

Appendix 2: Portrait of Canadian Immigrants, using 2000 NSGVP data

The immigrant community in Canada is remarkably diverse, reflecting successive waves of immigration from different source countries over the years. Below, we present a socio-demographic profile of Canadian immigrants who were interviewed for the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP).¹

In the NSGVP, 14.1% of those surveyed were identified as immigrants. This is lower than the 18.4% estimate provided by the 2001 Census. It appears that the NSGVP under-represents immigrants to some degree. And while there are other differences with the 2001 Census data – which we discuss below – overall, the NSGVP presents a fairly accurate portrait of Canada’s immigrant population.

Period of immigration: The number of people immigrating to Canada has varied over the years, reflecting changes in immigration policy and labour market needs. For example, more immigrants came to Canada in the 1950s than in the 1960s. More recently, however, the number has increased considerably. Among immigrants aged 15 and older living in Canada in 2000, 11% arrived between 1996 and 2000, 14% arrived between 1991 and 1995, 23% arrived between 1981 and 1990, 21% arrived between 1971 and 1980, 11% arrived between 1961 and 1970, and 20% arrived before 1961.²

Recent immigrants are more heavily concentrated in Toronto and Vancouver, particularly in comparison to other, non-metropolitan areas. In 2000, over half of Vancouver’s immigrant community aged 15 and older had lived in Canada for less than 16 years, and 23% had lived here for less than six years. In Toronto, 46% of immigrants had lived in Canada for less than 16 years, and 10% for less than six years. By contrast, less than one-quarter (23%) of immigrants living in smaller areas outside of the major urban centres had come to Canada between 1986 and 2001.

The picture is slightly different when we look at recent immigrants in the Canadian regions. In 2000, British Columbia had proportionally the largest group of immigrants over age 15 who had lived in Canada for less than six years (18%), and Quebec had the largest group who had lived here for less than 16 years (48%). The Prairies had the

¹ Please keep in mind that these are averages for this population based on a particular survey, at a particular point in time.

² According to the 2001 Census, 13% of immigrants aged 15 and older arrived in Canada between 1996 and 2000, 16% arrived between 1991 and 1995, 20% arrived between 1981 and 1990, 19% arrived between 1971 and 1980, 15% arrived between 1961 and 1970, and 18% arrived before 1961.

largest group of established immigrants, that is, those who had lived in Canada for more than 26 years.³

Proportion of immigrants, by region and length of time in Canada, 2000
Aged 15 and older

Region	Length of time in Canada			
	1 to 5 yrs	6 to 15 yrs	16 to 25 yrs	26+ yrs
Atlantic	*	*	*	*
Quebec	13%	35%	19%	33%
Ontario	10%	31%	19%	40%
Prairies	60%	27%	17%	50%
BC	18%	26%	16%	41%
Canada	11%	30%	18%	41%

* Results suppressed due to small sample size.

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

Most immigrants come to Canada as young adults. According to the 2000 NSGVP, over half (57%) of immigrants aged 15 or older arrived in Canada when they were 20 to 39 years old. One-third (33%) immigrated as children, 9% were aged 40 to 59, and only 2% came to Canada as seniors aged 60+.

Interesting differences are evident when looking at age at immigration by region. Immigrants in the Prairies were much more likely than those in other regions to come to Canada as children. Ontario attracted the largest proportion of young adult immigrants (aged 20 to 39), while British Columbia and Quebec attracted the largest groups of immigrants aged 40 to 59.

³ According to data in the 2003 GSS, Quebec had the largest group of recent immigrants, British Columbia had the largest group of immigrants who had lived in Canada for six to 15 years, and the Atlantic region had the largest proportion of established immigrants (in Canada for 26+ years).

Proportion of immigrants, by region and age at immigration, 2000

Aged 15 and older

Age at Immigration				
Region	Under age 20	Aged 20 to 39	Aged 40 to 59	Aged 60+
Atlantic	*	*	*	*
Quebec	29%	50%	16%	60%
Ontario	30%	63%	60%	10%
Prairies	46%	45%	90%	Less than 1%
BC	33%	50%	16%	Less than 1%
Canada	33%	57%	90%	20%

* Results suppressed due to small sample size.

