# Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical ReportVisible Minority Women Visible Minority Women

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## Introduction

In Canada, the term “visible minority” is used to define one of four designated groups under the *Employment Equity Act.* The purpose of the act is to achieve workplace equality and to correct employment disadvantages affecting women, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, and visible minorities. Within this context, visible minorities are defined as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. Other visible minority groups are also included in this population, as are people belonging to multiple visible minority groups.[Note 1]

Some visible minority groups have been present in Canada for a long time and have contributed many generations of children to Canada’s population. Other groups are relatively new to the country, composed almost entirely of immigrants who are themselves the first generation of their family in Canada. Still other visible minority groups are internally diverse, with members from a large number of geographic regions, each with its own history in Canada. This diversity culminates in a visible minority population that in many ways shows as much variability within itself as between itself and the population not belonging to a visible minority group.

In this chapter, the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of visible minority women and girls are explored. Where it is relevant and feasible, analyses compare both the total visible minority population and specific visible minority groups with the population not belonging to a visible minority group.

## The visible minority population is growing

In 2011, approximately 6.3 million people in Canada reported belonging to a visible minority group. Of these, about 3.2 million, or just over half, were women and girls.

Like males, the proportion of visible minority females in Canada’s total female population has steadily increased since 1981, when data for the visible minority population were first collected in the census. In fact, over the last 30 years, this proportion has more than quadrupled. In 1981, 4.7% of Canada’s female population belonged to a visible minority group. Twenty years later, this proportion had grown to 13.5%, and, in 2011, visible minority women and girls comprised 19.3% of Canada’s total female population (Chart 1).

This proportion is expected to continue increasing. According to Statistics Canada’s population projections using a

medium-growth scenario, over 3 in 10 females in Canada could belong to a visible minority group by 2031.

Chart 1
Proportion of female population who is a visible minority, Canada, 1981 to 2031

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## Immigration and a growing visible minority population

Growth of the visible minority population coincides with increasing numbers of immigrants[Note 2] arriving from non-European countries. Between 1981 and 2011, the proportion of immigrants in Canada's female population grew from 16% to 21%. At the same time, Canada experienced a marked shift in the source regions of new immigrants.[Note 3]

In 1981, 69% of recently landed[Note 4] immigrant females were born in non-European countries. In 1991, this proportion had grown to 77%, and, in 2011, nearly 87% of new arrivals were from non-European countries. This immigration trend corresponded to an increase in immigrants who belonged to a visible minority group. In 1981, 55% of recent immigrant females belonged to a visible minority group, compared with 71% in 1991, and 79% in 2011.

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## The largest group of visible minority females is now South Asian

In 2011, the three largest visible minority groups in Canada were South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.), Chinese and Black. Nearly 61% of visible minority females and 62% of visible minority males belonged to one of these three groups.

Although these were also the three largest groups in 2006, there has been some change in relative size. In 2006, South Asian (about 1,262,900 individuals) surpassed Chinese (about 1,216,600 individuals), for the first time, as the largest visible minority group in Canada. However, within the female population Chinese remained the largest group at that time, comprising 24.3% of the female visible minority population, while 24.0% were South Asian.

In 2011, South Asian was the largest visible minority group among both females and males for the first time, comprising 24.1% of female visible minorities and 26.0% of male visible minorities. In comparison, 21.5% of females and 20.8% of males were Chinese (Table 1).

The rest of the female visible minority population included Black (15.3%), Filipino (10.9%), Latin American (6.1%), Arab (5.5%), Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.) (4.9%), West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.) (3.1%), Korean (2.6%), and Japanese (1.5%) women and girls. Between 2006 and 2011, there was little change in the proportions of visible minority females represented by each of these groups.

Table 1
Visible minority groups, by sex, Canada, 2011

Females comprised a slightly larger share (50.8%) of Canada's total population as compared with males (49.2%) in 2011. Females made up a slightly higher proportion of the visible minority population as a whole (51.4%) and a similar proportion of the population not belonging to a visible minority group (50.7%).

There were some differences in the proportion of females within specific visible minority groups. For example, the proportion of the Filipino (56.6%) and Japanese (56.1%) groups that were female was higher compared with Canada's total female population, and the overall female visible minority population. On the other hand, the proportion of females in the Arab (46.5%) and West Asian (48.9%) groups was smaller compared with the same two

reference populations.

## Two-thirds of visible minority females are immigrants

The 2011 National Household Survey reported that most visible minority women and girls (66.7%) were immigrants to Canada. Another 4.0% were non-permanent residents, in Canada on a work or study permit, or as a refugee claimant. Just less than a third of visible minority females (29.3%) were born in Canada. This pattern was fairly consistent for males, although a slightly smaller proportion (63.3%) of visible minority males were immigrants. Additionally, a slightly larger proportion of visible minority males (32.7%) were born in Canada.

The proportion of Canadian-born within each visible minority group is related, in part, to the length of its history of immigration to Canada, as well its representation in the recently arrived immigrant population year over year. For example, the Japanese and Black visible minority groups each have a long history of immigration to Canada but with relatively low levels of recent immigration. As such, among visible minority females, these two groups are represented by a larger proportion of Canadian-born members (56.6% and 41.6%, respectively), compared with the South Asian (30.2%) and Chinese (24.9%) groups, for example, that also have a long-history of immigration but that continue to be a large source of new immigrants (Table 2).

The proportion of Canadian-born people in other groups of visible minority females ranged from 31.9% within the Southeast Asian population to 15.4% in the Korean population.

Table 2
Visible minority groups, by immigrant status, period of immigration and sex, Canada, 2011

## Differences in generation status reflect immigration history

Another way to look at the relationship between immigration patterns and visible minority presence in Canada is by considering the generation status of members within each group.

Of Canada's total female population, 22.5% were identified as being "first generation" in 2011. These are people who were born outside of Canada. Another 17.1% were "second generation," having at least one parent who was born outside of Canada, but themselves having been born in Canada. The remaining 60.3% were "third generation or more," having been born in Canada, and also having parents who were both born in Canada.

Most females belonging to a visible minority group are considered first generation by the definition above. However, there are differences in the proportions of people who are first, second and third or more generation within each group (Chart 2). For example, in 2011, the Japanese group had the largest proportion of third-generation or more members (28.2%), reflecting its long history of moderate immigration to Canada. In contrast, although the Chinese have a long history of immigration to Canada, their sustained immigration in larger numbers is reflected in far fewer members (2.6%) who are third generation or more.

Chart 2
Generation status of females, by visible minority group, Canada, 2011

## Immigrant visible minority females come from many countries

Most visible minority females in Canada are immigrants, with birthplaces spanning the globe. In 2011, the most commonly reported birthplace for immigrant females who identified as South Asian was India (50.4%), followed by Pakistan (13.7%), Sri Lanka (12.3%) and Bangladesh (3.9%). Other birthplaces included Guyana (3.8%), Fiji (2.2%), and Trinidad and Tobago (2.1%), with a few women and girls also coming from Kenya (1.5%) and the United Kingdom (1.5%).

Most immigrant females belonging to the Chinese visible minority group came from China (58.9%) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (21.2%). Another 7.0% were born in Taiwan and 4.2% were born in Vietnam.

Immigrant females who identified as Southeast Asian most commonly came from Vietnam (56.9%), followed by the Philippines (3.9%), India (2.0%) and Sri Lanka (1.3%).

The majority of immigrant females who identified as West Asian were born in Iran (60.5%), while many were also born in Afghanistan (21.3%). Other places of birth for this group included Iraq (4.9%), Pakistan (2.4%) and Turkey (1.6%). Immigrant females who identified as Arab came from a diverse set of countries, including Lebanon (18.7%), Morocco (15.7%), Egypt (13.0%), Iraq and Algeria (both 11.8%).

The Black visible minority population was also very diverse. The largest proportions of Black immigrant females came from Jamaica (23.5%) and Haiti (16.4%). Other birthplaces included Trinidad and Tobago (4.7%), Nigeria (4.6%), Ethiopia (4.4%), Guyana (3.0%), the United States (2.2%), the United Kingdom (1.6%) and Kenya (1.4%).

