

UNEQUAL ACCESS

A Canadian Profile of Racial Differences in Education, Employment and Income

A Report Prepared for Canadian Race Relations Foundation

By the Canadian Council on Social Development

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Executive Summary

Is there equity in Canadian society for Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities? Do racial minorities still face barriers to success in the workplace? A feasibility report prepared for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation in March, 1999, pointed to a need to examine issues of racial inequality in Canada on a regular basis (Gentium Consulting and John Samuel & Associates Inc., 1999). This report documents the differences among racial groups with regard to education, employment, and income. A primary objective of this report is to establish baseline information on the topic for future comparisons. Results of the report are based upon quantitative data, mainly, the 1996 Census, as well as focus group discussions among visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples across Canada. Highlighted below are some of the key findings:

Quantitative Analysis

- High school non-completion rate is highest among Aboriginal youth, compared to visible minority and non-racialized youth. Among Canadian-born youth aged 15 to 19 in 1996, about three in ten Aboriginal youth did not finish high school, and were not attending school in the past year, compared to less than one in ten among visible minorities.
 - Visible minorities generally have higher education levels than either non-racialized groups or Aboriginals.
 - In spite of their higher educational attainment, visible minorities still trail behind non-racialized groups with regard to employment and income.
 - Compared to non-racialized groups, visible minority and Aboriginals with university education are less likely to hold managerial/professional jobs.
 - Foreign-born visible minorities experience greater education-occupation discrepancies compared to other groups as less than half of those with a university education have high skill level jobs.
 - Even though as many visible minorities as non-racialized groups have managerial jobs, most of these visible minorities are self-employed.
- Aboriginals and foreign-born visible minorities are over-represented in the lowest income quintile and they are under-represented in the highest income quintile. Given the same level of education, non-racialized groups, whether foreign-born or Canadian-born, are three times as likely as Aboriginal peoples and about twice as likely as foreign-born visible minorities to be in the top 20% income distribution. Moreover, even if they are born in Canada, visible minorities are still less likely than foreign-born and Canadian-born non-racialized group to be in the top 20% income distribution.
- Even when racial minorities have attained a university level education, they are still less likely than non-racialized groups to be in the top income quintile. About 38 percent of the Canadian-born non-racialized group with a university education were in the top income quintile, compared to 29 percent of Canadian-born visible minorities and 21 percent of foreign-born visible minorities.
 - In most cases, the earnings of Aboriginals and foreign-born visible minorities are lower than Canadian-born non-racialized groups, regardless of region of residence, field of educational study, age, or gender. Foreign-born visible minorities earned, on average, about 78 cents for every dollar earned by a foreign-born non-racialized person.

Focus Group Discussions

Seven focus groups were conducted in five cities across Canada based on a random sample of the Aboriginal and visible minority populations. Most

members of these racial groups feel that they have better access to the Canadian labour market than before, but the access is still limited and unequal.

- Participants agreed that one's perceptions of ultimate success in the labour market depends largely on skills and education, particularly technical/computer skills.
- There is a consensus among participants that some groups of people in Canada have more difficulty than do others in finding employment. These people include visible minorities, recent immigrants, youth, and seniors.
- Participants stated that there is racial discrimination in the labour market and in the workplace. For some, this view is based on personal experience of having been victimized or having seen others discriminated against.
- In each group, there were one to three participants who have experienced unequivocal racial discrimination at work or in trying to obtain work. Blacks are the most likely to have experienced discrimination.
- These participants are convinced that they have been the victims of racism, and they most often used the word “**subtle**” to describe their experiences. Examples of this “**subtle discrimination**” include being passed over for promotion, being assigned unpleasant tasks at work, being stereotyped, and being excluded from the “inner circle” of their workplace.
- Many participants observed that the higher up the organizational ladder, the lighter the skin-tone one would find.

- Participants generally agreed that public education and legislation would be crucial in removing barriers for racial minorities in the workplace and in society. Most hoped that their children would have a better future than they have.

Conclusions

- Although Canada's labour force is becoming increasingly diverse, racial minorities still face limits in their access to employment. Getting a job is hard, but it is even harder to find a job that matches their qualifications or to move ahead on the job.
- This report demonstrates that racism is still persistent at the individual and systemic levels, although overt forms of racism are generally seen as socially unacceptable.
- Many racial minorities have difficulties finding jobs that are fulfilling to them. For recent immigrants, the challenge is to have their foreign-trained credentials recognized.
- Employment equity measures should move beyond recruitment to focus on retention and promotion. While legislation may alter the behaviour of employers, attitudes toward racial minorities have been slower to change.
- Racial discrimination today has become more subtle or hidden compared to the overt forms of the past. Public education is important for raising awareness of racial inequality in order to eliminate it in the future.

Introduction

Race, an arbitrary classification of human beings based upon skin colour and other physical features carries great social and economic significance. Racial distinctions can allow some groups special access to power and dominance, while excluding others from full participation in society. Broadly dichotomised into white and non-white in western society, race was historically used as a justification for exploitation and dominance of whites over non-whites during and after the colonial era. Even in the post-colonial era, social inequality continues to be structured along racial lines. Racial minorities continue to experience social and economic discrimination with regard to employment and other aspects of their social lives.

Even though Canada was the first country to adopt multiculturalism as its official policy, we have had a history of social, cultural, and economic discrimination against visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples. Immigration policies, in the past, generally discriminated against persons of colour. Racial minorities were expected to take jobs deemed undesirable for the white population. For example, in Canada's early years, Chinese males were a valuable source of cheap labour during the construction of the Canadian National Railway. Following the completion of the railway, the Chinese were no longer seen as a desirable presence, and in 1888 a head tax was imposed on Chinese entering Canada, rising to \$500 in 1903 (Kendall, Murray, and Linden, 1997). It was not until changes to immigration regulations in the 1960s and 1970s that national origin was replaced by an emphasis on family reunification and labour market contribution as criteria for immigration. Since that time, the immigrant population, and consequently, the Canadian population, has become much more culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse. For example, between 1991 and 1996, the Asian-born accounted for nearly three-fifths (57%) of recent immigrants, compared to 12 percent of immigrants arriving in the 1960s, and 3 percent prior to 1961 (Statistics Canada, 1997).

