

AN IMMIGRATION PROFILE OF WINNIPEG

Winnipeg And The 2001 Census

By Daniel Klymchuk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Winnipeg's share of Canada's immigrant population declined over the last two decades.

Winnipeg receives a higher proportion of refugees than the rest of Canada, but Filipinos represent the largest ethnic percentage. Family reunification brings more new immigrants to Manitoba than to other provinces, and the average age of immigrants is therefore higher.

Nine out of ten newer immigrants speak English, and younger ones tend to be better educated. Although older immigrants generally report lower education levels than native-born Canadians, over time they achieve near parity. Immigrant families are larger in size, and birth rates are higher. Rates of labour force participation start out lower for new arrivals and even lower for younger ones, but quickly exceed those of the pre-existing population. These rates correlate directly with education levels, but even the well-trained are having difficulty obtaining work that reflects their skill levels.

Immigrants gravitate in larger numbers to sales and processing jobs, but in time move into supervisory roles at the same rate as established residents. Fewer fully leverage their education levels, but rates of income eventually reach the same level. Newer and younger immigrants tend to receive fewer government transfers than native Canadians, but surprisingly those who arrived prior to 1981 do collect transfers at higher rates. Income levels for recent immigrants start low, but rapidly reach parity, and pre-1981 immigrants tend to have higher incomes than the Canadian-born.

In September, 2000, Citizenship and Immigration Canada published a comprehensive study entitled "Recent Immigrants in the Winnipeg Metropolitan Area."³ It compares immigrants who arrived prior to 1981 with those that arrived between 1981 to 1990, and between 1990 to 1996. The comparison illustrates how, over time, immigrants are integrated into the city's economy. Although Canadian society and its economy have evolved, the path that new immigrants must take is surprisingly similar to yesteryear.

IMMIGRANTS IN WINNIPEG

As of 1996, the number of immigrants living in Winnipeg stood at 111,700, virtually unchanged from the 1981 figure of 110,700. The increase in the city's total population, from 578,600 to 657,000 for the period 1981 to 1996, was entirely due to growth in the Canadian-born population. During this period the total number of immigrants living in Canada increased by 1.1 million. However, Winnipeg's share increased by a mere 1,000. Consequently, the proportion of Winnipeg's population comprised of immigrants declined from 19% to 17%. Winnipeg failed to attract new immigration in the late 1980's and early 1990's. In fact, 64% of all immigrants in Winnipeg have been in Canada for more than 15 years. Of the 1,039,000 immigrants that came to Canada between 1991 and 1996 only 1.5% were living in Winnipeg.

Notwithstanding the low totals, Winnipeg has attracted immigrants from all over the world. Over the period the study covers, what has changed most is the source country of the immigrant. The following table illustrates this point.

The Philippines was the largest source country for immigration to Winnipeg for over two decades. Of all Filipinos that immigrated to Canada, 8.4% chose Winnipeg. This compares to a typical average of about only 1.9% for other ethnic groups. This fact lends credence to the argument that any ethnic group that has a critical mass of population of recent arrivals will grow much more quickly than any other. Another aspect of the demographic is that 4% of the people that emigrated from Ethiopia and El Salvador to Canada settled in Winnipeg. In this case, the higher number reflects the facts that Manitoba takes in a

³ Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2000 Cat.No. MP22-20/10-2000E ISBN 0-662-29469-6

larger share of political refugees than of the whole immigrant population. It demonstrates that if Manitoba fills a need, the province will be more successful in attracting immigrants.

