



Rural and Small Town Canada ANALYSIS BULLETIN



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IMMIGRANTS IN RURAL CANADA

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HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ **Immigrants tend to prefer urban to rural: in 1996, they made up 27 percent of the population in predominantly urban regions, compared with 6 percent of the population in predominantly rural regions.**
- ◆ **Recent and new immigrant groups intensified this urban trend: those who arrived between 1981 and 1996 made up only 2 percent of the predominantly rural region population, but 13 percent of the predominantly urban region population.**
- ◆ **In predominantly rural regions, immigrants had a higher level of education, compared with the Canadian-born: a lower proportion had less than a high school diploma and a higher percentage were university graduates.**
- ◆ **In predominantly rural regions, immigrants who arrived before 1981, when compared to the Canadian-born,**
 - had a higher employment rate,
 - were more likely to work in professional services, and
 - had higher employment incomes.
- ◆ **In predominantly rural regions, recent and new immigrants (who have arrived since 1981), when compared to the Canadian-born,**
 - had a lower employment rate,
 - were more likely to work in sales and services, and
 - had lower employment incomes.
- ◆ **Immigrants in the rural northern regions had more favorable socio-economic profiles than in other regions.**

Introduction

In 1996¹, 17 percent of Canada's total population were immigrants, and 88 percent of them were living in urban regions. The three provinces with the largest urban centres attracted most immigrants: 55 percent went to Ontario, 18 percent to British Columbia and 13 percent to Quebec, a pattern that has remained constant for immigrants who have arrived since 1961.

1. Census 2001 data for immigration, ethnic origin and visible minorities will be released in February 2003.



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Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

The remaining 12 percent (or 580,000 people) were living in predominantly rural regions. They can be characterized by the period in which they arrived in Canada. Recent and new immigrants were better educated than pre-1981 immigrants, particularly in terms of university education. But pre-1981 immigrants had the highest employment rate and were more likely to have professional service occupations than the Canadian-born.

Visible minority immigrants fared worse, in socio-economic terms, than non-visible minority immigrants; these differences were more pronounced in predominantly rural regions.

The profiles of immigrants in predominantly rural regions were similar to those in predominantly urban regions. However, the few immigrants who resided in rural northern regions had a very different and more favorable profile.

Box 1

Definitions

Predominantly rural regions are census divisions (CDs) where more than 50 percent of the population lives in rural communities. A **rural community** has a density of less than 150 persons per km². The predominantly rural regions are disaggregated into three subregions: rural metro-adjacent regions, rural non-metro-adjacent regions, and rural northern regions.

Predominantly urban regions are CDs where less than 15 percent of the population lives in rural communities. There are also intermediate regions, where between 15 percent and 50 percent of the population lives in rural communities.

Population groups studied in the paper come from the 1996 Census and include the following:

- **Immigrants** are those born outside Canada and are, or have been, landed immigrants. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right by immigration authorities to live permanently in Canada. Some immigrants have lived in Canada for many years while others are recent (1981 to 1990) or new (1991 to 1996) arrivals. Children born in Canada to immigrants are counted with the Canadian-born population.
- **The visible minority population** is defined by the *Employment Equity Act* (1986) as those who are not Aboriginal and who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. For the exact question on the 1996 Census of Population, see question 19 on the 1996 Form 2B Population Questionnaire at www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/info/question2.cfm. For more information about visible minorities, see *The Daily*, February 17, 1998, "1996 Census: Ethnic origin, visible minorities," at <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980217/d980217.htm>
- **The non-visible minority population** comprises those who are Caucasian in race or white in colour.

These immigrant populations are grouped as follows:

- Pre-1981 - those who arrived in Canada before 1981
- Recent - those who arrived in Canada between 1981 and 1990
- New - those who arrived in Canada between 1991 and 1996

- **The Canadian-born** are those born in Canada and, therefore, not part of any immigrant group.

Non-permanent people are those who were not Canadian citizens by birth and did not have landed immigrant status (e.g., people with a student or employment visa or a Minister's permit, or refugee claimants) at the time of the 1996 Census. They are excluded from this analysis.

The experienced core labour force comprises people aged 25 to 54 years, excluding institutional residents, who were employed or unemployed during the week prior to Census Day, and who had worked for pay or in self-employment in either 1995 or 1996.

Occupations have been separated into the following groups:

Professional services

- Management
- Business, finance and administration
- Natural and applied sciences and related occupations
- Health
- Social science, education, government service and religion

Cultural

Arts, culture, recreation and sports (Note: Because of the low numbers in this occupational group, cultural occupations have not been included in this analysis.)

Sales and service (e.g., retail trades, real estate agents, police/firefighters, travel agents)

Trades and industrial

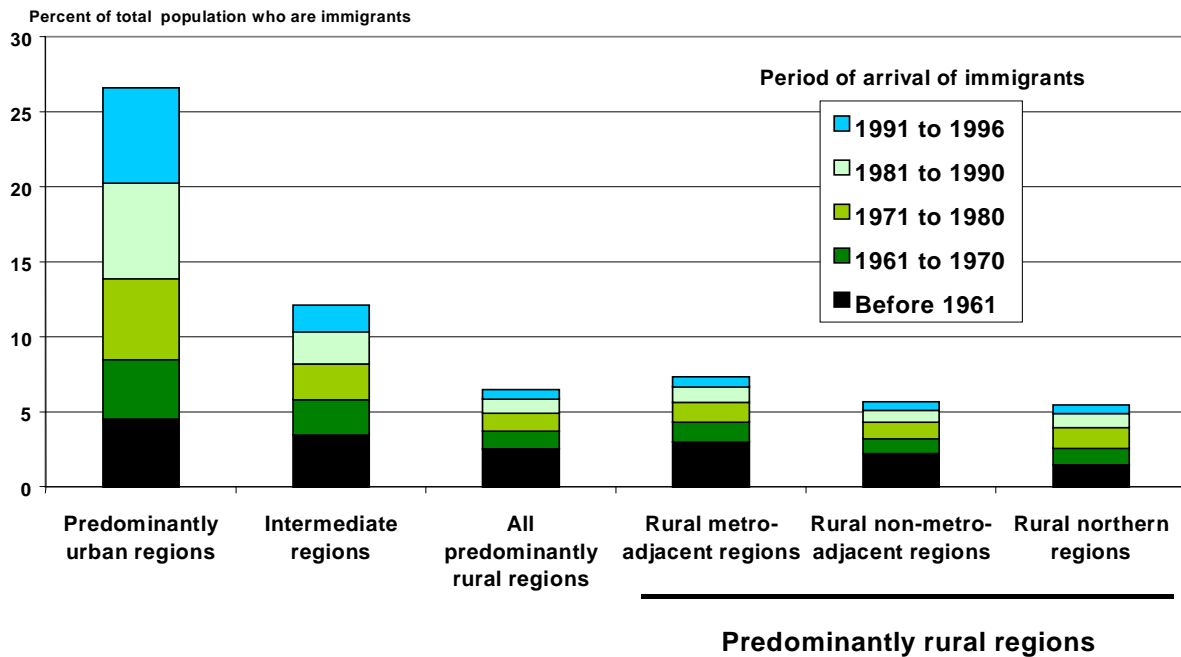
- Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations
- Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities

