

5 Second Generation Educational and Occupational Attainment in Canada

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Framing the Topic

Throughout the 20th century and early 21st centuries, the number of migrants coming to Canada fluctuated dramatically (Boyd and Vickers 2016, Figure 12.1). Today, one in five Canadians is foreign born and the increasing proportion of foreign-born Canadians shows no sign of abating. Projections estimate that by 2036 at least one in four Canadians will be foreign born (Morency, Malenfant, and MacIsaac 2017). Such demographic trends substantiate the importance of immigration, for Canada's nation building, both historically and today. Immigrants represent a vital source of population growth—of workers, innovators, and consumers (Boyd and Alboim 2012).

In addition to their own contributions to Canada, immigrants are the parents of future generations. The second generation—those who are Canadian born but have at least one foreign-born parent—is sizeable: 18 percent of Canadians in 2011. Shifts in the country origins of parents also mean that growing shares are visible minorities: 30 percent of the second generation in 2011 and expected to reach 50 percent or more by 2036 (Morency, Malenfant, and MacIsaac, 2017). These demographic statistics reflect national trends. The proportion of the population that is second generation and the share that is non-White are higher in large cities where the immigrant parental generation originally settled.

Those belonging to the second generation are of particular sociological interest because their experiences speak to two related themes of immigration and stratification research: improving life chances and who gets what and why (Jasso 2011). Migrants usually cross international borders to improve their situations, raising the question of what their lives are really like after migrating. In answering this question, many stratification scholars focus on socio-economic integration, studying the relationships between education, occupations, and earnings, which, in turn, are correlated with indicators of well-being, such as health, poverty, wealth accumulation, and quality of housing and neighbourhoods. Extensive research on the socio-economic integration of migrants in Canada indicates that recently arrived immigrants experience labour market difficulties, especially compared to the Canadian-born population. In particular, data analyses of large surveys (usually the census) find educational credentials and work experience outside Canada are devalued for recent immigrants, and their earnings are lower than those of comparable Canadian-born groups (Frenette and Morissette 2005; Hou and Picot 2016; Picot and Sweetman 2005). Audit studies, which send contrived résumés to would-be employers, also suggest that immigrants face hiring barriers based on their origin, race, and language proficiency (Dechief and Oreopoulos 2012).

Consequently, immigration scholars now say it is not enough to study only the integration of immigrants. Instead, they urge reaching across generations to study the socio-economic integration of the children of migrants. A major objective is to determine if the children also experience difficulties in educational attainment and in the labour market.

There are reasons to think the educational attainment and labour market experience of the second generation should be much like that of people further removed from the migration experience, notably the third-plus generation, that is, people who are Canadian-born with Canadian-born parents (with many having Canadian-born grandparents and great-grandparents). Both the second and third-plus generations are exposed as youngsters to the destination country's

school system, language(s), media, culture, and labour market institutions. According to stratification experts, in a meritocratic society, the difficulties experienced by migrant parents should not extend across generations, and people should be employed and paid according to their education, training, skill, and occupation. That said, there is concern, supported by audit studies and surveys asking respondents to report their experiences and perceptions of discrimination, that non-Whites in the second generation encounter discrimination and barriers in the workplace.

Research on the second generation is extensive, including studies of children in school and studies that assess multiple dimensions of integration, including identity, feelings of belonging, and transnational ties. In this chapter, I consider only the socioeconomic situation of the second generation, focusing on the educational and occupational attainment of young adults. I address three important issues. First, I ask how well the second generation does relative to the third-plus generation on these two socio-economic dimensions. Reflecting the changing origins of recent immigrants to Canada and employment equity legislation introduced in 1986, I also ask if the conclusions reached by comparing the entire second and third-plus generations hold when distinctions are made by race. Second, I address the theme of “who gets what and why” by asking what factors likely produce the findings. To do so, I summarize recent studies that analyze large Canadian surveys and present my own findings from the 2011 National Household Survey. (Data from the 2016 census have not yet been released by Statistics Canada.) I end by briefly indicating where new avenues of future research exist.

Educational Attainment and the Second Generation

Education is a pathway to increased knowledge, skill development, and ultimately to jobs. If elementary and secondary schooling provide essential skills in the form of literacy, numeracy, and basic knowledge of science, social science, and the humanities, then post-secondary education—particularly university education—is even more desirable, since it provides specialized training and new knowledge (Hirschman 2016). Higher education can lead to lower rates of unemployment, better jobs, higher status occupations, and higher earnings.

Today’s immigrants often have university degrees because admission criteria emphasize their potential economic contribution and use higher education as an admissibility criterion (Boyd 2014; Boyd and Alboim 2012). But what about their children who are born in Canada? One of the most consistent findings in recent Canadian social science research is the educational over-achievement of the second generation compared to the third-plus generations in adulthood. Obtaining at least a university degree is usually the indicator used in this research; far less attention is paid to other forms of post-secondary education (Abada, Hou, and Ram 2009; Abada and Tenkorang 2009; Boyd 2002; 2009; Aydemir and Sweetman 2008; Picot and Hou 2010).¹ Several studies examine very young adults, finding that the children of immigrants have higher aspirations for university and are more likely to attend university than their non-immigrant

¹ Probable reasons for the focus on a university degree include its importance in a knowledge economy; a “sheepskin effect” in which analysts and survey respondents alike prize the awarding of a degree; and the need to use a common measure when undertaking comparative research between Canada and the United States (Aydemir and Sweetman 2008; Picot and Hou 2010; for an exception, see Reitz, Zhang, and Hawkins 2011). Changes by Statistics Canada to the 2006 census education question removed the ability to calculate years of schooling, thus accentuating future reliance on obtaining a university bachelors’ degree as a measure of higher education.

counterparts (Childs, Finnie, and Mueller 2015; Taylor and Krahn 2005).