A. Recent immigrants by country of birth and residing in Winnipeg 1996		
Country of Birth	Total that immigrated to Canada	% residing in Winnipeg
Philippines	127,765	8%
Ethiopia	13,340	4%
El Salvador	37,745	4%
Poland	110,350	3%
Former Yugoslavia	45,435	3%
Portugal	42,550	2%
Germany	25,500	2%
Trinidad, Tobago	27,655	2%
Guatemala	12,160	2%
United States	75,435	2%
Viet Nam	97,550	2%
Former USSR	34,925	2%
Cambodia	14,810	2%
Czech, Slovak	12,125	2%
India	139,425	2%
All other places of birth	154,900	2%
Romania	29,860	2%
United Kingdom	88,870	1%
Chile	12,150	1%
Korea, South	30,270	1%
Mexico	18,325	1%
China, Peoples Republic	153,295	1%
Afghanistan	10,720	1%
Guyana	43,220	1%
Malaysia	12,895	1%
Ghana	11,295	1%
Iran	43,470	1%
Jamaica	50,975	1%
France	21,455	1%
Iraq	14,335	1%
Somalia	16,475	1%
Italy	11,905	1%
Pakistan	26,360	1%
Hong Kong	185,895	1%
Sri Lanka	63,780	1%
Canadian Born	23,390,300	2%

The federal government has established three classes of immigration: family, economic and refugee. While the economic class is growing in importance, it is the reunification of families that remains the largest source of immigration. For the period 1991 to 1995, 44% of all immigrants to Winnipeg entered under the family class. This is also the largest size of that category across Canada. Also unique to Winnipeg is the high percentage of immigrants that are refugees. Between 1981 and 1996, 27% of immigrants entered Winnipeg under this category, compared to 14% for Canada as a whole. This reflects Manitoba's need for people rather than a highly developed social consciousness. The balance of immigration, 29%, entered under the economic class. To realize the full benefits of a higher population, it may be important that this latter group constitute a higher proportion of potential immigration, as their social costs are lower and the speed at which they become economically productive faster.

A major cost-benefit consideration in assessing the impact of immigration to a city is the rate of attraction of younger people, who will be productive for a longer period. In 1996 49% of recent immigrants to Winnipeg were between the ages of 25 and 44 while only 32% of Canadian-born persons were in this category. However not all immigration consists of young people. 18% of Canadian-born residents are between 45 and 64. Immigrants are not far behind at 15%. This relatively small gap is a result of family reunification policies that tend to increase the average age. Children under 15 years of age constitute only 13% of immigrants, compared to 24% for Canadian-born. What distorts this statistic is the fact that children born in Canada to immigrants count as Canadian-born.

A large majority of Winnipeg immigrants can converse in English. Among recent immigrants, since 1981, almost 90% are in this category. The ability to speak English decreases with the age of the immigrant. It is not surprising that the majority of women over the age of 65 cannot converse in English. This group, of course, is not a part of the labour force.

Recent immigrants to Winnipeg are found in high proportions in the highest and lowest education levels. One in four recent immigrants has a university degree, compared to only one in six for Canadian born. Immigrant women far out pace their Canadian-born counterparts who hold a university degree, by 23% to 14%. At the opposite end of the education spectrum, 15% of recent immigrants to Winnipeg have less than grade 9 compared to 7% for Canadian-born. At the high school graduate level, both foreign and Canadian groups are the same, at about 23% of the population. Moreover, younger immigrants arriving between 1991 and 1996 are better educated than their Canadian-born counterparts at all education levels. This fact is obviously a beneficial to the Winnipeg economy. The following table sets out the number of persons by major area of study with a university degree residing in Winnipeg in 1996.

B. Number of persons by major area of study with a university degree residing in Winnipeg in 1996		
WOMEN	Canadian Born	Immigrated 1981-96
Physical sciences	10%	22%
Social sciences, education	40%	29%
Commerce	29%	28%
Health Professionals	21%	21%
Number of persons with degree	85800	7000
MEN		
Physical sciences	50%	62%
Social sciences	27%	18%
Commerce	18%	12%
Health professionals	5%	8%
Number of persons with degree	79800	7600

Education is highly valued by immigrants. In the age group 15-24, 64% of immigrants arriving between 1991 and 1996 attend school, versus 59% for Canadian-born. In the 25-44 age group, it is 26% vs. 12%. In the latter case, the high immigration figure would likely be tied to the need for immigrants to upgrade their qualifications to Canadian standards. However, it clearly demonstrates strong motivations by immigrants to integrate into the economy.

