

The Colour of Poverty: A Study of the Poverty of Ethnic and Immigrant Groups in Canada¹

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ABSTRACT

Research on immigrants' socio-economic performances in Canada has produced mixed results. One reason for this has been the fact that many studies have used measures that rely on average performance of immigrants, and also treat immigrants as a homogeneous group. Also, some measures of economic performance are unnecessarily complicated.

The present article argues that this practice masks the diversity of experiences that exist among immigrants. In particular, it is argued that indices based on average income do not adequately reveal the status of low income immigrants.

Using poverty status as an indicator of economic performance, the study examines and compares different groups of immigrants, in terms of their ethnic origin, period of immigration, age at immigration, and their geographical location in Canada.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s a new discourse on poverty has emerged in the industrial world. Among the common themes in this discourse has been the notion of poverty concentration; that the new surge of poverty has hit certain segments of populations much harder than others. Women, especially single mothers,

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young adults, children, and the elderly are often cited as groups with a disproportional share of poverty (Duffy and Mandell, 1996[1994]; Duffy et al., 1988; McFate et al., 1995). Studies in the US have highlighted alarming levels of poverty among certain racial minorities such as blacks (Lawson and Wilson, 1995). While European research has revealed high levels of poverty among some immigrant groups, in Canada the poverty of ethnic minorities and immigrants, with the exception of Aborigines, has not received much attention.

Research on the poverty of immigrants in Canada has been hindered, to some extent, by two trends in the immigration literature. First, a belief based on previous research that the earnings of immigrants, within 12 to 14 years after arrival, surpass those of non-immigrants (Fagnan, 1995). This implies that immigrants are no more likely than non-immigrants to fall victim to poverty, and if such a possibility exists at all, it would occur in the first few years after their arrival and subside with their stay in the host society. Second, studies of average income of immigrant and non-immigrant families have almost consistently shown that the former enjoy higher incomes (Basavarajappa and Halli, 1997). The most immediate implication of this finding is that immigrants are less likely than non-immigrants to live in poverty.

A closer examination of the socio-economic profile of immigrants in Canada casts some doubts on the validity of these two beliefs. The diversity of socio-economic experiences of immigrants is masked in such studies. In a review of immigration research in Canada, Weinfeld (1998: 2) raises the point that:

[Much] of the literature refers to immigrants as a group, without distinguishing those who are visible minorities, or more recent arrivals. Much of the earlier literature on immigration deals with mainly *European* immigrants. It is an empirical question, as yet unanswered by the available literature, as to whether the trajectory followed by those earlier waves will prefigure that of the newer, largely *non-European* immigrants. [italics in original]

The use of family average income as an indicator of immigrants' economic performance is also problematic. First, it does not take into account the average size of immigrant families, which is larger than for native families (2.91 versus 2.87 in 1991, respectively).² Second, it conceals the varying experiences of low, middle, and high income immigrants. We have reasons to believe that immigrants have a more unequal income distribution than non-immigrants. Figure 1 (page 81), on the distribution of family income among immigrants and non-immigrants in 1991, reveals that higher proportions of immigrant families are found at the two ends of the income scale whereas a reverse pattern applies for middle income categories. In other words, in all income categories below \$27,500 and above \$80,000 immigrants are over-represented.³ This pattern

indicates that findings based on the average income of immigrants are likely to mask the varying situations of immigrants on different rungs of the income ladder, i.e., overall trends do not accurately depict the situation of low and high income immigrants. These need to be addressed separately.

A CONCEPTUAL BACKDROP

Despite the paucity of research on poverty of immigrants, particularly in Canada, the issue has been partially addressed through more general studies on the economic status of immigrants. Until very recently, these studies were strongly influenced by assimilation theory, developed during early decades of the twentieth century, as the guiding conceptual framework to understand the experiences of immigrants. A key to understanding the influence of assimilation theory was the simple and straightforward nature of its propositions. First, immigrants start with a socio-economic situation inferior to those of the native population but improve their conditions the longer they stay in the host country. Upward mobility results from their ability to diminish the influence of language and cultural barriers, improve their occupational skills, enter into existing job-finding networks or build up those of their own. They typically manage to “catch up” with the native population within ten to fifteen years of their arrival. Second, the offspring of immigrants tend to follow this path at an even faster pace because they do not face such hardships as language barriers and educational mismatch with which their parents had to struggle. Thus the socio-economic status of immigrants would be correlated positively with length of time in the host country and negatively with age at arrival.

