

Helping and Receiving Help from Neighbours: A Look at Canadian and Foreign-Born¹

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ABSTRACT

Using pooled data from the public use microdata files of Statistic Canada's General Social Surveys 2010 and 2012 (cycle 24 and 26), this study examined differences in exchanges of help with neighbours between Canadian-born and foreign-born individuals. About thirty-eight thousand respondents to these surveys reported whether help was given to and/or received from a neighbour in the month prior to the survey. Four patterns of help exchanges were examined: neither giving nor receiving help (Case 1), receiving help only (Case 2), giving help only (Case 3) and a bidirectional pattern of both giving and receiving help (Case 4). Drawing on the theory of civic participation, social capital and immigrant integration two hypotheses were generated. Firstly it was predicted that the patterns of help exchange would differ between Canadian-born and immigrants with varying lengths of residence in the country. It was also expected that the impact of immigrant status and length of residence in the country, which may define help exchanges with neighbours, would interact with other socio-demographic and attitudinal correlates of pro-social behaviour. Findings suggest that bidirectional help exchanges (Case 4) were the most prevalent pattern of behaviour among both Canadian and foreign-born individuals. Multivariate analyses using multiple correspondence analysis and multinomial logistic regressions revealed that higher rates of bidirectional exchanges of help were typical among the Canadian-born when compared to foreign-born groups. This research also concluded that immigrant status and length of residence are as important as other socio-demographic and attitudinal correlates in influencing help exchange behaviour, and that favourable views of a neighbourhood increase the occurrence of bidirectional help exchanges. This research also hints that there may be different cultures of "civic engagement" in Canada where neighbours may play more or less peripheral roles as agents of civic integration.

Keywords: Neighbours, Help Exchanges, Immigration, Canada

INTRODUCTION

To what extent do immigrants take part in exchanges of help with their neighbours? Are they exchanging help with neighbours in the same way as their Canadian-born counterparts or are there differences in the patterns of help exchanges between neighbours? This research explores whether socio-demographic and attitudinal traits such as status and length of residence impact likelihood of exchanging help with neighbours. The quest to answer these questions sheds light on the intricate nature of integration of immigrants into civic community. This exploratory paper focuses on the patterns of help exchanges displayed by Canadian-born and foreign-born groups, in attempt to obtain a general picture of the civic integration

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process, interactions between help exchanges, immigrant status, and general correlates of pro-social behaviour.

Neighbourhoods are central arenas for the civic integration of immigrants in Canada (Klein, 2011). One key indicator of this civic integration is the participation in exchange of help with neighbours in their community of residence (Bourdieu, 1986; Worley, 2005; Cheong, 2006; Ravanera and Rajulton, 2009; Bridge, 2002; Van Oorshot, et.al, 2006; Lancee and Donkronkers, 2011). Neighbours are important acculturation agents and a greater involvement in help exchanges with neighbours is highly desirable in ensuring social cohesion and the creation of social capital (Putnam, 1995; Henning and Lieberg, 1996; Worley, 2005). Exchanges of help with neighbours also enhance mutual trust, reciprocity and solidarity between community members (Yalom and Leszcz, 1995; Putnam, 2000; Abbott and Freeth, 2008; Van der Gaag et. al, 2005; Williams et. al, 2003). Despite its importance in social policy, however, the phenomenon of exchanging help with neighbours among immigrants has been relatively understudied and lacks strong empirical evidence across countries (Wickes et. al. 2013).

Individuals may help their neighbours in various ways such as working at someone's home, providing health-related or personal care, assistance such as shopping, driving someone to a store or appointment; doing paperwork and assisting neighbours in other ways (CCSD, 2005). These activities have often been examined under the rubric of informal volunteering whereby individuals interact within informal networks of extended families, friends, and neighbors. Several Canadian studies have already found that large numbers of Canadian-born and established immigrants are actively engaged in activities of informal volunteering and that the longer immigrants reside in Canada, the more likely they are to participate in various forms of both formal and informal volunteering (Statistics Canada 2001,2009, Thomas,2012). Informal volunteering rates have been consistently found to be lower among recent immigrants compared to the Canadian-born and the overall immigrant average. Addressing this particular question, Burstein and Mulholland (2008) suggest that immigrants tend to under-report volunteering activities because these are often seen as personal, communal and religious responsibilities rather than as informal volunteering activities, which do not conform to the Western paradigm of data collection of national surveys.

