

## **Report of Peter Li**

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### Workshop Title:

Economic and Social Value of Immigrants

### Organizer:

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### Workshop description:

Immigrant receiving countries have developed normative expectations regarding the value of immigrants based on their perceived and actual contributions to the receiving society. How immigrants are assessed, in terms of their economic and social value, depends on the normative expectations of the resident population, the prevailing methods of assessment adopted by researchers, and the nature of data and measurements used in the analysis. The purpose of this session is to compare how different countries go about assessing the value of immigrants, and how academics using different methods and paradigms come to different perspectives regarding the contributions of immigrants. The session provides a forum to discuss the merit and limitation of economic and other models. It also explores alternative ways of considering and assessing the value of immigrants to receiving countries.

### Workshop Panel

#### Chair:

Peter S. Li, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

<[Li@sask.usask.ca](mailto:Li@sask.usask.ca)>

#### Presenters:

(1) Jock Collins, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Australia

<[Jock.Collins@uts.EDU.AU](mailto:Jock.Collins@uts.EDU.AU)>

“Analysing Immigration with one eye shut: The inherent inability of neoclassical economics to assess all aspects of the immigration and settlement experience”

(2) Wei Li, Arizona State University, USA

<[Wei.Li@asu.edu](mailto:Wei.Li@asu.edu)>

and Pierpaolo Mudu, University of Rome, La Sapienza, Italy

“A Comparative Evaluation of Recent Chinese Immigration in USA and Italy:  
Settlement pattern, economic contribution and social identity”

(3) Dr. Irit Keynan, Research and Strategic Planning, The Jewish Agency for Israel, Israel

< IritK@jazo.org.il>

“Mutual perceptions of new immigrants and the receiving society: The case of Israel”

(4) Amornrat Apinunmahakul <amornrat@uwindsor.ca>, Erika Harris, and Ronald Meng, University of Windsor, Canada

“The Contribution of Social Capital to The Incomes of Immigrants and The Native-Born Canadians”

Jock Collins, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Australia

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“Analysing Immigration with one eye shut: The inherent inability of neoclassical economics to assess all aspects of the immigration and settlement experience”

#### ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the controversial issue of the contemporary impact of immigration on host societies. It critically looks at the neoclassical economic analysis of immigration by taking the Australian immigration experience as an example. The main argument of this paper is that neoclassical economics is congenitally incapable of assessing all the economic implications of immigration, let alone the social impacts. This is in part because econometric studies of immigration to date, at least in Australia, have been constructed using data that is insufficiently disaggregated to capture even the broad thrusts of the economic impact. For example, the impact of immigrant entrepreneurship in the small business sector of the economy has never been appropriately captured by these econometric models. Moreover, neoclassical economic is constrained by a methodology that creates a series of blind spots in the analysis of immigration. It effectively ignores social aspects of immigration as if somehow these did not also have economic consequences. For example, immigrants in Australia, like in so many other countries, have contributed to community building through voluntary investments in community facilities that play an important role (bridging social capital) in improving neighborhood community relations. The result is that, at best, the economic and social impact of immigration is underestimated. At worst, immigration and immigrants become scapegoats of economic and social problems in contemporary societies because the predominant analysis of immigration is incapable of dealing with many consequences of immigration and settlement.

Wei Li, Arizona State University, USA

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and Pierpaolo Mudu, University of Rome, La Sapienza, Italy

“A Comparative Evaluation of Recent Chinese Immigration in USA and Italy: Settlement pattern, economic contribution and social identity”

#### ABSTRACT

Historically, both China and Italy were sources of immigrants to the United States. The U.S. has a history of carefully crafted and strictly enforced immigration policies that reject certain immigrants while selecting others, depending on their nationality, race, gender and class. Italy, as late as mid-20th century one of the major source to global emigration flow, is now drawing large number of immigrants instead, including those from China. The case of Chinese immigration can be used to build a description of the similarities and differences between contemporary immigrants experiences in these two countries, beyond their different timeframes as immigrant receiving countries and different numbers of Chinese immigrants. Recent migrations from China are happening in a complete different scenario from the past as China embarked on an intense economic development within the globalized world system. The often uncontested economic view to conceive and benchmark immigrants in terms of cost and benefit to the host society can no longer fully capture today's immigration reality, and there is a need to broaden the approach by considering the contribution of cultural and linguistic diversity and other social and political aspects of life cross national boundaries. Investigating categorization processes linked to immigrants spatial practices, in particular linked to construction of ethnic economies and public spaces, can offer a different perspective regarding the actual input of immigrants. This paper will analyze contemporary Chinese migration and its consequences in the U.S. and Italy, by examining their settlement patterns, economic contributions and social identities, and providing policy implications.

Dr. Irit Keynan, Research and Strategic Planning, The Jewish Agency for Israel, Israel  
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“Mutual perceptions of new immigrants and the receiving society: The case of Israel”

Israel has always received many immigrants. In fact the national fabric of the country is based on immigrants. Since 1989 over one million people have immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union, thus creating a sub group of 20% of the population. Over the last decades there has been a transformation of attitudes in Israel from an ideology of the “melting pot” towards one of multiculturalism. This change impacts the mutual perception of new immigrants and the veteran Israeli society. Against the background of a consensus in Israel as to the importance of immigration, there are still barriers to integration and large rifts between the sections of the population. Over the past four years, these mutual perceptions have also been impacted by the security and economic crisis in Israel. In my paper I will address those issues and present the mutual perceptions against the background of today's reality in Israel.

Amornrat Apinunmahakul, University of Windsor, Canada  
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Erika Harris, University of Windsor, Canada, and  
Ronald Meng, University of Windsor, Canada

“The Contribution of Social Capital to The Incomes of Immigrants and  
The Native-Born Canadians”

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of social capital in explaining the income differences between native and foreign-born Canadians. We find the incomes of both groups are positively influenced by joining social organizations and networking (social capital). These social links also have a significant impact on the time it takes immigrants to catch up to native-born incomes, the so-called “years in Canada affect”. Immigrants of colour (visible minorities) especially benefit from joining social organizations and clubs. Not only do their incomes improve significantly with the acquisition of social capital, visible minority incomes also improve relative to native- Canadians and their ‘white’ immigrant counterparts.