The higher educational attainment of the second generation compared to the third-plus generation are evident in recent data from Statistics Canada, namely the 2011 National Household Survey, which surveyed about one in three households. Figure 5.1 shows the percentages with bachelors' degrees for the second and third-plus generations aged 25-64. People in this age range have for the most part completed schooling and represent the core working-age population. In this age cohort, 21 percent of the third-plus generation has a university degree or higher compared to 31 percent of the second generation. The chart also shows that younger age cohorts tend to have higher levels of education. But across all age cohorts, the second generation has higher percentages obtaining at least bachelors' degrees.

What factors underlie these patterns? To ask the question differently, why does higher educational achievement exist for the second generation but not the third-plus generation? One factor influencing how far people go in school is geography. Generally speaking, people who grow up in large communities are more likely to have higher education, if only because larger communities house universities and other institutions of higher learning. This observation is useful when comparing the educational attainment of the second and third-plus generations; as the children of immigrants, those in the second generation are far more likely to have grown up in one of Canada's three largest cities (Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver) than those in the third-plus generation. When this fact is taken into account, the size of the gap decreases, although the second generation is still more likely to hold university degrees than is the third-plus generation (Boyd 2002; 2009; Picot and Hou 2010).

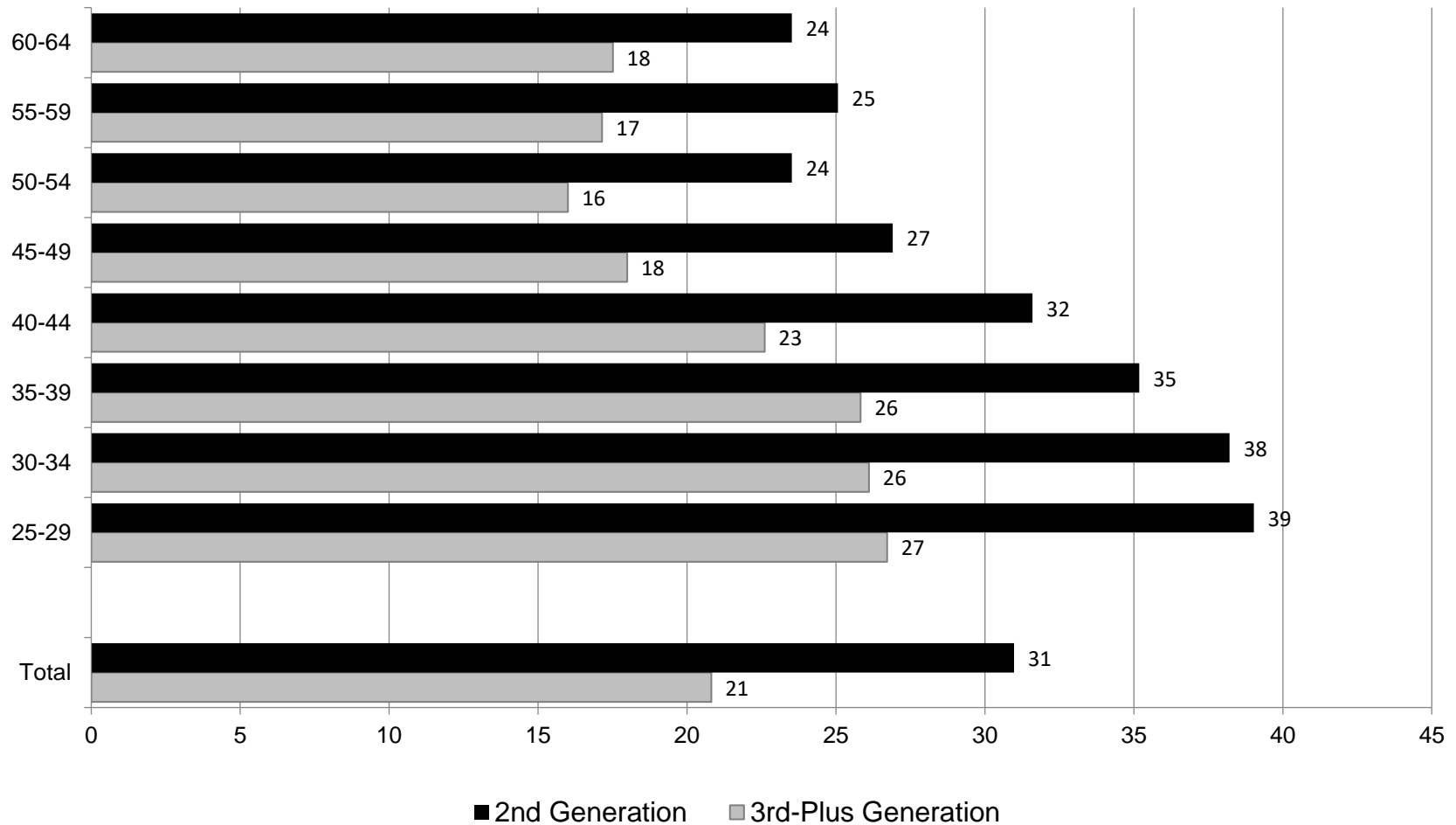
Another body of explanations emphasizes the impact of immigrant parents. Three inter-related variants exist: Canada got lucky; the migrants selected for admission are better educated than those left in the origin country and better educated than many Canadian residents; and the aspirations of immigrant parents influence their children's educational attainment.

