

Enforced Government of the Self:
Forced Dependence and Experiences of
Sponsored Older Chinese Immigrants in Canada

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Globalization and global competition have rendered Canada's immigration regime and governance increasingly susceptible to market forces. Additionally, the pressure of an aging society in Canada has contributed to a significant reduction in the admission of family-class immigrants, especially older people, and in 2014, the federal government tightened and dramatically revised its parent/grandparent (PGP) immigration program by raising income requirements for sponsors, extending the period of sponsorship by offspring, and imposing an annual quota of applications.

Scant literature has explored how the PGP program and its policy alteration affects the later life and well-being of sponsored older immigrants in Canada. Mainly through in-depth semi-structured interviews with sponsored Chinese parents, their offspring and social workers and qualitative analysis of documents, my PhD research explores the experience of sponsored PGPs in Canada; examines the state's positioning of sponsored older immigrants, especially those from the global South, through a lens of governmentality; and analyses the workings and effects of neoliberal governance through immigration policy in Canada and its implications.

Drawing on and contributing to the literature on governmentality and racism in migration, especially by engaging with notions of "government of the self," neoliberalism, biopolitical citizenship, and racism and racialization, I construct my conceptual framework by examining the embedded tensions and contradictions in contemporary governance, which I term "neoliberal frictions." I discuss three forms or levels of neoliberal friction and their manifestations and ramifications in the experience of sponsored Chinese PGPs.

Additionally, taking on the insights of Anna Tsing (2004), I conceive of friction as not only consisting of contradictions, tensions, inequality, and injustice, but also as engendering a location and process of struggle that generates actions, changes, new knowledge, new social and political orders, and new forms of justice. Thus, I explore and discuss not only the challenges and difficulties of later-life immigration, but also how sponsored Chinese PGPs develop various strategies to handle challenges, adapt to new environments, resist dependence imposed by the PGP program, and pursue an independent and meaningful existence with dignity. Hence my approach, built on the concept of neoliberal friction, is consistent with the notion of assemblage (Wiertz, 2020), which accounts not only for situations where life is subordinated to systemic power but also for instances that fracture and challenge this power (p. 5). I prioritize the agency and experience of sponsored PGPs, highlight their struggles, perspectives, and concerns, and underscore moments of dissonance, agency, and resistance.

My findings debunk the misconception and stigmatized portrayal of older immigrants as welfare seekers and reveal that their contributions are ignored and exploited by neoliberal governance in Canada. My study shows that Canada's immigration regime, though becoming more implicit and subtler, remains structurally raced, classed, and gendered and interplays with dynamics such as ableism, ageism, ethnocentrism, otherness, and worthiness within the state's power relations. My study reveals a new governance apparatus – dependent biopolitics – that targets sponsored older immigrants, enables the state to download its collective responsibility onto immigrant families, and justifies its othering and discriminatory practices in the name of facilitating family reunification.

My study reveals that intergenerational relations and housing arrangements are the two key factors that affect sponsored PGPs' satisfaction with life and well-being. It shows that sponsored Chinese PGPs need a mindset or desire for and the ability to realize independence,

rather than relying on their offspring, if they are to age well and develop a satisfying life in Canada. My findings reveal that forced dependence by the undertaking/dependence clause of the PGP program, deepens the gap between their desired independence and actual independence.

This research demonstrates that the PGP program, as a tool of government, cannot grant sponsored Chinese PGPs entrepreneurial spirit and facilitate their self-reliance, but instead tends to add hardship to their lives and engender social problems such as isolation, senior mistreatment and neglect, physical and mental problems, poverty, and precarious living conditions, which may use up more social resources and public funds. Accordingly, this thesis recommends a more sustainable PGP program and more supportive settlement policies and services for sponsored older immigrants.

My study contributes conceptually and empirically to governmentality perspectives on the study of immigration policy and the governance of older immigrant populations. It does this by developing an assemblage approach: on the one hand, it shows that neoliberal frictions are embedded in the state's governance systems and its practices, which cannot foster life for sponsored older Chinese immigrants and can even undermine their quality of life and well-being; on the other hand, it demonstrates how sponsored PGPs can, by performing agency, forming small, informal groups, and engaging with and helping to build community, conduct self-government and resist dependence imposed on them by the PGP program.

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	ix
1 Introduction: Neoliberal Immigration	1
• A Sea Change: Family Reunification under Fire	1
• Method	8
• Outline of the Chapters	18
Part I: Method and Context	
2 Conceptual Framework: Neoliberal Frictions: An Assemblage Approach	22
• Three Levels of Friction	22
• An Assemblage Approach: Agency and Resistance in Neoliberal Friction	45
3 History of Immigration Policy and the PGP Program: Laws, Regulations, and Literature	47
• Immigration Acts and Regulations (1869 –1976)	47
• Acts and Regulations on Chinese and Other Asian Immigrants (1885 –1945)	53
• Family-Reunification Policy and the PGP Program	56
• Conclusion	66
Part II: PGPs’ Lived Experience	
4 Neoliberal Immigration and Its Internalization: Marketizing Life and Privatizing Responsibility	67
• Why PGPs Immigrate in Their Later Life	68
• Internalizing Neoliberal Immigration: Participants’ Views on the PGP Program and Its Changes	82
• Conclusion	99
5 Fostering Life or Choking Life: Frictions between Independence and Forced Dependence	101
• Independence versus Forced Dependence	101
• Family-Role Change and Intergenerational Relations	105
• Housing Arrangements	128
• Conclusion	148
6 Migrant Agency: Challenges, Adaptation, and Resistance	151
• Adaptation and Resistance: Daily Challenges and Concerns	152
• Re-entering the Labour Market	158
• Community Activities and Community Building	162
• Biggest Worry: Resisting Forced Dependence in Later Life	167
• Conclusion	169
7 Conclusions and Recommendations: Independence and Aging Well in Canada	171

• Neoliberal Governance of Sponsored PGPs: Workings and Effects	171
• Aging Well in Canada: Participants' Perspectives and Suggestions	173
• Conclusions and Recommendations: Increasing Independence and Aging Well in Canada	187
References	195
Appendix	214

List of Abbreviations

CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
EAN	Elderly Abuse and Neglect
GIS	Guaranteed Income Supplement
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
ITA	Invitation to Apply
ITS	Interest to Sponsor
LICO	Low-income Cut-off
MNI	Minimum Necessary Income
OAS	Old Age Security
OHIP	Ontario Health Insurance Plan
PGP	Parent and Grandparent
PGP Program	Parents/Grandparents Sponsorship Immigration Program
PR Status	Permanent Resident Status

Chapter 1

Introduction: Neoliberal Immigration

A Sea Change: Family Reunification under Fire

In this era of globalization and global competition, many industrialized, immigrant-receiving countries such as Canada have increasingly taken an economic-oriented approach to immigration policy. In the 1990s, the Canadian government began directing its immigration policy more towards the labour market, deliberately admitting more economic-class immigrants, especially high-skilled people, while it sharply decreased and deprioritized family-class immigrants, especially older people from the global South (Kim & Lee, 2021; Neborack, 2014). Popular discourse and some studies blamed the latter group of immigrants for increasing domestic rates of poverty, unemployment, and hence government spending (Kim & Lee, 2021; Neborack, 2014). In 1994, 60 per cent of new arrivals were admitted as economic class, and only 39 per cent as family class, reversing the ratio between the two categories (Bélanger & Candiz, 2020). This trend has continued since then, with family-class immigrants at about 20–30 per cent (Bélanger & Candiz, 2020; IRCC [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada], 2020). Scholars point out that the underlying neoliberal immigration governmentality causing this shift encourages cherry-picking of “model citizens” who can contribute to the economy to help solve socioeconomic problems and inefficient governance (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2008; Siemiatycki, 2015). Immigration programs and the granting of citizenship become a “legitimate sorting device” and “dividing line” to prioritize some foreign nationals and exclude others (Turnbull & Hasselberg, 2017). These practices enable the state to further its economic, social, and political goals while managing the composition of its population.

An International Shift

The immigration regimes of many other industrialized, immigrant-receiving nations also have become more economic-oriented. For example, according to *Model Immigrants and Undesirable Aliens*, by Christina Gerken (2013), in the mid-1990s the U.S. immigration system was considered as in crisis because of the overwhelming influx of so-called undesirable immigrants in terms of their race, ethnicity, class and gender. Debate followed that focused on reforming the category of family reunification. By the mid-1990s, “family values” had narrowed to a conservative ideology that promotes the nuclear family as the only living arrangement worthy of government support and protection; the legal status and immigration sponsorship of other family members such as adult children, siblings of U.S. citizens, and permanent residents was problematized, and their immigration was proposed to be discontinued (Gerken, 2013).

Gerken (2013) sees reforms that focus on maximizing profits from immigrants while minimizing welfare and public expenditures on immigrants as forming part of a larger, neoliberalizing process. She argues that immigration reform, even as it emerged in the 1990s as a race-neutral economic issue, reflected the anxieties of some policy-makers and elements of popular discourse surrounding immigrants’ race, class, gender, and sexuality. This demonstrated that “neoliberal discourse disguises the reality that racism and sexism continue to affect social and economic processes” (Gerken, 2013, p. 7).

Canada, which has, ever since Confederation in 1867, emphasized family reunification, is facing an aging population, increasing migration from the global South, and rising spending on social welfare. Under this “triple crisis,” the state considers sponsored parent/grandparents (PGPs), who are unlikely to work and likely to “take” public healthcare and pensions, to be non-contributors and a challenge to the economy and welfare system (Braedley, Côté-Boucher, &

Przednowek, 2021). So government policy started to say “No entry” more often. In November 2011, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC – now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC]) paused its PGP immigration sponsorship program (PGP program) for two years: 2012 and 2013. When the program re-opened in 2014, the CIC raised the minimum necessary income (MNI) for sponsors by 30 per cent and extended this requirement from one year to three; increased the sponsor’s undertaking period from 10 years to 20; and set an annual maximum number, or quota, of applications (IRCC, 2014). This policy change covers all applications except those of Quebec, which chooses immigrants by its own criteria (IRCC, 2014).

Among these three changes, longer sponsorship was the one that affected PGPs’ life in Canada. When applying for immigration, sponsoring offspring and sponsored parents (or grandparents) must sign the IMM1344 Application form - Application to Sponsor, Sponsorship Agreement and Undertaking, whose “undertaking by sponsor and co-signor” clause (“undertaking”) required the sponsor (and spouse as co-sponsor, if applicable) to pay for the PGP’s basic needs, including food, clothing, shelter, fuel, utilities, household supplies, dental and eye care, and other health needs not covered by universal public healthcare programs such as the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). A clause outlining “obligations of the person to be sponsored” (“dependence”) requires that the PGPs make every reasonable effort to provide for their own basic needs and only rely on their sponsors for help if they have difficulty supporting themselves, and it states that they are ineligible for provincial social assistance and federal universal seniors’ benefits (Old Age Security [OAS] and the Guaranteed Income Supplement [GIS] (Ferrer, Lee, & Khan, 2020; IRCC, 2014). If the sponsored PGP seeks and receives social assistance, the sponsor must pay back the money and loses the right to sponsor any other relatives, hence forced undertaking/dependence.

Most other industrialized, immigrant-receiving nations have also tightened sponsorship rules. For example, a U.S. citizen who is at least 21 years old may sponsor a parent for a Green Card. They must promise that the parent will not become “a public charge” (USCIS, 2023) and sign Form I-864, Affidavit of Support under Section 213A of the INA (Immigration and Nationality Act), which includes a Sponsor’s Contract obliging them to ensure that the parent maintains an income of at least 125 per cent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and stating that the parent is not eligible for certain federal, state, and local public benefits, except emergency, Medicaid, and other short-term, non-cash emergency relief (USCIS, 2023, Form I-864). If the sponsor has not provided the necessary support, they must repay any benefits received, for which the agency may sue them. Unlike in Canada, the sponsor’s obligations end after the parent becomes a citizen (USCIS, 2023, Form I-864). Additionally, there is not an annual cap on applications for this category (USCIS, 2023). However, grandparents are ineligible, and permanent residents may not sponsor their parents.

In Australia, both a citizen and a permanent resident (and a New Zealand citizen) 18 or older, along with siblings so qualified, may sponsor parents; this category of application is subject to capping and queueing annually (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). The category of Contributory Parent Visa requires that at least half of the parent’s children reside permanently in Australia; processing takes about 6–12 years, and the fee is a prohibitive AUD\$48,365. The Parent Visa requires that the sponsored person have more children living permanently in Australia than in any other country, and processing takes usually about 12 years, but can last 29 (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). The sponsor must be a settled resident in Australia, lodge an Assurance of Support (AoS), and post an AoS bond with Services Australia; this commitment requires the sponsor to repay any welfare payments received by the sponsored person and lasts

10 years for permanent Contributory Parent Category visas (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). The form of Sponsorship for Migration to Australia outlines the sponsor's obligations and undertaking, and Your Sponsorship Undertaking in Part L explains that the sponsor must provide information, accommodation, and financial assistance to meet the sponsored person's needs: health, medical, and pharmaceutical (Department of Home Affairs, 2023). Additionally, sponsored parents must wait 10 years to apply for an aged pension (Department of Home Affairs, 2023).

In New Zealand, citizens and permanent residents may sponsor parent immigration under the Parent Category, and the sponsored parent receives a Parent Resident Visa rather than becoming a permanent resident (PR). The parent may live in New Zealand indefinitely but needs to renew the visa after 10 years or apply for a PR visa, in which case the sponsor must guarantee suitable accommodation and coverage of health and welfare needs; otherwise, the parent may not switch to a PR visa and may be deported, with the sponsor liable for the costs of deportation and repatriation (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). As well, a sponsor must meet an income requirement. An adult offspring and spouse or two adult offspring may sponsor a parent; their income must reach the national median income and increase by half of the median for joint sponsors and each additional parent (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). Sponsored parents must also show a certain proficiency in English – for example, an overall score of at least 5.0 from IELTS (International English Language Testing System) (Immigration New Zealand, 2023). The Parent Resident Visa program is capped at 2,500 acceptable applications each year. Sponsors must first submit an Expression of Interest and are then randomly selected (Immigration New Zealand, 2023).

Industrialized immigrant-receiving countries may allow only citizens to be sponsors (e.g., the United States), cap numbers (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand), or impose a long wait (Australia). These nations insist that sponsors have at least a certain income (e.g., Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) or be well-settled and post a bond (Australia). They all impose undertaking/support on the sponsor so parents will not rely on government support. Among these four countries, although only Canada allows sponsorship of grandparents, it also mandates the strictest and longest undertaking – 20 years after PGPs become permanent residents.

In Canada, among landed immigrants, 82 per cent of seniors are sponsored under the PGP program, and 75.6 per cent belong to racialized minority communities (Guruge et al., 2015). Studies report that older immigrants face more barriers to public benefits than their non-immigrant counterparts, which makes their lives more precarious (Phan and Selassie, 2021). Poverty, malnutrition, mental illness, and elderly abuse and neglect (EAN) affect many immigrants and may be more severe and more under-reported among older ones (Guruge et al., 2015; Yon et al., 2017). Given that most PGPs are from the global South, with strong ties to family (Collacott, 2014; IRCC, 2023), making sponsors (adult children) responsible for them may greatly affect their quality of life and well-being. The 20-year undertaking/dependence may exacerbate hardship. A study of the PGP immigration policy and its effect on PGPs – perhaps the most vulnerable among immigrants and the older population – is necessary to determine their needs and facilitate their well-being.

Literature

The scant literature on the PGP program and policy criticizes the tightening of immigration policy. For example, Braedley and colleagues (2021) discuss how the program borders and restricts PGPs' mobility and how the state externalizes and privatizes both the costs

and the labour of social reproduction. Li, Guruge, and Lee (2023) examine the Super Visa as part of the policy change, in which it is designed as a possible alternative to the PGP program, argue that it cannot replace the existing program, and analyse the social-justice implications of the policy changes of 2014. Chen and Thorpe (2015) assess how immigration policy problematizes and unevenly responsabilizes families and how the state maximizes border control and marketizes regulation. Some scholars look at the effects of changes in PGP immigration policy by discussing how family separation harms immigrant children/sponsors' families and how PGPs could help with the immigrants' settlement (e.g., Bragg, 2014; Bragg & Wong, 2016; Stephen, 2013; Zhou, 2013a), but they say little about how the PGP program and policy affect sponsored PGPs' lives in Canada.

Some scholars have touched on the lived experience of sponsored PGPs in Canada – for example, Rachel Zhou (2013a, b; 2019) looks at the transnational “grandparenting” of Chinese parents and analyses the relationships between care, immigration, and social policy, but not at how the forced undertaking/dependence makes life harder for PGPs and affects their family relations, well-being, and aging. In Zhou's studies, some of the PGPs are not sponsored immigrants but arrived in Canada with a visitor visa. Ferrer, Lee, and Khan (2020) examine the finances of sponsored PGPs in Alberta and show that forced dependence helps make many of them poor and vulnerable; however, the study only has 11 participants who are from various countries. Da and Garcia (2015) explore more comprehensively Chinese immigrant PGPs' life and experience in Canada. They discuss more dimensions of PGPs' reality and outline micro- and macro- factors that affect them. They show that forced dependence can unsettle relations between generations but do not provide an analysis of the effects of PGP policy on their life.

For other countries, Lo and Russell (2007) trace the dependence experience of sponsored Chinese parents vis-à-vis offspring in Australia, but only in terms of family care and the role of filial piety. Ho and Chiu (2020) explore the transnational aging and care technologies of Chinese PGPs doing grandparenting in Singapore and Sydney; Gao, Dupre, and Bosman (2021) examine how older Chinese immigrants in Australia re-create a sense of home; and Guo and colleagues (2020) discuss the relations between older Chinese immigrants and their adult children in the United States. These foreign studies neither focus on immigration policy nor analyse the state's use of it, which is my focus here.

As well, some scholars, for example, Guruge et al. (2015), deal with specific concerns about older immigrants' health, and Zhang (2019) assesses the prevalence of EAN among Chinese immigrant families in Canada. Zhang captures various types of EAN but does not look at PGPs' experience with it or the impact of PGP immigration policy on this problem.

Method

Assemblage and Frictions

The current thesis, in contrast with, and complementary to, the existing literature, focuses on how Canada's PGP program, especially the undertaking/dependence, affects sponsored older Chinese immigrants' life in their new country. My study explores their lived experience, considers how immigration policy affects their well-being and satisfaction with life, and analyses how the state uses its PGP program to govern this group and meet its own economic, social, and political needs. My central research question here is: What and how can PGP immigration policy and sponsored PGPs' lived experience tell us about the workings and effects of neoliberal governmentality in Canada? In other words, how does PGP immigration policy shape self-governance for its subjects? What are its implications for neoliberal governance in Canada?

I set up the conceptual framework and background for my discussion in part I (chapters 2 and 3) and present my empirical research in part II (chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7). In this thesis, I take an assemblage approach to study the PGP program as a governmental tool and its workings and effects on the governance of sponsored PGPs. I use this method to reveal the challenges and difficulties of immigration in later life and to examine how forced dependence may make these newcomers' lives poorer and harder, as well as how they handle challenges, adapt, resist forced dependence, and make their lives more independent and meaningful, with dignity. Existing studies focus on PGPs' challenges and precarity. My assemblage technique, in contrast, generates an unabridged, comprehensive picture of their lives in Canada and extends the literature on older immigrants.

Wiertz (2020) emphasizes that assemblage prioritizes individuals' agency and experience and works more closely with their struggles, perspectives, and concerns. He explains that it points out moments of dissonance, agency, and resistance and reveals people's practices of resistance and negotiation, thus helping to account for their sometime subordination to the system of power, but also for fractures and challenges to it (p. 5). Accordingly, in part II, I outline the challenges and hardship facing sponsored PGPs, so I can supply evidence about how they can improve their situations. I highlight their agency and resistance in three ways – by discussing their desire and ability to make decisions and live independently (chapter 5); by showing how they resist forced dependence – individually, in small, informal groups, and through helping to build community (chapter 6); and by presenting their suggestions for a satisfying and healthy existence for sponsored PGPs in Canada (chapter 7).

In *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Tsing (2004) famously views “friction” as referring to “encounters” in global connections and defines it as “the awkward,

unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (p. 4). In her well-known metaphor – “A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere. Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick” (p. 5) – it is friction that produces movement, change, action, and power. Tsing clarifies: “Heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power” (p. 5). I take on her insights and expanded idea of friction – an “encounter” that can rearrange power and culture and unmake hegemony. For me, friction can take the form of contradictions, tensions, inequalities, and injustice, but it is also a location and process of struggle, adaptation, and resistance that produce change, new knowledge, new social and political orders, and new forms of justice. I name my conceptual framework “neoliberal frictions: an assemblage approach.”

Neoliberal governmentality underscores individuals’ personal responsibility to secure their own and loved ones’ well-being under market mechanisms (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, O’Malley, & Valverde, 2006). Through privatization and by promoting entrepreneurialism and self-governance, the state turns the governed into the governing and displaces its collective responsibility onto other governmental entities as well as families and individuals (Ilcan, 2009; Inda, 2006). Government of the self calls for governing subjects who must use their agency and autonomy to manage and improve themselves, become self-reliant, and achieve their own maximal lives, rather than relying on welfare and collective protection (Miller & Rose, 2008; Rose, 2017). I conceive Canada’s PGP program, especially its forced undertaking/dependence, as a strategy to promote and enforce self-governance and subjectify PGPs and their sponsors so they must govern themselves. My study examines this enforced self-governance, especially the effects of forced dependence on PGPs’ daily lives. In that context, I analyse how political power

functions at a distance through “conduct of conduct” via a variety of policies, programs, services, and practices. Through this kind of conduct which is fielded by a range of minor authorities and often linked to community partnerships and market mechanisms, the state promotes neoliberal self-governance to displace its own responsibilities and meet its social, economic, and political goals by harnessing various forces, including administrative, cultural, family, financial, legal, and psychological (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 63).

I uncover embedded contradictions, frictions, and tensions in neoliberal governmentality, which I term *neoliberal frictions*, that surface in the lived experience of sponsored PGPs, as well as shape their self-governance. I focus on forms or levels of neoliberal friction embedded in three areas:

- in the state’s government mechanism or mode (first level)
- in its welfare system and immigration regime (second)
- in the practical governance of racialized vulnerable groups (third)

and I examine how these neoliberal frictions affect PGPs’ agency, autonomy, and (in)dependence, shape their self-governance, and interplay with dynamics such as ableism, ageism, otherness, racism, and worthiness within the state’s power relations and generate new forms of immigration and of social injustice and problems. I hope this analysis will contribute theoretically and empirically to the governmentality literature and the study of immigrants, especially older ones.

I observe that first-level contradictions exist between the conventional goals of governmentality, as introduced by Michel Foucault, and the neoliberal-governance model conducted in Canada. First-level friction leads to the second level, which emerges in the depoliticization of individual risks and hence an austere welfare system and hyper-politicization

of the so-called threat or risk to the state posed by immigrants and refugees, especially those from the global South, whom the state often considers undesirable, a burden on welfare systems, and a risk to its values, which leads it to tighten borders and immigration. The first two levels of neoliberal friction are both systemic and structural. They lead inevitably to the third level of neoliberal friction, which is visible in the state's racialized and disadvantaging positioning and framing of some populations (e.g., poor immigrants from the global South), in its inefficient and damaging neoliberal governance of vulnerable populations (e.g., sponsored PGPs), and in its self-claimed "humanitarianism" and "race-neutral" immigration programs and practice.

I argue that, even though neoliberal governmentality gives people more freedom to make choices and claims to foster life through self-government, it can harm the people on the lowest rungs of the state's power relations, such as sponsored PGPs. Racism is still a normal and central feature of neoliberal governance, although it has shifted from the explicit to subtler forms of differentiation, categorization, and exclusion, based on multiple national and international forces and dynamics, including the frictions between Eastern and Western values, knowledge, and culture and the socioeconomic differences between global North and South. At the same time, as Tsing (2004) proposes, friction also can empower, and "hegemony is made as well as unmade" (p. 6), so neoliberal frictions can engender new and different forms of freedom, knowledge, rights, and justice.

Research Design and Data Collection

Interpretive, qualitative research is ideal for exploring subjective experience and generating in-depth knowledge (Little, 2023). The main goal of qualitative design is to comprehend the social reality of subjects through their own accounts and interpretations. Researchers can then, by taking the stand of those they are studying, acquire social knowledge

and see things in a way that an outsider would not (Bryman & Bell, 2019). Almost all of the related literature is qualitative and employs semi-structured interviews to collect most of its data. For example, as part of an SSHRC-supported project, Zhou (2013a) studied interdependence of care in Chinese families through semi-structured interviewing of 36 Chinese grandparents and 34 Chinese skilled female immigrants in Canada whose parents/parents-in-law have assisted them with childcare or plan to do so. Her study results demonstrate the multiple contributions of the grandparents, especially in helping with childcare, the search for work, education, and upward social mobility of skilled immigrant women. Similarly, Da and Garcia (2015) used a qualitative design and semi-structured interviews with 31 older Chinese immigrants to explore their socio-cultural adaptation and overall self-perceived quality of life. Their work reveals that these older immigrants help support their children's settlement and that their perceived quality of life is shaped by both their roles in the family and their connection to the host country.

Ferrer and colleagues' qualitative study (2020) of the financial literacy of older immigrants in Alberta collected photovoice data. They interviewed 11 older immigrants from eight countries (China, India, Iran, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Philippines, South Korea, and Ukraine) to explore their finances, challenges, and coping strategies. They discovered that finances and aging are indeed affected by "financial exclusion, dependency clauses within immigration policies, and (in)eligibility and (in)accessibility [*sic*] to pensions" (p. 61). Zhang's qualitative examination (2019) of EAN in Canada employed 12 semi-structured interviews and one focus group session and captured various types of abuse.

In other countries, most research on older Chinese immigrants also is qualitative and uses mainly semi-structured interviews – for example, Ho and Chiu's (2020) in-depth interviews with 41 grandparenting Chinese migrants in Singapore and 31 in Australia. Gao and colleagues (2021)

undertook 30 in-depth interviews with older Chinese immigrants living in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. For many scholars, qualitative research via semi-structured interviews has proven suitable and effective and has been confirmed in their insightful and useful findings.

To explore the lived experience of sponsored Chinese PGPs in Canada and how immigration affects them (part II, below), I also employ semi-structured interviews with participants, especially in-depth interviews with the PGPs. Cho (2010) emphasizes the power of “counter-storytelling” as a potent method for data collection: by amplifying the voices of those on the margins, this approach allows personal narratives and stories to emerge, challenging the dominant discourse in our society. Through counter-narratives, individuals whose groups have been historically marginalized can assert their agency and reshape the prevailing narrative, thus facilitating understanding of diverse perspectives and promoting inclusivity (Cho, 2010). This approach allows me to focus on the effects of immigration policy on sponsored PGPs, while I probe deeper into their experience, sometimes exposing themes not previously captured by investigators.

My *qualitative document analysis* of related laws, regulations, and government reports, especially of IRCC’s announcements and reports (in chapter 3), reveals how policy-makers understand immigration and the PGP program. I examine the political rationales and priorities offered by leading politicians and popular discourse in different historical periods and how they affect the design of immigration policy. I try to uncover the deeper economic, ideological, and societal forces underlying the 2014 policy changes, to help us gauge their real purposes, thus setting up a broader context for my study, which aims to unearth the racialized features and rationales underpinning the program and its changes.

Recruitment and Interviews

Scholars in Canada who study older Chinese immigrants usually recruit participants through multiple social networks. For example, Zhou (2013), of McMaster University, recruited participants from among both grandparenting parents and skilled immigrant women with young children, respectively, in the Toronto area, through Chinese websites, settlement agencies, and personal referrals by participants. Da and Garcia (2015), of Western University, sought volunteers through friends' networks, assistance from a local Chinese organization in London, and snowball sampling.

In recruiting for my research in Ontario, I was unable, due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, to introduce my project, as I had planned, at several Chinese seniors' clubs and community centres in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Using purposive sampling, I approached and recruited volunteers through my personal networks, especially with the assistance of a social worker (also a participant) employed by a large Chinese service agency in Toronto, and by posting advertisements and messages via the popular Chinese social media platform WeChat. I also used snowball sampling. I recruited 42 participants within my study timeline.

I interviewed 38 sponsored or sponsoring participants in total: 26 sponsored parents (I recruited 28, but one was sick and later died, and one returned to China) and 12 sponsoring offspring. Among the PGP participants, 18 are female, 8 are male; 1 is under 60 years old, 6 are aged 60–69, 13 are aged 70–79, and 6 are 80 or older. I also interviewed two social workers. Among the sponsoring offspring, 4 are daughters, 4 are daughters-in-law, 2 are sons and 2 are sons-in-law. Please find a summary chart of the main information of the sponsored PGP participants in the Appendix section.

I asked all these participants about, and discussed with them, the main PGP program changes of 2014, especially the longer undertaking/dependence. I also inquired of all sponsored and sponsoring participants about the daily lives of sponsored PGPs, the difficulties and challenges facing them, their family relations and housing arrangements, and their suggestions on how to age well in Canada. Among the PGPs, several were or are leaders in a Chinese seniors' club or organization, so I asked them also about their group's services and activities and their perspectives on the above questions as community leaders.

The two social workers I interviewed both have extensive experience with older immigrants. I queried them about their agencies' services, their own observations and perspectives on the experiences and challenges facing their clients, and their suggestions on PGPs' aging well.

I conducted all my interviews in Mandarin, using WeChat or phone. Most lasted 2–3 hours, and, for three participants who wanted to share more, I conducted a second session. Though following an interview guide approved by the Research Ethics Board of University of Waterloo, I allowed participants, especially PGPs, to speak freely about their experiences. For several participants who had difficulty expressing themselves, I reworded the questions to make them more open. I also used examples to inspire these interviewees or asked them to respond to other participants' remarks. For sensitive topics, such as intergenerational relations and EAN, many participants did not want to talk, I then inquired about their friends' experiences or other older immigrants' stories they had heard about, and I thereby obtained sufficient, rich data.

Most participants (both PGPs and offspring) were very willing to share their insights and experiences, and many – especially PGPs – told me that they felt very grateful that some

researchers cared about the well-being of older immigrants.

Although my research sample is not huge, and I could not conduct the interviews in person because of COVID-19 restrictions, I established a rapport with participants on the phone. I first called each one to explain my project, introduce myself, and answer all kinds of questions before the interview. During the interview, I remained flexible and used strategies to probe, stimulate, inspire, and encourage participants, as well as making follow-up calls to them to gather any added or new ideas or thoughts.

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed in Chinese, with key findings rendered verbatim and translated into English for this thesis. By exploring sponsored PGPs' happiness, sadness, challenges, adaptation, and resistance, my study has obtained an empathetic understanding and unabridged depiction of interviewees' lives and insights into how PGP immigration policy interplays with other forces to shape their lives and their aging in Canada.

Data Analysis

I analysed the data that I collected via iterative coding and analysis, moving back and forth between data and theory construction through multiple stages and cycles of coding. I started analysis after collecting some data, and I amassed more in the light of my ongoing analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Schulenberg, 2018). Data collection and analysis continued until I had identified and examined all my main themes.

I developed concepts and theories by coding recurring themes and identifying underlying indications, patterns, and relationships. Additionally, I used principally standard thematic analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2019, pp. 318-319) to analyse participants' daily experiences, challenges, feelings, and perspectives on later life and aging well in Canada, as

well as how they interpret and make sense of what happens around them.

Outline of the Chapters

Part I contains chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2, I introduce my conceptual framework - neoliberal friction: an assemblage approach, and explain why it is suitable. I draw on the literature on neoliberal biopolitical governmentality, identifying especially the three levels or forms of friction in neoliberal governance in Canada and invoking assemblage theory, to construct my conceptual framework. I coin and harness the concept of *neoliberal friction* to examine the state's neoliberal governmentality and its effects and implications vis-à-vis immigration and governance of immigrants, as well as to analyse the lived experience of sponsored PGPs (in part II, chapters 4--6), particularly their agency and resistance to forced dependence.

In chapter 3, I set my study in its broader historical context by reviewing Canada's principal immigration acts and regulations between its first Immigration Act, 1869, and the Immigration Act, 1976, which opened Canada to migrants from all over the world. I look particularly at some policies in those years discriminating specifically against Asian immigrants. I then review the history of family-class immigration policy which can be traced back to 1908 and look at the current PGP program and its application procedure and process. I argue that the program and its changes reflect the state's increasingly economic orientation and that its policies and practices remain racialized and racializing, even if less explicitly and obviously so.

Chapter 4, the first empirical chapter, explores how embedded neoliberal frictions reify themselves in the lived experience of sponsored Chinese PGPs in Canada. I consider, first, their reasons for later-life immigration and their pursuits in Canada and, second, their perspectives on the PGP program and the 2014 changes, especially the extended undertaking/dependence. I

reveal stereotypical, false, and hegemonic knowledge around the portrayal and sponsoring of PGPs. Under neoliberal market mechanisms, the state ignores and exploits their unpaid contributions, rendering them sub-citizens, viewing them as a burden and risk to welfare systems, and treating them as “outsiders inside.” By analysing and examining how embedded neoliberal frictions affect the state’s positioning of sponsored PGPs in its power relations, I argue that the PGP program and its 2014 changes indicate a structural inequality and injustice in neoliberal governance, and Canada’s immigration regime still has dimensions of race, gender, and class that intersect and interplay with other stigmatized dynamics such as ableism, ageism, otherness, and worthiness. By internalizing neoliberal values and claiming to facilitate family reunification, the PGP program has made its social injustice less explicit, subtler, even abstruse.

Chapter 5 further examines neoliberal frictions in terms of two dimensions: sponsored PGPs’ new roles in the reunited family, especially vis-à-vis offspring, and their housing arrangements – both of which appear to strongly influence their self-governance and overall well-being. I also analyse factors such as finance, age, and health that affect their approach to independence and its achievement. We see how forced dependence and other factors intersect and interplay to affect their agency and independence, quality of life, degree of satisfaction, and well-being. I find that their forced dependence, particularly their exclusion from universal seniors’ benefits (OAS/GIS), weakens their agency, undermines their autonomy and independence, and exacerbates their hardship and inner struggles, thus harming their mental, psychological, and physical health. Even though neoliberal governance ostensibly looks cost-efficient, I suggest that the PGP program engenders costly social problems such as EAN, poverty, malnutrition, physical and mental problems, and isolation, which manifest the embedded neoliberal frictions and paper over the harm they cause.

Chapter 6 highlights sponsored PGPs' agency by exploring their pursuit of independence and performance of agency and autonomy in terms of their difficulties and how they face challenges and pursue an independent and meaningful life. To that end, they have acted on their own, formed small social groups, and/or become active in, even built community and thereby demonstrated strong agency and autonomy. I also explore their major concerns and the obstacles they face. I propose that the PGP program does not facilitate their self-governance and instead deepens their worries and hardship and undermines their capacity and ability for independence, revealing embedded neoliberal frictions.

In chapter 7, I provide my conclusions and recommendations. I first summarize my findings on the neoliberal governance of sponsored PGPs. Next, I discuss participants' perspectives and suggestions for sponsored PGPs, offspring sponsors, and policy-makers and service agencies to facilitate the aging well of PGPs. Based on these suggestions and my own observations, my recommendations aim to enhance sponsored PGPs' agency and independence and promote cultural- and age-sensitive services for them. Lastly, I summarize the contributions of my study, its limitations, and my suggestions for future research.

