WHO IS THE SECOND GENERATION?

A Description of their Ethnic Origins and Visible Minority Composition by Age

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to develop a compositional analysis of the characteristics of second generation Canadians as they relate to diversity, so as to provide some context for researchers who might examine their integration. Specifically, this article will first review the concept of generations on the Census and examine the results of the Ethnic Origin and Population Group (visible minority) questions on the 2006 Census with regards to the second generation by age.

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The opinions expressed in the article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The demographic composition of Canada has changed dramatically over the last three decades, reflecting the de-racialization of immigration policy; the policy changed from one favouring people with European backgrounds to one that accepted individuals regardless of their national origins or race. Prior to the 1960s, Canada was already a diverse country with its Aboriginal peoples, Francophone minorities and immigrants coming from Britain (Scotland, Wales, Ireland and England) and many other European sources (e.g., Germany, Ukraine and Hungary). However, changes to immigration policy in the 1960s and 1970s led to new sources of immigration (e.g., China and India) and an increase in the number of ethnicities, cultures and languages in the Canadian population.[1] The 2006 Census data highlights this fact: the number of languages reported on the Census has increased from 38 in 1971 to 147 in 2006, the number of ethnic origins has increase from 121 in 1991 to 247 in 2006 and the percentage of the population that reported they were a visible minority increased from 4.7% in 1981 to 16.2% in 2006.[2]

Several decades have passed since Canada's immigration laws were liberalized, but it is only in the last decade or so that Canada has received a significant number of people from these new source countries. The important policy questions that have emerged are whether the children of immigrants coming from these new source countries have overcome the integration hurdles encountered by their parents and whether they have thrived in a country that is still largely British and European in stock and based on Christian values. Some researchers have suggested that the barriers faced by immigrants from these new source countries are similar to those faced by immigrants from older source countries and that the integration of their children (i.e. the second generation) will be the same as the integration of the children of past generations of immigrants. Others have suggested that immigrants coming from these new source countries are substantially different from those coming from past sources (e.g., religion and physical characteristics) and, thus, these immigrants and their children will face different barriers that will adversely affect their integration.

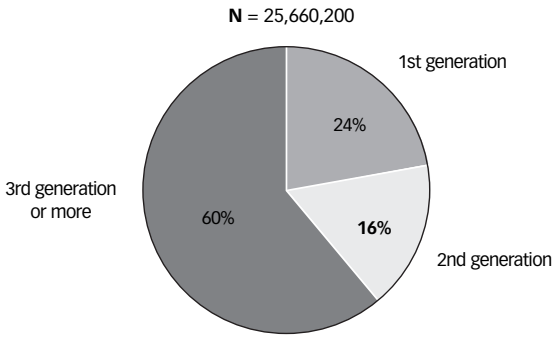
The purpose of this article is to develop a compositional analysis of the characteristics of second generation Canadians as they relate to diversity, so as to provide some context for researchers who might examine their integration. Specifically, this article will first review the concept of generations on the Census and some of the methodological shortcomings inherent in the standard concepts on the Census. This is followed by an analysis of the 2006 Census second generation results from the Ethnic Origin and Population Group (visible minority) questions by age.[3]

Defining generations

Information on generations in Canada from the Census is available for the population aged 15 years and older. Analysis that applies three generational categories has only been possible since the 2001 Census with the addition of the Place of Birth of Parents question on the 20% Sample. I will be employing some standard Statistics Canada generational definitions: first generation is anyone not born in Canada (6,124,600 people, or 24%), second generation is anyone born in Canada with at least one parent not born in Canada (4,006,400 people, or 16%), third-plus

generations is anyone with both parents born in Canada (15,533,200 people, or 60%).

Figure 1
Generational status in Canada for the population aged 15 and older (2006 Census, 20% sample)



Although I will be using these standard generational categories, it is important to note that there are some the methodological issues surrounding their use. For example, in defining the first generation as those people not born in Canada, the standard generational categories include Canadian citizens born outside Canada in the first generation.[4] Depending on the purpose of the research endeavour, it is possible to adjust the generational data to deal with these children (e.g., exclude them).