The "Canada got lucky" perspective alludes to changing immigration policy regimes since the 1970s. The trend toward higher and higher education among immigrants continues as Canada seeks to admit the best and the brightest (Boyd 2014; Boyd and Alboim 2012). Students of stratification note that well educated parents tend to have well educated children simply because the parents are familiar with higher education systems, expect their children at least to reproduce parental levels of attainment, and tend to have the resources needed to interface with schools and teachers and to assist with school-related tasks such as homework. In short, better educated parents tend to have better educated children, and Canada "got lucky" when it admitted many highly-educated immigrant parents.

The second variant of this perspective emphasizes that policy was more important than luck in ensuring this outcome. Canadian immigrants are not randomly chosen. They are unusual relative to the populations in which they originated in terms of their education, talent, IQ, or other "unmeasured" qualities. Canadian immigration policy is designed to ensure that a disproportionately large number of such exceptional people are admitted to the country and often they are better educated than their fellow Canadians.

The third variant of this perspective holds that immigrant parents' relatively high level of education likely influences the educational outcomes of their children. It does so in two ways. First, immigrant parents may possess cultural capital such as foreign language skills and appreciation for classical music that may influence their children's educational outcomes. They also have a subjectively higher social status based on their position in the origin countries, and

Figure 5.1 Percentage with Bachelor's Degrees or Higher, 2nd and 3rd-Plus Generations by Age, Population Age 25-64, Canada, 2011



Source: Computed from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey Public Use File, Individuals.

this is related to higher educational expectations (Feliciano 2005; 2006; Feliciano and Lanuza 2016; Ichou 2014). Highly educated immigrants may thus import from their home countries cultural institutions and practices designed to maximize the educational success of their children. Lee and Zhou (2015) find that Chinese parents in the United States tend to rely on after-school academies and courses that prepare students for SAT tests to enhance the educational potential of their sons and daughters. How generalizable this explanation is for other groups and across borders requires investigation. Bonikowska's (2007) Canadian research on the educational attainment of the second generation argues that cultural explanations are not convincing; she refers to the argument that parents may come from countries where education is highly valued and that this cultural emphasis explains the educational attainment of children.

All these explanations are newer and more nuanced extensions of the familiar view that family background influences the social position of children. Certainly, Canadian studies confirm that parental educational level influences the educational attainment of the second generation (Abada, Hou and Ram 2009; Aydemir and Sweetman 2008; Aydemir, Chen, and Corak 2013; Boyd 2002; Chen and Hou 2016; Finnie and Mueller 2010; Picot and Hou 2010). However, these studies all find that parental education is only part of what explains the high percentage of the second generation holding at least a bachelor's degree. Even when allowances are made for differences between generations in parental education and demographic characteristics (such as place of residence as a child), members of the second generation are more likely to have university degrees than are members of the third-plus generation. Further, the children of less well educated parents drive the higher educational attainment of the second generation (Picot and Hou 2010). Said differently, there is normally an association between the education of the parents and that of the offspring—the children of highly educated parents tend to be highly educated, partly because of greater familial resources, while the children of less well-educated parents do not advance as far on the education trajectory. But studies confirm that this association is weaker for the second generation than for the third-plus generation, implying that second-generation children from less well-educated families graduate from university to a much greater extent than might be expected (Aydemir, Chen, and Corak 2013; Boyd 2002; Hoe 2012; Picot and Hou 2010).

How are we to understand the higher educational attainment of the second generation, measured here as the likelihood of getting at least a bachelors' degree? Census data and most large-scale surveys do not ask the questions necessary to tap into the contexts of the educational decisions made by the second generation and their parents.² However, several Canadian and US studies indicate that the second generation attains a high level of education because of parental expectations and aspirations for their children, which, in turn, are acquired by the offspring. As noted by Childs, Finnie, and Mueller (2015: 3) in their analysis of Canadian data on university attendance: "Somehow the idea of going to university is so ingrained in these youth by their immigrant parents that they find the means to attend, even when, statistically speaking, they should not." Similarly, Picot and Hou (2013, Table 2) find that parental expectations and student hopes for university completion are the most important factors behind university attendance, far

² Some researchers also call attention to the importance of ethnic resources as a factor motivating the second generation to obtain bachelors' degrees. However, such studies rely on crude, aggregate indicators such as the percentage of a specific ethnic group residing in a city. Consequently, the concept of ethnic resources is not well measured.