Primary (e.g., farmers, crop harvesters, fishing boat deckhands, miners, chainsaw operators)

Employment rate refers to the number of people employed in the week prior to Census Day, expressed as a percentage of the total population (for the given age class).

Figure 1

Immigrants represented a low share of rural population but over one-quarter of urban population, 1996



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population.

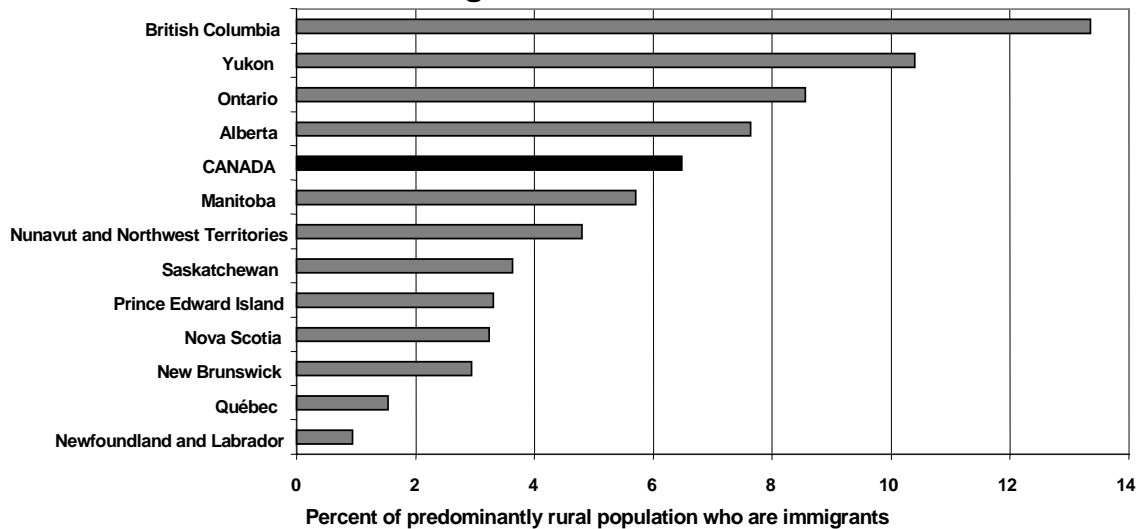
Few immigrants resided in predominantly rural regions

The immigrant proportion of each regions' population varied considerably (Figure 1). In predominantly urban regions, immigrants made up 27 percent of the total population compared with only 6 percent of the predominantly rural population. The share was slightly higher in rural metro-adjacent regions than in rural non-metro-adjacent and rural northern regions.

Immigrants that settled in predominantly rural regions preferred the higher-income provinces (British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta) and the Yukon (Figure 2). In the predominantly rural regions of Saskatchewan and in Canada's five eastern provinces, immigrants represented less than 4 percent of the total population.

Figure 2

Predominantly rural regions in Canada's higher income provinces (and the Yukon) had a higher share of immigrants in 1996

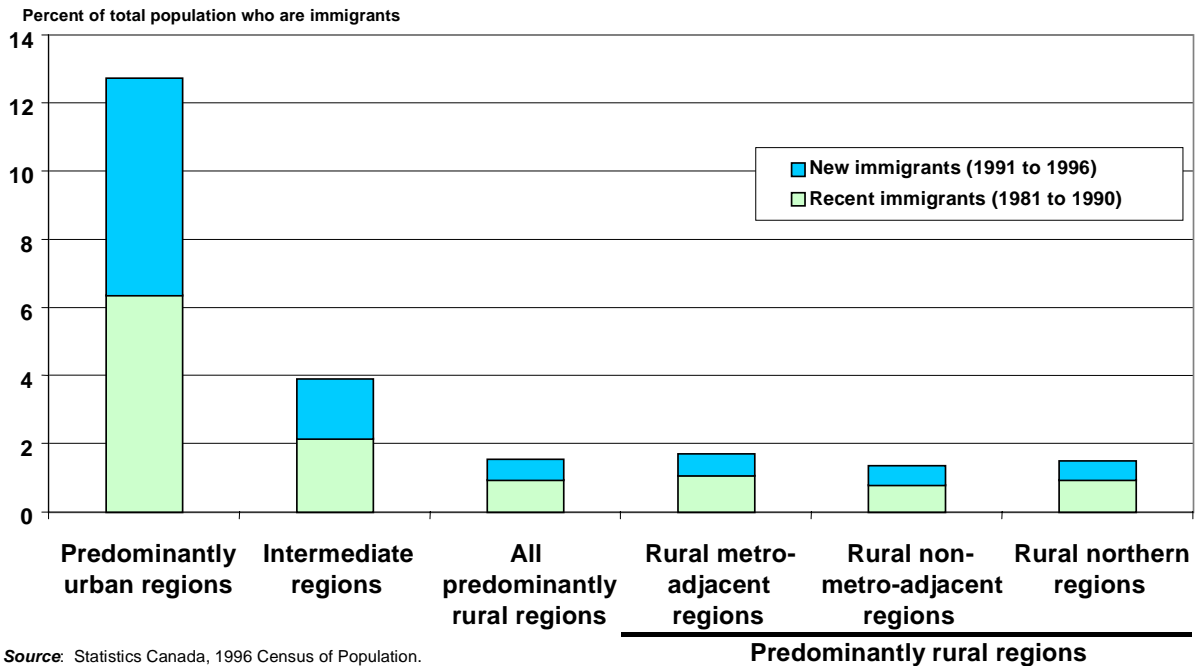


Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population.