Previous studies on informal volunteering in Canada have shown that several socio-demographic and life-cycle related factors such as age, gender, marital status, mother tongue, the presence of children, health status, religiosity and socio-economic status are important key drivers of these type of behaviours (Statistics Canada, 2010). In undertaking an analysis of neighbourly help exchanges comparing Canadian and foreign-born groups, three sets of considerations appear relevant. Firstly, the length of residence in the country is a key factor, as immigrants become more familiar with neighbours over time and, thus, develop stronger bonds with them (Joseph, 1997; Murie and Musterd, 2004; Thomson, 2005; Hooghe, et al 2009; Vervoot, 2012; Huijts et. al, 2014). Secondly, perceptual and behavioural factors are equally important. If immigrants perceive the ethnic/racial climate of their neighbourhoods as hostile then contact and interactions with neighbours may be null or limited (Fischer, 1984; Keller et.al, 1977; Broman, 1997; Korte,1988; Wong, 2003; Stolle et al, 2008). Individuals who do not exchange help with neighbours may not do so for a variety of reasons ranging from time constraints, lack of resources, absence of need, linguistic barriers, and unfamiliarity with the community and negative views of surrounding neighbours (Levin and Chatters, 1998; Wuthnow, 2002; Statistics Canada, 2009; Taniguchi, 2012). Thirdly, characteristics of the neighbourhood are expected to influence the level of help exchanges between neighbours (Huijts et. al, 2014). These factors provide general information on the geographical context where help exchanges and other important social capital related interactions are likely or unlikely to occur (Murie and Musterd 2004; Uslander and Conley, 2003; Mata and Pendakur,

2014).

By merging central ideas present in the literature two broad working hypothesis can be tested with empirical data provided in the General Social Surveys (GSS) in Canada. These hypotheses state that (a) the patterns of help exchange behaviour will be different for Canadian and foreign-born groups and, (b) that the impacts of immigrant status and length or residence in the country in defining the patterns of help exchange with neighbours will interact with other socio-demographic and attitudinal correlates of pro-social behaviour. This analysis pays special attention to four major types of help exchanges with neighbours: neither giving or receiving help from neighbours (case 1), receiving help only, (case 2), giving help only (case 3) and both giving and receiving help from neighbours(case 4). Case 1 is representative of no-exchanges, case 2 and 3 of unidirectional exchanges and case 4 of bi-directional exchanges of help. Non-participation in help exchanges (case 1) are expected to occur more frequently among recent immigrants when compared to Canadian-born due or those with longer residence due to their initial stages of acculturation. Unidirectional exchanges of help (cases 2 and 3) are expected to be less frequent and to vary greatly from one individual to the next. Rates of bidirectional exchanges of help (case 4), representing a higher level of civic and neighbourly engagement, are predicted to increase as residence duration increases.

DATA AND SAMPLE

Established in 1985, the General Social Survey (GSS) is an annual telephone survey with varying themes produced by Statistics Canada. Data for the current study was drawn from the public use micro-data files of the 2010 and 2012 General Social Surveys (GSS 2010 and 2012, cycles 24 and 26 respectively). The target populations of this survey are residents of Canada aged 15 and up, and excludes residents of the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The main theme of Cycle 24 (2010) was time use, time-stress and well-being issues while Cycle 26 (2012) was devoted to collecting information on care-giving and care-receiving. Both national surveys provided information on help provided/received from neighbours within the month prior to the survey as well as other socio-demographic and attitudinal characteristics of respondents.

Pooling respondents from the two GSS surveys offered important analytical advantages for the study of neighbourly exchanges of help. This larger sample size contributes to a larger minority population, which helps to increase levels of confidence in point estimates and decrease standard errors of population parameters.² For this research, merging the 2003 and 2006 datasets produced a pooled dataset containing 38,006 individuals (15,346 from the GSS 2010 and 22,660 from the GSS 2012). This pooled sample represented a weighted average population of 28.4 million adult Canadians.³

The pooled 2010-2012 GSS sample was broken down in the following immigrant status groups: Canadian-born (n= 31,197), foreign-born with 20+ years residence in the country (n= 3,969), foreign-born with 10-19 years residence in the country

² Pooling the two datasets required identifying all common variables of interest. Key variables present in both cycle questionnaires were identified and isolated from their respective datasets. Variable coding schemes were contrasted against each other and were standardized to a common coding. The final preparatory activity consisted of comparing the two surveys in terms of their socio-demographic and social capital attributes to determine if there were fundamental differences by cycle. An examination of age, gender and provincial composition of the two GSS cycles revealed remarkable similarities in terms of these general attributes (with discrepancies amounting to less than 1% percentage points).

³ Merging the datasets required a thorough examination of the content, coverage and mode of data collection in surveys (Thomas and Wanell, 2009). In terms of weighting strategies, Wendt's proposal is of merging the datasets and dividing the global person weight by the number of cycles (two in this case) is followed here (Wendt, 2007). This new global weight in combination with the 500 bootstrap weights were used in the multivariate analysis of the data.

(n=1,496), foreign-born with 5-9 years of residence in the country (n= 677) and foreign-born with less than 5 years residence in the country (n= 687). As expected, among those who were recent immigrants with less than 5 years residence in the country, the overwhelming majority (97.6%) had resided in the present neighbourhood for 5 years or less. These percentages were 51.9% for the Canadian-born, 59.8% for foreign-born with 5-10 years of residence in the country, 49.3% for foreign-born with 10-11 years of residence in the country and 41.8% for those with 20+ years residence in the country.