In 1996, 3.2 million people, representing 11.2 percent of the Canadian population, identified themselves as members of a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 1998a). This figure had increased from 6.3 percent in 1986 and 9.4 percent in 1991. According to the 1996 Census, about 3 out of every 10 visible minorities were born in Canada while the remainder were foreign-born. An additional 3 percent of the Canadian population were identified as Aboriginals in 1996, representing about 800,000 people (Statistics Canada, 1998b).

First Nations or Aboriginal peoples in Canada also have a history of racially based discriminatory treatment from whites. The residential school systems run by religious organizations from the 1880s until the 1970s resulted in the removal of Aboriginal children from their homes. These children were immersed in an English-speaking environment, away from their families and cultural traditions. The ramifications of this history of degradation have been felt for generations and laid a basis for marginalization, exclusion, and forced integration (Davies and Guppy, 1998).

One of the strategies to redress some of the past injustices against disadvantaged populations in Canada has been the implementation of the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Employment Equity Act. Passed in 1986, the purpose of the Employment Equity Act is to ensure equity in the workplace so that no one is denied access to employment and benefits for reasons unrelated to their abilities. A specific goal of the Act is to alleviate the disadvantaged conditions experienced by women, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and visible minorities with respect to employment. Employers designated under the Act must submit an annual report to the federal government showing the extent to which these four groups are statistically represented among their employees. The Employment Equity Act, however, applies to only five percent of the Canadian workforce, namely federally regulated

and crown corporations with more than 100 employees. It does not cover provincial organizations or the private sector. As demonstrated by Bakan and Kobayashi (2000), the application of employment equity policies varies across provinces. These differences, to some extent, reflect the political landscape as well as the social and cultural characteristics of the provinces.

More than a decade has passed since employment equity entered the forum of public discourse. Overt forms of racial discrimination are no longer acceptable in the public. Are visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples in Canada today still socially and economically disadvantaged? In March, 1999, a feasibility report prepared for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation highlighted the need to examine racial inequality in Canada (Gentium Consulting and John Samuel & Associates Inc., 1999). In this detailed and comprehensive report, we examine education, employment, and income profiles among racial (visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples) and non-racialized groups in Canada. Comparisons will be made, to the extent possible, at the national and regional levels. Our focus will be on adults in their working years (aged 25-64), although some references will be made to youth.

The report will show that while racial groups have experienced some improvement in their conditions, they are still relatively disadvantaged, especially Aboriginals. The overall findings will show that visible minorities as a group have poorer outcomes with respect to employment and income than do non-racialized groups. Aboriginal peoples as a group are disadvantaged in the areas of employment and income, and also in their levels of educational attainment. The reality is that racialized groups face barriers to socio-economic equality in this country.

Findings of this report come from two sources: quantitative analysis of the Census and the National Graduate Survey and qualitative analysis of focus group discussions with visible minority and Aboriginal men and women across the coun-

try. Studies on racial discrimination have either relied on quantitative data such as population surveys or, to a lesser extent, qualitative observations. Both data sources are complementary because the impact of discrimination cannot always be measured by numbers alone. This report marks a first effort in documenting the socio-economic profile of racial groups in Canada combining quantitative and qualitative data. It also provides an update of quantitative data.

Based upon a set of indicators, the report will center on racial differences on education, employment, occupation, and income. The report is organized according to three components. Part I provides an overview of existing work on racial and ethnic inequality. Using survey data, Part II describes racial differences with regard to education, employment, occupation status, and income. Part III presents a discussion of the experiences and perceptions of visible minorities and Aboriginals concerning discrimination in the workplace and in society in general. It summarizes focus group findings conducted in five major cities in Canada. Before moving on to the results, some clarifications of key concepts are in order.

Concepts and Definitions

Understanding Race and Racialization

Discussions of race and racism are often highly emotional and political. The mere utterance of the 'r' word can easily generate a whole range of emotion. As Fontaine (1998:1) commented: "There is a lot of sensitivity around the subject of racism. For a person or party to be called racist in Canada today, is considered a slur". To understand racism, we should begin with a critique of the very notion of objectively subdividing the human population into different categories (Satzewich, 1998). The study of race relations is flawed because of the term "race". Some have argued that race is a dubious term because it is based upon an arbitrarily assigned physical feature, i.e., skin pigmentation, the colour of the eyes or hair, (e.g., Elliot and Fleras, 1992). In a similar vein, by assigning individuals into categories such as 'white' and 'visible

minority', we automatically assume that 'white' is the frame of reference (Kunz and Fleras, 1998). Race, therefore, is a social construction based on certain physical features, especially skin colour, to justify dominant ideology, power, and social hierarchy.

Racism represents a set of ideologies and beliefs that implies, justifies, and asserts the superiority of one social group over another on the basis of physical and cultural characteristics. Through institutionalised power, these ideologies and beliefs are put into practice "in a way that has the intent or effect of adversely discriminating against minority women and men" (Fleras and Kunz, 2000).

"[R]acism is not only an attitude, but it is the specific actions that result from this attitude which impact upon, marginalize and oppress some people" (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2000). It is manifested in overt and covert forms both at the individual and institutional level. Overt forms of racism refer to deliberate attempts by individuals or institutions to discriminate against racial minority groups with the consequence of denying these groups full participation in the society. Overt forms of racism are evident in Canada's past such as the residential schools for Aboriginal children, and the race-based immigration policy that prefers immigrants from western European countries over those from other regions. Today, policies and legislations are in place to ensure the full participation of Canadians of all social and cultural backgrounds in the society. However, the implementation of these policies and legislations is uneven, and racism is far from being a thing of the past, nor is it merely deviant behaviour of some white supremacist groups that are at the fringe of the society. It is not uncommon to find incidences where racial minorities are denied access to social and natural resources under the disguise of defending some democratic principles. Employment Equity measures, for example, are misinterpreted by the media and others as a 'quota system' sacrificing quality over quantity. Racial minorities still feel isolated from the corporate culture. Visible minority immigrants still face

systemic barriers getting their credentials recognized. Consequently, they are denied opportunities to jobs that match their qualifications. In other words, systemic racism is a barrier to racial minorities and Aboriginal peoples in gaining full access to suitable employment.

Few would disagree that racism often results in the exclusion of certain groups or individuals and creates barriers to full participation in society and inequality based upon race. To develop a mechanism to assess the status of racism, it is useful first to reach a common understanding of the concepts of visible minorities, Aboriginals, and non-racialized groups.

The actual and potential victims of racial discrimination are non-white groups including Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities.