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

Age: Among immigrants aged 15 and older who were surveyed for the NSGVP, the largest group was aged 25 to 44 (40%), followed by those aged 45 to 64 (34%). Immigrant youth (15 to 24 years) constituted only 8%, while seniors made up 19% of immigrants surveyed. Among Canadian-born respondents, there were comparatively more young adults (18%) and fewer seniors (14%).⁴

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by age group, 2000

Aged 15 and older

Age group	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
15 to 24 yrs	8	18
25 to 34 yrs	16	18
35 to 44 yrs	24	21
45 to 54 yrs	22	17
55 to 64 yrs	11	11
Aged 65+	19	14
Canada	100	100

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

⁴ According to the 2001 Census, among immigrants aged 15 and older, 9% were aged 15 to 24, 35% were aged 25 to 44, 36% were aged 45 to 64, and 20% were aged 65+. Among the Canadian-born, 19% were aged 15 to 24, 38% were aged 25 to 44, 29% were aged 45 to 64, and 14% were aged 65+. (Statistics Canada's 2001 Census. Cat. No. 95F0357XCB20011004)

Marital Status: According to the 2000 NSGVP, immigrants were much more likely than Canada-born respondents to be married (73% compared to 60%). The proportions of people who were separated, divorced or widowed were roughly the same, but fewer immigrants than Canadian-born had never married (15% and 28% respectively).⁵ The likelihood of being married was high among immigrants, regardless of the amount of time spent in Canada. The only exception was among those who had lived in Canada for six to 15 years.

It is interesting to note that immigrants who had come to Canada as children were less likely than those who had come as working-age adults – particularly those aged 40 to 59 – to be married. Indeed, immigrants who had come as children were less likely to be married than Canadian-born respondents. By contrast, those who were aged 40+ when they immigrated were more likely than other immigrants to be separated, divorced, or widowed.

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by marital status, 2000
Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
Married	73	60
Single	15	28
Separated, divorced, or widowed	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

Children: Immigrants were slightly more likely than Canadian-born respondents to have children, particularly children over the age of six (including adult children). Indeed, 25% of immigrants had children over age 18 living at home in 2000, compared to 15% of Canadian-born respondents. There are many possible reasons for this. Certainly there are many immigrants in their key child-rearing years living in Canada. As well, many ethno-cultural communities expect children to live at home until they marry.

As one might expect, recent immigrants were more likely than more established immigrants to have young children. One-third (32%) of immigrants who had lived in Canada for less than six years had one or more children aged 0 to 5. Those who had lived in Canada for 16 to 25 years were more likely than both recent immigrants and

⁵ According to the 2001 Census, 64% of immigrants over age 15 were married, 20% were single, and 16% were separated, divorced or widowed. (Statistics Canada's 2001 Census. Cat. No. 97F0009XCB20011040)

well-established immigrants (in Canada for 26+ years) to have children over the age of six (53%) living at home.

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by presence and age of children, 2000
Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
No children aged 0-5 yrs	86	88
One or more children aged 0-5 yrs	14	12
No children aged 6+ yrs	59	70
One or more children aged 6+ yrs	41	30

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

Languages Spoken at Home: The capacity to participate in Canadian society is affected by a person's familiarity with Canada's official languages. Knowledge of French or English obviously does not preclude civic engagement through volunteering or voting, but it can present a barrier to key social and economic institutions such as the labour market. There were no questions concerning language on the NSGVP, but according to the 2001 Census, roughly half of all immigrants (49%) spoke English in the home, and another 4% spoke French. Four of 10 immigrants (41%) spoke a non-official language at home, while 61% of recent immigrants spoke a non-official language. Many immigrants speak two or more languages, including French or English. In 2001, 78% of immigrants reported a knowledge of English, 4% had a knowledge of French, and 12% had a knowledge of both languages. Only 6% were unfamiliar with either French or English.⁶

Languages spoken most often at home, by length of time in Canada, 2001

Immigrants aged 15 and older

	All immigrants	Immigrated before 1991	Immigrated 1991 to 2001
English	49%	60%	28%
French	4%	4%	5%
Non-official language	41%	31%	61%
English and French	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
English and non-official language	4%	4%	5%
French and non-official language	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
English, French and non-official language	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Cat. No. 97F0009XCB20011040.