Recent or new immigrants made up a small proportion of the population of predominantly rural regions (Box 1 and Figure 3). These immigrants were overwhelmingly found in predominantly urban regions. The predominantly rural regions in each province had a low share of the population that were recent or new immigrants – ranging from less than 1 percent in the five eastern provinces to just over 2 percent in the higher-income provinces and the Yukon (Appendix Table 1).

Figure 3

Recent and new immigrants represented a low share of the population, 1996



Visible minority immigrants made up an increasing share of total immigrants, but few resided in predominantly rural regions

The origin of immigrants has changed significantly, so that the majority of new immigrants to Canada are now members of a visible minority group (Box 1). Of those immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996, 74 percent were visible minority immigrants, compared to about 3 percent of all immigrants who arrived three decades earlier (data not shown). By 1996, there were almost 2.2 million visible minority immigrants residing in Canada, representing 44 percent of all immigrants.

In predominantly rural regions, visible minority immigrants numbered almost 83,000, representing 14 percent of all predominantly rural immigrants and almost 4 percent of all visible minority immigrants in Canada.

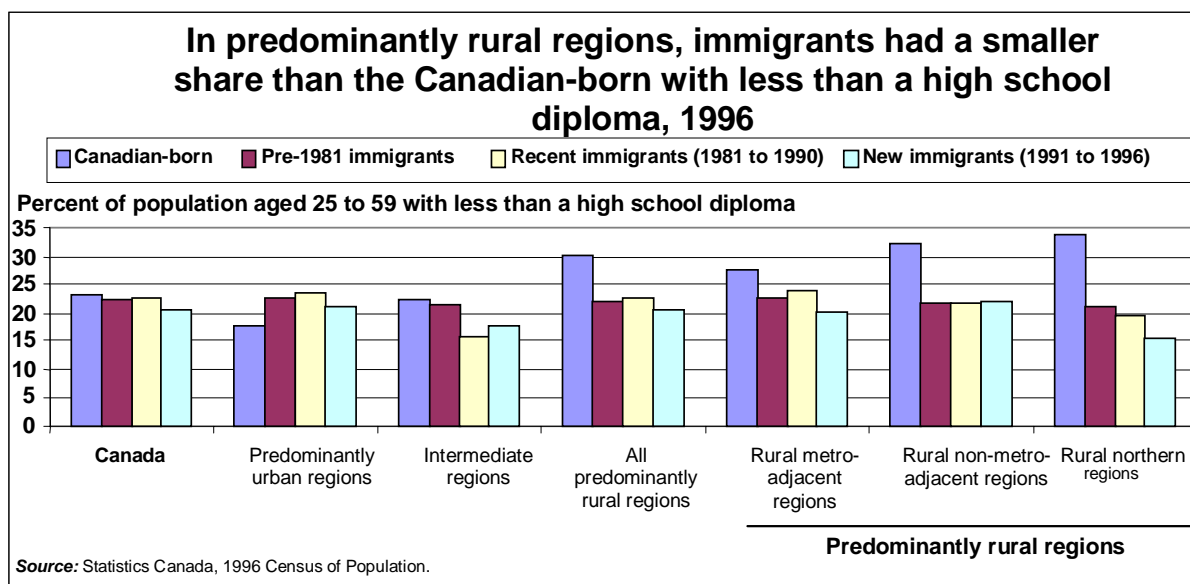
The immigrants in rural regions were better educated than the Canadian-born

The proportion of immigrants with lower educational attainment— i.e., less than a high school diploma—was similar to that of the Canadian-born. A larger proportion of the immigrants had a higher education—i.e., were university graduates—than the Canadian-born. In rural regions, on average, immigrants were markedly more highly educated than the Canadian-born.

In Canada in 1996, 23 percent of the Canadian-born had not graduated from high school. The proportion of total immigrants² was similar but slightly lower. In predominantly urban regions, 18 percent of the Canadian-born had less than a high school diploma, while all immigrants groups were about 4 percentage points higher (Figure 4). However, in predominantly rural regions, a higher percentage of the Canadian-born had not graduated from a high school, with the greatest difference found in the rural northern regions.

In rural regions, the proportion of visible minority immigrants lacking a high school diploma was always greater than that of non-visible minority immigrants (data not shown).

Figure 4

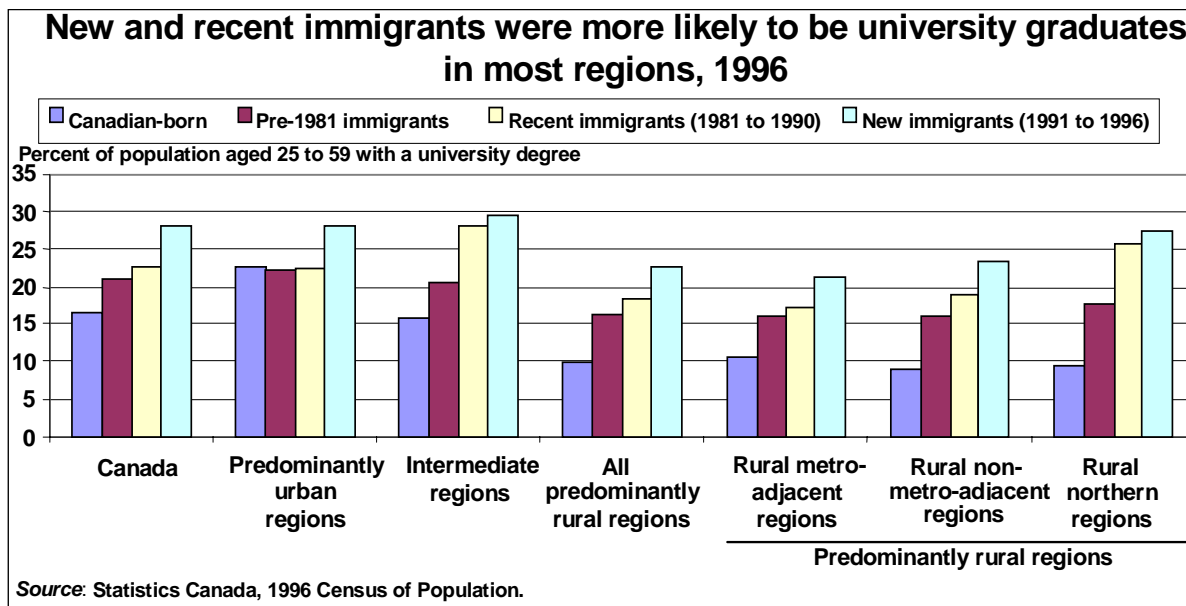


In all regions, Canadian-born women were better educated than Canadian-born men, that is, a smaller proportion of women had less than a high school diploma and a larger proportion had a university degree (data not shown). Among recent and new immigrants, however, a larger share of women than men had less than a high school diploma, but women were almost equal to men in terms of having a university degree.

