

Unemployment Rates of Visible Minority Groups in Canada, 1991-2006

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Part 1

As the unemployment rate in Canada declined across the period 1991-2006 so too has there been an improvement in the employment situation of Canada's visible minorities. But the broad decrease in unemployment rates does not mean that disparities in levels of employment between various groups have diminished. It is the gaps in rates of unemployment between various groups of immigrants on the one hand and immigrants and Canadian-born on the other that is often considered an important test of the success of integration. Policy-makers have also taken an increasing interest in the condition of the Canadian-born population from visible minorities to determine whether the children and grandchildren of immigrants are attaining parity with other Canadians. Although some wrongly describe this as a debate about integration, it is better labeled as a discussion of whether as a society these conditions reflect principles of fairness and equal opportunity. But in order to properly assess the disparities in the levels of unemployment between white and visible minority on the one hand and between the various groups identifying as visible minorities on the other it is essential to consider such things as immigrant status, age, level of education and gender. Using the data from the 2006 census that which follows will examine the respective rates of unemployment for visible minorities and how socio-demographic considerations influence our assessment of their situation.

In the table below the rates of unemployment are provided for immigrants in the five years prior to the census being conducted. There has been much made of the greater challenges encountered by recent immigrants in securing employment relative to previous groups in their first five years of settlement. The 2006 census results do not offer evidence in support of an affirmation that is heard rather widely. Although the difference is not substantial, immigrants had a lower rate of unemployment over the five years 2001-2006 than those who in 2001 settled over the five years prior. This applied to nearly all groups with the exception of the Filipino, Southeast Asian and Korean groups (the Arab and West Asian groups were combined in the previous census).

Table 1

Canada-Entered country within the 5 years prior to the census being taken				
Unemployment rate	2006	2001	1996	1991
Total	12,3	12,7	18,0	16,6
Total visible minority population	13,0	13,4	19,3	17,4
Chinese	12,3	12,6	14,8	11,5
South Asian	12,3	13,2	22,4	19,9
Black	14,8	16,5	27,7	21,0
Filipino	7,0	6,1	8,8	7,9
Latin American	13,1	13,9	22,7	23,7
Southeast Asian	12,5	12,3	22,5	21,3
Arab	23,8	20,4	26,2	25,7
West Asian	15,6			
Korean	12,3	12,1	12,5	9,8
Japanese	6,7	7,9	9,5	10,3
Multiple visible minorities	12,7	12,9	17,2	12,1
All others	10,6	11,1	14,7	14,8

As observed below following significant reductions in rates of unemployment for white and visible minority groups between 1996 and 2001 there was a more modest decline in the subsequent five-year period. Those reporting visible minority Arab had the highest rate of unemployment in the country followed by Black and West Asian.

Table 2

Canada	2006	2001	1996	1991
Total - Total population by visible minority groups	6,6	7,4	10,1	10,2
Total visible minority population	8,6	9,5	14,2	13,1
Chinese	7,5	8,4	10,2	9,9
South Asian	8,6	9,6	15,3	14,4
Black	10,7	11,5	19,3	15,0

Filipino	5,0	5,6	8,1	6,5
Latin American	9,0	10,5	19,5	19,7
Southeast Asian	8,5	9,8	16,7	17,0
Arab / West Asian	13,1	14,0	18,5	17,2
Korean	8,5	8,7	9,9	8,1
Japanese	5,1	6,1	6,6	6,3
Multiple visible minorities	8,5	8,3	12,6	10,5
All others	6,2	7,1	9,6	9,9

With some exceptions the reductions were reflected in both the non-immigrant and immigrant population. Amongst non-immigrants it is persons reporting visible minority of West Asian that reported the highest rate of unemployment in 2006 followed by the Latin American and Black population. The latter two groups along with those reporting multiple visible minorities saw no meaningful change between 2001 and 2006 in their respective rates of unemployment.