It is also possible to divide the second generation into two categories: those whose parents were both not born in Canada (second generation) and those with one parent born in Canada and one parent born outside Canada (2.5 generation). This division helps to adjust for the fact that having both parents as immigrants may lead to a different integration experience for their children than for the children having one parent who has been socialized in Canada.

In addition, the standard generational variable does not take into consideration the fact that children can also be immigrants and can, in some cases, have been fully educated in Canada. This raises the question: What is the difference between children of immigrants and children born in Canada to immigrant parents in terms of their integration experience? It is possible to modify the generational constructs to take into account this potentially important distinction. For example, it is possible to move children that immigrated to Canada into the second generation, or to divide the first generation into those that arrived as children and those that arrived as adults.[5] The question then becomes: What is the appropriate age for making the necessary split within the category?[6] Depending on the nature of the research question, it could be important to refine the operationalization of the generational variable to take this issue into account.[7]

Another piece of information that is missing from the standard generational categories is the age of the parents at immigration. Since the age that the parents immigrated to Canada is not a Census question, we cannot adjust accordingly.[8] The concept of generations in Canada is based on the fact that being socialized in another country has an impact on an individual and how they parent. If a parent immigrated to Canada as a child and has been educated entirely in Canada, then the degree to which they were socialized elsewhere is not near as great as that of someone who immigrated as an adult.[9]

These methodological issues discussed above point to problems with the use of the standard generational variable for research questions having to do with integration. Some of the issues can be handled by using non-standard categories; however, the issue of the age of the parent at immigration remains outstanding. Although the generational divisions are not clear-cut, it is more useful to be able to differentiate between the children of immigrants than to have to include them in with third-plus generations and rely on an "immigrant" versus "non-immigrant" dichotomy. For the purposes of this article, the standard definition provides adequate information for producing a portrait of the second generation; however, I would suggest that researchers analyzing specific generations or sub-populations of generations consider modifying the standardized definitions to suit their research needs.[10]

The second generation according to the 2006 Census

The rest of this article focuses on an examination of results from the ethnic origin and population group (visible minority) questions on the long form of the 2006 Census, as they relate to the second generation.

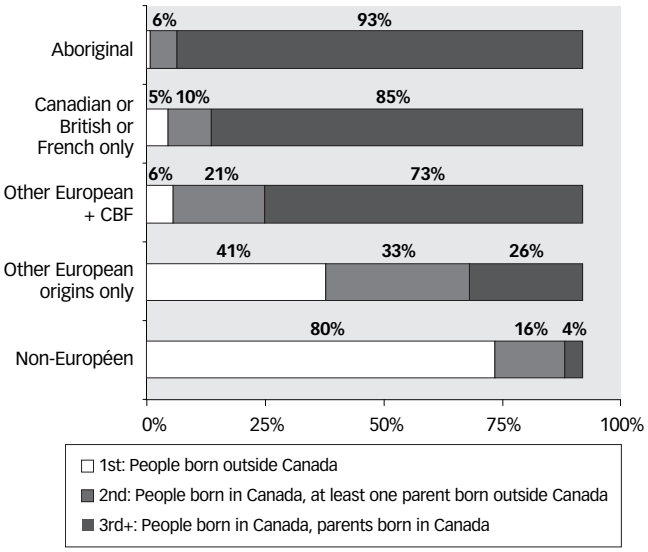
Broad ethnic origin categories

The ethnic origin question on the 2006 Census is open-ended (people can write in their responses) and asks people about the origins of their ancestors.[11] As the preamble to the question states, it is intended to "capture the composition of Canada's diverse population." It does not focus on which culture people might identify with or feel they belong to but rather where their ancestors come from. Statistics Canada released information on 247 different ethnic origin categories.[12] This question allows for single of multiple responses. Multiple responses permit researchers to understand where there is mixing between people from different ethnic origin categories.[13]

Reported ethnic origins can be assigned to broader categories. In this article, I have assigned people to four main categories: Canadian and/or British and/or French (CBF),[14] other European origins, non-European origins and Aboriginal origins. When these broad categories are considered in terms of their generational composition, we are able to see how Aboriginal and CBF-only origins categories are dominated by the third-plus generations, how the other European origins category is split between the three generational categories and how the majority of non-European origin respondents are in the first generation. An understanding of the composition of these broad categories is important for the analysis of the second generation since it indicates the size of the second generation in each category.