⁶ Ibid. Data for all ages.

Religion: The research literature has identified religious practice as a key factor linked to higher levels of community engagement and participation. According to the NSGVP, immigrants were as likely as Canadian-born respondents to report a religious affiliation. Like the Canadian-born population, the largest group of immigrants were Roman Catholic. There were proportionally fewer Protestants among immigrants surveyed. As might be expected given recent patterns of immigration, almost one-quarter of immigrants reported “other” religious affiliations such as Christian Orthodox, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu (compared to one in 20 Canadian-born respondents).⁷ New immigrants were significantly more likely than more established immigrants to report “other” religions: 33% compared to 12% among those who had lived in Canada for over 26 years.

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by religious affiliation, 2000
Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
Roman Catholic	37	42
Protestant	18	27
Other	23	4
No Religion	21	27

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

Education: Immigrants to Canada are highly educated – even more highly educated than the Canadian-born population. Just over half of immigrants (51%) surveyed by the NSGVP in 2000 had either a college diploma or university degree, compared to 41% among Canadian-born residents.⁸ Fewer immigrants than Canadian-born respondents had a high school education or less: 38% and 48% respectively.

More recent immigrants had higher education levels than established immigrants: 29% of those who had lived in Canada for less than six years and 28% of those who had lived here for six to 15 years had a university degree, compared to 17% of those who had lived in Canada 26+ years. Overall, one of five university graduates in 2000 were immigrants.

⁷ According to the 2001 Census, 33% of all immigrants said they were Roman Catholic, 20% said they were Protestant, 30% identified another religious affiliation, and 17% reported no religious affiliation. Ibid.

⁸ According to the 2001 Census, 42% of immigrants over age 15 had a high school diploma or less, 10% had some post-secondary education, 27% had a college diploma, and 21% had a university degree. (Statistics Canada’s 2001 Census. Cat. No. 97F0009XCB20011041) Comparisons between the NSGVP and Census data should be made with caution due to definitional differences.

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by level of education, 2000

Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
High school or less	38	48
Some post-secondary	11	12
College diploma	28	25
University degree	23	16

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

Employment: Despite their high levels of education, immigrants had lower labour force participation rates than Canadian-born residents in 2001, according to the Census data (61% compared to 68%). Predictably, the employment rate among immigrants was also lower (57%), while their unemployment rate was the same as that of Canadian-born respondents (7.4%). More recent immigrants had lower employment rates than established immigrants. Among immigrants who had come to Canada between 1991 and 2001, 58% had paid employment in 2001; by contrast, the employment rate for immigrants who had arrived between 1971 and 1980 was 70%. Similarly, recent immigrants had an unemployment rate of 11.4% in 2000, compared to 4.9% among established immigrants.⁹

Among immigrants over age 15 surveyed by the NSGVP, 64% were employed in 2000, about the same proportion as among Canadian-born respondents. Of this group, the large majority held full-time jobs.¹⁰

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by employment status, 2000

Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
Full-time	56	50
Part-time	8	14
No job	36	36

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

According to the Census data, established immigrants were more likely to be employed than more recent immigrants. And immigrants who arrived as children were more likely to be in the labour market working either full-time or part-time. By contrast, those

⁹ Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Cat. No. 97F0009XCB20011042.

¹⁰ Direct comparisons with the Census are not possible because of differences in measurement of full-time and part-time employment and those not in the labour force.

who immigrated in their 40s, 50s, or 60s were much less likely to be employed than those who came to Canada as children or young adults. They were also less likely to be employed than Canada-born individuals.

Occupation: The occupational profile of immigrants and Canadian-born respondents in the 2000 NSGVP was quite similar. Approximately one of six immigrants (16%) was a professional, while 8% were trained as managers or administrators. Another 26% reported “other white-collar” occupations such as supervisors, senior clerical workers, or sales and service personnel. Just under one-fifth (18%) of all immigrants were trained in “blue-collar” occupations. Almost one-third (32%) did not state an occupation.

