Sorting or Shaping? The Gendered Economic Outcomes of Immigration Policy in Canada

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Using a growth model analysis of Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), we establish a significant relationship between application status — i.e., the distinction in immigration policy between primary and secondary migrants — and individual wages. This relationship is associated with an earnings disadvantage for secondary migrants, who are disproportionately female. The disadvantage persists over time, even when individual human capital and personal characteristics, household context, and pre-existing differences in the relative employability of spouses are taken into account. We outline some possible explanations for this effect, as well as implications for immigration policy makers.

INTRODUCTION

There is a longstanding discussion about the relationship between immigration policy and outcomes such as migration flows and settlement processes.[2]

[Minor typographical changes have been made to this article since it was first published.]

The characterization of this relationship often falls within two broad methodological stances, each with a particular standpoint on immigration policies and the individuals and families they regulate. Building on Hein (1993), we distinguish between *realist* and *nominalist* conceptualizations of immigration policy and migrants. According to the former, the typical entry categories contained in immigration policy — distinguishing among economic, familial, and humanitarian migrants — reflect real and distinct categories of newcomers with particular characteristics that exist independently of receiving state policies. From a realist perspective immigration policy affects flows and settlement processes by filtering, more or less effectively, all potential newcomers so as to obtain the "mix" desired to meet the receiving country's economic, communitarian, or other domestic goals (see, for example, Borjas 1990; Cornelius and Tsuda 2004; Skrentny, Gell-Redman, and Lee 2012). In contrast, a nominalist conceptualization of immigration policy and migrants sees the entry categories delineated in immigration policy as social constructions that, in turn, shape the subjects of that policy into sociologically relevant categories with attendant effects on immigration and integration outcomes (see, for example, Portes and Böröcz 1989; Zolberg 1999; Freeman 2004). While the nominalist perspective is adopted mainly in theoretical and qualitative empirical work to highlight the relational and contextual quality of the causes and determinants of international migration and immigrant outcomes, the realist perspective has dominated quantitative analyses of migration phenomena, as the popularity of human capital models for analyzing the effect of immigrant traits on individual economic outcomes shows.

     In this paper, we demonstrate the analytical leverage to be gained from adopting a nominalist approach in the predominantly realist domain of quantitative analysis of immigrant economic outcomes. Recently, a number of qualitative studies have argued that the distinction in immigration policy between primary (i.e., independent, economic) migrants and secondary (i.e., dependent, tied) migrants is related to outcomes that are detrimental to the economic attainment of individuals designated as secondary migrants (see, for example, Ho 2006; Cooke 2007). By placing this primary/secondary migrant distinction at the center of a detailed quantitative analysis, we examine the magnitude and durability of the effects described in qualitative studies.

     Using a growth model analysis of Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), we establish a significant relationship between application status (i.e., the distinction in immigration policy between primary and secondary migrants) and individual wages. This

relationship is associated with an earnings disadvantage for secondary migrants, which persists over time. The wage differential is gendered by virtue of the fact that secondary migrants are overwhelmingly female. However, the observed wage differentials are not simply an effect of gender: application status has an independent, negative effect on both male and female secondary migrants over time. Notably, this effect exists even when individual human capital and personal characteristics, household context, and preexisting differences in the relative employability of spouses are taken into account.

The relationship between application status and economic outcomes is significant and of a magnitude that warrants further qualitative investigations into the causal mechanisms that lead to enduring wage differentials between primary and secondary migrants. In our discussion, we draw on both our empirical analysis and the growing body of qualitative studies on dual-career migrant households to outline a range of possible explanations for the relationship between application status and economic attainment. While some explanations highlight the direct effect of the legal relationship that application status creates between migrants and the state, others point to the indirect ways in which application status may interact with migrant household strategies and (gendered) contexts of reception.

Overall, our analysis serves as a reminder that the failure to consider the possibility that the groups created in immigration policies are "emergent properties of particular structural settings" weakens both the potential for social analysis and the possibility for political intervention to mitigate any adverse effects these policies may have (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 28). In the spirit of this reminder, we conclude by outlining a range of policy prescriptions that derive from our analysis of the primary/secondary migrant distinction in immigration policy. Beyond concrete policy implications, we also briefly consider the broader implications of our analysis for theories of immigration policy.

CONCEPTUALIZING AND OPERATIONALIZING IMMIGRATION POLICY IN QUANTITATIVE STUDIES OF IMMIGRANT OUTCOMES

According to nominalist conceptualizations of the relationship between immigration policy and immigrant outcomes, receiving states not only create the migrant flows that they purport solely to manage (Zolberg,

Suhrke, and Aguayo 1986; Zolberg 1999), but also create sociologically relevant groups within admissions and integration policies.[3] Yet, while the distinctions created among newcomers in immigration policy may be artificial, they are not trivial; nominalists argue that such distinctions have real consequences for immigrant outcomes. As part of the institutional context that shapes immigrant outcomes (Portes and Böröcz 1989; Freeman 2004; Reitz 2007), entry categories have a direct effect on immigrants' economic and social integration because they dictate the terms of access to settlement services as well as settlement-related rights, like the entitlement to remain in the country for a particular period of time and the right to work. Studies by Anderson (2010), Goldring, Berinstein, and Bernhard (2009) Goldring and Landolt (2011) and Menjivar (2006) all demonstrate how temporary admissions categories, conditions surrounding permit renewals, and categories that tie immigrants to a sponsoring employer or family member lead immigrants into precarious existences in countries of reception, which in turn influences their ability to pursue long-term settlement goals.

A number of recent qualitative studies have looked beyond the direct effects of immigration policy that derive from the legal relationship they create between immigrants and the state, to study the more indirect ways in which categorizations in policy interact with migrant household strategies and (gendered) contexts of reception to produce detrimental effects for immigrants who fall under a particular categorization. One pertinent example of this categorization is the distinction in immigration policy between what Boucher (2007) terms "primary" and "secondary" migrants. Primary migrants are individuals whose personal traits are evaluated for the purpose of admission (e.g., principal applicants in economic/skilled worker categories), while secondary migrants are individuals whose entry is tied to the evaluation of a primary applicant or sponsor (e.g., family members accompanying an economic class or business-stream applicant, or sponsored family migrants). These studies argue that the distinction within immigration policy between primary and secondary migrants interacts with household settlement strategies and gender norms to produce

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[3]The notion that immigration policies shape the people they regulate has been explored primarily in relation to refugee movements (Hein 1993) and "illegal" immigration (De Genova 2002; Anderson 2010). From this perspective, refugees and illegal migrants are not discrete groups of people with distinct traits, but people who have a particular relationship with the receiving state that affects paths of inclusion and exclusion (see Stewart 2008).

outcomes that are detrimental to individuals designated as secondary migrants, who are disproportionately women (Boucher 2007). They suggest that once one partner in a dual-income migrant family is designated as primary, the secondary migrant withdraws from or postpones entry into the labor market in order to manage the family's transition and avoid burdening the breadwinner with domestic work and childcare responsibilities (Ho 2006; Cooke 2007). The purported impact of secondary migrant status on immigrant labor market outcomes, particularly among women, has variously been dubbed "de-skilling," "feminization," "re-domestification," and "compromised careers" (Meares 2010, 473).