In conclusion, my research makes it clear that PGPs' both having a desire for and achieving independence rather than relying on their offspring can make possible a healthy and satisfying life for them in Canada. Independent or suitable housing arrangements, harmonious relations between generations, and some money in hand allow them to age well with dignity.

Although PGP immigration policy enables family reunification, its forced dependence has often prevented PGPs' independence and made their lives precarious, especially for those with weak finances. The PGP program and its changes make clear the embedded neoliberal frictions and enduring discrimination, inequality, and exclusion, based on race and white

supremacy, in the expression of state power, the (dis)entitlement of state benefits, and the (non-)distribution of state welfare.

The neoliberal strategy of promoting self-reliance and privatizing responsibilities, and its internalization among immigrant families, indicate that the structural inequality and injustice of modern governance become less explicit, subtler, even abstruse, under the veil of freedom of choice; the state does this by ostensibly aligning personal needs with its social, political, and economic goals. The lived experience of sponsored PGPs informs us that seemingly cost-efficient governance may not encourage self-governance and personal responsibility for some populations, but instead impair, even destroy their agency and independence and engender new and costly social problems. Accordingly, I recommend more sustainable immigration and public policies vis-à-vis sponsored PGPs, which would benefit not only them and their families but also state and society in the long run.

PART I: METHOD AND CONTEXT

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework: Neoliberal Frictions: An Assemblage Approach

Three Levels of Friction

This chapter introduces my conceptual framework for this thesis and explains why it is appropriate. Its grounding concept derives mainly from the literature on governmentality and racism, especially its concepts of government of the self, neoliberalism, biopolitical citizenship, and racism in immigration, which I use to construct “neoliberal frictions in the government of the self.” This framework enables me to unearth the Canadian state’s rationales and ideologies underpinning its PGP immigration program, to analyse its policy changes in 2014, and to examine how neoliberal governance affects sponsored PGPs in terms of their lived experience in Canada.

Family reunification has been a pillar of Canada’s immigration regime since Confederation. However, under globalization and global competition, the state increasingly restrains family-class immigrants, such as sponsored older immigrants, who participate least in the labour market (Belanger & Candiz, 2020; Bragg & Wong, 2016). A conservative think tank (the Fraser Institute) has blamed the PGP program for “chain migration,” claiming it brought in older immigrants from the global South “who were unskilled, often nearly illiterate, and not likely to make a positive economic contribution to Canada” (Collacott, 2014, p. 7). It proposed that PGPs from the four principal source countries (China, India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka) immigrated to seek better seniors’ benefits, healthcare, and social services (p. 6). When announcing the new program in 2014, CIC minister Jason Kenny commented:

If you think your parents may need to go on welfare in Canada, please don't sponsor them. We're not looking for more people on welfare, we're not looking to add people as a social burden to Canada. If their expectation is that they need the support of the state then they should stay in their country of origin, not come to Canada. (Fitzpatrick, 2013)

Clearly, the minister saw older immigrants as welfare seekers, whose arrival abused the immigration system and Canada's generosity (Zhou, 2020), so the government had to address these concerns. This negative portrayal led to the tightened PGP immigration policy, restricting PGPs' mobility by limiting their immigration opportunities and treating landed PGPs as outsiders, limiting their access to otherwise-universal seniors' benefits (OAS/GIS). In other words, their age, health, and immigration are problematized and their presence is framed as a risk by the state.

Using a governmentality lens, my study analyses this positioning and its implications, as well as examining its effects. Unlike most existing studies on older immigrants, which use a relatively micro-level lens and engage in concepts such as family and cultural values, financial precarity, grandparenting, life course, reciprocal care, and transnational care, I apply a more macro-level lens and relate my findings to globalization and the division of global North and South. By connecting immigration policy with other dimensions of neoliberal governance, such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, country of origin, socioeconomic status, ageism, ableism, worthiness, and otherness, I seek a broader, deeper understanding of sponsored PGPs' lived experience in Canada and critical insight into neoliberal governmentality.

I term the embedded contradictions and tensions in neoliberal governmentality *neoliberal frictions*. These frictions manifest themselves in the lived experience of sponsored PGPs as well as shape their self-governance. Drawing on concepts of governmentality and racism in

immigration literature, I focus on three levels/forms of neoliberal friction in contemporary governance:

- between ends and means: government of the self to enhance life (moral, beneficial) versus neoliberal marketization and quantification of life (humiliating, damaging)
- between low individual risk and high state risk: privatization and self-responsibilization (austerity and unjust welfare system) versus hyper-securitization and tightened border (harsh and unsustainable immigration regime)
- between racism and “humanitarianism”: racialized governance and disadvantaging of vulnerable groups (racist, unjust) versus self-claimed humanitarianism and race-neutral immigration (humanitarian, fair)

The first form of neoliberal friction involves contradictions between the conventional goals of governmentality, as outlined by Foucault – to foster, benefit, and maximize human life and neoliberal governance (a means to conduct governmentality) that marketizes, quantifies, humiliates, and damages some groups. The second form underlies the contrast and tension between, on the one hand, depoliticizing and lowering individual risk by promoting neoliberal self-responsibilization and privatization, hence an austere welfare system that harms vulnerable groups and, on the other hand, heightening state risk, which leads to hyper-securitization because of alleged threats from immigrants and refugees, especially those from the global South, hence tightened borders and a harsh immigration regime. The third form manifests itself in the juxtaposition of the state’s claims of humanitarianism and race-neutral immigration policies with racialized governance vis-à-vis vulnerable groups (e.g., sponsored PGPs) and the inefficient and damaging results.

The first two levels of friction are structural and systemic, and they are interconnected. We see the first in neoliberal governmentality serving as a means or mode of governmentality, and the second in systems such as the immigration regime and welfare systems. The first level informs the second. They reflect the state's power relations, built on national and international hierarchies of economy, politics, and culture, and they determine how the state practically governs (the third level) through governmental tools (e.g., immigration programs) and the results thereof.

I take on Tsing's (2004) expanded idea of "friction" that can rearrange power and culture and unmake hegemony, and accordingly I define "neoliberal friction" also as a location and process wherein immigrants struggle and resist, thereby producing actions, changes, and new forms of knowledge and justice. I invoke the notion of migrant agency and the related literature, which discusses how migrants demonstrate their agency in hardship or precarious situations, negotiate mobility, resist restrictions, discrimination, and injustice, and fight for rights and dignity. This positioning permits me to illuminate this aspect of neoliberal friction and then analyse PGPs' challenges, adaptation strategies, and resistance to forced dependence. Accordingly, my conceptual framework of neoliberal frictions constitutes an assemblage approach (Wiertz, 2020). The rest of this chapter explains in turn these three levels of friction and explores how they can connect to PGP immigration policy and the state's neoliberal governance of its subjects.

Ends versus Means: Government of the Self to Foster Life versus Neoliberal Marketization and Quantification of Life

Michel Foucault introduced the concept of governmentality in the 1970s while investigating political power (Miller & Rose, 2008). It challenges the view of the state as the sole

and terminal point of power and instead recognizes various authorities that govern in different sites with varying objectives, thus making power more visible and tangible (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006). It offers a very powerful lens for examining governance in everyday life. Understanding governance as a micro-process fielded by a range of minor authorities and always dealing with 'local problems' (such as those that emerge in the governance of older immigrants and reunited immigrant families) enables a more nuanced analysis and avoids making the state into a monolith.

Foucault also extended the concept of governmentality beyond governance of individuals to cover governance of the "whole population" (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006, p. 83). This expansive definition considers "collective social bodies" as the object of the new technology of power – biopolitics (Mavelli, 2017; Vitales, 2020, p. 168) – which helps explain the sacrifice of the interests of some minority groups for the benefit of the so-called general population.

Walters (2012) considers governmentality a flexible framework of power analysis, a cluster of concepts, an "analytical toolbox" to study past and present forms and effects of governance practically, in terms of its rationales, programs, techniques, and subjectivities (p. 2), and he sees it as well suited for governmentality-oriented and migration research (Walters, 2015). My thesis focuses on Canadian immigration policy as a governmental tool to govern PGPs' mobility and their lives, as well as on its effects. Thus a governmentality lens serves as an apt and effective approach.

Governmentality literature frequently invokes the government of the self or governing subjects, which Foucault elaborated on while discussing ethics (Foucault, 1982; Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2006, p. 90). So self-governance begins as a moral discussion. Foucault defines ethics as "technologies of the self – the ways in which human beings come to understand and act

upon themselves within certain regimes of authority and knowledge, and by means of certain techniques directed to self-improvement,” wherein human beings are entrepreneurs of themselves (Rose, O’Malley, & Valverde, 2006, p. 90). The notion of “techniques of the self” focuses on subjectivity, and for Foucault, government can exercise power effectively only by relying on individuals’ freedom, which itself becomes a tool to govern them more effectively (Lorenzini, 2023). Rose further points out that the central strategy for governing the soul is creating freedom for subjects to conduct their own lives responsibly, even if it is forced; he views it as a kind of enterprise of “choice, autonomy, self-responsibility, and obligation to maximize one’s life” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 88; Rose, 2017).

For Walters (2012), government of the self relates to forms of power that enjoin subjects to reflect on and govern themselves and that induce conscience in them (p. 25). I view Canada’s PGP program, especially its undertaking/dependence, as a mechanism to insist on government of the self, which constructs human beings as self-governing subjects. Through compulsory self-governance, the state can realize “conduct of conduct” and achieve its own social, economic, and political goals, such as addressing government deficits by limiting some groups’ access to social resources and welfare.

Lorenzini (2023) highlights that, according to Foucault, techniques of the self permit individuals to operate, on their own means or with others’ help, on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, and conduct and thereby transform themselves into a state of perfection, happiness, purity, and supernatural power (p. 21). Foucault made it clear and emphasized that this process is intended for the benefit, improvement, happiness, and well-being of the human being.

Foucault points out that the crucial ethico-political issue is “the ways in which individuals are constituted and constitute themselves as subjects – both as the fundamental target

of governmental mechanisms of power and as a strategic place for the elaboration of practices of freedom” (Lorenzini, 2023, p. 25). Since the late 20th century, neoliberalism has become the way of governmentality in industrialized democracies such as Canada; it is based on market mechanisms and underscores individuals’ personal responsibility for themselves, their family, and their community, as well as their obligation to secure their own and loved ones’ future well-being (Miller & Rose, 2008). As the means of modern governmentality, does neoliberalism exist to facilitate life, or in other words, is it adopted by the state to foster life?

To answer this question, we must examine how neoliberalism emerged. Dean (1999) highlights its links with anti-welfarism. In the 1960s and 1970s, in the industrialized West, the welfare state, social security, and state planning came under attack for leading, it was alleged, to inefficient governance, substantial public debt, and many individuals’ dependence on the state (Dean, 1999). This reactivated classical liberal belief in the marketplace led to calls emerging to replace the planning economy with the market and its rules -- hence “neoliberalism” (Dean, 1999; Miller & Rose, 2008). So, the birth of neoliberalism aimed not to foster life but to address social problems and inefficient governance.

Inda (2006) emphasizes that this post-social state is no longer obliged to take a primary role in dealing with social ills and providing integrative and collective security to its population to facilitate social cohesion, social justice, and social promotion. Rather, it is displaced by multiple actors such as individuals, families, communities, schools, hospitals, and charities (p. 12). In this new dispensation, political authorities monitor and regulate other governmental entities at a distance by assembling a host of governmental technologies and programs to align the activities of diverse organizations with the state’s social-political ends (p. 14).

The purpose of neoliberal governmentality differs from Foucault's original notion of governmentality that aimed to benefit the population and foster human life by promoting self-government. Instead, neoliberalism has evolved to address societal problems resulting from ineffective state governance through a "conduct of conduct" approach to direct and channel subjects' conduct so that government can act from a distance to achieve its governmental goals. I thus posit an embedded mismatch and friction between the ends and the means of neoliberal governmentality.

Unlike the social-state principle of maximizing government to strengthen the state and solidarity, neoliberal governmentality views the market as "a site of justice," promoting minimal government and advocating self-regulation of the governed by the mechanisms and values of the market (Gudmand-Hoyer & Lopdrup, 2009, p. 111). I question the market as a "site of justice," because it not only disadvantages some groups (e.g., by age, class, country of origin, gender, immigrant status), but also devalues, even ignores, forms of labour that do not fit market norms (e.g., unpaid care and domestic labour). I argue that employing market values and mechanisms to determine an individual's contribution and link it to the distribution of social resources can create new forms of economic and social injustice and unfair public policies.

Neoliberalism, unlike liberalism, does not confer dominance on the market but constructs the political, institutional, and cultural conditions for a regulated free market, including by promoting and cultivating entrepreneurial, economic-rational, responsible individuals (Shan, 2015). This distinction helps explain how the state regulates and manages from a distance, through its proactive leadership vis-à-vis conduct and conduct of conduct, and reminds us that neoliberal governance, while it moves away from direct control, remains itself subject to the manipulation of sovereign power. Although the neoliberal state recognizes diverse governmental

sites and authorities, it retains the ultimate power to establish rules, regulate the market, and pursue its social, economic, and political objectives, all while governing the entire population.

Mavelli (2017) observes that, under neoliberal government, “the measure of liberal governmental activity is no longer legitimacy or illegitimacy, but economic success or failure” (p. 497). The emphasis on “the subject of rights” (*homo politicus*) has given way to the emerging form of “subjectivity” (*homo oeconomicus*) (p. 497): the construction of the rational and self-oriented individual who pursues self-interest in the market. In effect, government stepped from “the sphere of politics, where the individual is ruled as a ‘subject of rights’” into “the economic sphere, where he is governed as a ‘subject of interests’” (p. 497). So neoliberal governance prioritizes economic success and subordinates human rights to economic gains. Its goal is to maximize economic interests rather than attain a maximal quality of life; the neoliberal order facilitates competition and pursues interests, rather than fostering life, safeguarding rights, and protecting the vulnerable.

According to Mavelli (2017), neoliberalism “economizes” society and politics and elevates speculation and risk above the market to make them a general orientation of life, so subjectivity transcends the market to occupy all spheres of human life – “neoliberal life thus turns into a speculative enterprise aimed at maximizing one’s own human capital through logics of competition, accumulation and strategic positioning” (pp. 497- 498).

Mavelli’s insights deepen my understanding of how economization is extended to human life itself. Neoliberal government forces individuals to subjectify themselves as entrepreneurial and become resilient subjects to survive a neoliberal life full of uncertainty and risk without protection from the state (Mavelli, 2017, p. 498). This is what I mean by “*enforced* government of the self.” I see Canada’s PGP immigration policy and its enforcement as a process of

subjectification whereby sponsored PGPs, in order to survive, must subjectify themselves as both a governed and a governing subject so they can govern themselves, rather than counting on the state.

Mavelli (2017) points out that emphasizing the construction of entrepreneurial and resilient subjects overlooks a central task of biopower as a technology that manages humans as a species: taking care of the population by fostering its flourishing and well-being (p. 498). His insights enhance my argument for embedded friction in neoliberal governmentality; focusing on “interest” and measuring governance only through cost-benefit analysis will inevitably lead to a society that ignores rights, inequalities, social injustice, and unfair immigration policy and practice.

Identifying this neoliberal friction enables me to argue that marketization and quantification of life downplay, even ignore, other values such as emotional support, family bonds, and intergenerational care. This process can further harm poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups and help disguise unjust forms of immigration policies and mask social injustice. In my empirical chapters (nos. 4–6), in part II below, I discuss how my data and findings reflect this friction and demonstrate that self-governance is not enforced to foster the life of sponsored PGPs and actually harms them.

Low Individual Risk versus High State Risk: Privatization and Self-responsibilization versus Hyper-securitization and Tightened Borders

Contemporary neoliberal governance means, or so it appears to me, that the state increasingly depoliticizes individual risks by privatizing public functions and by downloading collective responsibilities onto individuals and families. To that end, it promotes self-responsibility, -reliance, and -government, while itself remaining obsessed with state security

and hyper-politicizing the so-called threat posed by immigrants and refugees, especially those from the global South, thus further tightening its borders and immigration policy and limiting access to its collective protection.

Inda (2006) emphasizes that post-social government is realized not through “a beneficent state” but through “responsibilization of individuals and communities, ... making them accountable for their immediate and coming well-being” (p. 17) – what he calls the “new prudentialism” (p. 16). He shows that neoliberal/post-social regimes have differentiated “active citizens,” able to secure their own well-being, from “unethical” and “undesirable,” irresponsible subjects, unable to manage their own risks. This is a highly racialized division, as the latter subjects are those whose “phenomenal/cultural characteristics serve to distinguish them from the dominant ‘white’ population” (p. 18). Through “technologies of citizenship,” government designs programs to end dependence on the state and reconstruct “active citizens” (p. 19). For Ilcan (2009), the reduction of welfare and the shift to private responsibility and self-care mean “privatizing responsibility” (p. 208). I argue that the state, by doing so, has depoliticized and deliberately downplayed severe social problems that belong in the public domain of the state’s collective responsibility. By framing them as private matters, it depoliticizes and expels them from the public sphere, thus justifying its absence and eschewing its collective responsibility to individuals.

Ilcan (2009) points out that the neoliberal state’s privatizing of responsibility emphasizes individual competence, self-reliance, and self-responsibility and targets those most dependent on welfare (e.g., single mothers, the poor, the unemployed, aging “baby boomers,” pensioners, and medical patients), so that it can resolve social, economic, and political problems (p. 212). This neoliberal governance may not only expose individuals to the risks of the private market but also

engender “social inequities, gender, and ethnic discrimination, poverty, deteriorating health and living standards, and several other socially unjust conditions of life” (p. 229).

Inda and Ilcan’s critical insights help me grasp why the state targets vulnerable groups (in my thesis, sponsored PGPs) and makes them responsible. In chapters 4–6, I examine the neoliberal friction apparent in sponsored Chinese PGPs’ lived experience and analyse its immediate results (e.g., harm to their well-being) and its far-reaching effects (e.g., EAN, poverty).

A useful concept in governmentality literature – that knowledge is power – can help us figure out how the state rationalizes its targeting of some groups. The political rationalities of government rely on and foster various forms of knowledge and expertise because state authorities need to rationalize their practices, so problematize the targets as “objects of knowledge” and base programs on specific assemblages of knowledge (Inda, 2006). Some “experts,” as Inda observes, have associated immigrants with social, cultural, and economic maladies, representing some of them as criminals, takers and stealers of jobs, welfare dependants and burdens, spreaders of disease, and threats to the social body. These hegemonic, “knowledge”-based caricatures authorize government intervention (Inda, 2006).

Inda’s revelations about the concept inspire me to analyse how the state uses such dominant knowledge to rationalize its PGP program and restrict immigration. I propose that hegemonic knowledge and claimed truth about sponsored PGPs from some policy-makers, certain think tanks, and elements of popular discourse shape government practice by problematizing their personal characteristics, associating them and their varying, complex identities with social problems, and framing them as risks to the social body.

In part II of this thesis, I explore how the state privatizes responsibility in the governing of sponsored PGPs and analyse (chapter 4) how they and their sponsors rationalize and internalize neoliberal privatization and self-responsibility. I examine in chapter 5 how displacing social responsibility onto these groups can affect well-being, reinforce existing social problems, and engender new ones. I propose that the resulting problems may require more social services, government funding, and resources. Thus my thesis not only enriches governmentality literature but also contributes to the study of public policy.

While the main industrialized, immigrant-receiving nations (e.g., the four discussed above) have been depoliticizing individual risk and tightening welfare, in contrast, they have been hyper-politicizing state security, which Stephen Castles (2014) refers to as “hyper-securitization.” Globalization has led to growing tension between the global capital system, which requests more open borders, and states’ increased security concerns (Rygiel, 2010). This tension has become particularly visible since 9/11 and the more recent so-called refugee crisis. This situation has led to more restrictive control of borders and mobility, which requires more resources for security. Canadian border control has shifted from examination to surveillance (Salter, 2004), with more resources going into new forms of surveillance, such as identity management, biometric technology, risk classification, aggregation, and profiling technologies, as well as practices of detention and camps and the stratification and racialization of citizenship in governance of borders and populations (Rygiel, 2010). All these changes divert public resources away from social services and collective protection for individuals, especially vulnerable groups, thus the second form of friction.

Meanwhile, many nations dealing with the much-vaunted refugee crisis pool their sovereign powers, involve more actors and resources, and connect control over their own borders

to common borders (e.g., the EU). Thus border control and population governance are increasingly becoming regional, even global matters, changing the nature of borders and confirming the new, global governing order and power relations.

For the nation-state, borders and their control are increasingly important, because these not only establish the boundaries and limits of sovereignty but also symbolize it. For Agamben (1995), the state is founded on a mechanism of exception, through which the sovereign decides which life to include in or exclude from its *polis*; by keeping out undesirable life, it founds its “city of men” (Rygiel, 2010, p. 105). Nation-states increasingly use physical borders, set border-like checkpoints, and establish border-natured spaces to control the mobility of people, especially those it does not want.

Borders also function to maintain North-South inequality. Since the Soviet bloc collapsed in the early 1990s, the international East-West divide has been giving way to a North-South split, and in this “hierarchical nation-state system” (Castles’s term), the United States ranks highest in terms of politics, military, economy, and culture, and other countries have varying amounts of power (Castles, 2017). This hierarchical system leads to the same “hierarchical citizenship” (p. 360), wherein citizens of highly developed countries, such as the United States, enjoy more formal rights, democracy, and mobility than those from lower-tier nations, especially those from the global South (Castles, 2017). The new global order has increased North-South disparities in many sectors, transforming the so-called refugee crisis into a crisis of North-South relations, caused by uneven development and inequality. As a result, immigration control functions essentially to maintain this disequilibrium (p. 131). Moreover, borders help govern racialized mobility. Migratory patterns have changed greatly under globalization, with Europe becoming a major destination and a notable South-North migration of Africans, Asians, and Latin

Americans. So the main issue today is the governance of globalized migration and its ethnic diversity (Castles, 2014).

The understanding that borders and migration control help maintain North-South inequality and govern mobility racially makes possible my study of the PGP program and PGPs' experience within the context of globalization and global competition and inequality, thus broadening and deepening my analysis.

Lassen's study (2018) shows that many right-wing populists employ the "politics of fear" to make migrants, especially visible minorities, scapegoats for social and economic problems and label them "bad" and "a threat" "to us" or "to our nation" (p. 430). Promoted by parts of the media, the politics of fear often becomes a way for states to justify everyday exclusionary practices that restrain and exclude "strangers within" (p. 430), anti-immigration laws and policies, and tighter borders.

As well, welfare nationalists invoke the politics of fear to create worry about losing benefits to "bad" and "undeserving" others. They advocate for an "exclusive notion of welfare and solidarity," limited to "our people" – those "who have paid for the welfare" through "generations and generations" – and cast all others as "undeserving" (Lassen, 2018, p. 430). Moreover, the fear creates the populist discourse that defines social problems not in terms of social class, but as ethnic in nature, thus justifying anti-migration laws and policies, differential treatment of immigrants, tightened borders, and "keep them out" rhetoric (p. 431).

The notion of politics of fear and scholars' insights aid me as I explore the portrayal of sponsored PGPs in some right-wing quarters as bad and undeserving others or "strangers within" and/or as a threat to and drain on the welfare system, as well as helping me as I analyse how the

state uses hegemonic knowledge and manipulates popular discourse to rationalize its increasingly restrictive PGP program and to justify excluding sponsored PGPs from OAS/GIS.

This second form of neoliberal friction enables me to propose that neoliberal governance of immigration assumes the inequality of the global North and South and helps me make it clear why sponsored PGPs are framed as a threat. It also reveals how more and more restrictive and racialized migration and welfare regimes are justified.

‘Humanitarianism’ versus Racism: Self-claimed Humanitarianism and Race Neutrality versus Racialized Governance and Disadvantaging Vulnerable Groups

Canada’s Immigration Act, 1976, transformed immigration law, outlining its principal objectives as family reunification, non-discrimination, mandatory acceptance of refugees, and promotion of economic, social, and cultural goals (Immigration Act, 1976). The law defined three classes of admissible immigrants:

- independent immigrants, selected through the points system
- family-class immigrants, sponsored by Canadian citizens and permanent residents
- refugees, as defined by the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

The 1976 act also allowed in non-refugee, persecuted, and displaced individuals on humanitarian grounds (Immigration Act, 1976). In addition, it replaced the exhaustive list of prohibited types of individuals in previous immigration acts with more general categories of exclusion (Immigration Act, 1976). With its apparent humanitarianism and enhanced race neutrality, the law received broad support from political parties, stakeholders, academics, the media, and the general public (Meister et al., 2021).

Several years earlier, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, in October 1971, announced multiculturalism as official government policy. The policy promotes respect for cultural

diversity, recognizes the cultural contributions of ethnic groups, and grants them the right to preserve and develop their own cultures within Canadian society (Meister et al., 2021). Canada has stood out in the global North for its more inclusive, humanitarian, and multicultural immigration system and practices.

To reflect the country's increased racial and ethnic diversity, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1988, extended cultural preservation to promoting social, cultural, economic, and political inclusivity. It emphasized the right of all individuals to full and equitable participation in Canadian society. It sought to remove barriers to equality in employment, housing, and education and to overcome discrimination (Meister et al., 2021).

While Canada receives praise for its progressive and forward-thinking Multicultural Policy of 1971 and the subsequent Multiculturalism Act 1988, Cho (2014) highlights the inherent limitations within the cultural-mosaic concept. She argues that Canada's multiculturalism also faces criticism: despite aiming to avoid assimilation and promote diversity, it inadvertently encourages assimilation and acculturation. For example, Cho points out that immigrant teachers are severely under-represented in the workforce in Canada. B.Ed. programs have an expectation of assimilation on the part of the immigrant teacher candidates (ITCs) into the dominant culture. The programs position the ITCs as the problem with the onus on them to assimilate into the dominant group and those who cannot do so will encounter further challenges once they attempt to find teaching jobs (Cho, 2014).

I observe neoliberal friction between the country's much-lauded humanitarianism and claimed race-neutral immigration regime and the damaging results of neoliberal governance on vulnerable groups (in this thesis, sponsored Chinese PGPs). Drawing on the literature on

neoliberal biopolitics and racism, I now illuminate this third form of neoliberal friction and explain how it sheds light on my research question.

When discussing neoliberal governance, scholars highlight the concept of biopolitics, which intertwines with neoliberalism (Kenny, 2015, p. 12; Villadsen & Wahlberg, 2015). In immigration research, it has been used to “examine how the sovereign power or the state categorizes populations, differentiates the worthiness of people’s lives, and how this is engendered in practices and techniques of government” (Wiertz, 2020, p. 2).

Rygiel (2010) compares the understandings of biopolitics among Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, and Giorgio Agamben. Michel Foucault views bio-power as a new “power of regulation” that emerged in the second half of the 18th century to regulate rather than discipline the broader population of man-as-species (Rygiel, 2010). Rygiel (2010) notes Foucault’s point that biopolitics aims to administer the life and well-being of populations. Citizenship and other governing mechanisms calibrate individuals and their bodies to the needs of the broader population or a species body (Rygiel, 2010). So the real concern of biopolitics is the well-being of the larger, dominant population and whether the individual is desirable or good to the community, and it connects individual bodies with the species-body and adjusts the individual to meet the needs of the population (p.102). Foucault’s insights help explain why the state may sacrifice the interests of some minority groups for the benefit of the broader, dominant population.

Hannah Arendt defines citizenship as a form of biopolitics that governs individuals and populations by deciding between people who have the right to exist as political subjects and so deserve political, economic, social, and cultural rights and those who do not (Rygiel, 2010, p.

97). Foucault cautions that the biopolitical moment to manage and nurture the lives and well-being of the population can be moments where racism intervenes:

Certain races are described as good, and that others, in contrast, are described as inferior: all this is a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls. It is a way of separating out the groups that exist within a population ... to subdivide the species it controls into subspecies known, precisely as races. This is the first function of racism: to fragment, to create caesuras within the biological continuum addressed by biopower.

(Foucault, 2003, p. 295, cited in Rygiel, 2010, p. 103)

So racism establishes the relationship between life and death and makes it possible to justify the state's killing of some groups for the well-being of others (Doty, 2011).

Giorgio Agamben views biopolitics as "state racism," as people are often found guilty not because of criminal actions but based on who they are and with whom they associate (Rygiel, 2010). Aas (2011) defines biopolitics as being concerned with classifying and differentiating the lives of the society body, the polity. For Aas, its primary objective is "internal differentiation inside the bios" as social control of the population within the state's territory (p. 340). Biopolitics breaks down the population and creates lesser citizens, or "outsiders inside" – who, though territorially included, are securitized and substantially depleted (p. 340).

Scholars' insights into the roles of biopolitics and racism in neoliberal governance explain why and how the state separates and categorizes people into desirable or undesirable and abject groups, or full citizens and sub-, supra-, and non-citizens, and it uses citizenship as a bio-power to bestow varying rights, responsibilities, and treatment, thus controlling populations and attaining its own goals.

Mavelli (2017) views neoliberalism and biopolitics as two complementary rationalities, and biopolitics plays a crucial role in governing the uncertainties and risks resulting from neoliberalization of life. He notes that the main goal of biopolitics – to promote the population’s well-being – does not apply equally to everyone; rather it protects one group from the others – the “inferior species” viewed as a threat. For Mavelli, biopolitics takes care of the dominant group through racism vis-à-vis the “inferior species/them,” which it punishes for threatening the “neoliberal life/us” (pp. 508-509).

Findings on different applications of biopolitics by scholars illuminate how the state manages the risks and challenges resulting from the market and neoliberal governance by displacing them onto “inferior/them” groups, thus confirming my contention that biopolitical racism is embedded in neoliberal governance and that embedded frictions permeate neoliberal governmentality.

In studies of humanitarian border policing, some scholars maintain that, in daily border control, care works through a ‘minimalist biopolitics’ (Redfield, 2005, p. 344). Minimalist biopolitics “is different from biopolitics that is about the optimisation of life and the advancement of population welfare ... Minimalist biopolitics concentrates on the maintenance of human life and the alleviation of human suffering.” (Isleyen, 2018, p. 857). Scholars look at the intertwining of care and control as inherent in the humanitarian governance of mobile populations (Isleyen, 2018), which labels migrants as both at risk and a risk (p. 852). For example, Turkish border practices during the 2015 refugee crisis employed minimalist biopolitics to prevent crossing of borders through the preservation of life and the provision of basic needs, including temporary shelter, dry clothes, shoes and blankets, food and drink, basic onsite medical care, and transfer to more advanced medical care if needed. This reflects a

concern for order and control in a minimalist humanitarian biopolitics (p. 858). Baban, Ilcan, and Rygie (2017) stress that humanitarian border practice, while it provides migrants with some citizenship rights, simultaneously regulates their status and situates them in positions of precarity, differential inclusion, subordination, exploitation, or segmentation. Beyond the binary status of citizen/non-citizen and inclusion/exclusion, the practice of less than full citizenship, or differential inclusion, can produce precarity and devastating consequences for individuals and political communities (p. 46).

These insights in biopolitics and humanitarian bordering help me explain why and how the Canadian state facilitates family reunification while framing sponsored PGPs as burdens, risks, and less-than-full citizens. Some scholars question the binary “making life live v. making life die” in the understanding of biopolitics. For example, Lorenzini (2020) in his blog suggests that biopolitics does not so much juxtapose life and death as seek to organize differentially “the grey area between them.” Tazzioli (2021) proposes that the production of differences and hierarchies of lives transcends the binary formula of politics of life versus politics of death both theoretically and epistemically (p. 3). For her, the grey area consists of heterogeneous political technologies that “choke” migrants and disrupt their infrastructures of livability (Tazzioli, 2021). I echo these critical observations of biopolitical harming of life rather than making death in modern governance. By analysing how sponsored PGPs are targeted and how the PGP program fails to nurture their agency and independence through forced dependency, my study reveals a new form of “minimalist biopolitics” – “dependent biopolitics” and demonstrates the “grey area,” where neoliberal biopolitical governmentality hampers life, and I hope thereby to enrich the literature on biopolitical governmentality.

Turnbull (2017) observes that racism, especially “whiteness” and “non-whiteness,” categorizes certain groups as inherently undesirable, detainable, and deportable by the state. On the state’s side, immigration programs and granting of citizenship become a “legitimate sorting device” and “dividing line” to prioritize some foreigners and exclude others, thus controlling human mobility and managing access to legal belonging and state protection (Turnbull, 2017; Turnbull & Hasselberg, 2017). She notes that nowadays the state does not express racism directly but often attempts to show that it’s “race-neutral” by promoting diversity and neutralizing its immigration policy by de-gendering and de-ethnicizing it. Nonetheless racism is, in her view, manifest in the state’s behaviour, actions, and attitudes, and the “hostile environment” generated by its immigration policy makes the life of “unwanted” migrants “increasingly difficult, circuitous, and precarious, particularly for those who are poor and racialized” (Turnbull, 2017, p. 143). Turnbull highlights implicit and subtler forms of racism and injustice, which helps me analyse the design and effects of the PGP program and its effects on sponsored older immigrants.

According to Kalir (2019), the root of oppressive migration regimes is “white supremacy.” He observes that in Western liberal states, whites initially were neither original inhabitants nor the majority in the land, but they used citizenship to control both the population and colonial spaces. By denying membership to racialized groups and harnessing immigration policy, states excluded groups they did not desire. They also used “poverty” as a proxy, portraying migrants as a threat and source of social problems to legalize and rationalize “apartheid” and exclusion (Kalir, 2019).

These scholars’ observations and arguments on racism make clear that race and racialization still inform states’ conduct and governance of groups. They allow me to unearth the

reasons for the forced dependence imposed by the PGP program and its changes and to analyse how race and racialization shape the state's control of migrants' mobility and citizenship rights, including access to social resources for the benefit of the neoliberal "life/us." The existing migration literature focuses mostly on racism vis-à-vis refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants without legal status. By examining race and racialization in the design, formation, and enforcement of the PGP program, and by exploring the lived experience of sponsored Chinese PGPs, my thesis enriches the study of biopolitical governmentality and of racism in migration.

My study shows that prejudice, bias and negative attitudes to sponsored PGPs and their immigration are manifestations of the institutional power that advantage white supremacy in the form of racism. For Moffette and Vadasaria (2016), racism permeates power structures and orders, engaging with the modern colonial project of the nation. They highlight that the securitization of immigration is not exceptional and extreme, but normal and central to modern governance. These revelations make clearer the frictions embedded in neoliberal governance and enhance my argument that, while Canada's biopolitical governance of immigration has shifted to less explicit, subtler forms of differentiation and injustice, neoliberal governance is still racialized and racializing.

By identifying the three levels of neoliberal friction, my study constructs an apt conceptual framework to examine the PGP immigration policy and the workings and effects of neoliberal governance in Canada through the lived experience of sponsored Chinese PGPs. I contend that the government uses its immigration program to construct and reproduce racism by framing state-perceived undesirable and unworthy immigrants as non-contributors and risks and therefore excluding them from the body politic and state protection and public welfare, with all the harms that follow.

