WHO LIVES AT HOME?

Ethnic Variations among Second Generation Young Adults

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Throughout Canada's history, well-known indicators of becoming an adult have included completion of schooling, finding a full-time job, leaving the parental home, marriage and starting a family of one's own. Some people believed that the ideal sequence was serial and irreversible; young people first completed school, then found work, moved away from home and married and then had children. And these events occurred when the youth were either older teenagers or in their early twenties. Today, the transition to adulthood is different from the past in two important ways. First, the various indicators of the transition often are not sequential, and the events may even occur simultaneously. Young people may find employment and attend school at the same time; they may move out of the parental home, marry and move back in with parents. Second, the full transition to adulthood is taking longer to complete; young adults are attending school longer; they are marrying later and postponing the age of childbearing (Clark 2007).

As part of these changing patterns in the transition to adulthood, young adults today are also more likely than in previous decades to be still living in the parental home. According to the most recent Canadian Census of population, in 2006, more than two out of every five (43.5%) of the 4 million young adults aged 20 to 29 lived in the parental home compared with slightly more than one in four (27%) 25 years earlier, in 1981. This increase is partly caused by the greater tendency of young people to leave and then return to the parental home (Beaupré et al. 2006a and 2006b). It also reflects the increasing school attendance of young adults and the delayed transition to stable employment; monetary considerations may exert strong pressures to reducing costs by co-residing with parents (Boyd and Pryor 1989, Boyd and Norris 1999).

Of course, not all young people live with their parents. Having a job, earning a high salary and living in a large city where apartments are plentiful increase opportunities for alternative living arrangements. Family structure also matters. Youth are more likely to be in the parental home when both parents are present than when only one parent is present. Additionally, family bonds are important in two ways. First, emotional closeness to parents while growing up and receiving parental financial support are conducive to remaining in the home (Mitchell, Wister and Gee 2002 and 2004). Second, at any given time within contemporary society, some groups continue to emphasize family and familial orientations and to view intergenerational co-residency as desirable. In a country such as Canada, with high immigration, the greater emphasis on family and positive attitudes towards young adult co-residency may derive from the beliefs and preferences regarding family life that exist in different countries around the world, and which immigrants bring with them.

This last observation implies that youth who are born in Canada but have a least one foreign-born parent may be more likely to co-reside with parents than youth who are more removed from the migration experience. Further, since immigrants now come from many countries, it also is likely that these young second generation offspring will vary among themselves in the propensity to reside with parents.

The impact of origins

It does appear that some groups are more familistic than others and that such orientations influence the propensities of their young to co-reside with parents. One Canadian study of 1,900 young adults aged 19 to 35 in 1999-2000 found that Indo-Asian, Chinese and Southern European youth tend to remain at home longer than youth of British origin. The authors of that study noted that Indo-Asian parents socialize their unmarried children to remain at home as long as possible, while filial piety and the pursuit of higher education may underlie Chinese parent-young adult co-residency (Mitchell, Wister and Gee 2004). Additionally, the "Southern Mediterranean" family system with its emphasis on the centrality of the family also implies high levels of parent-young adult co-residency, both in North America as well in Southern Europe. In keeping with the theme that ethnic groups vary in the emphasis given to family life, and thus in the likelihood of co-residency, an earlier Canadian study finds that in 1991 single adults aged 20 to 34 who declared Greek, Italian, Balkan, Portuguese, South Asian, Chinese, Arab, West Asian, Jewish and other South-Southeastern Asian ethnicities had very high percentages living with parents (Boyd 2000).

Neither of these two Canadian studies focused explicitly on the second generation, defined as those born in Canada to one or more foreign-born parents. Yet, the second generation is uniquely situated. As the offspring of parents whose own countries and cultures have beliefs and preferences regarding the living arrangements of their children, some second generation groups may be more likely to co-reside with parents than other groups of second generation youth. A study of exclusively second generation youth in the United States suggests that this is the case for those of Southern European origins, particularly those of Portuguese, Greek and Italian origin (Giuliano 2007).

Information on the second generation in Canada

As noted elsewhere in this volume (Boyd 2008), the 2001 Canadian Census of population provides rich information on second generation youth. In addition to the master database housed at Statistics Canada, the agency that fielded the Census, a public use microdata file of individuals (PUMF_I) is available. Information from PUMF_I on variations in the co-residency patterns of the second generation indeed confirms that second generation youth are more likely than the third-plus (Canadian born to two Canadian-born parents) to be living with one or both parents considered to be the family head (labelled "person 1" in the Census). However, percentages vary according to the ethnic/ancestral origins of these youth. Some of these origins also include visible minority groups.

