandparents; family reunification; integration outcomes

Introduction

Family migration has been the lifeblood of immigrant movements throughout the world (Daniel, 2005; Kofman, 2004). Recognizing the importance of the family to immigrant settlement and integration, most receiving countries have implemented relatively generous family reunification policies which allow for the sponsorship of relatives who did not accompany the original migrant at the time of immigration. Canada has been no exception (CIC, 2000; Daniel, 2005; Deshaw, 2006). However, in recent years Canada has increasingly favoured a selection process informed by human capital theory privileging those with skills, experience and high potential for economic adaptability. Consequently, while immigration itself is on the increase there is a downward trend in the number of family class entrants admitted to the country (Baker and Benjamin, 2002; Triadafilopoulos, 2006). Once one of the largest sources of immigration, family class migration for reunification is currently well under 30% of annual immigrant intake in Canada (CIC, 2007; Daniel, 2005). Sponsored parents and/or grandparents are one of the most vulnerable groups that are susceptible to criticisms that call into question the value of family class immigration. Consequently, it is this group within the family class that provides the focal point for our discussion.

The basis upon which Canada selects its immigrants and the appropriate balance between family class immigrants, economic immigrants (skilled workers) and refugees is an important issue in the development of Canada's immigration policies. However, in discussions on what Canada's rationale for immigration should be, the focus in recent years has been almost exclusively on skilled workers with a heavy emphasis on tracking

economic indicators of integration such as employment and income. Very little attention has been paid to the integration experiences of family class immigrants, except to note their relatively poorer economic performance (Frances 2002; Stoffman 2002; Borjas 1999).¹ Consequently, the value of family class immigration has not been addressed and any discussion as to the balance of different immigrant classes is severely hampered by the absence of empirical data establishing the validity of different arguments (Rumbault, 1997).

The literature that does exist focuses on the value of family reunification policies *in principle*. Very little research exists on the integration experiences of sponsored family members in general or specific categories such as parents and/or grandparents.² The reason for this gap is in part due to the perceived marginal (and gendered) nature of the subject matter; family immigration may be of less interest because of its connection to the social, feminine, private sphere rather than the economic sphere (Kofman, 2004; Rumbault, 1997). Family class members are also not screened on human capital variables and are not required or expected to possess the same levels of human capital brought by economic class entrants. Little attention has been given to developing models to ascertain the non-economic contributions made by these newcomers to Canada, or to develop more appropriate models for measuring the non-standard economic contributions of this particular class. Consequently, the integration outcomes of family class immigrants have not been measured in any meaningful way beyond the standard income indicators which dominate the field of immigration studies (Li, 2003a, 2003b; Smith, 2004). Studies that do look at the integration outcomes for family class immigrants tend to be qualitative in nature, based on case study designs (VanderPlaat,

2007). These studies are rich in data, and provide considerable insight to the potential contributions of family class immigrants, particularly parents and/or grandparents, within the family unit as well as the community. However, these studies were not conducted for the express purpose of measuring non-economic outcomes or developing a meaningful model for measuring the economic and non-economic contributions of parents and/or grandparents. Most important, qualitative studies focusing on family class immigrants have not been conducted in conjunction with, or successfully linked to large scale quantitative data, limiting their capacity to be policy informative. Consequently, arguments for and against family reunification tend to be highly subjective and rarely appeal to solid evidenced based research.

The identification of these problems, both theoretical and methodological, does not produce an obvious solution. As one analyses the sparse literature on family class immigrants, it is apparent that the issue is a highly complex one, easily subject to “leaps of logic” and misinterpretation of data.³

Yet, the need to understand the role of the family in the immigration experience is considered critical (Jasso, 1997, Rumbault, 1997). The objectives of this paper are therefore twofold: First, using data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants in Canada (LSIC), it explores the basic quantitative data on sponsored parents and/or grandparents to inform the discussion about what their potential contributions to Canadian society may be and how these may be more fully explored; and second, it considers what factors influence different potential outcomes of sponsored parents and/or grandparents compared to other immigrants of similar age migrating under other categories of immigration. We will accomplish these goals by first providing an overview

of the different perspectives on family reunification policies; second introducing potential contributions that sponsored parents and/or grandparents contribute; and last we test what correlates influence different contributions of sponsored parents and/or grandparents.

Competing Discourses

In very simplistic terms the discussion on the value of sponsoring parents and /or grandparents takes place between those who advocate a humanitarian rationale for family reunification versus those who argue against such policies from an economic perspective. As such, the debate remains at the level of values and beliefs instead of substantive arguments. The key issue is which perspective should dictate Canada's position on family immigration. Both readily dismiss the other without actually addressing the specific arguments being presented.

The position opposing large scale family reunification policies is based on an economic imperative that contends that while families may be good for the well-being of individuals; family class immigration may not be in the best economic interests of the state (Avci, 1999; Borjas 1999; Collacott, 2002,2006; Frances 2002; Grubel, 2005). In particular, sponsored parents and/or grandparents are viewed as potential 'burdens' on Canadian society, by virtue of their diminished capacity for economic contributions and increased potential for stressing the social welfare and healthcare systems (Stoffman 2002).