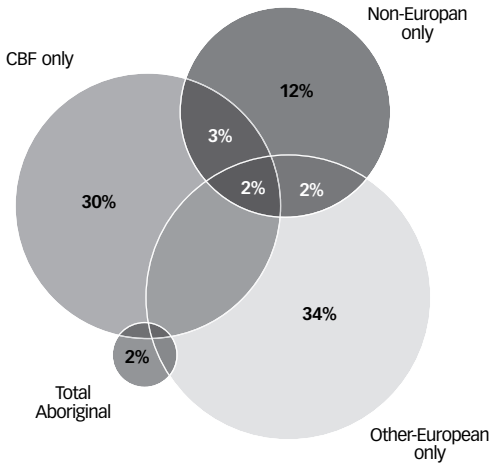
By taking these broad ethnic origin categories and applying them to a Venn diagram of the second generation, response patterns can be illustrated.[15] The second generation Venn diagram shows not only that the

Figure 2
Broad ethnic origin categories by generational status



other European origins category (54%) has the largest circle, followed by CBF origins (52%), non-European origins (19%) and Aboriginal origins (2%) but also that the CBF and other European categories have the highest level of overlap or mixing.[16]

Figure 3
Broad ethnic origin categories for the second generation aged 15 years and older in Canada (2006 Census, 20% sample)*



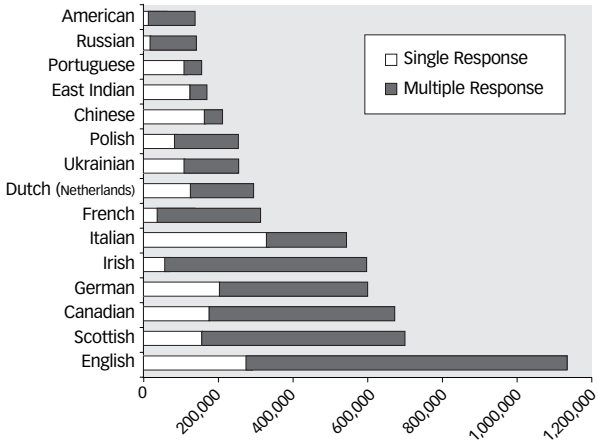
*Only overlaps that are over 2% are shown.

Most frequently reported ethnic origins in the second generation

To further understand the second generation, it is possible to take ethnic origin data to a lower level and examine the most frequently reported origins for that generation. As shown in Figure 4, the most frequently reported origins for that generation are from the CBF origins category: English is the most frequently reported origin, followed by Scottish and Canadian. Irish and French are in the top 15 origins ranking 5th and 7th, respectively. It should also be noted that in the case of all five CBF origins, a greater proportion of respondents reported a multiple response to the ethnic origin question, compared with a single response, reinforcing the fact that people of mixed backgrounds report these origins.

Of the most frequently reported origins, seven are from the "Other European" category: German, Italian, Dutch, Ukrainian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian. Several of the European origins have been in Canada for generations (e.g., Germans, Ukrainians). Not all people of European origins have the same immigration history; for example, a greater percentage of people with Italian or Portuguese origin are in the first and second generations. Within the "Other European" category, there is a great deal of variation between groups, as reflected by the percentage of people reporting single and multiple responses to the ethnic origins question.

Figure 4
Most frequently reported ethnic origins in the second generation (2006 Census, 20% sample)

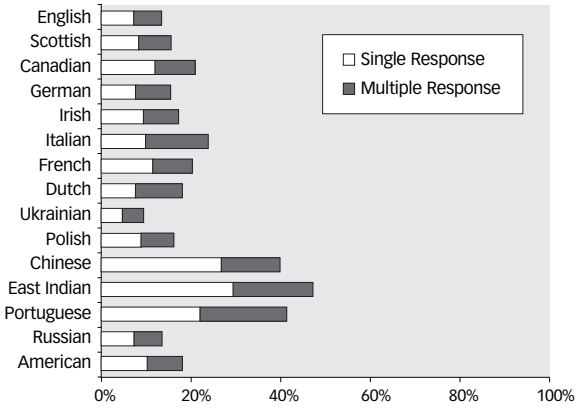


Of the top 15 origins in the second generation, three are "Non-European": Chinese, East Indian and American.[17] People in the second generation that reported East Indian and Chinese have a higher propensity to report a single rather than a multiple response. American origins is similar to Canadian origins in that it is a "New World" origin and is more often reported as a multiple response than as a single response.