An Assemblage Approach: Agency and Resistance in Neoliberal Friction

Wiertz (2020) proposes an “assemblage approach” for researchers, applying the notion of biopolitics to interrogate how sovereign power or the state’s differentiation governs groups’ lives. This method he believes is beyond the standard framework of absolute binary oppositions – life versus death; inclusion versus exclusion; and bare life (zoē) versus political rights/politically qualified life (bios). Wiertz shows that the assemblage approach prioritizes the agency and experiences of individuals and that its theory more closely addresses migrants’ struggles, perspectives, and concerns and emphasizes moments of dissonance, agency, and resistance. It makes migrants’ practices of resistance and negotiation visible and sayable, offering a critical approach to biopolitics that accounts not only for situations where life is subordinated to systemic power but also for instances that fracture and challenge this power (p. 5).

Harnessing this understanding, I take an assemblage approach to my conceptual framework and research. I not only examine how neoliberal friction shapes the government of the self and affects the well-being of sponsored Chinese PGPs, but also look (in chapter 6) at their concerns, worries, and perspectives and highlight their agency, adaptation, and resistance to forced dependence.

This approach also corresponds to Tsing’s (2004) definition of friction, which comprises not only tension, contradiction, conflict, inequalities, and injustice, but also struggles, compromises, negotiations, and resistance. Both her concept of friction and Wiertz’s assemblage theory conceive of reality as processes of becoming, in which multiple forces interact to produce change, action, movement, knowledge, new social and global orders, and new forms of justice. This method enables me to comprehensively examine the interlocking that occurs between

immigration policy and other political, social, economic, cultural, and family dimensions and to analyse how varied forces and actors are involved and interplay to shape sponsored Chinese PGPs' lived experience, well-being, and aging in Canada. Thus my study contributes to and extends the governmentality literature conceptually and empirically.

Chapter 3

History of Immigration Policy and the PGP Program: Laws, Regulations, and Literature

This chapter places my study of PGP immigration policy, the PGP program, and PGPs' lived experience in Canada within a broader historical context. To that end, I examine, first, Canada's immigration acts and regulations between 1869 and 1976; second, its key policies on Asian immigrants from 1885 to the mid-1940s; third, the history of family-class immigration policies and the PGP program; and fourth, policy changes to the PGP program in 2014 and their implications, by referring to government and IRCC reports and key literature on the policy changes. For this dissertation, I outline early immigration acts and regulations to provide historical context and show the long-standing racism and racialization in Canada's immigration regime and practices. A thorough analysis of settler colonialism is beyond the scope of this study.

Immigration Acts and Regulations (1869--1976)

Following Confederation in 1867, the new dominion introduced laws and regulations to govern the selection and admission of immigrants. Over the decades, it has altered the old Acts and issued new ones. Its first Immigration Act, 1869, aimed to encourage immigration and settlement of European farmers in the western part of its lands (Meister et al., 2021). Its few restrictions and the short list of prohibited immigrants included the "lunatic, idiotic, deaf or dumb, blind or infirm" and paupers and the destitute (Immigration Act, 1869). This indicates the state's obsession, since its inception, with keeping out the poor and the "unhealthy." The relatively open policy of 1869 attracted, in addition to many British subjects, increasingly diverse immigrants from central, eastern, and southern Europe, especially as the Canadian west

began to open up in the 1880s, after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the west coast.

The Immigration Act of 1906 addressed some public concerns about the latter groups' perceived inability to assimilate, their threat to Anglo-Saxon norms, and the claimed labour surplus that led to lower wages for Canadians. It excluded people with contagious diseases, individuals convicted of crimes of moral turpitude, prostitutes, and *anyone* likely to become a public charge. The act takes for granted Anglo-Saxon norms and values, reflecting a racial hierarchy and suggesting that non-British immigrants have historically been perceived as threats, as undermining the nation's identity, and as a source of social problems (Castles, 2014).

Although the legislation did not mention culture, ethnicity, or nationality, the government could prohibit and deport *any* type of undesirable immigrant whenever necessary or expedient (Meister et al., 2021). This reality underscores the crucial role of immigration as a "legitimate sorting device" and "dividing line" vis-à-vis new arrivals (Turnbull & Hasselberg, 2017), maximizing benefits to the state while also governing the population.

This act not only "granted the government absolute discretionary powers to effectively restrict the flow of immigration according to prevailing ideologies about race, desirability and assimilation," but also established "boards of inquiry" (precursor of the Canadian Border Services Agency [CBSA]) at each port to examine and decide the entry of immigrants, after which legislation deportations surged (Meister et al., 2021). This act of 1906 reveals borders as being a symbol of sovereign power, inherently "tools of exclusion" (Aas, 2011). Through border control, the state determines which lives it deems desirable, hence included, and which undesirable and excluded.

Nonetheless, after 1906, more immigrants from unfavoured nations such as Italy, nowadays Ukraine, Poland, and Russia [previously part of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Prussia Empires] were arriving to help settle the west and respond to the demand for industrial labour. Consequently, the Immigration Act of 1910 expanded the government's power to keep out anyone "unsuitable to the climate or requirements of Canada." Later that year, a more restrictive policy targeting Asians required that all immigrants of Asiatic origin pay at least \$200 (the "head tax") upon landing, compared to \$25 for other immigrants. The 1910 act also introduced domicile status or permanent residency (PR) for an immigrant after three years, but until then he or she could be deported if classified as undesirable. Moreover, it granted absolute authority to the immigration minister, preventing courts from reviewing or interfering with the minister's decisions and inquiry boards' proceedings (Meister et al., 2021). During the Great War, "enemy aliens" from hostile countries could be refused entry or interned, suspected communists or socialists were denied entry or deported, and most African and Asian immigrants were blocked (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014). From its early stages on, Canada's immigration regime was displaying its market-driven and racialized practices, especially vis-à-vis Asian immigrants. In *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, Kelley and Trebilcock (2014) postulate that immigration policy between 1896 and 1914 reflected the state's absolute right to admit and exclude new members. The emerging regulatory system was under the control of the dominion cabinet.

In 1919, more restrictive immigration regulations were a response to postwar problems such as economic turmoil, widespread fear of Bolshevik communism, and suspicion of enemy aliens. These measures restricted entry as well of political dissidents, the illiterate, and individuals physically or mentally defective or suffering from chronic psychopathic inferiority,

chronic alcoholism, or tuberculosis (Immigration Act, 1919). The law also targeted Doukhobors, Hutterites, and Mennonites and authorized the government to prohibit *any* person unsuitable to the “climatic, industrial, social and educational, labour or other conditions or requirements of Canada,” based on their “peculiar customs, habits, modes of life and methods of holding property and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated” (Immigration Act, 1919).

The legislations of 1910s demonstrate the state’s unlimited imagination, as it added to the traditional excuses for restriction or exclusion individuals’ habits and way of life, even the climate! Kelley and Trebilcock (2014) note the dominion government and its colonial predecessors’ “very detailed immigration policies, often micro-managing immigration down to the individual level, but always reflecting some set of policy values or objectives” (p. 442). Kelley and Trebilcock (2014) find that immigration policy over the next forty years focused on economic and labour-market consequences – a stark contrast to 1869-1909, when it was relatively open and aimed at populating the west. Policy started to be spurred on by large employers who needed foreign labourers. Selecting immigrants who would help the nation grow, coupled with substantial public demand for specific racial and political attributes, now became major factors.

After the Second World War, Canada’s economy was booming, which called for more lenient immigration policies. There was growing pressure to strengthen its alliance with other Western countries facing threats from the Communist bloc, and in 1949 it joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014). So political and racial considerations outweighed economic demands in immigration policy. In a widely quoted speech

of 1947, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King emphasized immigration as a privilege rather than a human right:

The government will seek ... to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy ... I wish to make it quite clear that Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a 'fundamental human right' of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege ... The people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population ... Any considerable Oriental immigration would ... be certain to give rise to social and economic problems. (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014, p.312)

Under the pressure of open conflict between East-West blocs started in 1947 and anti-Oriental immigration discourse, Parliament passed the Immigration Act of 1952, continuing previous policies and codifying the authority of the governor-in-council (the federal cabinet) to block entry based on nationality, ethnicity, occupation, peculiar customs, climate unsuitability, and probable inability to assimilate. The legislation extended exclusion categories to cover homosexuals, drug addicts, and traffickers. It outlined procedures and conditions for arrest, detention, and deportation of immigrants and processes of examination, inquiry, and appeal. While it prioritized "white" applicants from American, British, and European countries and excluded people without a traceable European racial or ethnic origin (Challinor, 2011), its definition of "family" still included parents (Immigration Act, 1952).

The act established a legislative framework that allowed the government to issue additional orders and regulations and gave the minister final authority in all immigration cases and discretionary power to grant or cancel immigration permits and overturn decisions of

immigration officers, and appeals boards were set up in the act. Intended to simplify administration, the minister's new and unlimited discretionary power resulted in a deluge of individual cases and files for the minister and created a backlog (Meister et al., 2021), setting an unnerving precedent.

Yet at the same time, information about the horrors of the Holocaust was leading to increased awareness of and sensitivity to racial discrimination worldwide, including in Canada. The Bill of Rights of 1960 outlawed discrimination based on race, colour, national origin, religion, or sex (Meister et al., 2021). Following the ongoing and profound changes in the postwar international landscape and political environment, Canada has increasingly and actively participated in world affairs, and the general public also favoured the opening up of immigration (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014). Yet unemployment was on the rise, stirring up concern about the influx of sponsored immigrants too unskilled to find work. In 1962, new regulations eliminated overt racial discrimination and ostensibly made skill the main criterion for admission (Meister et al., 2021).

For non-sponsored immigration, the state would select people it thought able to establish themselves in Canada, assessing their education, training, skills, or other non-race-based special qualifications (Meister et al., 2021). In 1967, a new points system prioritized applicants' human capital. In 1976, an entirely rewritten Immigration Act (discussed below) made Canada a destination for migrants from all over the world (Challinor, 2011).

In conclusion, except for the relatively free entry permitted before the Great War, Canadian immigration acts and regulations until the early 1960s were blatantly discriminatory, reflecting a racial hierarchy based on the supremacy of white, Anglo-Saxon/francophone and excluding non-Europeans, such as Asian migrants.

Acts and Regulations on Chinese and Other Asian Immigrants (1885--1945)

Canada's early immigration policy severely restricted admissions from targeted countries such as China. Even during the first thirty years after Confederation, a perceived "Golden Age" of immigration, when Americans, Britons, and northern Europeans received the most attention and generous assistance, formal barriers discouraged Chinese arrivals (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014), as in the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, amended in 1887, 1892, 1900, and 1903. In the 1880s, about 15,000 Chinese workers were recruited by labour agencies as cheap and reliable labour to construct parts of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia; many were unable to return to China because of high costs of transportation and lodging in Canada (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014).

With completion of the railway in 1885, protests against Chinese labourers gained momentum. Although there was no evidence to substantiate the claimed threat of a wave of newcomers, under pressure from some trade unionists and white residents, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 was passed (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014; Meister et al., 2021). The legislation allowed incoming vessels to transport one Chinese immigrant for every fifty tons of the ship's weight, and one European for every two tons; it also imposed a duty (head tax) of \$50 on each Chinese person, in the country's first law based on ethnic exclusion (Meister et al., 2021).

Despite the mere handful of settlers, the dominion Electoral Franchise Act of 1885 denied all Chinese people, whether naturalized or not, the franchise, to ensure that they would not have a political voice in their new community. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald argued that Chinese workers were merely sojourners with "no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations, and therefore ought not to have a vote" (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014, p.98).

Amendments to the 1885 act in 1887 made Chinese women married to non-Chinese men the same nationality as their husbands; an 1892 amendment required every Chinese resident to register their temporary leaving with an immigration official before departure (Meister et al., 2021).

Despite the restrictions, economic growth in British Columbia brought thousands of Chinese immigrants in the 1890s. In response to intensified demand from elements of the public for more restrictions, the Chinese Immigration Act, 1900, raised the entrance duty to \$100; with arrivals increasing each year, the duty was raised to an almost-prohibitive \$500 (equivalent to more than \$17, 500 in 2024 as per Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator) in 1903 (Meister et al., 2021). To address the labour shortage, some labour contractors covered the entry fee, and arrivals were surging again by 1907 (Meister et al., 2021).

The entrance duty did not stop the flow or satisfy nativists and racists who blamed newcomers for the poor economy. The more restrictive Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, the so-called Chinese Exclusion Act (Meister et al., 2021), allowed in only diplomats and government representatives, children born in Canada, merchants defined by the government, and students attending university or college. Also, vessels were permitted to carry one Chinese immigrant for every 250 tons of the ship's weight; all Chinese individuals in Canada (including those born and naturalized in the country) had to register with the government with photo ID; wives and children of Chinese immigrants were not allowed to join them. The lack of Chinese women in Canada led to a decline in population and short-circuited the natural growth of the Chinese-Canadian community (Meister et al., 2021). Only about 15 Chinese immigrants were admitted between 1923 and 1946 (Meister et al., 2021). The 1923 act took effect on 1 July, Dominion Day (now Canada Day), or "Humiliation Day" to the Chinese-Canadian community.

Kelley and Trebilcock (2014) observe that attributing poor economic conditions, low wages, and high unemployment to visible-minority immigrants is probably the “most pervasive and persistent myth” in Canadian immigration policy (p. 443). These new arrivals, they tell us, based on research findings, perform better than native workers over time and have little or no effect on wages and employment for the domestic population, including unskilled workers, and pay more in income tax than they receive from social programs, so contribute more on average than the domestic population. Even though some researchers note the deteriorating economic performance of recent waves of immigrants in the United States, scholars from that nation, Canada, and other receiving countries concur that immigration does little to affect employment and wages (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014). States’ connection of social ailments to newcomers, targeting specific groups, and restricting their numbers, reflect racialized governance of immigration and the population. The resulting policies may not only exploit the labour of immigrants but also inhibit their lives, even destroy their community.

Other Asian nations were targeted as well during these years. Canada’s 1908 “continuous journey regulation” amendment shut out most new entries from India and Japan (Meister et al., 2021). No direct sea route connected these countries to Canada: Japanese people had to use the Hawaiian route, and the only company (Canadian Pacific) offering direct service to Indians was forbidden from selling “through” tickets, so most new arrivals from these two countries were denied entrance. Japanese people were targeted because many of their compatriots were contracted as labourers on the BC coast in 1907, leading to the Vancouver Riot, organized by the Asiatic Exclusion League. The 1908 amendment was passed to placate intensified anti-Asian sentiment and singled out Indians because of high unemployment and impoverishment in Canada, which the government attributed to their perceived incompatibility with the country’s

climate and way of life! However, Indians were British subjects: the state could not directly ban their entrance, so created the regulation (Meister et al., 2021). The continuous journey rule discreetly blocked the landing of new immigrants from both countries, hiding its racism.

The Canadian government had long considered Japanese people “an alien and undesirable race” (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014, p. 360). In December 1941, after Pearl Harbor, it declared war on Japan. The next year, it placed about 22,000 of British Columbia’s Japanese Canadians into internment camps; when the war ended in 1945, it offered them the choice of deportation to Japan or relocation east of the Rocky Mountains (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, 2023). Their internment was reflective of racism in Canadian governance and deep ethnic divisions within the society (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014).

In conclusion, the history of Canada’s principal immigration acts and regulations before the 1970s manifests a blunt systemic racism, rooted in notions of whiteness, ethnicity, nationality, and socio-economic status. The state was creating discriminatory laws and policies to limit or prohibit racialized immigrants, who were scapegoated for social problems and had their lives made precarious. Although racial scrutiny has seemingly loosened since the late 1960s because of a point system for economic immigrants based mainly on applicants’ human capital, such as education, training, and work experience, the minister’s sweeping discretionary power allows her or him to make broader, prohibitive regulations that target racialized groups and block or restrain their immigration according to state’s needs.

Family-Reunification Policy and the PGP Program

Despite the explicit racism of earlier Canadian immigration acts and regulations, the country has long promoted family reunification. Admitting relatives of immigrants can be traced back to 1908, and the 1910 act allowed in not only wives and children but also parents and

siblings (Neborack, 2014, p. 3). The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 with Japan put an annual quota on Japanese newcomers, but still let in returning residents and their wives, children, and parents (Meister et al., 2021).

Importantly, in 1962, new regulations allowed *any* Canadian citizen or permanent resident living in Canada, regardless of country of origin, to sponsor parents, grandparents, husband, wife, fiancé(e), or unmarried son or daughter under 21, if the sponsor could provide care and maintenance until such person established themselves in Canada (Immigration Regulations, Order-in-Council PC, 1962). As a result, between 1972 and 1976, while the number of independent immigrants fell by almost 60 per cent because of stringent labour-market criteria, sponsored immigrants almost doubled (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014, p. 347). Yet only Canadian citizens from Europe, the Americas, and selected countries in the Middle East were permitted to sponsor children over 21, married children, siblings and their families, and unmarried orphaned nieces and nephews under 21 (Immigration Regulations, Order-in-Council PC, 1962; Meister et al., 2021). The regulations excluded relatives from Asian countries, implicitly casting them as undesirable.

Growing demand for skilled workers in manufacturing, managerial, professional, and technical occupations, coupled with some people's attributing of high unemployment to unskilled and undereducated sponsored immigrants, led to a review of policy. The resulting White Paper on Immigration, 1966, argued for recruiting more skilled people and limiting unskilled family-sponsored applicants (Meister et al., 2021). While major curtailment of family sponsorship was successfully resisted by influential groups (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014), and a broader range of sponsorship for Canadian citizens was proposed by ethnic, labour, and church

organizations, permanent residents could sponsor only immediate dependants (Meister et al., 2021).

The debates on the White Paper resulted in Regulations 1967, which created three classes of immigrants: independent, sponsored, and nominated. The new rules set up a point system to admit independent immigrants based on their scores in nine factors, which substantially increased immigration from Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa (Meister et al., 2021). Additionally, the measures divided the family class into sponsored relatives and nominated relatives. The former were immediate relatives not subject to the point system and included spouse or fiancé(e); unmarried son or daughter under 21; parent or grandparent aged 60 years or older or, if unable to work or widowed, under 60, and accompanying immediate family; sibling, nephew or niece, grandchild orphaned and under 18; adopted child under 18; and any qualified child under 13.

Nominated, or distant relatives included children aged 21 or over; married children under 21; sibling 18 or over; parent or grandparent under 60; nephew, niece, uncle, aunt, grandchild; and all those individuals' immediate family. Nominated relatives were evaluated on five factors: education and training, personal qualities, occupational demand, occupational skill, and age (Immigration Regulations, Order-in-Council PC 1967-1616, 1967). An undertaking clause also was imposed: a nominator had to promise to provide necessary care and maintenance for the nominated relative and accompanying family for five years, as well as undertaking to help the newcomers to fulfil their responsibilities as a resident of Canada (Immigration Regulations, Order-in-Council PC 1967-1616, 1967). The five-year undertaking applied only vis-à-vis nominated relatives. The undertaking clause used today is much more rigorous.

The Immigration Act, 1976, redefined and set up three immigration categories, adding refugees alongside independent immigrants and family class. But the last category was limited to close or immediate relatives (formerly “sponsored relatives” in Regulations, 1967), and the sponsor had to take care of them for up to ten years (Atkey, 1990); as such, it not only excluded nominated, distant relatives but also applied the undertaking to all family-class, as well as increasing the undertaking to 10 years for people sponsoring PGPs. This tightened family class continues to the present, and the 10-year undertaking was increased to 20 years in 2014.

The 1976 act allowed the government to limit family sponsorship to immediate relatives and only those remote relatives who could fit labour-market needs. The act assigned extra points to independent immigrant applicants with adult relatives (e.g., parent, grandparent, adult sibling, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece) who are Canadian citizens or PRs (IRCC, 2023). Research reveals that those newcomers, often informed and supported by their Canadian relatives, usually integrate better than their counterparts without adult relatives in the country (Statistics Canada, 2005).

In 1988, amended regulations stipulated that a permanent resident in Canada for at least three years could, like Canadian citizens, sponsor parents or grandparents (PGPs) who were under 60, healthy, and not widowed (Immigration Regulations 1978, amendment [SOR/88-537], 1988). Previously, PRs could sponsor only PGPs aged 60 or over or under 60, unhealthy, and widowed.

After 9/11, Canada introduced the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2001. The new legislation maintained the same categories (economic/independent, family, and refugee), but extended the family class to include same-sex and common-law relationships. Citizens and PRs aged 18 years or older could sponsor PGPs and accompanying family members

(e.g., spouse or common-law partner and dependent children) through the Parents/Grandparents [PGP] Immigration Program (IRCC, 2001).

Although the 2001 act expanded the scope of sponsored persons (e.g., adding same-sex relationships), it increased the financial requirements on sponsors (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014) to meeting the minimum necessary income (MNI) based on family size, which is equal to the low-income cut-off (LICO) as defined, but imposed no such requirement to sponsoring a spouse or dependent child if the sponsor could show that they could afford to sustain the family's life in Canada (Immigrant and Refugee Protection Regulations [IRPR], 2002). Sponsors had to promise to provide for the basic needs of the sponsored person; and for sponsored PGPs, the undertaking was to last 10 years (IRPR, SOR/2002-227) and was unconditional, so sponsors had to provide support even if their situations changed (IRCC, 2002).

The new act still required would-be immigrants to apply from outside Canada, but now permitted them to do so only through the Canadian visa offices serving their country or the country where they had legally resided for one year; previously they could apply at any visa office outside Canada, which had added tremendous flexibility for applicants and immigration offices. Kelley and Trebilcock (2014) observe that, under the new dispensation, processing times soon varied widely: one and a half years for Buffalo, New York, almost four for European offices, more than six for Africa, and more than fifteen for New Delhi – the last an example of racist practice denounced years earlier (p. 428). Besides tightening the borders after 9/11, the 2002 regulation “was deliberately devoid of detail,” reversing the trend towards greater transparency (p. 461).

As we saw above, Canada has long emphasized family reunification. Until the 1990s, the family class always included PGPs, with similar legitimacy to spouses and children (Chen and

Thorpe, 2015). It had made up about 60 per cent of all immigrants from the early 1900s until the 1970s (Neborack, 2014, p. 4); for example, in 1976, 62 per cent for family class versus 29.6 per cent for independents and 7.9 per cent for refugees (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014, p. 347).

Canada's immigration policy has become more economic-oriented because of an economic downturn in the 1980s, yet the influx of refugees expanded greatly during the 1980s after the 1976 Act. For the government, this changed situation required a proper balance of admissions among the three types of applicants (Neborack, 2014). In the 1990s, there were more immigrants from Asia and the Middle East, and they, especially those from the family class, were blamed by elements of popular discourse for high unemployment and government spending. So CIC began responding to the labour market, admitting substantially fewer family-class and more economic immigrants, especially the high-skilled -- "model citizens" -- to maximize economic benefits to Canada (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002, p.96). Some scholars call this approach a kind of "social eugenics" because it focuses on the well-educated and economic elites of other countries, distinguishing desirable and undesirable based on socioeconomic status (Siemiatycki, 2015).

The point system was retained in the 1990s, but assigned more points to postsecondary education, training, skilled experience, language proficiency in English or French, and younger age. Fitting one of the "preferred occupations" was removed, and the point threshold was reduced from 72 to 67 out of 100, boosting the number of eligible skilled workers (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2014, p. 429).

The 1990s brought a notable downplaying of family reunification: in 1994, only 39 per cent, versus 60 per cent for economic class (Belanger & Candiz, 2020). This trend has since increased, with family class in the range of 20–30 per cent (e.g., 22 per cent in 2012, 26.7 per

cent in 2020, 20 per cent in 2021). Among those admitted, about 20–25 per cent were sponsored PGPs (e.g., 21.2 per cent in 2020) (Belanger & Candiz, 2020; IRCC, 2022). The admission ratio between family and economic classes thus has reversed.

Following the change in processing and the prioritization of economic class, PGP immigration applications incurred a huge backlog: more than 79,000, with over 167,000 applicants, leading to eight years for processing on average by the end of 2011. Without any action, the backlog would have ballooned to 250,000, with waits reaching 15 years by 2015 (IRCC, 2011). However, Chen and Thorpe (2015) reveal the main cause of the backlogs – not an excess of applications, but CIC’s “intentional administrative delay” and discriminatory practices, such as lack of staff assigned to process PGP applications.

In November 2011, CIC launched its Action Plan for Faster Family Reunification, and ministerial instructions paused PGP immigration for two years –2012 and 2013 – and announced a new Super Visa program for PGPs to permit them to stay in Canada for up to two years (extended to five years in July 2022) (IRCC, 2011; 2022). These changes were put in place to clear backlogs and reduce waits for family reunification (IRCC, 2014).

The moratorium led to fierce complaints from ethnic communities, especially those with family-reunification traditions and relying heavily on the program. Scholars also note that the Super Visa is just a band-aid: still only temporary, it prevents families from making meaningful long-term plans (Bragg, 2014). Some argue that its design is based on the same discriminatory logic as the PGP program itself, making it “a stratified solution that only serves to further reinforce financial and racial barriers” (Neborak, 2013, p. 10); and others emphasize its nature of temporary visa, without the social services and healthcare that the PGP program can provide (Ferrer, 2015).

However, the federal government claimed that the Action Plan of 2011 created only temporary measures; the government needed a “more manageable and efficient” PGP program and more flexibility to “focus on creating a more economically driven immigration program to address Canada’s economic and labour force needs” (IRCC, 2013). In its Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement, the CIC listed so-called public concerns and cited data to prove that PGPs’ incidence of seeking and receiving social assistance jumped from 3 per cent during the undertaking period to close to 20 per cent immediately afterwards. For the CIC, this meant that some sponsored PGPs relied on social assistance after the undertaking ended, thus showing the need for a longer sponsorship (IRCC, 2013). Additionally, for the government, the MNI thresholds – the LICO for PGP sponsors – were too low and did not reflect rising life expectancy and inflation (IRCC, 2013). Moreover, the one-year test of income did not indicate the sponsor’s financial stability and continuous ability to support their sponsored PGP (IRCC, 2013).

As a result, the PGP program was redesigned, and the amendments to the IRPR took effect on 1 January 2014. The key changes included a 20-year sponsoring period, an MNI increase of 30 per cent, to the equivalent of LICO plus 30 per cent, and an MNI qualifying period of three years before application. Also, evidence proving the sponsors’ income had to include documents issued by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) (IRCC, 2014).

The revised program imposed an annual cap on applications to be accepted – 5,000 for 2014 (IRCC, 2014). Since 2014, the IRCC has accepted more applications: 5,000 for 2015; 10,000 for 2016 and 2017; 10,000 and later increased to 17,000 for 2018; 20,000 for 2019; and 10,000 for 2020. For 2021 and 2022, the IRCC did not invite new potential sponsors to express their interest to sponsor (ITS), but randomly selected and invited potential sponsors who submitted an ITS in 2020, and it accepted 30,000 completed applications for 2021 – the record to

that date. Again, in 2022, it sent out 23,100 invitations randomly to the remaining pool of 155,313 potential sponsors from 2020 and aimed to accept 15,000 applications for the year (IRCC, 2022). In 2023, it used the same method. Aiming at up to 15,000 applications, between 10 and 23 October 2023, it sent 24,200 invitations to ITS submitters from 2020 and required application submissions by 23 December 2023 (IRCC, 2023).

Since an application cap was imposed in 2014, the IRCC has used three intake models for the PGP program. According to *The Parents and Grandparents Program: Intake Report 2014 to 2019*, from 2014 to 2016 it applied a “first-in application intake model” (IRCC, 2023): any qualified sponsors could apply to the named IRCC offices by mail or personal delivery, with required supporting documents. The applications were accepted and processed “first-come, first-served,” and when the quota was reached, the program was closed. The cap for 2014 was reached in 33 days (the program was opened on 2 January and closed on 3 February); 2015’s was achieved in two weeks (2–16 January); and 2016’s took four days (4–7 January) (IRCC, 2023).

The IRCC’s “first-in” model was criticized as unfair because of sponsors/applicants’ widely varying distances to designated offices in Canada, so in 2017 and 2018 it tried “randomized selection”: all prospective sponsors who had met the income requirements were allowed to submit an ITS, and after the one-month ITS window closed, IRCC removed duplicate submissions, set up a queue, and started to issue Invitations to Apply (ITAs) randomly, based on the quota. The time window to apply was 90 days in 2017, 60 in 2018 (IRCC, 2023).

For 2019, a new intake model was introduced. Prospective sponsors still needed to submit an ITS and then were randomly selected to apply, based on the order in which they submitted their ITS (IRCC, 2019). According to the *Intake Report*, 27,000 ITSs were accepted, and the cap was reached in less than eight minutes (IRCC, 2023). Due to the COVID-19

pandemic, PGP intake for 2020 was not opened until October 2020. On 5 October, IRCC announced it would accept 10,000 applications. It allowed three weeks for online submission of an ITS. To ensure a fair, transparent, and equal opportunity, it still randomly selected applications and invited sponsors to apply within 60 days (IRCC, 2020).

Despite efforts to address the backlog, which shrank the inventory and sped up processing to under two years in 2019 (IRCC, 2023), the annual quota is far from meeting demand. When announcing the 2020 program, Minister Marco Mendicino stated: “Family reunification is an important component of Canada’s immigration system. It plays a key role in attracting, retaining and integrating the best and the brightest from around the world” (IRCC, 2020), but the target was only 10,000 applications, whereas more than 180,000 ITS forms arrived (IRCC, 2023). Some unlucky sponsors who could not apply fast enough in 2014, 2015, and 2016, failed to be randomly selected in 2017 and 2018, were unable to submit the ITS within eight minutes in 2019, and still were not selected in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, having waited ten years – without success – to sponsor their PGPs. Although processing has greatly accelerated since 2011, the trade-off may be turning down more families.

According to IRCC’s Annual Report for 2022, the 81,423 family-class admissions in 2021 consisted of 69,685 spouses, partners, and children (including a handful of orphaned relatives) and 11,738 PGPs, or 14 per cent of the total – a great decrease (IRCC, 2023). My findings highlight a great discrepancy between the government’s claimed championing of family reunification and its results, especially since the PGP application was capped, reflecting an “underlying hypocrisy at the heart of neoliberalism, a gap between theoretical assumptions and their practical implementation” (Mavelli, 2017, p. 506). Policy focusing on the labour market has increasingly diminished PGP admissions, which are most vulnerable during economic

challenges, such as a pandemic. Sponsored PGPs become ready victims of, and scapegoats for, an inadequate welfare system wrought by neoliberal governance. Through regulations, ministerial instructions, and public policies, the state has sought to limit PGP immigration, indicating that it still regards sponsored PGPs, especially from the global South, as unwanted and inferior.

Conclusion

In the context of settler colonialism and colonial nation-building, for a century and a half, the Canadian state has used immigration acts, regulations, and programs to develop its population, control its composition, characteristics, and mobility, and meet its economic, political, and social goals. Family reunification, though still allegedly a pillar, has lost its leading role. The PGP program and its changes of 2014 reveal its strong economic drift, and its policies and practices remain racialized and racializing, rooted in white supremacy and Anglo-Saxon/francophone culture and values, though not as blatantly as before.

The literature on the PGP program and its changes is mainly theoretical. Little explores how it affects the life and well-being of sponsored PGPs, and none of it has studied its far-reaching effects through a governmentality lens. In the empirical chapters (4 – 6) below, I analyse sponsored Chinese PGPs' lived experience and further examine how neoliberal frictions shape and manifest themselves in the governance of these people and how the state has failed, and continues to fail, to promote and nurture their agency and autonomy, but rather has denied and impaired their agency, independence, self-reliance, and self-government, thus diminishing their quality of life and well-being.

PART II: PGPs' Lived Experience

Chapter 4

Neoliberal Immigration and Its Internalization: Marketizing Life and Privatizing Responsibility

A key goal of neoliberal governmentality is to forge and turn governed subjects into governing subjects with agency and autonomy to govern themselves, thus promoting the well-being of the whole population and maximizing human life with a minimum of state intervention. However, the PGP program treats only sponsors, not sponsored PGPs, as governing subjects and makes the latter dependent on the former for their basic needs. Sponsored PGPs are framed by the state and portrayed by elements of popular discourse as non-contributors and a drain on the public purse.

The Fraser Institute, a conservative public-policy think tank, blames the PGP program for bringing into Canada undesirable older immigrants from the global South – “unskilled, often nearly illiterate, and not likely to make a positive economic contribution” (Collacott, 2014, p. 7). It claims that sponsored PGPs, principally from China, India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, are seeking better seniors’ benefits, healthcare, and social services (p. 6). About the PGP program changes that began in 2014, then-Minister Jason Kenny stated that the state must consider its economic needs and fiscal capacity (Bragg & Wong, 2016): “If you think your parents may need to go on welfare in Canada, please don’t sponsor them” (Zhou, 2020). For Kenny, sponsored PGPs were not welcome – they were non-contributors, welfare hunters, and burdens on society. The re-opened PGP program in 2014 was more restrictive. Sponsors needed more income, and the undertaking/dependence was extended to 20 years, making PGPs wait an additional 10 years

for provincial social services and for OAS/GIS, which turns out to be a crucial factor in their lives in Canada. Each year's applications faced a quota.

I observe that sponsored Chinese PGPs immigrate to Canada not to burden offspring and society but to live independently, with family around them. "I don't want to be a burden on my children" is the most common sentiment among my PGP interviewees. Neoliberal governmentality promotes self-responsibility and -reliance, but the PGP program denies PGPs' agency and capacity and renders them an adjunct to adult children's lives.

In this empirical chapter, I explore, first, sponsored Chinese PGPs' reasons for immigration and, second, participants' perspectives on the PGP program and the 2014 changes, especially the longer undertaking/dependence. Third, I examine how embedded neoliberal frictions manifest themselves in the state's positioning of sponsored PGPs in its power relations and the implications thereof. My key question throughout is: How does the state's framing of sponsored PGPs reflect neoliberal frictions, and what does its ignorance of their contributions tell us about the workings of neoliberal governmentality in Canada?

Why PGPs Immigrate in Their Later Life

According to a 2023 report by IRCC, the top five source countries of PGP immigration to Canada between 2014 to 2019 were China (26 per cent), India (26 per cent), the Philippines (7 per cent), Iran (4 per cent), and Pakistan (3 per cent) (IRCC, 2023). Chinese immigrant families, hailing from an Asian culture that cherishes family and where generations take care of each other, warmly embrace the PGP program. One parent participant (no. 20) told me with strong emotion:

This immigration program is precious to us Chinese! It is important to our families, because our tradition is 'raising children to prepare for old age [*Yang Er Fang Lao*].' We

value family affection, and different generations enjoy spending time with each other.

Family being together helps pass on our culture! We are very grateful for this

immigration program in Canada.

Cultural norms strongly influence Chinese PGPs' decisions to immigrate. Their culture advocates "respecting the old and loving the young." Many parents are willing to sacrifice everything for a better future for their offspring, and when they themselves are aging, they expect the children to support them until the end, because of filial piety tradition. Although my and other scholars' studies reveal that filial-piety norms have been challenged by new generations, especially those in the West (Gao et al., 2021; Zhou 2013a and b; 2020), that ideal is still regarded highly in Chinese culture and still shapes family structures and elder care.