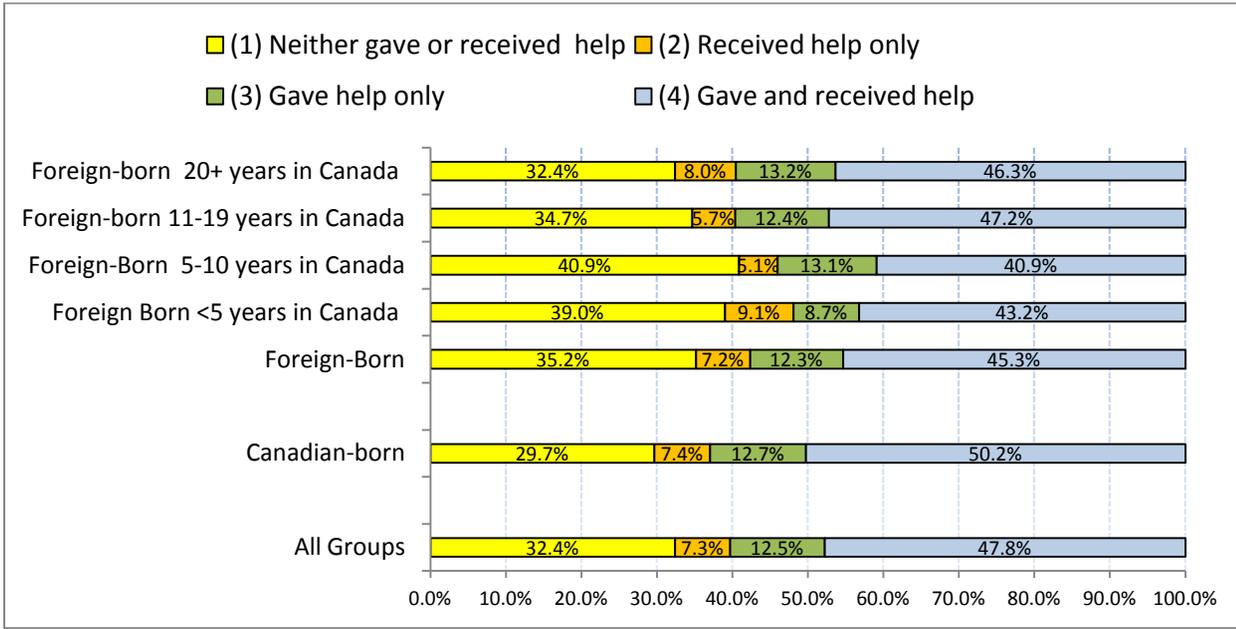
Help exchanges with neighbours were explored here through two questions asked in the GSS 2010 and GSS 2012 surveys which were stated as follows: a) In the past month, have you done a favour for a neighbour? (*DOR_q228 and DOR_q222*), and b) In the past month, have any of your neighbours done a favour for you? (*DOR_q229 and DOR_223*). In each question respondents provided a yes or no answer. Combinations of responses to these questions were used as dependent variables in the multivariate analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

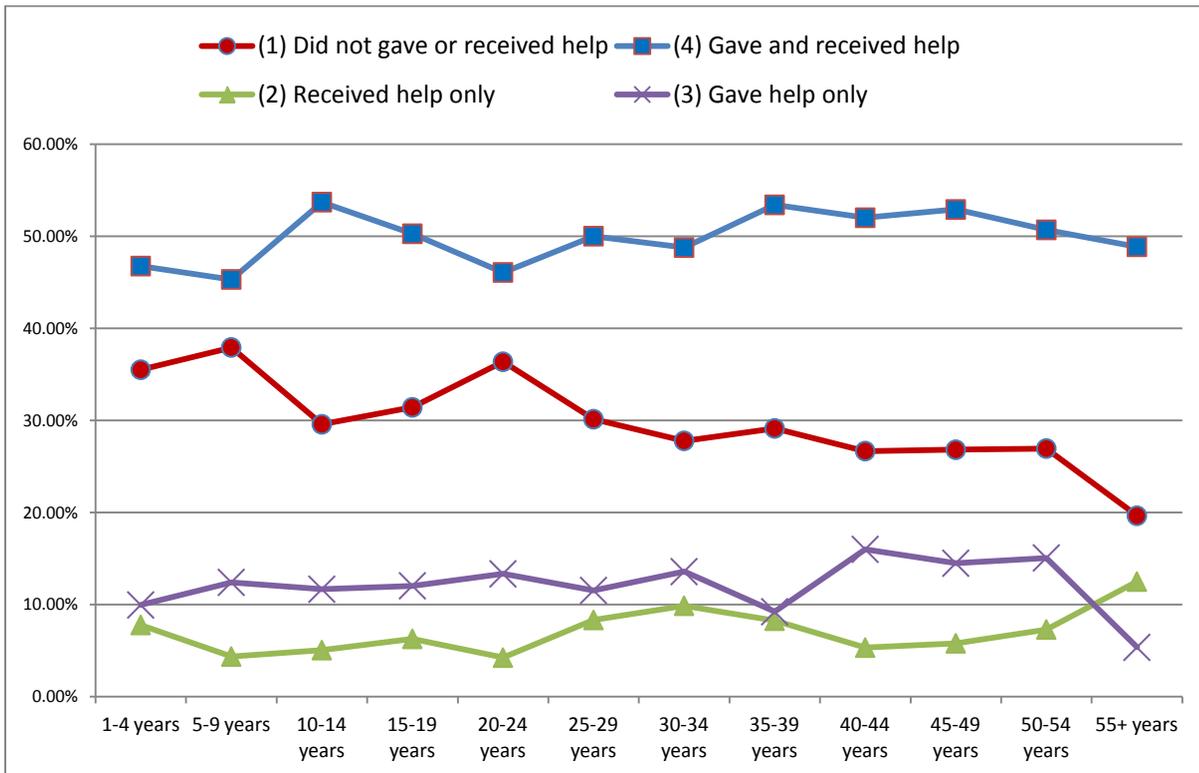
As seen in Chart 1, a first examination of the pooled GSS data suggests that almost half of the adult Canadian population (case 4, 47.8%) had both given and received help from a neighbour in the last month previous to the GSS 2010 and GSS 2012 surveys. This percentage was found to be higher for the Canadian-born residents when compared to the foreign-born (50.2% to 45.3%), and the difference was found to be statistically significant ($t= 2.04, p<.00$). The percentage of individuals who neither gave nor received help (case 1) was higher among the foreign-born compared to the Canadian-born (35.2% to 29.7 %, $t= -4.15, p<.00$). Approximately 1 in 4 immigrants who had resided in Canada less than five years or 5-9 years, did not report participating in any help exchanges with neighbours. In terms of unidirectional exchanges (i.e. reporting receiving or giving help only), percentages were lower (below 13%), differences between Canadian and foreign-born groups were narrower (within 2% points) and not found statistically significant.