The most common birthplaces among immigrant females who identified as Latin American were Colombia (19.2%), El Salvador (14.3%) and Mexico (13.4%). Other birthplaces included Peru (8.6%), Chile (6.6%), Guyana (2.2%) and the United States (1.6%).

## Most visible minority women and girls live in large urban population centres

In 2011, 95.4% of visible minority women and girls in Canada lived in one of the four most populated provinces. Ontario was home to 52.7% of visible minority females, followed by British Columbia (19.1%), Quebec (13.4%) and Alberta (10.2%) (Table 3). In comparison, 83.8% of females who were not a visible minority lived in one of these provinces.

Visible minority representation in the total female population was highest in British Columbia and Ontario, where 28.0% and 26.2% of females belonged to a visible minority group, respectively. In Alberta, 18.6% of the female population identified as a visible minority, as did 11.0% of females in Quebec.

The proportion of the female visible minority population living in Manitoba was relatively small, at only 2.4%. However, the proportion of females in Manitoba who identified as a visible minority was higher (13.0%), exceeding the proportion of visible minority members in Quebec's female population.

Table 3
Distribution of female visible minority population across provinces and territories, Canada, 2011

The distribution of visible minority groups differed within the four most populated provinces. In British Columbia, the largest visible minority group was Chinese, comprising 37.4% of the female visible minority population in that province (Table 4). The second-largest group was South Asian (25.4%), followed by Filipino (11.8%). Alberta's largest female visible minority population was South Asian (22.9%), followed by Chinese (20.8%) and Filipino (17.8%). Similarly, in Ontario, South Asian was the largest visible minority group, comprising 28.4% of the female visible minority population, followed by Chinese (19.3%). The third-largest visible minority group in that province was Black (17.0%). Black females (29.4%) formed the largest visible minority group in Quebec, followed by Arab (17.8%) and Latin American (13.8%). The three largest visible minority groups in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec were also reflected in the largest census metropolitan area (CMA) in each of these provinces (Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montréal).[Note 5]

Table 4
Distribution of female visible minority groups within selected provinces, Canada, 2011

In 2011, 95.9% of visible minority females in Canada lived in one of 33 CMAs. In contrast, 63.3% of females who did not belong to a visible minority group lived in one of these areas. Several of these CMAs were home to a larger

share of visible minority females compared with their share of the total female population (Table 5).

Notably, 41.9% of visible minority females lived in the CMA of Toronto, compared with 17.0% of the total female population. The CMA of Vancouver was also home to a larger share of the female visible minority population (16.7%) compared with its share of the total female population (7.0%). This was also the case in the CMA of Calgary, albeit to a lesser degree, with 5.3% of the female visible minority population, compared with a 3.6% share of the total female population. The share of visible minority women and girls living in the CMA of Montréal (12.0%) was similar to Montréal's share of the total female population (11.5%).

Table 5
Distribution of visible minority females in census metropolitan areas, Canada, 2011

## The largest visible minority group differed across census metropolitan areas and within municipalities

In the CMA of Toronto, 47.6% of females belonged to a visible minority group. Of these women and girls, the largest share resided in the city of Toronto (49.3%), followed by Mississauga (14.5%), Brampton (13.0%), Markham (8.2%) and Richmond Hill (3.7%) (Table 6). South Asian women and girls were the largest visible minority group in three of these municipalities. They comprised 37.7% of the total female population in Brampton, 21.4% of females in Mississauga, and 11.8% of females in the city of Toronto. Chinese women and girls made up the largest female visible minority group in Richmond Hill and comprised 23.6% of its total female population.

In the CMA of Vancouver, 46.1% of all females belonged to a visible minority group. Within this CMA, the largest share of visible minority women and girls lived in the city of Vancouver (30.2%), followed by Surrey (22.9%), Richmond (13.1%), Burnaby (12.7%) and Coquitlam (5.3%). Chinese women and girls were the largest female visible minority group in four of these municipalities. They made up 47.7% of the total female population in Richmond, 31.6% of females in Burnaby, 28.6% of females in Vancouver, and 17.5% of females in Coquitlam. In Surrey, South Asian women and girls were the largest female visible minority group, comprising 30.3% of this municipality's total female population.

Approximately one in five (20.2%) women and girls in the CMA of Montréal belonged to a visible minority group. The largest shares of visible minority women and girls lived in the city of Montréal (66.8%), Laval (10.6%), Longueuil (4.2%), Brossard (4.0%), and Dollard-Des Ormeaux (2.4%).[Note 6] In Montréal, Laval and Longueil, the largest female visible minority group was Black, representing 9.4%, 6.2% and 4.8% of the total female population in these municipalities, respectively. In Brossard, the largest female visible minority group was Chinese, accounting for 12.3% of that municipality's total female population. In Dollard-Des Ormeaux, the largest female visible minority group was South Asian, comprising 9.9% of the total female population.

Over one-quarter (28.4%) of females in the CMA of Calgary belonged to a visible minority group. The vast majority of visible minority females in this CMA lived in the city of Calgary (96.5%), while approximately 1% lived in each of Chestermere, Airdrie and Rocky View County, and less than 1% lived in Cochrane. The largest female visible minority group in the city of Calgary, Chestermere and Rocky View County was South Asian, comprising 7.3%, 9.5% and 3.7% of the total female population in these municipalities, respectively.

Table 6
Distribution of visible minority females in selected municipalities in the census metropolitan areas of Toronto, Vancouver, Montréal, and Calgary, Canada, 2011

## The visible minority population is younger than the population not belonging to a visible minority group

Overall, in 2011, the visible minority population was younger than the population not belonging to a visible minority group. The median age of visible minority females was 34, compared with 43 for females who were not a visible minority (Table 7).

This difference is also reflected in age-delineated groupings. Compared with the rest of the female population, a larger share of visible minority females were girls under the age of 15 (15.3% versus 20.5%, respectively). Correspondingly, only 8.1% of the female visible minority population were aged 65 and over, compared with 16.4% of the rest of the female population. This pattern also existed in the male population.

Some visible minority groups were even younger, on average, than the overall visible minority population. Girls under the age of 15 made up 27.8% of Arab females, 25.8% of Black females and 22.5% of South Asian females. The median ages of these groups were 29, 31 and 33, respectively. At the other end of the age spectrum, a higher proportion of Japanese (13.8%) and Chinese (11.0%) females were 65 years and over. The median age of Japanese females was 38; it was 39 for Chinese females.

The majority of the visible minority population (66.7% of visible minority females) are immigrants to Canada, most of whom arrived in early to mid-adulthood. For example, in 2011, 64.6% of recent female immigrants that belonged to a visible minority group were between the ages of 15 and 44, more or less of childbearing age. This means that recently arrived immigrants are themselves young and also at the age at which they may have children. Those children may also identify as belonging to a visible minority group. In combination, these factors result in a visible minority population that is younger than the population not belonging to a visible minority group.

Table 7
Population by age group and visible minority group, Canada, 2011

## Living arrangements differ by visible minority group

In 2011, 88.6% of visible minority women aged 15 and over were living with at least one family member, while the remaining 11.4% lived alone or with non-relatives only (Table 8). The proportion of women who were not a visible minority that lived with at least one family member was somewhat lower, at 80.3%.

The proportion of women living with their family members varied greatly between visible minority groups. For example, nearly 95% of South Asian women were living with at least one family member. In contrast, only 78.8% of Japanese women were living with a family member, a proportion even lower than that of the female population not belonging to a visible minority group (80.3%).

Visible minority women aged 15 and over were more likely than same-aged women in the rest of the population to be living as part of a married couple (49.4% versus 44.3%). Conversely, women who were not a visible minority were more likely than visible minority women to be living with a common-law partner (12.8% versus 3.9%, respectively). Taken together, women who were not a visible minority were somewhat more likely than visible minority women to be living as part of a couple, either as a married spouse or as a common-law partner (57.1% versus 53.3%).

Among those living with a spouse or partner, 70.5% of visible minority women were in a couple with children,[Note 7] compared with 48.7% of women in the rest of the population (data not shown). Married visible minority women were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to have children living at home (72.4% versus 49.6%). However, women who were living with a common-law partner were similarly likely to have children, regardless of whether they belonged to a visible minority group (46.0%) or not (45.6%).