While neoliberal policy-makers may calculate benefits and costs, aiming to save money on social welfare, sponsored parents in my study treasure above all the "family together" – living a life with offspring around. We can see this in their reasons for immigration. Several stated that they would not have immigrated if their offspring were not in Canada. One parent participant (no. 21) was emphatic, "If my son did not come to Canada, but had immigrated to another country, such as Australia or Singapore, we would have followed him there. Where our son is, there is our home!" Gao and colleagues (2021) observe that the sense of home for sponsored Chinese PGPs is closely tied to where their offspring live, and they view the relationship as more crucial than any other. Many older Chinese parents esteem generational reciprocity (Zhou, 2020) and delight in receiving care from adult children while enjoying their grandchildren (Tsang et al., 2004).

Though admitting their age and need for more support, most sponsored Chinese PGPs do not want to be a burden and do not think they are. Parent participant no. 21 explained that he and

his wife help the children take care of their grandchildren, so the children can work without distraction; while helping offspring, they also reduce social problems in Canada:

My little grandson is six, and it was I who took him and picked him up on his first day of kindergarten. When parents come to Canada, they all try their best to help their children, especially those grandmothers [sponsored female PGPs] contribute the most. Whether they contribute directly or indirectly, they are actually supporting society, reducing the burden [by providing childcare], and stabilizing society. Sponsored parents do not immigrate to consume Canadian welfare.

This participant's comments hint at neoliberal friction and unfairness. First, neoliberal governmentality values labour only according to its market value, ignoring sponsored PGPs' unpaid childcare and household work and their emotional and social support to adult offspring's families. Second, by calculating the amount of welfare they can receive, the Fraser Institute and many policy-makers frame them as a drain on public welfare (Collacott, 2013), which shows neoliberal economic cost-benefit analysis reaching into the welfare system. By "counting for and calculating" costs but "not counting for and not-calculating" the contributions, the state not only turns sponsored PGPs from a "subject of rights" into a "subject of interests," but also marketizes and quantifies the value of human life (Gudmand-Hoyer & Lopdrup, 2009; Kenny, 2015).

Among the female sponsored Chinese PGPs I interviewed, over half (10 out of 18) immigrated mainly to assist with childcare. For example, parent participant no. 24 told me, "My daughter applied for immigration for us because she was pregnant and preparing for her child, so needed our help." For the daughter, the parents' immigrant status ensures continuous, long-term childcare. Some participants had already visited Canada to help with childcare long before they immigrated. For example, parent participant no. 1 visited first in 2004 and immigrated in 2014.

She had taken care of her grandson in China for a couple of years while her son studied in Canada and took the young boy back to Canada when her son graduated. Her son later had another boy, and she continued helping him with childcare through a visitor visa and settled permanently after her son sponsored her. Her daughter, who has a son, also immigrated to Canada later, and the grandmother spent most of her time in the country looking after her three grandchildren.

Similarly, parent participant (no. 3) arrived in 2000 when her first grandson was born, and she lamented that she spent most of her time taking turns caring for her six grandchildren, leaving little time for herself. Two male parent participants also mentioned that their spouses visited Canada to assist their daughters with childcare before their immigration.

According to other studies, some immigrant families find relying on grandparents the only workable option. Childcare is typically the second-highest cost (after housing) for Canadian families, so many immigrant women leave their jobs and stay at home to look after their children, and some may never return to the labour market (Bragg & Wong, 2016, p. 53; Li, Guruge, & Lee, 2023). For some families, the need for two incomes and unaffordable childcare forced them to send their children back to China to be raised by extended family (Zhou, 2013a, p. 283). Without emotional and practical support from parents, many immigrant women with children find it very difficult to balance professional, social, and domestic lives (Bragg & Wong, 2016; Li, Guruge, & Lee, 2023). These findings make it apparent that many sponsored PGPs support their adult children's families greatly; in particular, sponsored mothers play a crucial and instrumental role in the settlement of immigrants with young children.

Neoliberal governance devalues unpaid childcare, discounts the labour of sponsored PGPs, and frames them as an economic cost or “human liabilities” (the opposite of human

capital). Yet it also forces them to depend on offspring for their own care and support. Through a simple, unfair cost-benefit calculation, the state not only ignores invaluable intergenerational support but also uses immigration programs to legitimate its cutback of social resources and download social caregiving onto individual families, particularly immigrant women and their older mothers. This reflects multiple inequalities and exploitations based on gender, age, and geography of care (Aggarwal & Das Gupta, 2013; Zhou, 2013). It is apparent that government's focus on "interest" and cost-benefit analysis devalues, even ignores other values such as family bonds and care, emotional support, tradition, and cultural values, thereby engendering violation of social rights, social inequalities and unjust policy.

Extending other scholars' findings, my research reveals that some sponsored parents sustain their offspring financially. Many have helped pay for their education abroad, and some encouraged them to immigrate. Several helped their young people purchase a home. Most hold a college or university degree and typically are better off than typical senior citizens in China. A great number seem open-minded, even visionary. Sponsored Chinese PGPs' socioeconomic status has improved in recent decades, which has spurred their agency, self-reliance, and independence, as if to confound the state's stereotypical portrayal, and that of the Fraser Institute! Accordingly, I propose that policy-makers pay attention to their changing demographics and human capital and stop viewing them as silly or feeble dependants who have no way to conduct the government of the self independently but must rely on sponsoring offspring.

Some parent participants, especially those who have only one child or have all the offspring living in Canada or another foreign country, chose Canada because they were aging and thought it easier for the children to take care of them there. For example, parent participant

no. 12 and her husband (no. 13) initially did not plan to immigrate but changed their minds after she broke her ankle and had surgery several years ago. At that time, they both turned 80, and one of the children (one daughter is in Canada and one in the United States) had to leave work and return to China urgently to take care of her.

For some parent participants with only one child, immigration is a “have-to” decision.

Parent participant no. 2 told me:

We immigrated because we have only one child; we needed to come to him. He worried about us when we were in China. It is inconvenient for him to go back, and flights are expensive. If something went wrong on our side, our son would be unable to get back in time.

China implemented its one-child policy in 1979, whereby a couple living in an urban area could have only one child, and a second (or more) would lead to fines. This policy ended in 2015, but its ramifications have been far-reaching. As the country has not established a mature social-care system, aging parents often depend on offspring for care, and most have only one child. For these parents, Canada can be a “Catch-22,” as they may be better off and more comfortable aging in China but end up doing so alone. A majority of recent Chinese immigrants to Canada were only children and were born after 1980. They are economic immigrants, entering either under the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) as international students in Canada or under Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) as skilled young professionals in China.

As well, many older people in China, especially in rural areas, still view living alone as miserable and shameful. In cities, many people regard an “empty-nest family” as a social problem and pitiful. So older Chinese parents with two or more offspring, all living overseas, usually also immigrate to live with one of them.

Besides enjoying three generations together or because they needed mutual, intergenerational support, several parent participants mentioned other reasons for immigrating. They cited variously Canada's more relaxed political environment, greater freedom of speech and activities, clean air, clean water, safe food, beautiful natural landscapes, a friendly cultural environment, simple interpersonal relationships, more channels to obtain information, and a richer spiritual life.

Although several interviewees praised universal healthcare and appreciated the attitude and services of doctors and nurses, no one chose Canada to immigrate and seek better healthcare and social services. While the country is more developed and wealthier than China, sponsored parents in my study sought primarily family reciprocity and caring for the practical needs of both sides, and especially so they could grandparent. These findings debunk the notion of them as people who seek or abuse welfare.

Immigration is life-changing. Doing so in pursuit of better welfare seems unlikely to be a convincing claim, as sponsored PGPs will face challenging acculturation, made more difficult by their age, which can affect their health, socioeconomic status, and quality of life. Other studies (e.g., Da & Garcia, 2015; Gao et al., 2021; Zhou, 2013a; 2020) have found the same. For example, in their look at sponsored Chinese PGPs in Australia, Gao and colleagues (2021) state that the "majority of participants (77%) mentioned the important role that taking care of adult children's families played in making their immigration decision" (p. 5). Similarly, my findings show that many sponsored parents have given up comfortable retirement in China to assist offspring in Canada (Gao et al., 2021). They are not seeking welfare but rather a chance to assist children's settlement in the host country.

Some of these families had undertaken a highly agency-based, comprehensive consideration of both sides' situations and the socio-political environment of the two countries. Unlike the situation for young and middle-aged independent economic immigrants, later-life immigration is usually a family arrangement, often involving multiple factors and forces, such as individual situation (e.g., retirement, illness or frailty, loss of spouse), family situation (e.g., having only one child or an "empty nest"), cultural values (e.g., filial piety, intergenerational care), as well as public policies (e.g., pension and healthcare systems, support for aging) and power relations (e.g., socioeconomic status, gender, class, networking, geography). Many Chinese PGPs facing this choice decide they can age better in China, and some have, after immigrating, voluntarily returned to China and given up their PR status (e.g., parent participant no.14's husband and no. 8's wife), which further shows sponsored PGPs able to plan for later life and aging. These findings make clear not only that such people do not seek Canadian welfare and are also not illiterate dependants. Ignoring their agency and their pursuit of independence and dignity can result in inefficient and unjust immigration programs and undermine their government of self, as well as engender frictions and social problems (see chapters 5 and 6 below).

"We Don't Want to Be a Burden": Efforts to Help and Contribute

Most offspring participants in my study highlighted the childcare support they received from sponsored parents, especially from their mothers, and some strongly challenged the view of sponsored PGPs as non-contributors. Offspring participant no. 4 commented that her mother, as well as looking after her child and her brother's children and cooking meals for her family, has given her tremendous emotional support. With her husband still employed in China, she could not have worked without her -- "my mental pillar." She did not consider her mother a burden:

“She is very active and optimistic; she has her own friends, her own life, and her own things to do. Also, people of her generation do not spend money indiscriminately. She spends mainly on food for our family, and she also picks clothes that are not expensive.”

Similarly, offspring participant no. 12, the daughter-in-law of sponsored parents, told me that her parents-in-law had already visited from China to help them prior to immigration and had waited eight years before they received their PR status. The parents assist her with childcare and have run a small catering business at home to help support the family. Her mother-in-law has used all her strength to help them and immigrated only to support the family. This participant criticized the “non-contributor” claim: “For the government, these sponsored older parents are only a burden; they do not create value for the government, and even if they contribute, it can be ignored because, for the government, the value they create is insignificant compared to the added burden.”

This comment puts in focus the false but hegemonic knowledge produced by some politicians and elements of popular discourse that problematizes the age and health of sponsored PGPs, constitutes them as non-productive and non-economic, and ignores the value they create and their contribution to immigrant families and society. Gudmand-Hoyer and Lopdrup (2009) emphasize that neoliberal biopolitics views the individual as an entrepreneur of self and an economic agent and sees his/her body and health as a form of human capital. However, the PGP program does not treat sponsored PGPs as economic agents who can contribute and doesn’t recognize their capacity to govern themselves. I see this friction as expressing the biopolitical racism in neoliberal governance and reflecting what Mavelli (2017) calls an “underlying hypocrisy at the heart of neoliberalism, a gap between theoretical assumptions and their practical implementation” (p. 506).

Besides all their unpaid contributions to family, many sponsored Chinese PGPs actively maintain good health to reduce possible burdens on offspring and society. Parent participant no. 15 stated:

We engage in seniors' club activities to enrich our lives, stabilize our emotions, and make our existence fulfilling, so the children can have peace of mind and concentrate on their jobs. This is also our thanks to Canada. We don't make trouble, we remain healthy, and we stay away from healthcare and medical resources – this is also a kind of contribution! I observe that they and many counterparts do not want to be a burden and use all kinds of ways and resources to take care of themselves and maintain maximal self-reliance (more discussion in chapter 6).

Many sponsored PGPs have volunteered in their local Chinese community. For example, parent participant no. 26 began to teach dance and take on other work to help the needy in her community shortly after she arrived in 2000. She told me that she had just received a Volunteer Award from the city. Such efforts and these PGP's domestic contributions not only challenge the myth of their being a burden but also the racist, hegemonic knowledge that grounds the PGP program.

The PGP program and neoliberal governmentality downplay the labour and contributions of sponsored PGPs. Chinese culture deems childcare a private family responsibility, and in many families, grandparents help take care of grandchildren. Scholars observe that although full-time care work, especially childcare, has become increasingly recognized as a fundamental part of the economy, care work is still most often characterized as a family responsibility (Hanley, Larios & Koo, 2017, p. 124). In the wealthy global North, the limited availability of collective provision for care results in a widespread deficit in care and engenders the rise of a global care market

(Man & Cohen, 2015; Thompson & Walton-Roberts, 2020). These wealthy countries have chosen to avoid investing in their public-care infrastructure, instead maintaining a temporary, exploitable immigrant workforce to address this need (Hanley, Larios & Koo, 2017, p. 131). In Canada, the government uses an immigration program to attract foreign caregivers in response to this deficit, but most newcomers, especially those from the global South, cannot afford a foreign-worker nanny, so unpaid childcare by grandparents is integrated discreetly into the global care chain as a family obligation (Hanley, Larios, & Koo, 2017; Li, Guruge, & Lee, 2023; Zhou, 2013a). This approach presents sponsored PGPs' efforts as reflecting their family's personal need or dependence, rather than as reproductive work that supports and reproduces the workforce and maintains social and family structures. In that way, it devalues their social contributions, excluding their labour from market calculations and rendering their contributions invisible in public-policy discourses.

Göttler (2023) argues that migrant culture is typically described as traditional and family-oriented and that the portrayal of PGPs and their values produces a timeless link to traditional rural life. This stereotypical image particularly affects expectations of care and the role of the family. She points out that the emphasis on PGPs' presumed old-fashioned values casts intergenerational care and mutual social support as traditional family responsibilities and enhances women's stereotypical gendered roles as caregivers and providers of household labour. Göttler observes that discourses on PGPs construct family-based care and support as the norm and an in-house responsibility for immigrant families. She warns that the presumption that such care is possible may suggest that older ethnic women do not require public support, which may impede the development of appropriate care services for PGPs. I agree with her and argue that

the PGP program's downloading of responsibility for care onto families reflects this assumption and the stereotypical description of sponsored PGPs, especially those from the global South.

Underlying "family responsibility," the exploitation of PGPs deserves further discussion. Martin and Tazzioli (2023) expand the "carceral economies" of migration control beyond detention and confinement to include the invisible and unpaid reproductive labour and its value extraction taking place in "non-prison places" (p. 3). They point out that value extraction goes beyond economic profit for private actors to encompass a wide array of actors, especially as determined by racialized differentiation and political ideology. They propose that such unpaid work can be a "hyper-exploitative" job with no guarantees for the future (pp. 10-11). I suggest that sponsored PGPs, especially women, are doing this kind of labour – part of the carceral economy of migration control – even though they are not behind bars. Most of them visit and/or immigrate to Canada to help offspring with childcare, and most live with children's family, at least while grandparenting. They spend most of their time performing childcare and other domestic work and may be confined to that residence and environs by language, transportation, and cultural barriers. Their being framed as undesirable, unwanted, and non-productive and defined as dependants increasingly subjects them to immigration control and allows the state to extract their value. In other words, they are allowed to immigrate only if as a source of value extraction in a non-prison place – children's home – thereby trading off the burden they may add to the state.

According to Martin and Tazzioli (2023), this mode of carceral economy may generate not monetary profit but needs – which, in the case of immigrant families, I suggest, the PGP program just uses. By leveraging their needs for intergenerational care and aligning them with its own goal (i.e., to manage the public-care deficit), the state frames two-way intergenerational care

as a private by-product of family reunification rather than as independent reproductive work. In this way, sponsored PGPs' grandparenting and other contributions, as well as their needs for care from offspring, become an embedded, de facto condition for family reunification. Their rights have become conditional: to be sponsored and obtain PR status, they must not become a burden on society; offspring must support them, and they must promise not to seek social services. By forging a kind of carceral economy through forced dependence and value extraction, the state privatizes responsibility and meets its own needs.

Martin and Tazzioli (2023) also highlight a problem: "Efforts to valorise refugee life operate in and through the very conditions that keep asylum-seekers and refugees destitute" (p. 8). Resonating with this aperçu, I observe the same friction in the governance of sponsored PGPs. Casting them as dependants, which the state has claimed safeguards their lives, is the very condition (undertaking/dependence) that undermines their agency, autonomy, and independence, engendering challenging social problems in the home and beyond. I discuss these further in chapters 5 and 6 below.

Moreover, Mezzadri (2021) pushes for moving beyond a "wage-centric understanding of exploitation" (p. 1187) and detects exploitation in a variety of forms beyond wage labour. I conceive of sponsored PGPs' childcare and domestic labour as an example of such non-wage labour that is not driven by profit or pure capitalism but rather engages with social capital and values. I concur with those scholars that social reproduction produces value and that a "value theory of inclusion" presumes that all value generation and unpaid labour form part of global capitalism (Martin & Tazzioli, 2023; Mezzadri, 2021). I propose that sponsored PGPs' unpaid efforts in the home generate value and constitute a "frontier of capital" not always driven just by capitalist or profit logic (Martin & Tazzioli, 2023). Neoliberal governance appreciates their

labour time at zero cost, which disguises the inherent exploitation by excluding them from the wage system (Mezzadri, 2021). It seems a shame that their invaluable support of family is not recognized as a major contribution and that they do not enjoy workers' rights and benefits. Cast as non-contributors, they are treated as undeserving of the state's protection. Despite being landed immigrants, they are not granted equal rights but sorted out and framed as outsiders inside.

In conclusion, my research makes it clear that sponsored Chinese PGPs' decision to immigrate is not a quest for better welfare, but instead involves individual and structural elements that flow from the interplay between PGP immigration policy and other cultural, familial, social, economic, and political factors in both China and Canada. Presenting them as non-contributors encourages policy-makers to ignore their substantial contributions and indicates the structural inequality and injustice of neoliberal governance. Canada's immigration regime still has race, gender, and class dimensions and involves other negative dynamics such as ageism, ableism, worthiness, and otherness within the state's power relations.

While neoliberal governmentality constitutes the governed as governing subjects and promotes self-responsibility and -reliance for them through self-governance, the PGP program, in contrast, portrays sponsored PGPs as dependent, implicitly denying their economic agency and contributions and damaging their independence and self-reliance by denying them social services and OAS/GIS for decades. The state's logic underlying the program design is that these sponsored PGPs, most of them from the global South, are imprudent, irresponsible others who are unable to contribute and do not deserve state protection and inclusion in the social body. Accordingly, I concur with scholars that racism plays a pivotal role in shaping the perception of 'others' within the context of citizenship, where "the lives and rights of negatively racialized

‘others’ are often deemed less valuable than those of the nation’s members” (Sharma, 2015, p. 99) and immigration policy and practices construct and reproduce racism (Turnbull, 2017). In this sense, the PGP program’s forced dependence and government of the self are indeed racialized and racializing practices of neoliberal governance.

Internalizing Neoliberal Immigration: Participants’ Views on the PGP Program and Its Changes

I have written about and commented on the PGP program, but what do participants in this project – sponsored PGPs and offspring – think? In this section, I discuss findings from interviews with them that directly addressed the program and its policy changes in 2014. I analyse their perspectives and consider how the state uses the program to regulate the neoliberal government of the self at a distance.

Among my 26 parent participants, 18 (69 per cent) were sponsored by their offspring in or before 2011, with a 10-year undertaking/dependence, and eight (31 per cent) later, with 20 years. Only one parent participant (no. 15) knew about the clause, because her son and daughter-in-law sponsored her and her husband under the old policy, but sponsored her daughter-in-law’s parents under the new dispensation. All other parent participants had known little about the program’s details, especially the undertaking/dependence. For example, parent participant no. 12 who is a retired senior researcher initially told me that the period change would not much affect her, but when she learned that it delays the start of OAS/GIS, she said that sponsored PGPs need it:

If there is a Canadian pension [OAS/GIS], we can use it to rent a home or buy a small one so we can live on our own, because housing is the family’s largest expense. My

daughter's house is not big enough. When we came, our little grandson had to move to the basement. However, we can't afford to live on our own – our pension from China is not enough for the rent.

This quotation suggests that at least some sponsored Chinese PGPs cannot afford independent housing without state support. Having to depend on offspring can undermine their peace of mind.

When discussing the program and its changes with participants, I have noted obvious differences between sponsored parents and offspring on two central issues -- the extended, 20-year undertaking/dependence and the responsibility of sponsors. All the sponsored parents believe 20 years too long, but most offspring accept it. None of the parents wants to burden offspring, and all think OAS/GIS essential, but a majority of sponsors affirmed that they themselves should step up, even if not everyone does so, which my findings reveal (see chapter 5, below) and other studies reported (such as Boucher, 2014). In this section, I examine what the frictions and discrepancies in perspectives reveal about neoliberal governmentality.

Perspectives on Policy Changes

Income Requirements. All participants – parents and offspring – stated that they could accept the income requirements: if the children do not have a stable income, the parents will burden both them and society.

Imposed Quota. Most of the parent participants (18 of 26) applied for immigration before 2011 under the old policy, when there was no quota on applications. All of those who applied later, under the quota system since 2014, felt that they were very lucky. One parent participant (no. 18) commented:

The quota's selection method is unreasonable. People who applied earlier were not chosen, but some who applied later were. They should all wait in line. Random drawing

is unfair. Some of my friends waited many years with no luck. Finally, they gave up and returned to China, as they were getting too old to wait.

Several other participants also cited friends who were still waiting. Some indicated that they could understand the government's decision to impose a quota; for example, offspring participant no. 3 believed that it did so to avoid imposing on taxpayers and was responding to labour-market needs and the economic situation.

Extended Undertaking/Dependence. Most participants felt that the changes suggested a cash-strapped government. Several believed that the government does not want to grant the benefits to people it sees as non-contributors and a burden, thus unworthy of welfare. Several saw it as a decision balancing political, economic, social, and cultural factor.

Among offspring participants, four (33.3 per cent) considered 20 years too long, and 10 years more reasonable. In stark contrast, *all* the parent participants called 10 years understandable, but 20 years too long. For example, after learning about it, one parent participant (no. 4) laughed: "I am already in my late 70s and will turn 80 soon. I don't know if I will live till then, so it has nothing to do with us at all whether there is a benefit [OAS/GIS] or not!"

Similarly, most said that the bulk of sponsored PGPs immigrated after retirement and would be in their 80s or dead when they qualified, so it had no significance for them. Several thought that it meant that the government did not want them to receive OAS/GIS at all. No. 21 commented: "20 years is too harsh ... The government might simply say that those who applied after the year 2014 have no pensions!" They might be more accepting if the government simply told them: no OAS/GIS for you!

Parent participant no. 6, who immigrated after 2014, insisted: “Twenty years is too long! It’s like talking in vain. Ninety per cent of older people can’t wait till then. This will only increase the burden on children.” Taking himself as an example, he reported that his retirement salary (pension) in China is equivalent to less than \$500 per month, which cannot sustain him, and he can only depend on offspring. Benefits would reduce his mental stress; he might use this money to improve and enrich his own life, reduce the pressure on his children, and help his granddaughters join more extracurricular activities. Clearly, for these people, OAS/GIS would not just help them, but also reduce their worries about burdening their children, and let them feel that they were contributing to the family.

Parent participant no. 9 believed that the extended wait would affect older PGPs much more:

When you are in your 60s, you can still find some ways to work or support yourself, but after 70, you need a minimum guarantee from the government. China’s money and pensions cannot support life. It may be possible at the beginning, but it will become harder after a long period. I know many cannot survive by themselves. Also, it needs to look at the children’s situation. Although most of those who can immigrate to Canada are elites, their situations differ. If the children cannot settle down well, there will be many problems.

This sponsored father is well off. He purchased his own house in Canada, supported his daughter’s home purchase, and lent her money to invest. I believe his comment reflects the reality for most sponsored PGPs. So government support can be crucial for their quality of life and well-being, especially for those less affluent. If offspring are not financially sound or cannot

fulfil their sponsoring duties, social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, and EAN may occur (see chapters 5 and 6 below).

A couple of offspring participants were also concerned about or challenged the policy changes. Offspring participant no. 3, thought an undertaking necessary and 10 years acceptable, since it was unfair to Canadians if sponsored PGPs received OAS/GIS right away, but she considered 20 years too long:

They [her parents] do not increase the financial burden on us, even financially supporting us, but living is an issue. The elderly and children have different eating and living habits, and [name of her son] is also growing up and needs more space, so it is best to live separately but close, for example, [parents] living in a nearby rented apartment or purchasing a small townhouse.

In this family, the sponsored father is a retired professor and the mother a retired researcher from a large scientific research institute. Although both have a relatively large pension from China, they still cannot afford a house or a rented apartment because of the prohibitive prices in the city. According to the *Toronto Star* (Mach 26, 2024), the cost of rent and groceries rose nearly 40 per cent in many cities in Canada in just three years (Olive, 2024). An editorial in the *Journal of Public Health* by Premila Webster and Keith Neal (2022) opines that the world is experiencing a “cost of living crisis,” based on a definition from a British newspaper: “a situation in which the cost of everyday essentials like groceries and bills are [sic] rising faster than average household incomes” (p. 475). A paper for the United Nations Development Programme, which analysed data from 159 countries, projects that the current cost-of-living crisis has engendered extreme poverty, hunger, and inequalities, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Webster & Neal, 2022, p.

475). During crises, it is always the vulnerable and marginalized populations that are most affected.

Offspring participant no. 3 thought that OAS/GIS would let her parents rent an apartment close to her place. She thought that the government had changed the policy because tax revenues were insufficient and it could not afford OAS/GIS, but she emphasized: “The government should think of other ways to solve the problem and should not transfer the burden onto us sponsors. Even if we are middle class and not under great financial pressure, not giving benefits to the parents who are sponsored is a different thing.”

Some scholars argue that neoliberal governmentality has a “programmatic” feature whereby the state employs all kinds of programs to address perceived problems and attain its social, political, and economic goals (Gudmand-Hoyer & Lopdrup, 2009; Miller & Rose, 2008). This participant challenges the state’s use of the PGP program to deal with social insufficiency and its downloading of its responsibilities onto immigrants and families. It appears to me that the program has become a convenient and effective means for the government to legitimate its cutbacks and foist its responsibilities onto individuals. Cummins (2018) observes that neoliberal welfare has shifted from the war on poverty to a war on the poor and postulates that neoliberal policies, followed by austerity, have created divided and unequal societies.

Offspring participant no. 12 concurred: 10 years for the undertaking/dependence was acceptable, but 20 unreasonable. She and her husband sponsored his parents before 2014, and the parents still have two years to wait until they receive OAS/GIS: “We cannot afford to see a dentist, as the free programs are all very basic, but the parents are getting older, and their teeth need to be fixed. We really can’t afford it. OAS/GIS can help a lot.” The program changes, she

complained, complicate family reunification, increase family expenses, heighten the burden on children, and may lead many families to give up on sponsorship and immigration.

This offspring participant had lost her job, had been out of work for some time, and had returned to college to change her career, and her husband had done the same to qualify for a different profession, so he could find a stable job. Even after 15 years in Canada, they both still face challenges (e.g., job loss). However, the sponsor's undertaking clause is unconditional, so they will not receive government support and will have to manage the risks by themselves.

My interviews expose the hard reality that if sponsors are in financial straits, their PGPs may not receive proper support. I argue that the PGP program has not promoted self-reliance but rather has added hardship and further disadvantage to racialized immigrants and their families, especially those who are financially squeezed.

Another offspring participant (no. 1) also challenged the longer dependence, believing it discriminatory:

The 10-year undertaking period is the maximum acceptable limit, and the 20-year is unreasonable and discriminatory for those of us who applied under the new policy. Same with those who applied under the old dispensation: we too work diligently and pay taxes on time. How come it was changed from 10 years to 20? It's unfair! Most parents come after retirement; they can wait for 10 years, but not 20. What is the meaning of the 20 years? I suspect the government is actually denying the benefits totally.

This participant in effect pointed out another issue in neoliberal governance: sub-categorization inside the bios. For Aas (2011), biopolitics aims at "internal differentiation inside the bios" – social control on the state's territory (p. 340). In my study, most sponsors are naturalized Canadians, but they are treated differently from other citizens. They and their parents are not

only members of visible minorities but are further categorized as falling under either the older policy (up to 2014) or the new one, with different requirements and treatment. This further division among racialized groups may reduce the solidarity of immigrants as political subjects to voice and pursue their rights, equality, and social and immigration justice.

While *all* the sponsored parents thought the 20-year undertaking unreasonable, and *several* offspring participants challenged the changes, *most* of the latter could understand and accept it by emphasizing the sponsors' responsibility. For example, offspring participant no. 2 commented: "Sponsoring the parents for immigration is a personal decision. Now that you have made the decision, you should take responsibility. Now that the sponsored parents are here, it's *your* duty to support them."

These perspectives indicate that the state has, through its immigration program, privatized responsibility and rationalized its displacement onto immigrants and families in the name of freedom of choice of the governed: sponsoring and being sponsored for immigration are not regulated public (and political, economic, and social) matters, but a purely personal decision, and individuals should take responsibility for their choice. This reflects what Rose already observed in 1996: the neoliberal state does not govern through expansive state apparatuses, but regulates the choices of individual citizens (Miller & Rose 2008, p.41). The discrepancy between various participants' perspectives shows us that neoliberal governance can engender subtle immigration and social injustice.

Echoing no. 2 offspring participant, nos. 8 and 9 offspring participants, who are a couple (they both studied in Canada and immigrated as international students), both considered 20 years acceptable. According to the husband, they never thought about OAS/GIS while sponsoring their parents and would never take advantage of the country; they would manage their parents' affairs

by themselves. He attributed the policy changes to the “budget” of the government, whereas his wife cited the aging of society, which burdens it:

Seniors are living longer, and the government has a heavy burden. It wants to spend on things that are more meaningful to the country, such as highway construction and improving traffic, as well as employment and training of young people. The money is not used on older people, but on sustainable development.

It seems that most sponsors assume that parents are a burden to the country and refuse to challenge hegemonic knowledge. Sponsored PGPs are not only framed by the state as “others,” but also not treated as full members of Canadian society by many offspring sponsors who buy into the “good immigrant” or “active citizen” narratives based on labour-market contribution to Canada. Also, as offspring participant no. 9 points out, the state does not see older immigrants as objects for “meaningful” and “sustainable” investment.

Gerken (2013) tells us that “government services represent an investment in a promising individual – one who is likely to develop into a productive citizen” who consumes certain services provided by government and is expected to pay for them and assume responsibility for their choices (p. 12). So the state’s rationale for disentitling PGPs from OAS/GIS is that they are non-productive and do not deserve the investment; if it invests in them, they have no way to pay it back. I agree with Gerken’s insights and argue further that treating social services as an investment and the governed as consumers is reflective of the marketizing and quantifying of human life and inevitably exacerbates social inequality and results in new forms of social problems and injustice.

However, most offspring participants concur with the practice. Offspring participant no. 4 said she could understand the increased application requirements, including the longer

undertaking and the quota. For her, the increase in sponsorships is overwhelming the government, so it requires applicants to have a more stable job and higher income. In her opinion, the government hopes that applicants consider their decisions carefully and take responsibility, because sponsorship is a serious decision. She believed that the undertaking is a good constraint on sponsors: “You shouldn’t just sponsor your parents, and then you don’t care about them anymore. For example, the daughter of my mother’s friend doesn’t help her mother with anything. It is my mother who helps [the friend] with everything, such as finding a school to learn English and taking buses.”

Offspring participant no. 7 offered a similar argument. For her, the policy was changed to make applicants more cautious, reminding them that sponsoring means taking responsibility: “I believe that 99 per cent of people want to occupy a spot in the quota, but have you made up your mind? Are you willing to make such a sacrifice and take on this responsibility?” She believed that the government made or changed policies based on data; because sponsoring demand is high and more people can meet the conditions, requirements have to be raised. She elaborated:

Only if you perform well can you bring your parents and enjoy a good life. If you cannot settle well yourself, your parents will suffer if you bring them over. Immigrants do not come to Canada to ‘gnaw’ at the government, but to be pioneers, forcing themselves to be independent and able to stand firm, and only then should they consider sponsoring their parents.

These participants highlighted individual responsibility and ignored the social duties of the state, which suggests strongly that the PGP program has internalized neoliberal values of self-sufficiency, -reliance, and -responsibility and justified its reduction of state welfare and the shift from state to individual responsibility. The program has promoted and enforced the idea of self-

government by “prudent” citizens and ensured that it was directed towards the goals the state has set up.

I observe that the PGPs’ main concern is not welfare, but rather not burdening their children. Many emphasized that they want to be self-sufficient and independent. They reported many problems in intergenerational relations and living together (see chapter 5 below), and some spoke about financial challenges. OAS/GIS, when available, is indeed a great support for them – for some of them, the only way they can live on their own.

Although no sponsored parents immigrated to seek OAS/GIS and had even known it existed, all of those receiving it reported that it boosted their quality of life, increased their independence, eased their worries, and gave them dignity. They indicated that waiting 20 years to receive the benefits does not make sense to their lives. However, most offspring participants believed that to sponsor and to immigrate are personal or family decisions, and the sponsor should take care of the sponsored parents rather than relying on the government, so they could accept the extension.

I propose that PGPs may feel differently about OAS/GIS than their offspring because entitlement more directly affects their daily lives, independence, and well-being and they are anxious not to impose on the offspring. Framed as dependent by the PGP program, they feel greater anxiety as receivers than offspring do as providers. Additionally, although sponsors may experience many challenges after the parents arrive, they may lose face if they complain about the longer undertaking, which may indicate their lack of ability to take care of their parents or their not performing adequately.

The two groups’ perspectives may seem at odds with each other, but I find them like two sides of a coin – the same idea from different viewpoints: both reflect self-responsibility, -

sufficiency, and -government. As independent souls, the parents seek self-sufficiency and independence so as not to trouble others – including the children – and not to burden the state, as required by the PGP program, which makes the offspring responsible for them. Thus, as both governed subjects and governing subjects, sponsored PGPs must act responsibly to become self-reliant and independent – which they could if treated like other seniors – yet they are constructed as dependants of the offspring through the undertaking/dependence, which disqualifies them from state protection. The state’s contradictory demand and conduct reflect what Mavelli (2017) observed: that neoliberal governance inevitably results in tension within its governmentality, or neoliberal friction. I echo him and argue that the embedded neoliberal friction exposes “the underlying hypocrisy at the heart of neoliberalism” (Mavelli, 217, p. 506): whereas theoretically, government of the self aims to facilitate self-reliance and foster life, its real purpose is to end the state’s duty, disadvantaging racialized and vulnerable groups. My findings reveal that the PGP program enables less explicit immigration injustice and social injustice by enhancing and internalizing neoliberal values in the name of freedom of choice and family reunification.

Moreover, I propose, the state uses the PGP program to depoliticize its collective obligation by turning political rights into civil responsibility. Sponsors and PGPs must sign an Application to Sponsor, Sponsorship Agreement and Undertaking – the IMM1344 form. This document acts just like a contract in which the sponsor (and their spouse as co-signer, if applicable) promises to financially support the PGP, who must promise not to burden the welfare system. In return, IRCC, representing the state, grants sponsorship to the offspring and PR status to the PGP. This civil contract pushes the political sphere out of the state’s domain into civil society’s conduct. This strategy coincides with Dean’s (2002) three-folding (p. 45): the PGP program “unfolds” the formal public domain (i.e., welfare or social assistance) to non-political

agencies – individual sponsors; “enfolds” the processes of civil society (i.e., contracting of sponsorship and undertaking) into the state domain; and “refolds” values of civil society (i.e., keeping promises or facing sanctions) into the political sphere, which is dominated by the state (Ilcan, O’Connor, & Oliver, 2003). By the three-folding, the state not only uses the civil mechanism to realize its sociopolitical goals but also mitigates or even hides the political nature of its coercive power, such as denying sponsorship rights and welfare entitlement by turning sociopolitical rights into “civil conduct.”