² In this bulletin, ‘total immigrants’ is discussed but not shown. ‘Total immigrants’ is the weighted average of all the immigrant types.

Regarding university graduates, 23 percent of total immigrants had graduated from university whereas only 17 percent of the Canadian-born had. Generally, across all region types, the recent and new immigrants were much more likely than the Canadian-born to be university graduates (Figure 5). In predominantly rural regions, a greater proportion of the visible minority immigrants than of the non-visible minority immigrants were university graduates (data not shown).

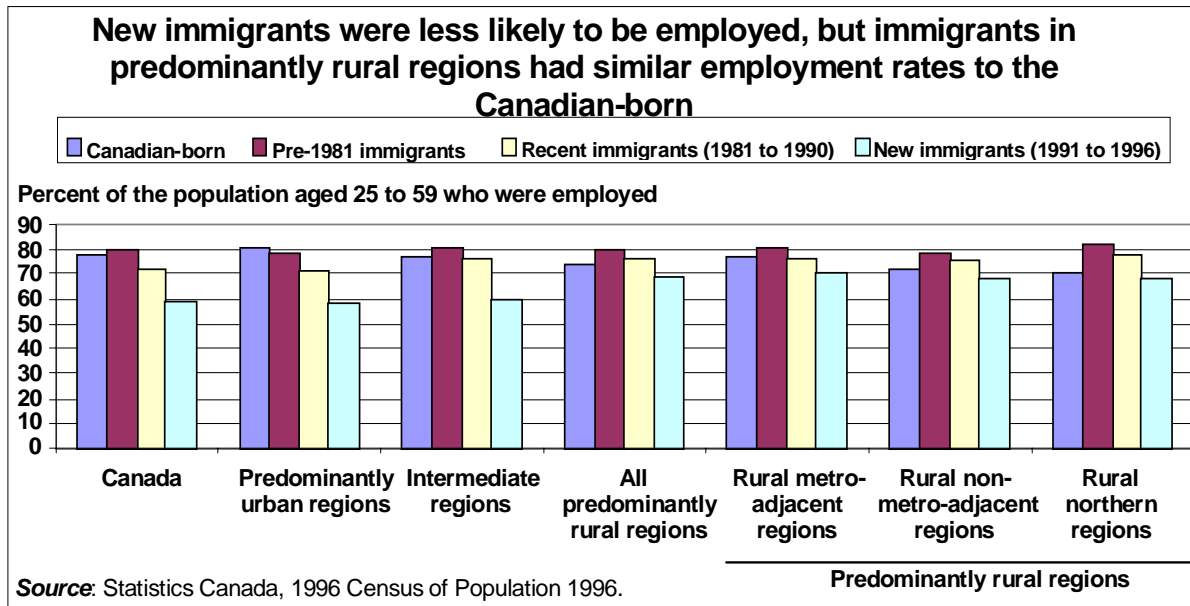
Figure 5



In predominantly rural regions, immigrants (except new immigrants) were more likely to be employed than the Canadian-born

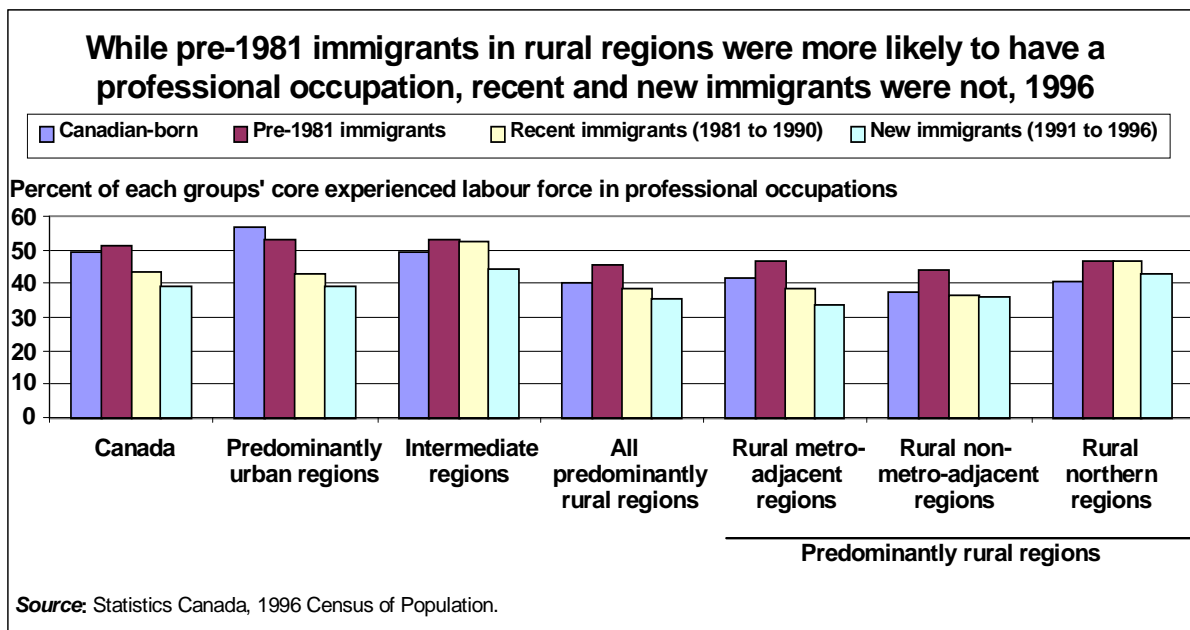
In Canada, the total immigrant employment rate was lower than the Canadian-born rate (73 percent versus 78 percent). However, there were differences among the immigrant groups. Pre-1981 immigrants had a higher employment rate of 80 percent (Figure 6). Urban and intermediate regions were similar to this Canadian profile. However, in predominantly rural regions, all but the new immigrants had slightly higher employment rates than the Canadian-born. In the rural northern regions, the total immigrants population had the largest lead over the Canadian-born (80 percent versus 71 percent).