Large-scale quantitative assessments of the magnitude and durability of the relationship between the primary/secondary distinction in immigration policy and immigrant economic outcomes are conspicuously absent. In part, this is due to the established practice in quantitative analyses of immigrant outcomes of adopting a realist conceptualization of immigration policy and migrants and viewing policy as a framework for sorting and managing subjects whose personal traits (e.g., human capital, motivation for migrating) make them fundamentally distinct from each other. Borjas (1990,11) exemplifies this stance in the following statement: "Certain kinds of immigration policies, such as those that make it easy to migrate if the visa applicant has relatives in the host country, attract different kinds of persons than policies that award entry visas based on the applicant's educational attainment or occupation." In other words, immigrant entry categories for "economic migrants," "family migrants" or "refugees" denote a type of person who exists as such prior to engagement with immigration frameworks and whose attendant characteristics will affect integration outcomes in typical ways. This is not to say that realist approaches see outcomes such as economic integration as the result of simplistic processes. As Fuller and Martin (2012) point out, human capital, social connections, household composition, and the presence of a more or less "institutionally complete" ethnic community (Breton 1964) all play a role. However, from the realist perspective, immigration categories *reflect* preexisting differences among immigrants. Thus immigrant outcomes vary by entry category by virtue of fundamental differences between people denoted by each category, and states can manage outcomes by altering the "mix" of intake categories, for example, by raising annual targets for the intake of economic migrants while lowering intake levels for humanitarian and family-related entries (OECD 2010; Aydemir 2011; Skrentny, Gell-Redman, and Lee 2012).

The absence of large-scale quantitative assessments of immigrant outcomes with a nominalist framing is also due to the limited nature of datasets worldwide that allow for the linking of entry category and application status (i.e. the primary/secondary designation) to measures of immigrants' economic attainment. Quantitative studies by Ishizawa and Stevens (2011) in the United States and Smith and Bailey (2006) in the United Kingdom provide evidence of diminishing economic outcomes for secondary migrants. However, the data used do not link secondary migrant status to entry categories in those countries' immigration policies.

The dataset on which we draw for our analysis, Canada's LSIC, is a unique resource for demonstrating the analytical leverage to be gained from adopting a nominalist approach to quantitative analyses of immigrant economic outcomes. We examine the magnitude and durability of the relationship between the primary/secondary distinction in immigration policy and immigrant economic outcomes, measured in terms of individual wages. Our aim is not to assess the relative efficacy of realist and nominalist frameworks in explaining migrant outcomes; rather, we are interested in how quantifying the relationship between policy categories and individual wages can serve to further discussions about migration management and the roles played by individuals and states in shaping settlement outcomes.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The LSIC is a government-funded representative survey of immigrants aged 15 years and older who arrived in Canada between October 2000 and September 2001. It has more individual-level variables than many comparator datasets in other countries, enabling our detailed quantitative inquiry.[4] The Wave 3 LSIC population (used for this study) consists of immigrants who have been in Canada for four years, allowing for analyses of their integration processes over time. All immigrants in the Wave 3 sample were interviewed approximately six months after arrival (Wave 1), two years after arrival (Wave 2), and four years after arrival (Wave 3); only one individual was surveyed per household.

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[4]For example, The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia, an international precursor to the LSIC that is often viewed as a comparator dataset, does not consistently include data on secondary applicants.

Our sample was constructed to capture the household constellations discussed in the qualitative literature on which our research concerns rest: potential dual-wage-earner households. We thus restricted the sample to include individuals who were of working age (aged 18–64) throughout the survey period, and who were not full-time students during any of the three waves (defined as an individual who spent 37.5 or more hours per week in class or training, excluding language training). To capture the primary/secondary migrant distinction, we included only individuals whose application status placed them in the position of primary migrant (principal applicants in the economic and business classes of entry)[5] or secondary migrant (spouses or fiancés in the family class, and spouses/dependents in the economic and business classes).[6] Technically, spouses or fiancés in the family class are principal applicants in that category; however, in contrast to principal applicants in the economic and business entry categories, their application status entails dependency on a Canadian citizen or resident sponsor, which clearly makes them secondary migrants according to our research framework. Refugees were excluded from the sample altogether due to the extenuating circumstances surrounding their migration that conceivably affect their labor market entry upon arrival in unique ways. Individuals who entered Canada under the "provincial nominee" entry category were also excluded, as they represented less than 1 percent of the total sample. The sample size derived from these specifications was approximately 5,150 individuals, allowing for robust estimates. Rescaled bootstrap (replicate) and longitudinal weights provided by Statistics Canada were used to calculate accurate percentages and standard errors where appropriate.

Our derived response/outcome variable measured the *mean monthly wages of respondents from all jobs, including self-employment income.* This

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[5]The terms used throughout this paper to designate entry categories refer to the categories used in the LSIC, which were in place in Canadian immigration policy when the survey respondents entered Canada (October 2000–September 2001). Numerous changes have been made to admissions categories since that time, although the basic distinction between economic, family, and humanitarian migrant streams remains.

[6]Individuals designated "parents/grandparents" and "other" family class migrants were excluded, as we considered them less likely to have relocated with the intention of being the main or a major wage earner within the household. This is not to discount the myriad other forms of social and emotional support these migrants may be primarily responsible for, such as childcare, cultural continuity, etc., which may also factor into household earnings strategies.

allowed us to account for cases of ongoing precarity, where an individual held multiple or fluctuating jobs.

For the independent variable, we differentiated between application statuses within entry categories that denoted a *primary economic migrant* (defined in our sample as individuals designated "principal applicants" in the skilled worker/economic and business class entry streams) and ones that denoted a *secondary, non-economic migrant* (defined in our sample as all spouses, fiancés and dependents of working age in the family, economic and business class streams). This differentiation between statuses allowed us to map our findings onto the relevant existing literature exploring family earnings strategies and potential dual-earner couples.