Importance of OAS/GIS

The majority of my parent interviewees emphasized the significance of OAS/GIS to sponsored PGPs. One parent participant (no. 17) elaborated:

These benefits are super-important to us. They can be used for food, clothing, and housing. You can buy whatever you want without asking your children for money. For example, my teeth are not good. I have seen the dentist three times, and they [teeth] still don’t feel good. I don’t want to have any more treatments – they’re too expensive – but my child insisted. If I had the money, I could pay for myself. It is always the child spending money to treat my teeth, which causes me a lot of worry.

Several other parents mentioned they went to China for cheaper dental care.

Other parent interviewees also highlighted OAS/GIS’s role in their lives. For example, parent participant no. 15 and her husband, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, will start receiving it soon and have applied for a nursing home for him. Parent participant no. 2 said that she did not expect much, but receiving even something – say, \$10 a day, for groceries – would help a lot. Parent participant no. 16, the youngest parent in my study, told me that she would use the funds to help pay off the mortgage of the house that she and her husband bought recently.

Several parent participants would give the proceeds to the children, who have been supporting them.

Quite a few parent participants commented that OAS/GIS can improve relations between generations and support appropriate housing. For example, parent participant no. 7, who was living in a seniors' home, told me that he could afford it because of his pensions from China and Canada. Parent participant no. 18 observed that many sponsored parents have conflicts with offspring and want their own place after they qualify for OAS/GIS. In the seniors' club she had joined, seven or eight couples had applied for a seniors' home, planning to leave the children's home as soon as a unit becomes available:

My best friend [and her husband] had lived with her son and daughter-in-law and was very happy to receive OAS/GIS. The couple can get more than \$2,000 [per month]. She said to me that they could finally move out and become independent! They rented a house first while waiting for a seniors' apartment, and then moved out when it became available. I also know that several other old couples have moved out of the children's house and have lived on their own after getting OAS/GIS. They stopped relying on the children and living with them. They are happy now, and their sons and daughters-in-law are also happy. Good for everyone!

As a widowed mother, she said that she would not move out of her daughter's home, but the money gave her more freedom and comfort – for example, she could participate in more activities, such as get-togethers and meals with friends, travel, and entertainment. Without the pension, she would feel embarrassed to ask her daughter for money.

Like this participant, many other PGPs indicated that OAS/GIS did or would give them more freedom, and for some – and most important – they could stop asking offspring for money.

Many mentioned that they had already lived in the children's home and did not want or dare to further burden them. OAS/GIS not only greatly helped them to meet their needs, but also gave them dignity and enhanced their self-esteem.

My findings show strongly that receiving OAS/GIS is critical to sponsored PGPs' daily life, allowing them more nutrition, socialization, and convenience, independent housing, and better family relations. Most importantly, it facilitated more agency, mobility, autonomy, independence, and dignity. These findings resonate with the conclusions of other scholars. For example, Morassaei and colleagues (2023) found that income and health status appeared more crucial to the life satisfaction of older immigrants than to their non-immigrant counterparts and that their disqualification from OAS/GIS explains the difference.

Although all the parent participants think the 20-year clause meaningless for them, many were grateful for the PGP program and saw OAS/GIS as a symbol of Canada's generosity.

Parent participant no. 19 commented:

The immigration policy is already good enough. We have no further requests from the government. If it gives us benefits, we are grateful; if not, that is also OK. We immigrated never thinking about welfare. We came to help the children. Offspring who can sponsor their parents should also be able to fulfil their responsibility to take care of their parents.

Parent participant no. 15 reported that many members of their seniors' club were very grateful for OAS/GIS. They believe that their taking care of themselves and making their own lives better can give the children peace of mind and let them concentrate on jobs, thus rewarding Canada.

Despite their gratitude to the PGP program for family reunification, several parent participants (nos. 2, 13, 14, and 16) suggested a shorter sponsoring period – no. 13, male, a

retired professor, proposed 5–7 years. He was in his 80s when he immigrated and had helped pay for his daughter's immigration and her home. The daughter and son-in-law have now settled very well. The father sees that parents have supported offspring, who contribute to Canada and want to repay the parents but have to work and raise their own children, so the government should not put all the burden on them:

Granting the pension [OAS/GIS] to sponsored parents is a win-win. The government should see that. It helps not only parents and children but also the government. The elderly newcomers can promote consumption, which they do very well – for example, purchasing nutritious food and products, and nursing supplies. And if they can live well on their own, this will not only reduce the [supposed] use of medical and care resources but also ease the burden on children and help them work better, thus stabilizing family and society, which is a good thing for the government!

My findings seem to confirm his comments: most people who have received OAS/GIS have been more independent and happier and have better intergenerational relations and healthier bodies and minds. Similarly, Phan and Selassie (2021) report that expanded public benefits can save not only lives but government money; greater medical eligibility and access have increased tax revenue from individuals, and program spending on older adults reduces hospitalization: “Ensuring basic stability for all residents is good for the well-being of the state. Wider access to basic public goods promotes a stronger state” (p. 6). The authors emphasize that older immigrants of colour endure systemic racism from a series of discriminatory policies and practices, which further complicate and limit their access to public benefits (Phan & Selassie 2021).

My results demonstrate that the PGP program has enhanced neoliberal ideas of freedom of choice, self-responsibility, and self-reliance. The internalization of neoliberal values among participants, especially sponsors, justifies the reduction of state welfare and the shift of responsibility, as well as enabling them to use market logic to judge themselves and other social actors. Through privatization and internalization of responsibility, the state has reconstructed the subject of its governance – be it an immigrant or a sponsored PGP – turning “a social being with political rights” into a “subject of interest” who must be an “active citizen with agency” pursuing self-government and -fulfilment (Inda, 2006, p. 5). The program legitimates its framing of the PGPs as non-contributors and makes reasonable their impaired citizenship (e.g., no access to OAS/GIS). My study indicates that the endeavour of neoliberal biopolitics to promote the population is not applied to groups equally, but disadvantages and sacrifices its perceived undesirable and inferior life (Mavelli, 2017).

Neoliberal governance has shifted the state’s role from “direct control” to providing mechanisms, such as requirements, norms, guides, and criteria (Turner, 2014). Through various governmental techniques, the state keeps a distance from the governed by granting them a kind of freedom to make decisions, thus mitigating the complaint of direct intervention and simultaneously achieving its governing goals. This is what Miller and Rose describe: “Modern political power does not take the form of the domination of subjectivity” (Miller 1987), but rather “has come to depend upon a web of technologies for fabricating and maintaining self-government” (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 52). This deception aligns personal needs with the state’s social-political goals, compelling individuals to govern themselves.

Additionally, Donzelot observes that the state is concerned specifically with financially dysfunctional or troubled families and uses various techniques of social engineering, such as

“strategy of prevention” and “psycho-control,” to govern them and treat its own anxiety (Beddoe, 2018; Rohkramer, 1999). The PGP program is a case in point. Rather than addressing the structural issues of poverty and hardship facing immigrant families, the state forces an undertaking/dependence on them to prevent possible risks and burdens on it even before the sponsored PGPs arrive.

Moreover, while granting families some freedom to make decisions (e.g., to sponsor or not) and reunify, the state simultaneously sets up requirements (e.g., self-reliance, undertaking) that often reduce them to hardship, but forces families to take responsibility as this is their own decision. Through this psycho-control strategy, the state not only rationalizes the transformation of its collective responsibility into family duty but also turns the resulting social problems into private family frictions. Worst of all, families attend to only the immediate benefit (reunification) of the program but overlook the ensuing problems it caused. The state thereby obscures, even hides, the injustice of modern governance by promoting values and mechanisms of neoliberal governance.

Conclusion

While economic and budgetary factors help to make neoliberal governance accountable, measurable, efficient, and auditable (Miller & Rose, 2008, pp.109-110), my study suggests that it marketizes and quantifies human life through the cost-benefit calculation, further disadvantaging vulnerable groups such as sponsored PGPs. Neoliberal governance ignores their contributions and exploits them, singling them out as sub-citizens and outsiders inside.

The PGP program and its practice reflect the embedded frictions in neoliberal governance in Canada. Although neoliberal governmentality emphasizes the fostering and maximizing of the population's life, acting behind the PGP program is the neoliberal biopolitical logic that human

life is a form of self-investment, self-government, and personal responsibility based on market values and the biopolitical power order. Through its programs, the state enforces “government of the self” and turns the structural deficits of neoliberal society, particularly insufficient social support, into individual responsibilities. People at the bottom of the state’s power relations, such as sponsored PGPs from the global South, inevitably become the targeted “inferior” population, whose well-being can be easily sacrificed for the benefit of neoliberal life (Mavalli, 2017).

The PGP program and its changes indicate that the government frames racialized PGPs not as “active citizens” who can self-promote and -govern prudently, but as unethical subjects, irresponsible and unable to manage their own risks; therefore the state intervenes to force them to act responsibly through the PGP program’s undertaking/dependence clause. My study of the PGP program demonstrates how hegemonic knowledge is leveraged by the state to target racialized vulnerable groups to govern the flow and characteristics of the population, meet labour-market needs, and realize its social, political, and economic goals.

The PGP program and its changes in 2014 have most affected immigrants from the global South with traditions of family reunification. They indicate the structural inequality and injustice of neoliberal governance, and Canada’s neoliberal immigration regime still has dimensions of race, gender, and class that intersect with other stigmatizing dynamics within the state’s power relations.

Chapter 5

Fostering Life or Choking Life: Frictions between Independence and Forced Dependence

Independence versus Forced Dependence

It seems clear to me, as I have outlined so far, that the PGP program displays obvious friction and self-contradiction vis-à-vis government of the self for sponsored PGPs, who are adult subjects and independent souls. The program assumes them to be both governed and governing subjects under neoliberal governmentality – self-governing and achieving self-reliance – yet treats them as and makes them dependent on sponsoring offspring for basic needs and daily life and disentitles them from seniors' benefits (OAS/GIS) by the undertaking/dependence clause.

In this chapter, I further discuss how the embedded neoliberal friction resulting from forced dependence affects sponsored PGPs' quality of life and damages their capacity for self-government, and to that end, I explore, first, their intergenerational relations and, second, their housing arrangements, which are two main factors that substantially determine their well-being and satisfaction with life in Canada. My key question here is: How does the neoliberal friction from forced dependence shape sponsored PGPs' self-government and well-being?

I have observed gaps between sponsored PGPs' desired (in)dependence (independence and dependence) and their actual (in)dependence; the size of the gaps profoundly affects their satisfaction with life and their quality of life. A larger gap often correlates with higher dissatisfaction, while achieving an (in)dependent life aligned with their desires typically results in satisfaction and overall well-being. The majority of PGP interviewees seek or enjoy

independent lives, rather than burdening offspring. They typically have a more satisfying and fulfilling existence in Canada.

I find that several factors can affect sponsored PGPs' desired or sought-after (in)dependence, including culture, personality, age, health, finances and socioeconomic status, gender, marital status, family relations, and biases and preferences. For example, those who believe in "raising children to prepare for aging" expect filial piety from offspring and assume their own dependence. Those with an independent personality usually live accordingly. Those with meager resources may expect support from offspring, especially as they age or become sick. Those who are female and widowed usually favour dependence; close relations between generations may increase their desire for interdependence; and their own preferences or biases, such as the belief that care by offspring is better than institutional care, or that government-funded homes for seniors are "low-end" or "inadequate," may increase their desire for dependence.

Main factors that can affect sponsored PGPs' actual (in)dependence include health, finances, language, driving skills, social network, family relations, and children's filial piety. My research indicates that finances greatly affect their (in)dependence and all other dimensions of their lives. For example, they determine their housing arrangements (e.g., a purchased house, townhouse, or condo or seniors' home versus residing with offspring), family relations, quality of life, well-being, and satisfaction with life. Poor finances limit their decision-making, autonomy and freedom, and authority in the family. Robust finances usually enable independent housing, reduce family conflict, and enhance independence.

Two other factors greatly affect sponsored PGPs' agency and independence: age and health. Generally speaking, the older and sicker they are, the more assistance they require,

including from offspring and the state. Even though they may have tried to contribute and to reduce their dependence on the children, all the parent interviewees, no matter their finances, still worry about losing their self-care capacity one day and becoming a burden. Some also fear that offspring may be unable or unwilling to take care of them at the end of their lives. Children's filial piety can facilitate a parent's dependence, while bad relations often lead a parent to live alone.

For some PGP participants, language and transportation barriers can limit mobility, forcing reliance on offspring for shopping, doctor's visits, and social activities. Loss or rupture of their social networks in China deprives some of support, making them depend more on offspring, while those who develop new networks (e.g., through Chinese seniors' groups or clubs) usually live more independently.

Many factors can affect both their desired independence and their actual independence, such as age, health, and financial status. However, many sponsored PGPs have very strong personalities or independent minds and always seek maximum self-reliance, and some expressed the hope to remain independent and look for support only when they can no longer care for themselves.

I observe that sponsored PGPs' desire for (in)dependence can affect its realization, and vice versa. That desire or an (in)dependent cast of mind has more influence on actual (in)dependence than vice versa and shapes daily conduct, relations between generations, and housing arrangements. For example, those who are keener for (in)dependence usually lead a more (in)dependent life in terms of housing, transportation, physical activities, and so on. Actual (in)dependence also reinforces the intensity of the desire for (in)dependence. For example, some senior participants found that doing things by themselves (e.g., taking a bus to socialize or shop

or travelling on their own to a hospital or barber shop or hairdresser) gave them more freedom of mobility, as well as more confidence to make decisions and rely less on offspring. It also appears that sponsored PGPs who moved out of the children's home not only become more independent but want more independence. My research reveals that the stronger both their desire for and the reality of their independence, the better and happier their lives are.

The PGP program's forced dependence is an outside force beyond sponsored PGPs' control and can greatly affect both their desire for and actual independence. For instance, many stated that they would move out of the children's home once they started to receive OAS/GIS, and some anticipated that the benefits could support them and give them more freedom, convenience, autonomy, and dignity. Forced dependence can also increase the gap and friction between their desire for and actual independence, add hardship, and heighten inner turmoil. The majority want separate housing, and many have poor relations with sponsor offspring because they are financially dependent on them and/or have to share a roof with them, so receiving OAS/GIS is the only route to the life they want.

The enforced undertaking/dependence prevents many sponsored PGPs from achieving desired life, greatly affecting their mental, emotional, and physical health. They may experience hardship and even suffer precarious situations if their sponsors fail to support them adequately. Many sponsored PGPs from the global South cannot survive on pensions from their home countries. Ferrer and colleagues (2020) report that their interviewees all emphasized what a crucial role OAS/GIS played in their lives, even though some found it not enough to survive on. Their study also reveals that most offspring sponsors are unable to fulfil their financial promises.

Lo and Russell (2007) find that the traditional family structure and filial care are not fully followed and cannot meet the needs of older Chinese immigrants. Boucher (2014) observes that

many older immigrants (27 per cent during the period of 1981–2006) obtained social assistance, suggesting sponsors' shortfalls. Guruge and colleagues (2015) note that later-life immigration and forced dependence can greatly affect sponsored PGPs' physical and mental health, especially women's. Studies (e.g., Guruge et al., 2015; Yon et al., 2017) highlight EAN, malnutrition, poverty, and mental health problems, perhaps more severe and under-reported among older immigrants.

Most of my PGP participants were being treated well, they stated, but reported bad experiences of friends or acquaintances, suggesting serious under-reporting. I propose that forced dependence damages PGPs' independence and well-being rather than assisting them. Addressing the problems it causes requires public resources such as social workers, psychologists, doctors, nurses, food banks, and shelters, which may all cost much more than OAS/GIS would have. Accordingly, a more inclusive, humane, and sustainable PGP program can benefit rather than burden the state, and better services, such as more affordable seniors' homes and shorter waits for them would help.

Below, I explore and examine how neoliberal friction manifests itself in sponsored PGPs' self-government and affects their intergenerational relations by looking at their change in family role, their intergenerational relations, and their housing arrangements.

Family-Role Changes and Intergenerational Relations

For the 26 sponsored parents I interviewed, the most bittersweet topic was relations with sponsoring offspring (and their families). Being sponsored to immigrate is a source of pride for them, as it reflects filial piety. When offspring meet the requirements to sponsor parents to immigrate to Canada, a prestigious Western country, it not only brings the parents admiration

from peers but also boosts their overall satisfaction with life. However, despite their anticipating challenges such as language barriers, cultural conflict, and loss of social networks, they seemed less prepared to face the complexities of family in their new land.

The large majority of them had their own residence in China ($n = 24$ out of 26), and, for most, offspring had left home when they entered university. After graduation, the majority of offspring went to work in cities different from their parents' and later immigrated to Canada, and some pursued education abroad and then immigrated. Therefore, most sponsored PGPs had lived apart from the sponsoring offspring long before they reached Canada. However, all of them immigrated to reside with offspring and families at least for some time. Among the 26, only nine (34.6 per cent) were living elsewhere at the time of my interview.

Sponsored parents discovered quickly that family dynamics had changed since the offspring were growing up. Roles had reversed, with parents shifting from protectors and suppliers to "dependants" (at least for the PGP program) with basic needs to meet. As well, many were living with children-in-law for the first time, so dealing with a new type of family relationship. I observe that acceptance and adaptability, the socioeconomic status of both generations, and state-enforced dependence shape and affect their self-government. Sponsored parents' reunion with adult offspring ends their own independent lives in China and merges their lives with those of the children's family. How they position themselves and adjust shapes their intergenerational relations, physical and mental well-being, and satisfaction with life in Canada.

My participating parents fell into three groups: (1) dominant, (2) subservient, and (3) in-between. As for the first, assertive type, one parent participant (no. 8) insists: "A father is a father, a son is a son, no matter place and time. It is a fact." This sort of parents insists on respect, even obedience, from offspring. They value the influence of their own advice and

suggestions to the children and hope to be involved in their important (if not daily) decisions. They want to dominate the family and usually possess strong traditional Chinese cultural values (e.g., one has children to prepare for old age), and they tend to regard the offspring's family as part of their own. These parents belong to either of two radically different financial groups: wealthy or financially humble and lower class. They typically have the strongest desire or mindset to rely on the children, but the wealthy have the highest actual, achievable independence, and the latter has usually the lowest actual, achievable independence.

For the second, subservient category of sponsored parents, the offspring's family is not their own, so they have no intention to intervene, and they accept and follow all the arrangements made by the children. Some are very sentimental. Parent participant no. 11, a woman, lamented, "When children are young, they listen to and obey you, but now it is changed: the aging parents become children, and the young people become your 'parents,' and you must listen to them!" Another parent participant (no. 4), also female, offered the same perspective:

We come to Canada, we don't speak the language, and we don't understand anything. It is our children who apply for all kinds of cards [SIN, health, and so on] and documents for us; we just have to follow their arrangements. We used to take care of them, but now they take care of us. When you come to the children, you should not point fingers at their things, just listen to them, and there is nothing for us to decide about. We need only to eat well, drink well, and ensure our bodies and health are fine. We have no other requests, and there is nothing for us to decide.

This sponsored mother and her sponsored husband both worked in a factory before retirement in China and received a lump sum in lieu of pension. She is one of the two parent interviewees who had not purchased a home in China. I observe that parents of this type usually are of a lower

socio-economic class, and their substantial practical needs complement their strong desire for dependence. In other words, their two forms of dependence (desired and actual) are both strong.

Most parent participants belonged to type 3: in-between: they do not expect offspring to obey them and are not seriously involved in their lives, but they do not avoid participation. This type has two sub-categories. Members of the first sub-category offer guidance and advice, especially in important matters such as career decisions, investments, or home purchases, and hope that the children consider their counsel. Members of the second emphasize that offspring's family is separate from their own, but they care, they pay attention to important matters in the children's family, and they provide advice or support if needed, but consider their opinions merely a contribution. They offer opinions or participate only when invited.

Most PGPs in the first sub-category have a strong personality and/or are proud of their own success. They acknowledge the children's family as separate but want a close relationship. For example, one parent participant (no. 19), a male, insisted: "We have many experiences, and they can help our child avoid many pitfalls and detours. We can help with and guide their direction in life." This parent interviewee – a successful business owner, with several properties in China – supported his son's study in Canada and his home purchase. He was proud that he could help his son and daughter-in-law, who have two children. He said that he had tried to let his son manage things by himself and extends support only when his son cannot cope. He admitted that the two generations often disagreed but could discuss differences rationally, and he was satisfied that his son followed most of his advice.

Many of the parents have more casual relations with the children's family and belong to the second sub-category. Parent participant no. 21 summarized this group's performance of the "three nots" ("*San Bu*" in Chinese):

‘Not initiate’ means that parents should not proactively take part in the children’s family life; for example, if the young people don’t request your help, parents should not do things for them such as grocery shopping, cleaning their bedroom, and teaching the grandchildren. ‘Not talk’ means that the parents should keep silent in situations that may result in conflict. ‘Not refuse’ means when the children ask for the parents’ assistance, we should not refuse and must make an all-out effort to help them out.

This parent participant added that when the children request help, this means that they have difficulty or are not able to do certain things and require assistance; if parents refuse to help, it will hurt the children and affect family relations.

The “three nots” is summarized by one of this father’s friends, a retired professor who is also a sponsored parent and belongs to the same Chinese seniors’ club. He told me that the “three nots” have been practised by many fellow members and are testified by them to foster harmonious family relations. His wife did not do her own interview because of illness but interjected:

Everyone should keep a sense of distance. Distance produces beauty. We have been in Canada for eight years and we have a good relationship. When we first arrived, we did not know much about our daughter-in-law, and she did not know us much either, but we were sure that if we maintained a good relationship with her, our son will be happy. We have our own habits, and we have our own colourful, independent lives. If you want a happy life, you need to keep your independence. Our daughter-in-law is very proud of us and said to her colleagues that her parents-in-law are ‘awesome’!

The “three nots” and these statements reflect the PGPs’ spirit of independence, as they separate their own lives from the children’s and function as a separate, distinct unit. Indeed, this couple is

active in a Chinese seniors' club, and the husband is a leader there. After living with their son briefly, they sold their house in China and bought one a minute's drive from their son's. They spend most of their time on club activities and help their son look after his two children whenever they are needed. Their experience demonstrates that a desire for and actual independence help sustain healthy, harmonious relations; a social network, hobbies, and sound finances facilitate a satisfying life and overall well-being.

The oldest male parent participant (no. 7), 86, expressed similar thoughts. Despite his age, he has insisted on living in a seniors' apartment. He treasures his independence and emphasized that he had paid for his apartment by himself with his Chinese and Canadian pensions. He reported a self-organized and satisfying existence in Canada.

Type-3 participants have generally reported a more satisfying life than other two types and less friction with offspring's family, although some are involved more than others in children's lives. This type of parents usually has both a strong desire for and real independence. This group includes different classes and levels of education. It seems that a desire for (in)dependence and a strong personality shape how they handle intergenerational relations, although finances of both sides always play a role, as do parents' housing arrangements.

I observe that the second sub-category of type 3, with looser family relations, typically has the greatest desire for and actual independence and healthier family relations, as well as greater overall well-being and higher satisfaction with life in Canada. The stronger the desire for independence, the greater the actual independence. For example, those parents very keen for independence enjoy relative independence, usually prefer separate housing, and manage their own daily activities independently, taking buses by themselves, liking to take part in seniors' activities, and savouring their own social network.

It may seem odd that some dominant parents (type 1) seem keen to depend on their offspring. However, any domination requires others to obey, so their happiness depends on children submitting to them. In other words, they care deeply about how the offspring treat them and listen to their advice, leading to their strong dependence on the younger generation. If the latter does not obey them, they may still be able to manage their matters by themselves, but they would feel sad and frustrated, so their dependence is more emotional than practical or physical. This finding suggests that emotional and mental (in)dependence is indispensable to actual (in)dependence.

In my study, no parent participant fit completely into the dominant category. This type might want to control children's lives, but that could cause great frictions, and in the end, it is always the elderly who give in. They often compromise more than offspring, which indicates the decline of their parental authority. For example, parent participant no. 8, who said, "A father is a father, a son is a son," has changed a lot. I also interviewed his son and daughter-in-law (no. 10 and 11 offspring participants) and found that early in his immigration, he was very domineering. His son stated:

He always feels that he is the patriarch; that is hard to change, especially [because] he held an official position [before retirement]. [He] has changed a lot. Previously, he offered his opinions without being asked; now, he does so only when we ask. It is nonsense to act as a patriarch.

This son laughed, saying, "Our strategy is 'Just act, and do not ask him.''" His wife gave an example: "When we purchased our house, I saw it and told him [her husband] that I liked it, Then he went and checked it, and we decided to buy it and did so without telling my father-in-

law.” This father participant had had a very successful career and bought his own home in Canada, but moved to his son’s place when he began to have midriff pain several years ago.

The father told me that he is satisfied with his intergenerational relations, as his daughter-in-law respects him and treats him very well. His son also appreciates his own wife, who mediates whenever the two men have a dispute. She described their relations as “treating each other with respect,” while the son referred to it as “thinking of and missing each other when [we are] not together, but it is a bit annoying while being together.” The experiences of this family demonstrate that sponsored PGPs, especially domineering ones, may face challenges after family reunification. Only by treating the children’s families as a separate unit can they maintain peaceful and healthy relations.

Another family also experienced the role shift. I interviewed both the sponsored parents (nos. 5 and 6) and their daughter (offspring participant no. 7). The daughter noted her mother’s strong personality and frequent requests to cooperate with her. She saw her mother as a matriarchal parent who held that “I am the parent in this family, and you should obey me.” Her father also is very straightforward but softer in the daughter’s eyes. They had all been living together but differed on many matters, especially on the daughter’s decision to purchase a big house. The parents worried about the huge mortgage, started quarrels, and even threatened to ask their daughter to return the money they had given her and they would move back to China. Finally, the daughter convinced them: their current home in Toronto had become too small, so they sold it and purchased a much bigger house in another city, where the house prices were much lower.

According to the daughter, their family had later experienced a role change, and she is now regarded as the “parent,” because facts have proven her decision correct, and everyone is

convinced. She reported a feeling of “equality,” but admitted that it needs time and the process is not always happy:

We need to re-understand the relationship with the parents. We have not lived together for a long time. My parents have their habits and their hobbies. However, you come to me, this is my house, not yours, so I should have the final say. Conflict is unavoidable, and both sides need to adjust.

To avoid misunderstandings, she proposes, parents should not “rely on old age and use old age,” thinking “I am the most important one” and saying, “The salt I have eaten is more than the rice you have eaten.” For her, the “parent” position is earned rather than a result of being older.

From my interviews with this family, I could tell that the parents loved their daughter and had much fewer conflicts than before. Of course, I am sure that the mother has already lost dominance. She did not talk much about family life, but spoke about her volunteer work and other activities in the Chinese community as a member and organizer. Both parents indicated that they preferred living on their own (they applied for seniors’ housing shortly after arriving in Canada), although both said that their daughter treated them well and they have enjoyed their time with their two granddaughters. My interviews suggest that offspring sponsors as hosts usually have advantages and more say in the family than parents. The parents’ decision-making authority and autonomy inevitably decline.

Another major role change occurred in a family where the sponsored parents had experienced fierce conflict with their daughter-in-law. Both parents had worked in factories with low pay before retirement and had had few resources. It was not easy for them to raise their son and support him through university. They were very proud of him: he went to Canada to pursue a PhD and immigrated. They had exerted themselves to support him, and he feels the duty of filial

piety, promising them a better life and that he would not forget them after he married. In Canada, because of conflict with the daughter-in-law, the sponsored parents made great efforts to try to persuade their son to divorce her. When I interviewed them, they already had a much better in-law relationship. The sponsored mother (parent participant no. 17) mentioned that her son was very busy; it was her daughter-in-law who often drove them to parks for a walk, sightseeing, and shopping. The mother commented:

Habits are different; we just take care of ourselves. Everything at home is handled by the two of them; we just listen and aren't involved much ... Family matters need negotiation, and the family needs peace. We are old, our brains do not function as well as before, so we should not dominate and should involve ourselves less and talk less.

Despite the earlier challenges, she reported: "We will go wherever my son lives, and we need him to take care of us when we get old!" This parent has a strong desire for and heavy actual dependence on her son.

According to her daughter-in-law (no. 6 offspring participant), the parents had changed a lot, especially after the father was diagnosed with kidney disease. Since then, he has become much gentler and does not interfere so much. She laughed that the change might be a result of his illness, which has weakened him, leaving him no energy to fight with her. She explained that her husband has been very obedient to his parents since he was a child, and he had studied hard mainly to honour them. She pointed out that after he married in Canada and even after he had his own son, his parents' lives still revolved around and mingled with his. He had always sought his father's opinion before making a decision, and her conflicts with his parents never stopped. The situation changed dramatically after the father became ill, and her husband learned lessons from the conflicts and reduced his parents' involvement in their lives. Relations had improved a lot.

This family's experiences showcase the complexity of relations between generations, which are shaped by the interplay of multiple factors, such as culture, family background and tradition, finances, personality, and health. It appears that, in a reunified family, both generations' emotional, financial, and physical independence from each other is crucial to healthy relations. The more domineering the parents, or the more they meddle, the worse the relationship.

In-law Relations and International Marriage

In-law relations form a sensitive topic for participants, but they also seem to indicate the parents' overall well-being – or not. In-law relationships, especially between mother- and daughter-in-law, are, for my interviewees, the most challenging part of family life. Ten parents (38.5 per cent of the total) are sponsored by sons, and 16 (61.5 per cent) by daughters. Among the former, two have lived with daughters who also immigrated to Canada. In Chinese culture, managing relations between mother- and daughter-in-law is a traditional challenge. My observations concur, revealing that parents sponsored by a son typically encounter more conflicts of this type than those with a daughter sponsoring them. The latter group reported only minor family conflicts, and parents seldom complained about their son-in-law. Parents sponsored by daughters have experienced more comfortable and satisfactory lives in Canada overall.

Whereas all my interviewees admitted the challenges of in-law relations, the majority did not describe their own bad experiences, but talked more about how relations should be handled or used other families' stories to express their perspectives. Many had friends who could not get along with their daughter-in-law and were mistreated. For example, parent participant no. 18 told me that sponsored parents in two families that she knew who had resided with children went

back to China and gave up their PR status for exactly that reason. These reports indicate that sponsored PGPs may be mistreated, and not all have been happy in Canada.

Several participants explained why they think these challenges arise. Parent participant no. 20 believes it happens usually because a daughter-in-law was from a family with different ideas and habits, which can easily result in misunderstandings, and the mother-in-law could not treat her as her own child which is regarded as a best practice of a mother-in-law in traditional Chinese culture. She said that she had tried her best to treat her daughter-in-law as her own daughter, but admitted the relationship is very difficult: “I have a friend. She said, ‘Even if you take out your heart and give it to her [the daughter-in-law], she will not say a good word about you!’ My friend was so sad that she returned to China in 2015 and will never come back.”

Several other parent participants concurred, proposing that the relationship is not a simple issue, easy to resolve, and that mutual understanding, adjustment, and tolerance are crucial.

Parent participant no. 20’s daughter-in-law (no. 9 offspring participant) sees things differently. For her, culture is the main issue, because that relationship is not so fraught in Western countries:

After I came to Canada, I learned from the Bible that a woman is a man’s rib, and after marriage, they form a new family, but Chinese culture is completely different. Chinese parents think that the child will always be theirs, so he [the son] must honour his parents and cannot take a wife and then forget his mother!

Her husband (no. 8 offspring participant) emphasized the effect of cultural differences:

The Chinese traditional value is that if the mother-in-law is present, the daughter-in-law is inferior. When the former ages, she hands over the reins to the latter, who then will be in charge of the family. I told my parents: ‘You can just treat this place as your own

home,’ but they have conflict with her [his wife]. This is also her home, and she is the host, so who will be in charge?

He later added, “It is similar between father and son. I think I have no problem being the family head, because my parents don’t understand English, and they need our help with many things, but they would not tell me ‘You are the head of the family.’ My father has a strong personality; he would not say that to me.”

The comments of this offspring couple reflect the clash between traditional Chinese culture and modern Western attitudes. In the former, a large family, with three or even four generations living together, is common. There the mother-in-law traditionally holds authority over the daughter-in-law. In contrast, the modern, “nuclear” family has only wife, husband, and minor children. In this setup, parents and adult children’s families are distinct and independent, so for the new generation, parents’ interference or engagement with children’s lives is no longer the norm or considered acceptable.

Although China has become a more modern society, many people there, especially older ones – including quite a few sponsored parents – still prefer the old ways. My research indicates that parents’ considering an adult child’s family part of their own and intertwining personal lives sit at the heart of much family conflict and strained in-law relations. By framing sponsored PGPs as dependants of adult offspring and denying them OAS/GIS, the PGP program further complicates familial relations and can harm everyone’s well-being.

In this family, even though the husband and his parents have more traditional views on family, and the wife more Western, both couples acknowledged that everyone’s maintaining relatively independent lives benefits them all. After the parents purchased their own home and moved out, family relations, especially between in-laws, improved.

For many parent interviewees, especially women, the idea of “talk less and do more” helps greatly. For example, parent participant no. 22 stated: “To handle intergenerational relations, my concept is ‘work more and talk less.’ As my mother told me, ‘It is a blessing to you to be able to do it!’ I do all the housework that I can, so my daughter-in-law has nothing to say, and our relationship has been good.” In her opinion, “Here in Canada, it is the home of other people, not yours; it is the children’s home, and they decide their matters, so we parents should not be involved.” She laughed, “I do all the housework, don’t think about other things ... If we have a different viewpoint from the children, we avoid conflict by talking about something else.” She admitted the two generations’ differing perspectives on many issues, as well as problems from living together: “At the beginning, I went into their bedroom to clean, and my daughter-in-law was unhappy and would not let me in, so I never went in there again.” She and her husband (parent participant no. 23) later moved to a townhouse bought by their son.

They both emphasized that it is good to live separately, and they feel more comfortable. They both have large pensions from China and have already started to receive OAS/GIS: “Since we moved out, we have become independent, and our own pension [from China and Canada] can cover our daily expenses.” This participant’s experiences highlight her concessions, compromises, tolerance, adjustment, and wisdom and demonstrate how both a desire for and actual independence help engender good family relations, especially between mother- and daughter-in-law.

Additional challenges from cultural differences may unsettle families with an international marriage. Parent participant no. 24 told me about her “foreign” (non-Chinese) son-in-law. For example, they wanted their granddaughter to learn Chinese after school, but he opposed this: “She just came home [from school]; don’t add more work for her!” When the

grandmother wanted to correct her granddaughter's sitting posture, the girl's father objected: "As long as the child is comfortable, she can sit any way she wants." From the start, this son-in-law had not respected her and treated her as an "outsider." She gave an example:

My son-in-law brought home three hamburgers, so I asked him, 'What about mine? Give me one.' He gave me the one he had bought for my daughter. I said it is [her daughter's name], and I wanted one for me. I asked my granddaughter: 'Does Grandma belong to this family? Grandma has washed your face in the morning and cooked for all of you since you were a child, and Grandma always buys things for everyone. Shouldn't your father buy a hamburger for Grandma too?' After that, they bought one for me too.