exceeding the impact of parental education. The result is that the second generation over-achieves educationally compared with the third-plus generation.³

The Educational Attainments of Second Generation Visible Minorities

So far I have focused on the attainment of bachelors' degrees by the second generation without considering the considerable diversity of the second generation. In fact, the increased migration of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa means that visible minorities are now a key part of the second generation. The term "visible minority" was first used in the early 1980s in Canada to denote groups that are distinctive by virtue of their race or colour. The term is socially constructed in that its origins lie in discussions of, and legislation on, employment equity and related program requirements in the 1980s. Visible minorities are defined in the census as people who self-identify as Chinese, South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.), Black, Filipino, Latin American, Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.), Arab, West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.), Korean, Japanese, and Other (as specified by the respondent). However, these sub-groups combine people from socially diverse locales—for example, those self-identifying as Chinese may have origins in Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, or elsewhere. Colour labels such as Black or pan-geographic labels such as South Asian and Latin American also mask substantial within-group diversity.

The increasing focus in Canadian immigration research on racial stratification usually examines the educational and labour market outcomes for visible minorities in relation to those of the White majority population. When discussing the second generation, this comparison means contrasting select visible-minority, second-generation groups to the third-plus, White generation. In such comparisons it is important to recognize that the shift in the origin composition of immigrants only started in the 1970s, and most members of the visible-minority second generation are young (Boyd 2017, Table 1). In the working age population, aged 25-64, most second-generation visible minorities are in their late twenties and early thirties, whereas the White third-plus generation is most likely to be between the ages of 40 and 65. Consequently, comparisons of educational attainment for working age adults aged 25-64 risk distorting conclusions by comparing persons who by virtue of their youth have higher levels of education to those who are older and who may have less education (see Figure 5.1). The caution also holds for indicators of labour market integration such as occupation and earnings. This age distortion holds for any race-specific assessment of how the second generation is doing in the labour force. As a result, most studies focus on those aged 25-39 or 25-44. The age restriction means that members of the second and third-plus generation were born between 1957 and 1976 if data are from surveys fielded in 2001—or between 1967 and 1986 if data are from the 2011 National Household Survey (using the age range 25-44). These dates indicate that analyses conducted so

³ This comparative pattern is called the "success orientation model" (Boyd and Grieco 1998) or the "immigrant optimism hypothesis" (Kao and Tienda 1995). It contrasts with the more orthodox "linear assimilation" model in which the second generation does better than its parents but less well than the third-plus generation. The latter model is based on early 20th century migration in which migrants came from agricultural communities and had far less education than the population born in destination areas. It is less applicable in a time when countries seek to recruit the best and the brightest migrants for permanent residency.

far examine the experiences of a unique cohort, notably those whose parents arrived before 1985 and often much earlier.

Within the research on the Canadian second generation, educational attainment is the most frequently studied variable. Investigations into the educational attainment of young visible-minority adults consistently find that compared to the third-plus generation, the second generation exhibits a pattern in which Chinese and South Asians tend to have above-average levels of university attainment and Blacks and Latin Americans have below-average levels of university attainment (Abada, Hou, and Ram 2009; Abada and Tenkorang 2009; Boyd 2017; Boyd and Tian 2016; Chen and Hou 2016; Kelly 2014; Reitz, Zhang, and Hawkins 2011). These conclusions rest mainly on analyses of data from around 2001-02. Figure 5.2 updates this pattern using data from the 2011 National Household Survey for the 25-39 age cohort. It shows that in 2011 the percentage of Black, second-generation Canadians with a bachelor's degree was equal to that of the White third-plus generation. However, the corresponding percentage for Latin Americans was lower than that of the White third-plus generation.⁴ All other second-generation groups had higher corresponding percentages than that of the White third-plus generation. Figure 5.3 highlights the other end of the educational distribution by showing the percentage of people who failed to attain a high school degree. Latin American visible-minority second generation young adults had the highest percentage without a high school degree.⁵