The humanitarian position, by contrast, derives its moral imperative from Canada's commitment to a number of international conventions that recognize migrants' rights to join or be joined by their families. These include the *Declaration of Human*

*Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*⁴ Proponents of this position include settlement sector NGO's, immigrant advocacy groups and social justice organizations among others. The humanitarian position often also argues that not only is access to family a right, it is also fundamental for the social, physical, psychological and spiritual well-being of newcomer populations (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2004; Deshaw, 2006; KAIROS, 2005; OCASI, 2005).

As Daniel (2005) notes, in its current state much of the debate between the altruistic humanitarian position and the more instrumental economic perspective is not particularly useful because it lacks a common ground for argumentation. A more fruitful platform for discussion is presented by those who argue that the notions of “contribution” and “burden” are inappropriately defined by the dominant economic and human capital constructions of integration (Lewis-Watts, 2006; Li, 2003a, 2003b; McLaren, 2006). It is thus important to critically examine how the integration experiences of sponsored relatives, including parents and/or grandparents, should be interpreted and understood.

Researchers from this perspective argue that not only is the family good for the well-being of the individual, it is good for society as a whole because access to family relationships and networks can support and mitigate the settlement and integration process (Dench, 2006; Deshaw, 2006; Khoo, 2003; Kofman, 2004; Li, 2003a; Pratt, 2006). By providing child care and/or labour to family owned businesses sponsored parents and/or grandparents can contribute to the overall economic well-being of the family and support the educational pursuits and labour market activities of other family members. Through volunteerism, informal networking and kinship work sponsored

parents and/or grandparents can also contribute to community cohesion and social capital formation which can be particularly important in absence of more formal support systems and settlement services (Lewis-Watts, 2006, Telegdi, 2006). As Anderson (2001) points out, in some cultures grandparents also play an important intermediary role in intergenerational conflicts. In addition, the possibility of sponsoring relatives may be an important element in attracting and retaining immigrants (Deshaw, 2006; Khoo, 2003).⁵

The problem with the alternative contribution discourse is that what “may” or “could” happen is more or less based on speculation rather than concrete evidence. While the assumptions posited make intellectual sense very little effort has been made to substantiate them. This is in part because most large-scale national databases do not differentiate between different types of immigrants, not to mention family-class immigrants. As a result, and in absence of a well substantiated alternative discourse, the “integration” of family class immigrants continues to be narrowly defined by inappropriately applied economic-related outcomes (Li, 2003b; Smith, 2004).

However, it is important to state that the development of an alternative contribution discourse should not dismiss economic indicators as an integration outcome for sponsored parents and/or grandparents. At issue is the establishment of appropriate economic indicators for parents and/or grandparents, indicators which, we argue, recognize the importance of the family unit in assessing integration outcomes. For example, analyses of earnings or income-tax returns hide the in-kind support parents and/or grandparents may be giving their families and communities. Likewise, the temporary strain on family wealth produced by sponsorship may have long term benefits

and as Baker and Benjamin (2002) and Mogelonsky (1995) would suggest, this may be a very strategic decision on the part of families.

Our analysis therefore aims to expand the discourse on integration outcomes by offering preliminary empirical evidence to critically engage the academic, policy and settlement community in assessing the value of family class immigration, particularly as it relates to sponsored parents and/or grandparents.

Data and Methods

To examine different potential contributions of sponsored parents and/or grandparents we use Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC). It was first administered in 2001 and has results for three waves of data - six months, two years, and four years after immigrants arrive in Canada. It offers unique insight into the transitions immigrants experience after migrating and unlike most surveys, the LSIC contains data on different immigrant statuses, which allow us to specifically examine family class sponsored parents and/or grandparents. We begin by conducting tabular and graphical analysis of different potential contributions and then run logit regression models on their determinants, controlling for various demographic factors. In these models we also report exponentiated, or anti-logged, coefficients to interpret change in the odds ratios for comparison among significant factors. We examine data from waves 1 and 2 alone, omitting wave 3 because of right censoring of cases due to attrition. Regression models examine contributions in wave 2, for all immigrants 40 years and older, and uses Statistics Canada bootstraps weights to produce standard errors.

Our analysis examines different potential contributions of sponsored parents and/or grandparents and each is treated as a dependent variable in our regression analysis. We first regress *retired* (Y1) as a main activity, and then to offer comparison to the dominant literature that focuses on economic contributions we assess the determinants of *working or being self-employed* (Y2). To understand potential non-economic contributions we next examine three additional contributions, including *homemaking* (Y3), *caring for family members* (Y4) and *volunteer experience* (Y5). Each of these are dummy variables and with the exception of volunteer experience all of the dependent variables are derived from LSIC variables em1q049 (wave 1) and em2q049x (wave 2), which looks at the main activity reported.⁶ We acknowledge that this is a rough proxy of potential contributions, noting that theoretically they may not be mutually exclusive, and that LSIC forces respondents to choose one option over others; however, we offer these measures as an empirical starting point to open grounded debate. Unlike other contributions, volunteer experience is derived from LSIC variable em2q037 (wave 2).