Table 8
Family status of population aged 15 and over, by visible minority group, Canada, 2011

Visible minority women were somewhat more likely than women who were not a visible minority to be lone parents (10.1% versus 8.1%). However, both groups of women were far more likely than their male counterparts to be lone parents, with 2.0% of visible minority men and 2.4% of men who were not a visible minority living in this type of situation.

Black women were the most likely to be lone parents, with lone parents comprising 22.5% of this group. Latin American women (13.9%) and Southeast Asian women (11.0%) had the second- and third-largest shares of lone parents.

Visible minority women were less likely than the rest of the female population to be living alone (6.6% versus 16.0%). The gap was most evident among seniors aged 65 and over. Indeed, within this group, 16.8% of visible minority women were living alone in 2011, compared with 37.5% of women who were not a visible minority.

The proportion of senior women living alone varied substantially between visible minority groups. Living alone was most common among Black and Japanese seniors (Chart 3). Within each of these two groups, 29.7% of senior women lived alone in 2011. In contrast, only 9.4% of female South Asian seniors lived alone.

Due to longer life expectancy, senior women were generally more likely than senior men to be living alone. However, living alone was also related to visible minority status among men; 18.2% of men aged 65 and over who did not belong to a visible minority group were living alone, compared with 8.8% of same-aged visible minority men.

Chart 3
Population aged 65 and over living alone, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

## Co-residing with grandchildren more common among visible minority women compared with other women

In 2011, 15.0% of visible minority women aged 45 and over were grandmothers living in the same household as their grandchildren (Chart 4).[Note 8] In contrast, 3.3% of same-aged women who were not a visible minority were living with their grandchildren. Men were generally less likely than women to be residing with grandchildren. Nonetheless, co-residing with grandchildren was more common among visible minority men (9.7%) compared with men who did not belong to a visible minority group (2.2%).

Co-residing with grandchildren was more common among some visible minority groups than others. South Asian women aged 45 and over were most likely to be co-residing with grandchildren, whereas Japanese women were least likely to be living in this type of household (26.3% versus 3.1%). South Asian men (17.0%) were also most likely to be living with their grandchildren, while Japanese men were least likely (2.4%).

Chart 4
Co-residing grandparents aged 45 and over, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

## Multigenerational households more common among visible minorities compared with the rest of the population

In 2011, most co-residing grandparents were living in a multigenerational household, with at least one person from the middle generation (i.e., a couple or lone parent), whereas skip-generation households (i.e., grandparent and grandchild without a middle generation) were less common (Table 9).

The household structure of co-residing grandparents, however, differed based on visible minority status. Among co-residing grandparents, visible minority grandmothers were more likely than grandmothers who were not a visible minority to be living with at least one person from the middle generation (96.8% versus 81.3%), as opposed to living in a skip-generation household. Visible minority grandfathers were also more likely than grandfathers who were not

a visible minority to be living with at least one person from the middle generation (97.0% versus 80.6%).

Differences also existed between visible minority groups. South Asian (98.7%) and West Asian (98.6%) grandmothers living with their grandchildren were most likely to be living with a middle generation, whereas skip-generation households were most common among Black (11.1%) and Japanese (8.0%) groups.

Table 9
Household structure of co-residing grandparents, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

## Proportion with a non-official language as a mother tongue declines over generations

In 2011, 69.0% of visible minority women and girls reported having a mother tongue that was a non-official language (i.e., a language other than English or French).[Note 9] Of these women and girls, 79.1% were immigrants.

The proportion of first-generation visible minority women and girls who reported a non-official mother tongue was even higher (81.9%) (Table 10). This proportion was nearly halved among the second generation in Canada (41.8%) and very small among the third generation or more (4.5%). This suggests that, over generations, languages brought to Canada from abroad are either no longer taught or no longer retained.[Note 10]

The decrease in the proportion of visible minority women and girls with a mother tongue that is neither English nor French from first generation to second generation was largest among the Filipino population, where 90.3% of first-generation women and girls had a non-official mother tongue, compared with 16.4% among the second generation. The difference was smallest among West Asians, wherein 96.2% of first-generation females had a non-official mother tongue, compared with 71.8% of second-generation females.

Table 10
Proportion of females who have a mother tongue that is a non-official language, by generation status and visible minority group, Canada, 2011

## Most visible minority women and girls can speak an official language

In 2011, the vast majority (92.0%) of visible minority women and girls could speak at least one of Canada's official languages (Table 11). Of the 8.0% of visible minority females who could not speak either English or French, 85.2% were immigrants.[Note 11]

Table 11
Knowledge of official languages, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

## Visible minority women are more likely than other women to have a university degree

In 2011, just over 30% of visible minority women aged 15 and over had obtained a university degree.[Note 12] In comparison, 19.5% of same-aged women who were not a visible minority had obtained a university degree. Similarly, 32.0% of visible minority men aged 15 and over had obtained a university degree, compared with 17.7% of same-aged men who did not belong to a visible minority group.

An even larger proportion of visible minority women of core working age was university educated. In 2011, 39.7% of visible minority women between the ages of 25 and 54 had obtained a university degree, compared with 27.1% of women who were not a visible minority (Table 12).

Table 12
Highest certificate, diploma or degree for population aged 25 to 54, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

At the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of core working-age women who had not obtained at least a high school diploma or equivalent[Note 13] was comparable between visible minority women and women who were not a visible minority (9.5% and 9.8%, respectively), as well as with visible minority men (9.3%). Men of core working age who did not belong to a visible minority group were, however, more likely (13.5%) to report that they did not have at least a high school diploma or equivalent.

The proportion of women who had not earned at least a high school diploma or equivalent differed substantially between visible minority groups. Nearly one-quarter (24.2%) of South Asian women of core working age did not have a high school diploma or equivalent, whereas this was the case for relatively few Korean (1.6%), Japanese (2.3%) or Filipino (2.6%) women of the same age.

## Canadian-born visible minority women are more likely than other women, and men, to have a university degree

In 2011, immigrant women in the core working-age group (25 to 54 years) were more likely than Canadian-born women of the same age to have a university degree (38.0% versus 26.6%, respectively). This is in part because of Canadian immigration policy, which admits permanent residents under three categories: the refugee class, the family class and the economic class.[Note 14] In the latter class, education is highly emphasized as a selection criterion for admission, with the goal of admitting people who are equipped to integrate into the Canadian labour market.

The fact that a large proportion (81.9%) of core working-age visible minority women were immigrants in 2011 may partially explain the difference between the proportion of visible minority women who have obtained a university degree and that of the rest of the same-aged female population.

However, within the core working-age Canadian-born population, visible minority women were nearly twice as likely as the rest of the female population to have obtained a university degree. Indeed, 47.7% of Canadian-born visible minority women of core working age had a university degree, compared with 25.8% of same-aged women who were not a visible minority (Chart 5). Furthermore, among the core working-age group, Canadian-born visible minority women (47.7%) were also more likely than visible minority immigrant women (38.0%) and immigrant women who were not a visible minority (38.2%) to have a university degree.

Notably, Canadian-born visible minority women of core working age (47.7%) were also more likely than same-aged Canadian-born visible minority men (38.0%) and visible minority immigrant men (41.2%) to have a university degree.

Chart 5
Women aged 25 to 54 with a university degree, by immigrant status and visible minority status, Canada, 2011

## Generation status is related to having a university degree

Previous research has shown that, in Canada, on average, the children of immigrant parents have education levels that are higher than those of their counterparts with Canadian-born parents.[Note 15] This is partly explained by the known relationship between the education level of parents and that of their children; parents who are more educated are more likely to have children who go on to acquire a university degree.[Note 16] However, research has shown that even after controlling for parental education, the children of immigrant parents continue to achieve higher levels of education compared with their counterparts with Canadian-born parents.[Note 17]

This body of research suggests that the higher prevalence of university degree obtainment among Canadian-born visible minority women is likely related to their greater likelihood of having immigrant parents. Among Canadian-born women aged 25 to 54, 85.3% of those belonging to a visible minority group were considered second generation (i.e., they had at least one parent who was born outside of Canada). In comparison, only 17.1% of those who did not belong to a visible minority group were considered second generation. Although a small percentage of second-generation individuals may have a parent who is a non-permanent resident or who does not reside in Canada, the majority of them have an immigrant parent.