Table 3

Canada	Unemployment rate		Non-immigrant population	
	2006	2001	1996	1991
Total - Total population by visible minority groups	6,4	7,4	9,9	10,1
Total visible minority population	9,8	10,7	15,3	11,9
Chinese	7,9	9,1	10,3	10,1
South Asian	10,4	12,1	19,2	14,0
Black	12,2	12,4	20,4	15,9
Filipino	7,5	9,5	16,4	12,7
Latin American	12,3	12,1	19,9	12,2
Southeast Asian	11,7	13,8	19,0	9,6

Arab	9,0	9,4	12,3	10,7
West Asian	13,3			
Korean	9,0	10,0	16,8	15,7
Japanese	4,9	6,1	7,2	6,8
Visible minority, n.i.e.	9,4	10,6	19,4	10,8
Multiple visible minorities	11,1	10,8	16,9	10,4
All others	6,3	7,3	9,8	10,1

As to immigrants there were reductions across all groups over the 2001-2006 periods. Those reporting Arab visible minority had the highest rate of unemployment.

Table 4

Canada	Unemployment rate		Immigrant population	
	2006	2001	1996	1991
Total - Total population by visible minority groups	6,9	7,4	10,5	10,2
Total visible minority population	8,2	9,1	13,7	12,9
Chinese	7,3	8,2	10,0	9,6
South Asian	8,3	9,1	14,5	14,0
Black	9,7	10,8	18,4	14,1
Filipino	4,9	5,2	7,7	6,8
Latin American	8,5	10,1	18,7	19,7
Southeast Asian	8,0	9,5	16,6	17,2
Arab	13,5	14,1	18,7	18,0
West Asian	10,5			
Korean	8,3	8,5	8,9	7,7
Japanese	4,8	5,7	5,4	5,8
Multiple visible minorities	7,5	7,5	11,7	10,2
All others	5,1	5,5	7,9	8,3

Immigrant versus Non-Immigrant

When contrasting immigrant versus non-immigrant rates of unemployment for 2006 the results reveal that in most cases immigrants have lower rates of unemployment than non-immigrants with the widest gaps being amongst Latin American and Southeast Asian. Non-immigrants fare better in terms of unemployment amongst the Arab and West Asian groups as well as those declaring multiple visible minorities. Looking at the rate of unemployment on the basis of the time of arrival of immigrants in visible minorities one observes that it is the Arab visible minority population that entered between 2001 and 2006 which had the highest rate of unemployment. Thereafter it is the West Asian and Black populations with the next highest levels.

Table 5

Canada 2006 Unemployment rate	Total - Immigrant status and period of immigration	Non- immigrants	Immigrants	Before 1991	1991 to 2000	1991 to 1995	1996 to 2000	2001 to 2006
Total - Population by visible minority groups	6,6	6,4	6,9	4,7	7,8	7,4	8,4	12,3
Total visible minority population	8,6	9,8	8,2	5,6	8,5	8,0	9,1	13,0
Arab	13,0	9,0	13,5	7,1	11,9	11,0	12,8	23,8
West Asian	10,7	13,3	10,5	7,0	9,6	8,5	10,3	15,6
Black	10,7	12,2	9,7	6,7	11,7	11,2	12,3	14,8
Latin American	9,0	12,3	8,5	6,4	8,4	8,2	8,8	13,1
Multiple visible minority	8,5	11,1	7,5	6,2	7,8	7,7	7,9	12,7
Southeast	8,5	11,7	8,0	6,8	9,2	9,1	9,5	12,5

Asian								
Chinese	7,5	7,9	7,3	4,8	7,8	7,3	8,3	12,3
South Asian	8,6	10,4	8,3	5,2	8,8	7,8	9,6	12,3
Korean	8,5	9,0	8,3	5,0	8,2	7,8	8,4	12,3
Not a visible minority	6,2	6,3	5,1	4,0	6,1	5,8	6,4	10,6
Filipino	5,0	7,5	4,9	4,0	4,5	4,6	4,4	7,0
Japanese	5,1	4,9	4,8	3,8	4,6	5,6	3,9	6,7