To specify and validate the impact of our independent variable, numerous controls were tested and included in our final models. Our choice of controls was guided by the large volume of literature on the economic integration of immigrants in the Canadian context, which points to the influence of the following factors on immigrant outcomes: entry category; personal attributes like gender, religion, and age at migration; and human capital measures like education level, work experience, work status, and language proficiency (see, for example, Pendakur and Pendakur 2002b; Aydemir and Skuterud 2005; Reitz 2007; Aydemir 2011; Bonikowska, Hou, and Picot 2011; Reitz, Curtis, and Elrick 2014).[7] In light of research showing that belonging to a racialized group leads to unequal earnings in the Canadian labor market, for immigrants and non-immigrants alike (Li 1998; Pendakur and Pendakur 2002a; Reitz and Banerjee 2007; Lightman and Good-Gingrich 2012), we also controlled for visible minority status (being non-white[8]) in our models. To account for the influence of contextual and household-level factors discussed in qualitative investigations of dual-career migrant households (see, for example, Cooke

[7]To measure language proficiency, a current priority of immigration policy in Canada, we drew upon a modified version of Fuller and Martin's (2012) scale combining self-reported oral, verbal and written language proficiency in English in provinces outside of Quebec and in French within Quebec. Our scale was scored from zero to 12 with higher scores representing stronger self-rated language proficiency.

[8]According to the official definition from Statistics Canada, visible minorities are "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The term commonly refers to the following groups: Chinese, South Asian, black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean (Statistics Canada 2012).

2007; Ho 2006), we included controls to capture the impact of the presence of children or elderly in the household, as well as spousal attributes such as work status and education level, in the case of individuals living with a spouse in Canada.

Method of Analysis

Cross-sectional descriptive analyses were performed initially to capture a profile of the sample population. We subsequently ran individual growth models (multilevel models) to explore the change in mean monthly wages from all jobs including self-employment income (henceforth referred to as mean monthly wages or MMW) of individuals over time. Such models are widely used to examine the unique trajectories of individuals and groups in repeated measures data (Chen and Cohen 2009). By using multilevel modeling (MLM), we account for the considerable variability between individual immigrants in our sample, while focusing on averages between groups.

The Level-1 model (analyzing individual change) examined variability within individuals — in this case how MMW changed over time and whether these changes were due to time-varying and time-invariant covariates. However, unlike a standard regression approach, the coefficients indicating the effects of these covariates were treated as random rather than fixed effects. For example, the model assessed the effects of having recognized work experience from abroad, measured at each wave, on repeated measures of wages, yet these effects were allowed to vary across individuals.

Between-individual differences were estimated by treating the parameters of these trajectories as dependent variables in the Level-2 model. Adding individual-specific variables such as gender, religion, and highest level of education achieved prior to entry into Canada at Wave 1 made it possible to account for significant, unexplained variation in both initial status and the rate of change in MMW (Strohschein 2005).

The reference categories in our growth models were those that were considered the more/most privileged position or the category with the largest number of responses. Model 1 represented the model with the fixed effect of the independent variable (applicant status) *only*, wherein "primary migrants" was the reference category. This first model was unadjusted for the impact of the selected human capital characteristics of immigrants or contextual factors related to spouses and dependents in the

household. Progressing in a hierarchical fashion, the Individual Model (Model 2) added the selected personal attributes and human capital characteristics to examine whether the effect of application status remained significant initially and over time when these controls were included. Entry category, sex, visible minority status, highest level of education completed prior to entry to Canada (recoded into four dummy variables ranging from "less than high school" completion, to the reference category of "graduate degree" completion), and religion (with "no religion" as the reference category) were all coded as time-invariant controls. Having no recognized work experience, work status (coded as "part-time work" or "not working", with "full-time work" as the reference category), a centered variable capturing the average score on the combined official language proficiency scale (coded as 0), and a centered variable measuring age, were collapsed into time-varying variables that were measured at each wave.

Model 3 and Model 4 were our so-called Contextual Models. These models incorporated controls for the impact of household-level variables and spousal attributes, in addition to the selected personal traits and human capital characteristics measured in Model 2. Because the descriptive analyses revealed an unequal gender distribution among the primary/secondary migrant categories (secondary migrants, as we show below, are disproportionately women), and because gender plays a strong role in the qualitative literature on dual-career migrant households, we ran our Contextual Models separately for men and women. This allowed us to compare relative impacts of the controls on MMW within a gendered household context, and to ensure that any effects of application status were not simply gender effects. For Models 3 and 4, the sample was restricted to individuals who had spouses who were living with them, excluding single respondents or those whose spouse lived abroad (about 1000 individuals in the sample). Controls were added to account for the presence of children (15 or younger) or elderly (64 or older) in the household, in an effort to capture the associated "care work" this may imply. Finally, in acknowledgement of the realist assertion that primary/secondary applicant status simply reflects relative human capital differences among spouses, the following spousal traits were taken into account: the work status of the spouse, a dummy variable measuring if the spouse had or did not have a bachelor's degree, and a variable comprised of the ratio of respondents' education levels as compared to that of their spouse.
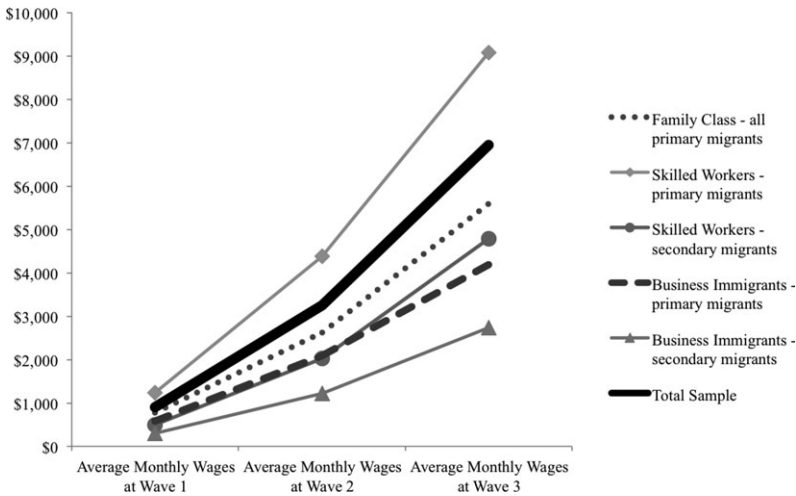
RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

Our descriptive analysis revealed measurable differences between primary and secondary migrants. A major difference in gender distribution was apparent: 75.1 percent of secondary migrants were female, compared to 23.2 percent of primary applicants. The data in Table 1 show that primary migrants in the sample were, on average, slightly older than the secondary migrants at arrival, and entered Canada with significantly higher levels of education: 93.9 percent of primary migrants held a post-secondary degree or above, compared to 67 percent of secondary migrants. Primary migrants had higher self-perceived levels of language proficiency in one of Canada's official languages, and were slightly less likely to identify as belonging to a visible minority (non-white) group. Secondary migrants were also less likely to have been employed prior to arrival: 77.4 percent compared to 97.4 percent of primary migrants. Acknowledging these differences, our subsequent models controlled for these personal and human capital characteristics.

