

Immigrant experiences with changes to the parental sponsorship program in Canada

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore in-depth immigrant families experiences with recent changes to the parents' and grandparents' sponsorship program in Canada. My ultimate objective is to critically analyze (Kuntz, 2015) immigration policies that led to the recent changes on the one hand; to critique (Kuntz, 2015) the dominant ideology that seeks to portray parents and grandparents as economically useless and socially undesirable on the other. In particular, I aim to 1) explain the policymaking process that led to Canada's family sponsorship program changes and 2) describe immigrants' perceptions of changes to family reunification policies. Using discursive institutionalism, I emphasized the role of coordinative and communicative discourses in justifying the exclusionary form of policies that shaped immigration intakes. On the one hand, background abilities maintain the exclusion of undesirable migrants; on the other, foreground abilities change the definition of whom is considered undesirable, therefore legitimizing their exclusion. After the end of discrimination based on racial, class and political affiliation, politicians turned toward other forms of othering to target the refugee, the poor and the elder using different institutional tools such as the point system. Specifically, neoliberalism's capacity to adapt (Schmidt, 2015: 174) immigration needs to the labour market can help us understand the continuous rise of temporary immigration intakes while creating new categories of exclusion, the last of which are older adult immigrants.

Biography

Souhail Boutmira is a proud recipient of the prestigious Canada Excellence Research Chair Doctoral Fellowship. He is in the Immigration, Settlement, and Diaspora Policies stream. My research interest focuses on migrants' wellbeing and policies. In particular, he analyzes the politics behind welfare states' responses to recent migration flows to address social justice issues emerging out of globalization processes. His most recent contributions include research on older adults' experiences with language barriers and risk factors contributing to elder abuse in the context of migration and (re)settlement in Canada.