Chart 1: Neighbourly Help Exchange Types by Immigrant Status Groups



Source: Pooled 2010 and 2012 GSS Survey

Chart 2: Neighbourly Help Exchange Types by Length of Residence in Canada (years)

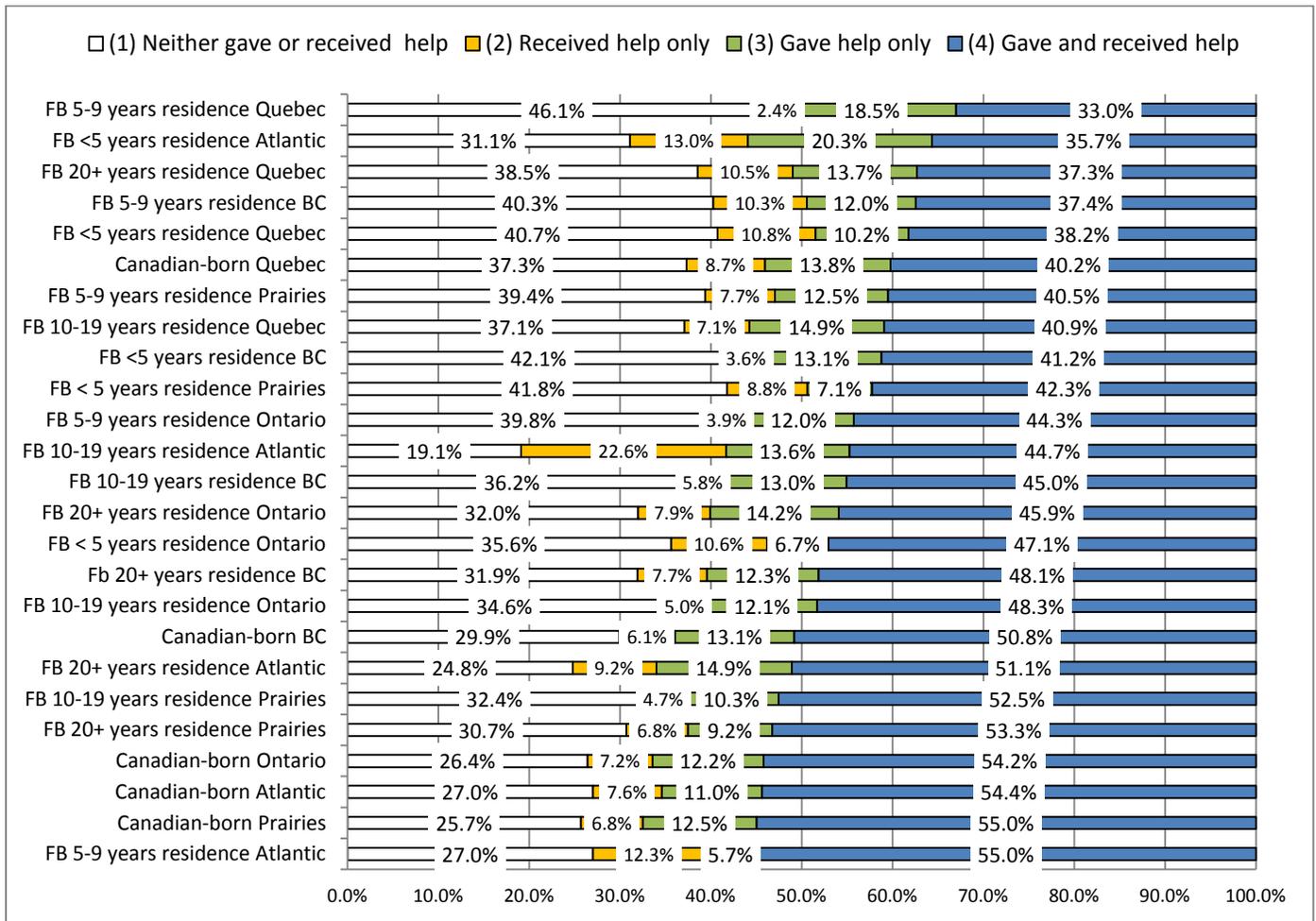


Source: Pooled 2010 and 2012 GSS Survey

For immigrants, bi-directional exchanges of help with neighbours (case 4) did not linearly increase as a function of the length of residence in Canada (see Chart 2). This rate fluctuated around the 50% mark across time. There were, however, some rate reductions of non-participation in help exchanges (case 1) particularly among those foreign-born that resided 25+ years more in Canada (below 30%). Other help exchange types were less frequent across the different lengths of residence in Canada.

Further examination of the data revealed that both male and female immigrants with less than 5 years residence in Canada did not report participating in exchanges of help with their neighbours one month previous to the survey: 43.3% and 42.1% respectively. Among these individuals, rates far exceeded those of bidirectional exchanges. Older immigrants with recent residence in Canada (10 years or less) were also among those least likely to participate in any exchanges with neighbours (57.7% or more). In terms of home language use, about 43% of immigrants who used languages other than English or French at home did not participate in any help exchanges with neighbours. This result was expected as the language barrier may diminish the likelihood of interacting with neighbours. Those who benefited more from neighbourly exchanges were Canadian-born and spoke English and/or other languages at home (50% or more). In terms of regional