   Figure I graphs the mean monthly wages from all jobs, including self-employment income, across application status (primary/secondary) and entry class (skilled worker, family and business class) in a cross-sectional manner at each wave. It suggests that there are real differences in our response variable between primary and secondary migrants, but that these are moderated by distinctions within entry class. Secondary migrants made 48 percent, 66 percent, and 57 percent as much in MMW as primary

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF HUMAN CAPITAL AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
MIGRANTS

	Primary migrants	Secondary migrants
% Sample population (weighted) (Approx. *n*)	50.8 (2350)	49.2 (2800)
% Family class	00.0	100.0
% Skilled workers	60.1	39.9
% Business class	39.2	60.8
% Female	23.2	75.1
% Visible Minority	76.9	80.1
Mean age at arrival	35.5	32.3
% Less than post-secondary degree prior to arrival	6.2	33.0
% Post-secondary degree completed prior to arrival	61.1	52.5
% Graduate degree completed prior to arrival	32.8	14.5
Mean combined score for reading, writing and speaking in an official language (scored 0–12)	9.5	7.9
% Work experience prior to arrival	97.4	77.4

Figure I.   **Average Monthly Wages from All Jobs (Including Self Employment Income) Over Three Waves by Immigrant Entry Class and Application Status**

migrants, on average, across each successive wave. Primary migrant skilled workers did by far the best on average. While all groups substantially increased their mean monthly wages from Wave 1 to Wave 3, more growth occurred from Wave 2 to Wave 3. This is likely due, in part, to the longer period of time that passed between those waves, and because a degree of economic integration, upward mobility, and accumulation of Canadian work experience can be expected to improve MMW the longer one is in the country (see for example, Frenette and Morissette 2005). Skilled worker primary migrants had MMW that were approximately twice as high as those of all secondary migrants, regardless of entry category.

In sum, our cross-sectional analysis demonstrated that individuals with different application statuses (primary versus secondary) had disparate human capital and personal characteristics, with primary migrants in the more privileged position. Without any relevant controls being applied, secondary migrants had MMW well below those of primary migrants both at the time of arrival and throughout the initial years of settlement in Canada.

In the following section, we turn to the results of our growth models (Table 2), to examine more closely the relationship between application status in immigration policy and individual economic outcomes. Of particular interest here is whether application status had an effect on MMW

over and above what would be expected of primary/secondary migrants given each group's human capital and personal characteristics.

Modeling Changes in Mean Monthly Wages over Time among Individuals and Groups: The Effects of Application Status, Entry Class, and Gender

The models in Table 2 revealed a *significant and substantial* effect of being a secondary migrant throughout the course of the survey period, controlling for human capital and personal characteristics, contextual household characteristics and spousal attributes. Model 1 demonstrated that the MMW of secondary migrants at Wave 1 (initial status) was approximately \$570 (β_{01}) (SE = \$62) or 40 percent less than for primary migrants, and that the monthly wage differential increased on average by approximately \$1,719 (β_{27}) (SE = \$113) in each of the subsequent two waves (both findings significant at the level of $p < 0.001$). According to Model 1, the MMW for primary migrants across the sample in Wave 3 were \$8,839, versus \$4,831 for secondary migrants, making secondary migrant wages on average about 55 percent as high as those of primary migrants before controls were taken into account.

Our Individual Model (Model 2) built on our Model 1 findings and directly demonstrated the analytical leverage to be gained from adopting a nominalist approach to a quantitative analysis of immigrant economic outcomes. Controlling for personal and human capital attributes, it confirmed the existence of a significant initial gap in monthly wages for secondary migrants in Wave 1 (β_{01} = \$ -228, SE = \$80). This negative wage gap was amplified noticeably over time (β_{27} = \$ $-1,026$, SE = \$168), suggesting a path-dependency element to the effect of the primary/secondary migrant distinction in immigration policy. According to Model 2, secondary migrants made, on average, \$2,280 (or approximately 30%) less than primary migrants four years after their arrival to Canada, when personal and human capital characteristics were controlled for.

Model 2 also established that the only impact of entry class over and above primary/secondary application status was a negative effect over time of being in the business stream (β_{29} = \$ $-1,279$, SE = \$222), when all other variables, including application status, were held constant. This could be due to the fact that business class entrants, who entered the country as investors, entrepreneurs, or self-employed persons, are more vulnerable to macroeconomic downturns than individuals in regular paid

employment. It could also be because many of them are reliant on wages or income from abroad.[9]

Being female resulted in a wage disadvantage at Wave 1 ($\beta_{04} = \$ -204$, SE = \$70) in the Individual Model, as well as in a steep significant, negative linear rate of change ($\beta_{30} = \$ -1,092$, SE = \$120), controlling for the other individual-level factors. We calculated that after four years in Canada women were, on average, making over \$2,300 less than men per month in wages. The 75 percent of secondary migrants in our sample who were female were, on average, making \$4,610 less — or approximately 60 percent as much in mean monthly wages — as their male, primary applicant counterparts, when the relevant individual-level controls were applied. Thus, Model 2 highlighted how the coincidence of dependency and gender selection creates poorer economic outcomes initially and over time, even when controlling for human capital characteristics of individuals.

Anticipating the critique that the observed effect of application status may be more of a gender issue than an immigration policy issue, in Models 3 and 4 (the Contextual Models), we progressed in a hierarchical fashion and examined the effect of application status separately for men and women, also taking into account household context and spousal traits. For the Contextual Models, the sample was restricted to individuals who had spouses who were living with them, to control for spousal attributes and capture household characteristics (still controlling for the personal characteristics and human capital traits included in Model 2). These models compared effects directly for females and males. Notably, in Models 3 and 4, with the addition of contextual controls, applicant status was not significant initially for either gender. However, in both cases, being a secondary migrant did have a substantial negative impact over time on MMW (for females $\beta_{27} = \$ -1,026$, SE = \$168 and for males $\beta_{27} = \$ -1,187$, SE = \$295). This confirmed our finding in Model 2 of a path-dependency element to the effect of the primary/secondary migrant distinction, and also showed that the effect of application status — while undoubtedly situated in the gendered contexts of sending and receiving countries and household dynamics — is a policy effect that matters above and beyond what one would expect given these contexts.

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[9]Studies conducted on business immigrants in Canada in the early 2000s show that entrepreneurs in particular faced difficulties adjusting to their new business context, due to unfamiliar tax and regulatory systems, a lack of business networks, fierce competition within "ethnic enclave" economies, and language barriers (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010; Ley 2010).