Visible minority (VM): As defined by the Employment Equity Act, visible minorities are "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour".*

Aboriginal peoples: According to Statistics Canada, Aboriginal peoples refer to those who identify themselves with at least one of the following groups: North American Indian, Metis or Inuit.

Foreign-born (F-B): A person, who may or may not be a visible minority, who was not born in Canada.

Canadian-born (C-B): A person, who may or may not be a visible minority, who was born in Canada.

Non-racialized groups (Non-RG): This category includes all persons who are neither visible minorities nor Aboriginal. Throughout this report, non-racialized groups (Non-RG) refer to white Canadian residents, both Canadian-born and foreign-born.

*The following groups are specified by the Act as visible minorities: Chinese, South Asians, Blacks, Arabs and West Asians, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Latin Americans, Japanese, Koreans and Pacific Islanders

The authors of this report were cognizant of the differences within each of these groups. In addition, it should also be acknowledged that experiences vary within visible minorities, non-racialized groups (Ornstein, 2000), and Aboriginals. Ornstein concluded in his report that, compared to other ethnic groups living in Toronto, African ethno-racial groups suffer severe economic deprivation, with respect to high levels of poverty and the overrepresentation in low skill jobs although most of them have high school level education. Not only are there differences within visible minority groups, but the circumstances of Aboriginal peoples differ depending on whether they live in remote reserves or urban centres (Elliott and Fleras, 1992). Similarly, there is considerable variation in economic circumstances within non-racialized groups. Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic differences, however, are beyond the scope of this current project.

Racism/racial discrimination: Consistent with the CRRF's feasibility study (Gentium Consulting and John Samuel & Associates Inc., 1999), we will define racism as racial discrimination that results in "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life" (Article 1, United Nations' International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966).

Racial discrimination has been observed in many sectors of our society, such as in employment, housing, the justice system, and the media. Inequity in employment, especially occupation, is believed to have the most serious effect on those individuals

who were being discriminated against, since occupational status bears a close relation to income and social status. Racial discrimination takes on many forms. Like women, racial minorities are often shut out of the white 'old boys club' that is crucial for job access and promotion. Visible minority or Aboriginal job applicants may be denied interviews because they are not connected to the 'right' type of social network or are excluded from consideration from the outset. Even when they are hired, career advancement is still a prospect that eludes them.

Racism exists at both the personal and institutional levels. While it is sometimes manifested openly, it frequently occurs in subtle forms, especially at the institutional and systemic levels. A straightforward way to assess discrimination in employment would be to ask employers: Would you discriminate against non-white employees or job applicants based upon the colour of their skin? Most people would respond with a resounding 'NO'. An examination of the career sections or job ads would reveal that many employers identify themselves as an equal opportunity employer or even encourage members of the designated employment equity groups to apply (i.e., women, persons with disability, visible minorities, and Aboriginal peoples). It is difficult to measure discrimination empirically, especially using quantitative data alone. Yet, a review of some of the major studies from the recent literature in this area will highlight the inequities that currently exist among visible minorities, Aboriginals, and non-racialized groups.

It should be noted that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, such as discrimination on grounds of gender or ability. This report does not examine differences in outcomes based upon these overlapping dimensions, but this is certainly an important topic for further study.

Part I Overview of Current Research

With respect to education, employment, and income, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples in Canada have often been found to be socially and economically disadvantaged compared to non-racialized groups. An exploration of current research identifies key issues of discrimination presently facing visible minorities and Aboriginals in Canada. The review focuses mostly on Canadian studies produced in the last five years, although research from the United States is included where relevant. It is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the literature, but rather provides the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

Often interrelated, education, employment, and income are important indicators of social status. They are frequently selected to measure socio-economic differences between groups that have been identified as being disadvantaged in the labour market, including those who are Aboriginal or a visible minority (Frank, 1997). These indicators, alone or in combination, reveal different aspects of inequality (Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996). Li (1998: 128-129) has argued:

...the social value and market value attached to racial origin are related... [E]conomic disadvantages associated with certain racial origins reinforce their low social standing since people so marked carry a lower market worth. In the long run, economic disparities according to racial origins help to maintain the social reality of race by giving a discounted market value to certain racial groups. In turn, the low social value given to certain racial origins creates obstacles which further limit the market outcomes for people being racialized.

However, as Frank (1997: 9-10) points out, the choice to use these indicators tends to be made

“out of expediency, practicality and, to a large extent, consistency with the prevailing culture and ideology”.

Racial Groups and Socio-economic Status

Education

In today's knowledge-based economy and society, education is highly valued, and plays an ever critical role in determining employment and income. A high school diploma is the increasingly minimum requirement for jobs that pay more than minimum wage. From the human capital perspective, education not only promotes personal development, it is a crucial investment in economic prosperity in the future. As shown in a report on employment among teens in Canada, most young people realize that high school education and a post-secondary degree are pre-requisites for obtaining meaningful and well-paying jobs (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1999).

Education affects earnings not only through the number of years of schooling, but also through other factors. How much a person earns often depends on the type of degrees the person obtained, the reputation of the degree-granting institution, as well as the field of specialization the person chose. To the extent that visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples obtain the same educational opportunities and level of achievement as non-racialized groups, this will increase their chances of having comparable levels of employment and income.

Taken as a group, visible minority groups in Canada were better educated than both non-racialized groups and Aboriginals (de Silva, 1997; Frank, 1997; Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996). Visible minorities, both Canadian and foreign-born, had a higher proportion of university graduates than did non-racialized groups (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999). Despite this educational achievement, visible minorities and immigrant youth continue to

face discrimination at school both at the personal and institutional levels. Immigrant youth often felt that they were penalized or ostracised because of their accent or their ethnic origin (CCSD, 2000). Davies and Guppy (1998) summarize the allegations of cultural racism that have been made against Canadian schools:

- a) public schools are said to not give enough coverage to the role of racial minorities in the history of Canada;
- b) the existing coverage of minorities is insulting and demeaning;
- c) there is too much emphasis on Canadian and European history and literature, and a lack of coverage of Native, Asian and African history and literature;
- and d) the sum total of these biases is that public schools tacitly tout White, European culture as superior, damaging the collective self-esteem of minorities (142-143).

These authors state that issues of inequity in schools are becoming increasingly racialized, when other related factors, particular class and socio-economic status, are the more likely sources of problems. Davies and Guppy (1998) felt that educational disadvantages are a reality for Aboriginals, but less so for other visible minorities.