Figure 6



New immigrants had the lowest employment rate in each type of region. However, their employment rate was higher by 12 percentage points in predominantly rural regions than in predominantly urban regions (70 percent versus 58 percent).

Figure 7



Pre-1981 immigrants had the highest share with professional services occupations in predominantly rural regions

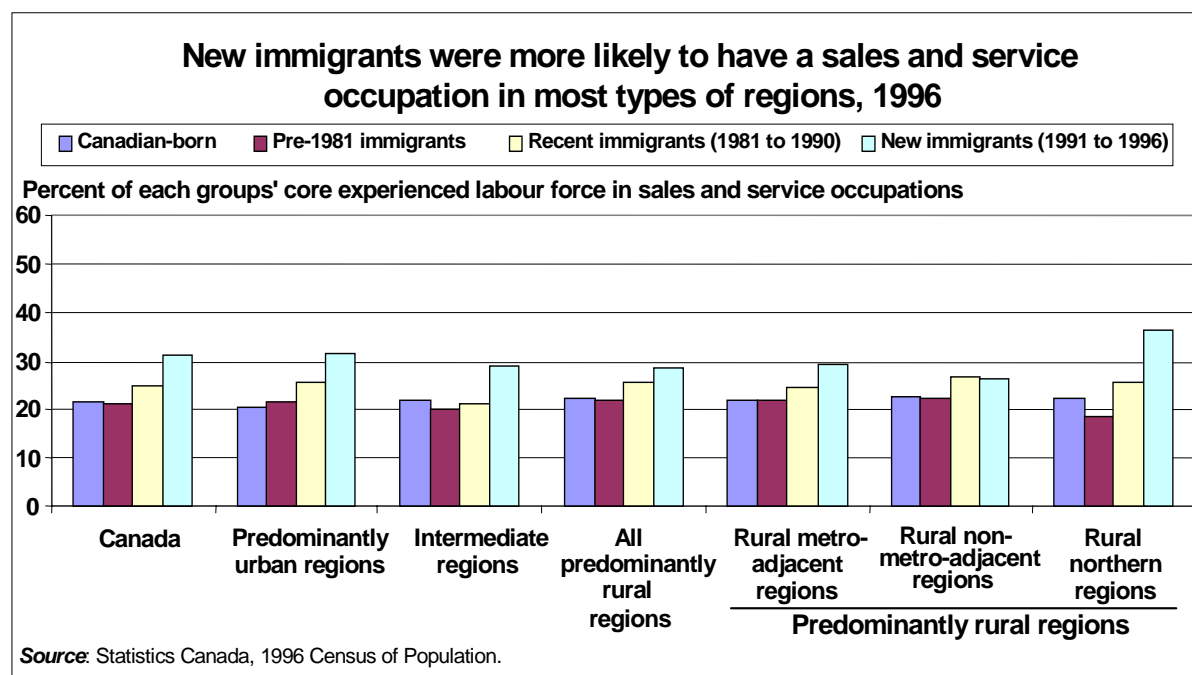
In predominantly rural regions, pre-1981 immigrants had the highest proportion (45 percent) working in professional services (Figure 7). This was 5 percentage points higher than the Canadian-born. This pattern prevailed in all of the rural regions except rural northern regions, where all immigrants had a higher proportion than the Canadian-born in professional service occupations. Only in predominantly urban regions did the Canadian-born have the highest percentage working in professional services.

In intermediate regions, the proportion of visible minority immigrants in professional service occupations was higher than the proportion of non-visible minority immigrants (data not shown). However, in predominantly urban and predominantly rural regions, the opposite was true: a higher share of non-visible minority immigrants worked in these occupations, a finding that was accentuated in the rural northern regions.

In most regions, immigrants were more likely to work in sales and service occupations than the Canadian-born

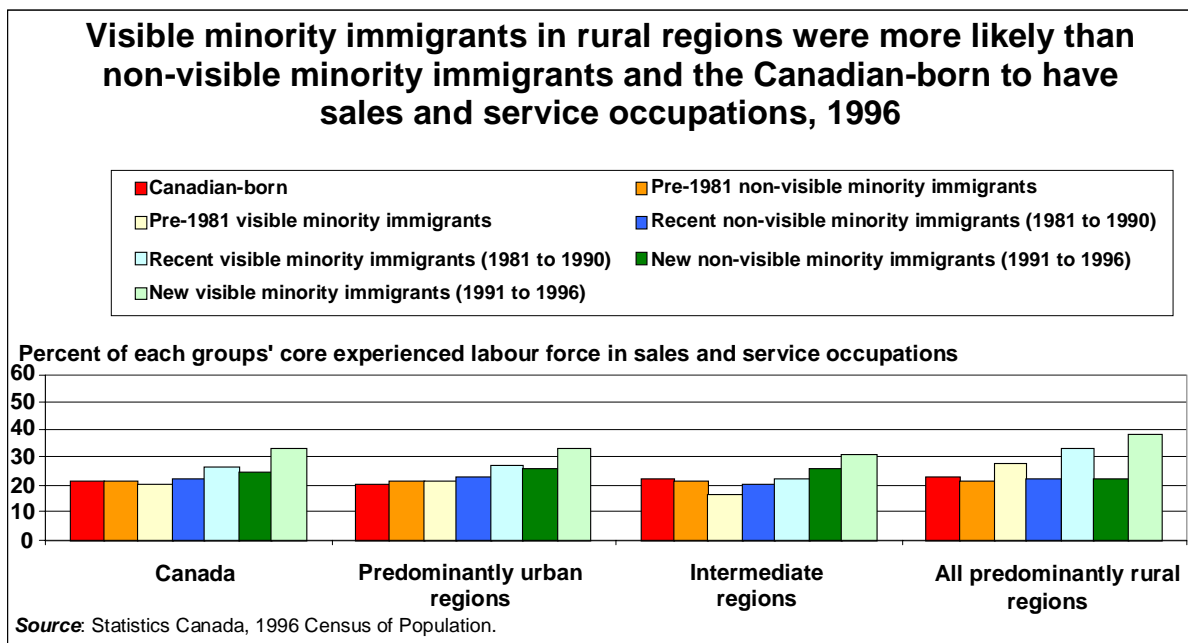
Nationally and in most regions, the percentage of all immigrants working in sales and service occupations was higher than the percentage of the Canadian-born (Figure 8). The more recent the date of arrival of the immigrant, the higher the proportion working in these occupations. In predominantly rural regions, the difference between the Canadian-born and new immigrant groups working in sales and service occupations was 7 percentage points; the difference was highest (14 percentage points) in rural northern regions.