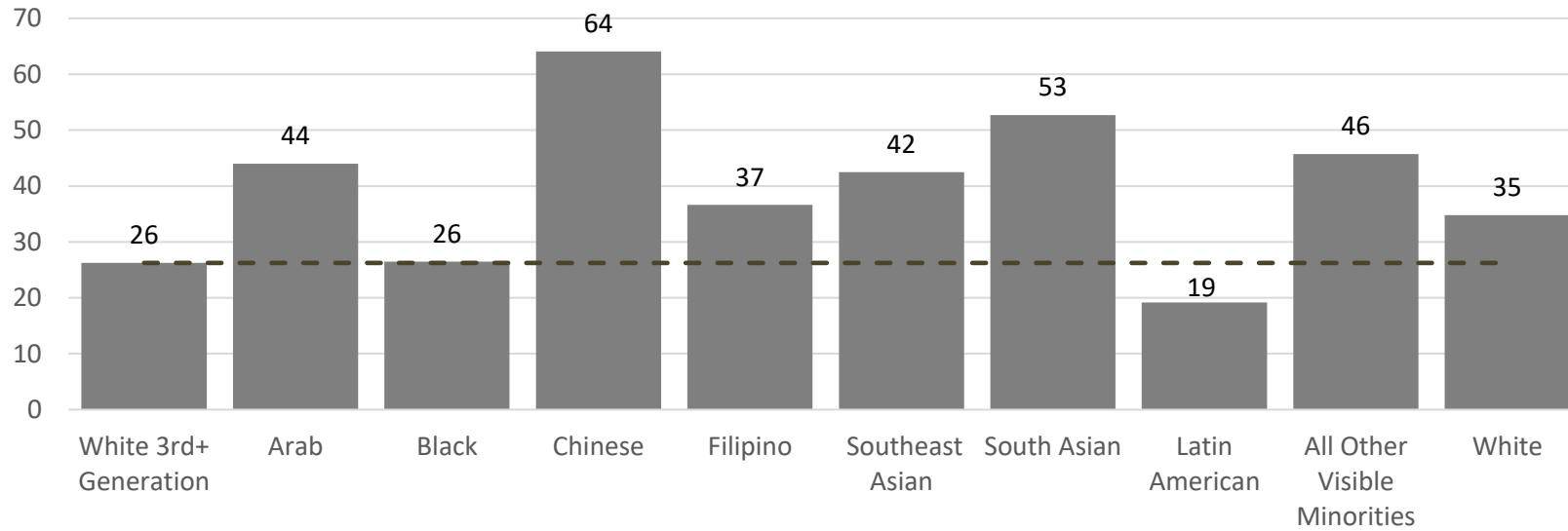
Most analyses of large data sets that highlight visible-minority group variations shed little light on why second-generation visible minorities do or do not acquire bachelors' degrees. The most extensive investigations generally use the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey to see if educational variation among ethnic and racial groups reflects parental education, growing up in a single-parent family, language while growing up, place of parental residence, and ethnic capital (crudely defined as an ethnic group's average level of education and the ethnic group's average family income; see Abada, Hou and Ram 2009; Abada and Tenkorang 2009; Picot and Hou 2010).⁶ Level of parental education is an important factor in raising the education of the various ethnic and racial groups. However, it matters less for those of the second generation from

⁴ In their analysis of data from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey and eight General Social Surveys fielded between 2003 and 2014, Chen and Hou (2016) find all visible minority groups, including Blacks and Latin Americans, have higher percentages attaining bachelors' degrees than the White third-plus generation. However, they focus on the 25-44 age cohort rather than the 25-39 age cohort. The additional five years may affect their findings because the White third-plus generation is older in their analysis and is likely to have less education because of the relationship between education and age cohort.

⁵ Results not presented here show that Latin American and Black second-generation men are less likely than White third-plus generation men to acquire bachelors' degrees.

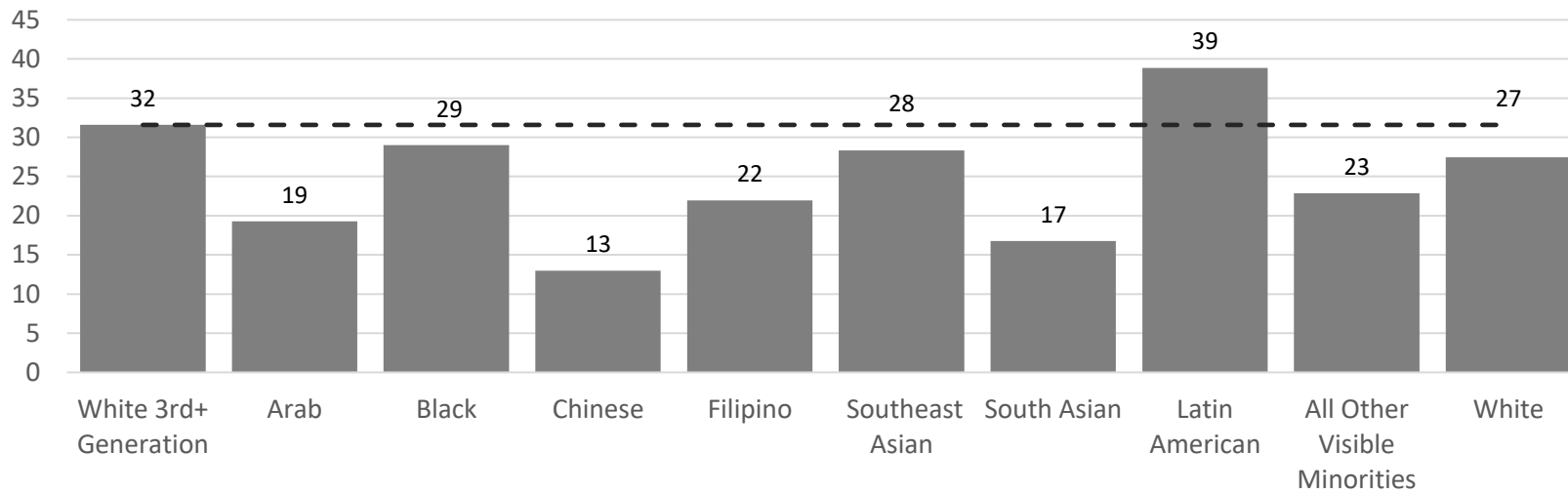
⁶ Strictly speaking, the findings by Abada, Hou, and Ram (2009) from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey are not limited to second generation visible minorities. The authors combine the 1.5 generation, consisting of those who are foreign-born but arrived as children, with the second generation. The focal groups are based on the survey questions on ethnic origins and race, and comparisons are between ethnic-racial groups and the second generation declaring British ethnic origin.