Visible minorities, regardless of age, were more likely to be enrolled in a post-secondary institution on a full-time basis (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999). Over two-thirds of racial minorities 18-24 years old attended a post-secondary institution in 1996 compared to 46 percent of non-racialized Canadians. Racial minority participation, whether full- or part-time, appears to be generally higher than the participation by other Canadians, at all levels, and was most common in the fields of mathematics and physical sciences (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999).

Racial minorities were more likely than non-racialized groups to obtain bachelor or higher degrees, whether immigrant or non-immigrant, although these data do not differentiate between credentials

obtained within or outside Canada (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999). The proportion of university graduates among visible minorities was about twice that of whites, while the proportion of trade-certificate holders was only slightly higher among whites (de Silva, 1997). There was variation within visible minority groups regarding their levels of education (Davies and Guppy, 1998; Frank, 1997). For both men and women, Chinese and Filipino Canadians were among the groups most likely to have a university degree, especially at younger ages. While Asians have higher educational attainments, Blacks had above-average high school completion rates but below-average university completion rates. Hou and Balakrishnan (1996) have also reported that, with the exception of Blacks, young immigrants to Canada have attained much higher levels of education than the charter groups.

Despite the educational achievements of most visible minorities, the situation is quite different for Aboriginal peoples. They tend to have much less formal education than the general Canadian population (Davies and Guppy, 1998; Frank, 1997). Until recent decades, elementary and secondary school systems were "often not culturally sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal students" (Frank, 1997: 20). Younger Aboriginal children today face a slowly improving situation with the closure of residential schools and a higher proportion of Aboriginal teachers, but "this past has retained a menacing presence for Aboriginal youth" (Davies and Guppy, 1998:145).

Employment

People who have higher levels of education are less likely to be unemployed and more likely to have higher incomes (Macionis, Nancarrow Clarke, and Gerber, 1997). A person's educational level is related to a greater likelihood of employment, and to the occupational status that he or she holds. Occupation is important because it has been viewed as the major source of economic power for most individuals (Grabb, 1998). Ranking the importance or status of occupations, however, involves making value judgments (Frank, 1997). For example, certain normative assumptions have

to be made when ranking managerial and administrative occupations in terms of higher socio-economic status than clerical, sales, and service occupations. Nonetheless, occupational status is highly correlated to income levels. Grabb (1998) stated that occupation is sometimes viewed as the single best indicator of an individual's general stratification rank given its association with other inequality-related variables, i.e., income, education, gender, ethnicity. Employment patterns and occupational status differences among visible minorities, Aboriginals, and non-racialized groups are important to examine as discrepancies may reflect discrimination.

Despite the educational achievement of racial minorities, securing employment proves more problematic. Henry (1999) pointed out that discrimination can take place at any point in the employment process, including recruitment, screening, selection, promotion, or termination, and can be either intentional or inadvertent. A recent report, published by the Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service, showed that visible minorities accounted for one in 17 among all employees in the public service. Further, among those in the management level positions in the federal service, only one in 33 were visible minorities (Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service, 2000:20). Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin (1999:13-14) concluded that "systemic racism is likely operating to produce the differences in incomes and unemployment rates between the non-immigrant minority group and the non-immigrant (reference) group."

Labour force participation among visible minorities is slightly higher than it is among other Canadians, but considerable variation exists between different ethnic groups (Frank, 1997). Aboriginal peoples have lower rates of labour force participation and employment (Frank, 1997). Using 1991 Census data, the percentages of visible minority groups working in managerial and professional occupations were found to be generally smaller than for Canadians with British or French

ethnic backgrounds (Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996). For the Chinese, difficulties with the official languages may have been the major factor influencing their occupational status. However, Blacks, South Asians, and other visible minorities have lower occupational status than the charter groups in Canada, even when controlling for education (Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996). While about half of visible minority university graduates were employed in professional jobs in 1996, almost two-thirds (64.5%) of other Canadian university graduates found similar employment (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999).

Accreditation is a major barrier facing immigrants who were not educated in North America. There have been many recommendations made by various groups to facilitate the recognition of foreign credentials which have largely fallen by the wayside. Immigrants with foreign credentials still feel that their skills are under-utilized. For example, a 31-year-old chemical engineer from Iran reports applying to 700 to 800 companies with no job prospects. He currently works at a pizzeria for \$10 an hour (Toronto Star, 1999). Although most people are able to cope with their current situation, job satisfaction among foreign-trained professionals is low (NOIVMWC, 1996; 1999). Many people find it difficult to navigate their way through the administrative maze of gaining accreditation. Moreover, the cost of accreditation could be beyond the reach of immigrants who have just started their life in the new country. A recent study by the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (1999) has outlined five issues, including accessibility and availability of accreditation services, the cost of accreditation, lack of knowledge of the specific barriers facing immigrants, lack of co-operation among stakeholders, and lack of community consultation.

Even for visible minority persons educated in North America, many still face barriers to career advancement. Dr. Kin-Yip Chun, a Canadian seismologist of Chinese descent, perceives racial barriers despite his credentials (Globe and Mail, 2000).

He spent nine years from 1985 to 1994 at the University of Toronto as a research associate. Dr. Chun was denied tenure in four separate competitions, despite his international reputation, and \$1.4 million in research grants. The Ontario Human Rights Commission found evidence of racism, noting in one competition that the successful candidate, “initially considered inexperienced”, was appointed assistant professor in seismology a few months later over Dr. Chun, “who had served the university in this capacity for several years.” As evidenced by the case of Dr. Chun, racial minorities may fare relatively well in terms of education, but this is not necessarily translated into successful employment patterns.

Occupations with a relatively high concentration of visible minorities were machining, managerial, scientific, and service sector jobs (de Silva 1997). Except for the service trades, the same occupations also have a relatively high representation of whites. In the case of high-paying managerial jobs, the relative proportion of whites was slightly above that of visible minorities, whereas in the scientific fields, the latter were over-represented compared to whites. Visible minorities have the lowest representation in the occupations related to teaching, health, and transportation (de Silva 1997).

Overall, unemployment rates decline with increasing levels of formal education. However, there were some differences by minority group status. For example, among high school graduates, the unemployment rate for visible minorities in 1996 was 14.5 percent but only 9 percent for non-visible minorities. Similarly, the unemployment rate for visible minorities with a university degree was 11 percent while for non-visible minorities it was 5 percent (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999).

