

## Integrating Gender, Language, and Race

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The socio-economic characteristics of immigrant groups vary greatly by gender, race/ethnicity, nativity (Canadian born/foreign born), and language proficiency. The rationale for studying these groups is derived from late-twentieth-century developments in international migration. Women and men now migrate in near equal numbers. There is increased migration of non-European origin groups, with accompanying shifts in ethnic origins and in French/English language proficiencies. Such changes in the characteristics of migrants force us to refine the question 'how well do immigrants do?' We could also ask, how are the socio-economic experiences of all Canadians conditioned by gender, nativity, colour, and language? Such a question acknowledges recent trends in immigration, and it emphasizes that language skills, along with gender and racial/ethnic markers, are key factors shaping immigrant integration.

Socio-economic profiles are presented for twenty-six groups (defined by the combination of gender, race/ethnicity and nativity, and language proficiency) who reside in seventeen select census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in 1991. The analysis illustrates that although gender, race/ethnicity and nativity, and language proficiency are factors that separately influence socio-economic integration, in combination they also have important cumulative consequences. In particular, foreign-born women who have low levels of language proficiency and who are racially/ethnically visible have the lowest levels of education, the lowest rates of labour force participation, the highest percentages in low-skill occupations, and earn the lowest wages of all groups.

### Changing Origins, Increased Visibility

In Canada, the geographical origins of the foreign born shifted dramatically during the post-war period, away from European and American source countries. These shifts reflect the changed criteria of admission, which appeared first in the 1962 and 1967 immigration regulations and then in the Immigration Act, 1976 (modified in 1993). The previous criterion of admission was national origin, which heavily favoured the entry of European origin groups. This was replaced with those of family reunification, labour market skills and, more recently, refugee status.

These changes in the origin countries of immigrants have altered the ethnic and racial composition of Canada's foreign-born population. Of the population aged fifteen and older in the 1991 census, less than 5 per cent of the foreign born who arrived in Canada before 1961 were members of Canada's designated visible minority groups. But for those arriving in the 1980s, close to 70 per cent were members of visible minority groups.

'Visible minority' is a term first used in the early 1980s to denote groups that are distinctive by virtue of their race, colour, or 'visibility.' Developed by the federal government to meet data needs of federal employment equity legislation and program requirements, the term is a socially constructed measure generally equated with 'people of colour.' In accordance with guidelines established by the Interdepartmental Working Group on Equity Employment, ten visible minority subgroups are identified: black, South Asian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Southeast Asian, Filipino, Other Pacific Islanders, West Asian and Arab, and Latin American. When census data are used, as they are in this chapter, the term 'visible minority' does not represent self-placement or designation by individuals. Classifications of visible minority groups are created at Statistics Canada from responses to 1991 census questions on ethnic origins, birthplace, religion, and mother tongue.

### Diverse Languages

Changing birthplace origins of recent immigrants means that many of these 'new' immigrants are from countries or regions where the main language is not one of Canada's charter languages (English and French).

This is evident using three measures of language from the 1991 census: mother tongue (the language first learned and understood), language used in the home, and the ability to carry on a conversation in English and/or French. In combination, the Canadian census questions on mother tongue, home language, and official language permit the construction of a typology of language use in Canada. The four types are listed in descending order of assumed linguistic skill in Canada's official languages:

**TYPE I** Persons who cite English and/or French as mother tongue or home language, and who indicate their ability to carry on a conversation in one of those languages;

**TYPE II** Persons with a mother tongue other than English and/or French, but with home language and conversational ability in English and/or French;

**TYPE III** Persons with a mother tongue and home language other than English and/or French, but with official language English, French, or both;

**TYPE IV** Official language 'neither' English nor French.

The basic four-category typology used in this chapter was developed in Boyd and de Vries (1992; see also Boyd, de Vries, and Simkin (1994)), who argue that it represents a sliding scale of language skills. At one end are those individuals who report that they had English and/or French as their mother tongue language(s), speak one or both in the home, and are able to converse in English and/or French (Type I). One can assume that persons of this type have high levels of language proficiency in one or more of Canada's official languages. At the other end are those individuals who are unable to speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation on several topics and whose proficiency in one of Canada's official languages is considered to be extremely low. The typology also illustrates language acquisition. This latter topic is examined more thoroughly in Chapter 12.

Using customized data from the 1991 Canadian census Public Use Microdata Files (PUMF), Table 13.1 shows the extent of linguistic fluency for groups classified by Canadian and foreign birth, visible and non-visible minority status, and gender. Overall, the distribution of En-

glish/French language proficiency measured by the language typology shifts from high to low along a continuum of birthplace, visible minority status, and gender. For both women and men, knowledge of one or both of Canada's charter languages is highest for the Canadian born who are not members of visible minority groups, followed by the Canadian-born visible minority groups, foreign-born non-visible minority groups, and ending with foreign-born visible minority groups. Gender differences in language distributions are negligible, except for foreign-born visible minority groups, where women are almost twice as likely as men to have low levels of proficiency (Type IV). Approximately one in eight foreign-born visible minority women cannot conduct a conversation in English and/or French, compared to one in fifteen of the foreign-born visible minority men.