With respect to the living arrangements of second generation youth, age was restricted to those who were between 20 and 29 in 2001, since this is the age range when most moves out of (and back into) the parent homes occur. Most adolescents, including those who are older, in fact still live with parents. Because of the pronounced tendency of Canadians who are married or living common-law to live apart from their parents, living arrangements are examined only for those who are single and who have never been married. Ethnic/ancestral origins are based on the Canadian Census question on ethnic origins. Respondents were asked, "to which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?" On the public use microdata file, the extensive classification system for ethnic origins is highly aggregated, with most detail preserved for single responses and available only for those living outside the Atlantic Provinces and territories.

In a country such as Canada, with high immigration, the greater emphasis on family and positive attitudes towards young adult co-residency may derive from the beliefs and preferences regarding family life that exist in different countries around the world, and which immigrants bring with them.

Starting in the 1960s with regulatory changes and enshrined in the *Immigration Act, 1976*, which came into effect April 10, 1978, Canada's immigration policy discarded the previous admission criterion that rested on national origins and which heavily favoured migrants from Europe and severely restricted those from other regions. Instead, would-be migrants who sought to reside permanently in Canada were admitted on the basis of family ties, economic contribution or humanitarian consideration. As a result, the volume of migration from non-Europe areas rose substantially, with most immigrants coming from Asian countries. Arriving in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, many of these migrants were in their twenties and thirties, and they became the parents of the "new" second generation. In order to highlight the co-residency patterns for these "new immigrant" groups who are not of European origins, information is used from the more detailed classification of ethnic origins, focusing in particular on parent-young adult co-residency patterns for those of African, Arab and West Asian, South Asian, East and Southeast, Latin, Central and South American, and Caribbean origins. As a result, the discussion below excludes those who reside in the Atlantic Provinces and territories. In examining ethnic/racial differences in the percentages of second generation youth that live with parents, comparisons are also made with the third-plus generation. This group is dominant in Canadian life, numerically and culturally. Most of the third-plus generation consists of groups who have resided in Canada for many generations, and more than three-quarters of the ethnic origins of the single third-plus generation aged 20 to 29 include Canadian, British and French.

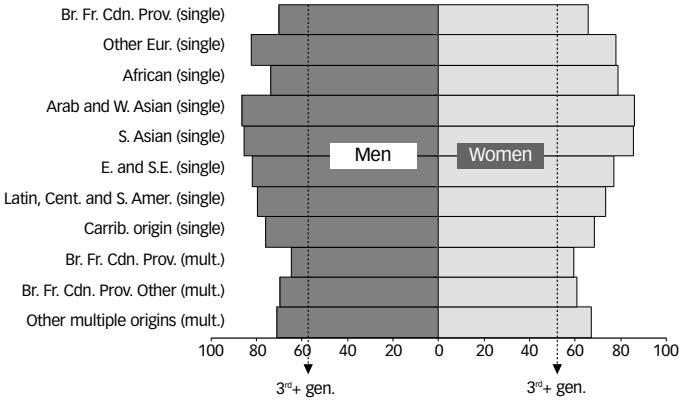
Ethnic variations in living with parents

Second generation youth in their twenties are more likely than the third-plus generation to be living with one or both of their parents. Compared with five out of ten (53%) third-plus generation young women who are single and who are in their twenties, seven out of ten (70%) of second generation young women co-reside with parents. For young men, nearly six out of ten of the third-plus generation (59%) live with parents compared to three quarters (75%) of second generation young men. Study after study in Canada find that young women are less likely than young men to live at home, and this holds for both second and third-plus youth. Why this is so remains a matter of speculation. One reason may be that women marry at a slightly younger age and are perhaps more likely to leave the family home for marriage. Other reasons include the possibilities that young women benefit less than young men from residing with parents. They may be

monitored more closely by parents and they may be asked to perform more household chores (Boyd and Pryor 1989, Clark 2007, Mitchell, Wister and Gee 2002).

Within the second generation, ethnic/ancestral differences also exist with respect to parent-young adult co-residency (Figure 1). Those who have multiple origins have the lowest percentages among the second generation residing in the parental home. This is especially true for those young adults who indicate British, French and/or Canadian ethnic origins; it also describes young adults who give a single ethnic origin that is British, French or Canadian. In contrast, those whose origins are Arab and West Asian, South Asian, East and Southeast Asian and "Other European" have the highest percentages living with parents. More than two-thirds (67%) of the other European origin group have Southern European ethnic origins. It appears that the "Southern Mediterranean" emphasis on the family may indeed increase the likelihood that these young adults reside in the parental home. Of the second generation who declare their origins as Portuguese, Italian or Greek, 82%, 87% and 84% of young women and 85%, 90% and 93% of young men are living with parents.