We regress different contributions on a dummy variable for *sponsored parents and/or grandparents*, based on LSIC variable lr1d011, controlling for a series of potential influences of contributions in wave 2. This analysis compares sponsored parents and/or grandparents to other immigrants 40 years and older, looking at the potential influences of *Ethnicity, Family income, Sex, Age, Work experience prior to arrival, Language skills, Highest level of education, Region of destination, and Marital status* on different contributions.⁷ The dominant literature on economic integration shows that each of these factors possibly influences economic outcomes, thus we anticipate the same for other contributions. Because our analysis is exploratory we remain agnostic to the direction of

effects for possible influences and are instead interested in seeing which significantly affect different contributions and whether or not sponsored parents and/or grandparents have statistically discernable differences in their contributions compared to other immigrants of comparable age immigrating through other immigration categories.

Analysis and Discussion

While the numbers of sponsored parent and/or grandparent immigrants has fluctuated over the last 10 years, Table 1 shows that they have not exceeded 10 percent of total immigration for any given year. Although this is a small proportion of total immigrants, they have been the focus of much contention.

Table 1: Sponsored Parent and/or Grandparent Immigration 1997-2006

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of parents/grandparents | 20,153 | 14,164 | 14,481 | 17,768 | 21,341 | 22,234 | 19,384 | 12,732 | 12,474 | 20,006 |
| Percentage of family class immigrants | 33.8 | 28 | 26.2 | 29.3 | 32 | 35.7 | 29.8 | 20.4 | 19.7 | 28.3 |
| Percentage of total immigration | 9.4 | 8.2 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.5 | 9.7 | 8.6 | 5.4 | 4.8 | 8 |

Source: Facts and Figures, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

When one examines data from both the LSIC and CIC it is immediately apparent that the parent and/or grandparent population is in fact not as “elderly” as some might expect and this could broaden the types of activities they participate in. In fact, LSIC data show that just about 68 percent of these immigrants are under the age of 65, which is also in line

with recent CIC data (CIC, 2007); this likely means that they make a number of economic and non-economic contributions to Canada.

When we examine the main activities of these immigrants, in Table 2, we find that sponsored parents and/or grandparents make a number of important contributions and they change over time. Just after arriving, roughly a third of these immigrants reported being retired, which is what many would expect. However, the other two thirds of these immigrants were either working or self-employed and homemaking. As a result, the majority of sponsored parents and/or grandparents engage in activities that contribute to the Canadian economy and society.

Table 2: Percentage of Sponsored Parents and/or Grandparents by Main Activity

| | Wave 1 | Wave 2 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| Retired | 29.65 | 26.89 |
| Work or self-employment | 27.98 | 39.8 |
| Homemaker | 33.3 | 11.92 |
| Caring for family members | -- | 16.6 |
| Other | 9.07 | 4.79 |

Source: LSIC Wave 2

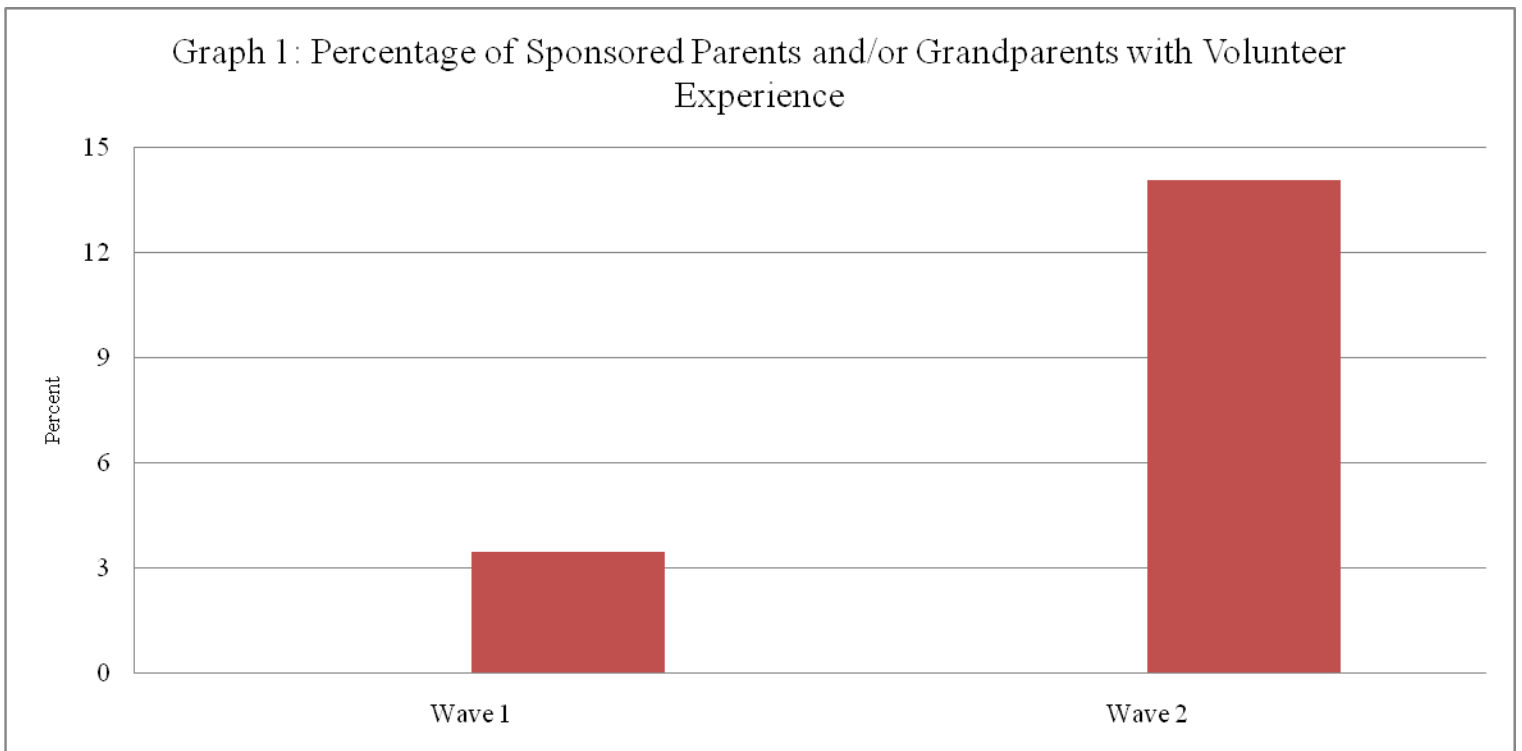
When the same data are examined in the second wave of the LSIC, two years after landing in Canada, the results look somewhat different. After two years in Canada about three percent fewer sponsored parents and/or grandparents reported being retired. This is a very interesting finding in light of the fact that this population is now two years older.