As observed below for the entire population the gap in unemployment between immigrants and non-immigrants is not particularly significant. Indeed immigrant employment rates improve over five years as the group that arrived between 1996 and 2001 have rates comparable to those of non-immigrants with however the gaps being somewhat greater in the upper cohorts. In other words, an immigrant in their late forties or more will experience a somewhat greater degree of difficulty securing employment than a younger immigrant. Gender and education also influence the level of unemployment amongst “older” immigrants.

Table 6

Visible minority population	Canada Unemployment rate							
	Total - Immigrant status and period of immigration	Non-immigrants	Immigrants	Before 1991	1991 to 2000	1991 to 1995	1996 to 2000	2001 to 2006
Total - Age groups	8,6	9,8	8,2	5,6	8,5	8,0	9,1	13,0
15 to 24 years	15,7	15,4	15,7	14,0	16,1	15,6	16,6	16,0
25 to 54 years	7,3	5,8	7,4	5,2	7,0	6,5	7,5	12,2
25 to 34 years	8,4	6,3	9,0	6,3	8,1	7,7	8,5	12,1
35 to 44 years	7,1	4,7	7,2	4,9	6,7	6,1	7,3	12,1
45 to 54 years	6,2	4,9	6,2	4,9	6,3	6,1	6,6	12,5
55 to 64	6,7	4,9	6,7	5,1	9,1	8,4	10,2	17,1

years								
65 to 74 years	7,7	7,1	7,6	5,7	9,5	7,8	10,9	16,1
75 years and over	8,5	10,4	7,8	7,2	8,8	6,3	10,8	8,6

Visible Minority, Education and Age

On the basis of age immigrants from visible minorities tend to have higher rates of unemployment than the white population in each cohort. Rates of unemployment are lowest in the 35-64 age categories.

Table 7

Unemployment rate	Canada	
Immigrants	Total visible minority population	Not a visible minority
Total - Age groups	8,2	5,1
15 to 24 years	15,7	11,5
25 to 54 years	7,4	5,0
25 to 34 years	9,0	7,0
35 to 44 years	7,2	5,0
45 to 54 years	6,2	4,0
55 to 64 years	6,7	4,1
65 to 74 years	7,6	3,7
75 years and over	7,8	6,1

For non-immigrants that are visible minorities the overall rates of unemployment are relatively similar to those of the white population across the age spectrum. However such results mask the gaps between the visible minority groups.

Table 8

Unemployment rate	Canada	
Non-immigrants	Total visible minority population	Not a visible minority
Total - Age groups	9,8	6,3
15 to 24 years	15,4	12,3
25 to 54 years	5,8	5,1
25 to 34 years	6,3	6,1
35 to 44 years	4,7	4,8
45 to 54 years	4,9	4,5
55 to 64 years	4,9	5,3
65 to 74 years	7,1	4,6
75 years and over	10,4	5,1

The results of the 2006 census suggest that the level of educational attainment does not substantially modify unemployment for most immigrant members of visible minority groups. However across visible minorities there are important variations between the groups and in immigrant receiving cities in Canada.

Table 9

Unemployment rate	Immigrants	Canada	35 to 44 years				
	Total - Highest certificate, diploma or degree	No certificate, diploma or degree	High school certificate or equivalent	Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	College, CEGEP or other non-	University certificate or diploma below	University certificate, diploma or