If researchers want to compare the integration of people in one second generation ethnic origin category with another, it is also important these researchers understand the age structure of the people in the category. Here I will consider the percentage of individual origin population that is between the ages of 15 and 34, since people in this age cohort are usually in transition and trying to find their economic niche in life. If we consider the percentage of people between the ages of 15 and 34, we will gain an understanding of how economically and socially mature people in the ethnic origin categories are in relationship to each other. For most CBF and other European origin respondents, 20% to 40% of the people in individual ethnic origins are between the ages of 15 and 34. People in the two non-European origins categories stand out since they are much younger: 76% and 91% of

Chinese and East Indian people, respectively, are between 15 and 34 years of age.[18] In summary, for the most frequently reported originspeople reporting CBF origins and other European origins tend to be older than those reporting the non-European origins, which may result in misleading conclusions due to very different age structures.

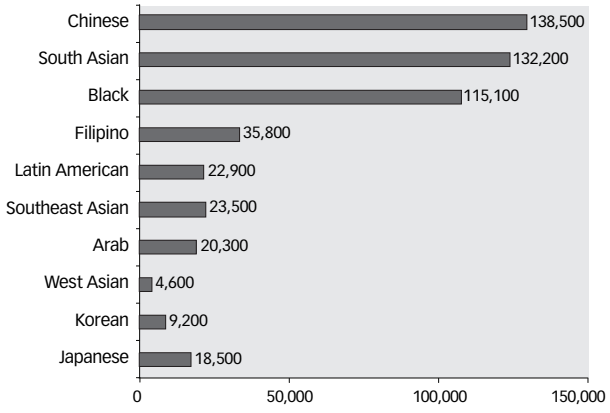
Figure 5
Percentage of people in the second generation aged between 15 and 34, by selected ethnic origin (2006 Census, 20% sample)



Visible minority status[19]

Many who examine the second generation will want to know how people that reported visible minority status are faring and whether they are integrating into Canadian society. Of the second generation aged 15 years and older, 14% (or 552,000 people) reported visible minority status; Chinese is the largest category, followed by South Asian and Black. All of the other visible minority categories were reported by less than 40,000 people.[20]

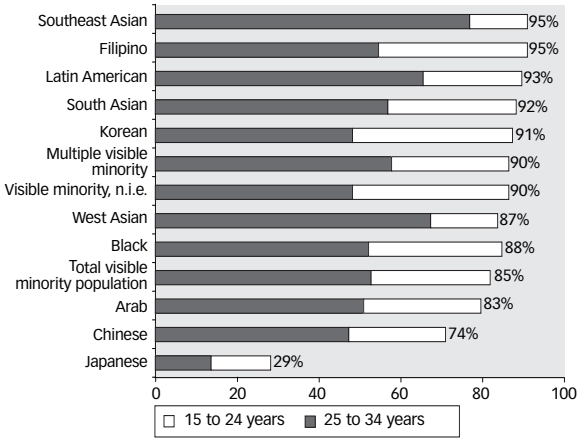
Figure 6
Visible minority categories for second generation Canadians (2006 Census, 20% sample)



Second generation visible minority categories by age

It is not enough, however, to just consider the size of the individual categories. As stated above, if people are interested in understanding the integration of people in the visible minority categories, it is important to know their age distribution. If a population is too young, then they may still be in university and not yet established in their careers. In keeping with the results for the most frequently reported ethnic origins, many of the second generation visible minority categories have large percentages of their populations between the ages of 15 to 34; more than 90% of Southeast Asians, Filipino, Latin Americans, South Asians and Koreans are below the age of 35. The only exception is Japanese: 29% of people that reported Japanese origins are in the 15 to 34 age bracket.[21] Even though there is a high percentage of young people in the visible minority categories, it should also be noted that for the top three categories, there is still a large proportion of the populations that are 35 years and older: Chinese (98,600), South Asians (96,400) and Black (88,300). In summary, analysis is possible in the area of integration, but researchers must take age into consideration.