In other words, a number of sponsored parents and/or grandparents gave up their retirement to pursue other activities.

Table 2 also shows that parents and/or grandparents increasingly report working or being self-employed after two years in Canada. In fact, almost 12% more parents and/or grandparents reported this as their main activity in wave 2. As a result, counter to the often negative interpretations of the lack of economic contributions of sponsored parents and/or grandparents, almost half of them (40%) work or are self-employed after two years in Canada.

However, these immigrants also make other social and cultural contributions as well. In wave 2 of the LSIC, just under 12 percent of sponsored parents and/or grandparents reported homemaking as their main activity, a drop of about 21 percent from wave 1. One might extrapolate, when compared against other contributions, these parents and/or grandparents are increasingly engaged in activities outside of the home at the cost of work inside the household or for their families. Yet, some caution is warranted with such interpretation. The second wave of the LSIC added a question on caring for family as a main activity. Some of those reporting homemaking in wave 1 might have in fact reported caring for family, if such a question was asked. In fact, if the percent of those homemaking and caring for a family member are combined in the second wave, then the percent of parents and/or grandparents doing either as a main activity is about 29 percent and the drop from homemaking is much less dramatic, with a only a four percent decrease between the two periods. Again, the table shows that the majority of these immigrants make economic and non-economic contributions to Canada.

To examine this further we also analyze volunteer activity. Whereas Table 2 examines “main activities,” we use a less restrictive measure of volunteering derived from another variable because it was not captured by the “main activity” measure in the first wave of the LSIC. When it is analysed, in Graph 1, we find that just over three percent of parents and/or grandparent report volunteer experience six months after landing in Canada and by the second wave this rose to about 14 percent. This is more than a threefold increase over from the first wave.



Source: LSIC Wave 2

Like with other measures, save retirement, it appears that sponsored parents and/or grandparents make more contributions to the Canadian economy and society over time. In fact, tabular and graphical analysis of main activities and volunteer experience shows

that sponsored parents and/ or grandparents make both economic *and* non-economic contributions to Canadian society.

To explore our findings further we ask if there are any determinants of the different contributions of sponsored parents and/or grandparents and additionally we ask whether or not their contributions are significantly different from other immigrants of comparable age entering the country through other immigrant categories. If there are systemic correlates with different outcomes and differences among immigrant categories, this should be of interest to academics and policymakers alike. It is our aim to offer a preliminary snap shot of what these immigrant contribute, and why they do so, to potentially advance the debate on family class immigrants and sponsored parents and/or grandparents.

To examine these questions we conduct a series of logit regression models, regressing being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent on each type of contribution, controlling for a series of other measures. We also report exponentiated coefficients to provide logistic results to help with interpretation, and we use Statistics Canada bootstrap weights to generate standard errors. We begin by regressing retirement as a main activity on a dummy variable for sponsored parents and/or grandparents and other controls accounting for ethnicity, family income, sex, age, work experience prior to arrival, official language abilities, highest level of education, region of destination, and marriage status. We then look at other main activities and volunteer experience to explore trends among economic and social contributions.