Figure 8



In predominantly urban regions, visible minority immigrants were more likely to have sales and service occupations compared to non-visible minority immigrants (Figure 9). In all of the predominantly rural regions this finding was accentuated, particularly in the rural northern regions.

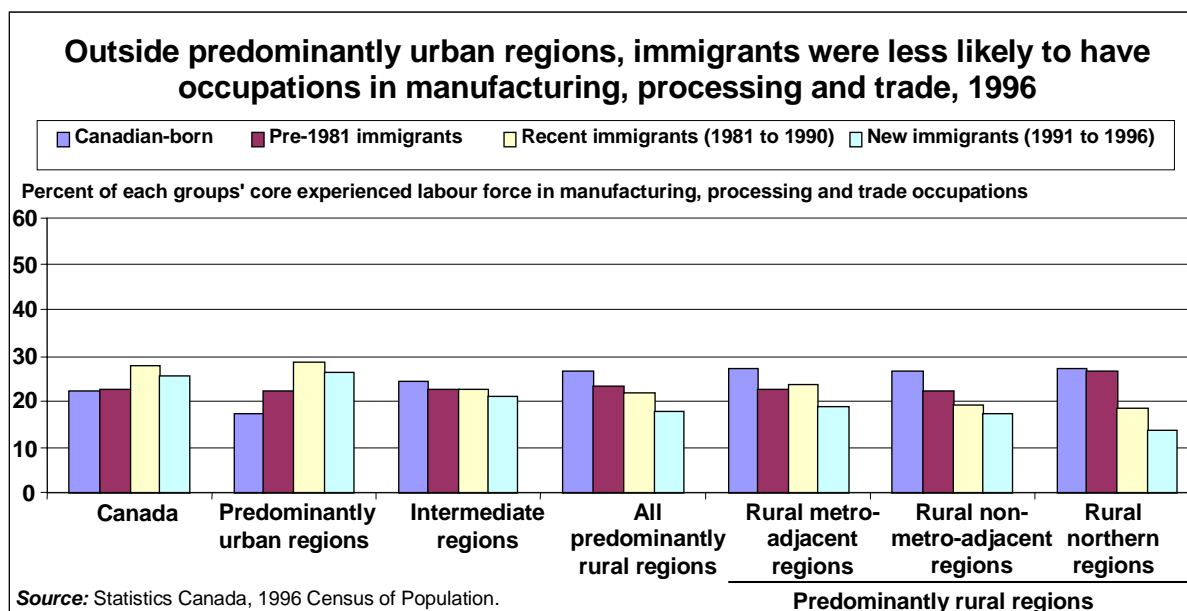
Figure 9



In predominantly rural regions, a lower proportion of immigrants than of the Canadian-born worked in manufacturing, processing and trade occupations

In predominantly rural and intermediate regions, a lower percentage of the immigrant groups than of the Canadian-born worked in manufacturing, processing and trade occupations. Intermediate regions had shares that were almost equal, but predominantly rural regions showed a greater difference—27 percent for Canadian-born, compared with 18 percent for new immigrants (Figure 10). The gap between these two groups was even wider in rural northern regions. Only in predominantly urban regions did all immigrant groups have a higher proportion than the Canadian-born working in manufacturing, processing and trade occupations.

Figure 10



In predominantly rural regions, immigrants were more likely than the Canadian-born to work in primary occupations

The share of the Canadian-born working in primary occupations was less than that of most immigrant groups in predominantly rural regions (data not shown). The more recent the immigrant, the higher the share working in these occupations.

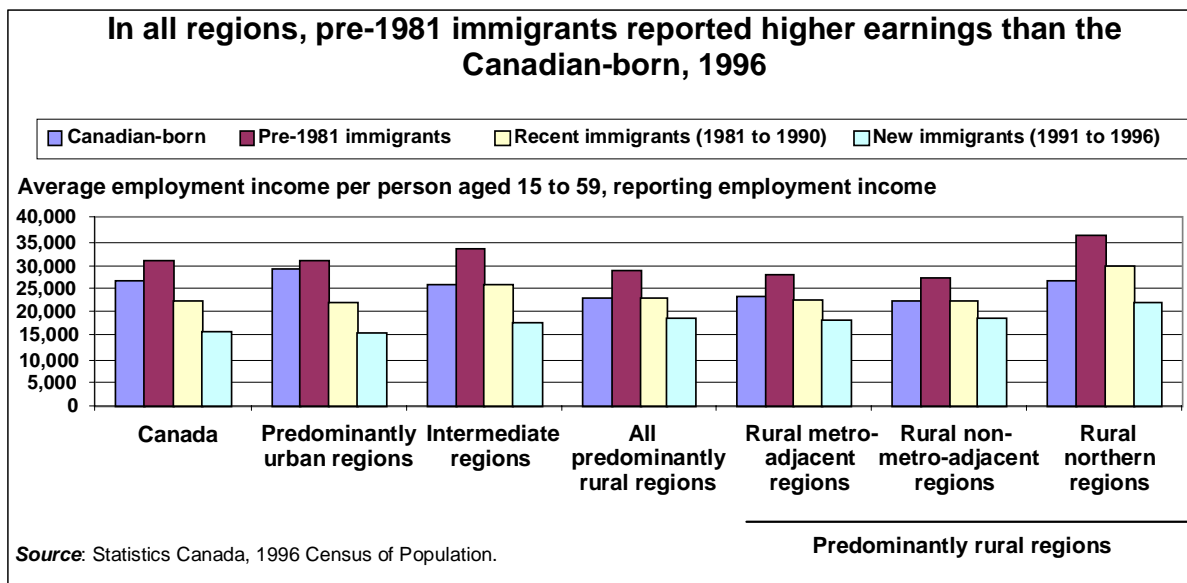
Within predominantly rural regions, the percentage of recent and new immigrants working in primary occupations was highest in rural metro-adjacent regions and non-metro-adjacent regions. The rural northern regions did not have enough observations to allow a reliable regional comparison.