differences of exchange patterns (see chart 3), it was noticeable that immigrants of recent stay in Quebec and B.C were the most likely to have not participated in any exchanges of help with neighbours (40% rate or higher). The most exchange participatory groups were those foreign-born of residence 5-9 years residing in the Atlantic region as well as Canadian-born residing in the various provinces of the country.

Chart 3: Neighbourly Help Exchange Types by Immigrant Status Groups and Region of Residence



Source: Pooled 2010 and 2012 GSS Survey

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

To empirically test the two broad working hypotheses, multivariate analysis of the GSS 2010 - 2012 data was undertaken using multiple correspondence analysis and multinomial logistic regression analysis techniques in a sequential fashion. It was important to identify the major predictors of help exchanges and to determine if immigrant status and length of residence effects on help exchange behaviour remained after controlling for other major factors of pro-social behaviours underlined in the literature.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis Results

Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) uses principal components factor methods to visually observe the distances between several categorical variables and observations in a bi-plot⁴ (Greenacre, 1993). By determining departures from the independence model through the X^2 statistic, CA expresses relationships between variables and groups as points in a bi-plot

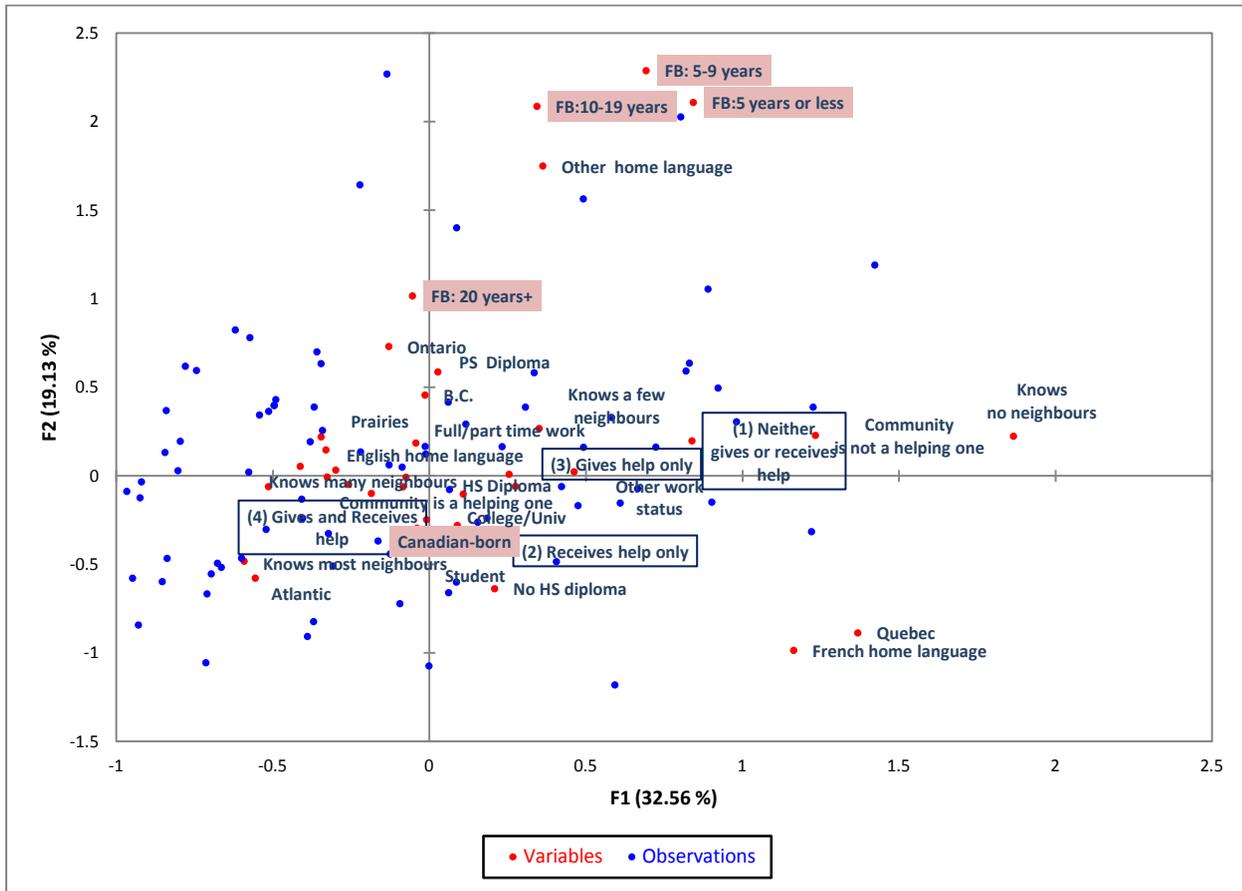
⁴ A bi-plot is a map that shows the geometrical positions of variables and observations in factor space.