When being retired as a main activity is regressed on these measures, the only factors that have a statistically significant influence are being a sponsored parent and/or

grandparent, being female, age, and having less than highschool education. Other measures do not achieve statistical significance and do not have a discernable impact on the odds of reporting retirement as a main activity. As one might expect, being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent increases the odds of reporting retirement as one's main activity threefold over other immigrants 40 years and older. Being female decreases the odds of being retired, again pointing to the gendered nature of immigration; the odds decreased by roughly 35 percent for women compared to men, however, this finding is statistically significant at only the most marginal level. Lastly, having less than highschool education, with a highschool degree as the reference category, decreases the odds of being retired as the main activity for immigrants 40 years and older. It actually decreases them by 59 percent, when controlling for other measures in the model.

Next, we examine correlates of economic outcomes as a main activity by looking at work or self employment. Although the initial tabular analysis shows that only about a third of sponsored parents and/or grandparents report working or being self-employed as their main activity, the logit models show that, when controlling for other factors, the odds are 38 percent greater for them to work or be self-employed than other comparable immigrants 40 years and older in the second wave of the LSIC. It should be cautioned, however, that this dummy variable achieves only the most lenient level of statistical significance. When compared against those of European ancestry, being an immigrant from Arab and West Asian backgrounds decreases the odds of reporting this as their main activity. Female immigrants are less likely to report working or be self-employed than their male counterparts. The odds of their reporting this activity decrease by 63 percent compared to men. Age also has a statistically significant effect on working or being self-

employed. As one might expect, older immigrants are less likely to report this as their main activity than younger immigrants. Work experience before arriving in Canada also increases the odds of reporting work or self-employed as a main activity for immigrants 40 years and older. Full time work experience before arriving in Canada increases the odds of reporting this as the main activity by 158 percent, compared against those with no work experience, and half-time experience increases the odds by about 154 percent. Being able to speak an official language also increases the odds of reporting to work or be self-employed. Last, being an immigrant who landed in Quebec decreased the odds of working or being self-employed, compared to those landing in Ontario. By contrast, being an immigrant who landed in the Prairie region or in British Columbia increased the odds of reporting this as their main activity. Overall, when controlling for all factors in the model, being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent increases the likelihood of working or being self-employed compared to other immigrants 40 years and older, thus offering some evidence that this group makes significant economic contributions to Canada. Moreover, as one might expect, the greatest increase in the odds of reporting work or self-employment is prior full time work experience. The biggest decreasing influence is being female, pointing to the gendered nature of immigration and potential contributions.

The third model examines homemaking as a main activity, for immigrants 40 years and older. When controlling for all measures in the model, being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent decreases the odds of being a homemaker in the second wave of the LSIC. Being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent decreases the odds of reporting homemaking by roughly 47 percent compared to other immigrants 40 years and older.

The odds of Arab ethnic immigrants reporting this as their main activity is twofold that of European ethnic immigrants. Other ethnicities did not have a statistically significant impact. Female immigrants are much more likely to report homemaking as their main activity than their male counterparts, yet again highlighting the gendered nature of immigration. The odds increase 12 times for them, compared to men, when controlling for other measures in the model. By contrast, older immigrants are only slightly more likely to report homemaking as their main activity. Those with full-time work experience and those with official language skills have lower odds of reporting homemaking. Immigrants landing in the Atlantic region and Quebec have greater odds of reporting this as the main activity; as do married immigrants. The odds are about 50 percent greater for those who are married. Nevertheless this is only statistically significant and the 0.10 alpha level. The model shows that when controls are added, sponsored parents and/or grandparents are less likely to engage in homemaking as their main activity compared to other immigrant 40 years and older. Even so, as one might expect, given traditional gender roles, the biggest factor increasing the odds of reporting this is being female. Prior full-time work experience decreases the reporting of home making the most among significant factors. As result, the model suggests that non-economic activities may rest in a feminized domain.

We explored non-economic contributions further by also regressing caring for family on the same variables. Compared to other immigrants 40 years and older, being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent increases the odds of reporting caring for family twofold. Family income has a marginally significant and miniscule effect on increasing the likelihood of reporting caring for family as a main activity. Conversely, female sex

has the greatest increasing effect on odds of reporting caring for family. Women are over seven times more likely to report this as their main activity than men, when controlling for other factors in the model. Prior full time work experience decreases the odds of caring for family, compared to those with no prior employment experience. More education also appears to decrease the odds of caring for family as a main activity for immigrant 40 years and older. Those with some post-secondary education and those with a university degree or higher had decreased odds of reporting this as their main activity than those with high school education. Immigrants landing in both the Prairie region and British Columbia had lower odds of reporting this as their main activity. The greatest increasing influence on caring for family as a main activity was again being female, offering more insight into how non-economic contributions are feminized. The greatest decreasing influence was those with university education or higher.