Income

Not surprisingly, racial minorities’ disadvantage in their employment experiences was also reflected in their earnings. Many researchers point to income disparities between white and non-white groups (e.g., Pendakur and Pendakur, 1996; Li, 1998; Frank, 1997; Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996; Baker and

Benjamin, 1995) with Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities generally earning less than white Canadians. Visible minorities earn much lower average annual incomes than non-visible minorities in all educational categories (Anisef, Sweet, James, and Lin, 1999). For example, among university graduates, visible minorities earned approximately \$7,000 less than non-visible minorities. The earnings differentials between racial and non-racialized groups that remain after accounting for other factors, such as educational levels, is often taken to be a proxy for discrimination. “Social inequality is primarily manifested in income inequalities” (Hou and Balakrishnan, 1996: 324).

Although earnings are only one outcome of labour market activity, wage rate differentials are considered the summary statistic that best characterise the difference between racial and non-racialized paid workers (Christofides and Swidinsky, 1994). De Silva (1997:25) stated that earnings differentials resulting from discrimination imply an “economically inefficient allocation of resources...[b]ut if the differential stems from differences in productivity, then attempts to close the earnings gap through such measures as employment equity legislation will impair economic efficiency.” Such reasoning suggests that it is important to determine the cause(s) of any differentials that exist.

Using data from the 1989 Labour Market Activity Survey, Christofides and Swidinsky (1994) found that visible minorities experience a wage disadvantage, compared to whites, that cannot be explained in terms of endowment differences¹. Only 24 percent of the differential in offered wages between the earnings of visible-minority men relative to white men was attributable to endowment differences. De Silva (1997:27) criticized this study for not considering “the role of quality differences in education in the wage differential between visible minorities and whites” but this raises the key issue of comparability of educational credentials which is difficult to resolve.

¹ According to de Silva (1996), endowment differences include age, education, language, marital status, province, urban/rural residence, occupation, weeks worked.

Pendakur and Pendakur (1998) argued that the earnings gaps² found between Canadian-born white men and Canadian-born visible-minority men (8.2%) and Aboriginal men (12.5%) were due primarily to differential opportunities. They state that although the earnings gap between immigrant men and Canadian-born male workers was larger, at 16 percent, this may decrease as immigrants assimilate into Canadian labour markets. There did not appear to be an earnings penalty for Canadian-born visible-minority women, but there were differentials for immigrant visible-minority women (7%) and Aboriginal women (9%), compared with Canadian-born white women. Pendakur and Pendakur (1998:544) concluded that “these earnings gaps found among Canadian-born ethnic groups suggest that economic discrimination may play an important role in Canadian labour markets.”

The earnings differences for immigrants that were associated with place of education differ by gender and across country of birth. Baker and Benjamin (1995) found that the Chinese experienced one of the smallest wage differentials. For men, there were large earnings differentials associated with finishing education in Central Europe and Other (including Northern) Europe, but there was no earnings differential associated with education completed in Asia or Africa. However, women who completed their education in Asia or Africa, earned 16 percent less than those from the same birthplace who finished their education in Canada (Pendakur and Pendakur, 1998).

Using the 1986 Census, Howland and Sakellariou (1993) found that for men, the earnings gap ranged from 2 percent for South Asians to 21 percent for Blacks. These differentials may also hide earnings

differences across occupational categories. Occupational segregation, by itself, played a role only in the earnings disadvantage experienced by Black men (Howland and Sakellariou, 1993). Blacks, whether native or foreign-born, face one of the largest unexplained wage differentials. Among the native-born, this appears to be correlated with very small returns to experience (Baker and Benjamin, 1995).

Analysis of 1986 Census data found that the earnings differential was about 5 percent for Black women and about 4 percent for both South East and South Asian women. For South and South East Asian women, wage discrimination was the largest factor explaining their earnings disadvantage (Howland and Sakellariou, 1993).

Summary

Most researchers have pointed to racial differences with respect to levels of education, employment and income. Of all groups, Aboriginal peoples are the most disadvantaged in education, employment, and income. Visible minorities as a group perform less well in terms of employment and income than do non-racialized groups. There is a significant “unexplained” wage differential which can be reasonably attributed to racial discrimination.

The main purpose of this study is to examine nationally the relationship between educational attainment, employment, and income; and to examine how visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples compare with non-racialized groups, and whether immigration status is also a factor. The study is conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data which will be presented in the two following sections.

² An earnings differential or gap refers to the difference in earnings between racialized and non-racialized groups. For example, if Canadian-born visible minority men have an earnings gap of 8.2 percent, then this means they earn 8.2 percent less than their non-racialized counterparts.

Part II Quantitative Analysis

This section presents findings from quantitative data analysis on differences in education, employment, occupation, and income. Comparisons are made across three groups: visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and non-racialized groups. Where possible, visible minorities and non-racialized groups are further subdivided by place of birth, i.e., Canadian-born and foreign-born. Although the in-depth qualitative findings are presented in the next section, selected quotations from the focus group are included in italics throughout the statistical analysis.

Research Methods

The purpose of the quantitative analysis is to assess the differences among the visible minority, Aboriginal, and non-racialized populations in employment, education, and income using the same set of indicators from year to year. In addition, the relationship between education and labour market outcomes is examined for the groups. Comparisons are made, to the extent possible, at the national and regional levels. For the purpose of this project, the comparison group will be non-racialized groups. Granted, quantitative data do not directly measure racism. Nevertheless, if racial differences in earnings still persist when all other factors such as gender, age, and education, are taken into consideration, it is reasonable to infer that discrimination may well contribute to the inequities.

Concepts and Definitions

Based upon the CRRF feasibility study (Gentium Consulting and John Samuel & Associates Inc., 1999), several concepts are deemed important to examine racial differences. These indicators will be used throughout this report.

Education

High school non-completion: The proportion of individuals who have not completed high school or secondary school.

College level: The proportion of students who have some college/trade education including those who are currently enrolled in a college/trade school or those who have completed a college/trades certificate or diploma.

University level: The proportion of students who have some university education including those who are currently enrolled in a university or those who have completed a university degree.

Employment

Employment rate: Also known as the employment/population ratio, this variable represents the number of employed persons expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over. The employment rate for a particular group (age, sex, marital status, etc.) is the number employed in that group expressed as a percentage of the population for that group (Statistics Canada, 2000).

Unemployment rate: The number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force. The unemployment rate for a particular group (age, sex, marital status, etc.) is the number unemployed in that group expressed as a percentage of the labour force for that group (Statistics Canada, 2000). (The labour force is defined as those either working at a paid job, or actively seeking paid work.)