where distances to factor axes reflect correlational patterns present in the data. Bi-plots use the first two main factors or components as reference axes for the geometrical positions of variables.

In order to visualize complex patterns of data through MCA it was necessary to reduce the number of potential predictors of helping behaviours which could be included in the analysis⁵. The MCA bi-plot of Chart 4 presents the results that combined the typology cases, immigrant groups and the most relevant predictors of help exchanges. Here, extracted factors F1 and F₂ jointly account for approximately 51.2% of the adjusted total inertia. Factor 1 accounted for 32.6% and while factor 2 for 19.1%. Like the first bi-plot presented before, the first factor represented an axis of differentiation between help vs. non help and perceptual/contact attributes while the second factor contrasted immigrant status categories. Canadian-born were found at relative shorter distances to the cluster of variables representing bidirectional help exchanges (case 4), located in quadrant III. Atlantic residents were also in close proximity to this cluster. More established immigrants occupied intermediate positions between the former group and more recent immigrants. The fact that more recent immigrants and, particularly, those residing in Quebec, appear at closer distances to the no-exchange/no contact and negative views of the community cluster of variables (quadrant I) suggests more difficulties for these groups to be under-represented in bi-directional exchanges of help with neighbours.

⁵ This was accomplished by selecting 20 respondent attributes and including them in a regression and classification tree (CART) where the target variable was a nominal one containing the four typology case. The QUEST algorithm of CART had a classificatory success of 55%. Chi-squared partitions of the target (dependent) variable revealed that the most predictors were the perceptions of the neighbourhood as a helping one or not and the contact with neighbours. The calculated predictor importance of these two inputs were .50 and .39 respectively. Education level, work status and region of residence of respondent were also useful but were found to have less discriminatory power than the former ones (importance indices lower than .05)

Chart 4: MCA bi-plot: Help Behaviour Categories, Immigrant Groups and Predictors



Source: Pooled 2010 and 2012 GSS Survey

Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis Results

In the last step of multivariate analysis, multinomial logistic regressions were used to predict patterns of neighbourly exchanges using socio-demographic and pro-social behaviour predictors. These regressions tested if the effect of immigrant status and length of residence remained strong in the presence of other influences which included cycle effects and other socio-demographic and attitudinal correlates of pro-social behaviour. Variance parameter estimates (balance repeated replicates or BRR) of these regressions were obtained using the new person weight in combination with 500 bootstrap weights which were provided in micro-data files which take into account the survey design and estimate the variances of the effects. The dependant variables used for the multinomial regression included one categorical non-ordered variable used to represent responses to the four patterns of help behaviour: (1) Neither gives or receives help (no= 0,yes= 1), (2) Receives help only, (3) Gives help only, (4) Gives and Receives help.

Predictors: Socio-Demographic and Attitudinal Correlates of Pro-Social Behaviour

- *Immigrant status/Length of Residence*: These comprised four dummy variables (0,1) representing the following categories: immigrants with 20 years or more of residence, immigrants with 11-19 years of residence, immigrants with 5-10 years of residence and immigrants with less than 5 years residence. Reference category: Canadian-born
- *GSS Cycle*: one dummy variable represented the cycle effect of the GSS 2012 period of observation: Reference category: GSS 2010 period
- *Female*: A dummy variable measuring whether the respondent said he/she was female was used (0=no, 1=yes).
- *Age groups*: Age effects were measured by four dummy variables: 35-44 years old, 45-64 years old, 65+ years old. Reference category: 15-34 years old
- *Marital status*: two dummies represented single and other marital status. Reference category: married or common law status
- *Young children (under 14) in household*: A dummy predictor was also used to represent this presence (0=no, 1=yes)
- *Work status*: two dummies representing student and other status in the labour force were used. Reference category: full or part time work
- *Home language use*: two dummies represented these attributes: French and Other language. Reference category: English
- *Region of Residence*: four dummies represented influences of the region of residence: Quebec, Ontario, Prairies and British Columbia regions were used. Reference category: Atlantic region
- *Education level*: three dummies representing high school diploma, college and some university, and post-secondary university. Reference category: no high school diploma
- *Knowledge of Neighbours*: This question was worded as "Would you say that you know most, many, a few or none of the people in your neighbourhood? Three dummies represented the responses: A few, many and most. Reference category: None
- *Favourable Perceptions of the Neighbourhood*: This question was worded as "Would you say this neighbourhood is a place where neighbours help each other? One dummy variable represented yes to this question.