Recent studies in North America have questioned the validity of these propositions (Borjas, 1994; Gans, 1992; Sanchez, 1997; Huber and Espenshade, 1997). Their basic premise is that the experiences of the older waves of immigrants are not indicative of those experienced by the recent waves. Recent migrants have to face a less friendly environment (both in economic and social terms); are more distinct from the native population, culturally and racially; and hence are more likely to be subjected to possible racist views and discriminatory acts. They also questioned the belief that second generation immigrants would categorically outperform their parents in social and economic arenas.

The present study is guided by the implications of these studies. We have examined the poverty status of immigrants in reference to their ethnic origins, period of immigration, and age at immigration. Compared with previous studies, we use a simpler indicator of economic performance (i.e., poverty status), allow for a comparison of the economic situations of different cohorts of immigrants, and reveal the possible decline in performance of immigrants’ offspring.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

There is little agreement among researchers as how to define and measure poverty. Most discussions of poverty in Canada during the last 25 years have used a measure suggested by Statistics Canada called “Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs)” (Krahn, 1995) which relies on the findings of a detailed survey of the expenditure patterns of Canadian families (FAMEX) conducted by Statistics Canada every four years. The survey shows the average percentage of pre-tax income that Canadian families spend on food, shelter, and clothing. LICOs are set where families spend 20 percentage points more of their income than the Canadian average on food, shelter and clothing. The low-income lines are then calculated for communities and for families of various sizes within those communities, and updated annually using data obtained from the Consumer Price Index surveys (Statistics Canada, 1998).

In 1991, Statistics Canada used a 1986-base FAMEX data and set 56.2 per cent as the threshold for LICOs (Statistics Canada, 1998: 8). Hence, any family spending more than 56.2 per cent of gross income on the basic necessities is considered poor (Krahn, 1995: 2-18). Table 1 (page 82) shows the Low Income Cut-Offs for communities and families of different sizes in 1991. Not all researchers agree upon the legitimacy of using LICOs as a poverty status indicator. For example, while considering LICOs as a relative and inadequate measure of poverty, Sarlo (1992; 1994) suggested an alternative set of poverty lines and concluded that poverty has been basically eradicated in Canada. In response to the debate surrounding the use of LICOs, Canada’s Chief Statistician confirmed that Statistics Canada has not treated LICOs as poverty line, and reiterated that any decision regarding the choice of a measure of poverty, LICOs or otherwise, involves a number of “discretionary judgements” (Fellegi, 1996). In the absence of an official decision on the appropriate measure of poverty, such “discretionary judgements” have been made by involved researchers, leaving behind a tradition of using LICOs as a poverty-status indicator in Canada. In adopting this practice in the present study, we suggest that even if one does not agree with it, the findings and arguments at least facilitate discussion of low income, rather than poor, immigrants.⁴

Our study relies on the Canadian 1991 census data. Statistics Canada provides census data in four major forms: Individuals, Families, Households, and Census Tracts. Except for the last set, which is in an aggregate form and contains data at geographical levels such as neighbourhood, the others provide information on human and social units. While the former set is more appropriate for studying neighbourhood poverty, the latter is appropriate for analysing the poverty of individuals and families. In the present study, we have used the data on individuals. Using LICOs, this data set specifies whether the income of the respondent, or that of the family with which he or she lives, is above or below the low income cut-off.

FINDINGS

The ethnic dimension of poverty

Table 2 (page 83) indicates that ethnic groups in Canada have different experiences of poverty. Using the national poverty rate in 1991 (15.6 per cent) as a yardstick, the table is divided into three areas: groups with poverty rates lower than the national rate (the bottom area); groups with poverty rates up to twice the national rate (middle area); and ethnic groups with poverty rates higher than twice the national rate (top area). The fact that the difference between the highest and the lowest values in the table (30.7 per cent) is about twice the national poverty rate is itself an indicator of the wide discrepancy between the poverty experiences of ethnic groups in Canada.

Table 2 also reveals a few consistent patterns. First, groups in the bottom area are all of European origins. The only exception is the Jewish, which can also be safely grouped with Europeans as more than 78 per cent of Jews were born in Canada, the US, and Europe. Second, the groups which experience the most severe poverty are non-European visible minorities, except for Aboriginal and Spanish. Of Spanish, however, only 13.5 per cent were born in Europe and about 62 per cent declared Latin American countries as their places of birth. This composition makes them more closely associated with non-Europeans. Third, except for the French, those in the middle area constitute a mixture of Eastern/Southern European and Asian ethnic origins.