The transformations of international migration generate potential inequalities in the integration experiences of immigrants to Canada. Gender, race/ethnicity, and language are major factors that shape social interaction and labour market experiences of immigrants. Gender not only connotes being 'female' or 'male', but also privileges the latter over the former in the labour markets of virtually all industrial countries, including Canada (United Nations 1995). Ethnic and racial markers also shape immigrant integration. Virtually no society is free from racialization in which 'we' and 'they' conceptualizations exist and where racial and ethnic groups are stratified along dimensions of power, defence, and socio-economic resources (Miles 1989).

The stratifying influences of gender and race/ethnicity on immigrant labour market integration have not gone unnoticed by Canadian social scientists. Social scientists also acknowledge the importance of immigrant language skills in integration. Knowing the language(s) of the host society enhances the capacity to obtain information about the new society – information about schools, health care, social programs, housing, employment opportunities, unemployment benefits, and civic and legal rights. Language is also a form of economic capital, in that it influences where workers are hired, their job productivity, and thus, under the assumptions of neoclassical economics, their wages. With limited or no knowledge of the host country's language(s), workers are likely to find employment only in those settings in which their own language is used, such as in ethnic enclaves. They may also work where the host country language(s) is not required for job performance (for example, cleaning occupations). Such workers are likely to be employed in low-wage jobs.

TABLE 13.1  
Language usage for persons aged 15 and older, by sex, Canadian-foreign birthplace and visible minority status, Canada, 1991

	Females				Males			
	Canadian born		Foreign born		Canadian born		Foreign born	
	Visible minority (1)	Nonvisible minority (2)	Visible minority (3)	Nonvisible minority (4)	Visible minority (5)	Nonvisible minority (6)	Visible minority (7)	Nonvisible minority (8)
Population estimate (in 000s)	133	8,463	750	1,351	135	8,036	711	1,283
Sample N	3,978	253,903	22,508	40,518	4,037	241,074	21,317	38,502
Language typology								
Total								
Mother tongue, home language, official language are English and/or French (Type I)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	76.5	94.7	27.7	45.3	74.9	94.9	25.5	41.0
Mother tongue is other, home and official languages are English and/or French (Type II)	16.4	4.0	16.5	25.5	16.1	3.7	18.6	30.9
Mother tongue and home languages are other, official language is English and/or French (Type III)	6.7	1.2	43.6	23.9	8.6	1.3	49.4	24.9
Official languages ability neither English nor French (Type IV)	0.4	0.1	12.2	5.4	0.4	0.1	6.5	3.2

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Public Use Microdata File of Individuals

Even if workers with low language skills are not in low-wage employment, neo-classical arguments that wage levels reflect productivity suggest that lower wages are associated with reduced language skills. According to this argument, persons with limited or no knowledge of the marketplace language(s) may be of less value to an employer, where maximum productivity on a job is assured by a predefined level of linguistic skill. According to orthodox 'human capital' theory, in such circumstances, the productivity of a worker with less than optimal language skills would be lower, and wage rates accordingly would be less (Boyd 1992a; Boyd, de Vries, and Sinkin 1994).

#### Language Skill and Socio-economic Integration

Both research and the experiences of immigrants themselves offer compelling evidence that gender and visible minority status are powerful stratifying forces that shape the experiences of women and men, foreign and Canadian born. Adding language skills reaffirms the central roles placed by language knowledge in combination with the well-documented influences of gender and race/ethnicity on immigrant integration. This addition generates several empirically answerable questions. What socio-economic variations exist by English/French language skills among groups defined by nativity, visible minority status, and gender? Do lower levels of language proficiency imply reduced economic rewards? If so, is the impact of low language skills conditioned by gender and/or race and colour? Are some groups more disadvantaged than others?

In this chapter, these questions are answered by comparing the average years of schooling, labour force participation rates, unemployment rates, occupational and skill levels, industrial locations, and 1990 wages for the four language proficiency categories for the subpopulations represented in Table 13.1. Although sixteen groups exist for women and men respectively (thirty-two groups in all), very small sample numbers (less than a hundred persons) in the 1991 Census Public Use Microdata File dictate the exclusion of three of the sixteen language groups from the remainder of the analysis. These are the Canadian born who are members of visible minority groups and whose language proficiency is Type III or Type IV and the Canadian born who indicate that they cannot carry on a conversation in either English or French (Type IV).