More than half (50.6%) of second-generation visible minority women aged 25 to 54 had a university degree, compared with 29.6% of their third-generation or more counterparts (Table 13). This pattern also existed for same-aged women who did not belong to a visible minority group, albeit to a lesser degree. About one-third (33.1%) of second-generation women who were not a visible minority had a university degree, compared with about one-quarter (24.2%) of those who were at least third generation. Similar relationships between generation status and visible minority status existed among men.

Notably, among second-generation women and men of core working age, visible minority women were the most likely to have obtained a university degree. While over 50% of second-generation visible minority women held such a credential, this was true for 39.8% of second-generation visible minority men. Fewer second-generation women (33.1%) and men (26.6%) of core working age who were not a visible minority had obtained a university degree. Although this pattern existed among the core working-age group of women and men who were third generation or more in Canada, the magnitude of the difference was smaller.

Table 13
Women and men aged 25 to 54 with a university degree, by visible minority status and generation status, Canada, 2011

## Proportion with a university degree differs by visible minority group and sex

As a group, visible minority women of core working age (25 to 54 years) were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to have obtained a university degree (39.7% versus 27.1%) in 2011. This difference was even more apparent for males, with 41.0% of visible minority males holding such a credential, compared with 21.4% of males not belonging to a visible minority group.

The proportion of people with a university degree varied substantially between visible minority groups. Specifically, the proportion of core working-age women who had obtained a university degree ranged from 24.4% among Black women to 56.5% among Korean women (Chart 6).

Gender differences in university-level education among the core working-age population were related to visible minority status and visible minority group. Women of core working age who were not a visible minority were more likely than their male counterparts to have a university degree (27.1%, compared with 21.4%). This difference was not apparent in the visible minority population, where 39.7% of women and 41.0% of men of core working age had a university degree.

On the other hand, gender differences were observed within specific visible minority groups. For example, Filipino women were more likely than Filipino men to have a university degree. Within this group, 43.9% of women and 36.9% of men had a university degree. There was also a slightly higher proportion of university-educated women, compared with men, for people identifying as a visible minority outside of the 10 largest groups (i.e., another visible minority) and for those belonging to multiple visible minority groups.

Gender parity was most evident within the Japanese group, where 44.6% of men and 44.2% of women of core working age had a university degree. At the other end of the spectrum, fewer Chinese (47.6%) and Arab (44.4%) women compared with men (52.7% and 49.3%, respectively) had obtained a university degree.

Chart 6
Population aged 25 to 54 with a university degree, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

## School attendance is higher among young visible minority women compared with other young women and visible minority men

Over three-quarters (79.0%) of young visible minority women, aged 15 to 24, attended school either full or part time between September 2010 and May 2011. The attendance rate of young visible minority women was higher than that of other young women (69.3%) or young visible minority men (77.9%).

Overall, young immigrant women were more likely than young Canadian-born women to have attended school during the nine-month period before the 2011 National Household Survey (74.8% versus 70.9%). However, young Canadian-born visible minority women were the most likely to have attended school (82.1%) (Chart 7). The attendance rate of Canadian-born visible minority women was 12.7 percentage points higher than that of Canadian-born women who were not a visible minority, 69.3% of whom attended school during the reference period.

Chart 7
Women aged 15 to 24 who attended school part time or full time, by immigrant status and visible minority status, Canada, 2011

The higher attendance rate of young Canadian-born visible minority women may be related to the fact that a larger proportion of these women (91.3%), compared with the rest of the female population (13.9%), had at least one parent born outside of Canada. Although some second-generation people in Canada have a foreign-born parent who is a non-permanent resident, or who does not reside in Canada at all, the majority of them have an immigrant parent. As discussed earlier in this chapter, immigrants tend to be a well-educated group, and well-educated parents are more likely to have children who go on to acquire university credentials. Therefore, it follows that second-generation women may be more likely than their third-generation or more counterparts to have been attending school during the reference period.

Among young visible minority women, those who were second generation had a school attendance rate of 82.7%. In comparison, first-generation young visible minority women of the same age had an attendance rate of 76.4%, and those who were third generation or more had an attendance rate of 74.0%.

Second-generation women who were not a visible minority (72.7%) were also more likely than their first-generation (69.4%) or third-generation or more (68.8%) counterparts to have attended school during the reference period. However, compared with the visible minority population, this difference was smaller.

## School attendance varies by visible minority group

Among young women aged 15 to 24, those who identified as Korean (85.1%) or Chinese (84.7%) were the most likely to have attended school in the nine-month period before the 2011 National Household Survey (Chart 8). Young Korean (83.3%) and Chinese (83.5%) men were also the most likely of the visible minority groups to have attended school during the reference period.

In general, young visible minority women were slightly more likely than their male counterparts to have attended school (79.0% versus 77.9%). However, young Arab women (78.3%) were slightly less likely than young Arab men (80.6%), as were young Japanese women (75.6%), compared with young Japanese men (77.0%).

Chart 8
Population aged 15 to 24 who attended school part time or full time, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2011

## Visible minority women make up a relatively large share of women who studied in

## fields less often chosen by women

The top three fields of study for women aged 15 and over with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree were consistent regardless of visible minority status. The most common field of study among women was business, management and public administration, reported by 27.4% of visible minority women and 26.2% of women who were not a visible minority (Table 14). Health, and related fields, was the major field of study reported by 20.5% of visible minority women and 22.4% of women who were not a visible minority. This was followed by social and behavioural sciences and law, reported by about 13% of all women.

Table 14
Major field of study, by visible minority status and sex, Canada, 2011

Visible minority women were more likely than the rest of the female population to report having earned a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree in a scientific or technical field, despite it not being commonly reported by either group. Visible minority women accounted for 19.6% of all women who completed a postsecondary education. However, they comprised 31.9% of women who studied in physical and life sciences and technologies; 31.9% of women with postsecondary credentials in mathematics, and computer and information sciences; and 31.1% of women with postsecondary credentials in architecture, engineering and related technologies.[Note 18]

In contrast, visible minority women were less likely than women who were not a visible minority to have completed their education in personal, protective and transportation services, accounting for only 11.8% of women who studied in these fields. They were also less likely to have studied in education, accounting for 12.7% of women with a postsecondary credential in this field.

Women in the four largest visible minority groups were most likely to have studied in business, management and public administration or in health and related fields (Table 15). South Asian (24.9%) and Chinese (32.3%) women were most likely to have studied in business, management and public administration, while the top field for Black (29.9%) and Filipino (33.8%) women was health and related fields.

Table 15
Top five fields of study of women aged 15 and over with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree among four largest visible minority groups, Canada, 2011

## Most visible minority women of core working age are labour force participants

By National Household Survey definition, labour force participants are people who are either employed or unemployed but who are not out of the labour force. This means that people who are unemployed but who are looking for work are considered labour force participants. On the other hand, people may not be part of the workforce for a variety of reasons (for example, because they are attending school, taking care of children or retired).

In 2011, nearly 62% of women and 71% of men aged 15 and over were labour force participants, regardless of visible minority status (Table 16). Differences in labour force participation were, however, observed within age groups and when immigrant status was taken into account.

Among young adults between the ages of 15 and 24, visible minority women were less likely than women who were not a visible minority to be labour force participants (48.4% versus 64.2%, respectively). A similar pattern was observed among men.

In the core working-age group of 25- to 54-year-olds, visible minority women (75.6%) were less likely than women who were not a visible minority (83.2%) to be labour force participants. This difference was, however, carried primarily by visible minority immigrant women, 74.6% of whom were labour force participants. Among the Canadian-

born population, visible minority women were slightly more likely than Canadian-born women who did not belong to a visible minority group to be labour force participants (85.0% versus 83.5%, respectively).

In the two oldest age groups (aged 55 to 64 and aged 65 and over), visible minority women and women who were not a visible minority were similarly likely to be labour force participants. However, among the older working-age group of 55- to 64-year-olds, Canadian-born visible minority women had a somewhat higher participation rate than Canadian-born women who were not a visible minority (61.1%, compared with 55.8%).