Nationwide poverty rates of ethnic groups may conceal as much as they reveal. Despite what such rates may portray, members of a certain ethnic group can, and do, have varying experiences of poverty, depending on the city in which they live. Cities vary in terms of their size, economic status, demographic composition, and, as a consequence, their poverty conditions. A more accurate picture of the poverty experiences of ethnic groups needs to take this dimension into account.

Table 3a and b (page 84 and 85) shows the poverty rates of ethnic groups in different cities. The last row and column contain the overall poverty rates for ethnic groups and cities, ranked from lowest to highest. The national poverty rate in 1991 (15.6 per cent) is used to distinguish cities and ethnic groups with poverty rates below and above the national rate. The horizontal and vertical lines in the table divide the two sets. These lines create four distinguished areas in Table 3, called 1 through 4 as follows: (1) area in bold type at the top of Table 3a, (2) area at top of Table 3b, (3) area in bold type at bottom of Table 3b, and (4) area at bottom of Table 3a.

In almost all cities in western Canada and Quebec, the British have poverty rates higher than their nation-wide rate. Even so, they are still better off compared with other ethnic groups living in the same cities (with only two

exceptions). Except for Oshawa, the British are better off in all Ontario cities such as Toronto, St. Catherine-Niagara, Kitchener, London, and Ottawa-Hull. Hamilton is the only deviate from this trend.

A similar pattern prevails for French in Quebec and western Canada. The exceptions are Regina, Saskatoon, and Vancouver, in which the French have poverty rates higher than both their nation-wide and city rates. In Ontario, the French experience of poverty is clearly in contrast with that of the British.

Among all ethnic groups, Germans have the lowest poverty rates in Ontario; not only are their poverty rates lower than their nation-wide rates, but are also lower than the city rates. In Quebec and western Canada, they have poverty levels lower than their nation-wide rates. In all cities but two, Germans' poverty rates are never higher than the city rates. The same observation holds for Dutch.

The poverty rates of the other ethnic groups reveal a variety of patterns. Hungarian and Polish in all but three cities have poverty rates higher than their nation-wide rates, the city rates, or both. Spanish, Latin, Central, and South American as well as the Black/Caribbean are in a unique situation: all their poverty rates are either higher than their city rate, or their nation-wide rate, or both. With the exception of one city, the same holds true for those of Arab, West Asian, Chinese, and Vietnamese origins, along with Aborigines.

The vertical line in Table 3 which separates cities with poverty rates lower and higher than the national rate, shows that except for Vancouver, cities with higher rates are located either in Quebec or in the Prairies; cities with lower rates are mostly located in Ontario. The horizontal line, which distinguishes ethnic groups with lower-than-national poverty rates from others, shows that most western European groups, with the exception of those with Balkan and Ukrainian origins, have lower-than-national poverty rates. Visible minorities, Southern and Eastern Europeans, and Aboriginal, have higher-than-national poverty rates.

A comparison of the areas 1 and 3 reveals another striking feature. These areas represent the poverty patterns of the ethnic groups of Western European origins in cities with lower-than-national poverty rates, and the visible minorities in the cities with higher-than-national poverty rates. While the latter cases can rarely be found in area 1, they are the overwhelming majority of the cases in area 3. In other words, the Western European groups have poverty rates lower than the poverty rate of the cities in which they live, even if the city rates are lower than the national rate. On the other hand, the visible minorities have poverty rates higher than the poverty rates of the cities in which they live, even if the city rates are already higher than the national rate. Thus, visible minorities not only tend to live in cities with higher poverty rates, but they also tend to be poorer than the

average residents of those cities. This indicates an enormous gap between the living conditions of the two groups.

Other than their higher poverty rates and their non-European origins, the visible minority groups have another common characteristic: they are mostly recent immigrants. Table 4 (page 86) clearly shows that the overwhelming majority of these groups arrived in Canada after the 1970s, unlike European immigrants who settled in Canada long before the 1970s. This points to the possibility that the poverty experiences of these groups may be related to their immigration status, and also that they came to Canada at a certain period.

THE POVERTY OF IMMIGRANTS

Generally speaking, immigrants have a poverty rate higher than non-immigrants and the national rate. In 1991, while the national poverty rate in Canada was 15.6 per cent, immigrants faced a poverty rate of 19.2 per cent compared with non-immigrants 14.8 per cent.⁵ The general perception has been that immigrants outperform non-immigrants. However, perceptions based on the average economic performance of immigrants do not accurately depict the situation of low income immigrants in 1991. Figure 1 illustrated that immigrants are over-represented in the lower end of the income scale, under-represented in the middle layers, and again over-represented in the higher end. An expectation about low income immigrants derived from observations of the middle and high layers of income scale may be misleading.