Occupational concentration: This refers to the proportion of individuals working in certain occupations, for example, service or professional/managerial. For the purposes of this analysis, only broad occupational aggregates are examined.

Income

Low income: The proportion of individuals whose personal earnings are at the bottom quintile (20%) of the income scale.

High income: The proportion of individuals whose personal earnings are at the top quintile (20%) of the income scale.

Average personal earnings: The average (positive) personal earnings from employment and self-employment.

Data Sources

The Census

The 1996 Census Public Use Micro-data File (PUMF) is the primary data source for the analysis. Based upon 2.8 percent of the Census records, PUMF has detailed information on ethnic origin, visible minority status, and Aboriginal status; as well as employment, education, occupation, income and other relevant variables. Wherever possible, comparisons will be made between the 1991 and the 1996 Censuses. Since the Census is conducted every five years, it allows for cross-sectional/longitudinal data analysis over time.

National Graduate Survey

Another data source, the National Graduate Survey (NGS), is used for quantitative analysis, especially the section on education. The NGS gathers information on post-secondary graduates (college, trade school, and university) in Canada and follows the same sample of graduates two and five years after graduation. The NGS collects data on education level, education history, employment, employment history, income, job satisfaction, and whether these graduates find jobs in their field of study. With NGS, for example, we will be able to look at the employment rate for graduates two years after graduation. This information is important in understanding the labour market outcomes of post-secondary graduates for racial minorities and non-racialized groups. Similar to the Census, the NGS is conducted regularly, allowing changes to be tracked at several points in time. Although the NGS does not allow for analysis at the local level, it does allow for comparisons at the national level. Analysis will be centered on those who graduated in 1995.

Findings

Education

"When I send out my resume and I'm totally qualified for the position, they'll look at the courses I've taken (First Nations resources). Maybe that's why I don't get the job."

Education plays an increasingly important role in helping individuals secure stable employment and income in today's knowledge-based society and economy. In this section, we look at high school completion, highest level of education, and field of study. The findings generally show that the overall level of education has increased between 1991 and 1996 for all groups. Visible minorities have the highest levels of educational achievement, while Aboriginals fare the least well.

High School Completion

We first look at youth between the ages of 15 and 19, most of whom would have either completed or nearly completed their secondary education. As shown in Table 1A³, high school completion rates vary across groups. Among Canadian-born youth aged 15 to 19 in 1996, about three in ten Aboriginals did not finish high school, and were not attending school in the past year, compared to less than one in ten among visible minorities. Visible minorities, regardless of place of birth, were the most likely to be still attending high school. Canadian-born non-racialized groups had higher non-completion rates than either visible minorities or foreign-born non-racialized groups. These patterns remained quite stable between the Census years of 1991 and 1996.

Highest Level of Education

Aboriginals aged 20-24 were much less likely to pursue post-secondary education than other groups. Over one-half of those aged 20 to 24 had not completed high school compared to 10 per-

³ In this table and subsequent tables, the following notation is used:

C-B=Canadian-Born

F-B=Foreign-Born

Non-RG= Non-Racialized Group

Table 1A. Percentage High School Attendance by Racial Groups (Age 15-19, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
No High School	7.6	9.4	8.9	9.6	13.4	14.6	13.4	12.1	29.8	30.6
High School (continuing)	72.5	71.3	66.0	70.4	63.8	65.6	62.3	68.5	61.2	61.9
Completed High School	19.9	19.2	25.1	20.1	22.7	19.8	24.3	19.5	8.9	7.5
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File

Table 1B. Percentage Education Level by Racial Groups (Age 20-24, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
High School non-completed	10.5	10.3	20.6	18.2	20.9	17.8	19.8	14.2	57.0	52.8
High School	14.5	13.6	19.6	16.2	20.5	17.3	19.6	17.5	13.4	16.2
Some College/Trade	12.3	12.6	12.1	13.1	11.6	13.0	11.1	10.7	12.5	12.2
College/Trade	11.8	11.5	10.3	9.9	18.0	19.1	16.1	16.5	8.1	8.5
Some University	27.9	24.5	20.9	17.9	13.9	12.5	16.9	16.7	6.4	5.4
University	23.0	27.4	16.7	24.6	15.0	20.3	16.4	24.3	-	4.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File Note: - sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

Table 1C. Percentage Education Level by Racial Groups (Age 25-34, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
High School non-completed	13.0	9.8	22.9	20.6	22.8	18.2	19.9	14.8	51.5	44.1
High School	13.2	11.0	16.3	15.4	21.4	18.4	18.1	16.2	11.3	11.3
Some College/Trade	8.1	7.9	7.9	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.1	12.1	13.5
College/Trade	21.3	19.6	15.7	16.6	23.1	26.1	23.3	24.3	15.0	18.2
Some University	8.4	4.3	6.6	4.0	3.8	2.7	5.2	3.1	4.2	3.3
University	36.1	47.5	30.6	35.4	20.9	26.6	25.7	34.5	5.9	9.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File

Table 1D. Percentage Education Level by Racial Groups (Age 35-64, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
High School non-completed	28.1	23.6	29.7	28.0	35.9	29.9	35.3	29.3	60.7	49.9
High School	16.8	15.4	14.7	15.5	20.5	21.0	16.8	17.3	8.2	10.7
Some College/Trade	6.0	6.3	5.8	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.0	4.7	6.5	7.4
College/Trade	17.8	19.1	14.9	16.4	16.9	20.6	19.6	21.6	14.0	19.1
Some University	4.7	3.4	3.8	2.4	3.0	2.0	3.1	2.1	3.2	2.3
University	26.6	32.3	31.0	32.6	18.2	21.0	20.2	25.1	7.4	10.5
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File

cent of Canadian-born visible minorities and 18 percent of foreign-born visible minorities (Table 1B). Foreign-born visible minorities had as high an educational level as the non-racialized Canadian-born group measured in terms of high school completion. In terms of university completion, Aboriginal peoples lagged far behind (4.8%) while both Canadian-born and foreign-born visible minorities had somewhat higher attainment than Canadian-born non-racialized groups. Between 1991 and 1996, there was an increase in individuals having a university degree for all groups, but particularly for the foreign-born. There was an increase of eight percentage points for both foreign-born visible minorities and non-racialized groups having a university degree, from 17 percent to 25 percent and 16 percent to 24 percent, respectively.