Table 16
Labour force participation rate, by visible minority status, immigrant status, age and sex, 2011

## The majority of visible minority women are employed

Data from the 2011 National Household Survey show that the majority, 55.2%, of visible minority women were employed in 2010. The employment rate for the rest of the female population was slightly higher at 57.4% (Table 17).

A larger proportion of core working-age women aged 25 to 54 were employed. Among visible minority women of core working age, the employment rate was 68.6%. In contrast, the employment rate among same-aged women who were not a visible minority was over 10 percentage points higher, at 78.8%.

One important factor influencing the employment rate gap between visible minority women and the rest of the female population is immigrant status. When considering only the Canadian-born population, the employment rate among core working-age women was 79.0%, regardless of visible minority status.

Visible minority women who were immigrants to Canada, however, were less likely to be employed than their Canadian-born counterparts. Among visible minority immigrants of core working age, the employment rate was 67.3%, which was 12.1 percentage points lower than that of the Canadian-born visible minority population of the same age.

The employment rate gap between Canadian-born and immigrant women was smaller among those who did not belong to a visible minority group. Immigrant women who did not belong to a visible minority group had an employment rate of 75.4%, which was 3.8 percentage points lower than that of Canadian-born women who did not belong to a visible minority group.

The employment rate of women was generally lower than that of men. The gap was widest, however, among visible minority women in all age groups, except for those aged 65 and over. Among people of core working age, the employment rate of visible minority women was 13.2 percentage points lower than that of visible minority men. In comparison, the employment rate of women of the same age who were not a visible minority was 6.5 percentage points lower than that of their male counterparts.

Table 17
Employment rate, by visible minority status, immigrant status, age and sex, Canada, 2011

## Employment rates differ by visible minority group

There was a substantial range in employment rates between visible minority groups. Within the core working-age group of 25- to 54-year-olds, Filipino women were most likely to be employed (84.0%) (Table 18). Filipino women of core working age were also more likely than women who were not a visible minority (78.8%) to be employed, a difference of 5.2 percentage points. Within this same age group, Arab (51.5%), West Asian (54.7%) and Korean (56.1%) women were the least likely to be employed. Their employment rates were 27.3, 24.1 and 22.7 percentage points lower than those of women who were not a visible minority, respectively.

Differences in the employment rates of visible minority women and women who were not a visible minority were smaller within the Canadian-born population. Within this population, several groups of visible minority women were more likely than women who did not belong to a visible minority group to be employed. Canadian-born Chinese (83.1%), Japanese (82.5%), Filipino (82.3%) and Southeast Asian (81.0%) women in the core working group were more likely to be employed than same-aged Canadian-born women who did not belong to a visible minority group (79.2%).

Table 18
Employment rate of women aged 25 to 54, by visible minority group and immigrant status, Canada, 2011

## Unemployment rate among visible minority women is related to immigrant status

The unemployment rate represents the proportion of labour force participants who are unemployed. In general, visible minority women were somewhat more susceptible to unemployment. Among visible minority women aged 15 and over, 10.6% were unemployed in the week prior to the 2011 Census (Table 19). The unemployment rate in this group was higher than that of women who did not belong to a visible minority group (6.7%) and slightly higher than that of visible minority men (9.3%). That said, unemployment patterns differed between Canadian-born and immigrant populations.

Within the Canadian-born population, visible minority women were slightly less likely than visible minority men to be unemployed overall (11.4% versus 12.3%). However, within the core working-age group, the unemployment rate for Canadian-born visible minority women and men was the same (both 6.7%). On the other hand, among Canadian-born 15- to 24-year-olds, visible minority women were less likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts (19.1% versus 22.4%). This was also true for the older working-age group of Canadian-born 55- to 64-year-olds, where 4.1% of visible minority women and 7.5% of visible minority men were unemployed.

In contrast, the unemployment rate of immigrant visible minority women was higher than that of their male counterparts (10.5% versus 8.5%). This overall difference was driven by the core working-age group of 25- to 54-year-olds and seniors aged 65 and over. For example, within the core working-age group of immigrants, visible minority women had an unemployment rate of 9.8%, compared with 7.3% among visible minority men. Among immigrant seniors, the unemployment rate was 10.3% for visible minority women and 8.0% for visible minority men.

The size of the unemployment gap between visible minority women and women who were not a visible minority was also influenced by immigrant status. Within the Canadian-born population, the gap was widest among 15- to 24-year-olds. Within this age group, the unemployment rate was 19.1% for visible minority women and 14.5% for women who were not a visible minority, representing a 4.6 percentage point difference. The gap narrowed among the core working-age group, where the unemployment rate was 1.5 percentage points higher among visible minority women. The gap reversed among Canadian-born women aged 55 to 64. In this case, visible minority women had a slightly lower unemployment rate (4.1% versus 5.3%—a 1.2 percentage point gap). Among seniors, Canadian-born visible minority women were even less likely than women who were not a visible minority to be out of work (4.3% versus 7.7%—a 3.4 percentage point gap).

Table 19
Unemployment rate, by visible minority status, immigrant status, age and sex, Canada, 2011

## Unemployment rate differs by visible minority group

There was substantial variability in unemployment rates between visible minority groups in 2011. For women of core working age (25 to 54 years), the unemployment rate ranged from 4.7% for Filipino women to 16.0% for Arab women (Table 20). The unemployment rate of Filipino women was 0.6 percentage points lower than that of women who did not belong to a visible minority group, whereas the unemployment rate of Arab women was 10.7 percentage points higher.

When immigrant status was taken into account, the unemployment gap was smaller for most visible minority groups. For example, the unemployment rate among Canadian-born Arab women was 7.2%, which was 2 percentage points higher than the unemployment rate for Canadian-born women who were not a visible minority. Canadian-born Japanese women were less likely (3.2%) than Canadian-born women who were not a visible minority (5.2%) to be unemployed.

Table 20
Unemployment rate of women aged 25 to 54, by visible minority group and immigrant status, Canada, 2011

## Women are more likely than men to work part time

Among those who worked in 2010, women, regardless of visible minority status, were more likely than men to report that they had typically worked part time.[Note 19] During that year, 27.7% of visible minority women and 29.5% of women who were not a visible minority reported working mostly or entirely part time (Table 21). In contrast, 16.8% of visible minority men and 15.2% of men who were not a visible minority worked mostly or entirely part time in 2010.

Part-time work was most common among the youngest and oldest workers. Among 15- to 24-year-olds, visible minority women were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to have worked part time (66.2% versus 61.1%). In contrast, among those aged 65 and over, visible minority women were less likely than women who were not a visible minority to have worked part time (46.9% versus 56.7%, respectively).

Table 21
Part-time employment among population aged 15 and over who worked in 2010, by visible minority status, age group and sex, Canada

## Visible minority women are more likely than other women to work in occupations less frequently held by women

Over three-quarters of visible minority women (76.7%) and women who were not a visible minority (77.9%), aged 25 to 54, worked in one of four occupational groups. Among visible minority women, sales and service (26.1%) was the most frequently reported occupation, followed by business, finance and administration (22.9%); education, law and social, community and government services (15.8%); and health (11.9%) (Table 22). Compared with visible minority women, the rest of the female population was somewhat less likely to be employed in a sales and service occupation (21.1%) and somewhat more likely to be employed in business and related occupations (26.1%), as well as in education, law and social, community and government services (19.0%).

There were some differences between visible minority women and the rest of the female population in the less frequently reported occupations. Visible minority women of core working age were somewhat less likely to be employed in management than women who did not belong to a visible minority group (7.8%, compared with 10.3%). On the other hand, visible minority women were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to be employed in manufacturing and utilities (6.0% versus 2.3%), as well as in natural and applied sciences (5.3% versus 3.6%).

In general, visible minority women and women who were not a visible minority were more similar to each other in their occupations than they were to their male counterparts. However, the most commonly reported occupation for visible minority men of core working age was, like women, sales and service, reported by 20.3% of this group. In contrast, 13.5% of same-aged men who did not belong to a visible minority group were employed in sales and service occupations. Regardless of visible minority status, men were more likely than women to be employed in trades, transport and equipment operation and related occupations; natural and applied sciences; and management.