The differences between visible minority and non-visible minority immigrants were fairly consistent: non-visible minority immigrants had a larger percentage in primary occupations. However, in rural non-metro-adjacent regions, this pattern was reversed, with a greater proportion of the visible minority immigrants in primary occupations.

Pre-1981 immigrants earned more employment income than the Canadian-born, particularly in the north

In Canada, the pre-1981 immigrant group earned the highest average employment income (\$30,700), about 16 percent more than the Canadian-born (Figure 11).

Figure 11



The recent and new immigrant groups earned less than the Canadian-born—16 percent and 40 percent less, respectively. Most of the rural regions maintained this profile except rural northern regions, where recent immigrants earned 13 percent more than the Canadian-born. This region also had the greatest difference between pre-1981 immigrants and the Canadian-born, with the former earning 38 percent more³.

All female groups in each region earned less employment income than their male regional counterparts (data not shown). In 1996, in predominantly rural regions, Canadian-born women earned 40 percent less than Canadian-born men and new female immigrants earned 48 percent less than new male immigrants. In predominantly urban regions, a similar picture emerged: Canadian-born women earned 34 percent less and new immigrant women earned 31 percent less than their male counterparts.

³ These comparisons should be regarded with care. Income data was taken from the Census 2B or 'long' form, which has a one-fifth or 20 percent sampling. Therefore, in the rural northern regions, while Canadian-born had a representative sample of 75,523, the pre-1981 immigrant income data was taken from a representative sample of only 3,553.

Comments and analysis

Immigration was Canada's main source of population growth in the period from 1996 to 2001. In fact, immigration accounted for more than one-half of Canada's population growth between 1996 and 2001 (Bélanger, 2002). For rural communities that are seeing out-migration of their educated youth, attracting immigrants is an important development strategy. The potential for rural communities to recruit immigrants from outside Canada is already under discussion as a community development strategy. The challenge is first, to attract individuals and second, to keep them here (Citizenship and Immigration, Canada).

While the pre-1981 immigrants had integrated well into the labour force, new and recent arrivals, despite a higher share with a university education, were still adjusting to the economy (Badets and Howatson-Leo, 1999).

This may be due to a number of factors, including:

- lack of Canadian work experience, lack of networks, sex, age at arrival in Canada and lack of knowledge of English or French (Boyd and Vickers, 2000), and
- lack of recognition of foreign credentials and work experiences (Couton, 2002; Thompson, 2002).

More controversial reasons include:

- a weak professional education, restricted mobility and inequitable earnings within the professions (Couton, 2002), and
- racial discrimination (Smith and Jackson, 2002).

New immigrant arrivals may have also been caught in the recession of the early 1990s and maintained slow earnings growth compared with immigrants who arrived earlier and the Canadian-born (Couton, 2002; Thompson, 2002).

Not many immigrants have decided to make rural regions their home. In 1996, immigrants constituted only 6 percent of the predominantly rural population, compared with 27 percent of the predominantly urban population. The pattern is more stark for immigrants who have arrived since 1981: they make up less than 2 percent of the predominantly rural population but over 12 percent of the predominantly urban population.

Among the immigrants presently living in predominantly rural regions, pre-1981 immigrants have integrated well, sometimes outperforming the Canadian-born. However, the new and recent immigrant groups have not integrated as well in predominantly rural regions.

The socio-economic differences between visible minority immigrants, the primary source of new immigrants, and the other population groups were more pronounced in the predominantly rural regions.

Visible minority immigrants reported:

- a higher proportion lacking a high school diploma,
- a higher proportion with a university degree,
- a lower employment rate,
- a higher likelihood of having occupations in sales and services, and
- lower incomes.

Many of the predominantly rural immigrant profiles were also found in predominantly urban regions. However, the few immigrants that lived in the rural northern region have a very different profile, with:

- increased levels of education,
- higher employment rates,
- occupations in professional services, sales and service, and
- higher employment incomes compared with the Canadian-born.

These immigrants have the advantage of mobility and education to access well-paying and professional employment.

Roland Beshiri is an analyst in the Research and Rural Data Section, Agriculture Division, Statistics Canada. Emily Alfred is a student at the University of Waterloo and contributed to this paper during a co-op work term at Statistics Canada.