Families and Households

Few immigrants live alone. Over 90% live with relatives. This is particularly true for older immigrants: 93% live with relatives versus only 62% for Canadian-born. Extended family arrangements are much more common among immigrants (19%) than Canadian-born (5%). However, attitudes and economic situation change the longer the immigrant has been in Canada. For immigrants that arrived in Canada prior to 1981, only about 11% live in an extended family.

About 40,000 immigrants arrived in Winnipeg between 1981 and 1996. Close to all, 88%, consisted of a married couple. Only 12% were single parents. These figures are similar to the Canadian-born statistics. In recent immigrant families, 4 out of 5 have at least one never-married child living at home, compared to 2 out of 3 for Canadian-born. Often immigrant parents require long-term financial support and that translates into more adult children living at home.

In general, immigrant families are larger in part for another reason: more children. One-quarter has more than two children, compared to only 13% for Canadian-born. In fact, 20% of recently arrived immigrant households have six or more members versus only 2% for Canadian-born. The following table sets out households by immigrant status who were living in Winnipeg in 1996.

C. Households by immigrant status living in Winnipeg in 1996		
	Number of households	% of all households
Canadian born households	196700	75%
Immigrants prior to 1981	46200	18%
Immigrants post 1981	18300	7%
Immigrants post 1990 in household with others	3900	1.50%
Canadian born	900	0.30%
Other immigrants	2600	1.00%
With Canadian born and other immigrants	340	0.10%
Immigrants post 1990 only	3400	1.30%
TOTAL	261100	100.00%

Immigrants and the Winnipeg Economy

Labour force participation is lower initially for immigrants, but over time moves towards the rate for Canadian-born. The following table sets out labour force participation by age and time of immigration (Winnipeg 1996).

D. Labour force participation by age and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996					
	15-24	25-44	45-64	15-64	Labour force
Women					
Canadian born	68%	82%	65%	74%	133700
Immigrated prior to 1981	84%	85%	66%	74%	18700
Immigrated 1981-90	59%	80%	69%	73%	7200
Immigrated 1991-96	54%	73%	53%	65%	4300
Men					
Canadian born	71%	92%	79%	84%	147600
Immigrated prior to 1981	74%	92%	83%	86%	21200
Immigrated 1981-90	59%	91%	84%	84%	8700
Immigrated 1991-96	52%	85%	73%	76%	4600

The most recent immigrants (1991-95) have a very low participation (52%) in the labour market compared to Canadian-born (71%). This suggests that for young immigrants the period of adjustment to Canada is difficult. Eventually, however, the participation of recent immigrants in the work force will resemble that of immigrants that came to Winnipeg prior to 1981. The participation of this group is in fact higher than the Canadian born rate (74% versus 71%). It is abundantly clear that immigrants come here to work.

The following table sets out labour force participation rates of the 15 to 64 age group by level of education and gender (Winnipeg 1996).

E. Labour force participation rates of the 15 to 64 age group by level Winnipeg 1996						
	Less than grade 9	Some high school	High school diploma	College or trade	University degree	Total
Women						
Canadian born	36%	57%	89%	83%	88%	74%
Immigrated prior to 1981	46%	66%	80%	81%	85%	74%
Immigrated 1981 -90	56%	61%	74%	85%	85%	73%
Immigrated 1991 -96	51%	54%	69%	70%	72%	65%
Men						
Canadian born	61%	72%	89%	91%	93%	84%
Immigrated prior to 1981	75%	81%	88%	88%	91%	86%
Immigrated 1981 -90	82%	69%	87%	87%	93%	84%
Immigrated 1991 -96	70%	57%	75%	84%	85%	76%

For both Canadian and foreign-born, the higher the level of education the greater the participation in the labour force. Immigrants with "some high school" or "high school diploma" have a somewhat lower participation rate than Canadian-born. This may be a result of immigrants' attending school before entering the job market. At the "less than grade nine" level, far more immigrants are working than Canadian born (82% versus 61%). It is reasonable to conclude that this higher rate would be spurred by necessity.