Data in Table 1C show that the percentage with high school non-completion aged 25-34 has decreased for all groups between the Census years. Level of education was higher among visible minorities and foreign-born non-racialized groups than among Aboriginal peoples and Canadian-born non-racialized groups. More than four in ten Aboriginal young adults aged 25 to 34 in 1996 had not completed high school. Canadian-born visible minorities had the lowest percentage of high school non-completion, and the highest percentage having a university degree (47%). Although the proportion of Aboriginals in this age category obtaining a university degree was still much lower than the other groups, it increased from 6 percent in 1991 to nearly 10 percent in 1996.

Similar to the other age groups, individuals aged 35 to 64 have shown improvement in their educational levels since 1991 (Table 1D). Compared to Tables 1B and 1C, it was not unexpected that high school non-completion increases with age across all groups while a university level education decreases with age. However, the 1996 data reveal that Aboriginals were still the most educationally disadvantaged with over half of this age group having less than a high school education. On a more positive note, there has been a decrease in

high school non-completion from the previous Census year (from 61% to 50%). Between 1991 and 1996, college-level educated Aboriginals increased from 20 percent to 26 percent.

Overall, the educational data show that the educational attainment of both foreign-born and Canadian-born visible minorities was equivalent or superior to that of Canadian-born non-racialized groups. This was true even for the younger age groups who would most likely have received their education in Canada.

Field of Study

"I have a university degree from Algeria, where they do not have CEGEP. When I came here, they subtracted three years from my educational attainment in order to compensate. This makes no sense."

Across all groups aged 25 to 44, the most common fields of study are business administration and engineering with about half of all groups in these fields (Table 1.2). Engineering was less common for Canadian-born visible minorities, while business administration was the top field for visible minorities, regardless of place of birth.

Although there was less overall representation in the fields of education and agriculture/biological sciences, foreign-born visible minorities were the least likely to be in these fields in 1996. In contrast, foreign-born visible minorities were more apt to study mathematics than were the other groups. There was little variation between the Census years.

Employment

"I've called for jobs and had people say 'come down for an interview' and when I get there, I get the feeling they are surprised to see that I'm black, because I sound like the average guy on the telephone. They've said 'Oh, the job has just been filled', or during the interview they will say that I'm overqualified or ask me questions like 'Are you sure you want to work at this type of job?'..."

Table 1.2 Individuals with Some Post-Secondary Education in Field of Studies by Racial Groups (Age 25-44, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Education	7.6	7.4	5.2	5.1	9.8	9.2	8.6	8.4	13.3	11.8
Fine Arts and Humanities	11.3	11.5	10.0	10.3	11.5	11.7	14.3	13.8	8.4	7.9
Social Sciences	13.3	14.9	8.3	8.8	9.6	10.7	9.4	10.1	14.2	16.7
Business and Commerce	24.7	25.3	27.0	26.6	22.6	23.4	18.7	18.7	23.1	20.1
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	5.2	6.1	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.8	5.3	5.7	-	5.2
Engineering	21.2	19.0	25.6	25.1	27.6	26.7	29.4	28.5	28.1	29.5
Health, Nursing and Applied Sciences	11.6	11.0	11.5	11.2	11.5	10.6	10.1	9.9	8.4	8.2
Mathematics and Physical Sciences	5.0	4.9	7.7	8.2	2.9	2.8	4.2	5.0	-	-
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File
 Note: - sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

This section examines differences with regard to the employment rate, the unemployment rate, and occupational status. We focus on adults aged 25-64 as they are more likely to participate in the labour market full-time, compared to individuals at older or younger ages. Given the higher proportion of visible minorities with post-secondary education, one would expect that this would be positively reflected in employment patterns. However, the results in this section show that, regardless of education, non-racialized groups still fare the best in terms of employment. On a national as well as regional level, non-racialized groups had the lowest unemployment rate, especially if they had a university education. Only in business and engineering were there similar employment rates between visible minorities and non-racialized groups. Aboriginal peoples had the highest unemployment rate regardless of levels of education.

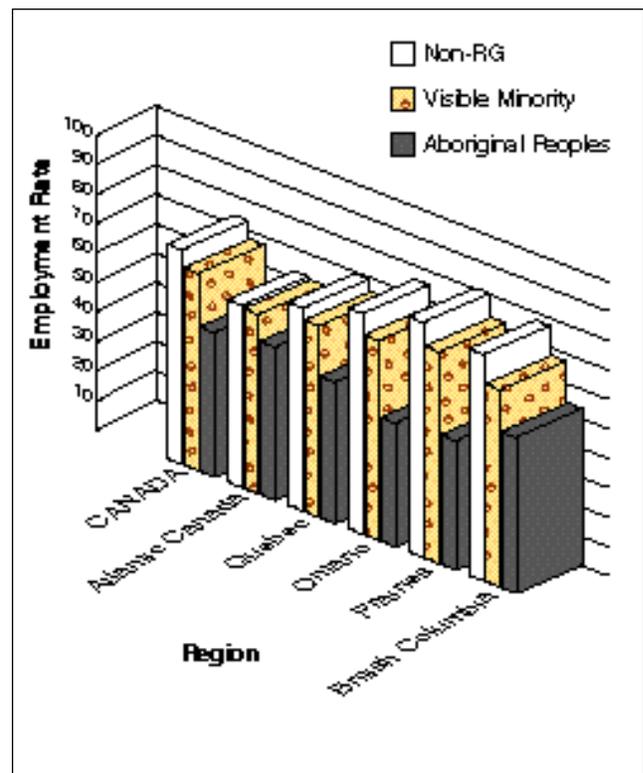
Employment and Unemployment Rates

"I think it (racism) happens in the workplace. Simple looks, gestures, tones, body language, you can read all that. I've seen it. It's out there. Maybe it's not done on purpose; maybe people are inexperienced with people from other cultures. But it does happen in the workplace."