The population under study consists of persons aged twenty-five to fifty-four who are residents of seventeen metropolitan areas. Three con-

siderations dictate this focus on highly urban Canadian adults: 1) young people may still be in school and not in the labour force, 2) similarly, older people may be retired, and 3) the foreign born, particularly recent arrivals, are highly concentrated in large Canadian cities (see Boyd (1992b) Appendix A, for a detailed review of how different urban/rural CMA/non-CMA distributions of groups can create the illusion of earnings equally between groups). As well, people immigrating after 1989 are omitted from the socio-economic analysis, partly to exclude the most immediate effects of migration and partly because these people either reported no 1990 Canadian earnings or quite likely had earnings only for part of 1990 (see Boyd (1992a)). Persons living in Halifax are also omitted from the analysis because period of immigration data are quite aggregated on the 1991 Census Public Use Microdata File for residents of the Maritime provinces.

### Educational Attainment

What can be said about the educational characteristics of groups classified by gender, visible minority status, and language proficiency? The main differences are not by gender or visible minority status, but rather exist between persons with different language skills. Persons with higher language proficiency have higher levels of education. Conversely, immigrants who cannot converse in either English or French have the lowest years of schooling of all groups (Tables 13.3 and 13.4). This pattern persists even when adjustments are made for the differing age composition and CMA of residence of groups, and for years lived in Canada for the foreign born. The adjustments are made using Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) (Andrew, James, Morgan, and Sonquist 1967). This technique produces educational levels that would be expected if all the groups shared the same distribution of age and CMA residence that characterizes the overall population, Canadian born and foreign born combined (Tables 13.2 and 13.3, panel 2). If only the foreign-born population is of interest, the expected educational levels are those that would exist if all the designated foreign-born groups had the same distributions of duration in Canada that characterize the entire foreign-born population, in addition to identical age and CMA residence distributions (Tables 13.2 and 13.3, panel 3).

Two explanations exist for the pattern in which lower levels of language proficiency are correlated with low levels of schooling. One ex-

planation is that in immigrant origin countries, language instruction in English and/or French is most common at the higher educational levels. Thus, individuals with higher levels of schooling are likely to have been exposed to learning French or English before immigrating to Canada. Persons with less schooling may lack such premigration exposure. The alternative explanation rests on the fact that language knowledge is not a fixed characteristic. This is particularly true for immigrants whose language proficiency usually increases with length of stay in a country. Because of familiarity with abstract symbols, immigrants with higher levels of education may learn new languages more rapidly, especially in a society such as Canada, where literacy often is assumed in the pedagogy of language instruction.

### Labour Force Participation

As a form of capital, language proficiency is also associated with measures of economic integration. Participating in the labour force is the requisite first step to accessing labour market rewards. Among the foreign-born population aged twenty-five to fifty-four, people are more likely to be in the labour force if they have some knowledge of English and/or French (Tables 13.2 and 13.3). In general, the higher the level of English/French linguistic skill, the higher the labour force participation rate. Differences in labour force participation are especially pronounced for foreign-born women, where less than 60 per cent of those who cannot converse in English and/or French (Type IV) are in the labour force, compared with over 70 per cent of immigrant women who have acquired English and/or French.

It is possible that the pattern of labour force participation by language proficiency in fact reflects the association between language and education and in turn the association that exists between education and labour force participation. MCA results indicate that levels of education and other variables partially account for the patterns of labour force participation by linguistic skill, especially for foreign-born women who cannot converse in English and/or French. However, once the effects of age, education, and CMA residence are statistically taken into account, there still remains a pattern whereby the lower the linguistic proficiency of immigrants, the lower their labour force participation. The pattern also persists when differences in duration (e.g., years of residence in Canada) are taken into account for the foreign-born population.

TABLE 13.2

Select social and economic characteristics for women aged 25–54, by Canadian/foreign birth<sup>(a)</sup>, visible minority membership, and language knowledge, CMA residents only, Canada, 1991 (excluding Atlantic provinces)

	Percentage of labour force						
	Years of schooling	Percentage in labour force	Unemployed	In processing & production occupations	In low-skill <sup>(b)</sup> occupations	In goods <sup>(c)</sup> industries	In low-skill service industries <sup>(d)</sup>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Total Population	13.1	79.7	8.1	5.1	8.6	23.2	12.8
Canadian born							
Visible minority							
Type I	14.0	83.5	8.5	2.4	5.8	19.3	13.1
Type II	14.9	88.2	3.6	0.5	3.9	20.6	12.2
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	13.2	80.0	7.6	3.0	7.2	21.8	12.0
Type II	13.9	81.7	7.2	1.6	4.8	21.1	10.7
Type III	13.5	78.6	8.2	3.3	7.0	25.9	13.9
Foreign born							
Visible minority							
Type I	13.6	83.8	9.3	8.0	10.9	23.7	10.7
Type II	14.5	82.0	8.1	7.0	7.9	22.1	14.3
Type III	13.0	77.5	13.1	16.9	17.4	31.9	17.6
Type IV	8.3	58.2	21.4	41.9	33.6	54.0	27.6
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	14.0	82.5	6.4	2.3	4.9	20.6	12.4
Type II	12.7	79.6	7.1	5.9	9.0	24.3	14.3
Type III	10.4	72.6	12.6	23.7	23.9	36.9	19.7
Type IV	6.5	59.6	12.9	44.1	37.1	54.0	20.7