Figure 5.2 Percentage with Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Generation and Visible Minority Status, Age 25-39, Canada, 2011



Source: Computed from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey Public Use File, Individuals.

Figure 5.3 Percentage with No Postsecondary Degree, by Generation and Visible Minority Status, Age 25-39, Canada, 2011



Source: Computed from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey Public Use File, Individuals.

Western societies. Most likely, the reasons found to influence education levels—parental education, expectations and aspirations—still hold. One study of Toronto School Board data observes that higher family socio-economic status (defined by parental education and occupation) is important for high school youth transitioning to university (Sweet et. al. 2009), noting that lower family socio-economic status depresses the university pathway of young, Black high school students. At the same time, a second study argues that the aspirations of 15-year-old visible minority youth are much higher than their native-born, non-visible minority counterparts (Taylor and Krahn 2005).

Making a Living: The Link between Education and Occupation

As discussed earlier, one reason researchers focus on formal education is that it indicates relative level of knowledge. Another is that it shows the extent to which individuals participate in one of Canada’s major institutions. A third reason is that education is a form of human capital, representing the knowledge, skills, and training acquired by individuals through the educational system. According to economists, higher education usually means higher productivity and wages. As such, in post-industrial societies, educational attainment is associated with labour force participation, employment and unemployment, the types of occupations that people have, and their earnings. The role of education in the economic sector is so strong that, in the late 1960s, the status attainment paradigm saw it as mediating most if not all of the impact of family origin. In this view, family characteristics might matter for the life-chances of individuals but they do so by influencing level of educational attainment (Boyd et al. 1985).⁷

What are the occupational characteristics of the second generation compared to the third-plus generation, and how important is education in determining the occupational characteristics of the second generation? These questions can be answered with data from the 2011 National Household Survey. In this data base, the 500 occupational titles originally collected are collapsed into 30 occupational groupings. I use the 30 categories to define two types of occupational characteristics: employment in a high-skill occupation and occupational status.

The first indicator, employment in a high-skill occupation, is defined as employment in occupations that require university education (Statistics Canada, nd),⁸ a definition first established by experts convened by Employment and Social Development Canada (then Human Development Canada) in the late 1980s. Unfortunately, for occupations in art, culture, recreation, and sport, the 2011 National Household Survey Microdata File on Individuals combines one set of occupations requiring university education with another set requiring only college education or apprenticeship training. Investigation shows most of the more detailed occupational titles found in the file’s broad classification of “professional occupations and technical occupations in

⁷ This generalization still holds. Additionally, two studies examine the impact of parental characteristics on the earnings of Canadian immigrant offspring. However, the parental measures are pseudo-measures, obtained by generating distributions of likely parental characteristics from earlier census data and appending these to individual records. The analyses find a significant but small effect of fathers’ earnings on the earnings of the 1.5 and second generation (Aydemir, Chen, and Corak 2009; Aydemir and Sweetman, 2008).

⁸ A few studies add those employed in management occupations to those defined as high-skill or professional occupations. Results are similar in that the second generation is more likely to be employed in the combined occupational classes (Reitz, Zhang, and Hawkins 2011).

art, culture, recreation and sport” do not require a university education. As a result, this broad category is omitted from the list of occupations considered to be high skill in my analysis.

I also employ a ranking of the 30 occupational groupings available in the 2011 National Household Survey Microdata File on Individuals (cf. Boyd 1998; 2008a; 2009). The score for each occupational group represents the approximate percentage of people who are in occupations where the combined levels of income and education are lower than the given occupational group. For example, a score of 53 associated with the category “Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services” indicates that 53 percent of the entire labour force work in other occupations where the combined levels of education and earnings are lower than found for “Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services.” Higher scores are found for occupational groups where the combined education and earnings are high, and lower scores are found for occupational groups where educational levels and earnings are low.

My analysis confirms earlier findings. The entire second generation is more likely than the entire third-plus generation to work in high-skill occupations and, on average, members of this generation find themselves in occupations ranked higher in terms of composite educational and earnings characteristics. Twenty-five percent of the second generation in Canada works in an occupation that usually requires a university education compared to 20 percent of the third-plus generation. Likewise, the average occupational score for the second generation in Canada is 59.0 points, compared to 55.7 points for the third-plus generation. Analysis not presented here shows that the higher education of the second generation compared to the third-plus generation is most important in explaining the advantageous occupational score for the second generation, followed by differences between the two groups in location of residence (a proxy for local labour market characteristics), age, and other demographic variables.

Like those investigating the educational attainment of the children of immigrants, scholars considering the labour market integration of the second and third-plus generations ask if the occupational advantage holds for specific visible minorities. In fact, the overall patterns generally correspond to what might be expected on the basis of the educational characteristics of each visible minority group (Boyd 2008b; Boyd 2017; Boyd, Jeong, and Tian 2014; Chen and Hou 2016; Reitz, Zhang, and Hawkins 2011). My research confirms that education explains a great deal of the pattern observed for each group. Table 5.1 compares percentages with high-skilled occupations for visible minority groups in the second generation and the White third-plus generation.