Nor do all immigrants experience this general poverty rate in similar ways. As noted above, the risk of living in poverty seems to be higher for recent immigrants. Table 5 (page 87) shows the poverty rates for immigrants relative to time of arrival. Those who migrated before the end of World War 2 have poverty rates higher than the national average. This group comprises mainly elderly immigrants. One may speculate that the reason for their higher poverty may be that they had their productive years at a time when social programmes were still at a rudimentary stage. Many elder women in Canada, for example, are currently poorer than average simply because their husbands did not have transferable pensions (Foot and Stoffman, 1998). The higher poverty rate of this group of immigrants is matched with the higher poverty rates of elder non-immigrants.

Among the post-World War 2 immigrants to Canada, those who arrived during the 1940s through to the 1960s have poverty rates lower than the nation and the native population. The 1970s immigrants also have a poverty rate lower than the national rate, but higher than the non-immigrants. It is the poverty rate of 1980s immigrants, however, that is alarmingly high (32.4 per cent); more than double the national poverty rate. The lower poverty rates of

pre-1970s immigrants are expected; they arrived at a time when the Canadian economy experienced an unprecedented boom (Li, 1996). It is the sharp increase in poverty rates of immigrants who arrived after 1970 that needs explanation.

There exist two alternative explanations for the observed trend. One, more compatible with the assimilation theory, is that recent immigrants are still busy building their careers. As previous research has shown, it takes 10-15 years for their earnings to “catch up” with those of the native population. Until then, immigrants are likely to maintain a lower economic status and, therefore, a higher poverty rate. The fact that the poverty rate of those who migrated during the 1970s is so close to the native and national poverty rates is broad confirmation of this explanation. The higher poverty rate of the 1980s immigrants is also not surprising because they have not yet completed the period needed to catch up with the native population.

An alternative explanation may see the high poverty rates of recent immigrants as long-lasting, having little to do with recency of their arrival. In attempting to explain the socio-economic status of recent immigrants to the US, for instance, some researchers have argued that changes in the economy, as well as in the racial and ethnic composition of the immigrant population since 1970s, may have created an entirely different environment for immigrants, in which they face enormous obstacles in trying to catch up with non-immigrants (Huber and Espenshade, 1997; Portes, 1997). These studies have pointed that, due to such obstacles, even the offspring of immigrants will not be able to outperform their parents, as was the case in the previous waves of migration (Sanchez, 1997; Zhou, 1997; Gans, 1992).

A systematic evaluation of the validity of these alternative explanations is beyond the scope of the present article. However, an examination of the economic performance of different generations of immigrants may shed some light on the comparative relevance of the above arguments. Such an examination may show whether or not the classic assimilation theory still holds with regard to the recent immigrants.

Table 6 (page 87) shows the poverty rates of immigrants by age at arrival. The second column of the table contains the poverty rates of all immigrants. Since the data include some very young offspring of immigrants who have arrived recently but are not yet of working age, the third column of the table contains the poverty rates only for those over 15 years of age. The combination of the two reveals some noteworthy patterns.

According to the classic assimilation theory, we should expect to see the lowest poverty rates at the top of the table, that is, for those who have migrated at an earlier age. The poverty rates should then increase consistently. Neither the

poverty rates for all immigrants, nor those for 15 years and older immigrants, completely match this expectation. Comparing the poverty rates for the age groups 0-4 and 5-9 years (17.2 per cent and 18.7 per cent, respectively) with those of the 20-24 and 25-29 years (15.6 per cent and 16.7 per cent, respectively) indicates that immigrants who arrived at an earlier age are more likely to be poor. This, indeed, is surprising.

The exclusion of those aged less than 15 years refines the picture to some extent. Here the trend is more compatible with the assimilation theory, as the youngest groups at time of arrival have the lowest poverty rates (12.2 per cent and 12.9 per cent for those 0-4 and 5-9 years at the time of arrival, respectively). However, there is an anomaly here: the poverty rates increase sharply for those who migrated at age 10-14 and 15-19, and decline afterwards. The combination of these three features – lower poverty rates for very young immigrants, higher rates for those who migrated in their adolescence years, and lower rates for those migrated in their early adult years – points to a complicated situation not entirely explainable by the assimilation model. Neither is it easily reducible to notions of first and second generation immigrants. It clearly challenges conventional conceptualization regarding the integration of immigrants in host countries.