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Appendices

Appendix Table 1

Immigrant population, Canada and Provinces, 1996							
Province	Predominantly rural regions						
	Predominantly urban regions	Intermediate regions	All predominantly rural regions	Rural metro-adjacent regions	Rural non-metro-adjacent regions	Rural northern regions	All regions
Immigrant population							
Newfoundland and Labrador	...	5,705	2,785	...	2,160	620	8,485
Prince Edward Island	...	...	4,395	3,020	1,375	...	4,395
Nova Scotia	...	23,865	18,090	7,670	10,420	...	41,955
New Brunswick	2,860	4,905	16,615	11,195	5,420	...	24,380
Québec	607,760	30,515	26,220	15,285	10,450	490	664,495
Ontario	1,960,535	582,240	181,715	138,965	35,700	7,050	2,724,490
Manitoba	108,180	...	27,760	16,655	9,010	2,095	135,940
Saskatchewan	...	33,135	19,180	9,305	9,505	365	52,315
Alberta	336,130	...	69,010	50,685	14,830	3,495	405,145
British Columbia	694,685	...	208,505	70,565	123,740	14,200	903,190
Yukon	...	...	3,195	...	...	3,195	3,195
Nunavut and Northwest Territories	...	...	3,075	...	...	3,075	3,075
Canada	3,710,155	680,365	580,545	323,355	222,615	34,580	4,971,070
Percent of immigrants in total population							
Newfoundland and Labrador	...	2.3	0.9	...	0.9	1.2	1.6
Prince Edward Island	...	...	3.3	4.4	2.2	...	3.3
Nova Scotia	...	7.0	3.2	2.8	3.6	...	4.7
New Brunswick	3.7	5.8	2.9	3.8	2.0	...	3.3
Québec	15.8	2.0	1.5	2.1	1.2	0.6	9.4
Ontario	35.6	19.4	8.6	9.3	7.4	4.5	25.6
Manitoba	17.6	...	5.7	8.0	4.3	3.1	12.4
Saskatchewan	...	7.4	3.6	4.0	3.6	1.2	5.4
Alberta	19.0	...	7.6	8.7	5.2	9.6	15.2
British Columbia	32.7	...	13.3	13.0	13.7	12.1	24.5
Yukon	...	...	10.4	...	...	10.4	10.4
Nunavut and Northwest Territories	...	...	4.8	...	...	4.8	4.8
Canada	26.6	12.1	6.5	7.3	5.7	5.5	17.4
Percent of recent and new immigrants in total population (i.e., arrived in Canada between 1981 and 1996)							
Newfoundland and Labrador	...	0.8	0.3	...	0.3	0.4	0.5
Prince Edward Island	...	...	1.0	1.5	0.5	...	1.0
Nova Scotia	...	2.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	...	1.6
New Brunswick	0.8	2.1	0.9	1.1	0.6	...	1.0
Québec	9.0	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.3	4.9
Ontario	27.1	7.6	1.8	2.1	1.2	0.9	14.8
Manitoba	8.0	...	1.8	2.5	1.4	0.9	5.1
Saskatchewan	...	3.0	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.8
Alberta	10.3	...	2.4	2.7	1.5	3.9	7.4
British Columbia	25.1	...	3.6	3.1	4.0	3.3	14.6
Yukon	...	...	3.3	...	...	3.3	3.3
Nunavut and Northwest Territories	...	...	2.1	...	...	2.1	2.1
Canada	17.6	4.5	1.6	1.8	1.1	1.6	9.1

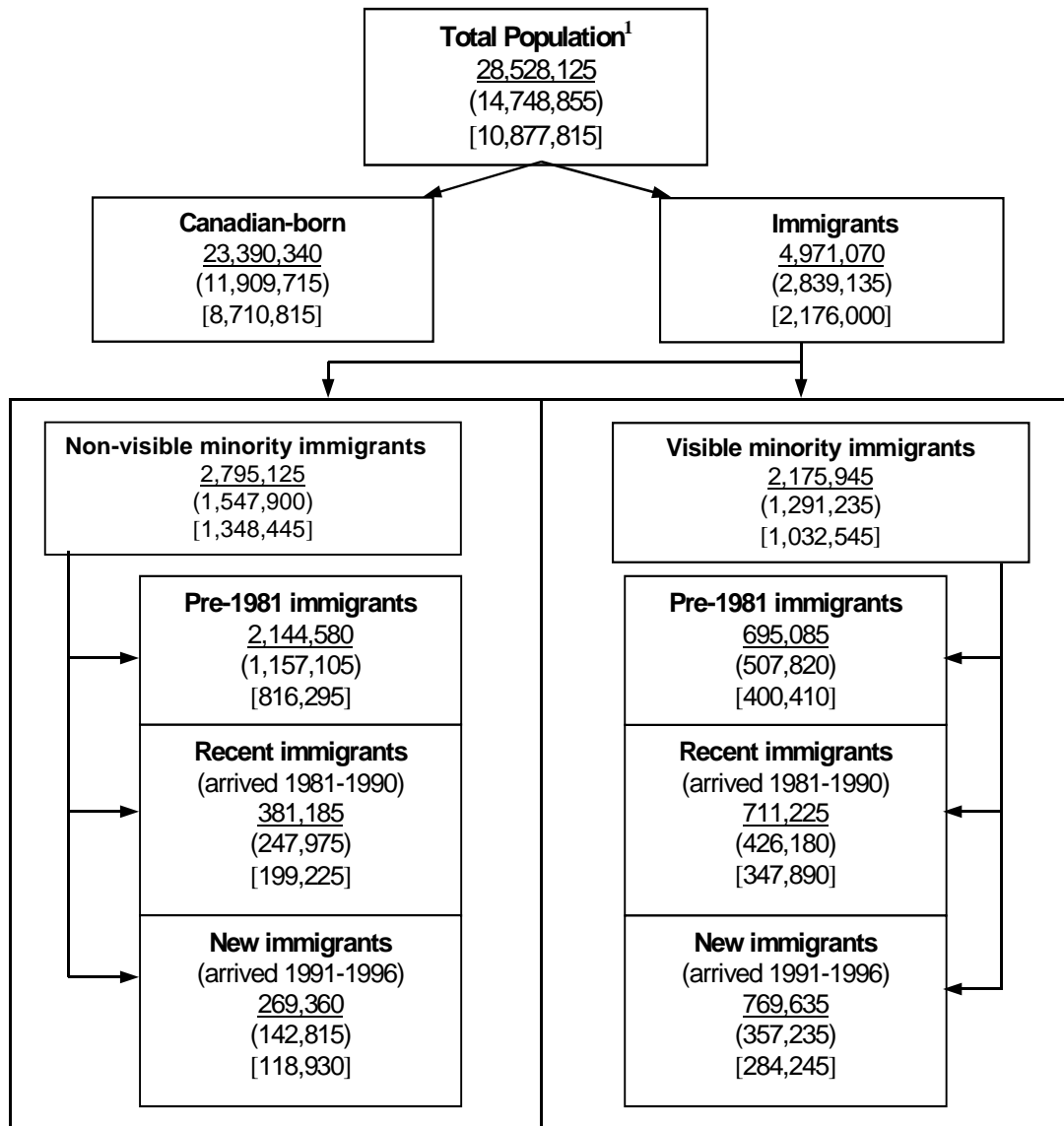
Source: Statistics Canada. 1996 Census of Population.

... = 'not applicable'

Appendix Figure 1

Population groups, 1996

Number key:
 — Total population
 () Labour force (ages 15+)
 [] Core experienced labour force (ages 25-54)



¹ Total population does not include non-permanent population (Box 1)
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996.

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