The ability to speak English does impact the initial success of immigrants who seek a job. One estimate holds that, if all immigrants were fluent in English, their labour force participation rate would be about 2% higher than what currently exists. However this 2% gap evaporates in about five years as the individual becomes comfortable with English. The language barrier is real but temporary.

The unemployment rate for persons in the 18 to 25 age group is high for both recent immigrants and Canadian-born (16% versus 15%). This statistic changes dramatically in the 25 to 44 age group, where the unemployment rate is identical between the two groups (7%).

F. Unemployment rate by age, gender and time living in Winnipeg 1996					
	15-24	25-44	45-64	15-64	unemployed
Women					
Canadian born	13%	6%	5%	7%	9900
Immigrated prior to 1981	8%	4%	5%	5%	900
Immigrated 1981 -90	13%	9%	8%	9%	700
Immigrated 1991-96	18%	12%	17%	14%	600
Men					
Canadian born	15%	7%	6%	9%	12700
Immigrated prior to 1981	18%	7%	7%	7%	1600
Immigrated 1981 -90	15%	8%	6%	9%	800
Immigrated 1991-96	16%	11%	16%	12%	600

Youth unemployment is a sensitive area for Canadians. Direct competition at the entry level of employment between Canadian-born and recent immigrants is going to occur. Government must be sensitive to this potential conflict and introduce appropriate policies to ameliorate the situation.

G. Unemployment rate by education, gender and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996						
	Less than grade 9	Some high school	High school diploma	College or trade	University degree	Total
Women						
Canadian born	18%	11%	7%	6%	4%	7%
Immigrated prior to 1981	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Immigrated 1981 -90	11%	10%	9%	11%	7%	9%
Immigrated 1991-96	21%	16%	15%	10%	12%	14%
Men						
Canadian born	18%	13%	8%	6%	4%	9%
Immigrated prior to 1981	12%	11%	8%	6%	3%	7%
Immigrated 1981 -90	14%	10%	9%	7%	5%	9%
Immigrated 1991-96	19%	20%	9%	12%	10%	12%

The above table illustrates that there is definitely an adjustment period for immigrants at all levels of education. Over time the situation improves. For example, the unemployment rate for recent immigrants (1991–96), shown in the right column, is 12%. This changes to 7% for immigrants that arrived prior to 1981. The adjustment period is shorter for the least-educated recent immigrants but longer for the well-educated. This demonstrates the barriers that educated immigrants face in having their qualifications accepted. Fortunately, based on the experience of earlier immigrants, this gap will evaporate over time. For example, immigrants that arrived prior to 1981 and possess a university degree have an unemployment rate of 3% versus 4% for Canadian-born.

Unemployment and the knowledge of English are directly related. The following table sets out the relationship.

H. Unemployment rate and the knowledge of English by gender and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996				
	Population share with no English	Unemployment Rate		Total
		No English	English	
Women				
Canadian born	n.a	n.a.	7%	7%
Immigrated prior to 1981	3%	6%	5%	5%
Immigrated 1981 -90	7%	13%	9%	9%
Immigrated 1991-96	11%	22%	13%	14%
Men				
Canadian born	n.a.	n.a.	9%	9%
Immigrated prior to 1981	1%	25%	7%	7%
Immigrated 1981 -90	3%	12%	9%	9%
Immigrated 1991-96	7%	17%	12%	12%

Lack of fluency in English contributes to lower employment for recent immigrants. Fortunately, within about five years recent immigrants become sufficiently fluent in English to overcome this handicap.

The following table sets out the type of occupation of men and women aged 25 to 64 residing in Winnipeg in 1996.