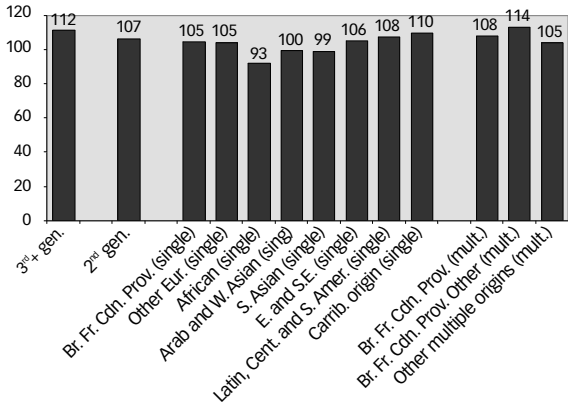
Figure 1
Percentages of young adults living with parent(s) by sex, age 20-29, for select ethnic groups, Canada, 2001



Ethnic variations also existed with respect to the "gender gap" in living at home. Sex ratios, defined as the number of men per 100 women, are one way of expressing this "gap" in which, generally, lower percentages of young women live with parents, compared with young men. A sex ratio of 100 implies an equal tendency among young women and men to live with parents; a ratio of greater than 100 implies that young men are more likely than young women to co-reside with parents and a ratio of less than 100 implies that men are less likely than young women to be living in the parental home. For the third-plus generation, 112 men for each 100 young women are co-residing with parents; for the second generation, the ratio is 107, indicating that although young men are still more likely than young women to co-reside with parents, the gender gap is not as great.

Within the second generation, the size of the gender gap and whether it exists at all vary with ethnic origins (Figure 2). Second generation young men, like third-plus generation young men, are more likely to live with parents. But three exceptions exist. Second generation young women of African origins are more likely than their male counterparts to live with parents (sex ratio = 93, indicating that for every 100 women living with parents, only 93 males co-reside), and second generation young women of Arab and West Asian and of South Asian origins are about as likely as their male counterparts to live with parents. Regrettably, Census data alone do not shed much light on why these groups had a pattern in which second generation young women are either more likely or about as likely to live with parents as second generation men. The fact that young women are more likely than young men to have a university degree and to attend school full time may partly explain the findings for second generation African, Arab and West Asian, and South Asian youth to the extent that living with parents is a strategy for saving money. However, if these origin groups also hold strong preferences for and expect young unmarried daughters to remain in the home, these values may also help explain the pattern. The definitive explanation awaits more research.

Figure 2
Sex ratios (men/women) for young adults living with parent(s), age 20-29, Canada 2001



Family type of those in the parental home

In research on young adults living with parents, it is often assumed that most young adults live with both parents in a one-family setting. In general that is true. However, parents also may be single parents or they may be co-residing with other families who may or may not be related to them. This variation means that young adults at home may differ somewhat in the type of family setting.

On the whole, Census data show that few differences exist between the second and third-plus generation with respect to family type. Of those who are living with one or more parents, more than three-quarters of both the second and third-plus generations (77%) are living with two parents in a single family setting. However, on the whole, the second generation is slightly more likely than the third-plus generation to be living in a household where multiple families reside (5% versus 4%) and slightly less likely to be living in a single parent single family setting (18% versus 20%).

However, ethnic/ancestral variations exist, as do modest differences by gender (Figures 3 and 4). Among second generation young women who live with parents, those whose origins are Arab and West Asian, South Asian or European (other than British or French) have the highest percentages residing in a single family with both parents. In contrast, second generation young women whose ethnic origins are African or Caribbean and who are living with one or both parents have the lowest percentages residing in such families. Instead they have the highest percentages residing in a single parent family. They also have higher percentages living in households where multiple families are present, as do second generation young women with South Asian origin.