In the last model we use an alternate measure to regress volunteer experience on the same variables. To our surprise, being a sponsored parent and/or grandparent decreases the odds of having volunteer experience, but this occurs at the lowest acceptable level of statistical significance; in fact, compared to other immigrants, the odds decreased by 31 percent. Although these findings are somewhat at odds with what was reported in cross tabular analysis, the addition of controls in this model might account for some of the differences. Being South and East/Southeastern Asian decreased the odds of volunteering compared to European ethnic immigrants. However, in both cases the level of statistical significance is at the most marginal level. By contrast African and “other” immigrant ethnicities have increased odds of reporting this. Being a woman increased the odds of having volunteer experience by about 46 percent, yet again

illustrating the gendered nature of non-economic outcomes. Half-time work experience also increased the odds of volunteering, compared to those with no prior work experience. Full-time experience was not significant. Immigrants with official language abilities were also increased the odds of volunteer experience compared to those without them. Advanced education also seems to increase the odds of volunteering. The odds increased 77 percent for those with university or higher education than those with high school education. And the odds of volunteer experience were greater for immigrants landing in the Prairie region and British Columbia. The model illustrates that sponsored parents and/or grandparents, compared to other immigrants, are less likely to have volunteer experience. In fact, controlling for other measures in the model, this decreased the odds of volunteering the most. Conversely, the factor having the greatest increasing influence was bilingualism.

Overall, our tabular and graphical analysis as well as regression models offer a first attempt to empirically analyze the claims made by both sides of the sponsored parent and/or grandparent debate. Our research shows that the LSIC provides excellent data to be further explored. Our analyses provide some clear trends for deeper investigation. We found that sponsored parents and/or grandparents make significant contributions to Canadian society –both economic and social. We also show that it is too simplistic to think of immigrants contributions as merely economic. Both the tabular and graphical analysis and regression models show that sponsored parents and/or grandparents make significant non-economic contributions to their families, especially through caring for other family members. Although one might assume this does not have wider contributions to the greater society, this is untrue. Caring for family members potentially

saves costs on child care, healthcare, and provides social-psychological support for immigrant families. Last, we find robust association between being female and non-economic contributions. Women are consistently more likely to report homemaking, caring for family members or volunteering than men.

Conclusions

This paper offers a preliminary examination of what the LSIC can tell us about the integration experiences of sponsored parents and/or grandparents and the extent to which there is empirical evidence to support arguments for and against the broad scale inclusion of this category of immigrant. Ultimately we hope to be able to contribute to the development of an alternate discourse for understanding both the concept of “contribution” and how we measure integration outcomes. The evidence at this point is obviously quite limited and more sophisticated analysis is required to determine the intricacies of how sponsored parents and/or grandparents contribute to the well-being of immigrant families and communities. Equally important is the need for data that will allow us to model how families work together to achieve their economic, social and cultural goals. Not all of what would be required to meet this objective is available through the LSIC since the individual, not the family, is the unit of analysis. However, the LSIC does have the capacity to produce the basic findings to dispel some of the myths attributed to this particular group. Even a basic analysis such as this provides evidence against two common misconceptions regarding age and productivity. Sponsored parents and/or grandparents are not by definition “seniors”, nor are they likely to be retired (a status which does not in and of itself preclude economic and social contributions).

Moreover, we consistently find, across different non-economic contributions that female immigrants play an important role in social and culture realms. They were more likely than their male counterparts to report homemaking, caring for family, and volunteering –all of which have indirect effects on the economic performance of other immigrants and the wider Canadian society.

These findings would suggest important directions for the type of research needed to effectively inform debates around family class immigration. First is the need to recognize immigration, integration and settlement as a family experience. Family class immigrants are by definition part of a larger social unit. Hence, arguments based on their outcomes as individuals, especially those which focus on economic indicators, are grossly misleading. Researchers working in the area of women and migration have made the same argument, noting that women’s integration experiences should be measured and understood within the context of their connectedness to family and household strategies (Arat-Koc, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Kofman, 2004). We would contend that the same theoretical framework should be applied to researching the experiences of parents and grandparents, especially in light of the gendered nature of our findings. Second, our analysis shows support for the alternative contributions argument. Sponsored parents and grandparents are active – especially in the social and cultural realm. Hence, there is evidence to support the contention that sponsored parents and grandparents are not only contributing to the best interests of the family but also, through their social and cultural reproductive activities, to the best interests of the state.

References

- Anderson, Philip. 2001. 'You don't belong here in Germany...' on the social situation of refugee children in Germany. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. 14 (2): 187-199.
- Arat-Koc, Sedef. 2006. Whose social reproduction? Transnational motherhood and challenges to feminist political economy. Pp. 75-92 in K. Bezanan, and M. Luxton, eds., *Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neoliberalism*. Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Avci, Gamze .1999. Immigrant categories: The many sides of one coin? *European Journal of Migration and Law* 1: 199-213.
- Baker, Michael and Dwayne Benjamin. 2002. *Are Elderly Immigrants a Burden?* Paper prepared for the conference Canadian Immigration Policy for the 21st Century, Kingston, Ontario, October 18/19, 2002.
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/cepa/AreElderly.pdf> (accessed 18 June 2007).
- Borjas, George J. 1999. *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Canadian Council for Refugees. 2004. *More than a Nightmare: Delays in Family Reunification*. <http://www.ccrweb.ca/nightmare.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2005).
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2000. *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977*.
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/legacy/chap-6.asp> (accessed 26 July 2007).
2007. *Facts and Figures: Immigration Overview: Permanent Residents and Temporary Foreign Workers and Students*.
<http://cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2007/index.asp> (accessed 3 November 2008).
- Collacott, Martin. 2002. Canada's immigration policy: The need for major reform. *Public Policy Sources* 64. The Fraser Institute.
http://www.fraserinstitute.org/commerce.web/product_files/CanadasImmigrationPolicy.pdf (accessed 15 November 2007).
2006. Family Class Immigration: The Need for Policy Review. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens*. Spring 2006. 90-93
- Daniel, Dominique. 2005. The debate on family reunification and Canada's Immigration Act of 1976. *The American Review of Canadian Studies*. 683-703.
- Dench, Judith. 2006. Ending the nightmare: Speeding up refugee family reunification. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens*. Spring 2006. 53-56.
- Deshaw, Rell. 2006. The history of family reunification in Canada and current policy. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens*. Spring 2006. 9-14.