I. Type of occupation by gender and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996							
	Sales	Processing	Admin	Mgt	Trades	Health	Total
Women							
Canadian born	25%	3%	38%	21%	2%	13%	100100
Immigrated prior to 1981	29%	14%	21%	16%	3%	15%	17000
Immigrated 1981 -90	33%	23%	18%	9%	2%	16%	5600
Immigrated 1991-96	43%	26%	11%	8%	2%	11%	3000
Men							
Canadian born	20%	8%	13%	23%	25%	11%	110500
Immigrated prior to 1981	17%	15%	9%	21%	27%	11%	19000
Immigrated 1981 -90	20%	24%	7%	11%	25%	13%	6900
Immigrated 1991-96	27%	27%	5%	14%	16%	11%	3400

Immigrants work where they can. Two categories, sales and processing have high participation by immigrants compared to Canadian-born. This weighting is reversed in the areas of administration and management. This statistic suggests that barriers to better employment exist for immigrants but, again, over time they erode. In the area of management, immigrants that arrived prior to 1981 occupy a percentage of this level that is close to Canadian-born (21% versus 23%).

J. Employment by industry by gender, and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996						
	Manufacture	Construction Transportation	Trade	Business Services	Public Sector	Hospitality and other
Women						
Canadian born	7%	8%	15%	15%	43%	12%
Immigrated prior to 1981	18%	5%	12%	9%	41%	15%
Immigrated 1981 -90	27%	2%	12%	7%	34%	17%
Immigrated 1991-96	29%	2%	13%	7%	23%	25%
Men						
Canadian born	17%	25%	18%	12%	20%	8%
Immigrated prior to 1981	26%	22%	13%	8%	19%	11%
Immigrated 1981 -90	38%	15%	13%	7%	15%	12%
Immigrated 1991-96	35%	8%	17%	7%	13%	19%

Recent immigrants are concentrated in low-skilled areas of manufacturing and the hospitality trade. Over time, immigrants make inroads into the construction industry and public works. It is clear that recent immigrants have great difficulty having their education or training recognized. For example, 70% of Canadian-born men with a university degree have a job that requires a degree compared to just 48% for recent immigrants. The following table illustrates this point.

K. Proportion of workers with a university degree in a job requiring a degree by gender and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996		
	Women	Men
Canadian born	65%	70%
Immigrated prior to 1981	62%	68%
Immigrated 1981 -90	40%	46%
Immigrated 1991-96	31%	44%

The average income of immigrants increase with the length of stay in Canada. The following table illustrates.

L. Average income of immigrants by gender and time of immigration Winnipeg 1996				
	Income by source (% of total)			
	Average income of persons with income	Employment income	Other private income	Government transfers
Women				
Canadian born	\$19,200	70%	13%	17%
Immigrated prior to 1981	\$19,100	62%	15%	23%
Immigrated 1981 -90	\$14,600	79%	5%	16%
Immigrated 1991-94	\$10,600	80%	5%	15%
Men				
Canadian born	\$30,500	79%	11%	10%
Immigrated prior to 1981	\$32,000	72%	13%	14%
Immigrated 1981 -90	\$21,600	87%	2%	11%
immigrated 1991-94	\$15,600	82%	4%	15%

Male immigrants arriving prior to 1981 have an average income of \$32,000 versus \$30,500 for Canadian -born and females \$19,100 versus \$19,200. The most recent immigrants, male and female, earn only one-half the Canadian-born average.

Virtually all households in Canada receive some form of financial benefit from government. For example, seniors receive pension income, while others may receive unemployment insurance or social assistance. The following table sets out the amount of government assistance to households in Winnipeg in 1995.