For this parent participant, the hamburger per se was not the issue; her big concern was "respect," which is a Chinese tradition and basic etiquette. She mentioned that her husband also experienced cultural conflict at home: for example, he disliked the son-in-law's hugging his daughter in the living-room, and he was annoyed because after lunch the young man left all the dishes in the sink. Finally, her husband decided to leave their daughter's home and returned to China, and his PR status was expiring.

I could feel her helplessness and powerlessness, losing authority to a different culture and "another" family when she treated it as her own. Parent participant no. 20 told me about a friend who immigrated for childcare but returned to China because the sponsored seniors could not get along with the "foreign" son-in-law. These experiences reveal that children's international marriages may engender extra, even life-changing challenges.

Reciprocity in Family Relationships

I observe that sponsored PGPs' contributions to and support for the children's family can affect their status in the family and their (in)dependence, as well as their expectations of

offspring. Typically, if they give more to offspring, they often expect more back or more keenly desire dependence and typically involve themselves more in the children's lives. If they are not paid back or treated reciprocally, they often feel sad and mistreated. For example, parent participant no. 9 told me:

I have a friend whose husband passed away. She sold her house in China, also her business, and bought a large house in Canada for more than \$2 million. Her daughter-in-law arranged for her own parents to live upstairs there, but forced her to live in the basement. She has been in a bad mood and feels depressed, but she can't afford another house. For the sake of her son, she has to tolerate and bear the burden of humiliation.

Although the participant's friend was well off, her desire for dependence and the actual housing arrangements prevented a dignified, satisfactory life for her.

Offspring participant no. 8, male, observed that the principle of "correspondence of rights and responsibility" or of "giving and receiving" is closely related to parents' roles in the children's lives. He elaborated:

If the parents invest more in the upbringing of the children, such as by purchasing a house for them, they will feel a stronger sense of ownership of the house. My parents invested a lot in my education, made the down payment for my first house, and continued to give us financial aid, so they could easily be in charge of our lives. They never said that, but they have that consciousness.

For him, his parents not only are self-sufficient but also have invested so much in him and helped him with childcare that he should be filial and honour them. Although his wife does not like their involvement, he does not mind and has spent a lot of time taking care of them, especially his mother, who is not well.

The case of another family is also typical of the reciprocity principle. The sponsored parents made the down payment for their daughter's house, and the mother has a strong sense of being the master at home. The daughter always takes into account the mother's preferences and needs when making decisions. For example, because her mother likes Canada, she herself gave up her plan of selling the house and going back to China for a higher position and a better career.

These findings suggest strongly that greater support from parents gives them more authority within the family. Also, it tends to boost their self-confidence while living with offspring. Their helping pay for the children's home may make them feel more comfortable while sharing a roof. Contributing and/or achieving financial independence can alleviate their feelings of "uselessness." This in turn fosters greater respect from the children and encourages more consideration of their needs. Consequently, this dynamic can minimize family friction.

Elder Abuse and Neglect (EAN)

In 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that "[e]lder abuse – sometimes also termed as elder mistreatment – is a serious global human rights and public health problem that requires urgent action" (Yon et al., 2017). Zhang's study (2019) captures various types of abuse, including emotional, verbal, physical, and financial, as well as neglect and violation of rights (p. 347). Nonetheless, elder abuse and neglect (EAN) remain under-explored by evidence-based studies (Hirst et al., 2016), and some scholars (e.g., Da & Garcia, 2015) call for further investigation.

Although none of my interviewees reported these types of abuse on themselves when I asked, almost all shared friends' experiences. For instance, parent participant no. 9, male, stated that some sponsored PGPs were abused because of financial dependence on offspring and told me about two examples from among his friends. A friend from his city in China, and his wife,

had lived with international-student tenants in a home in Canada owned by their son. After the students moved out, the son sold the house. His parents had nowhere to live, could not afford a place of their own, and had to return to China. They told my interviewee that they would return to Canada only after the seniors' apartment they had applied for became available.

Another friend and his spouse were abused by the son-in-law. Their daughter did not have a stable job and could not support them, so the couple, not yet qualifying for OAS/GIS, used their pensions from China for meals and daily expenses. For quite a long time, they could afford only food. Ultimately, they could not manage and returned to China. The forced dependence prohibits them from social assistance even when they are in destitute situations. Clearly, the PGP program cannot ensure proper care and support for sponsored PGPs, but may place them in precarious and humiliating situations, even in the family.

Parent participant no. 22, female, informed me that a widowed mother continued to live upstairs in her son's house. After she had surgery, using stairs became inconvenient, so she moved to a single bed placed in the living room. However, after she recovered completely, her daughter-in-law did not allow her to move back upstairs. Even though it makes her feel cold, the offspring open windows when in the living room. She also has to tolerate strong smells from the kitchen. This participant lamented: "She doesn't have a private space. She can do nothing and has to endure it. It's so sad." I offered to interview this unfortunate woman and asked my interviewee to pass on the request to her. The woman refused my invitation, fearing that her son and daughter-in-law might find out. It is evident that she is not given respect and necessary care; she lacks status and has no voice within the family. With no means to lead an independent life, she is forced to endure mistreatment.

Parent participant no. 3, also a woman, shared stories of her friends who were forced to leave Canada:

I know an old couple who were sponsored by their younger son. They immigrated to help take care of their grandson, but they had a very bad relationship with their daughter-in-law. They would, to avoid talking to her, go out for a walk after cooking dinner for the family and return only at nightfall, to sleep. Ultimately, several days before the grandson started university, they were kicked out and went back to China.

Several other parent participants also mentioned mistreatment of PGPs they knew who were sponsored for childcare, especially after the youngsters grew up. Parent participant no. 26, female, termed this phenomenon “cold violence” and spoke about her friends who sold their house in Shanghai and immigrated to help with childcare. The offspring treated them well at first, but when their grandchild grew up, they were not needed anymore. They were left alone, and the children never visited them, even after the father became very sick. The father died in Canada, and the mother returned to Shanghai. These experiences indicate that some sponsors ignore their undertaking and treat parents only as free labour.

The oldest parent participant (no. 25), female, 87, observed that such ill-treatment is not uncommon and that some children’s behaviour is shocking:

My friend has diabetes, so has a very small appetite, but even when she ate an egg, her daughter-in-law was unhappy. Her husband sometimes worked on a farm and had to hand over his small earnings from odd jobs there to the daughter-in-law – she insisted on the money! Finally, the old couple couldn’t stay and returned to China.

These horror stories reveal serious EAN by some sponsoring offspring. A number of PGPs nonetheless persevere; others leave Canada. Either way, their physical and mental health must be

greatly affected. Interviewees reported no cases of mistreated or destitute parents' seeking social services (e.g., food bank, public shelter, monetary support). PGPs may not know where to go for help, or their sponsors may prevent them. The PGP program's making sponsors responsible for them can lead to family conflict, and also serious harm, including malnutrition, injury, even death.

Coddington and colleagues (2020) emphasize that immigration law and policy can engender dependence, vulnerability, and impoverishment by selectively assigning people to specific categories. They note that the state deprives some types of immigrants (and refugees) of their status as economic subjects, so they can survive only through dependence on others, which they term "destitution"; in this predicament, dependence links poverty, injustice, vulnerability, and precarity (p. 1427). My findings resonate with their argument. These sponsored PGPs' experiences demonstrate that the undertaking/dependence can render some of them destitute by denying them seniors' benefits and other social assistance, reinforcing poverty, precarity, and vulnerability and leading to new social problems and injustice.

Practices of a "minimalist biopolitics" and "humanitarian border" provide minimal care to a population, although are not to optimize and foster life, they are to maintain survival and reduce human suffering so as to maintain a state's border control and order (Baban, Ilcan, & Rygiel, 2017; Isleyen, 2018; Redfield, 2005). In its PGP program, the Canadian state does not do even that for sponsored PGPs. Their basic needs are framed as their sponsor's personal responsibility. If their sponsors cannot live up to that or mistreat them, the state not only denies them "minimal care" by disentiitling them from provincial social assistance, but also punishes the sponsors by depriving them of future sponsorship opportunities. I propose that this forced dependence may constitute a new form of minimalist biopolitics – *dependent* biopolitics.

According to some of my interviewees, EAN by children and/or their spouses remains under-reported. For example, parent participant no. 3, female, knows a widowed sponsored mother who immigrated to take care of her son's children as her son was divorcing his wife. After her daughter also immigrated to Canada, she helped with both of them. When she became sick, her son used all kinds of excuses not to take her to hospital. Her daughter proposed to manage her OAS/GIS account, and she refused, but even after she gave her daughter some money, the latter asked for her bank card. Some physical altercation ensued, causing the mother minor injuries. When her friend (this participant) suggested she call 9-1-1, she refused, stating, "Family issues should not be made public." This participant believes that EAN is uncommon in Chinese families but certainly has occurred.

Parent participant no. 9, male, shared with me stories of his wife's two friends: "The house in China is sold, and the money is given to her son, but the daughter-in-law doesn't want to live with her, so she lives in a rented house. The son has been diagnosed with cancer; what will happen to her if her son dies?" Another friend of the participant's wife has been mistreated by the son-in-law, several times telling the wife that she wanted to commit suicide. This participant sighed and suggested that nowadays, although parents are still expected to raise their offspring, there is no reciprocal obligation. If parents cannot care for themselves anymore, whether offspring support them depends on the children's filial piety and virtue.

This participant's worries are not unreasonable: some sponsors fall short with support, and some sponsored PGPs have resorted to social assistance during the sponsoring period (Boucher, 2014). Although "respecting the elderly" and "loving the young" always go hand in hand in Chinese culture, the latter takes priority in many Chinese families. Zhou (2020) reports that some PGPs immigrating to do grandparenting had to leave their own aging parents or

parents-in-law behind in China. Similarly, this parent participant (no. 9) said that his wife was sad over their daughter's failure to visit them, while she always went to their grandchildren's activities.

I echo Zhou (2020): Chinese traditions of family and reciprocity between generations have become "increasingly selective for adult children" (p.123). Younger people, especially those educated in the West, accept more of modern notions of family and tend to endorse Western-style institutional senior care. This shift in turn weakens their sense of obligation vis-à-vis the PGP program, even though they may proclaim their filial duty. This hypocrisy also reflects the embedded friction in neoliberal governance between the nuclear family and forced dependence.

I noted that some conduct although short of EAN can greatly harm sponsored PGPs. For example, parent participant no. 24 complained:

I needed to copy a playlist, but I had to wait for my daughter's convenience and look at her face for clues. I felt sad. I didn't want neighbours or friends to help me do the copying, because I was afraid that I would lose face if they knew that the children would not help me.

She first travelled to Canada to help her son with childcare, then immigrated to help her daughters. She reported that she feels that her ability is decreasing as she ages, but even if she feels exhausted, as long as the children respect her and do not take her efforts for granted, she feels comforted: "For older people, the most important thing is happiness. For me, it is crucial that my children respect me and care about me ... Parents worry about causing trouble to offspring and try to do things by themselves. However, as they get older, they need care, consideration, and understanding from the children."

For many sponsored PGPs, childcare and heavy housework may take their toll on their health – another form of EAN. Parent participant no. 22 shared a case in point: an 88-year-old sponsored mother who had to look after her sick granddaughter and also cooked two meals for the family each day. She lacked energy and felt exhausted. Such situations align with findings by other scholars. For example, Zhou (2013a) reports some older grandparenting PGPs “physically and emotionally burned out” (p. 288). Da and Garcia (2015) show that time-consuming caregiving and housework limit PGPs’ rest time, activities, and socialization. Such domestic work is not regarded as physical abuse, but clearly neglects parents’ age and declining physical prowess.

In conclusion, relations between generations, especially involving in-laws, constitute one of sponsored PGPs’ biggest challenges. Creating a three-generation household demands adjustments: the change in family dynamics challenges parental authority and brings out differences and conflicts in age, finances, habits, and culture. My research suggests that it is almost always the PGPs who give in or compromise more to avoid conflict, especially if they live with offspring. Most interviewed parents stay out of household matters, and some are simply not invited. Both sides need mutual understanding, adaptation, adjustment, and tolerance, as well as substantial emotional intelligence.

In general, most sponsored parents who want and have independence enjoy better intergenerational relations and a more satisfying life. Excessive dependence, whether emotional, mental, financial, or physical, can lead to friction, even EAN. Stories shared by them reveal all kinds of EAN, which have seriously affected sponsored PGPs’ well-being and quality of life. I have observed that parents’ living with children may create difficult, even dangerous situations – the subject of the next section.

Housing Arrangements

The arrival of sponsored PGPs transforms sponsoring children's nuclear families into three-generation households. A study by Lo and Russell (2007) on the "family care" experience of older Chinese immigrants in Australia makes clear that generations living together may bring not closeness and emotional support, but rather tension and emotional turmoil (p. 34). My study has similar findings. For many parent and offspring participants, living under one roof is the culprit in many family issues. Offspring participant no. 9 emphasized differing ideas and habits, noting frequent conflict. She commented that in many families, relations deteriorated after parents moved in with children. As a result, some parents returned to China:

Many sponsored parents have become depressed, feeling that they are under somebody else's roof and relying on others. This situation meets the eye everywhere. Residing with a daughter and son-in-law is better, but there is more conflict living with a son and daughter-in-law! It can be worse if parents from both sides are sponsored.

All my parent participants resided for some time with the children's families in Canada, and 65.4 per cent (17 of 26) still do, unlike 34.6 per cent (9 of 26) who do not. Among the former, 12 were with their daughter, and five with their son. Among the nine living apart, one (parent participant no. 2) had a townhouse rented by their son, one (no. 7) was in a seniors' home or apartment, and five were in their own purchased house or condo (nos. 9, 19, 20, 21, and 26). Two (nos. 22 and 23) lived in a townhouse purchased by their son. However, among the parents, only 15.4 per cent (4 of 26, nos. 8, 11, 17, and 18) preferred residing with the children, and 22 (84.6 per cent) did not. Besides those with their own place, some have applied for a seniors'

home or apartment. Others are preparing or would like to apply for the same. Several indicated that they would move out of the children's home right away once a place became available.

Parent participant no. 21, a man, a leader of a Chinese seniors' club, commented that living on their own is ideal for most parents: it boosted quality of life and grounded overall independence and freedom. He observed that most families could not afford separate housing, so had to live together. He noted club members' differing housing arrangements: in the children's home (most of them could not afford to live alone and a small portion could afford but like co-residence); in the children's investment condo; or in a purchased or rented (town)house or a seniors' home or apartment after leaving the children's home. For him, finances and physical and health condition determined these choices.

A social worker who was with a large Chinese community-service agency for more than 15 years noted that generations' living together can harm their relations and lead to a range of problems, including isolation, physical and mental illness, and the tying of PGPs to childcare and housework, preventing activities and socializing.

Most sponsored parents, except for the widowed (especially women) who help with childcare or where mutual support is necessary, prefer living on their own, with co-residence a last resort in financial distress. A separate home with ample space that is close to the children's family is the most desired arrangement.

Living with Offspring

Among the four (15.4 per cent) sponsored parents who favoured living with offspring, one is male and three are female. Parent participant no. 8, male, had his own business and an official position in his city in China before immigration. He bought his own house in Canada and lived there with his wife for more than 10 years. Because of his recent physical problems, and his

wife's return to China, he sold his house and moved in with his son's family three years ago. His daughter-in-law mentioned that he insisted on living in the basement, even though she prepared a bedroom with its own bathroom for him on the second floor. He explained to the family that since the young people tended to stay up late, separate floors minimized disturbances.

This choice seems out of character: he is the person who told me, "A father is a father, a son is a son." He has a strong personality and seems rather patriarchal. I can tell he wants to be dependent, and his daughter-in-law (offspring participant no.11) reported that he likes to stay home and enjoys family time; he has only a couple of friends and no outside activities. When I asked him what he was most worried about, he laughed: "That my son might kick me out." He added that his daughter-in-law treats him very well and respects him, and he is satisfied with his life in Canada.

He laid out his strategy for peace at home: "To avoid conflict, don't talk about money with your son. Now that [father and son] live together, don't divide the money too clearly. If you divide it too clearly, there will be conflict. Talking about money hurts feelings. I am satisfied as long as they respect me." He complained about Canadian regulations that allow a traveller to bring into Canada only \$10,000 for each entry [This is a misunderstanding: they can bring more money if they declare and report to the CBSA]. Despite his strong desire for dependence, he has maintained independence vis-à-vis finances and living space. He specifically emphasizes the importance of sound finances.

The other three parent participants who prefer living with children are women. Two are widows (nos. 11 and 18), sponsored by their daughter. No. 11's husband died more than 10 years ago, and their daughter is their only child. She had lived with the daughter before the daughter immigrated to Canada. She believes that sponsored PGPs prefer living on their own, mainly to

protect relations between the generations. She cited a friend compelled to live on her own because her daughter-in-law disliked her. For this participant, sponsored parents residing with offspring should respect the young people's opinions: "There is no need to interfere too much. Don't question their lifestyle. One generation has different ideas from another. We should not impose our old ideas on the next generation." She believes that poor relations flow from parents' interference and nagging:

Older people need to be open-minded, not care too much about small things. Be simple a bit, and a bit foolish. Children are busy with their work, and they have youngsters to care for, so their focus will not be on us old folks. We should not rely too much on the children, and we have to look after ourselves. We need to understand more about the children. Long live understanding!

This participant is 69 and has been helping her daughter with the two grandsons, aged 14 and 10. Her son-in-law arranged her interview with me, indicating that their relations were good. Despite her strong dependence on the children for finances and housing, she stays out of their lives, apart from helping with childcare and household chores. Her low desire for dependence and her contribution to the family ease her stress and potential family conflict. She reported an overall satisfying life in Canada.

Similarly, parent participant no. 18, whose husband died more than 20 years ago, was sponsored by her divorced daughter. She has helped her daughter with childcare and had lived with her in China. She mentioned that her best friend moved out of her son and daughter-in-law's house to live alone after she started receiving OAS/GIS. But she herself would rather live with her daughter. She explained:

I don't know English, and I have to rely on my child when I apply for anything. I can't drive, the bus is too expensive, and I'm not familiar with the roads, so I need my daughter to drive me wherever I go. We have no conflict, and I feel happy being with my grandchildren. I have taken care of them since they were born, and I'm raising them, so we feel deep affection for each other, and our time together is precious.

She clearly has mutual needs with her daughter and has been the main caregiver for her two grandchildren. Despite her strong desire and need for dependence, her contribution to the family and the absence of an in-law reduce friction and enable good relations. However, she admitted that living with offspring forms the biggest challenge for sponsored PGPs:

One old couple is my good friend. They had lived with their son and daughter-in-law. Initially, their relationship was OK, but later conflicts surfaced. The mother is mild-tempered, but the father is more aggressive. He could not get along with the children and was very angry and got high blood pressure. They moved out right away after receiving senior benefits [OAS/GIS].

She also shared with me what another friend told her:

'My husband proposed that the children go out with us on the weekend, and they agreed. However, on the day, our daughter-in-law changed her mind. My husband became angry, thinking that she didn't want to be with us, and our son also felt that his wife treated us badly. Relations between my son and his wife have soured.'

These stories demonstrate that generations living together can easily misunderstand each other, and small things can lead to conflict. Poor relations can affect parents' physical and mental health, harm children's marriages, and stir up other problems.

Parent participant no. 17, a woman, implied that she enjoys and prefers living with her son, which she and her husband now do, for financial reasons:

Family reunification means being together with children. The closer, the better; best you can see them every day. ‘Reunification’ means just a short distance away, doesn’t it? If you see each other only every month or two, how can it be called ‘reunification’? It is best if all stay under one roof; even if you don’t do that, you can still eat together every day and go home to sleep at night.

For this parent participant, family reunification means spatial closeness, and living under one roof makes it easy for her son to take care of her and her husband. However, she admitted that the arrangement may not be ideal for her son, as “they are a little household of three.” She really wants to be dependent and is very much so vis-à-vis their son, but she told me: “If we start receiving a Canadian pension [OAS/GIS], we may consider moving out, renting a house by ourselves.”

It seems to me that the PGP program does shorten the spatial distance between sponsored PGPs in China and offspring in Canada, saving the offspring time and long travel to take care of older parents in need. In this sense, it can be said that the PGP program meets the family’s basic needs – family reunification, which may constitute a “minimalist biopolitics,” At the same time, the state, using the PGP program as a governmental tool, especially via undertaking/dependence, deprives sponsored PGPs of social assistance and OAS/GIS, which can create many problems (e.g., bad family relations, EAN, and crowded housing) that flow from family reunification. I propose that governmental technologies in the PGP program indicate a “depriving” rather than “fostering” biopolitics, thus reflecting the embedded neoliberal friction in the governance of sponsored PGPs and their families.

Parent participant no. 17's daughter-in-law (no. 6 offspring participant) explained that relations between the generations were unsatisfactory but improving. Vis-à-vis housing,

His [her husband's] parents wanted to apply for a seniors' home, but he didn't agree. He didn't want them to do that because he felt that that would contravene filial piety and he would be judged as ill-treating his parents. He considers seniors' homes 'low-end,' with poor living conditions, even after his parents' friends living in one told him that conditions are decent and they can have peers and friends living around them.

This daughter-in-law prefers that her parents-in-law live on their own, but sighed: "At present, we only can live together, no matter if it is a compromise or mutual tolerance. There are always conflicts under one roof, but living together is the only workable way for us at present."

This family's experiences suggest that many factors may affect housing arrangements, including culture, family tradition, personality, stereotypes, and misunderstandings. It seems that most parent participants who prefer living with their children are widowed, most of them female; they had done the same before immigration and help with childcare. Other determining factors include their health and finances. They usually want or need emotional, financial, and/or physical support. They prefer living with offspring yet indicate that it leads to challenging or unsatisfying family relations and lives.

Separate Housing

Twenty-two of our 26 parent participants – all but the four discussed just above – prefer living on their own if possible. Parent participant no. 24, a woman, explained: "If you're living alone, you have your own space, and you don't have to think about the children – or cook for them!" As well, her daughter held work-related meetings at home and would criticize her for making noise. Additionally, it was time-consuming to pick up her granddaughter from the school

bus, which was often late. This all left her no time for English classes, and she often missed scheduled activities. She underscored:

Parents should not live with offspring for too long. It may be alright at the beginning, but over time more problems and conflicts will surface. We applied for a seniors' house/apartment – it's been a long wait, and it's still not available ... No matter the distance or the size, if we get a place, we will move out right away.

This participant's comments suggest the benefits of independent housing for PGPs and the ways living with offspring complicates daily life. Her remarks also reflect the reality that many PGPs, especially women, spend most of their time grandparenting, cooking, and doing housework, so don't have time for study, hobbies, entertainment, activities, and socialization. Others also reported the same issue. These findings buttress my argument in chapter 4 that PGPs' contributions are ignored by policy-makers and may constitute a new form of value-extracting exploitation within a carceral economy (Martin & Tazzioli, 2023).

This participant also mentioned another troubling issue: PGPs are becoming older and perhaps more fragile, but some prepare up to three meals a day for the family and pick up and drop off their grandchildren, which can affect their health: "My younger daughter's sponsored mother-in-law is already 80 and cannot do housework anymore. She cannot wash the dishes well, and the grandchildren don't like the food she makes." She has observed that such situations are not uncommon, and many PGPs are too old to do what their offspring want. In her view, it's better to live separately.

The oldest parent participant (no. 25), female, 87, made similar comments. This mother has three children, two in Canada and one in Japan. She was sponsored by her son and immigrated to Canada 20 years ago. One of the social workers I interviewed introduced this

sponsored mother to me and told me that she had been a leader in the Chinese community, organizing many activities, and had done a lot of volunteer work to help immigrant families. She had lived with her daughter and moved to her son's home after his son moved out. She believes that having your own home is best:

Living with children for a long time, conflicts are inevitable. If the children give you a long face [don't like you], you have to put up with it. I'm getting older, often forgetting to turn off the furnace or the water, and so on, and I don't even notice it. The children do not talk to me politely. I have to endure it.

She thinks it best to keep "a distance of a bowl of water" from the offspring (other participants named it "a distance of a bowl of soup" (i.e., that soup will not turn cold if transferred from place to place). She had applied for a seniors' home but turned it down when one became available. Her daughter did not want her to move out, telling her: "We'd have to drive to take care of you if you need something..." She has applied again and is still waiting. She said that she would move out as soon as a place became available this time:

I don't quarrel with the children. If you start quarrelling, there will be a second quarrel, a third one ... Sometimes I pretended that I didn't hear and didn't answer their questions; if I couldn't answer, I said I didn't hear; if they were unhappy, I didn't talk ... I have managed to endure any conflict. Endurance may be wise, but is it good for the elderly? I doubt that it is!

She feels uncomfortable living with offspring, because they have nothing to say to her and do not talk much at home. The grandchildren are born and educated in Canada, and they do not have a strong sense of family, let alone speak with her much. She observed that aging has changed: it

used to be ‘raising children to prepare for old age,’ but now, with people living longer, to 80 or 90, even the offspring are old by then. How can they serve you?

The experiences shared by these two parent participants and many others demonstrate that living together and housework have kept them from leisure and self-improvement, restricting their mobility, decision-making, and autonomy, easily leading to unhappy relations. The last can even lead to EAN. The PGP program frames PGPs as dependants – requiring their sponsoring children to take care of them – but turns them into caregivers! This shows embedded frictions in neoliberal governance between its practices and results.

Some parent participants pointed out that they prefer being on their own mainly because they do not want to burden offspring. For example, parent participant no. 15, a woman, does not agree that parents choose separate accommodations because of family conflict. In her view, living apart can free both parties, especially by giving children the private space they need. She repeatedly said that she did not want to burden them: “We [she and her husband] don’t put much financial burden on the children. We exchanged our retirement salary into Canadian dollars every time we returned to China.” She complained that the law allowed them to bring in only up to \$20,000 (\$10,000 per person) each time. They do not receive OAS/GIS yet, but when it starts, they plan to give it to the children for their living expenses. Understandably, she has harmonious relations with her daughter-in-law, as she really wants to be independent and does not intervene in the children’s matters. She has been keen to avoid relying on them and has remained financially independent and done childcare and all the housework.

Public versus Private Housing

Only several sponsored parents or sponsoring offspring could afford to and did buy or rent a home for the parents to live in. Most have applied or will apply for government-subsidized

seniors' housing but may have concerns about it. As we saw above, some interviewees have stereotypical views about these facilities (e.g., they are all low-end), and many criticize the long waits for accommodation. Parent participant no. 12 complained about the facilities themselves. She and her husband want to live on their own, but visited several seniors' homes and found the units very small. Her husband (parent participant no. 13) wants to be close to the children's home because of challenges with language, driving, and so on. This couple would love to rent an apartment or (town)house near their daughter's house, but cannot afford to.

Similarly, several interviewees found the seniors' home too far from the children. For example, one daughter-in-law -- offspring participant no. 12 -- reported that her sponsored parents-in-law had applied for a place but did not want to move out: "It is inconvenient. Too far away. They cannot drive and need us to buy vegetables and other materials for their small food-catering business. A small townhouse nearby is best for them, but we cannot afford it." Other parent participants hope to live in a seniors' home not too far from offspring so they can obtain help but not bother the children too much. Those who purchased or rented all live close to the children. Participants' concerns reflect the structural dearth of accessible and suitable housing for seniors and suggest the need for a more supportive and effective system. According to a report by the Council on Aging of Ottawa (2008), "a limited supply of rental apartments, significant increases in house prices and property taxes, few supportive housing services, unregulated retirement residences, a restricted supply of social housing, the inadequacy of shelter accommodation and a lack of alternative housing for seniors with special needs" are challenges facing seniors (p. 8) Also, some participants know little about the subject, and others lack confidence in institutional living.

Some interviewees expressed other concerns. Parent participant no. 22 opined: “The atmosphere in the seniors’ home is not good. It’s all older people. Today someone is seriously ill, and tomorrow somebody leaves [dies], and it feels as if we are walking towards the grave.” Several worried about the services. Parent participant no. 10 explained: “Old people smell, and outsiders will dislike them. Care from outsiders is not as good as care from your own children.” This widowed mother commented that her daughter and son-in-law treated her well, but she still had worries, and she sighed: “Life is as unpredictable as the weather and needs a backup plan.” She has not sold her house in China or transferred her assets to her daughter; otherwise, she said: “there would be no good result.”

Several participants also thought it unwise to give or transfer everything (e.g., money, property) to offspring and had not sold their properties in China. Seemingly they do not want to rely completely on the children and are still prepared to count on themselves. Doing so offers them more security and peace of mind; they reject their assigned role of dependant and want to control their own life.

Financial Independence and Housing

Financial sufficiency seems crucial to sponsored PGPs’ quality of life and promotes peaceful coexistence with children. Some parent participants emphasized its value for both sides if they share a roof and noted that financial shortfalls for either side may cause conflict. For parent participant no. 12, varied factors unsettle relations, but especially financial dependence either way. Citing her university classmate’s unhappy relations with her son and daughter-in-law, she explains that conflict is likely if the offspring do not have a stable job or decent income. Her husband (parent participant no. 13) agreed, stressing that the basic issue for a family is finances, and conflict is likely if parents are completely dependent. He thinks the maxim about “raising

children to prepare for old age” is wrong. Even without financial problems, sharing a roof would cause disagreement:

I am very carefree, and my son-in-law is meticulous; we have different views on the education of [grand]children and other things, plus we seniors have high self-esteem. For example, once, when I bought green onions, I thought they were two bunches for \$2.50; my son-in-law told me the price was three for \$2.50. It was not a big deal, but I made a mistake. I missed one bunch, and I felt bad. Small things affect my mood.

Both wife and husband are in their early 80s and retired – a researcher and a professor, respectively, with decent pensions from China – but they still cannot afford to buy a home in their daughter’s city. Though not under financial pressure, they still feel the inconvenience of living with their daughter and her family.

Their daughter (no. 3 offspring participant) commented: “We live together, but we have our own lives; both sides are financially independent, and the parents keep their independence under our care.” Her parents were not a financial burden, as they insist on going with them to the supermarket two or three times a month to pay for groceries, but she and her husband had to adjust their home. They gave her parents the master bedroom upstairs and moved their son upstairs to a separate room; she and her husband live in the walk-out basement; all family activities take place on the first floor.

In the daughter’s view, the more independent the elderly, the happier they are. Housing seems to be her family’s biggest challenge and causes the most domestic conflict. She believes that ideally her parents should live on their own but close – perhaps in a nearby apartment or small house. She had not seriously considered a seniors’ home or apartment, but her mother inquired about it herself and was not satisfied with the size and living conditions. The daughter

told me that she strives to maintain her family's original quality of life, but their home still needs to be adjusted: their son is growing up and needs more space. She concluded that sponsorship involves sacrifices on both sides, and everyone needs to be prepared. Currently, the five of them get along well. She worries about what to do if one day her parents cannot take care of themselves. She is not ready for that and said she needs to do more research.

Her husband (no. 5 offspring participant) reported that the arrival of his parents-in-law did not affect him and his wife financially, and the parents even supported them financially. However, the newcomers are aging (both in their 80s), and their health is the biggest concern for him and his wife. They let the parents walk their son to and from school but not help with other things. He elaborated: "The safety of the elderly is the most important thing. Don't let them get injured and have to stay in bed. That is troublesome. Not getting sick is the greatest help."

He observed that parent immigrants sacrifice many things: their mobility radius shrinks, and co-residence limits their freedom and independence: "Her father has stayed upstairs except for meals. I told her parents, 'Just treat this as your own home,' but he acts as if he were a guest and is so careful not to affect our lives. Her mother is a bit self-centred and does whatever she wants, often sitting in the living-room and checking her phone." He thinks that her parents would be better off living on their own, but not too far away. He laughed that when his wife disagreed with her mother and tried to correct her, the mother complained that there was no freedom of speech and clamoured to move out: "But we cannot afford to buy another house! I have treated them well, and if they are still unsatisfied, there's not much more we can do." In this family, both sides are fairly well off. The daughter has a stable job, and her husband runs a small business. Both parents are retired senior intellectuals, pulled in decent salaries, and receive quite large

pensions from China. At the time of my interview, they landed in Canada for three years and have not qualified for OAS/GIS yet.

This family's experiences reflect key factors for harmonious relations while sharing a roof and for handling its challenges. The sponsored parents have remained independent mentally, financially, and practically; the children are very filial, yet the parents are seldom involved in their matters; both parties are quite independent, despite living under one roof. Yet both sides face minor conflicts, inconveniences, and restraints, and both want more living space and separate housing. Although the parents are quite affluent – above average for sponsored PGPs – this family still cannot afford separate housing for them. As well, their future and health worry both sides.

Age, Health, and Housing

Age and health substantially affect housing choices for sponsored PGPs. They can influence both PGPs' desire for and the reality of their independence, no matter their financial status. Although most interviewees favour separate housing, some pointed out that what is suitable depends on family situation. For example, parent participant no. 23, male, stated that even though sound finances and independence are very important, each family's circumstances and everyone's temperament differ, so housing should reflect that. His wife (parent participant no. 22) agreed and provided an example:

A friend finally got the seniors' housing they applied for and moved out. Her husband needs kidney dialysis every day, and the water for it is very heavy. She is also fragile, and it is a hard task for her. Before they moved out, their daughter could help her, but now she has to do it herself. They need help and cannot handle it if things go wrong. She said to me they admire us, as both of us are in good health.

Due to aging and declining health, sponsored PGPs may face the complexities of later life, especially medical-related challenges that can burden not only them but also offspring. My interviews suggest that poor health can challenge all parties. The parent participant (no. 15) whose husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease has been under great stress:

I had considered returning to China. I have given up the idea now because, if I went there, I would not be able to take care of my husband by myself, and there are fewer benefits and care support in this regard. The children also indicated that if we did that, they would worry about us and have to fly over to visit us, which is even more inconvenient.

She is very grateful for Canada's long-term care system and feels lucky that the children also treat her well.

It seems that even for sponsored PGPs with robust finances and very filial children, once they can no longer take care of themselves, they may need the state's collective protection and social support as well. The PGP program's extending the undertaking to 20 years inevitably exacerbates hardship, especially for families with fewer resources.

I find that sponsored PGPs have different needs as they age. For those in their 60s and 70s still able to take care of themselves, separate housing is beneficial, but in the 80s many start to lose that capacity. If their spouses are still alive, they may still be able to look after each other, or, when something happens to one of them, the other can request help. However, widowed PGPs may face more challenges. For example, the oldest parent participant (no. 25), 87, has applied for a nursing home but worries that if she lives alone nobody may know even if she died. We discussed "aging in place," in which nurses and social workers can serve at home, but she was afraid that the children would not agree because they do not want outsiders in the house. She

had been very active in the local Chinese community and volunteered for a long time, but in recent years, she told me: “I could not do volunteer jobs anymore, and could not take buses to community activities, and sometimes the children drove me, but I could not keep up and just sat there watching.”