The magnitude and statistical significance of odds ratios⁶ of these multinomial logistic regressions are presented in Table 1. The contrast group used here were those who both gave and received help from neighbours.

Analysis of Help Exchange Patterns

Case 1 (Neither gave nor received help): A cycle effect was evident in this prediction. Compared to respondents to the GSS 2010, respondents to the GSS 2012 were 1.20 times more likely to report not having participated in any exchanges of help with neighbours. All dummies representing immigrant status categories were found statistically significant suggesting greater propensities of members of these groups when compared to the Canadian-born to not participate in any exchanges net from socio-demographic and pro-social attitudinal factors (at least 1.15 times greater than the Canadian-born). Even more

⁶ These odds may be roughly interpreted as the odds ratio of the occurrence of a certain event, controlling for effects of other variables present in the analysis.

established immigrants (20 years plus residence) had a greater likelihood of reporting a lack of bidirectional help behaviour. Older individuals and those residing in the province of Quebec were also found prone to report no participation in exchanges of help with neighbours. Conversely, greater contact with neighbours, displaying favourable perceptions of the neighbourhood, being female and having a child under 14 residing in the household reduced the likelihood of reporting a lack of help exchange.

Case 2 (Receiving Help Only): A cycle effect was found in this prediction. In comparison to the Canadian-born, immigrants of longer stay in Canada were 1.27 times more likely to report having received help only from neighbours than to have given and received help. Similar to case 1, those individuals who had greater contact with neighbours and those who saw the community as a helping one were less likely to report having only received help from a neighbour than having given and received help. Multinomial regressions suggest that those more likely to report having received help were females, whose marital status was single, and who resided in all regions excluding the Atlantic.

Case 3 (Giving Help Only): A cycle effect was also observed here. Compared to the Canadian-born, all immigrant groups displayed higher odds ratios, which suggests more typical reporting of this help exchange pattern among these groups (odds ratios of 1.23 or higher). Higher level of social contact, positive perceptions, and having young children at home reduced the likelihood of giving help only while being female and/or single increased it.

Table 1: Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis Results: Odds Ratios

Predictors	(1) Neither gives or receives help		(2) Receives Help Only		(3) Gives Help Only	
	Odds Ratio	sig.	Odds Ratio	sig.	Odds Ratio	sig.
<i>GSS Wave</i>						
2012 wave	1.20	**	1.31	**	1.30	**
<i>Immigrant Groups</i>						
FB: 20+ years residence	1.19	*	1.27	*	1.32	*
FB: 11-19 years residence	1.15	*	0.88	ns	1.23	*
FB: 5-10 years residence	1.18	*	0.75	ns	1.70	*
FB: 5 years or less years	1.69	*	1.14	ns	1.30	*
<i>Contact with Neighbours</i>						
Knows a few neighbours	0.44	*	0.37	*	0.23	*
Knows many neighbours	0.28	*	0.21	*	0.09	*
Knows most neighbours	0.30	*	0.17	*	0.10	*
<i>Community perceptions</i>						
Community is a helping one	0.25	*	0.89	ns	0.23	*
<i>Region of Residence</i>						
Quebec	1.20	*	1.27	*	1.19	*
Ontario	1.01	ns	0.82	*	0.85	*
Prairies	0.95	ns	0.75	*	0.76	*
B.C.	1.08	ns	0.76	*	0.90	ns
<i>Gender</i>						
Female	0.84	*	1.63	*	1.26	*
<i>Age Groups</i>						
35-44	1.34	*	0.68	*	0.83	ns
45-64	1.43	*	0.62	**	0.87	ns
65+	1.46	**	0.79	ns	1.06	ns
<i>Mother Tongue</i>						
French	1.29	ns	0.76	ns	0.89	ns
Other	1.35	ns	0.71	ns	0.88	ns
<i>Presence of Children in Household</i>						
Child under 14 years	0.85	*	0.85	ns	0.64	**
<i>Marital Status</i>						
Single	1.39	*	1.25	*	1.48	*
Other	0.98	ns	1.26	**	0.94	ns
<i>Workforce status</i>						
Student	0.88	ns	1.01	ns	0.87	ns
Retired and Other	1.13	ns	1.18	ns	0.92	ns
<i>Educational Level</i>						
High School Diploma	0.87	ns	0.82	ns	0.87	ns
Univ/College	0.80	**	0.82	*	0.77	**
Post Secondary	0.72	**	0.92	**	0.79	**

Contrast Group: (4) Gives and Receives Help. Symbols: ns=non statistically significant coeff., *=sig. coeff. at the .05 level, **= significant coeff. at the .01 level