M. The share of households receiving government transfers by age and time of immigration Winnipeg 1995					
Share of households receiving transfers	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	All households
Canadian -born households	93%	91%	86%	100%	91%
Earlier immigrant households	100%	92%	88%	100%	93%
Recent immigrant households	92%	96%	95%	100%	96%
1980's immigrants	90%	95%	94%	99%	95%
1991-94 immigrants with others	100%	95%	96%	99%	96%
1991-94 immigrants only	93%	99%	99%	100%	99%

N. Average amount of government transfer per receiving household by age and time of immigration Winnipeg 1995					
	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	All households
Canadian -born households	\$3,600	\$3,800	\$4,200	\$14,700	\$6,400
Earlier immigrant households	\$2,000	\$3,900	\$4,200	\$15,200	\$8,300
Recent immigrant households	\$3,000	\$4,700	\$4,900	\$12,200	\$5,500
1980s immigrants	\$2,900	\$4,800	\$4,800	\$12,500	\$5,500
1991-94 immigrants with others	\$3,400	\$4,600	\$5,400	\$13,200	\$6,000
1991-94 immigrants only	\$2,900	\$4,800	\$5,000	\$7,900	\$4,900

O. Transfers from government as a share of average household income by age and time of immigration Winnipeg 1995					
	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	All households
Canadian -born households	19%	7%	6%	43%	13%
Earlier immigrant households	9%	7%	6%	43%	16%
Recent immigrant households	19%	11%	9%	27%	12%
1980's immigrants	17%	11%	9%	27%	12%
1991-94 immigrants with others	16%	10%	8%	24%	11%
1991-94 immigrants only	31%	18%	17%	25%	18%

As the table indicates, Canadian-born households received on average \$6,400 per year versus \$5,500 for recent (post 1981) immigrant households. Surprisingly, immigrants families that arrived in Canada prior to 1981 receive the highest annual government transfer (\$8,300). The cause of this anomaly is unknown. In the youngest category, 15 to 24 years of age, Canadian born households receive somewhat more than recent immigrants (\$3,600 versus \$3,000), not the reverse as many Canadians might think. Government transfers make up a larger percentage of a recent immigrant's household income because employment income is low. This percentage decreases with the length of stay in Canada.

The following table sets out the distribution of personal income for immigrants residing in Winnipeg in 1995.

P. Distribution of personal income for immigrants by income, gender and time of immigration Winnipeg 1995						
	Without income	\$1 to \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$50,000	Over \$50,000	Average Income
Women						
Canadian born	7%	30%	44%	15%	4%	\$17,900
Immigrated prior to 1981	4%	24%	55%	13%	4%	\$18,300
Immigrated 1981 -90	8%	35%	48%	7%	1%	\$13,400
Immigrated 1991-94	13%	46%	38%	3%	0%	\$9,300
Men						
Canadian born	4%	21%	33%	27%	15%	\$29,300
Immigrated prior to 1981	0%	13%	42%	30%	15%	\$31,800
Immigrated 1981 -90	5%	26%	45%	19%	5%	\$20,500
immigrated 1991-94	6%	36%	47%	8%	2%	\$14,700

42% of men and 59% of women among recent immigrants (1991-94) reported either no income or income under \$10,000. Average income for this group was \$14,700 for men and \$9,300 for women, compared to \$29,300 and \$17,900 respectively for Canadian-born individuals. Although initially low, based on the pattern of earlier immigrants it is logical to assume that incomes of recent immigrants will eventually increase to the Canadian-born average in each income category. For example immigrants arriving prior to 1981 have greater representation in the \$30–50,000 income bracket than Canadian born (30% versus 27%) and dramatically more than recent immigrants (30% versus 8%).

Although individual incomes are very low for recent immigrants, their household incomes average a respectable \$42,500 (93% of the Canadian-born level). This indicates larger households and within them more people working per household. In time, household incomes rise. For example for immigrants that arrived prior to 1981, household income is \$48,900 versus \$45,500 for Canadian-born. Over time, immigrants achieve more than the Canadian-born average.



Immigrants Arriving by Train in Winnipeg in 1880s (source: Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

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