The lived experience of sponsored PGPs illustrates how severe illness or advanced age can necessitate more specialized attention. Imposing the burden of care solely on offspring may prove inadequate, potentially leaving them very vulnerable. Accordingly, my study calls for a more compassionate and supportive PGP immigration policy and for age- and health-sensitive services tailored to their distinct needs.

The Importance of Independent Living: Well-being, Dignity, and Housing

Parent participants who already live apart from offspring all stressed the value of independence. Parent participant no. 21, who lives with his wife in a house they bought, emphasizes that that decision determines their quality of life and grounds their independence. They live not far from their son’s house, so can provide or receive timely “mutual help” when necessary. The arrangement gives both sides freedom and personal space. As a leader of a Chinese seniors’ club, he believes that sharing a roof causes many problems. It restricts PGPs’ agency and mobility, typically leaves them no place and dignity at home, and may lead to EAN. He commented that his role in the family has not been affected: he is financially independent, leads his own life, and can make his own decisions.

For both sides, this family is an ideal case of satisfactory reunification. The parents want independence and deliberately keep a distance and live as they wish and with satisfaction. Financially, they neither depend on the offspring nor support them; they care about them but are not actively involved in their lives, and when they are needed, they go all out to help. In the same

way, they manage their lives by themselves and ask the children for help only when essential. Both sides are relaxed and happy, disturbing each other very little.

The sponsored parents are both in their late 60s. The father was the CEO of a major culture and entertainment company before retirement and has means. The mother also has a good pension. The sponsoring son and daughter-in-law have stable and decent jobs and their own purchased home. The parents have a comfortable, satisfying, and fulfilling existence, dwell in their own house, have hobbies, are active in the Chinese community, and get along very well with their daughter-in-law.

This family's experience shows how independence can benefit both sides. However, it is not typical, because most sponsored PGPs don't possess such substantial finances. The sponsored father also owns and drives a car, a rarity among sponsored PGPs. He is also much younger than most of his counterparts and immigrated to Canada shortly after retirement when he had just turned 60. The state may more warmly welcome such "supracitizens" (Aas, 2011, p. 340), a group of people who are privileged and enjoy a much higher level of mobility than other people based on economic, political, educational and cultural resources they possess (p.340), but most sponsored PGPs, especially those from the global South, are vulnerable and need state support as they age, at least its equal treatment if it cannot support them more.

Several other families have similar situations: for example, both sides don't face financial pressure, but some parents like to participate in the children's lives or depend on them emotionally or mentally; others may lack hobbies and tie their lives to the children's; and yet others overlap with the children financially. All these situations tend to cause intergenerational conflict and decrease parents' satisfaction with life.

The PGP program constructs sponsored PGPs as dependent, which can force the mingling of their lives with their sponsors and prevent their self-reliance and -government. Sharing a roof especially can engender bad relations, crowding, precarious conditions, and diminished agency, autonomy, and independence, reducing quality of life and well-being.

Generally speaking, most sponsored PGPs in my study who prefer to live on their own have a strong desire for independence, live independently, separate the children's family from themselves, and avoid involvement in the children's lives. They usually have achieved more independence, better intergenerational relations, and a more satisfying life. Their preference for their own home does not necessarily mean a child's lack of filial piety or poor relations between generations; rather it can be a rational decision that indicates strong agency and autonomy to run their own lives and make Canada their home. My findings align with the observation of Gao and colleagues (2021): "The sense of home ... is tied into feelings of comfort, safety, freedom, relaxation and a sense of control"; in such a space, "individuals should have the ability to carry out their activities without obtaining permission from others" (p. 2).

Many sponsored PGPs demonstrate control of own life, freedom, and independence. For example, parent participant no. 1 is a mother whose husband died more than 20 years ago and who has lived with her daughter's family since before immigration. She appears to be very close with her daughter and grandson; her daughter cares about her, and her grandson loves her very much. However, she would still prefer to live on her own:

Although my daughter is very filial and her house is large, I still hope to have a place of my own. After all, the children's house is not mine. Having my own home will enable more initiatives. The important thing for me is not to bother the children too much, and I will be more comfortable in my own space. Being together under one roof every day, no

matter how good a relationship is, friction is inevitable ... It's best to live separately, and the children can come frequently to visit. Short-term contact will make both sides happier.

This mother has already applied for a seniors' home and hopes to move soon. She is keen to be independent, wants to control her own life, and hates to burden others, including the children.

I also interviewed her daughter (offspring participant no. 4), who sees her mother as a forceful personality, strong-willed and optimistic, and very independent. She mentioned that they also quarrel sometimes, but over trivial matters. Her mother never intervenes in her major events and decisions. In turn, she also respects her mother's decision:

I know that my mother has made a conscious distinction: 'This is the daughter's home, not mine.' I understand her decision. Mom is getting older, and she wants to live at her own pace. When her grandsons grew up, she didn't feel much needed by us anymore, so she wanted to move out. She just wanted to have her own place. She said to me, 'How can I live with you all my life!'

For this daughter, approval for her mother's apartment seems slow in coming, but she considers it very important to her mother's well-being, as this is what she wants. The experience of this family suggests strongly that many sponsored PGPs may seek, besides the basics, intangibles such as convenience, comfort, relaxation, a sense of control, and enjoyment of life. These are worthy goals for an individual with agency and dignity and constitute self-government: maximizing and fostering life.

Similarly, parent participant no. 4, female, has been residing with her daughter, whose house is large, but she would prefer to be on her own. Although their living together does not affect either of them much, she still believes that separate housing is ideal: "The elderly and

children have different requirements for food – for example, soft or hard. Schedules for work and rest are also different: young people go to bed late and get up late, the elderly usually go to bed early and get up early, so it is best to live by yourself and have an independent space.”

These PGPs’ perspectives suggest that the PGP program underestimates their agency and autonomy. The majority want to live independently and have tried to remain self-reliant financially. By identifying them as dependants, the program assumes that they are not prudent citizens and that depriving them of social services and OAS/GIS will force them to act responsibly and be self-reliant, reflecting that Canada’s immigration regime remains racialized and racializing. In addition, these PGPs’ remarks make it clear that OAS/GIS can or does really help them. For the majority, OAS/GIS represents their only extra resource/income to help them meet their basic needs in Canada, a country with high life expectancy, as well as allowing them to enjoy their own roof and family peace. The program’s disempowering them damages their capacity for self-government and dignity, which reflects neoliberal friction: claims to promote self-reliance, yet forces dependence.

Conclusion

Intergenerational relations and housing arrangements directly affect sponsored Chinese PGPs’ well-being and satisfaction with life. My findings make clear that those who want and achieve independence usually can maintain sound relations with the younger generation, appropriate housing, and satisfaction with life. They are usually happier than their counterparts who rely mentally and emotionally on offspring. The independent ones, especially if they are well off and live on their own, usually lead a more satisfying life and have better family relations than those who rely financially on children and live with them. Relations between generations affect PGPs’ preferences vis-à-vis housing, and vice versa. PGPs’ having healthy finances and/or

strongly filial offspring fosters harmonious relations and desired housing arrangements for them. Age and health can affect PGPs' desire for and actual independence. The PGP program's forcing dependence on them, especially through its denial of OAS/GIS, makes life harder for PGPs, deepens the friction between their desire for and actual independence, weakens their agency, and undermines their autonomy, limiting their government of the self, satisfaction with life, and overall well-being. The PGP program as a governmental tool falls short of fulfilling the full function of biopolitics – fostering the population's well-being by enhancing public welfare. In terms of family reunification, the state's performance may constitute only a kind of “dependent biopolitics” – shortening the spatial distance between sponsored parents and offspring and forcing the sponsors to support their basic needs.

Dependent biopolitics as a neoliberal governance technique can exist alongside other biopolitical formations – they may even share ‘family resemblances’ by identifying neoliberal elements as essentially neoliberal (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2009, p. 21). Although some scholars may charge governmentality with homeostasis, Rose and colleagues point out: “To describe certain techniques or even programs as neo-liberal indicates their lineage and provides a point of family resemblance with other postsocial governance” (p. 21). In their view, “the assembled nature of government always suggests rationalization -- the process of rendering the various elements internally consistent -- is never a finished process” (pp. 21-22).

Governmentality emphasizes the contingent and invented and empirically maps governmental rationalities and techniques (Rose, O'Malley, & Valverde, 2009, p. 24). Dependent biopolitics as a creative governance apparatus that targets sponsored PGPs, intertwined with other stigmatizing dynamics such as ageism, racism, and worthiness in the state's power relations, not only enables the state to download its collective responsibility onto

immigrant families, but also justifies its othering and discriminatory practices on sponsored older immigrants by problematizing their age, health, and living ability. Depriving sponsored PGPs of social assistance and OAS/GIS can engender EAN, poverty, and other harmful problems.

Therefore I concur with some scholars' argument that neoliberal biopolitics may not kill life but rather choke it (Tazzioli, 2021). I conclude that the PGP program has not fostered life but choked it, highlighting the neoliberal friction in the governance of sponsored older immigrants.

Chapter 6

Migrant Agency: Challenges, Adaptation, and Resistance

Studies demonstrate that migrants can experience struggle and demonstrate agency throughout their journeys, from deciding to leave till settlement, and beyond. Migrant agency can surface both at the micro- level – in individual decisions, actions, and performances – and at the meso- and macro- levels – in group acts, community building, and social movements.

Mainwaring (2016) positions migrant agency not as a simple choice, but as involving habit, imagination, and judgment. Judgment serves as the central pillar connecting past experience, present action, and future imagination, and it does so by consciously creating space for manoeuvring and negotiating mobility with the state and non-state actors. She focuses on the practical and daily experiences of migrants and stresses the relational and social properties of agency (p. 293), but she suggests that, in aggregate, migrants' performance and acts are politically powerful, unsettling, even transformational vis-à-vis state power and promotion of rights (p. 303).

Though facing all kinds of challenges and hardships after immigration, the sponsored Chinese parents interviewed for this thesis have manifested their migrant agency and resistance to forced dependence. The key question directing my discussion and analysis in this chapter is: What do migrants' agency and resistance in their government of the self tell us about neoliberal governmentality?

In its examination of older immigrants' experiences, the literature concentrates on their hardships and challenges and seldom on their positive attitude, strategies, and active adaptation and resistance. My study fills the gap by not only examining how their life is subordinated to the

state's power but also by analysing their performance of agency and autonomy to challenge systemic power. In chapter 5, I discussed their agency and resistance to forced dependence by pursuing independent housing. In this chapter, I examine and highlight their agency in fracturing situations – their struggles, concerns, perspectives, suggestions, and adaptation strategies – and prioritize their resistance against framing as dependent and forced dependence. I focus mainly on their daily challenges and major concerns as they develop strategies both to adapt and to resist, and we look at the re-entry by some of them into the labour market and their participation and leadership in building their local Chinese community, both of which demonstrate their resistance to forced dependence.

Adaptation and Resistance: Daily Challenges and Concerns

As for daily life, many sponsored Chinese parents reported regular and structured lives, featuring routine activities such as caring for grandchildren, attending English classes, participating in Chinese seniors' clubs, visiting libraries and community-service centres, cooking, housekeeping, walking in parks, exercising, gardening, and fishing. For most of them, their biggest daily challenges involve language and transportation, and the language barrier has limited their other capacities. Just a few can engage in basic English communication, and only a couple of them can drive. They need the children's help for shopping, even those who can drive due to language barrier. Because of language barriers, many of them can walk only near their homes because street signs are opaque to them, and many cannot take buses or subways, unable to read directions and lists of stops and fearing becoming lost and troubling offspring. Some cannot communicate with neighbours and maintain only a narrow social circle of Chinese-speaking immigrants or just family.

Parent participant no. 21, male, who can drive and do grocery shopping by himself in Canada still faces challenges caused by language barrier: he worries about explaining in English his symptoms when he's ill. The majority of parent participants have a family doctor who can speak Chinese, and the children typically accompany them during appointments. However, the young companions are not allowed in some areas of hospitals. For example, parent participant no. 16, female, reported: "When I cook green beans at home, I cut my hand. I went to the hospital for stitches. The doctor wouldn't let my daughter in. I couldn't understand what the doctor said. I had to use gestures, which was very inconvenient."

Several parent participants stressed that the language barrier hinders their engagement with and integration into the local Canadian community. Parent participant no. 12, female, stated: "I don't know the language, I cannot communicate with others and make friends with the local people. The neighbours talk to me. I can only say 'Hello' and nod," Parent participant no. 19, male, concurred: "I can drive by myself, but I can't speak the language! I can't communicate, so I can't make new local friends." He also observed that some PGPs, especially men, have little to do in Canada and feel lonely and isolated, especially at the start. Parent participant no. 20 cited a popular mantra among Chinese immigrants: "In Canada, we have good mountains, good water, and good loneliness!"

These lived experiences align with numerous studies on older immigrants (e.g., Da & Garcia, 2015; Zhou, 2013a; 2020): PGPs find acculturation more arduous than do their younger counterparts. Barriers in language and transportation and differences in cultural and social norms and way of life all make it even harder to adapt. Loss of social networks and lack of social support also hinder their integration.

Yet many parent participants have demonstrated a high level of agency and autonomy, developing strategies to adapt and clever ways to handle challenges on their own. For example, parent participant no. 24, female, 77, believes that PGPs should have a “consciousness of independence” and do what they can do by themselves rather than bothering the children:

Don't be afraid of getting lost. You can write down your home address and children's phone numbers and take them with you. I'm getting much braver because Canadians are very nice! They stop and take the time to draw maps for you, even walk you to where you're going. We older people must have the courage to do things.

She surprised me:

I took buses a couple of days before my [hospital] appointment to find the way and get familiar with the route. I don't understand English, so I wrote down my symptoms and medical conditions that I wanted to tell the doctor in Chinese the night before, and then I used Google Translation to translate it all into English.

She was proud that what she did by herself was often better than the children's arrangements.

For example,

I went to the hairdresser by myself one day; although I could not speak English, I said what I wanted using pictures on the shop wall and in the magazines, and I communicated with the hairdresser by gestures, and she did my hair beautifully. I was very happy I could make decisions by myself, and this increased my confidence in myself.

In her view, “Everything is a learning process. If you encounter difficulties, you should find a way to solve them. Don't be afraid.” Her experiences demonstrate her remarkable agency and autonomy and her determination to avoid dependence. She navigates challenges in language and transportation, demonstrating her resilience. Her ability to make decisions on her own develops

her self-confidence and makes her happy. Her independent approach creates her deep satisfaction with her life in Canada.

Many sponsored PGPs learn English to deal with language barriers. For example, parent participant no. 1, female, 74, had to rely on her daughter to go out, so has been learning English for almost 10 years. She attends classes from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. every day from Monday to Thursday, and her proficiency has reached ESL (English as a Second Language) 6 (advanced), which is a great achievement for an older person. This success has significantly improved her life. For instance, she can use simple words and sentences to tell nurses how she feels and what she needs after surgery; she also can take buses and go where she wants without worries about becoming lost.

Besides learning English, many parent interviewees study online and/or attend classes at local libraries or Chinese community centres to acquire and enhance skills, including computer use. For instance, parent participant no. 22, female, 77, mastered use of Instagram, Skype, QQ, and Zoom through both a cellphone and a computer. She also engages online sometimes with English-language materials, using translation apps. She described daily life:

I feel fulfilled every day. I feel that time flies and there is not enough of it. I surf the internet every day, watch TV, and chat with my son. I have eight sisters, and I often video-talk with them via WeChat. I don't feel lonely. My husband is even busier. We regularly go to the nearby community fitness centre to play table tennis and badminton so we can stay healthy. We are well known among our friends for being good cooks. We make zongzi, dumplings, and bread and often share them with friends. My schedule is full, and I don't think it is hard to pass the time.

She and her husband (82 years old) live on their own in a townhouse purchased by their son. She proactively navigates challenges, maintains an independent life, continues to learn, and cultivates her own social networks and pursuits. Her independence grounds her meaningful and fulfilling life.

Age does not seem to prevent sponsored PGPs from striving for independence. For instance, the oldest male parent participant (no. 7), 86, moved into a seniors' apartment three years ago by his own decision. He describes his residence, emphasizing its suitability for him and its customized design for seniors – for instance, full carpeting and handrails in the corridors for safety, free physical examinations, and many get-together meals and events. He emphasized that he moved NOT because he became estranged from his daughter, but instead, because it can help him stay independent, become more active, and live longer by doing housework. He elaborated:

My place is not far from my daughter's, only five or six minutes by car. I go to the supermarket by myself in summer, and the children drive me in winter. I take a bus there, and I don't need to change buses. I usually stay there for an hour; I walk around which is good exercise – it helps to delay aging, and it helps mental function ... Living with children, they would help with many things. Having nothing to do, the function of organs will degenerate.

He emphasized that his pensions from China and Canada (OAS/GIS) enable him to pay for this government-subsidized seniors' unit by himself. With a wealth of knowledge and a background as a researcher in a distinguished research institute in China, he values his independence, which brings him dignity, freedom, peace of mind, and a chance to maintain the values he cherishes.

He informed me that he doesn't need English and has functioned well without it:

I don't have many opportunities to communicate with non-Chinese speakers. I go to the nearby Chinese supermarket to buy food and sometimes go to dine at the nearby Chinese restaurants. I have five or six close friends; all are Chinese, and we talk about everything. When the weather is nice, we get together. We hold a 'chat event' each week. There is no language barrier in my daily life.

His unique, creative approach to life demonstrates his remarkable adaptation, agency, and autonomy. He resists dependence, and his friendships help overcome the isolation and loneliness that the language barrier might cause. Taking a bus to the supermarket and using shopping to stay fit provide him with food, activity, exercise, and fun. His independence makes his daily life controllable, active, enjoyable, meaningful, and dignified.

Similarly, the oldest (87) female parent participant no. 25, wants to remain independent. She complained about living with offspring:

They [the children] are not at ease with what I do, saying that I can't wash the dishes clean and that I am wasting water! I sit at home like a log and feel useless. I feel bad... Older people can help by doing some housework, and staying active can prevent Alzheimer's, but the children don't let me do that. I keep thinking: what will I be when I can't do anything? A person's life has value even when they are aging. We keep healthy, not dragging down the government, not troubling the children – that is the value of our life! As long as I am not a burden and making an effort to age a little slower, I am contributing!

Her words strongly implied her resistance to dependence. Like the oldest male parent participant (no. 7), she shows that old age may mean a decline in physical strength, flexibility, and mobility, but not necessarily in agency, wisdom, autonomy, and desire to be self-reliant and independent.

Being able to control one's own life and live with dignity is a primary human right and demonstrates a lasting attachment to life. One's aging should not be an excuse for others, including the government, to constrain and refute this pursuit.

Additionally, the majority of my parent interviewees have maintained a circle of friends and family through WeChat, the most popular social-media platform among Chinese all over the world. Despite any isolation they may feel, many seek connections with Chinese peers in their communities and quickly establish a new social network, showcasing their agency and adaptability.

Re-entering the Labour Market

Sponsored PGPs are cast by the PGP program as non-economic who are unable to work and are dependent on offspring. However, some, especially the younger ones, have looked for jobs and re-entered the labour market. I see this as action against and resistance to forced dependence.

Parent participant no. 26, a woman, 79, told me that she had worked on a factory's assembly line shortly after immigrating 20 years ago. Several other female parent participants reported having been paid nannies. Three parent participants (two males and one female) were still working. Parent participant no. 16, female, 58 – my youngest parent interviewee – reported that she and her husband began to work and pay taxes five days after they landed in Canada:

I started [work at a garment factory] at 8 a.m. and finished at 6 p.m. I got up at 6 a.m. to make breakfast. Then I walked for 50 minutes to the factory. Sometimes I ran and fell, especially when it rained: I fell, got up, and ran again. When it snowed heavily, my co-worker gave me a ride, and I paid her for that; it took about 10 minutes to the factory.

When I interviewed her, she was not going to the factory to work, but helping her son and daughter look after their children at home, so both her daughter and daughter-in-law could work. The factory sometimes sent piecework to her home, and an employee came to pick it up when it was done. She rarely goes out or participates in activities, but occasionally meets up with friends. Lack of time principally, and also language barriers, restrict her mobility. She said that she would not have immigrated if her life in China had been good, emphasizing that she does not want to burden anyone, including the children and Canada and would go wherever she can make a living. Clearly she did not immigrate to seek welfare and does not want to be dependent. She is self-reliant and responsible, and she also pays taxes and helps take care of her grandchildren.

Parent participant no. 6, male, 66, has worked full time at a well-known Chinese superstore in Canada. He is happy to be supporting his family. About a month after immigrating, he started to look for a job and became a helper at the restaurant where his daughter worked. His main duty was cutting meat: “I worked eight hours a day, cutting 200–300 kilograms of beef tongue. I was paid \$14 per hour, and it was not bad. Later, when the Covid pandemic started, I stopped working and received EI [employment insurance].” Although the job was not easy for someone his age, and the pay quite low, he is pleased to contribute rather than relying on his daughter.

Because his daughter’s home in Toronto became too crowded after he and his wife moved in, the whole family moved to a larger place in a city with cheaper housing. A friend of his daughter told them that a Chinese supermarket was recruiting, so he applied and was hired after an interview. After one month’s training and three months’ probation, he became a full-time employee. He recalled and lamented:

It was quite a challenge. I needed to move and carry 2–3 tons of goods every day, and I would then sort, stack, distribute, and deliver the goods as required. I recorded my steps – more than 18,000 in seven hours, equivalent to more than 10 kilometres ... The goods were all labelled in English, which was the biggest challenge for me!

He made a lot of effort to remember the English names of various goods. Besides using both brain and eyes, he asked colleagues from various departments to help him check the goods list:

I am very happy that, through my own efforts and the assistance of my supervisor and colleagues, my work has won the respect of everyone. I received unanimous praise from men and women, old and young; they all gave me a thumbs up! I feel so happy that everyone has confirmed and respected me!

Before he found that job, he had hesitated once, doubting his ability to find work at his age, but when he thought that it could increase the family income, help his daughter pay the mortgage, and facilitate better education for his granddaughters, he gained incentives and increased self-confidence. His experience demonstrates his agency and sense of responsibility to his family. It also reflects the realities confronting many sponsored PGPs – disadvantaged in language, age, energy, and social networks and needing to try harder to find work and keep a job than younger and local people.

Parent participant no. 9, male, 73, has driven a school bus part time for a primary school in Canada for almost 10 years. He is well off, living in his own purchased house, and owns investment properties. Moreover, he has supported his daughter financially. He sought work primarily to stay engaged and contribute to the community. There were four or five primary schools nearby, all short of bus drivers, as it is hard to find part-time workers for the long haul. He highlighted personal aspirations and self-sufficiency, noting that he has worked and received

a steady income since immigrating. Both of his investment properties are rented by international students. His wife cooks for the students and watches out for their well-being:

People who come into this world need to work hard. One is never too old to learn and to build a future. One should not retire and then do nothing. Since immigrating, I have worked hard and managed my properties. I sold my houses in China and purchased others in Canada, and my assets have doubled.

The experiences of these sponsored, working parents suggest that many of the PGP participants do not rely on their sponsors or the government, but assist their sponsoring offspring financially and contribute to family, community, and society. Their conduct demonstrates their agency, autonomy, and ability to govern themselves, refuting the stereotypical portrayal and challenging the treatment as a welfare-seeker and burden. Their experiences and conduct suggest that the state's framing and positioning of sponsored PGPs, especially from the global South, is based on racialized, hegemonic knowledge and misconceptions. The PGP program, particularly its undertaking/dependence, reflects an immigration regime and neoliberal governance still racialized and racializing.

Additionally, these findings reveal the hardship and difficulty PGPs face in the labour market. Even if they can obtain a job, it is usually secondary or peripheral labour that local people may not want. Their lived experience exposes “job-stealers” and “welfare-diluters” as racialized myths leveraged by populism and welfare nationalism. These myths generate unwarranted fear and serve to justify discriminatory treatment of racialized immigrants. They spur more stringent immigration policies aimed at excluding those deemed undesirable, as well as helping to frame social issues as ethnic problems.

When discussing re-entry into the labour market, the literature on older immigrants usually presents it in a negative light. For example, Ferrer and colleagues (2020), on financial literacy among older immigrants in Alberta, mention that two of their interviewees, though retired, obtained paid work, and another four intended to do so if they could find suitable employment. The scholars view the phenomenon as a manifestation of sponsored PGPs' hardships and their work as a passive means of survival. My study uses a more positive lens, valuing and highlighting their agency, autonomy, and active pursuit of self-reliance and independence, thus enriching and extending the study of older immigrants.

Moreover, many parents who are too old to work or lack appropriate skills are still trying to ease their dependence on offspring. For instance, some have chosen to return to China for dental treatment to save money, sparing offspring sizable expense. Some do not even tell children about seemingly minor ailments unless they become unbearable. The mantra "I don't want to trouble the children" is the most repeated I heard during my interviews.

In summary, many sponsored PGPs are steadfastly averse to dependence. They are able to make decisions independently, pursue their own needs, harness their own judgment and skills, and adapt to often-trying external conditions. Their conduct exemplifies their agency, autonomy, and resistance to imposed dependence. In essence, their lives have not been characterized by dependence; rather, they are conscientious individuals actively pursuing self-governance, -reliance, and -responsibility, even in the face of aging and declining health.

Community Activities and Community Building

Many sponsored PGPs demonstrate their agency and autonomy by reaching out to seek support from and contribute to the local Chinese community, rather than depending on offspring, and some are helping to build community. For example, my earliest parent participant (no.1),

female, not only takes part in activities organized by the community's library but also arranges activities with her friends, such as meal-sharing (potluck) parties, shopping and bus rides together, and picnics at nearby parks. To avoid burdening her daughter to drive her, she has learned how to take the bus by herself and imparts this skill to her Chinese peers. She often leaves home earlier in the morning than her daughter and is engrossed every day in various activities. For the daughter, she exemplifies remarkable self-reliance, leading an active and independent life of her own.

In my research, sponsored PGPs active in outside activities typically have a more independent, satisfying, and fulfilling life. Many, particularly those who do not feel lonely, noted how much community activities and seniors' clubs enhanced their lives and well-being. For instance, parent participant no. 18, a widow, told me that her daily life is simple, regular, and fulfilling. Besides walking her granddaughter to school, looking after the little girl's daily life, and cooking dinner for the family, she spends most of her time taking part in the activities of a Chinese seniors' club she joined many years ago. She reported that the club was set up by several sponsored PGPs and has rented activity spaces in several nearby community centres. She elaborated:

We only need to pay a membership fee of \$15 each year to participate in all activities, such as singing, dancing, playing cards, exercising, tai chi, and so on. Before the Covid pandemic, there were 300–400 members, and currently, more than 200. There are online classes every night and on weekends. Members can plug in through Zoom to learn English, computer knowledge, and names of medicines in Chinese and English through workshops, take part in lessons teaching handicrafts, and so on.

She expressed deep gratitude for the club and seemed very proud of its vegetable plot (in the community) – a government-funded project – where members take turns growing flowers and vegetables, which gives them a lot of pleasure. As well, the club distributed, during the Covid-19 pandemic, government-supplied basics such as rice, oil, masks, and hand sanitizers. It has also facilitated meaningful friendships and served as a valuable source of information for members. It made her sense the government's genuine concern for seniors. Without the club, she emphasized, her life in Canada would have been entirely different.

After our interview, I double-checked with her to confirm that the club is not sponsored by any institution, but entirely run by members. Its members elect leaders and design and organize all the activities. Sometimes the club invites volunteer experts or professionals to deliver lectures or host workshops. It enriches members' daily lives, provides them with practical information and knowledge, as well as opportunities to socialize, and connects them with the larger community and society. This cornucopia of services helps prevent their social isolation and gives them a sense of belonging, thus decreasing their dependence on offspring.

Several parent participants also noted the value of activities in the Chinese community. For instance, parent participant no. 15, female, told me that online English classes, lectures on medicine and nursing, health and wellness workshops, and explanations of seniors' policy and welfare have all empowered her, fostering a stronger connection with and deeper affection for Canada. She explained that after her husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, she felt life was hopeless, but these community activities have fuelled her desire to integrate. She said emotionally: "After attending the lectures, I found myself more motivated to engage in doing things such as household chores. My spirit was greatly boosted!"

This participant's experience resonates Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth which represents aspirational capital or nurtures the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, although facing difficulties and challenges; social capital or the networks of people and community resources can assist people of colour in varied ways, granting them a kind of sense of belonging.

Parent participant no. 21, male, who joined a Chinese seniors' club soon after immigration, commented that his daily life has been busy with club activities. He is a leader there, in charge of the choir, because in China he had been a professional symphony conductor and CEO of a sizable performing company. His daily routine centres around the choir. He remarked that he is now busier than he was in China, as the choir members are amateurs and require additional tutoring and coordination. He has organized and participated in numerous large-scale performances and cultural events within both the Chinese and broader local communities. He felt immense pride about enriching the lives of Chinese immigrants, fostering communication, and facilitating cultural exchange with local Canadians. He emphasized that his leadership and participation not only keep him occupied, which supports his physical and mental health, but also garner him respect and friendships, enabling a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Similarly, in recounting her daily life, parent participant no. 5, female, who relocated from Toronto to another city with her daughter's family, emphasized the pivotal role of the Chinese community and the significance of community building. In her current city, which has fewer Chinese immigrants, she has connected and mobilized many of them, particularly seniors, for various recreational activities: dance sessions, group exercises, and origami and paper-cutting. She told me that she and other sponsored parents and sponsoring offspring have set up a "mutual support" Chinese organization in the city.

She emphasizes that a fulfilling life does not hinge solely on sponsoring offspring and that the community represents a more dependable and robust resource. Before the move, she had been a registered volunteer with the Chinese community centre in Toronto, which she had found deeply satisfying. She commented:

If you want to lead a good life in Canada, you must rely on the community. Social workers are like our family members. We must make good use of social resources and engage in volunteer work to give back to the community. Maintain a positive attitude towards life, actively integrate into society, and embrace a beautiful old age!”

She actively engages as a giver and organizer to develop the Chinese community. This reciprocal relationship brings her great satisfaction and a strong sense of accomplishment and belonging. Several other parent participants who live in towns with fewer Chinese immigrants also prized the local Chinese seniors’ club or mutual-aid groups. They reported that older PGPs initiated and managed all these groups.

A study of refugees by Strang and Quinn (2019) reveals that dependence harms their mental health and lack of a sense of being needed “undermines self-efficacy and deprives the individual of the benefits of altruism.” I find their conclusion also applicable to sponsored PGPs. Maintaining independence and contributing to the community and society significantly bolster their self-esteem and satisfaction. By positioning and treating them as dependent, the PGP program ignores their self-esteem, efficacy, and dignity.

In summary, sponsored PGPs’ establishing seniors’ clubs and building community demonstrate their strong agency and autonomy, with some having great organizational and managerial skills. To save on welfare spending, framing them as illiterate dependants who

cannot manage their own lives, even their own basic needs, thus imposing forced dependence, is a racialized misconception and reflects the state's racializing conduct.

In my study, most sponsored parents, while facing all kinds of challenges daily, feel good about life and are able to make optimal decisions by adapting their activities and behaviour to their environment. Most seek an independent, fulfilling life, and those with social connections, hobbies, and/or personal interests typically do not feel lonely and enjoy life in Canada. These findings illuminate their strong agency in the pursuit of a meaningful life with dignity. Their efforts and initiatives, especially their self-managed groups and organizations and community building demonstrate their autonomy, capacity, and ability to govern themselves and live responsibly. Their lived experience makes it clear that the PGP program is designed and formed on misconceptions, bias, and exclusion.

Biggest Worry: Resisting Forced Dependence in Later Life

While the majority of the 26 sponsored PGPs I interviewed enjoy life, they also worry about potential dependence on offspring and the need for external support in their later years, particularly towards the end. I value their concern, placing it along with their autonomy, adaptability, and resistance, and recognize their worry as a form of resistance to enforced dependence. I respect their foresight in acknowledging these issues beforehand, viewing it as a testament to their wisdom, rational judgment, preparedness, and responsible self-government.

Most sponsored PGPs value physical self-care, which can enhance their quality of life and peace of mind. Their main concern revolves around eventually having to rely on offspring for daily functioning, which goes against their wishes, is impractical, and is far from ideal, given the issues it entails. Parent participant no. 13, male, explained:

It does not matter whether living with offspring or separately, it would be better if both [spouses] were still alive and could take care of each other. Children have their own lives and need to work, and they're out of the home eight or nine hours a day, so there is no one at home [to help]. If [we] fall ill, they can ask for a leave only for a certain period and cannot stay at home indefinitely. We may hire a part-time caregiver initially, but we need long-term care for our final stages.

For this father, relying on children for terminal care is not practical or workable. Similarly, the oldest female interviewee (parent participant no. 25), 87, who lives with offspring, reported good health, but her biggest worry was illness and losing the ability to take care of herself. She is dissatisfied with prolonged waits for family-doctor appointments. She complained about the lengthy waiting lists for seniors' homes, noting that 90 per cent of the people who qualify for a place with long-term care have cognitive impairment, and those who appear healthy have to rely on family members. She sighed:

I can bear anything and do anything that the children request of me, but I fear that I might fall sick, or get dementia. I am not afraid of a sudden serious, acute illness, but fear that my illness will take a long time and drag down the children.

Other parent participants expressed similar anxiety. Parent participant no. 2, female, said to me: "I have only one child, and he wanted to sponsor us, that is enough filial piety, and we should not cause him any more trouble."

Several parent interviewees mentioned that loss of the ability to care for themselves burdens the entire family. Parent participant no. 15, female, whose husband has Alzheimer's, told me that he frequently wanders and becomes lost, causing exhaustion and stress for her and

burdening her son's family as well. They have applied for a nursing home for him, but spaces are scarce, which is underscored by several participants.

The same worry troubles even well-off sponsored PGPs. Parent participant no. 9, male, who is affluent, lives in his own large house with his wife, has enjoyed a fulfilling life in Canada, but tells me: "We are not willing to trouble our daughter, and anyway children may not be reliable. If my wife or I cannot take care of ourselves in the future, I plan to go back to China and hire caregivers to take care of us." He believes that it's better to rely on oneself rather than on others, especially offspring.

However, the majority of sponsored PGPs cannot afford customized care. Even typical aging Canadians need public support, especially for major physical or health challenges. The statements and experiences of sponsored parents show that few of them plan to rely on offspring for their later life. Situations can spin out of their control and surpass the family's ability to handle, and this, I argue, is where the state should step in to fulfil its collective responsibilities and protect its subjects. If everything is left to the individual and their family, and they cannot fulfil it, it is not because they are being irresponsible; instead, it is the state that fails and eschews its duties. Depriving PGPs of social assistance and OAS/GIS may well result in hardship and precarity.

Conclusion

As this chapter makes clear, the majority of sponsored parents in my study exhibit a positive outlook on their life in Canada and demonstrate robust agency, autonomy, adaptation, and resistance to forced dependence in three ways – individually, in small groups, and through community engagement and building. Nonetheless they still face impediments to independence, security, and worry-free existence. Calasanti (2016) observes: "Like power relations based on

gender, race, or ethnicity, the concept of age relations conveys the ways that age serves as a social organizing principle such that different age categories gain identities and power in relation to one another” (p. 1095). She describes ageism as “the systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender” (Calasanti, 2016, p.1904, citing Butler, 1969, p. 243). Immigrant status coupled with ageism in Canadian society engenders more challenges and hardships that can harm sponsored PGPs. These challenges surpass their control and capacity, necessitating collective support for them from the state, rather than having them rely on sponsoring offspring. Based on their lived experience, I argue that the PGP program reflects embedded neoliberal friction: a state that claims to facilitate self-responsibility and -reliance among the governed fails to nurture their agency and enhance their autonomy and independence; rather, eschewing its collective responsibility, which undermines their well-being and even chokes their life.