DISCUSSION

Before discussing the findings of this analysis, it is important to mention some shortcomings of the data set used. Firstly, the pooled sample had limited counts on immigrants with shorter periods of residence in the country (i.e. less than 10 years residence) and this may have an impact on the reliability of their reported rates of giving and receiving help from neighbours. Caution was also employed when interpreting the findings for groups with the lower rates of receiving help, particularly when breakdowns of exchange rates and patterns of exchange are disaggregated. Information on the giving and receiving help from neighbours was collected by dichotomous items (no, yes) which oversimplify a complex process of exchanges of help with neighbours. Details on the types of help provided and received as well as the frequencies of exchanges and/or detailed residential characteristics were not available in the data set. Neighbourly exchanges cover only a part of a greater "spectrum" of help given/received from family, kin and other members of personal networks. Information collected was also limited to a one month period of observation previous to the GSS surveys of 2010 and 2012.

The presence of cycle effects suggest that there were differences in the reporting of help exchange behaviour between 2010-2012. With the exception of the immigrant group reporting 5-9 years of residence in the country, Canadian and foreign-born groups sampled in the GSS 2012 were more likely to report that they did not participate in any help exchanges with neighbours compared to those sampled in the GSS 2010. Differences ranged from +4 to +9% points and were reflected in the magnitude and statistical significance of the logistic regression coefficients for three of the typology cases. It is unclear why these discrepancies in reporting occurred between these years but it is suspected they may reflect fluctuations of a more complex pattern of civic integration over time.

As stated previously, the theoretical review on help exchanges led to the anticipation of two broad research hypotheses which were tested with a pooled GSS 2010-2012 data. The first one concerned differences in help exchange patterns between the Canadian and foreign-born. Though bidirectional exchanges (case 4) were the most prevalent across both groups, noticeable differences in exchange patterns between Canadian and foreign-born with respect to case 1 (no exchanges) were revealed. Regardless of the period of residence, at least one third of the foreign-born adult population did not engage in any help exchanges with neighbors, a figure that was higher among the more recent immigrants to the country living in Quebec, B.C. and the Prairies (5-9 years or less than 5 years in Canada). Further data probing revealed that females, older individuals as well as those who spoke languages other than English and French were the most likely to report no exchange of help with neighbours. Participation in bidirectional exchanges of help (case 4) did not necessarily increase with a longer stay in the country. This finding suggests that decisions of further involvement with neighbours in terms of help may be attributable more to personal decisions than deficits in terms of familiarity with neighbours, residential and/or language attributes. The data also suggests that unidirectional exchanges of help (receiving or giving help only) occurred more sporadically, represented minority of cases and were possibly tied to socio-economic related influences.

Overall, this analysis suggests that different "push" and "pull" factors are likely to be responsible for a lower level of immigrant participation in bi-directional help exchanges. After undertaking exploratory data analysis using decision trees, correspondence analysis, and binary logistic regression analysis, four major conclusions could be reached about the importance of the various predictors. *Firstly*, in the presence of other socio-demographic and pro-social drivers, immigrant

status and length of residence cannot be discarded as major explanatory factors of help exchange behaviour. Effects remained intact after other covariates (including the cycle effect) were controlled for in the logistic regression equations. *Secondly*, a higher level of contact with neighbours and favourable views of the neighbourhood were critical and essential pre-requisites to participation in help exchanges with neighbours for both Canadian and foreign-born groups. If the community was not perceived as a "helping" one and/or the contact level was low, individuals did not participate in help exchanges with their neighbours. *Thirdly*, life cycle, socio-economic status, religious attendance, and residential attributes were found to be important factors in explaining neighbourly involvement, confirming previous observations made about informal volunteering in Canada. *Fourthly*, that some factors such as the length of residence in the neighborhood and, particularly, home language were not found particularly relevant as explanatory factors underlying patterns of neighbourly exchanges. Attitudinal and other socio-demographic attributes of respondents were the more important predictors of these exchanges.

An emerging social policy question from this analysis refers to the presence in Canada of different cultures of "civic engagement". For some individuals, the spectrum of civic engagement may be more focused on family and kin rather than on surrounding neighbours. Neighbours may be, here, peripheral agents of the civic integration process. For others, interaction with neighbours may constitute an essential ingredient of integration to the community. Due to their unique experiences with different socialization agents, members of immigrant groups may hold different opinions toward civic duties, rights and responsibilities of their membership in the nation state. In a country which is becoming more diverse, understanding these processes is becoming increasingly relevant as neighbours have the potential to amplify social capital benefits, and ensure an extended network of social support. In the case of immigrant groups, it is important to identify those individuals who are less likely to exchange help with neighbours and help them overcome negative experiences. Recent immigrants may lack adequate access to extensive social networks and miss important opportunities to create strong bonds with fellow neighbours. To increase social civic engagement local, provincial, and federal programs could devise initiatives that foster frequent interactions with neighbours and create welcoming images of communities and a prejudice-free environment where common goals may be more easily achieved. Targeted programs fostering neighbourly exchanges of help could go a long way in increasing civic social engagement in Canadian communities.

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