Figure 7
Percentage of people in the second generation aged between 15 and 34, by visible minority category (2006 Census, 20% sample)

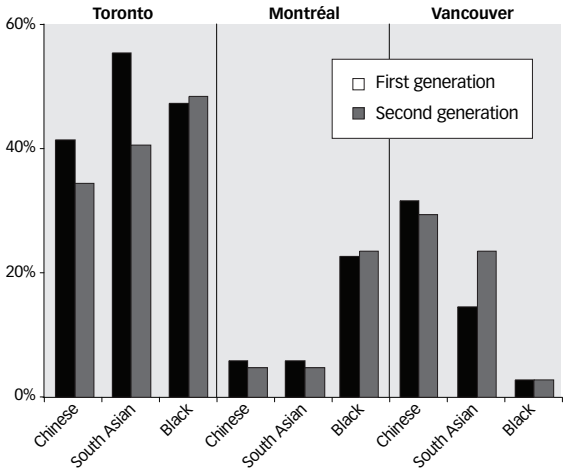


Visible minority categories – second generation in the Canada's largest CMAs

We know that immigrants, or first generation Canadians, have tended to cluster in Canada's largest cities, particular the three biggest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) – Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal.

For the second generation, there continues to be a concentration in these CMAs, more so for Blacks and to a lesser extent for Chinese and South Asians. For Chinese, 80% of the first generation live in the three CMAs, while it is 70% for the second generation. Of the first generation Chinese, 42% live in Toronto compared with 35% of second generation Chinese;[22] 32% of first generation Chinese live in Vancouver compared with 30% of the second generation. For South Asians, 77% of the first generation live in these three CMAs compared with 70% of the second generation. For South Asians, 56% of the first generation live in Toronto compared with 41% of the second generation. In Vancouver, the story is different: 15% of first generation South Asians live in Vancouver compared with 24% of the second generation. For Blacks, 74% of first generation Blacks live in these CMAs compared with 76% of the second generation. The percentages for Blacks are similar across the three CMAs.[23]

Figure 8
Percentage of selected visible minority categories living in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, for the first and second generation (2006 Census, 20% sample



In summary, it seems that for Chinese and South Asians, the second generation is less concentrated in the big three CMAs than the first generation.[24] For Blacks, the percentage has not changed much between generations, but it should also be noted that there is movement to other CMAs (particularly Ottawa-Gatineau, and that being true for both the first and second generations). It seems that the second generation is moving into areas outside of their "home communities;" however, this requires further examination since they may be moving to neighbouring suburbs.

Conclusion

After seeing several decades of immigration from non-European sources, we are now seeing the children of these immigrants, who are in many cases visible minorities, make their way into the labour force. Although the second generation continues to be dominated by the CBF and "Other European" origins, the population aged 15 years and older is now 16% non-European. As this article has shown, this particular population is still relatively young, making labour force analysis a little premature (unless controls for age are used). In the case of the two largest visible minority categories, Chinese and South Asians, they are also less concentrated in the big three CMAs – Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver – than their immigrant parents.

Notes

[1] This is not to say that immigration from European sources was discontinued. During this time period, immigrants also came from numerous European sources such as Portugal, Italy and Greece.

[2] The population group question (from which visible minority status is derived) was first asked on the 1996 Census. Prior to 1996, this information was derived from the results of the ethnic origin question on the Census.

[3] There are many other Census questions that could have been examined here but have not been examined due to a lack of space. Plans are underway to do a follow-up article that will include more Census variables (e.g., mother tongue, home language, first official language spoken).

[4] These citizens are mainly the children of people working as diplomats or for non-governmental organizations. Since we do not know how much of their childhood is spent outside Canada, it is difficult to know to which generation they should be assigned.