- Frances, Diane. 2002. *Immigration: The Economic Case*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.
- Grubel, Herbert. 2005. Immigration and the Welfare State in Canada. Growing Conflicts, Constructive Solutions. *Public Policy Sources* 84. The Fraser Institute.
http://www.fraserinstitute.org/commerce.web/product_files/CanadasImmigrationPolicy.pdf (accessed 3 November 2008)
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 1999. Introduction: Gender and contemporary U.S. immigration. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 42(4): 565-576.
- Jasso, Guillarmino (1997) Migration and the dynamics of family phenomena. Pp. 3-46 in A. Booth, A.C. Crouter and N. Lander (eds), *Immigration and the Family: Research and Policy on U.S. Immigrants*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- KAIROS. 2005. *Presentation to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration*. <http://www.urban-renaissance.org/urbanren/images/Kairos.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2005)
- Khoo, Siew-Ean. 2003. Sponsorship of relatives for migration and immigrant settlement intention. *International Migration*. 41(5): 177-198.
- Kofman, Eleonore. (2004). Family-related migration: A critical review of European Studies. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 30(2): 243-262.
- Lewis-Watts, Laura. 2006. Speaking with families from within the 'Family Class' *Canadian Issues / Thèmes canadiens*. Spring 2006. 81-84.
- Li, Peter. 2003a. *Destination Canada: Immigration debates and issues*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 2003b. Deconstructing Canada's discourse of immigrant integration, *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. 4(3): 315-333.
- McLaren, Arlene Tigar. 2006. *Parental Sponsorship – Whose Problematic? A Consideration of South Asian Women's Immigration Experiences in Vancouver*. Vancouver Centre of Excellence. Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis. Working Paper Series. No. 06-08.
- Merali, Noorfarah. (2006). South Asian Immigration to Canada Through Arranged Marriages: Exploring Challenges for Sponsored Woman. *Canadian Issues/themes canadien*. Spring: 38-41.
- Mogelonsky, M. 1995 Asian-Indian Americans. *American Demographics*. 17(8), 32-39.
- OCASI. 2005. *Submission to Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration*. http://www.ocasi.org/downloads/OCASI_Family_Reunification_Apr05.pdf (accessed 1 June 2005)
- Oxman-Martinez, J., Hanley, J., Cheung, L. (2004). Another Look at the Live-in-Caregivers Program (LCP): An Analysis of an Action Research Survey Conducted by PINAY, the Quebec Filipino Women's Association with The Centre for Applied Family Studies. Access Feb 18/07 from http://www.im.metropolis.net/research-policy/research_content/doc/oxman-marinez%20LCP.pdf.

- Prtt, Geraldine. 2006. Separation and reunification among Filipino families in Vancouver. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens*. Spring 2006. 46-49.
- Rumbaut, R.G. 1997. Ties that bind: Immigration and immigrant families in the United States. Pp. 3-46 in A. Booth, A.C. Crouter and N. Lander eds., *Immigration and the Family: Research and Policy on U.S. Immigrants*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Satzewich, Vic and Nikolaos Liodakis. 2007. *'Race' and Ethnicity in Canada: A Critical Introduction*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Darren. 2004. An 'untied' research agenda for family migration: Loosening the 'shackles' of the past. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 30(2): 263-282.
- Statistics Canada. 2005. *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: A Portrait of Early Settlement Experiences*. Catalogue no. 89-614.
- Stoffman, Daniel. 2002. *Who Gets In: What's Wrong With Canada's Immigration Program –and How to Fix It*. Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross.
- Telegdi, Andrew. 2006. Family Reunification: The key to successful integration. *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens*. Spring 2006. pp. 94-96.
- Triadafilopoulos, Phil. 2006. Family Immigration Policy in Comparative Perspective: Canada and the United States." *Canadian Issues/Thèmes Canadiens* (Spring 2006): 30-33.
- VanderPlaat, Madine. 2007. *Integration Outcomes for Immigrant Women in Canada; A Review of the Literature*. Ottawa: Integration Branch, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. http://www.atlantic.metropolis.net/index_e.html (accessed November 4, 2008)