Some researchers have used the term “bumpy-line assimilation” to refer to such unusual and unexpected complexities (Gans, 1992). This term matches perfectly with the trends observed in this article. We also found helpful the categorization of immigrant generations made by Rumbaut (1997). He introduced the concept of the “one-and-a-half” or “1.5” generation in reference to immigrant children who were socialized and began their primary schooling abroad but would immigrate before puberty (about age 12) and complete their education in the country of destination. Also, he made further distinctions between children who immigrate at age 0-5 (pre-school) and 13-17 (adolescence and secondary school), which he labelled as 1.75er’s and 1.25er’s, respectively.

The poverty trends examined above indicate that the groups which migrated in their adolescent years (i.e., 1.25 generation immigrants) had unusually higher poverty rates. It remains for future research to reveal the possible reasons behind this. We may speculate, however, that this group of immigrants is different from both the first generation and the 1.75 or second generation immigrants in that they experience a cultural transition exactly at the time when they are going through the identity crisis associated with difficult adolescent years. They not only have to redefine their identities while being pulled between the childhood and adulthood, but also redefine themselves while under the influence of the home and the host cultures. The hardship is compounded for them, with the possible side effect of disturbing the normal path of personality and identity development.

SUMMARY

The experiences of low income immigrants in Canada differs from the one relayed by literature. The main body of research on immigrants use one or another form of aggregate units of population. This practice masks the enormous diversity that exists within the immigrant populations. The examination of poverty trends among immigrants indicates that the diversity of immigrants' experiences is not confined to "old" and "new" immigrants; ethnic origin, period of immigration, and age at the time of arrival, along with the geographical locations of immigrants in Canada, also have important repercussions in terms of socio-economic experiences.

The limitations of publicly available data have left certain aspects of research on immigrants under-researched. It is not known, for example, if there is any noticeable difference among immigrants of different categories in terms of their socio-economic integration in Canada. Yet another under-investigated area is whether or not immigrants face a less friendly social environment in the host societies due to recent economic and social changes in those countries and changing composition of immigrants themselves. Perhaps, most urgently needed is a longitudinal study of immigrants' performances using cohort analysis. The recent efforts to promote research-based immigration policies in Canada gives hope that under-researched areas will soon be the target areas for new studies.

NOTES

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2. Authors' calculations based on 1991 PUMF on individuals.
3. With a couple of exceptions in which the proportions are the same for both groups.
4. For a more detailed discussion of the debate surrounding this issue, see Kazemipur and Halli (2000).
5. Authors' calculations based on 1991 PUMF census data on individuals.

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FIGURE 1
 DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY INCOME AMONG IMMIGRANTS AND NON-IMMIGRANTS, 1991