While Models 3 and 4 provided powerful evidence of an ongoing effect of secondary migrant status for males *and* females, they also indicated the existence of real and measurable gender differences in terms of wages. Holding both individual and household level controls and spousal attributes constant, we calculated that after four years in Canada, female primary migrants made only 61 percent as much in MMW as male primary migrants, and that female secondary migrants made only 56 percent as much as male secondary migrants. As with Model 2, there was also a significant negative effect of being in the Business entry class over time for both genders (β_{29}). Thus, all told, our growth models evidenced serious disparities in wages between women and men; yet, in addition to this, there remained a significant effect of secondary migrant status for both males and females over time, after accounting for numerous controls.

Human Capital and Household and Contextual Factors: The Effects of Controls

In focusing on the primary/secondary migrant designation, we do not claim that the personal and human capital attributes widely acknowledged in realist framings of immigration policy as influencing immigrant economic outcomes are without effect. In the Individual Model, visible minority status resulted in a major wage disadvantage at Wave 1 ($\beta_{05} = \$ -617$, SE = \$89) and over time ($\beta_{31} = \$ -1,156$, SE = \$146). In the Contextual Models, being a visible minority only had a significant negative impact at Wave 1 for males ($\beta_{05} = \$ -918$, SE = \$136). While the effect of visible minority status was significant and negative over time for both females and males, it was more than four times stronger for males (β_{31}).[10] Although

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[10]Other researchers have similarly found a greater earnings disadvantage for visible minority men compared to visible minority women. For example, Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) found that shifts toward "non-traditional" (i.e., non-European) source countries between 1980 and 2000 were associated with a 2 percent decline in earnings net of human capital for immigrant men, but only a 1 percent decline for immigrant women. Swidinsky and Swidinsky (2002) use census data to demonstrate that the visible minority disadvantage in terms of earnings is largely confined to immigrant men. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine in detail the gendered nature of the effect of visible minority status. However, it is plausible that male-dominated managerial, professional, and technical occupations are generally also high-status occupations desired by non-minority populations, which may lead to increased levels of ethnic discrimination as a form of gate-keeping (see, for example, Bauder, 2003).

visible minority status is a cursory and incomplete measure to indicate the presence of ethnic differences in the sample population, this finding supports studies that point to discrimination as playing a significant role in shaping immigrant economic outcomes in the labor market (Reitz and Banerjee 2007). Li (1998) and Pendakur and Pendakur (2002a), in particular, have shown that visible minority status has a negative effect on earnings, even among the non-immigrant population, suggesting that ethnic discrimination is a durable phenomenon in the Canadian labor market.

Also in line with previous findings (e.g., Bonikowska, Hou, and Picot 2011), work experience, full-time work status, and education had a positive impact on wages in our Individual Model, controlling for the other factors. Having no recognized work experience was a major disadvantage initially (β_{10} = \$ −853, SE = \$75), but did seem to be mediated by time in Canada (β_{36} = \$732, SE = \$90). Having a higher level of education completed prior to entry resulted in an increase in mean monthly wages that was significant over time (β_{32}–β_{35}). In the Contextual Models, not having recognized work experience or full-time employment was a significant disadvantage experienced more strongly for males than for females at Wave 1 (β_{10}–β_{12}). Having a higher level of education completed prior to entry resulted in a bigger increase over time (β_{32}–β_{35}) in MMW for males than for females, for individuals who had at least a high school education. Such gendered differences in findings can be at least partially explained by the fact that males were already starting off with a significant advantage in terms of MMW.

In contrast to previous studies (see for example, Berman, Lang, and Siniver 2003; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010), we found minimal evidence of an impact of language skills on MMW. This probably has to do with the fact that language measures in the LSIC are based on self-assessed language proficiency, which is an imperfect measure of language ability.[11] More in-depth analyses of the effect of language on immi-

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[11]Subjective measures of language proficiency, whether they are self-assessments or assessments by others, vary across datasets and studies, making comparisons difficult, especially in the context of an article not dedicated specifically to the effects of language skills. For example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada's evaluation in 2010 of the Federal Skilled Worker Program showed a strong correlation between points awarded under the points system for language ability and immigrant earnings. However, the CIC analysis is based on datasets that employ different subjective language assessments, particularly assessments by immigration officers of writing samples submitted by applicants (see Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2010 on the datasets and their limitations), making it difficult to compare results.

grant outcomes have created stronger measures, by looking at objective measures of prose literacy, document literacy, and numeracy that are not available in any dataset that would have met the needs of our analysis (see for example, Ferrer, Green, and Riddell 2006).

Models 3 and 4, in addition to stratifying the sample by gender, included important household-level controls and spousal attributes. These too suggested the presence of gendered dynamics in our sample households, including a gendered division of labor. Males experienced an initial positive effect of having a spouse who was not working ($\beta_{23} = \$482$, SE = \$107), while over time, females experienced a significant negative effect from having a spouse that is not working ($\beta_{48} = \$-256$, SE = \$110). This appears to indicate that taking a lead economic role in the household does not relieve women of other household responsibilities in the same way that it does for men. While the presence of children had no significant effects for females, males experienced a small but positive effect over time ($\beta_{46} = \$346$, SE = \$146). Interestingly, this suggests that childcare (whether or not it is borne disproportionately by women, as our secondary literature on dual-career migrants states) may not have a negative impact on the economic attainment of women in our sample. The presence of elderly individuals in the household, who could create substantial care work (but who also may take on much of the household responsibilities otherwise relegated to women) had no effect for males or females. Likewise, the variable designed to capture the relative individual attributes for primary/secondary immigrants within a household, through a ratio of respondents' education level as compared to that of their spouse, was not significant throughout the survey period for either males or females. Hence, the primary/secondary distinction did not simply reflect preexisting differences in the relative employability of family members, but had an effect beyond what one would expect controlling for these differences.

Overall, our results suggest that the ability to use human capital effectively is mediated by the path an individual takes under the immigration policy apparatus, as well as by the household context they are situated within. Our data does not discount the relevance of personal and human capital attributes, but suggests that applicant status has an independent significant effect over time, for males and females. This finding challenges the stance widely propagated by Borjas (1990), and supported by Aydemir (2011) and others, that the better performance of primary economic class immigrants compared to secondary family class immigrants is due to the effectiveness of the immigrant selection grid, applied only to the former, in selecting immigrants with higher levels of human capital.