Table 1: Sponsored Parent and/or Grandparent Immigration 1997-2006

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of parents/grandparents | 20,153 | 14,164 | 14,481 | 17,768 | 21,341 | 22,234 | 19,384 | 12,732 | 12,474 | 20,006 |
| Percentage of family class immigrants | 33.8 | 28 | 26.2 | 29.3 | 32 | 35.7 | 29.8 | 20.4 | 19.7 | 28.3 |
| Percentage of total immigration | 9.4 | 8.2 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.5 | 9.7 | 8.6 | 5.4 | 4.8 | 8 |

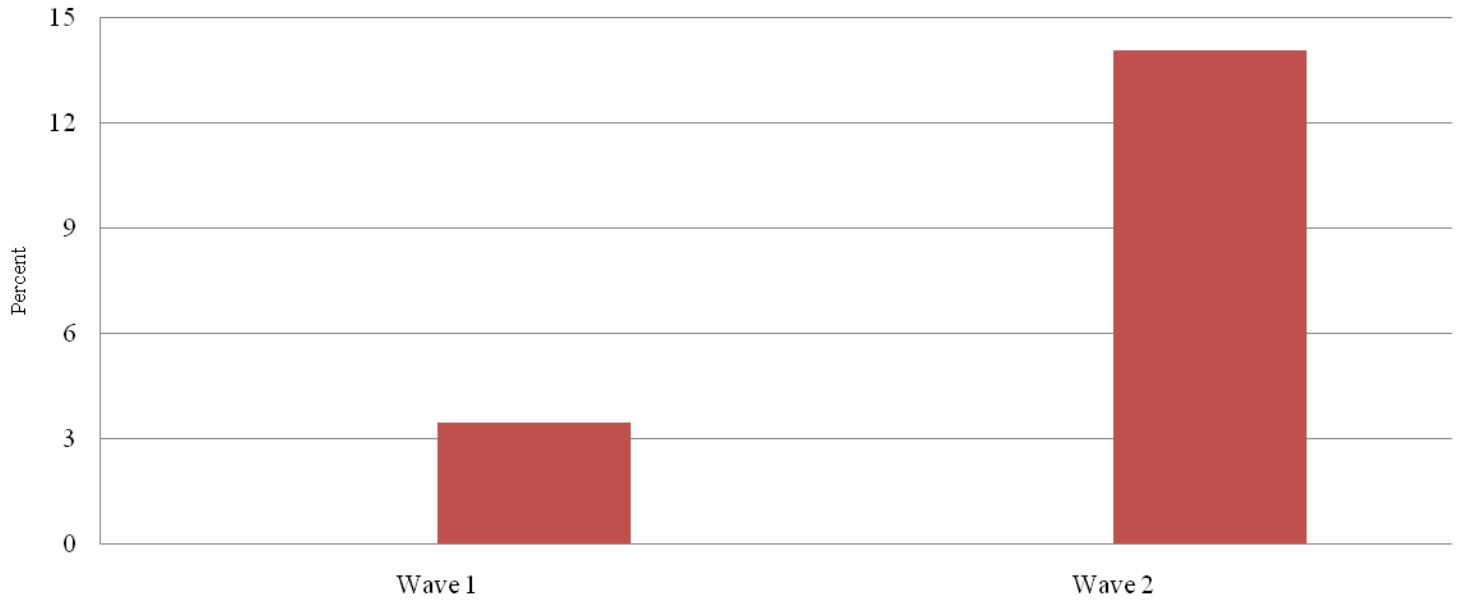
Source: Facts and Figures, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Table 2: Percentage of Sponsored Parents and/or Grandparents by Main Activity

| | Wave 1 | Wave 2 |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| Retired | 29.65 | 26.89 |
| Work or self-employment | 27.98 | 39.8 |
| Homemaker | 33.3 | 11.92 |
| Caring for family members | -- | 16.6 |
| Other | 9.07 | 4.79 |

Source: LSIC Wave 2

Graph 1: Percentage of Sponsored Parents and/or Grandparents with Volunteer Experience



Source: LSIC Wave 2

¹ For an excellent and succinct summary of the debate around family class immigration in Canada, see Statzewich and Liodakis (2007).

² An exception to this is the growing body of literature on the institutionally supported vulnerability of sponsored spouses (Merali, 2006; Oxman-Martinez, 2004).

³ For example, arguments against the sponsoring of parents and/or grandparents often appeal to data available on immigrant seniors, an assumed equivalency that has not been validated.

⁴ The *Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families* also recognizes the importance of the family but has not been signed or ratified by Canada or any of the western “receiving” nations.

⁵ 47 percent of immigrants who responded to the LSIC indicated an intent to sponsor a family member relative (Statistics Canada, 2005)

⁶ It should be noted that Caring for family members was not measured in wave 1 but was captured in wave 2. We derive working or self-employment from the valid skip option.

⁷ These are measured by LSIC release variables lr1g042 (Ethnicity), in2d069x (Family Income), Sex (lr1q008), Age (lr1g007), Work experience prior to arrival (em1q002), Official language (derived from ls1q003 and ls1q041), Highest level of education (ed1q001), Region of destination (hh1g007) and Marital status (derived from lr1q009 and lr2q009).