The literature on migrants’ agency and struggles focuses on those who have not become permanent residents or lack legal status, such as refugees, asylum seekers, and other irregular migrants. Scholars look mostly at the forms of struggles and resistance that migrants encounter on route to their intended destination country, such as strategies they use against inhumane treatment and precarious conditions in detention centres or refugee camps (e.g., Ilcan, 2018; Mainwaring, 2016; Scheel, 2018). Some scholars study migrants who are already in their destination country and employ various strategies to become PRs or citizens (e.g., Engbersen & Broeders, 2009; Sigona, 2012; Wonders & Jones, 2019), but few discuss migrants’ agency and resistance after they become PRs or citizens. By adding a new group (PGPs) and studying its members’ agency and resistance, my research contributes to and extends the literature on migrant agency and enriches the study of older immigrants.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations: Independence and Aging Well in Canada

Neoliberal Governance of Sponsored PGPs: Workings and Effects

My study reveals that Canada's PGP program and its policy changes in 2014 are based on hegemonic knowledge, biases, and misconceptions of sponsored PGPs, especially those from the global South. PGPs' contributions to the settlement of immigrant families and Canadian society are ignored and exploited, which facilitates hostility towards them and increases racial discrimination and social, political, and economic inequalities and injustices.

This thesis demonstrates that the Canadian state has, for a century and a half, used immigration policy to control the demographics of its population and to realize its social, political, and economic goals. More recently, under the veil of freedom of choice and by ostensibly aligning the state's own goals with immigrants' personal needs, neoliberal strategies of promoting self-reliance, -responsibility, and -government rationalize and legitimate the state's eschewing of its collective responsibility, rendering the inequality and injustice of modern governance less explicit, subtler, even abstruse.

My research makes it clear that neoliberal governance, which is based on market values and mechanisms, entails more flexibility and grants more freedom to the governed, but it may not facilitate self-government and -responsibilization and instead can impair, even destroy, the agency and independence of the governed, which are the grounds for them to govern themselves and become self-reliant. Its seemingly cost-efficient governance quantifies and marketizes life, turning "subjects of rights" into "subjects of interests," and can be more costly in the long run because of the social problems it has engendered.

Neoliberal governmentality claims to foster life, but it is not applied equally to all groups. This thesis shows how the PGP program, especially its undertaking/dependence clause, deflates sponsored PGPs and their families' spirit of enterprise, entrepreneurialism, and self-reliance. It leads to intergenerational conflict, sometimes damaging family bonds, and inhibits the provision of appropriate housing for sponsored PGPs, especially for those less well-off. This outcome can affect their well-being and satisfaction with life, as well as deepen social problems such as EAN, malnutrition, poverty, and isolation.

Shared experiences of sponsored parents in this study illuminate the embedded frictions in neoliberal governmentality between its alleged goals of fostering life and its unfair immigration and welfare regimes and their damaging results. These neoliberal frictions manifest themselves in the lived experience of sponsored PGPs and show that neoliberal governmentality may not work well for racialized vulnerable groups such as sponsored PGPs. Its implementation and its effects indicate that Canada's immigrant governance is still racialized and racializing.

Notably, my research reveals that sponsored PGPs, in response to various challenges – especially the difficulties and hardships engendered by the PGP program, which denies them social assistance and OAS/GIS – have demonstrated their robust agency, clever strategies of adaptation, and tremendous and active resistance to forced dependence. They have done so mainly in three modes – individually; by forming small, informal groups; and by both engaging in and building community – thereby pursuing and maintaining maximal independence and dignity.

To foster their well-being and alleviate their worries, my study calls for more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable immigration and settlement policies for sponsored older immigrants,

which would benefit not only them and their families but also the state and society in the long run.

To facilitate the quality of life and well-being of sponsored PGPs in Canada, the remaining sections of this chapter look in turn at participants' perspectives on how to age well and their suggestions to sponsored PGPs, to offspring (their sponsors), and to policy-makers and service agencies; my suggestions and recommendations on facilitating PGPs' aging well based on participants' insights and my own observations. Finally, I briefly summarize my study's contributions and limitations and suggest future research.

Aging Well in Canada: Participants' Perspectives and Suggestions

With people's increasing longevity, Robert Havighurst coined the term "successful aging" in 1961 to highlight aging that goes particularly well beyond simply aging normally (Ng et al., 2011, p. 314). His concept emphasizes the social conditions that allow an individual to achieve maximum satisfaction and happiness without burdening other groups in society (Calasanti, 2016, p. 1093). Scholars invoke positive terms such as "active aging" used by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2002, "vital aging," "productive aging," and "positive aging" to refer to aging well (Ng et al., 2011, p. 314). Rowe and Kahn identified three main components of such success (Ng et al., 2011, p. 315): avoidance of disease and disability, maintenance of high physical and cognitive function, and sustained engagement in social and productive activities (Calasanti, 2016, p. 1094; Cho et al., 2015, p. 133; Ng et al., 2011, p. 313; Rowe & Kahn, 1997). According to Ng and colleagues (2011), social engagement includes close personal relationships, community involvement, and volunteering, and, in Chinese culture,

intergenerational caring and productive engagement, aimed at staying useful, are especially important to the aging well of Chinese seniors.

Rowe and Kahn claim that appropriate ‘life-style’ choices can improve aging (Calasanti, 2016, p. 1094). Calasanti (2016) finds that the successful-aging narrative, though aimed at combating ageism, may inadvertently enhance it by treating aging well as a personal choice and reinforcing a middle-age standard, as well as not challenging “the cultural devaluation of aging itself, or the fact that physical, mental, or social losses should warrant exclusion” (p. 1095). Calasanti (2016) points out that the emphasis on individual responsibility obscures the systemic bases for both ageism and social inequalities that shape access to resources to improve aging (p. 1099).

I have observed that if sponsored PGPs are to age well comfortably and with dignity in Canada, they need, besides their own efforts, support from offspring, communities (both ethnic and local), and governments (municipal, provincial, and federal). So I sought the perspectives of all participants on how sponsored PGPs can lead a happy and healthy life in Canada and asked for their suggestions and advice to each party (parents, offspring, community services, and government).

Suggestions to Sponsored PGPs

To have a happy life, the majority of PGP participants first emphasized a positive attitude and active adaptation to the new environment. Parent participant no. 10, female, elaborated: “Now that you are here, you should let yourself feel peace at where you are. Do whatever you can, and don’t expect too much! You need to adapt to the society and adapt to the new family.” Many emphasized independence, which might include maintaining a healthy body, having one’s

own circle of friends, and developing hobbies and activities. Parent participant no. 13, male, summed things up:

All in all, the most important thing is to take good care of your body. Don't get sick.

Keeping healthy not only avoids one's own suffering but also avoids troubling the children. Don't rely too much on them. The elderly should make efforts to maintain their independence, especially financial, and not give up their '*Lao Di*' [savings] and '*Lao Wo*' [property] in China. They should keep busy and lead a fulfilling life. Maintaining independence is the biggest support to children.

Other participants urged sponsored PGPs to be more open to and understanding of offspring and show respect for their way of life. These perspectives align with my study findings that mental, emotional, financial, and physical independence is key to a satisfying life for sponsored PGPs.

I observed that male parent participants emphasized independence more than their female counterparts. All the men highlighted financial independence, and some, separate housing and having things to do. Parent participant no. 6, male, believed strongly in self-management:

You must forget the past and think only about today and tomorrow. To age well, you need to manage yourself and your own things well, keep pace with the times, try to change yourself, to adapt, talk to friends more, understand the children more, and talk less if you can't get along with them.

In my study, sponsored fathers usually have stronger agency and more desire for freedom and decision-making. They seem more pursue independence than most sponsored mothers do, so when they cannot fulfil their hopes or their needs, they often feel uncomfortable. Their shortfall is usually greater than their wives'. This gender difference helps explain why typically females

seem more adaptable and indicates that immigration and its effects are gendered in terms not only of intergenerational care but also of agency and dependence.

Some participants stress building social networks and seeking support from and engagement in the local Chinese community, library, and seniors' clubs, to short-circuit loneliness and social isolation. Parent participants nos. 5, 15, and 18, all female, explained that community activities enrich their lives, and information and support from members and friends empower them and create a sense of belonging. Their comments support my observation that social connection and community building reduce dependence on children, promote psychological, emotional, and mental well-being, and facilitate integration.

Although parent participants' living conditions and experiences differ, their views on how sponsored PGPs can age well in Canada are very similar: All of them believe that they should rely only on themselves rather than on offspring. This reinforces my conclusion that a strong desire for and actual independence are essential for a satisfying life. This idea also aligns with and is confirmed by a social worker interviewee who has served immigrants in a well-known Chinese community service agency for more than 15 years:

Aging people need to rely on the community and the government – not on children – and, more importantly, on themselves! Independence is the key to happiness while aging. Not relying on children emotionally and psychologically is crucial; financial independence and a separate home are also very important. Don't live with the children! Living together is the root of family conflict, not the daughter- or son-in-law! How can seniors achieve independence when they live under other people's roof?

She observed that many seniors not only do not rely on children but assist them financially. She commented that relations between generations can be a major problem, as few sponsored PGPs

can get along well with offspring, especially under the same roof. She reported that some older immigrants asked her for help with finding separate housing because of family conflict.

This social worker's perspective supports my argument that framing sponsored PGPs as dependent on offspring does not ensure them the care and support they need, instead, can increase their challenges and hardship, poison family relations, and stir up problems that greatly affect their well-being. She also pointed out that some sponsored PGPs still hold on to Chinese traditions, not treating children's family as separate: "In Canada, it is a social responsibility: the government takes care of older people, not the children. If seniors do not actively integrate, but always revolve around the children, it will result in family conflicts and physical and mental problems."

This experienced social worker touches on a key issue: in Western culture, support for the aging population is generally seen as a social obligation of the government. Even the seniors want to age at home, it is the government that provides needed support. Why then does the PGP program turn to sponsoring offspring? I contend that the only rational explanation is that the state frames and treats sponsored PGPs, most of them from the global South, as outsiders, sub-citizens, and inferior others, undeserving of state protection.

As well, she noted that many PGPs, in order to remain independent, have applied for seniors' housing, and some moved out of the children's home after starting to receive OAS/GIS. Maintaining independence, especially financial, she believes, gives them a feeling of safety and peace of mind. She reported that some of them took on odd jobs, which gives them more freedom and dignity, as well as income. For instance, she told me, one sponsored mother was paid well for babysitting, assisting a new mother and her baby. The babysitter told her: "The feeling of being able to earn some money by myself is very different. Spending it by myself is

quite different from using money from the children. It is convenient, and I feel very comfortable and at ease spending it!” These lived experiences of sponsored parents cast them not as welfare seekers but as economic agents and contributors to society – if given an opportunity. They want self-reliance and dignity. Their conduct highlights their agency, autonomy, and resistance to forced dependence.

This veteran social worker also reported that the pension from China for some sponsored PGPs is only about \$200 a month, and some receive nothing and have to rely on offspring until OAS/GIS kicks in. For her, the 10-year wait is acceptable, as it applied to everyone, but 20 years is definitely unreasonable and really hurts some sponsored PGPs. Her observation upholds my findings that the undertaking/dependence adds extra hardship and can lead to poverty, precarity, even destitution.

This social worker also emphasized that active integration is crucial. She highlighted involvement in the community and learning new technologies, especially computer and software apps, to socialize. In her agency, as she explained:

The COVID pandemic has divided seniors into two distinct categories. During the pandemic, many activities moved online, and extra online activities were added. The elderly who can use computers and social platforms, such as Zoom, have not been affected much – their lives even become more colourful and richer – but those who don’t know how to participate often feel lonely and isolated.

My results support this observation. The PGPs engaging with new technologies, including social media, can build and extend their social networks, avoid social isolation, and obtain useful information and new skills to navigate local environments. These activities enhance their agency and independence and help them adapt and integrate. These findings align with other studies that

conclude that technologies can ease language barriers (Gao et al., 2021) and information communication technologies (ICTs) can bridge virtual and embodied social interactions, help older people adapt, and support social networks (Ho & Chiu, 2020).

Moreover, this social worker observed that volunteering and serving others make seniors feel “useful to society,” which promotes their physical and mental health. Her comment accords well with research suggesting that the sense of being needed, valued, and helpful is very important to older adults, especially because it provides social connection and opportunities for productive aging for minority older people (e.g., Xu et al., 2021). My thesis offers the same conclusion: sponsored PGPs doing volunteer work or holding a position in the Chinese community or seniors’ club find life more meaningful. They typically want independence and achieve it and are more satisfied with life.

In addressing how sponsored PGPs can age well in Canada, offspring participants offered similar suggestions, albeit from a different viewpoint. They all emphasized parents’ avoiding excessive interference in the children’s lives. The majority stressed suitable housing, recognizing that living together poses real challenges, irrespective of how fond members are of each other. Some suggested that parents should not impose their ideas, especially traditions from China involving raising children, and should avoid patriarchal behaviour, as offspring are adults and have their own families. The majority emphasized having things to do, integrating into the local community, and developing new social networks. Offspring participant no. 3 offers a good summary:

Parents need to be financially prepared and not rely entirely on children; they also must be mentally prepared to develop their own hobbies and not rely completely on children. They need to continue to learn, keep their minds open, and actively adapt to the new

environment. They must have the awareness that they are coming to a new country, rather than moving from their own home to the child's. They must actively adapt!

She believes that the more independent they can be, the happier they will be:

Happiness comes from yourself, not from the children; it's important to discover your own 'happiness point.' Even if you can't make it completely, you must at least have the consciousness or mindset of independence. If you believe that raising your child means they owe you, and you rely on them for your happiness, you will likely face disappointment and trouble. True happiness is found in personal contentment.

All the participants – parents, offspring, and social workers – agree on how crucial independence is for aging well. This consensus reinforces my findings and bolsters my arguments on the inherent frictions in neoliberal governance. Forced dependence neither facilitates independence nor fosters life; rather, it can work exactly the other way and cause harm.

Suggestions to Sponsoring Offspring

Vis-à-vis sponsored PGPs aging well in Canada, a majority of parent participants hoped that offspring would show more understanding when parents can no longer help themselves and have more patience with their aging. Parent participant no. 4 pointed out that children should not sponsor PGPs only for childcare. Some parents emphasized the value of children's respect. They are not afraid of work and would like to do whatever offspring ask for, but lack of respect will make them sad. Some parents would like to be asked about their needs and concerns by offspring, as many parents don't like to burden their children. Others believed that children having stable work or income can ease parents' worries, and yet others highlighted mutual understanding and tolerance.

According to parent participant no. 13, male, “‘elder care’ and ‘family reunion’ are different. When the parents come, they are reunited with the children not for a short time but to spend the rest of their life in Canada.” Many offspring, he believes, have not seen the difference and are not fully prepared – for example, have not arranged proper housing for the parents’ long stay. He also pointed out that the government claims to facilitate family reunification, but does little to support the parents over the long haul. This father distinguished temporary visitors from permanent residents/citizens. Sponsored PGPs are not visitors – they will reside in Canada even after their death (being buried there). Rather than discriminating against them (e.g., by the PGP program), more inclusive and supportive policies are needed to show that they are valued members of society.

Regarding suggestions to their peers, most offspring participants urged more understanding and forgiveness, compromise, and adjustment. Some advised that children should not bring home stress and emotion from work, because parents are very sensitive and will misunderstand. Several suggested their being more considerate in daily life, because parents are afraid of causing difficulty and may not speak up about their needs; children should make efforts to ensure they feel comfortable and reduce their feeling of being under someone else’s roof if they are living together.

A daughter – offspring participant no. 3 – emphasized preparation. She believes that sponsoring parents requires the whole family to be prepared; both sides must make mental, economic, and family preparations in advance. Some offspring participants also talked about the challenges they face as middle-aged persons looking after both young and older family members. Some mentioned that sponsoring implies filial piety, but living with parents interferes with and affects their own lives. Several offspring participants (e.g., nos. 2 and 5) disapproved of

offspring sponsoring without adequate means. These comments suggest some sponsors' hardship and anticipation of falling short in support.

Whereas many parents do not want to impose on offspring and try hard to stay independent, they may need outside support and care, including from children, while they age. Children's respect, patience, and understanding, especially efforts to meet their needs, can help them age well. Yet even though most offspring would like to be supportive, some may not be able to be so, and therefore assistance from the state and society becomes essential.

Suggestions to Government and Service Providers and Agencies

Regarding suggestions to the government, most parent participants mentioned the undertaking/dependence, favouring 10 years rather than 20. Parent participant no. 13, male, proposed that the government view OAS/GIS as a positive, not a burden. For him, seniors need it, and it enhances their well-being, which can help families and society, thus reducing the government's medical and other expenses. Similarly, the oldest male parent participant (no. 7) emphasized that OAS/GIS fosters self-reliance and helps recipients manage their affairs, benefiting families and governments.

The topic of seniors' housing also generates suggestions. Many participants think the waiting times too long and want to see more publicly funded facilities. Several urged a more flexible policy – for example, prioritizing applicants' physical condition and age in allocating spaces.

As language and transportation challenge most PGPs, some participants suggested more government investment. They proposed lower bus fares for seniors. Several parents wanted to be picked up by transportation providers funded by the government when they were going to a seniors' club or community activities. Some participants recommended interpreting services in

public facilities such as hospitals, banks, and nursing homes, and translation of meanings or names of bus stops, subways, and other essential locations. Notably, parent participant no. 21 believes that the PGPs must rely on themselves for language. For him, English training should be better organized:

The government should find ways to improve the quality of language training and teaching so that everyone is interested and able to learn practical English to help with daily life. If the teaching is not good and the elderly don't feel it helps, they will not go to the LINC [Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada] class anymore after half a year at most.

He was dissatisfied with the LINC content, noting that it lacks structured progression from easy to difficult. He suggested carefully designed, standardized textbooks and teaching assessment to minimize arbitrary and casual teaching.

To improve services for PGPs, some parent participants wanted more stimulating activities, including more diverse and age-friendly, small-scale events tailored to various age groups. They asked for additional fitness equipment specifically designed for older people. They also advised organizing more lectures and seminars about seniors' health care and seniors' policy. Additionally, some suggested that the government and relevant institutions pay more attention to the mental and psychological well-being of the elderly.

While asking for more activities, some parent participants noted that service agencies are short of staff and funding. The second social worker I interviewed highlighted the same issues. She explained that most of the seniors in long-term care use wheelchairs and can hardly take care of themselves, but the wait for a space is lengthy. She reported that her agency needs many more staff members, especially personal support workers (PSWs), whose turnover rate is very high.

Her job title is “activation worker.” She designs activities to help slow seniors’ cognitive decline and prevent dementia. She takes care of 30 older people, and outdoor activities require 10 volunteers. She wants governments to assign more funds for the agency to add beds for long-term-care facilities, hire more full-time employees, and raise staff salaries.

Regarding costs for residents in long-term care, she explained that the provincial government funds part of the fee for each bed, and the resident pays the rest; OAS/GIS alone is not enough, and occupants need other sources, including savings, and/or their children’s help. These findings showcase the significant role of governments in facilitating the well-being of the older population, especially later in life. Denying OAS/GIS to sponsored PGPs and thereby imposing dependence on them may add hardship and render later life with dignity impossible.

Offspring participants had the same concerns and offered similar suggestions. They called for more seniors’ housing, with varied structures and shorter waiting times. Others proposed more customized activities and multilingual services at public facilities such as libraries and community centres. The crucial role of seniors’ clubs and groups was highlighted, and some offspring called for funding to arrange more activities and events. For example, offspring participant no. 6, a woman, complained that activities at the local community centre and library are all in English, and few activities are suitable for Chinese seniors. She suggested more culturally appropriate activities.

Moreover, some participants proposed that families with only one living parent, or with all the children abroad, or with the sponsor an only child, receive sponsoring priority and have their application expedited. Offspring participant no. 3 wanted IRCC to treat sponsored PGPs the same as other categories of immigrants, such as skilled economic immigrants, rather than framing them as dependants of the children:

Older immigrants are adults and part of the social population, and they should be included in the system. As it does for skilled immigrants, the governments should assign resources to educate and train older immigrants in language, skills, culture, values, and so on, to help them adapt to the new country and integrate into society as soon as possible, and they should not be pushed out and limited to their sponsors' family. They are also members of this country, and the government also needs to take responsibility for them!

Her argument aligns with my observation that sponsored PGPs are treated differently by the state and not viewed as potential members of Canadian society in the PGP program design. They are framed as their sponsors' appendages, which indicates the state's reluctance to spend resources to facilitate their integration and well-being.

Furthermore, offspring participant no. 7, female, emphasized that a PGP's having a fulfilling life cannot depend solely on family – it requires dedicated institutions or agencies to provide guidance and leadership, facilitating rapid integration:

The role of institutions is very important, such as establishing service centres, language schools, and activity centres specifically for older immigrants, so they can find their 'own organizations' when they come to Canada, which will guide them to familiarize themselves with the new environment. Having companions and peers is important. Enabling them to make friends and take the bus by themselves will make them no longer afraid to go out and to stay here [in Canada]. It needs special organizations or agencies to do this.

Her suggestions indicate the state's lack of attention to the integration of sponsored PGPs and insufficient resources to foster their well-being. It seems that the state does not expect them to integrate but constrains their lives, visibility, and mobility within their sponsor's family.

As well, several participants suggested that PGPs be educated about Canadian culture and daily life – about mundane things, such as how to sort garbage, not hang clothes on a rope in the yard, not walk into neighbours' yards uninvited. Offspring participant no. 8 elaborated:

After older people come, they face cultural conflicts. Some of their behaviour and habits are not accepted in Canada, but they may not listen to the children's advice. For example, some of them like to touch the heads of other people's kids, take pictures when they see other people's beautiful houses, and so on. They should be given an orientation, helping them understand Canada and adapt to a new environment.

Several participants also hoped for more attention to PGPs' mental and psychological well-being. Many PGPs are not able to lead a satisfying life in Canada, frequently grappling with depression and other mental problems. However, they are often reluctant to seek psychological support, and many can't afford such services.

Moreover, some offspring participants mentioned that PGPs, even they themselves, do not know where to look for such help, and parents may rely on them, seldom approaching outside service providers on their own. All these remarks call for more attention and improved services to support and facilitate PGPs' acculturation, integration, and well-being.

My findings clearly reveal that perspectives of and suggestions from both parent and offspring participants, as well as from service providers, all converged to one key point: nurturing and increasing PGPs' independence. For the parents, their concerns and suggestions (about seniors' housing, language training, transportation, community activities, bringing more money into Canada) all aim to reduce their dependence on offspring and make them more self-reliant. Their concern about the undertaking/dependence period relates not to increasing their

consumption, but to supporting a more independent life or better health and mobility for them, thus reducing the burden on offspring and enhancing their dignity.

In a parallel vein, the offspring participants' recommendations revolve around empowering parents to break free, become more mobile and independent, and integrate well. This does not imply any reluctance on their part to fulfil their responsibilities – all of them acknowledge their duty to the parents. However, they recognize that their efforts may prove insufficient; they need support from communities and government. In particular, government policies should play a crucial and leading role.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Increasing Independence and Aging Well in Canada

My findings clearly reveal that cultivating a mindset and capacity for independence rather than relying on children is the key for sponsored PGPs to have a fulfilling and satisfying life in Canada. A suitable, separate residence (or at least a private living space) and some money in hand are needed for them to age with dignity. Relations between generations greatly affect their physical and mental health and are a key indicator of their overall satisfaction with life in Canada. Their attitude towards life, ability to cope with daily challenges, and level of adaptation strongly influence their mental, emotional, and practical independence, as well as their overall self-government. In addition to factors depending on them and their families, the availability of the ethnic community and its services and activities is crucial for avoiding social isolation. Their involvement in community and use of collective resources not only benefit their well-being but also contribute to a vibrant and independent life. In this regard, small cities or rural areas display disadvantages in terms of funding, human resources, cultural sensitivity, and space. The initiatives of building networks and community demonstrate sponsored Chinese PGPs' strong agency and autonomy.

My study reveals that, even though the PGP immigration policy enables family reunification, it does not facilitate PGPs' self-reliance and aging well in Canada. Instead, forced dependence via the undertaking/dependence clause has hit the quality of life for many, and even damaged their independence, especially for the less affluent. Given the numerous cases of EAN, poverty, isolation, and mental illness (Guruge et al., 2015; Yon et al., 2017) and many cases shared in my study which happened under the 10-year dependence/undertaking, worse was foreseeable under the 20-year period. Additionally, my research shows starkly that, even for fairly well-off families with harmonious intergenerational relations, once the sponsored PGPs can no longer care for themselves, the lack of government support may prove devastating. Government's downloading of provision of support onto immigrant families not only harms PGPs' well-being but also can affect sponsors and their families, sometimes creating new and recurring social problems.

Based on these main findings, I provide the following three groups of evidence-based recommendations – on facilitating sponsored PGPs' desire for independence, facilitating their practical independence, and reducing their forced dependence:

1. Facilitating sponsored PGPs' desire for independence

A key conclusion of this thesis is that sponsored PGPs, if they are to age well, must rely mainly on themselves rather than on offspring. My research reveals that a strong desire for independence is not only a prerequisite for a satisfying and fulfilling existence but also facilitates achievement of independence.

For immigrants, including sponsored PGPs, the initial stage in a new land is quite challenging. An organization that can provide information and services will not only help them adapt but also improve their confidence in coping, thus cultivating their desire for independence

and enhancing their agency. To settle down in a new country needs time, so ongoing support, information, training, and guidance are necessary for them to integrate and age well.

As my findings indicate, sponsored PGPs may not follow advice from offspring, who may not have the resources, time, and ability to guide them, so the federal and provincial governments or their agencies can take this role. I therefore recommend that governments:

1) *Establish specific service centres, departments, and/or agencies for sponsored PGPs.*

This would enable them and their sponsors/caregivers to know where to go for information and services. Staff members who understand their language and culture should be provided.

2) *Create orientation programs for newcomer PGPs and develop ongoing education.* The orientation and educational programs should be customized to help sponsored PGPs understand and adapt to their new environment – its cultures, customs, daily life, seniors' policies, and relevant laws. These programs should be a long-term, ongoing service. Additionally, orientation for offspring sponsors would help them prepare for the parents' long stay.

3) *Develop, provide, and organize more volunteer activities and positions for sponsored PGPs.* Helping others can make sponsored PGPs feel useful. A sense of contributing can enhance their confidence, nurture their agency, and reduce their thoughts of dependence on offspring.

4) *Provide free mental and psychological consulting services to sponsored PGPs.* The majority of sponsored Chinese PGPs do not think of seeking a psychologist's services and could not afford them. Given the common issues in relations between generations,

and EAN, making these services a routine seniors' benefit and promoting them would improve their well-being.

2. Facilitating practical independence for sponsored PGPs

My research reveals that residing with children is the root cause of most family conflicts for sponsored PGPs and offspring, which may lead to EAN, physical and mental illness, isolation, and other problems. Independent housing can reduce PGPs' day-to-day dependence on sponsoring offspring, enable their decision-making, and increase their freedom and mobility. It also spurs their desire for and actual independence, thereby enhancing their satisfaction with life and their well-being.

However, few families can afford a separate home for parents. Most have to apply for seniors' housing, but the wait can be 8–10 years or more. Moreover, their options are limited, and places may be distant from offspring. Seniors' housing tailored to Chinese speakers is even scarcer. The ability to cope with language and transportation and the presence of community support also affect daily life, mobility, socialization, and sense of belonging.

Based on these key findings, I recommend that governments, communities, and related organizations improve their services to:

1) Facilitate independent housing. Government should allocate additional funds and collaborate with relevant institutions to construct more seniors' housing, offering diverse designs to meet varied needs. There should be an emphasis on creating language- and culture-specific homes, more long-term-care beds, and increased staffing and funding. Additionally, for seniors who wish to age at home, it is essential to formulate and implement supportive policies and benefits, as well as integrate at-home services for seniors into the healthcare system.

2) *Help with language and transportation.* Language learning (e.g., through LINC) should be more formalized, with a guiding syllabus and standardized textbooks that reflect daily life. Free public transit for seniors is desirable.

3) *Facilitate socialization, community building, integration, and self-management.* More support and funding should go to self-managed seniors' clubs and groups. More government- or community-led, -organized, and -funded activities should be provided. Activities for PGPs should be more age-sensitive and be tailored to different age groups and health conditions. More lectures and workshops on healthcare and maintenance and more training on self-care skills should be developed and provided.

3. Reducing forced dependence

My study makes it clear that forced dependence, especially when it lasts for 20 years, can greatly reduce PGPs' autonomy and independence and, most notably, prevent independent housing for them. My findings reveal that financial independence is the basis of all other dimensions of independence and essential for a life with dignity. Under the post-2014 PGP immigration policy, many sponsored PGPs may not live to receive OAS/GIS. To make the undertaking/dependence meaningful and to treat PGPs as full members of society, I strongly urge that policy-makers:

1) *Consider a more inclusive and sustainable PGP program.* IRCC should shorten the undertaking period and make the program more flexible, to give priority to families with urgent or special needs for reunification. Remove basic health services (e.g., dental and vision care) from the undertaking.

2) Recognize the contributions of sponsored PGPs. Consider and formulate policies to value their caregiving and other domestic labours. I suggest that their contributions can be claimed and paid for or be connected with the distribution of seniors' benefits.

3) Initiate and develop more equitable and supportive policies. Revise short-sighted discriminatory policies. All levels of government should develop policies and programs to nurture sponsored PGPs' agency and improve their capabilities for independence, self-care, and self-government, thus benefiting not only them and their families but also government and society in the long run.

This thesis, by examining the PGP program and the lived experience of sponsored Chinese parents, illuminates the embedded neoliberal friction in contemporary governance and demonstrates how it affects sponsored PGPs. Rather than fostering life for them, the PGP program impairs their agency and ability to govern themselves and creates hardship. My research shows clearly that contributions of sponsored PGPs are tremendously devalued, exploited, and ignored in policy-making. PGPs are categorized, framed, and treated as undesirable and excluded from state protection, demonstrating that Canada's immigration regime is still structurally raced, classed, and gendered. My study voices challenges and concerns of sponsored PGPs, values their perspectives and suggestions, and illuminates and highlights their robust agency, autonomy, and great effort and wisdom to resist dependence forced on them by the PGP program.

This thesis contributes to research on older immigrants by expanding and deepening the understanding of later-life immigration and the complexities facing immigrant families. It also extends the governmentality perspective conceptually and empirically on the study of immigration policy, governance of immigrant populations, and neoliberal practices vis-à-vis government of the self, especially by formulating the conceptual framework of neoliberal friction

and applying it to the workings and effects of neoliberal governance on older immigrants and their conduct of government of the self. It also makes an analytical contribution to the governance literature by demonstrating that governance is not homogeneous, but operates through a diffuse and heterogenous array of theories, mechanisms, and subjectivities and by revealing a new biopolitical apparatus and terming it ‘dependent biopolitics,’ which builds on the analytic work of minimal biopolitics and humanitarian bordering.

Additionally, my study examines sponsored Chinese PGPs’ struggles, adaptation strategies, and resistance to forced dependence, thereby contributing to and extending the literature on migrant agency, which focuses usually on refugees and asylum-seekers.

My recommendations above, based on the perspectives and lived experience of participants, can help older immigrants to better face difficulties and challenges, thus expanding the quality of life and well-being of this marginalized and racialized vulnerable group in Canada. This thesis also promotes policy changes and service improvements for older immigrants, especially sponsored Chinese PGPs, and may help decrease social problems such as EAN, malnutrition, poverty, and isolation.

The main limitation of my study is that it is specific to sponsored Chinese PGPs immigrating to Canada, so my findings may not apply entirely to other groups of sponsored PGPs in Canada or to sponsored Chinese immigrants in other industrialized, immigrant-receiving countries. Therefore, I suggest preparation of comparative studies of sponsored PGPs from other Asian countries such as India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, as well as research comparing those Asian nations that possess a strong tradition of family reunification with European countries that more value the nuclear family. These investigations can further facilitate culture-sensitive settlement policies and services.

I also suggest comparative studies of sponsored Chinese PGPs in the main immigrant-receiving countries (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, and the United States) to further examine how immigration policies affect their later life and well-being. As well, more research is needed on how Canada's disentanglement of sponsored PGPs from OAS/GIS and social services affects them, and how much government spending on resulting social problems that the disentanglement necessitates. These investigations are imperative if Canada is to develop sustainable immigration and settlement policies that benefit not only sponsored PGPs and families but also the whole society.

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Appendix

Summary Chart of Some Main Basic Information of the PGP Interviewees

	Gender	Age at Interview (Year 2022)	Marriage Status	Sponsor	Length of Undertaking/ Dependence	Year of Obtaining PR Status	Number of Grandchildren	Living Arrangement
1	Female	74	Widowed	Son	10 (Years)	2014	3	Co-residence (with offspring participant no. 4)
2	Female	74	Married	Son	20	2018	2	Co-residence
3	Female	81	Widowed	Son	10	2002	6	Co-residence
4	Female	76	Married	Daughter	10	2004	4	Co-residence
5	Female	67	Married	Daughter	20	2019	2	Co-residence (with offspring participant no. 7)
6	Male (husband of 5)	66	Married	Daughter	20	2019	2	Same
7	Male	86	Widowed	Daughter	10	2002	All are adults	Senior Home
8	Male	70	Married	Son	10	2012	4	Co-residence (with offspring participants 10 & 11)
9	Male	73	Married	Daughter	10	2012	2	Self-purchased House
10	Female	75	Widowed	Daughter	10	2013	2	Co-residence
11	Female	69	Widowed	Daughter	20	2018	2	Co-residence
12	Female	83	Married	Daughter	20	2019	3	Co-residence (with offspring participants 3 & 5)
13	Male (husband of 12)	84	Married	Daughter	20	2019	3	Same
14	Female	67	Married	Daughter	20	2019	1	Co-residence (with offspring participant no. 1)
15	Female	74	Married	Son	10	2012	2	Co-residence
16	Female	58	Married	Daughter	10	2013	5	Co-residence
17	Female	67	Married	Son	20	2019	1	Co-residence (with offspring participant no. 6)
18	Female	73	Widowed	Daughter	10	2009	3	Co-residence
19	Male	73	Married	Son	10	2012	2	Self-purchased House (initially co-resided with offspring participants 8 & 9)
20	Female (wife of 19)	72	Married	Son	10	2012	2	Same
21	Male	68	Married	Son	10	2014	2	Self-purchased House
22	Female	77	Married	Son	10	2012	3	Townhouse bought by son
23	Male (husband of 22)	82	Married	Son	10	2012	3	Same
24	Female	77	Married	Daughter	10	2018 (Applied in 2011)	5	Co-residence
25	Female	87	Widowed	Son	10	2003	2	Co-residence
26	Female	79	Married	Daughter	10	2000	3	Self-purchased Condominium