Table 22

Occupational group for population aged 25 to 54, by visible minority status and sex, Canada, 2011

Women in the four largest visible minority groups were most likely to be employed in sales and service or business, finance and administration. Chinese women aged 25 to 54 were most likely to be employed in business, finance and administration (28.2%), while South Asian (26.6%), Filipino (25.0%) and Black (24.8%) women were most likely to be employed in sales and service (Table 23).

Table 23
Top five occupational groups for women aged 25 to 54 in the four largest visible minority groups, Canada, 2011

## Visible minority women, aged 55 and over, report a larger share of income from employment, compared with other same-aged women

An individual's total income comprises two broad components: market income, such as employment earnings, investment earnings and retirement earnings; and government transfers, such as child benefits, employment insurance, old age security benefits and the Canada or Quebec Pension Plan.

The 2011 National Household Survey collected information on income acquired in 2010. The vast majority of income reported by the population aged 15 and over came from market income sources (Table 24). Visible minority women and women who were not a visible minority reported similar proportions of total income from market sources (82.7% and 83.2%, respectively); these proportions were smaller than those reported by their male counterparts (91.6% and 90.7%, respectively).

Table 24
Market income sources, by visible minority status, age and sex, Canada, 2010

In general, most market income was attributable to employment earnings. The majority share of total income for women aged 15 and over came from such earnings regardless of visible minority status. Employment earnings made up a somewhat larger proportion of the total income of visible minority women (75.3%), compared with women who were not a visible minority (69.5%). The share of total income from employment was also higher for men than women. Employment earnings made up 84.3% of the total income reported by visible minority men, compared with 76.6% of the total income reported by men who were not a visible minority.

The share of total income from employment earnings was highest within the core working-age group of 25- to 54-year-olds. Within this age group, employment income comprised 82.4% of the total income reported by visible minority women and 85.2% of the total income reported by women who were not a visible minority. The proportion of income from employment reported by men was approximately 92%, regardless of visible minority status.

As people get older and begin to exit the workforce, employment income comprises a smaller proportion of total income. Although market sources in general still accounted for about 90% of the income reported by 55- to 64-year-old women, regardless of visible minority status, a smaller proportion was from employment income in this age group, compared with younger age groups. The shift to other income sources was smaller for visible minority women compared with the rest of the female population in this age group.

Employment income accounted for 75.4% of the total income reported by visible minority women aged 55 to 64, compared with 68.0% of the income reported by same-aged women who were not a visible minority. At the same time, less of the income reported by visible minority women in this age group came from retirement income (e.g., pensions), compared with the income of women who were not a visible minority (4.9% versus 11.9%, respectively).

These differences were even more noticeable among women aged 65 and over, where employment income accounted for 14.7% of the income reported by visible minority women, compared with 9.9% of the income reported by the rest of the female population in this age group. Visible minority women in this age group reported a smaller

proportion of total income from investments, compared with same-aged women who were not a visible minority (9.0% versus 11.3%, respectively), as well as a smaller proportion of total income from retirement income (17.6% versus 27.5%, respectively).

## Visible minority women have lower employment income compared with women who are not a visible minority

Visible minority women generally earned less than women who did not belong to a visible minority group. The 2011 National Household Survey reported on employment income earned in 2010. Among women who worked full time for all of 2010, the median employment income of visible minority women aged 15 and over was $39,330, compared with $42,848 for women who were not a visible minority. Males reported higher income from employment, on average, than their female counterparts. The median income from employment of visible minority men aged 15 and over was $46,603; for men who were not a visible minority, the median income from employment was $54,336.

The median employment income of those in the core working-age group of 25- to 54-year-olds was higher than the median income of the total adult population. Among visible minority women of core working age, median employment income was $40,088. In comparison, median employment income among same-aged women in the rest of the population was $44,681, a difference of $4,593 (Table 25).

This gap existed primarily because of lower income among first-generation visible minority women. First-generation visible minority women of core working age earned a median income of $38,651 in 2011. In comparison, first-generation women of the same age who did not belong to a visible minority group earned a median income of $45,572, a difference of nearly $7,000.

The employment gap narrowed to just over $1,000 among second-generation women. Second-generation visible minority women between the ages of 25 and 54 earned a median income of $48,493, compared with a median of $49,637 among same-aged women who were not a visible minority. By the third generation, the median income of visible minority women of core working age was higher than that of the rest of the female population in this age group.

Table 25
Median employment income of women aged 25 to 54 who worked full time for the full year, by visible minority status and generation status, Canada, 2011

There was substantial variation in median employment income by visible minority group. Among women of core working age who worked full time for all of 2010, median employment income ranged from $36,020 among Filipino women to $47,103 among Japanese women.

## Higher prevalence of low income among visible minority females compared with females who are not a visible minority

In 2011, visible minority women and girls were more likely than the rest of the female population to be in a low-income situation. Overall, 21.9% of visible minority women and girls were living in a low-income situation, based on the National Household Survey's Low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT)[Note 20] (Table 26). A similar proportion (21.1%) of visible minority men and boys were living in low-income situations. In comparison, within the population not belonging to a visible minority group, the prevalence of low income was 14.3% among women and girls and 12.2% among men and boys.

The difference in low-income prevalence between the visible minority population and the population not belonging to a visible minority group was most evident among children and young adults. For example, the prevalence of low income was 26.3% among visible minority women aged 15 to 24, compared with 15.8% among same-aged women

who were not a visible minority.

Immigrants under the age of 55 were more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to be living in a low-income situation. This difference was most apparent among visible minority females. For example, 29.2% of visible minority immigrant women aged 15 to 24 were in a low-income situation in 2011, whereas this was the case for 18.6% of same-aged Canadian-born visible minority women. Within the population that did not belong to a visible minority group, 20.8% of immigrant women aged 15 to 24 were in a low-income situation, compared with 15.4% of same-aged Canadian-born women.

Table 26
Prevalence of low income, by visible minority status, immigrant status, age and sex, Canada, 2011

## Visible minority women are more likely than women who are not a visible minority to report experiencing discrimination

The 2014 General Social Survey on Victimization collected data on experiences of discrimination within the last five years. In general, women aged 15 and over were more likely than men to report having had at least one such experience (15% versus 12%, respectively). However, when visible minority status was taken into account, the gender difference was only statistically significant among those who did not belong to a visible minority group.

Both visible minority women (21%) and visible minority men (19%) were more likely than their counterparts not belonging to a visible minority group to report having experienced discrimination in the last five years (13% and 11%, respectively).

Among the eight largest visible minority groups, Latin American (32%), Arab (27%), Black (25%) and South Asian (21%) women were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to report experiencing discrimination (Chart 9). Within visible minority groups, there were no statistically significant differences in the proportion of women versus men who reported experiencing discrimination.

Chart 9
Proportion of women aged 15 and over who reported experiencing discrimination in Canada in the last five years, by selected visible minority groups, 2014

Although immigrant women (18%) were more likely than Canadian-born women (14%) to report that they experienced discrimination, this difference disappeared when visible minority status was taken into account. Among visible minority women, there was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of Canadian-born (24%) versus immigrant (21%) women who had experienced discrimination. The same was true among women who were not a visible minority, where 13% of Canadian-born and 14% of immigrant women reported that they had experienced discrimination.

The majority of visible minority women who reported experiencing discrimination cited that it was because of their ethnicity or culture (62%) or their race or skin colour (62%) (Table 27). Visible minority women were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to report ethnicity or culture, race or skin colour, religion, or language as the reason that they were discriminated against. They were less likely than women who were not a visible minority to report their sex or age as the basis for discrimination against them.

Table 27
Basis of discrimination among people aged 15 and over who reported experiencing discrimination in the last five years, by visible minority status and sex, Canada, 2014

Nearly half of women who experienced discrimination reported that it occurred at work or when applying for a job or promotion, regardless of visible minority status. Visible minority women were more likely than women who were not

a visible minority to indicate a store, bank or restaurant as an area in which they experienced discrimination (54% versus 35%, respectively). Visible minority women were also more likely to indicate that they experienced discrimination when crossing the border in the last five years (12% versus 3%). These differences were also observed among men.