Adjusted for age, CMA residence, and other variables<sup>(e)</sup>

Canadian born							
Visible minority							
Type I	13.8	80.5	8.7	3.8	7.4	20.0	13.4
Type II	14.6	83.9	3.8	3.1	6.8	23.5	12.9
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	13.2	79.8	7.4	3.1	7.5	22.4	11.9
Type II	13.8	79.1	8.6	3.0	6.5	22.3	11.7
Type III	13.2	77.6	7.4	3.3	7.8	24.1	14.2
Foreign born							
Visible minority							
Type I	13.4	81.9	10.2	8.6	11.9	21.3	12.0
Type II	14.4	78.3	9.3	8.8	10.6	24.2	16.3
Type III	12.8	77.6	13.2	16.7	16.9	29.9	17.5
Type IV	8.4	72.0	18.7	33.2	20.7	44.1	20.1
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	14.1	80.1	7.7	3.6	6.4	21.7	14.0
Type II	12.9	80.0	8.0	5.5	8.4	22.9	14.7
Type III	10.9	80.6	11.8	18.1	17.1	30.4	16.8
Type IV	6.8	78.2	10.6	31.1	20.5	44.1	13.3
Adjusted for duration, and other variables <sup>(f)</sup>							
Foreign born							
Visible minority							
Type I	13.4	81.7	9.5	9.3	12.4	23.3	11.9
Type II	14.3	78.9	8.4	10.7	10.8	26.5	15.5
Type III	12.6	78.2	78.2	16.7	16.0	31.6	16.0
Type IV	8.0	69.4	69.4	29.3	19.1	43.7	18.1

continued

TABLE 13.2 (continued)

Select social and economic characteristics for women aged 25–54, by Canadian/foreign birth<sup>(a)</sup>, visible minority membership, and language knowledge, CMA residents only, Canada, 1991 (excluding Atlantic provinces)

	Percentage of labour force						
	Years of schooling (1)	Percentage in labour force (2)	Unemployed (3)	In processing & production occupations (4)	In low-skill <sup>(b)</sup> occupations (5)	In goods <sup>(c)</sup> industries (6)	In low-skill service industries <sup>(d)</sup> (7)
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	14.2	80.0	7.8	5.7	7.8	24.2	14.1
Type II	13.1	78.4	8.4	7.4	11.1	25.2	16.0
Type III	10.6	77.0	11.4	16.4	19.0	25.9	17.4
Type IV	6.7	70.8	11.1	27.2	22.2	42.4	13.8

## Notes

- (a) Excludes persons born outside Canada who are Canadian citizens by birth and persons who did not answer the census question on year of immigration.
- (b) Level I occupations.
- (c) Includes agriculture, other primary industries, manufacturing, construction, transportation and storage, communication and other utilities, and wholesale trade industries.
- (d) Includes accommodation, food, and beverage service industries. Also includes 'other' service industries, excluding those in retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate, business services, government, education, and health and social services.
- (e) For education, data are adjusted for age and CMA place of residence. For other characteristics, data are adjusted for age, CMA residence, and education.
- (f) Includes variables in footnote (e) plus length of duration in Canada, calculated from year-of-immigration information.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Public Use File of Individuals

TABLE 13.3

Select social and economic characteristics for men aged 25–54, by Canadian/foreign birth<sup>(a)</sup>, visible minority membership, and language knowledge, CMA residents only, Canada, 1991 (excluding Atlantic provinces)

	Percentage of labour force						
	Years of schooling (1)	Percentage in labour force (2)	Unemployed (3)	In processing & production occupations (4)	In low-skill <sup>(b)</sup> occupations (5)	In goods <sup>(c)</sup> industries (6)	In low-skill service industries <sup>(d)</sup> (7)
Total population	13.5	94.5	7.6	15.1	8.9	50.8	8.7
Canadian born							
Visible minority							
Type I	14.6	92.5	7.8	12.1	7.1	42.9	9.4
Type II	15.6	94.5	4.8	8.5	5.2	34.6	11.8
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	13.5	94.6	7.3	13.7	8.4	50.6	7.5
Type II	14.2	95.7	6.0	12.8	6.9	51.3	7.5
Type III	13.6	88.5	14.1	14.1	12.6	49.8	13.9
Foreign born							
Visible minority							
Type I	14.1	94.8	9.7	20.3	9.9	49.8	9.2
Type II	15.4	94.1	8.5	15.2	8.2	41.6	13.3
Type III	13.9	92.5	10.6	22.7	12.2	48.8	15.0
Type IV	9.4	83.4	16.6	29.6	23.6	51.8	33.8
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	14.8	96.4	5.2	13.4	5.1	46.6	8.4
Type II	13.2	95.6	6.4	17.6	7.8	55.0	10.2
Type III	11.1	93.0	10.0	26.8	17.1	63.1	13.2
Type IV	6.6	89.0	21.3	28.2	43.5	81.6	11.7

continued

TABLE 13.3 (continued)  
 Select social and economic characteristics for men aged 25–54, by Canadian/foreign birth<sup>(a)</sup>, visible minority membership, and language knowledge, CMA residents only, Canada, 1991 (excluding Atlantic provinces)