					university certificate or diploma	the bachelor level	degree
Total - Population by visible minority groups	6,4	7,9	6,4	6,1	5,3	6,7	6,6
Total visible minority population	7,2	9,0	7,3	6,9	6,1	7,1	7,3
Chinese	7,0	6,8	7,4	6,0	6,4	8,1	6,9
South Asian	6,5	8,2	7,1	5,3	5,2	5,8	6,6
Black	8,8	13,6	9,2	9,0	6,7	9,4	8,9
Filipino	3,9	4,9	4,4	2,8	3,6	3,3	4,2
Latin American	8,3	9,6	8,0	6,2	6,9	8,9	10,0
Southeast Asian	6,7	8,8	7,0	6,0	5,2	5,2	5,3
Arab	13,5	15,5	9,2	13,4	13,3	15,5	14,1
West Asian	8,7	12,6	8,7	7,5	6,1	6,5	9,5
Korean	7,9	15,4	5,5	8,9	5,2	6,6	8,9
Not a visible minority	5,0	5,6	4,8	5,1	4,2	5,6	5,2

However for the Canadian-born members of visible minorities one's level of education can have a profound impact on rates of unemployment.

Table 10

Unemployment rate Non-immigrants Canada 35 to 44 years	Total - Highest certificate, diploma or degree	No certificate, diploma or degree	High school certificate or equivalent	Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	College, CEGEP or other non-university	University certificate, diploma or degree
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					certificat e or diploma	
Total - Population by visible minority groups	4,8	9,9	5,0	5,7	3,8	2,6
Total visible minority population	4,7	11,0	5,7	6,9	4,1	3,1
Chinese	3,1	10,6	4,2	-	2,1	2,7
South Asian	4,9	11,8	4,8	9,8	5,4	3,2
Black	7,1	13,1	9,3	9,1	4,9	3,7
Not a visible minority	4,8	9,9	5,0	5,7	3,8	2,6

Below are the real numbers of persons in each group as reflected in the table above.

Table 11

Canada Non- immigrants Unemployed 35 to 44 years	Total - Highest certificate, diploma or degree	No certificate, diploma or degree	High school certificate or equivalent	Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	College, CEGEP or other non- university certificate or diploma	University certificate, diploma or degree
Total - Population by visible minority groups	149420,0	34920,0	36745,0	26390,0	29515,0	17435,0
Total visible minority population	2705,0	380,0	615,0	285,0	530,0	715,0
Chinese	605,0	70,0	130,0	0,0	85,0	265,0
South Asian	350,0	40,0	60,0	40,0	75,0	105,0
Black	1165,0	205,0	350,0	160,0	215,0	155,0
Not a visible	146710,0	34540,0	36125,0	26105,0	28985,0	16720,0

minority							
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Time of arrival clearly plays an important role in the levels of unemployment of both the most educated segment of the white and visible minority immigrant populations. Amongst university degree holders it is the Arab population, followed by the Southeast Asian, West Asian, Black and Latin American populations that arrived between 2001 and 2006 and possess the highest rates of unemployment.

Table 12

Canada Unemployment rate 35 to 44 years	Total – University Certificate Diploma or Degree	Non- immigrants	Immigrants	Before 1991	1991 to 1995	1996 to 2000	2001 to 2006
Total - Population by visible minority groups	4,1	2,6	6,6	3,3	4,2	5,9	11,4
Total visible minority population	7,0	3,1	7,3	3,8	4,8	6,4	11,6
Chinese	6,5	2,7	6,9	3,1	4,1	6,2	11,1
South Asian	6,4	3,2	6,6	3,8	4,6	5,9	9,9
Black	8,1	3,7	8,9	5,3	7,3	7,8	15,1
Filipino	3,9	2,6	4,2	2,7	3,4	4,1	5,2
Latin American	10,1	5,1	10,0	5,6	4,6	6,5	15,0
Southeast Asian	5,0	-	5,3	2,1	6,2	7,2	15,9
Arab	13,5	1,3	14,1	4,6	6,7	11,4	23,9
West Asian	9,6	7,4	9,5	6,5	4,5	7,2	15,4
Korean	8,6	5,9	8,9	4,7	9,6	6,7	12,5
Not a visible minority	3,0	2,6	5,2	2,6	3,1	4,7	10,9