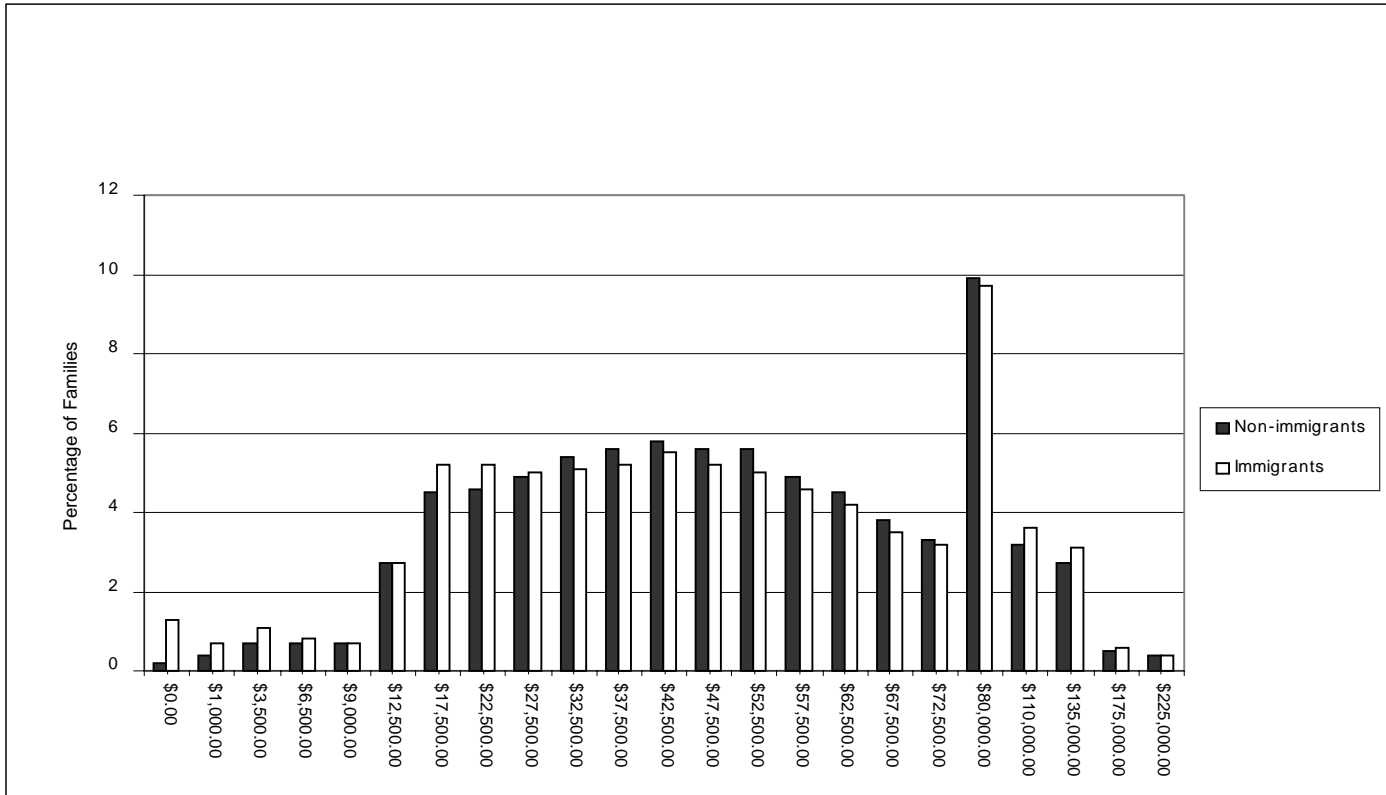


TABLE 1
 LOW-INCOME CUT-OFFS FOR FAMILIES
 AND UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS, 1991

Family size	Size of area of residence				
	500,000 or more	100,000 to 499,999	30,000 to 99,999	Small urban areas	Rural areas (farm and non-farm)
1990 Dollars					
1	14,155	12,433	12,146	11,072	9,637
2	19,187	16,854	16,464	15,008	13,064
3	24,389	21,662	20,926	19,076	16,605
4	28,081	24,662	24,094	21,964	19,117
5	30,680	26,946	26,324	23,997	20,887
6	33,303	29,248	28,573	26,047	22,672
7 or more	35,818	31,460	30,734	28,017	24,385

Source: Statistics Canada, Census Data CD-ROM on Families, 1991.

TABLE 2
POVERTY RATE OF ETHNIC GROUPS, 1991

Ethnic groups	Poverty rate
Latin, Central and South American	41.1
West Asian origins	41.0
Arab origins	39.4
Aboriginal	39.1
Spanish	38.5
Vietnamese	35.1
Black/Caribbean	32.7
Chinese	23.5
Greek	21.1
Filipino	20.8
Polish	20.5
Hungarian (Magyar)	18.7
South Asian	18.6
French origins	16.6
Ukrainian	15.2
Portuguese	15.1
Balkan origins	14.1
Jewish	13.9
British	13.8
German	12.5
Italian	11.9
Canadian	11.6
Dutch (Netherlands)	10.4

Source: Canada's 1991 PUMF data on individuals.