	Percentage of labour force						
	Years of schooling (1)	Percentage in labour force (2)	Unemployed (3)	In processing & production occupations (4)	In low-skill <sup>(b)</sup> occupations (5)	In goods <sup>(c)</sup> industries (6)	In low-skill service industries <sup>(d)</sup> (7)
Adjusted for age, CMA residence, and other variables <sup>(e)</sup>							
Canadian born							
Visible minority							
Type I	14.4	91.6	8.0	15.1	8.2	46.6	9.2
Type II	15.3	92.9	5.8	14.5	7.7	43.2	11.7
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	13.5	94.6	7.0	13.2	8.2	46.6	9.2
Type II	14.2	94.7	6.3	13.4	7.9	52.2	7.8
Type III	13.4	88.8	12.3	13.5	11.1	49.0	12.7
Foreign born							
Visible minority							
Type I	14.0	94.1	10.6	21.6	11.0	49.4	9.7
Type II	15.3	92.9	10.4	20.6	11.4	49.1	14.7
Type III	13.8	92.3	11.2	25.7	12.8	50.2	15.1
Type IV	9.2	88.3	13.9	27.3	16.1	41.0	32.3
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	14.8	95.2	6.9	15.5	7.5	49.3	9.5
Type II	13.3	95.7	7.1	16.4	8.3	51.9	11.0
Type III	11.2	96.2	9.1	23.7	13.6	56.0	13.2
Type IV	6.8	98.8	18.2	23.6	31.5	68.2	10.7

Adjusted for duration and other variables<sup>(f)</sup>

Foreign born							
Visible minority							
Type I	14.0	94.3	9.4	19.9	10.3	49.1	9.3
Type II	15.2	93.3	9.0	19.7	10.3	48.0	13.9
Type III	13.6	93.0	9.2	23.8	10.9	49.9	14.1
Type IV	8.9	86.9	12.3	24.1	13.6	43.3	29.8
Nonvisible minority							
Type I	14.9	95.3	6.7	15.4	7.8	49.4	9.4
Type II	13.5	95.4	7.5	16.4	9.2	53.6	10.7
Type III	11.2	94.5	8.7	22.0	13.4	57.2	12.1
Type IV	6.5	93.5	17.8	21.1	30.1	68.4	9.6

#### Notes

- (a) Excludes persons born outside Canada who are Canadian citizens by birth and persons who did not answer the census question on year of immigration.
- (b) Level I occupations.
- (c) Includes agriculture, other primary industries, manufacturing, construction, transportation and storage, communication and other utilities, and wholesale trade industries.
- (d) Includes accommodation, food, and beverage service industries. Also includes 'other' service industries, excluding those in retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate, business services, government, education, and health and social services.
- (e) For education, data are adjusted for age and CMA place of residence. For other characteristics, data are adjusted for age, CMA residence, and education.
- (f) Includes variables in footnote (e) plus length of duration in Canada, calculated from year-of-immigration information.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Public Use File of Individuals

language proficiency. The 'goods' sector includes agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, and distributive industries, with the latter consisting of transportation, communication and utilities, and wholesale trade industries. With declining language proficiency, the percentage of workers in the goods sector, as opposed to the service sector, rises for processing and production occupations (Tables 13.3 and 13.4, column 6).

At the same time, however, language proficiency is also associated with employment in the popularly described 'McJobs' of the service economy (Tables 13.3 and 13.4, column 7). Derived from the products and work organization of McDonald's, the term 'McJobs' refers to work that is consumer oriented, usually low wage, low skill, and often part-time, temporary, or without benefits that provide paid vacation leave, pensions, or access to health care. Jobs in accommodation, beverage, and food industries frequently have such characteristics. The 'Low Skill Service Industries' column in Tables 13.3 and 13.4 includes these industries along with the residual 'other' service industries. Employment in this type of sector is highest for persons who have no knowledge of either English or French (Type IV) or whose mother tongue and home language is not English and/or French (Type III).

### Earning a Living

In addition to influencing labour force participation rates, type of occupation, and industrial location of jobs, levels of language proficiency are also associated with earnings. Here the population of wage and salary earners is restricted to those who worked one week or more in 1990 and who did not have any self-employed income in 1990. Depending on the gender, nativity, and visible minority status group in question, this restriction deletes between 2 to 6 per cent of the population aged twenty-five to fifty-four who earned income either from wages and salaries and/or from self-employment. The restriction to wage earners only was made for many reasons, including the negative income that can result from self-employment and the enormous variation in types of self-employment (see Boyd 1992b; Stelcner and Kyriazis 1995).