## Confidence in institutions varies by visible minority status

In the 2013 General Social Survey, respondents were asked to indicate their confidence level in several Canadian institutions. Visible minority women and men, aged 15 and over, were generally more confident in institutions than their counterparts who were not a visible minority. That is to say that they were more likely to rate their confidence level as a 4 or 5 out of 5, where 1 indicates “no confidence at all” and 5 indicates “a great deal of confidence.” For example, 71% of visible minority women, compared with 56% of women who were not a visible minority, indicated that they were confident in the justice system and courts (Table 28).

Two exceptions to this general tendency were observed. Visible minority women were less likely than the rest of the female population to indicate that they were confident in local merchants and business people (48% versus 67%). The same pattern was observed among men. Additionally, visible minority women and men were as likely as their counterparts not belonging to a visible minority group to indicate confidence in the police.

Table 28
Confidence in institutions, by institution type and visible minority group, Canada, 2013

## Visible minority women are less likely to vote than women who are not a visible minority

Voting behaviour is one method by which to gauge civic engagement. In the 2013 General Social Survey on Social Identity, visible minority women and men were less likely to report having voted in the last election at every level of government. At the federal and provincial levels, 72% of visible minority women who indicated that they were eligible to vote reported that they did so in the last election, compared with 82% of eligible female voters who were not a visible minority (Table 29). At the municipal level, 57% of visible minority women reported voting, compared with 69% of the rest of the female population. Similar patterns were observed among men.

Among women, differences in voting behaviour based on visible minority status were most evident among seniors aged 65 and over. At the federal level, 82% of senior visible minority women reported that they voted, compared with 91% of women who were not a visible minority. The gap was larger at the provincial level (78% versus 91%, respectively), and still larger at the municipal level (64% versus 81%, respectively). Among men, differences in voting based on visible minority status were most noticeable among the youngest (18 to 24) and oldest (65 and over) age groups at the federal and provincial levels. At the municipal level, the difference was more noticeable among the core working-age group and among seniors.

Table 29
Proportion of eligible voters who voted in the last election, by visible minority status and sex, Canada, 2013

## Visible minority women are less likely than women who are not a visible minority to participate in organizations and associations

Taking part in an organization or association is one way by which people become involved in their community. In 2013, the majority of women (65%) and men (66%) aged 15 and over were involved in at least one organization or association.

Visible minority women (62%) and men (61%) were less likely than their counterparts not belonging to a visible

minority group (66% and 67%, respectively) to participate in an organization or association. Among women, this difference was only significant within the core working-age group of 25- to 54-year-olds. Among men, the difference was significant for both 15- to 24-year-olds and 25- to 54-year-olds (Table 30).

Table 30
Proportion of the population aged 15 and over that participated in at least one organization or association in the last 12 months, by visible minority status and sex, Canada, 2013

Some groups of visible minority women were less likely than the rest of the female population to participate in an organization or association, while others were not (Chart 10). Groups that were less likely included Filipino (56%), Arab (46%) and West Asian (45%) women. Women belonging to multiple visible minority groups were, however, more likely to participate in organizations and associations (82%).

Groups of visible minority men that were less likely than those who were not a visible minority to participate in organizations and associations were not entirely the same as women. South Asian men (60%) and Southeast Asian men (35%[E]) were statistically less likely than men who were not a visible minority to participate in organizations and associations. Korean men (82%) and Japanese men (74%[E]) were more likely than men who were not a visible minority to participate in such activities. Furthermore, unlike among women, there were no statistically significant differences between the proportions of West Asian men, Filipino men or men belonging to multiple visible minorities and men who were not a visible minority.

Filipino men (68%) were statistically more likely than Filipino women (56%) to participate in organizations or associations. In contrast, Southeast Asian men (35%[E]) were less likely than their female counterparts (61%) to belong to an organization or association.

Chart 10
Proportion of population aged 15 and over who participated in an organization or association, by visible minority group and sex, Canada, 2013

## Involvement in specific types of organizations and associations varies by visible minority status

In 2013, regardless of visible minority status, women most frequently cited unions or professional organizations as an organization or association type in which they participate (Table 31). Twenty-six percent of visible minority women and 27% of women who were not a visible minority participated in such an organization. Visible minority women were more likely to report that they participated in a religious group (23%), youth organization (7%), or immigrant or ethnic association or club (8%), compared with the rest of the female population. On the other hand, they were less likely to report participating in sports or recreational organizations (20%); cultural, educational or hobby organizations (18%); service clubs (4%[E]); or seniors groups (4%).

A similar pattern emerged between visible minority men and the rest of the male population, with a few exceptions. Men were equally likely to be involved in a cultural, educational or hobby organization, regardless of visible minority status. However, visible minority men (17%) were more likely than men who were not a visible minority to be involved in a school or community group, and less likely (24%) to be involved in a union or professional organization.

Table 31
Proportion of the population aged 15 and over that participated in specified types of organizations and associations, by visible minority status and sex, Canada, 2013

## Prevalence of chronic conditions varies by sex and visible minority status

The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) collects data on diagnosed chronic conditions expected to last, or that have already lasted, at least six months. Data collected between 2013 and 2014 show that visible minority women aged 15 and over were less likely than women who were not a visible minority to have several chronic conditions.[Note 21] Namely, visible minority women were less likely than women who were not a visible minority to have asthma (6.1% versus 9.8%), arthritis (10.1% versus 21.7%), high blood pressure (13.3% versus 18.8%), heart disease (2.3% versus 4.6%), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (1.5%[E] versus 5.1%), a mood disorder (4.7% versus 10.7%), or an anxiety disorder (4.1% versus 9.8%) (Table 32).

Similar differences based on visible minority status were also observed among men; however, visible minority men were also less likely than men who were not a visible minority to have cancer (1.1% versus 2.0%) or an anxiety disorder (3.7% versus 5.6%).

Importantly, however, many differences in the prevalence of chronic conditions based on visible minority status are in part attributable to the younger average age of the visible minority population. For example, within age groups, there were no statistically significant differences between visible minority women and the rest of the female population in the prevalence of heart disease. On the other hand, in the 55-to-64 year old age group, high blood pressure and diabetes were more common among visible minority women than women who were not a visible minority. Diabetes was also more common among visible minority women aged 65 and over, compared with same-aged women who did not belong to a visible minority group.

Population age had a similar influence on the prevalence of chronic conditions among men. Within age groups, the prevalence of high blood pressure and cancer was statistically similar between visible minority men and men who were not a visible minority. On the other hand, diabetes was more common among visible minority men aged 55 and over than among same-aged men who were not a visible minority. Among those who were aged 65 and over, heart disease remained statistically less common among visible minority men than among men who did not belong to a visible minority group.

Regardless of visible minority status, men aged 15 and over were statistically more likely than women to be diagnosed with diabetes or heart disease, while women were more likely than men to have asthma and arthritis. Among the population not belonging to a visible minority group, women were more likely than men to have a diagnosis of COPD, mood disorders and anxiety disorders, while men were more likely to have a diagnosis of high blood pressure. These gender differences were not statistically significant within the visible minority population.

Table 32
Prevalence of chronic conditions, by sex, age and visible minority status, Canada, 2013–2014

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## The healthy immigrant effect

In 2011, 78.4% of visible minority women aged 15 and over were immigrants to Canada. Therefore, the health characteristics of immigrants are particularly relevant to visible minority health. The “healthy immigrant effect” is a term used to describe the well-documented phenomenon whereby immigrants to Canada typically arrive in better health than the Canadian-born population. One of the reasons that this occurs involves self-selection: people who choose to migrate are able and motivated to do so. Another contributor involves immigrant selection procedures, which may exclude those with serious medical conditions and favour those with characteristics (such as higher education and language ability) related to positive health outcomes.[Note 22]

Typically, immigrants arrive in Canada when they are relatively young and healthy. With time spent in Canada, however, the healthy immigrant effect dissipates, with some immigrants, particularly those who have been in Canada for more than 10 years, reporting lower self-perceived health than their Canadian-born counterparts. Some

proposed reasons for this decline have included stresses associated with migration,[Note 23] as well as changes in dietary habits.[Note 24]

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## Self-reported general and mental health lower among visible minority women than among other women

The prevalence of most chronic conditions was lower among visible minority women than among the rest of the female population. Despite this, self-reported general health ratings tended to be lower among visible minority women aged 15 and over than among same-aged women who were not a visible minority. A smaller proportion of visible minority women rated their general health as very good or excellent, compared with women who were not a visible minority (54.7% versus 59.8%, respectively) (Table 33). This difference was observed in every age group, except for women aged 15 to 24.