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by occupation, 2000

Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
Professionals	16	16
Managers and administrators	8	6
Other white-collar occupation	26	31
Blue-collar occupation	18	19
Not in the labour force	32	28

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

More recent immigrants were concentrated in blue-collar occupations and “other white-collar” jobs. Immigrants who had been in Canada for 16 to 25 years were much more likely to report being in a professional occupation or “other white-collar” job than in management or blue-collar work. Those who had immigrated between 1976 and 1985 were also concentrated in “other white-collar” professions.

Income: In 2000, the average income of all Canadians over age 15 was \$29,769. Among immigrants, the average annual income was \$29,337, roughly \$600 less than Canadian-born citizens. The average employment income of immigrants working full-time was higher than the average income of all immigrants, but again, it was slightly lower than among Canadian-born full-time workers (\$43,134 compared to \$43,310). Recent immigrants who had arrived between 1991 and 2001 had considerably lower average incomes than more established immigrants: \$21,281 compared to \$36,192 for those who came to Canada in the 1960s. The gap was even larger between recent and established immigrants who worked full-time – \$34,809 compared to \$50,307.¹¹

¹¹ Statistics Canada’s 2001 Census. Cat. No. 97F0009XCB20011042.

Findings from the 2001 Census have raised significant concerns about the economic standing of new immigrants. It was once expected that immigrants would catch up with Canadian-born workers a few years after entry, however, it is now taking much longer for new immigrants to get established in the Canadian labour market and to climb the earnings ladder.¹² Rates of low income are particularly troubling. According to the Census, the poverty rate was 11.2% among Canadian-born families in 2000; among immigrant families, it was 19.1%. For unattached individuals, the respective poverty rates were 36.4% and 42.1%. Here again, new immigrants had much higher poverty rates than those of established immigrants. For example, one-third (33.6%) of new immigrant families were poor compared to 8.2% of established immigrant families.¹³

Immigrants surveyed for the 2000 NSGVP had an economic profile quite similar to that of Canadian-born respondents. The largest group of both immigrants and Canadian-born respondents over age 15 had personal annual incomes of less than \$20,000: 41% and 43% respectively.¹⁴ One-third of immigrants had incomes between \$20,000 and \$39,999, and another 14% had incomes between \$40,000 and \$59,999. One of eight immigrants (12%) and one of 10 Canadian-born respondents (10%) had incomes over \$60,000 per year.^{15, 16}

Proportion of immigrants and Canadian-born, by personal income, 2000

Aged 15 and older

	Immigrants (%)	Canadian-born (%)
Less than \$20,000	41	43
\$20,000 to \$39,999	33	31
\$40,000 to \$59,999	14	16
\$60,000+	12	10

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000.

¹² Picot, Garnett and Feng Hou. *The Rise of Low Income Rates among Immigrants in Canada*. Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, Catalogue No. 11F0019MIE, No. 198, 2003.

¹³ See footnote 13.

¹⁴ In order to compare the income profiles of immigrant respondents in the NSGVP to those in the Census, we have used the personal income variable, not the household income variable. It is important to keep in mind that many people with low incomes live in higher-income households.

¹⁵ According to the 2001 Census, 50% of immigrants had incomes under \$20,000 in 2000, 27% had incomes between \$20,000 and \$39,999, 13% had incomes between \$40,000 and \$59,999, and 10% had incomes over \$60,000. (Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. Cat. No. 97F0020XCB20011043) Given the differences between these surveys, variations in income estimates are not unexpected.

¹⁶ According to the 2000 NSGVP, the average income of immigrants and Canadian-born respondents was \$28,929 and \$27,678 respectively. However, the median income was \$23,000 among Canadian-born respondents and \$22,000 among immigrants.

Immigrants who came to Canada as children or young adults (aged 20 to 39) were more likely to report higher household incomes than those who came as older adults or seniors. Length of time in Canada also had an impact on household income, as noted above. Recent immigrants were much more likely to have low household incomes (under \$20,000) than those who had lived in Canada for many years. The largest proportion of immigrants (27%) had household incomes between \$20,000 and \$39,999 per year, according to the NSGVP.