In yet another display of the familiar pattern, 1991 census data show that with decreasing language skills, wages decline substantially (Table 13.4, rows 1-4). However, the addition of birthplace and visible minority status to the language typology increases the complexity of conclusions that can be made. With thirteen groups created for women and

men separately, seventy-eight comparisons of earnings are possible. If cross-gender comparisons are added, the potential number of comparisons rises to 325.

The potential complexity of analysis is simplified in four ways. First, it is evident that substantial gender inequalities exist in earnings, with women in all nativity, language, and visible minority groups earning less than their male counterparts. Since such inequalities are well established, and analysed in North American social science research, the focus is on earnings differentials for subgroups of women and men.

Second, employment equity programs in Canada stress the potential disadvantages associated with membership in one or more visible minority groups. This emphasis leads to the following question: do visible minority groups have lower earnings than groups that are not visible minority members?

Third, if the visible minority status dimension of inequality is combined with that of language and birthplace, the most privileged group in terms of potentially higher earnings should be nonvisible minority groups whose mother tongue, home language, and official language knowledge is English and/or French (Type I). This argument generates two reference groups against which the experiences of other groups can be compared. The first reference group consists of the Canadian born who are not members of visible minority groups but who have Type I language skills. The second reference group consists of the foreign born who are not members of visible minority groups but who have Type I language skills.

Fourth, if lower earnings are associated with being a member of a visible minority group, or being foreign born, or having low language proficiency, these disadvantages should cumulate. Further, there exists the possibility that all these statuses interact, producing even lower (or higher) earnings than might be expected on the basis of the impact of visible/nonvisible minority membership on earnings, plus the impact of language proficiency and the impact of being foreign born. In the world of statistics, this is called an interaction model.

The first focus on gender inequality in earnings has already been addressed. For all groups, average wages and salaries of women are far below that of men. The second focus on the earnings differentials by visible minority and nonvisible minority groups generates several observations. Among the foreign born, members of visible minority groups frequently do earn less on average than persons who are not members of visible minority groups (these and other conclusions rest on unpub-

TABLE 13.4

Actual and adjusted 1990 wage and salary earnings of persons aged 25–54 working one week or more in 1990, by sex, language proficiency, activity, and visible minority status, Canada, 1991

	Females				Males			
	Type I (1)	Type II (2)	Type III (3)	Type IV (4)	Type I (5)	Type II (6)	Type III (7)	Type IV (8)
<b>Actual</b>								
Canadian born								
Nonvisible minority	23,191 <sup>d</sup>	23,770 <sup>d</sup>	22,215 <sup>d</sup>	(NA)	36,952	37,127	27,208 <sup>c</sup>	(NA)
Visible minority	24,055	26,407 <sup>c,d</sup>	(NA)	(NA)	34,471 <sup>c</sup>	33,852 <sup>c</sup>	(NA)	(NA)
Foreign born								
Nonvisible minority	24,819 <sup>c</sup>	23,452 <sup>d</sup>	17,921 <sup>c,d</sup>	15,165 <sup>c,d</sup>	44,337 <sup>c</sup>	39,566 <sup>c</sup>	30,801 <sup>c</sup>	25,418 <sup>c</sup>
Visible minority	22,218 <sup>c,d</sup>	23,027 <sup>d</sup>	18,572 <sup>c,d</sup>	12,452 <sup>c,d</sup>	31,794 <sup>c</sup>	34,649 <sup>c</sup>	27,252 <sup>c</sup>	20,198 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Adjusted<sup>(a)</sup></b>								
Canadian born								
Nonvisible minority	23,325 <sup>d</sup>	23,050	22,663	(NA)	37,594 <sup>d</sup>	36,841 <sup>d</sup>	33,829 <sup>d</sup>	(NA)
Visible minority	23,254	24,034	(NA)	(NA)	34,852 <sup>c</sup>	33,839 <sup>c</sup>	(NA)	(NA)
Foreign born								
Nonvisible minority	22,896 <sup>c</sup>	22,836 <sup>c</sup>	20,900 <sup>c,d</sup>	21,505 <sup>c,d</sup>	38,486 <sup>c</sup>	35,774 <sup>c,d</sup>	32,420 <sup>c,d</sup>	34,463 <sup>c,d</sup>
Visible minority	20,143 <sup>c,d</sup>	21,142 <sup>d</sup>	19,346 <sup>c,d</sup>	20,095 <sup>c,d</sup>	30,522 <sup>c,d</sup>	31,705 <sup>c,d</sup>	28,343 <sup>c,d</sup>	28,999 <sup>c,d</sup>
<b>Adjusted<sup>(a)</sup></b>								
Foreign born								
Nonvisible minority	22,711	21,990 <sup>d</sup>	20,730 <sup>d</sup>	21,178 <sup>d</sup>	39,752	36,538 <sup>d</sup>	34,114 <sup>d</sup>	35,958 <sup>d</sup>
Visible minority	20,837 <sup>d</sup>	21,945 <sup>d</sup>	20,593 <sup>d</sup>	20,930 <sup>d</sup>	32,613 <sup>d</sup>	34,101 <sup>d</sup>	31,240 <sup>d</sup>	31,993 <sup>d</sup>

**Notes:**

(NA) Not available. Underlying sample numbers are too small for reliable estimates of earnings.