Latin American (48.7%), Arab (48.8%), South Asian (49.3%) and Chinese (51.5%) women were the least likely to rate their health as very good or excellent. Other groups of visible minority women had self-perceived general health ratings that were statistically similar to those of women who did not belong to a visible minority group.

Overall, visible minority men did not differ from the rest of the male population in their likelihood to rate their general health favourably (60.6% versus 58.9%, respectively). However, those in older age groups (55 to 64 and 65 and over) were less likely than same-aged men who were not a visible minority to rate their overall health as very good or excellent.

Gender differences in self-reported health were observed and varied based on visible minority status and age group. Overall, visible minority women were less likely than visible minority men to rate their health as very good or excellent (54.7% versus 60.6%, respectively). This difference was only statistically significant among visible minority women and men belonging to the two youngest age groups (15 to 24 and 25 to 54).

In contrast, among the population not belonging to a visible minority group, men (58.9%) and women (59.8%) were similarly likely to provide a general health rating of very good or excellent overall. Within this population, only women in the 15- to 24-year-old age range provided significantly lower health ratings than their male counterparts. Among women who did not belong to a visible minority group, those between the ages of 25 and 64 were in fact more likely than their male counterparts to rate their overall health as very good or excellent. There was no statistically significant difference in the general health ratings of men and women aged 65 and over who were not a visible minority.

Table 33
Self-reported general health rating of very good to excellent, among population aged 15 and over, by visible minority group and age group, Canada, 2013–2014

Like general health ratings, self-reported mental health ratings were also lower among visible minority women than among the rest of the female population. A smaller proportion of visible minority women aged 15 and over rated their overall mental health as very good or excellent, compared with women who were not a visible minority (67.3% versus 70.5%, respectively) (Table 34). This difference was statistically significant among women aged 55 and over, but not among those in younger age groups.

Chinese women (58.3%) were significantly less likely than women who were not a visible minority (70.5%) to provide such a rating. In contrast, Filipino women (79.5%) were more likely than women who were not a visible minority to rate their mental health as very good or excellent.

In addition to being less likely than the rest of the female population to rate their mental health favourably, visible

minority women were also less likely than their male counterparts to rate their mental health as very good or excellent (67.3% versus 71.3%). This gender difference was not significant among the population not belonging to a visible minority group.

Table 34
Self-reported mental health rating of very good to excellent, among population aged 15 and over, by visible minority group and age group, Canada, 2013–2014

## Notes

Footnote 1.

For information on how these groups are derived, see " Classification of visible minority": http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/concepts/definitions/minority01a.

Return to note 1 referrer

Footnote 2.

The term "immigrant" refers to a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant. This is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some immigrants are Canadian citizens, while others are not. Most immigrants are born outside of Canada, but a small number are born in Canada (for example, children born to foreign diplomats posted to Canada). The immigrant population excludes non-permanent residents, who are people in Canada on a work or study permit, or who are refugee claimants.

Return to note 2 referrer

Footnote 3.

For more information on immigration trends, particularly as they pertain to females, see Hudon, T. 2015. "Immigrant Women." *Women in Canada 7th Edition.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-503-X.

Return to note 3 referrer

Footnote 4.

Recent immigrants are landed immigrants who came to Canada up to five years prior to a given survey year.

Return to note 4 referrer

Footnote 5.

A census metropolitan area (CMA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census place of work data.

Return to note 5 referrer

Footnote 6.

It is notable that Brossard and Dollard-Des Ormeaux were home to the fourth- and fifth-largest shares of visible minority women, despite being home to the sixth- and ninth-largest female populations in the CMA of Montréal, respectively (data not shown).

Return to note 6 referrer

Footnote 7.

A couple with children refers to a couple living with one or more children of either or both spouses.

Return to note 7 referrer

Footnote 8.

For population in private households only; excludes those living in collective dwellings and institutions.

Return to note 8 referrer

Footnote 9.

Includes people that have both a non-official mother tongue and an official mother tongue; this is the case for 4.5% of visible minority women and girls.

Return to note 9 referrer

Footnote 10.

For more on immigrant-language transmission, see Houle, R. 2011. “Recent evolution of immigrant-language transmission in Canada.” *Canadian Social Trends, Winter 2011, no. 92.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-008-X.

Return to note 10 referrer

Footnote 11.

For a more detailed discussion of official-language use and knowledge among immigrant women, see Hudon, T. 2015. “Immigrant Women.” *Women in Canada 7th Edition.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-503-X.

Return to note 11 referrer

Footnote 12.

The term “university degree” includes “bachelor's degree,” “university certificate or diploma above bachelor level,” “degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry,” “master's degree” and “earned doctorate.”

Return to note 12 referrer

Footnote 13.

Refers to people belonging to the category “No certificate, diploma, or degree.”

Return to note 13 referrer

Footnote 14.

For more information on admission categories, see Hudon, T. 2015. “Immigrant Women.” *Women in Canada 7th Edition.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 89-503-X.

Return to note 14 referrer

Footnote 15.

Picot, G. and F. Hou. 2011. "Preparing for Success in Canada and the United States: The Determinants of Educational Attainment Among the Children of Immigrants." *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, no. 332.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019M.

Return to note 15 referrer

Footnote 16.

Finnie, R., E. Lascelles and A. Sweetman. 2005. "*Who Goes? The Direct and Indirect Effects of Family Background on Access to Post-secondary Education." Analytical Studies Research Paper Series, no. 237*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019M.

Return to note 16 referrer

Footnote 17.

Picot, G. and F. Hou. 2011. "Preparing for Success in Canada and the United States: The Determinants of Educational Attainment Among the Children of Immigrants." *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, no. 332.* Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11F0019M.

Return to note 17 referrer

Footnote 18.

The grouping "architecture, engineering, and related technologies" includes trades fields such as Precision production (e.g., welding), Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians (e.g., auto mechanics), Construction trades (e.g., carpentry) and Transportation and materials moving (e.g., truck driver).

Return to note 18 referrer

Footnote 19.

In the 2011 National Household Survey, people who had worked in 2010 were asked to report whether the weeks they worked were full-time weeks (30 hours or more per week) or not, on the basis of all jobs held. People with a part-time job for part of the year and a full-time job for another part of the year were to report the information for the job at which they worked the most weeks.

Return to note 19 referrer

Footnote 20.

The LIM-AT is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of households observed at the person level, where "adjusted" indicates that a household's needs are taken into account. Adjustment for household sizes reflects the fact that a household's needs increase as the number of members increases, although not necessarily by the same proportion per additional member.

Return to note 20 referrer

Footnote 21.

Because of differences in coding between the National Household Survey and the CCHS, CCHS respondents who indicated "other" as the only cultural or racial group to which they belonged were excluded from analysis; responses of "other" were ignored when classifying respondents who gave multiple responses. For the same

reason, the “other visible minority” category is not available for analysis.

Return to note 21 referrer

Footnote 22.

Ng, E., R. Wilkins, F. Gendron and J-M. Berthelot. 2005. “*Dynamics of Immigrants’ Health in Canada: Evidence from the National Population Health Survey.” Healthy Today, Healthy Tomorrow? Findings from the National Population Health Survey*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-618.

Return to note 22 referrer

Footnote 23.

Simich, L. and B. Jackson. 2010. “Social determinants of immigrant health in Canada: what makes some immigrants healthy and others not?” *Health Policy Research Bulletin, Migration Health, Issue 17, pp. 26-29.* Health Canada.

Return to note 23 referrer

Footnote 24.

Chiu, M. 2015. “Temporal trends in cardiovascular disease risk factors among white, South Asian, Chinese and black groups in Ontario, Canada, 2001 to 2012: a population-based study.” *BMJ Open, 5, e007232.*

Return to note 24 referrer

## Secondary menu

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