The basis of Table 5.1 is a logistic regression analysis. The first column (“Actual Value”) shows all percentages in high-skill occupations, using Statistics Canada’s National Occupational Classification of occupations requiring university education. The second column (“Model 1”) presents the same data but in comparison with the White third-plus generation. For example, 19 percent of the White third-plus population who indicate their occupations say they are in high-skill occupations. The figure is 28 percent for the second generation who define themselves as Arab. As shown in column two, the difference is 9 percentage points. This “deviation” lets us see the differences more clearly. The deviations in the second column show that a high percentage of the Chinese and South Asian second generation have high-skill occupations compared to the White, third-plus generation.

Table 5.1 Regression of Holding High-Skill Occupation on Demographic and Educational Predictors,^(a) Canada, 2011

Group	Actual Value	Deviations from the White 3 rd -plus Generation					
		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
				Demographic Characteristics ^(b)		Educational Characteristics ^(c)	
White, 3 rd + generation	19	rg		rg		rg	
Arab, 2 nd generation	28	9.0	**	5.4	ns	-4.1	ns
Black, 2 nd generation	18	-1.5	ns	-4.0	***	-4.3	ns
Chinese, 2 nd generation	40	21.0	***	18.1	***	-0.1	**
Filipino, 2 nd generation	26	7.4	***	4.1	*	-2.6	ns
Other Southeast Asian, 2 nd generation	28	8.8	***	6.5	*	-3.9	ns
South Asian, 2 nd generation	34	14.5	***	11.4	***	-1.2	ns
Latin American, 2 nd generation	14	-5.2	ns	-7.2	**	-5.2	ns
Other visible minority, 2 nd generation	24	4.6	*	1.0	ns	-6.0	**
White, 2 nd generation	22	3.3	***	1.5	***	-3.5	**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

rg = reference group; ns = not significant

(a) For people age 25-39, not in school and with an occupation code.

(b) Demographic characteristics include sex, age, city of residence, province of residence, and marital status.

(c) Educational characteristics include highest educational level attained and field of study.

Source: Computed from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey Public Use Microdata File on Individuals.

Model 2 shows what the differences would be if all groups had the same demographic characteristics with respect to sex composition, age, city of residence, province of residence, and marital status. If differences in these characteristics are taken into account, the deviations or differences between the visible-minority, second generation and the third-plus, White generation decrease slightly but do not disappear. Members of the Black and Latin American second-generation continue to have lower percentages in high-skill occupations relative to the third-plus, White generation. All other second-generation, visible-minority groups continue to have higher percentages in high-skill occupations relative to the White third-plus generation. This finding tells us that group differences in demographic characteristics matter somewhat but not enough to change the initial conclusion based on the actual deviations.

Model 3 shows what the differences would be if the groups had the same distribution of demographic characteristics *and* educational attainment and post-secondary field of study. If the overall higher educational attainments of the second generation did not exist, most of the differences in holding high-skill occupations would become minor. In fact, most of the deviations are within the range of random fluctuation; they are not statistically significant (designated “ns” in Table 5.1). In short, the higher educational levels and the fields of study distributions for the second generation are important factors explaining the greater tendency of the various second-generation minority groups to be in high-skill occupations, compared to the White, third-plus generation. If all groups had exactly the same demographic and educational characteristics, most second generation minority groups would be very similar to the White third-plus generation with respect to their chances of working in high-skill occupations.

This analysis helps us understand the factors underlying the occupational scores of visible-minority second-generation groups compared to the White third-plus generation. The occupational scores under discussion differ from the percentage in high-skill occupations. The scores represent averages along a distribution of socioeconomic scores calculated for the 30 broad occupational groups available in the 2011 National Household Survey Microdata File on Individuals. If one group has a higher average score than another group, members of the first group work in occupations that on average are characterized by higher education and earnings compared with other occupations. Because the percentages and averages of distributions are different measures, the results for occupational scores will not exactly replicate what was found above for the percentages holding high-skill occupations. However, the findings still confirm the importance of educational attainment in explaining why some groups have higher scores than others do.

How do we know this? The first column of Table 5.2 shows that Latin American and Black visible-minority members of the second generation have the lowest average occupational scores while the Chinese and South Asians have the highest scores. The second column expresses these numbers as deviations from the average score of 55 for the White third-plus generation. Here the conclusion is slightly more nuanced. The average occupational scores for the second generation who are Arab or Black are within one or two points of the score for the White third-plus generation—too small to be statistically significant. However, the occupational score for members of the Latin American second generation is nearly six points lower than that of the White third-plus generation, indicating that the Latin American second generation on average holds significantly lower ranked occupations. Conversely, occupational scores are higher for other visible-minority groups, indicating that they tend to be in occupations that have combined education and earnings that are higher than observed for the White third-plus generation.