(a) Adjusted for age, age-squared, CMA place of residence, years of school, occupational skill levels, industry, weeks worked in 1990, and full-time/part-time worker.

(b) Data are for foreign-born population only. Adjusted for variables in footnote(a) and for years of duration in Canada and duration-squared.

(c) Significantly different at  $p < .05$  or less from the sex-specific mean earnings of the Canadian born who are not members of visible minority groups and who have the highest level of language proficiency (Type 1).

(d) Significantly different at  $p < .05$  or less from the sex-specific mean earnings of the foreign born who are not members of visible minority groups and who have the highest level of language proficiency (Type I).

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Public Use Microdata File of Individuals

lished statistical tests for significant differences in earnings between designated groups). This conclusion also holds for earnings differentials between Canadian-born men who are members of visible and nonvisible minority groups. However, for Canadian-born women, the actual and adjusted earnings for visible and nonvisible minority groups are so similar that they cannot be said to be statistically different. The only exception occurs for visible minority Canadian-born women with Type II language proficiency. These women have higher (statistically significant) actual earnings than their nonvisible minority counterparts. They also have on average more education than nonvisible minority women (see Table 13.2) and when adjustments are made for education and other labour market relevant variables, these significantly higher earnings disappear (Table 13.4).

Other studies have noted, sometimes with a degree of perplexity, that the aggregated Canadian-born visible minority group often has equal or higher earnings than the nonvisible minority Canadian-born group (Boyd 1992b; Pendakur and Pendakur 1995). However, it is premature to reach the implied conclusion, notably that colour-based disadvantages disappear for the Canadian born, at least for women. More in-depth analysis is required. The ethnic composition of the Canadian-born visible minority group differs substantially from that of the foreign-born visible minority, which is characterized by greater ethnic diversity. The Canadian-born visible minority labour force population primarily consists of three ethnic groups: the Chinese, East and South-east Asian groups, and blacks. All three groups subsume more diverse ethnic groups, ranging from Malaysian Chinese to Caribbean-black origin groups. In aggregate, the first two groups are substantially different from the latter with respect to educational attainment, professional or managerial occupations, and the workplace barriers facing them (see: Boyd (1992b); Stelcner and Kyriazis (1995), 69-70). The ideal research design would compare and contrast the experiences of specific birth-place and ethnic groups rather than study populations collapsed into broadly defined region of birth groups. Regrettably, the small numerical size of these Canadian-born populations and the aggregation of groups on the PUMF database prevents the detailed investigation that is required to understand earnings similarities and differences.

Compared to other labour market characteristics, earnings data best illustrate the cumulative impact of language proficiency, nativity, visible minority status, and gender. For both men and women, the highest 1990 average wages are earned by the Canadian born with Levels I and

II proficiency and by the nonvisible minority foreign born with the highest level of language proficiency (Table 13.4, rows 1-4). Lowest earnings exist for the foreign born who have low levels of language proficiency and who are members of visible minority groups. Foreign-born visible minority women who cannot converse in either English or French have the lowest earnings of all groups, with average 1991 earnings of \$12,452).

These patterns of higher and lower average earnings persist when adjustments are made for differences among groups in factors known to affect earnings levels (Table 13.4, panel 2). The resulting adjustments indicate the average earnings that would characterize the various groups if they all had the same profiles with respect to age, CMA place of residence, education, occupational skill, industrial location, weeks worked, and full-time/part-time profiles. If the comparisons are made with the first designated reference group are used, three major conclusions can be reached:

- Compared to Canadian-born men who are not members of visible minority groups and who have the highest language proficiency level, adjusted earnings are significantly lower for all visible minority Canadian-born men and for all foreign-born men.
- The sole exception to the previous conclusion consists of those men who are foreign born but not members of visible minority groups and who are highly proficient in English and/or French. They have the highest of earnings for all groups, significantly higher than earnings that would be expected for the Canadian-born, nonvisible minority, high language proficiency men.
- For women, if all groups had identical distributions on variables known to influence earnings, there would still be significant differences between the higher earnings of Canadian-born nonvisible minority women with the highest level of language proficiency (Type I) and all foreign-born women of all levels of language proficiency.

Many significant income differences persist when comparisons shift to the second designated reference group – that is, to the foreign born who are not visible minorities and who have the highest level of linguistic proficiency. Even after statistically adjusting for group differences in variables known to influence earnings, this group has significantly higher levels of earnings than other foreign-born groups (exclud-

ing foreign-born women who are not visible minority women and whose mother tongue is neither English nor French but who speak one or both charter languages in the home and in conversation). The earnings advantage of not being a member of a visible minority group and having the highest level of language proficiency persists among the foreign born even after adjustments are made for differences in years of residency in Canada (Table 13.4, panel 3). These comparisons, as well as those with the Canadian-born, nonvisible minority groups, indicate that the disadvantages associated with low language skill, visible minority status, and immigrant status do indeed cumulate.