Figure3
Family structure for women living with parents, age 20-29, Canada 2001

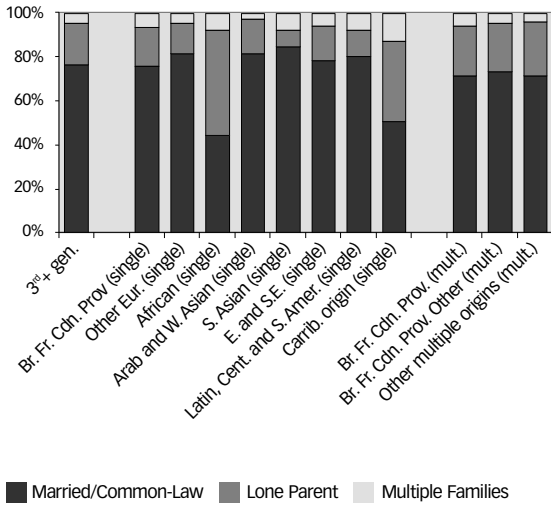
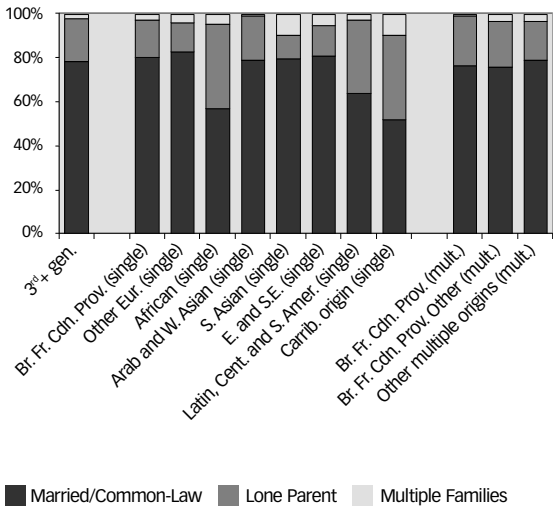


Figure 4
Family structure for men living with parents, age 20-29, Canada 2001



The patterns observed for second generation young women of African and Caribbean ethnic origins are replicated for second generation young men who are living with parents. However, high percentages of second generation young men of Latin American ethnicities reside with a parent in a single parent household and, along with young men of South Asian origins, they are more likely to live in households that contain multiple families.

Conclusion

Interest in the propensity of second generation youth to live in the parental home derives from the argument that family life as well as expectations for parental-offspring relationships vary between countries, with some societies emphasizing the centrality of the family more than others. Thus, depending on where their parents originated from, offspring who have foreign-born parents may continue living with parents while in school and during the transition to adulthood.

Canada Census data confirm that second generation youth are more likely to live with parents than are third-plus generation youth. However, percentages living with one or both parents vary substantially by ethnic origin. Among the single (never married) second generation groups, those who are most mostly likely to live with parents include those identified by previous research as belonging to ethnic origin groups that emphasize the importance of family and/or filial duty. As well, gender differences exist. Although, in general, second generation young women have lower percentages living with parents than their male counterparts, this is not true for those of African, Arab and West Asian, and South Asian origin. Finally, the family context for those who live with parents differs by ethnicity for second generation youth. Although most live with two parents, youth with African, Caribbean and Latin American origins (males only) are more likely to reside with single parents.

A full explanation of what causes these patterns awaits additional research. However, to the extent that living in – and leaving – the family home is considered an indicator of the transition to adulthood, it is clear that second generation youth are diverse in their experiences.

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Immigration and Integration in Canada in the Twenty-first Century

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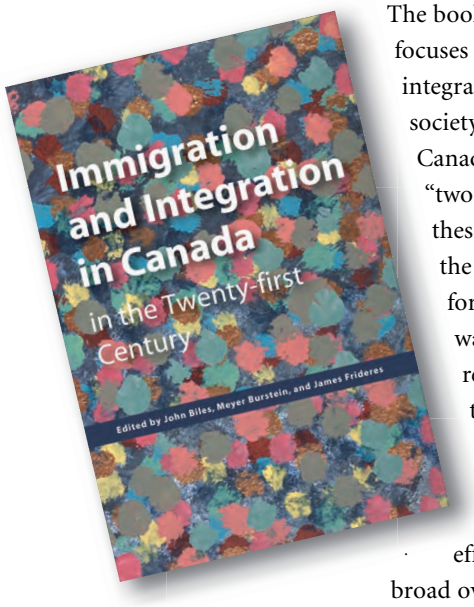

The book is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the social, cultural, economic and political integration of newcomers and minorities in Canadian society. These chapters highlight the responsibilities of both Canadian institutions and newcomers to ensure that the "two-way street" of integration is a success. In each of these chapters, the authors review current literature on the topic and then distill from that practical indicators for measuring relative success on each side of the two-way street. The authors identify concrete and practical recommendations for establishing measures to assess the level of integration of newcomers in Canadian society. The second part of the book addresses the context of various forms of integration and provides the reader with information that reflects on the efforts of integration. These contributions present broad overviews related to the issue of integration.

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