TABLE 3a
PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE, BY CITY, 1991

	City										
	Oshawa	Kitchener	St. Catharines - Niagara	Sudbury and Thunder Bay	Halifax	London	Victoria	Ottawa-Hull	Toronto	Hamilton	Windsor
Dutch (Netherlands)	5.2	11.2	7.6	5.7		7.5	20.6	11.1	8.3	10.8	11.4
Canadian	7.2	9.2	12.9	10.0	14.5	15.6	14.0	9.8	8.9	13.3	20.0
Italian	4.2	9.9	10.7	7.2		10.9	22.6	10.6	10.4	12.6	9.8
German	4.9	6.6	11.4	13.2	12.8	11.7	11.2	10.6	11.5	10.2	14.1
British	9.6	11.5	12.3	13.3	13.7	12.5	12.0	11.7	11.8	15.1	14.8
Jewish			25.0	30.8		8.3	15.0	6.3	12.3	11.2	11.4
Balkan origins	2.7	7.4	15.2	8.6		12.2	12.9	15.5	11.7	9.6	10.2
Portuguese	11.9	14.4		18.8		8.6	9.1	15.2	13.9	16.2	19.2
Ukrainian	6.7	4.9	10.5	11.6		13.9	14.7	7.6	12.5	19.4	9.6
French	12.6	14.9	15.0	14.4	11.4	15.1	11.5	14.2	15.5	15.6	14.4
South Asian origins	1.2	11.1	14.8	4.5		13.6	13.3	12.7	18.6	24.9	21.4
Hungarian (Magyar)	10.0	15.6	18.0	25.0		19.3	19.4	14.7	18.5	20.4	8.1
Polish	16.5	20.9	12.9	10.9		25.6	8.8	17.4	22.0	19.6	21.2
Filipino	5.9		9.7			20.0	27.6	21.3	18.1	26.3	4.5
Greek	19.4	20.9	3.7	14.3		8.2	22.7	15.7	16.3	23.9	22.6
Chinese	20.9	18.4	28.2	30.0		32.1	11.4	23.1	19.9	31.8	18.6
Black/Caribbean	5.2	24.5	24.2	27.8	33.8	30.3	33.3	37.6	28.4	25.3	39.5
Vietnamese		29.4		60.0		30.4	9.1	20.5	37.8	42.6	10.7
Spanish	11.1	25.0	61.5	25.0		45.2	29.4	46.4	31.7	48.6	46.5
Aboriginal	33.3	18.5	11.9	47.2	44.4	46.7	39.7	24.0	25.6	46.8	69.2
Arab origins	15.8	37.0	27.8	50.0		35.0	50.0	37.2	27.6	43.4	41.9
West Asian origins	41.7	43.3	20.0	50.0		34.8	10.0	38.5	40.0	37.8	44.8
Latin, Central and South American		41.9	20.0			34.8	27.3	41.9	32.4	42.9	53.8
City's Poverty Rate	8.7	11.7	12.6	12.6	12.9	13.4	13.5	13.9	14.4	14.8	14.9

Source: Canada's 1991 PUMF data on individuals.

TABLE 3b
 PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE, BY CITY, 1991

	City								Ethnic groups poverty rate
	Regina and Saskatoon	Vancouver	Calgary	Quebec	Edmonton	Winnipeg	Sherbrooke and Trois- Rivieres	Montreal	
Dutch (Netherlands)	8.7	12.9	13.7	20.0	11.9	9.8		17.5	10.4
Canadian	7.9	15.3	18.9	38.9	15.2	11.6	29.0	27.4	11.6
Italian	21.7	13.1	15.1	10.6	11.0	14.2	13.6	16.6	11.9
German	13.6	14.2	15.4	21.6	14.0	15.6	11.1	16.9	12.5
British	14.6	15.1	15.7	15.8	15.9	18.5	17.5	21.5	13.8
Jewish	10.0	19.2	14.7		15.7	12.1		17.0	13.9
Balkan origins	4.2	18.4	18.4	33.3	20.8	16.4		37.7	14.1
Portuguese	35.3	11.9	20.8	27.8	25.2	14.0	18.2	23.9	15.1
Ukrainian	15.1	16.4	15.3	25.0	15.0	19.1		24.2	15.2
French	20.7	18.0	17.4	17.9	17.5	18.7	19.8	18.7	16.6
South Asian origins	25.4	15.7	22.1	50.0	24.0	22.5	100.0	34.8	18.6
Hungarian (Magyar)	14.1	30.0	18.2	20.0	16.7	31.7	40.0	26.0	18.7
Polish	18.5	20.5	23.3	50.0	26.2	25.3	15.4	28.6	20.5
Filipino	22.2	23.3	23.6		22.8	22.8		37.6	20.8
Greek	7.1	17.5	25.5	16.7	17.1	31.8		30.0	21.1
Chinese	24.3	24.0	26.8	33.3	27.1	32.4	37.5	39.8	23.5
Black/Caribbean	20.8	24.7	44.1	37.5	39.6	34.9	43.8	46.9	32.7
Vietnamese	20.0	38.8	29.4	39.3	42.0	38.0	36.4	36.1	35.1
Spanish	70.6	53.1	49.5	41.4	62.8	37.5	66.7	39.2	38.5
Aboriginal	65.0	45.3	48.3	32.9	55.3	60.4	32.5	31.5	39.1
Arab origins		32.4	48.6	69.0	49.5	4.0	21.1	47.3	39.4
West Asian origins	20.0	51.0	44.4	87.5	54.3	34.4		41.1	41.0
Latin, Central and South American	34.4	40.6	30.1	40.0	42.3	51.4	42.9	55.0	41.1
City's Poverty Rate	17.1	17.1	17.7	18.3	18.6	19.5	20.1	21.7	

Source: Canada's 1991 PUMF data on individuals.