Increment to  $R^2$  tests also were performed for an additive model incorporating the main effects of visible minority status, nativity, and language proficiency versus an interactive one, based on the thirteen categories formed by cross-classifying visible minority status, nativity, and language skill (see gender specific categories in Table 13.4). The tests were significant for all models represented by the three panels of Table 13.4, indicating that the best explanatory model is that in which income reflects the unique combinations of the three variables. These results indicate that the level of earnings observed in Table 13.4 for a given nativity-language-visible minority status group cannot be explained as resulting from a given level of language skill, combined with the impact of membership (or non-membership) in a visible minority group, along with the impact of place of birth. Instead, certain combinations of these characteristics are associated with additional decrements or increments, or to use another terminology, with additional penalties and bonuses.

### Conclusion

To summarize, Canada's immigration policy has altered the origin composition of immigrants. No longer from Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States, today's migrants are admitted under many criteria – family reunification, economic contributions, and humanitarian considerations. Increasingly, these immigrants are from areas in which the main language is not English and/or French. Recent immigrants are the most likely to be unable to converse in English or French, or if they can, to still speak other languages in the home. Women have lower levels of English and/or French language proficiency than men.

Language skills have economic consequences. When in the labour force, persons with low levels of proficiency have higher rates of unem-

ployment compared to groups with higher levels of proficiency. Groups with low levels of proficiency are likely to be employed in production and processing occupations, in low-skill occupations, and in the goods-producing sector of Canada's economy. Correlates of lower levels of language proficiency tend to be more severely felt by the foreign-born visible minority population compared to the foreign-born population without visible minority status.

Perhaps the most important economic variable for economic well-being and life chances is income. Groups with low levels of language skill have, on average, lower wages and salaries compared to other groups. Foreign-born women who are members of visible minority groups and who have low levels of language proficiency have the lowest level of average yearly earnings, even after adjusting for group differences in the amounts of educational attainment, age, and other variables.

The correlates of language proficiency for immigrants and their implications for integration have not gone unnoticed by federal and provincial governments. Policy responses have been twofold. The most long-standing policy response is a remedial solution; the other is a preventive stance.

The 'preventive' policy response is directed at persons who seek to enter Canada but have not yet been admitted. A policy initiative that adopts a preventive stance by linking language skills to admissions could in principle reduce the needs of new immigrants for learning English and/or French. Since the 1960s, Canada has given points for English or French language knowledge to immigrants who enter as assisted relatives or in the economic entry categories. However, on 17 November 1995, the federal government announced regulatory amendments to the selection criteria used to admit immigrants in the economic classes. These new regulations target the skilled worker component of immigration to Canada, which represented about 25,000 principal applicants for a total of 60,000 persons (excluding those destined to Quebec) in 1994. Both education and ability in English or French will be given greater weight in determining the necessary points for admission, each accounting for a maximum of fifteen points (pass marks depend on the categories of skilled worker, but range from forty-five to fifty-four points).

These regulatory changes may have a modest impact on the numbers of higher skilled workers who might otherwise have faced difficulties in economic integration because of education and language skills. However, throughout the world, the volume of international migration is

rapidly growing, frequently fuelled by spontaneous political and economic upheaval, as well as the desire for family reunification. In the face of these numbers and the suddenness of migration flows, fine-tuning the admissions criteria for economic immigrants is not likely to diminish substantially the numbers who arrive without extensive knowledge of English and/or French. The 'preventive' policy initiative also does not address the settlement needs of migrants already in Canada.

The 'remedial' policy response does provide language training to target groups already residing in Canada. The general rationale has been to further immigrant integration through improved knowledge of the English and French languages. At various times, however, a subset of federally funded language training programs have used the links between language proficiency and enhanced economic productivity to design programs targeted at a subset of workers (see Boyd (1992a)).

Despite changing emphases, rationales, and programs over the years, the Canadian federal government has been a long-time player in funding immigrant settlement activities. However, in the 1994 budget, the federal government indicated that it was no longer prepared to be in the business of managing immigrant settlement policies and programs, including directed funding for language training. Following a pattern of decentralization found in other policy domains, the intention of the federal government is to transfer funds to other agencies, including the provinces, who will then set agendas and funding priorities. A critical question for the future is whether or not provinces will fill the void, by establishing and funding immigrant settlement policies and language instruction programs.

These recent policy changes indicate that the preventive stance is becoming more central at the federal level while the remedial approach is being expelled from the federal arena of responsibility. The consequences of such policy shifts for immigrant integration as yet remain unclear. However, one possibility is that migrants will continue in increasing numbers to enter Canada without high levels of English/French language skills, only to find a dismantled federal language training program and fewer substitutes in the public and provincial government sectors. Data presented in this chapter show that language proficiency, along with gender, nativity, and visible minority status, shapes immigrant integration experience. Those with low levels of language proficiency are the most disadvantaged, and the most likely to be affected by diminished policy responses.

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