Table 5.2 Regression of Average Occupational Score on Demographic and Educational Predictors,^(a) Canada, 2011

Group	Actual Value	Deviations from the White 3 rd -plus Generation					
		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
		Actual Value		Demographic Characteristics ^(b)		Educational Characteristics ^(c)	
White, 3 rd + generation	55.2	rg		rg		rg	
Arab, 2 nd generation	57.4	2.2	ns	-0.2	ns	-4.2	**
Black, 2 nd generation	54.0	-1.2	ns	-3.2	***	-1.7	**
Chinese, 2 nd generation	67.7	12.5	***	10.9	***	1.2	*
Filipino, 2 nd generation	60.4	5.2	***	2.6	*	-0.9	ns
Other Southeast Asian, 2 nd generation	60.8	5.5	**	4.4	**	-0.4	ns
South Asian, 2 nd generation	65.0	9.8	***	7.9	***	1.4	*
Latin American, 2 nd generation	49.6	-5.6	**	-8.0	***	-4.0	**
Other visible minority, 2 nd generation	60.5	5.3	***	2.8	**	-0.4	ns
White, 2 nd generation	58.2	3.0	***	1.5	***	0.0	ns

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

rg = reference group; ns = not significant.

(a) For people age 25-39, not in school, with an occupation code.

(b) Demographic characteristics include sex, age, city of residence, province of residence, and marital status.

(c) Educational characteristics include highest educational level attained and field of study.

Source: Computed from Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey Public Use Microdata File on Individuals.

Table 5.2, column 3, shows the size of the deviations from the White third-plus generation that would exist for the visible minority second generation if all groups were alike in their demographic characteristics. The results indicate that differences between the second and third-plus generations in demographic characteristics explain part of the occupational score differences between groups. The deviations in scores between the second generation groups and the White third-plus generation would decrease but not disappear if everyone was alike in terms of the distributions for sex age, marital status, city or residence, and province of residence. Much of the influence is due to geographical location—if the second generation was more like the third-plus generation in where they live, they would lose part of their access to higher scoring occupations simply because the range and types of occupations in large cities like Toronto and Vancouver are dissimilar from those in places like Kawartha Lakes or Rimouski. After taking these geographical and demographic characteristics into account, the Latin American second generation has an average occupational score nearly 8 points lower and the score for the Black second generation has a score more than 3 points lower than that observed for the White third-plus generation.

Table 5.2, column 4 compares the groups assuming they have the same demographic *and* educational characteristics. The deviations in column 4 are in general smaller and more often statistically not significant than those in column 3, suggesting that educational characteristics account for much of the between-group variation in occupational scores. If all groups were alike with respect to their demographic and educational characteristics, the gap in average occupational scores between the White third-plus generation and the Chinese and South Asian second generations would remain significant, very small, and in favour of the Chinese and South Asians. The gap between the White third-plus generation and the Filipino and Other Southeast Asian second generations would not be statistically significant. However, Arab, Black, and Latin American second generations would have significantly lower average occupational scores than the White third-plus generation does. These last results indicate that the original similarity observed in occupational scores between the Arab and Black second generation and the White third-plus generation largely reflect the more advantageous demographic and educational characteristics of these two second generation groups. Absent these characteristics, the average occupational scores would be lower than those of the White third-generation.

Back to the Future

Results of the 2011 National Household Survey tell us that second-generation Canadians—those born in Canada but with one or more foreign-born parents—tend to have high educational levels, and that their occupational profiles generally reflect those high educational attainments. In the age cohort that is the focus of this chapter (age 25-39), variation exists among the visible minority second generations in regard to education, the incidence of holding high-skill occupations and in average occupational scores. My analysis shows that most visible-minority second-generation groups benefit from living disproportionately in large cities and from other demographic characteristics and that their occupational profiles also reflect the usually higher levels of education they have, compared to the White third-plus generation. Said differently, the higher occupational profiles of many visible-minority second-generation groups largely reflect their demographic characteristics and their educational attainment. That said, not everyone shares the same outcomes. The Latin American second generation especially has low levels of education and occupational characteristics, well below those observed for the White third-plus generation.

Like many other visible minority labels, “Latin American” is a composite label, covering groups of diverse origin with different migration histories and different modes of entry (refugees, economic migrants, and so on). Future research on the socioeconomic integration of the second generation will benefit from greater attention to the specific groups that comprise the broad visible-minority categories (Boyd and Tian 2016). Additionally, the findings presented here are merely the tip of the knowledge iceberg for educational and occupational outcomes. What is it about education that is associated with labour market outcomes and what determines level of attainment? This chapter emphasized the roles played by parents and other family of origin characteristics but quality of schooling, peer groups, supplemental educational programs, and scholarships are also factors. An occupation is a job that occurs in a work environment; the type and size of firms and their recruitment and promotion practices, including discrimination, also influence occupational careers over the life cycle (Dechief and Oreopoulos 2012). Data that go beyond census-type questions are needed to further illuminate the socio-economic integration of the second generation in Canada.

The second generation discussed here was born to migrants who arrived in Canada by the mid-1980s. Many more immigrants have arrived since then, increasingly from areas other than Europe and the United States. Many of their children are still in school. However, by 2026 these immigrants and the rest of the second generation could represent nearly half of all Canadians (Morency, Malenfant, and MacIsaac 2017). These demographics indicate the importance of future research into the socio-economic integration of the second generation, with new attention given to the next cohorts that are reaching adulthood.

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