TABLE 4
 IMMIGRANTS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN AND PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION, 1991
 (percentage of ethnic origin)

Ethnic origin	Period of immigration			
	Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1991
British	44.8	24.0	20.5	10.7
French	29.8	25.0	25.6	19.6
Dutch (Netherlands)	74.5	10.8	8.6	6.1
German	65.8	16.6	9.2	8.3
Other Western European Origin	57.9	18.9	13.2	10.0
Hungarian (Magyar)	61.6	15.4	10.1	12.8
Polish	33.2	9.7	7.7	49.4
Ukrainian	80.5	6.9	4.5	8.1
Balkan origins	29.0	36.7	23.9	10.4
Greek	25.4	44.0	23.2	7.4
Italian	51.0	37.3	9.0	2.7
Portuguese	8.7	30.3	40.2	20.7
Spanish	4.5	12.1	31.6	51.8
Jewish	36.4	16.3	22.6	24.7
Other European origins	52.5	19.0	11.3	17.1
Arab origins	2.8	12.9	26.0	58.3
West Asian origins	2.3	12.4	21.5	63.8
South Asian origins	0.9	11.3	43.6	44.2
Chinese	5.0	9.4	32.4	53.3
Filipino	0.3	8.2	40.0	51.5
Vietnamese	0.1	0.9	36.8	62.3
Other East and South-East Asian	3.0	8.3	40.8	47.9
Latin, Central and South America	0.5	3.2	33.1	63.2
Black/Caribbean origins	1.5	16.6	43.2	38.6
Canadian	35.0	24.4	27.6	13.0

Source: Canada's 1991 PUMF data on individuals.

TABLE 5
POVERTY RATE OF IMMIGRANTS
BY PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION, 1991

Before 1946	21.1
1946-1950	12.8
1950s	11.8
1960s	11.2
1970s	15.1
1980s	32.4

Source: Canada's 1991 PUMF data on individuals.

TABLE 6
POVERTY RATE OF IMMIGRANTS
BY AGE AT IMMIGRATION, 1991

Age at immigration (years)	Total immigrant population	Immigrant population 15 years and older
0-4	17.2	12.2
5-9	18.7	12.9
10-14	19.8	16.4
15-19	18.2	18.2
20-24	15.6	15.6
25-29	16.7	16.7
30-34	19.1	19.1
35-39	22.3	22.3
40-44	25.6	25.6
45-49	28.6	28.6
50-54	27.8	27.8
55-59	29.8	29.8
60-64	30.4	30.4
65 and over	31.4	31.4

Source: Canada's 1991 PUMF data on individuals.

LA COULEUR DE LA PAUVRETÉ:
UNE ÉTUDE SUR LA PAUVRETÉ DES COMMUNAUTÉS ETHNIQUES
IMMIGRÉES AU CANADA

Les recherches effectuées sur la situation socio-économique des immigrants au Canada donnent des résultats mitigés. Cela s'explique entre autres par le fait que bon nombre d'études ont utilisé des mesures s'appuyant sur le statut de l'immigrant moyen et que les immigrants sont considérés comme un groupe homogène. Par ailleurs, certaines mesures de la situation économique sont inutilement compliquées.

Cet article fait valoir qu'une telle pratique masque la diversité des expériences que vivent les immigrants. L'auteur avance en particulier l'argument selon lequel les indices basés sur le revenu moyen ne rend pas correctement compte de la situation des immigrants à faibles revenus.

Utilisant l'état de pauvreté comme indicateur de la situation économique, l'étude examine et compare différents groupes d'immigrants en termes d'origine ethnique, de durée de présence dans le pays, de l'âge lors de l'immigration et du lieu d'établissement au Canada.

EL COLOR DE LA POBREZA:
UN ESTUDIO SOBRE LA POBREZA DE LOS GRUPOS ÉTNICOS
Y DE INMIGRANTES EN EL CANADÁ

La investigación sobre el rendimiento socioeconómico de los migrantes en el Canadá ha dado resultados mixtos. Una de las razones ha sido el hecho de muchos estudios han utilizado medidas que se basan en el rendimiento medio de los inmigrantes, pero que también tratan a los inmigrantes como un grupo homogéneo. Además, algunas medidas de rendimiento económico han sido innecesariamente complicadas.

Este artículo expone que esta práctica oculta la diversidad de experiencias de los inmigrantes. En particular, arguye que los índices basados en el ingreso medio no revelan adecuadamente la situación de los inmigrantes de bajos ingresos.

Utilizando la condición de pobreza como un indicador del rendimiento económico, este estudio examina y compara diferentes grupos de inmigrantes con relación a su origen étnico, al periodo de inmigración, a la edad en que inmigraron y a su localización geográfica en el Canadá.