

# **Public Policy and the Economic Wellbeing of Elderly Immigrants**

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## **Abstract**

In this paper we document the economic outcomes of elderly immigrants to Canada. Our objective is to describe the extent to which elderly immigrants may have low income (are “in poverty”) and their interactions with the Canadian income transfer system. The study has two main parts. First, using a combination of administrative and survey data, we describe the age dimensions of immigration to Canada since 1980, and the evolution of policies directed towards older immigrants (i.e., immigration selection, and eligibility for age-related social security programs). Second, using the SCF and SLID surveys spanning 1981 through 2006, we document the composition and levels of income for immigrants to Canada. We estimate the degree to which older immigrants support themselves, either through working, or living with relatives, as well as the degree that they rely on various income transfer programs, especially OAS, GIS, and Social Assistance (SA). We also summarize their overall living standards, and the extent to which they live in poverty (have “low incomes.”) Throughout the paper, we also explore the family dimensions to the outcomes of older immigrants: distinguishing between individual and family sources of income, as well as outlining differences in the living arrangements (family structure) of older immigrants, and the implications for measures of their well-being

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