TABLE 2
GROWTH CURVE MODEL OF EFFECTS OF PRIMARY/SECONDARY APPLICATION DISTINCTION ON IMMIGRANT WAGES OVER TIME, LSIC, 2001–2005

	Model 1: With Application Status Only (13,600 observations used, 5,154 subjects)		Model 2: The Individual Model (13,300 observations used, 5,054 subjects)		Model 3: The Contextual Model – Females Only (5,128 observations used, 2,193 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)		Model 4: The Contextual Model - Males Only (5,406 observations used, 1,946 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)	
	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)
Initial status, π_{0i}								
Intercept, β_{00}	961***	43	2,408***	117	1,297***	194	2,578***	238
Application status[a]								
Secondary immigrant, β_{01}	−570***	62	−228***	80	−80	93	−201	139
Entry class[b]								
Family, β_{02}			57	95	−17	102	146	196
Business, β_{03}			40	140	36	167	−83	234
Female, β_{04}			−204**	70	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Visible minority, β_{05}			−617***	89	−172	102	−918***	136
Highest education level completed prior to immigration[c]								
Less than high school, β_{06}			9	184	−100	230	337	416
High school, β_{07}			−13	136	−72	164	62	275
Some post-secondary, β_{08}			−132	132	−123	160	−178	234
Completed post-secondary, β_{09}			−61	74	−104	91	−123	108
No recognized work experience, β_{10}			−853***	75	−466***	93	−1,094***	106
Work status[d]								
Part-time, β_{11}			−512***	106	−285**	107	−718***	187
Not working, β_{12}			−706***	69	−464***	77	−949***	108
Centered official language proficiency scale, β_{13}			−10	9	−12	10	−10	15
Centered age, β_{14}			2	4	−5	6	5	7

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

GROWTH CURVE MODEL OF EFFECTS OF PRIMARY/SECONDARY APPLICATION DISTINCTION ON IMMIGRANT WAGES OVER TIME, LSIC, 2001–2005

	Model 1: With Application Status Only (13,600 observations used, 5,154 subjects)		Model 2: The Individual Model (13,300 observations used, 5,054 subjects)		Model 3: The Contextual Model – Females Only (5,128 observations used, 2,193 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)		Model 4: The Contextual Model – Males Only (5,406 observations used, 1,946 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)	
	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)
Religion[e]								
Catholic, β_{15}			41	92	7	103	196	143
Protestant, β_{16}			186	104	6	114	384*	156
Orthodox, β_{17}			−554***	143	−233	156	−864***	213
Muslim, β_{18}			−98	96	−128	115	−245	146
Eastern, β_{19}			270**	96	109	106	409**	149
Presence of child (15 or younger) in household, β_{20}					−61	74	−162	102
Presence of elderly (64 or older) in household, β_{21}					−81	188	−157	384
Work status of spouse[e]								
Part-time, β_{22}					−89	159	152	163
Not working, β_{23}					94	79	482***	107
Spouse does not have bachelor degree, β_{24}					105	135	−9	176
Ratio of respondent's education level to that of spouse, β_{25}					14	99	118	140
Linear rate of change, π_{1i}								
Intercept, β_{26}	3,939***	80	4,730***	195	3,425***	310	5,358***	457

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)
GROWTH CURVE MODEL OF EFFECTS OF PRIMARY/SECONDARY APPLICATION DISTINCTION ON IMMIGRANT WAGES OVER TIME, LSIC, 2001–2005

	Model 1: WITH APPLICATION STATUS ONLY (13,600 observations used, 5,154 subjects)		Model 2: THE INDIVIDUAL MODEL (13,300 observations used, 5,054 subjects)		Model 3: THE CONTEXTUAL MODEL – FEMALES ONLY (5,128 observations used, 2,193 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)		Model 4: THE CONTEXTUAL MODEL - MALES ONLY (5,406 observations used, 1,946 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)	
	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)
Application status[a]								
Secondary immigrant, β_{27}	−1,719***	113	−997***	137	−1,026***	162	−1,187***	295
Entry class[b]								
Family, β_{28}			62	163	−107	168	311	398
Business, β_{29}			−1,279***	222	−793**	261	−2,071***	467
Female, β_{30}			−1,092***	120	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Visible minority, β_{31}			−1,156***	146	−488**	169	−2,023***	269
Highest education level completed prior to immigration[c]								
Less than high school, β_{32}			−1,245***	304	−746*	363	−312	814
High school, β_{33}			−1,216***	226	−721**	263	−1,315*	538
Some post-secondary, β_{34}			−1,127***	225	−736**	262	−973*	483
Completed post-secondary, β_{35}			−819***	129	−449**	157	−909***	230
No recognized work experience, β_{36}			732***	90	586***	110	782***	133
Work status[d]								
Part-time, β_{37}			−1,030***	114	−856***	111	−675**	223
Not working, β_{38}			−687***	83	−754***	88	−185	142
Centered official language proficiency scale, β_{39}			−67***	13	−28*	14	−70**	23

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)
GROWTH CURVE MODEL OF EFFECTS OF PRIMARY/SECONDARY APPLICATION DISTINCTION ON IMMIGRANT WAGES OVER TIME, LSIC, 2001–2005

	Model 1: WITH APPLICATION STATUS ONLY (13,600 observations used, 5,154 subjects)		Model 2: THE INDIVIDUAL MODEL (13,300 observations used, 5,054 subjects)		Model 3: THE CONTEXTUAL MODEL – FEMALES ONLY (5,128 observations used, 2,193 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)		Model 4: THE CONTEXTUAL MODEL - MALES ONLY (5,406 observations used, 1,946 subjects – sample restricted to individuals with spouses who live with them)	
	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)	B ($)	SE ($)
Centered age, β_{40}			−17*	8	−13	10	−35*	16
Religion[e]								
Catholic, β_{41}			957***	158	683***	175	1,309***	302
Protestant, β_{42}			1,035***	176	390*	192	1,307***	329
Orthodox, β_{43}			−22	234	303	257	−323	426
Muslim, β_{44}			302	168	−212	199	870**	317
Eastern, β_{45}			843***	169	224	181	1,584***	323
Presence of child (15 or younger) in household, β_{28}					−69	96	346*	146
Presence of elderly (64 or older) in household, β_{46}					86	230	503	446
Work status of spouse[f]								
Part-time, β_{47}					124	183	−64	175
Not working, β_{48}					−256*	110	−147	130
Spouse does not have bachelor degree, β_{49}					−350	199	−53	299
Ratio of respondent's education level to that of spouse, β_{50}					−23	154	−306	259
AIC	260,355		252,606		93,018		102,693	

Notes: [a]Reference category is "primary immigrant"; [b]Reference category is "skilled worker"; [c]Reference category is "graduate degree"; [d]Reference category is "full-time work"; [e]Reference category is "no religion"; [f]Reference category is "full-time work"; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

DISCUSSION

Our quantitative analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of the primary/secondary migrant categorization in immigration policy on individual wages. However, it is beyond the scope of this type of analysis to demonstrate the exact causal mechanisms behind this statistical relationship, that is, *how* and *why* this effect manifests. Just as quantitative analyses showing de-skilling effects for the visible minority population in Canada can only identify a relationship between visible minority status and returns to human capital, leaving the exploration of the exact mechanisms by which such deskilling occurs to further qualitative studies (see for example, Esses, Dietz, and Bhardwaj 2006), our analysis identifies a relationship between categorizations and immigration policy that likewise requires further, qualitative studies for better understanding. What follows is, therefore, not an attempt to explain the results of our analysis, but rather an overview of plausible explanations for the Canadian context, in light of the negative relationship revealed in our analysis between secondary applicant status and immigrant economic attainment.