[5] According to the 2006 Census, 1.3 million immigrants aged 15 years and older (5% of the total population, or 22% of the immigrant population) came to Canada before the age of 15.

[6] I have seen several different positions on where to make this split: some consider children that have completed all of their education in Canada (immigrated before age 5), some take into account those children that arrive before the age of 12 (the age for finishing elementary school), and others use the age of 15 as a break (received some schooling in Canada).

[7] Surveys such as the *National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth* provide data for this type of analysis.

[8] It is possible to use household data to ascertain this for children living at home, but this would be very limiting since the generational variable is limited to the population 15 years and older.

[9] The 2002 *Ethnic Diversity Survey* attempted to probe this area; however, when this survey was being tested it was found that many respondents were not sure how old their parents were when they immigrated to Canada and the question was sidelined.

[10] This article is being written a couple of weeks after the ethnic origins and visible minority data were released, leaving little time to produce non-standard generational categories for this publication. Future research products will use non-standard definitions.

[11] The Ethnic Origin Question on the 2006 Census has a preamble that states "The Census has collected information on ancestral origins of the population for over 100 years to capture the composition of Canada's diverse population." The question then asks: "What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors?" A definition is provided: An ancestor is usually someone more distant than a grandparent. Then a list of examples is provided to respondents. These examples are based on the most frequently reported single responses to the ethnic origin question on the previous Census. For the 2006 Census, they were as follows: Canadian, English, French, German, Scottish, East Indian, Irish, Cree, Mi'kmaq (Micmac), Filipino, Polish, Portuguese, Jewish, Greek, Jamaican, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Chilean, Salvadoran, Somali, etc. Across from the question, four lines are provided (each line has 11 boxes for individual letters) for respondents to write their responses.

[12] The 247 categories include roll-ups. For example, British Isles is provided as a roll-up for people that reported Cornish, English, Irish, Manx, Scottish, Welsh and British n.i.e. (n.i.e. is the abbreviation for *not included elsewhere*).

[13] With each Census we have seen an increase in the percentage of the population reporting a multiple response to the ethnic origin question: 30% in 1991, 36% in 1996, 38% in 2001 and 41% in 2006.

[14] Canadian and/or British and/or French refers to people that reported Canadian origins (origins that are specific to Canada – i.e., Canadian, Albertan, Acadian, Québécois) or British Isles origins (i.e., English, Irish, Cornish, Scottish, Welsh) or French. The difference between "Canadian, British and French" and "Canadian, British and French only" is that the former includes anyone who reported one of these responses (i.e., Italian Canadian), while the latter includes people that reported responses that are only found in this category (i.e., English Canadian).

[15] This same Venn diagram for the first generation would illustrate that there is even less mixing between all the categories. Aboriginal counts would be too small of a category to show.

[16] This could be attributed to the fact that European immigrants have been in Canada for more generations than Non-Europeans and some would argue that it is a matter of time for this phenomenon to occur within the Non-European category.

[17] Some would argue that "American" should be in another category since it has a similar immigration history to that of Canada.

[18] The proportion of people reporting Portuguese origins that is between the ages of 15 and 34 years is also relatively high at 79%.

[19] In this paper, "Visible Minority" and "Non-European" are fairly interchangeable since we are mainly talking about the same people (except Americans, Australians, New Zealanders – all "New World" origins – however, their numbers are small enough to not make a difference and, in the future, they will be either excluded or moved to another category).

[20] The other visible minority categories are: Filipino, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Arab, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, Visible Minority not included elsewhere (n.i.e.) and Multiple Visible Minority.

[21] Japanese Canadians have been in Canada for generations and there is not a lot of immigration from Japan to Canada.

[22] It should also be noted that Calgary and Edmonton have a higher percentage of the second generation Chinese population than Montréal.

[23] However, it should also be noted that for the first generation and second generations, Ottawa-Gatineau and Calgary have higher proportions of Blacks than Vancouver.

[24] For South Asians, even with the proportion of the second generation living in Vancouver, there is still, overall (total of the three CMAs), a lower percentage of second generation South Asians living in these three CMAs than first generation South Asians.

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