In unpacking this relationship, it is necessary to distinguish between explanations that pertain directly to secondary applicants' relationship to the state, and those that point to ways in which secondary applicant status interacts with household migration strategies and gendered receiving country contexts. Beginning with the former, some secondary migrants — principal applicants in the family class — have a legal relationship with the state that places them in a precarious position *vis-à-vis* their Canadian or permanent resident sponsors. This precarious position derives from the legal financial obligations of sponsors toward their immigrant partners. If the relationship falters, these obligations can serve as an incentive for the sponsor to contact immigration authorities and seek the detention and deportation of the immigrant partner on grounds of marriage fraud, in order to avoid being financially responsible for any social assistance payments awarded the partner after exiting the relationship.[12] Especially if relationship issues arise early in the set-

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[12]"Marriage fraud" (sometimes referred to as a "marriage of convenience") has been a major concern to Canadian immigration authorities over the past decade. It has received substantial media coverage and has been the subject of government consultations and new legislation, all of which arguably contributes to a context of reception that is predisposed to view immigrant partners with suspicion (see for example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012a).

tlement process, fears of jeopardizing one's ability to remain in the country could influence this type of secondary migrant's ability to pursue long-term settlement goals (Goldring, Berinstein, and Bernhard 2009). Rather than mitigate the precariousness of spouses and partners, recent changes in Canadian immigration law augment it. In late 2012, the government introduced a new, conditional permanent resident status for sponsored partners/spouses who have been in their relationships for less than two years and have no common children. Immigrant partners in such relationships can now have their residence status revoked if they fail to remain in the relationship for two years after arrival in Canada, or if immigration authorities determine during that time that the immigrant spouse/partner is not living in a genuine conjugal relationship, marked by financial, social, emotional, and physical interdependency (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012b).[13]

In addition to the legal precariousness built into spousal sponsorship provisions, Anderson (2010) and Goldring and Landolt (2011) show how immigration policy creates precarious workers through labor market provisions that delay and restrict access to employment. This work points to another way in which difficulties for secondary migrants who are spouses/partners in the family class may arise, specifically in the stream of entry known as the Spouse or Common-Law Partner in Canada Class, which was created through the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).[14] In this sub-stream of the family class, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor spouses or common-law partners who are already living in Canada, and those sponsored may apply for a work permit once the permanent residence application has received initial approval, pending the outcome of medical, security, and background checks (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2006, 37). In such cases, it is standard practice to prohibit employment in childcare, education, health services, and agriculture, until medical testing has been passed.[15]

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[13]According to the Operational Bulletin cited here, immigration officers may request evidence of compliance with the requirement that the couple lives in a conjugal relationship either in response to a tip, or as a part of a random assessment of the level of overall compliance within the program.

[14]While this class of entry did not formally exist prior to IRPA, there has been a long-standing practice of processing spousal applications for permanent residence from within Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 1994).

[15]This information was obtained through e-mail correspondence with a representative of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, dated 17 December, 2013.

Notoriously long processing times for applications[16] combined with employment restrictions in highly feminized occupations (e.g., teaching and nursing) mean that this particular sub-stream creates numerous institutional factors that are potentially detrimental to the economic outcomes of (disproportionately female) secondary migrants: dependency, forced absence from the labor market for a substantial period of time, and a potentially longer period of forced absence from the labor market for women qualified to work in occupations in which women are overrepresented.

In addition to explanations pertaining directly to secondary applicants' relationship to the state, our analysis suggests that it would be fruitful to examine the ways in which secondary applicant status interacts with (gendered) household migration strategies, producing unfavorable economic outcomes for secondary migrants, particularly for spouses in the economic class. The primary/secondary distinction in the economic class forces migrant households to designate one person as the primary, economic migrant and the other as the dependent, secondary migrant, even if both applicants could meet the criteria for primary applicant status. While our LSIC analysis revealed differences in the human capital traits of primary and secondary migrants upon migration that might prompt households to select the most qualified member as the primary migrant, it also showed that the primary/secondary distinction mattered above and beyond those differences, even when the relative human capital traits of individuals and their partners was controlled for. This suggests that the primary/secondary distinction does more than simply reflect preexisting differences that lead to rational household earnings strategies, and further work is needed to understand what, how, and why. The forced distinction may result in family earnings strategies that focus all efforts on ensuring the labor-market success of the primary breadwinner. As Cooke (2007) and Ho (2006) show, following this strategy may involve the secondary migrant's withdrawal from, or postponed entry into, the labor market, to manage the family's transition and avoid burdening the breadwinner with unpaid domestic work and childcare responsibilities. Once the primary migrant is established economically, the secondary migrant's time outside

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[16]At the time of writing, the average processing time for that initial approval was six months (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2013). Excessive processing times in the family class have long been an issue; they have at times exceeded 200 days (Employment and Immigration Canada 1983).

the workforce may mean that they no longer qualify for work in their chosen fields and at the level of seniority their human capital would otherwise entitle them to. Additionally, the skills assessment performed in the course of the primary migrant's evaluation under the point system could serve as a form of credential recognition in the eyes of employers, giving primary migrants a competitive advantage over secondary migrants during the hiring process. Now that Canada has followed Australia's lead in introducing pre-application skills assessment by professional bodies, it is important to have a greater understanding of how application status plays into hiring processes, both in the way that immigrants market themselves and in the way they are perceived by employers.

The gendered nature of the primary/secondary distinction, revealed in our analysis and described elsewhere, may simply reflect gendered strategies around breadwinning within dual-career migrant households. However, it would be worth examining the degree to which the forced primary/secondary distinction in immigration policy activates gendered strategies in cases where they might otherwise have remained latent, and the subtle social-psychological mechanisms through which this may occur. In her work on migrant Chinese academic couples in Britain, Cooke (2007) argues that gendered earnings strategies within households are triggered when couples move from a sending country (China) where the government has increased gender equality in the labor market through policies that encourage the full-time employment of women (especially mothers) to a receiving country (Britain) where an absence of such policies goes hand-in-hand with a more gendered labor market and division of labor within households. It is in evaluating such claims, through a cross-national comparison of primary/secondary migrant outcomes in countries with varying degrees of gender equality in the labor market, that further quantitative analyses utilizing a nominalist perspective could increase understanding of the relationship between immigration policy and immigrant outcomes.

Additionally, the gendered nature of the primary/secondary distinction could be the result of — or at least facilitated by — the way in which supposedly "non-discriminatory" selection criteria in economic/skilled migration streams are more amenable to male biographies and thus disadvantage female applicants (Kofman and Raghuram 2005; Boucher 2007; Tannock 2011). For example, work experience criteria in Canada favor male-dominated managerial, professional, and technical occupations as well as the skilled trades. As economic migration streams favor younger

applicants, a woman who enters into motherhood may not have the same opportunity to accumulate equivalent levels of education and length of work experience as a man in her age bracket, leading to the sense that the male partner has the strongest application to put forward. Again, a cross-national comparison of the relationship between the way admission criteria are delineated in skilled migrant entry categories and the gendered nature of the division between primary and secondary migrants would contribute to a greater understanding of immigration policy's role in creating these divisions and, perhaps, a greater chance of ameliorating such effects.

Finally, our analysis suggests that further research is needed on the ways in which (gendered) secondary applicant status dovetails with gendered receiving country contexts to produce economic outcomes that are particularly detrimental to skilled female migrants. Broadly speaking, immigration policy can be seen as one of a series of state policies that perpetuate the dependency of women on men (Boyd 1997). In the case at hand, secondary migrant categories are a common path of entry for skilled female migrants. A brief look at Canada's institutional environment as it pertains to female employment, unpaid domestic work, and childcare responsibilities, suggests that it is a less than optimal context for reception of skilled female immigrants, particularly if immigration policy accentuates gender-related trends already present in the broader population. According to a Statistics Canada report by Ferrao (2010), 58.3 percent of all women in Canada over the age of 15 were in employment in 2009, up from 41.9 percent in 1976. While the number of women in employment may have risen, the *quality* of this employment has remained more or less constant, with women comprising 67.5 percent of part-time employees in 2009, compared to 70 percent in 1976. Furthermore, women remain concentrated in "traditional female occupations" such as teaching, nursing and similar health occupations, clerical and administrative work, and sales and services (Ferrao 2010;21). Another Statistics Canada report, by Milan, Keown, and Urquijo (2011) shows that women still spend significantly more time than men on childcare and unpaid domestic work. In 2010, women spent an average of 50.1 hours per week minding children, compared to 24.4 hours per week for men. Even in households where the female partner was the sole wage earner, the number of hours spent on childcare remained almost unchanged (50.8 compared to 25.5). Women also spent an average of one-and-a-half times as many hours per week as their male partners on unpaid domestic work. Thus, even before

immigration is taken into account, Canada's institutional environment is marked by gender norms that relegate women to particular occupations, often in part-time paid employment, and that still support the notion that childcare and unpaid domestic work are the primary responsibility of female household members, even alongside full-time paid employment. Situating our analysis of the relationship between application status and the economic outcomes of secondary migrants, who are often highly skilled and female, within the gendered context of reception in Canada suggests that immigration policy may affect more than the immigrant population that is the focus of the policy. Immigration policies may contribute to the social reproduction, in a large number of newcomers, of patterns of social inequality that are already part of the broader institutional context of reception. This reproduction should be of concern, because it ensures the continuity of social norms that affect immigrant and non-immigrant populations alike.

CONCLUSION

Our growth model analysis of Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) demonstrated a significant relationship between application status (i.e., the distinction in immigration policy between primary and secondary migrants) and individual wages. This relationship was associated with an earnings disadvantage for secondary migrants, which persisted over time. While this earnings differential was gendered by virtue of the fact that secondary migrants were overwhelmingly female, we demonstrated that application status had an independent, negative effect on both male and female secondary migrants. Notably, this effect persisted even when individual human capital and personal characteristics, household context, and preexisting differences in the relative employability of spouses were taken into account.

Our analysis, coupled with a growing body of qualitative studies on dual-career migrant households, points to a range of possible explanations for the relationship between application status and individual economic attainment. Some explanations highlight the direct effect of the legal relationship application status creates between migrants and the state, while others point to the indirect ways in which application status can dovetail with migrant household strategies and (gendered) contexts of reception. Our results justify renewed discussion about the relationship between immigration policy and immigrant economic outcomes in Canada.

At least three policy prescriptions follow from our analysis. First, admissions policies that employ a point system to vet applicants should not force migrant households to designate one person as the primary (independent) migrant and the other as the secondary (dependent) migrant. As we have argued, this distinction is not only associated with detrimental economic outcomes for individual migrants, but it may also contribute to the (re-)production of gendered labor markets in receiving countries. Even without understanding the precise mechanisms through which secondary migrant status leads to wage differentials, the changes that would be necessary to allow co-primary applicants seem small compared to the potential benefits to be gained. Second, governments should not rely heavily on vetting mechanisms that solely emphasize immigrant human capital in their efforts to derive economic benefits from immigration. While our results do confirm that personal and human capital traits are relevant for individual economic outcomes, they also suggest that the ability to use human capital effectively is mediated by the path an individual takes under the immigration policy apparatus. Finally, governments should take pains to rectify the almost complete absence in major immigrant receiving countries of robust and up-to-date immigration-related data sources that link application status — or even entry class — with personal traits and economic indicators over time. The unavailability of such data severely limits the kind of analyses of immigrant outcomes that can be performed, and hence the scope of policy remedies that could mitigate poor immigrant outcomes.

Beyond policy prescriptions, our analysis has implications for theoretical discussions of the relationship between immigration policy and the broader context of reception in receiving countries. As Meyers (2000) shows, theories of immigration policy often conceptualize it as deriving from isolated aspects of the context of reception (e.g., economic interests, understandings of national identity, domestic politics, or international relations). Rather than continuing to emphasize singular factors within contexts of reception, our analysis suggests the need to further develop conceptualizations of immigration policy as a structure that is shaped by — and shapes — more diffuse, "ideational" (Padamsee 2009) aspects of the context of reception (e.g., gender norms and racial/religious divisions). There is a need to map circular relationships between contexts of reception and immigration policies, to understand how such policies (re-) produce social inequalities, affecting immigrants and non-immigrants alike.

In recent decades, migration management frameworks developed in established immigrant receiving countries like Canada and Australia have been emulated by numerous other OECD countries (OECD 2010), and these frameworks all contain entry categories that differentiate between primary and secondary migrants. Failure to consider the possibility that the primary/secondary distinction in immigration policy mediates the ability of persons thus designated to achieve economic outcomes commensurate with their human capital weakens both the potential for social analysis and the scope of political intervention to mitigate negative individual and macroeconomic outcomes. The gendering of the primary/secondary migrant distinction — and hence of the family relationships of hundreds of thousands of newcomers each year — not only facilitates the social reproduction of gender inequality among those individuals, but also helps (re-) produce the gender inequality already embedded in the country's institutional environment.

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