Chart 2.1 presents the employment rate for each group in 1996. Overall, non-racialized groups had the highest employment rate, with nearly three-

quarters of the adult population being employed. In comparison, two-thirds of visible minorities were employed and less than half of Aboriginal peoples found paid work in 1996. Regionally, visible minorities in Quebec have the lowest employment rate with slightly over half of the population working, while the employment rate was highest in the Prairie provinces with 72 percent employed

Chart 2.1 Employment by Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1996)



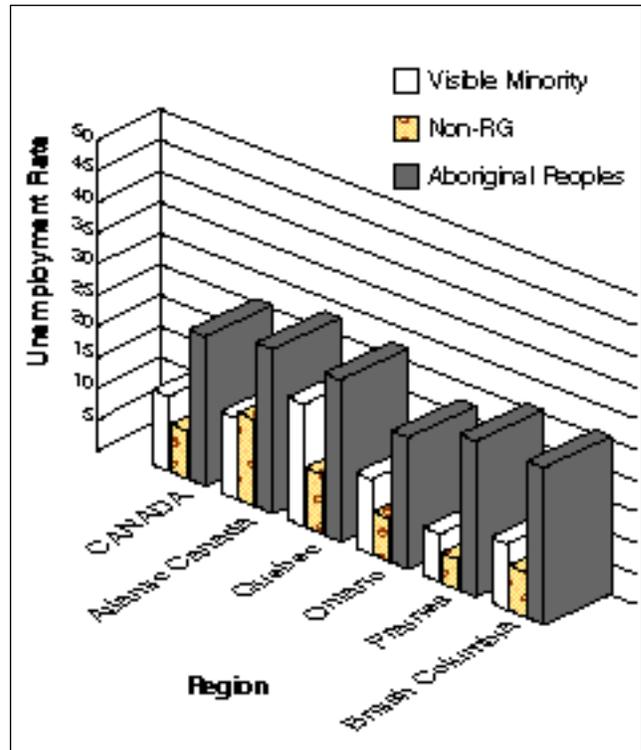
(Chart 2.1). Aboriginals in the Atlantic provinces, Ontario and British Columbia fare slightly better than in Quebec and the Prairie provinces.

The difference in unemployment rates between non-racialized groups and Aboriginal peoples was significantly greater in the Prairies, while differences between non-racialized groups and visible minorities were greatest in Quebec and lowest in Atlantic Canada.

As shown in Chart 2.2, the unemployment rate was the highest for Aboriginal peoples, with a rate of 25 percent. Although visible minorities did somewhat better than Aboriginal peoples, their unemployment rate was significantly above that of non-racialized groups. The difference was greatest in Quebec, where one in five visible minorities was looking for work in 1996.

The unemployment rate generally was highest for individuals with lower levels of education (Table 2.1). Even with post-secondary education, however, the unemployment rate was still higher for racial than non-racialized groups, especially foreign-born visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples. Based on the 1996 Census, among those with a college level education, 23 percent of Aboriginals and 12 percent of foreign-born visible minorities were looking for paid work, while the unemployment rates for non-racialized groups and Canadian-born visible minorities were around seven or eight percent. Only four percent of the Canadian-born non-racialized group were looking for paid work, while 10 percent of the foreign-born visible minorities and 16 percent of Aboriginal

Chart 2.2 Unemployment by Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1996)



peoples with a university level education were unemployed.

Part of the disadvantage shown here for foreign-born visible minorities could be attributed to the lack of recognition for foreign educational credentials. However, for visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples who received their post-secondary education in Canada, the employment rate in 1996 was still lower than for non-racialized groups. According to the National Graduate Survey, the employment rate two years after graduation was lower for racial minorities than for non-racialized groups regardless of field of study

Table 2.1 Highest Level of Education and Unemployment Rate by Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

	<High School		High School		College level		University level	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Visible Minority (CB)	12.5	16.3	-	-	8.6	8.0	6.8	6.3
Visible Minority (FB)	17.2	16.5	13.0	13.7	11.7	11.7	9.3	10.4
Non-RG (CB)	13.0	13.4	8.4	8.1	8.2	7.7	5.0	4.2
Non-RG (FB)	9.8	9.6	8.0	7.4	7.9	7.1	6.1	6.6
Aboriginal Peoples	33.7	31.8	20.3	21.8	26.1	23.2	15.1	16.5

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File Note: - sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

(Table 2.2). For those who graduated in education, the employment rate two years after graduation was 88 per cent for non-racialized groups but 78 per cent for visible minority and Aboriginal graduates, a ten percentage point difference. For visible minority graduates, rates of employment were highest among those who studied business and commerce, or engineering, but lowest in social sciences or agricultural and biological sciences.

Table 2.2 Employment Rate Two Years After Graduation by Each Field of Study and Racial Groups, 1992 and 1997

	Visible Minority		Non-RG		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
Education	85.0	78.4	89.6	88.8	80.5	77.5
Fine Arts and Humanities	74.2	72.2	79.7	78.0	81.7	76.0
Social Sciences	83.8	71.9	83.5	82.9	79.9	83.8
Business and Commerce	83.8	81.0	84.2	85.1	78.8	77.1
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	66.0	67.5	78.1	77.0	58.9	75.4
Engineering	77.2	81.9	81.0	84.8	70.0	75.3
Health, Nursing and Applied Sciences	87.5	78.7	93.5	88.9	97.8	86.1
Mathematics and Physical Sciences	74.1	75.3	83.0	80.5	–	–

Source: 1992 and 1997 National Graduate Survey Note: – sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate
 Note: Data based on 1990 and 1995 graduates two years after graduation

Occupation

“I look around and think - there’s no chance of getting ahead. Of all the people in senior positions, no one is from an ethnic group.”

Compared to Canadian-born non-racialized groups, Canadian-born visible minorities – consistent with educational attainment – tended to be relatively concentrated in professional jobs (22% vs 16%) and were equally employed in managerial jobs. Foreign-born visible minorities were relatively under-represented in professional and, especially, managerial jobs. Aboriginal peoples were relatively under-represented in both of these categories. Canadian-born visible minorities also seemed to concentrate disproportionately in clerical jobs, whereas foreign-born visible minorities tended to have semi-skilled and unskilled occupations (Table 2.3). Aboriginal peoples were more likely to take up sales/service or semi-skilled occupations.

Even though visible minorities and non-racialized groups seemed broadly as likely to be in the senior/middle management occupations, there were some differences within this occupational category. For example, one can be a senior manager in a large corporation or a CEO of one’s own small business. Although many visible minorities held managerial jobs, many of these managerial positions were also characterized by self-employment. For non-racial-

ized groups, almost two-thirds of those in management positions were employed by others, compared to only half among visible minorities (Chart 2.3). In other words, half of visible minorities who held a management position were self-employed.

“These people (i.e., immigrants) are college graduates, they have Ph.D.s, Masters, and most of them are unemployed or underemployed. The only reason is racism or discrimination.”

Education level does not show the same linkage to occupation for racial minorities as it does for non-racialized groups (Chart 2.4). In particular, foreign-born visible minorities, and, to a lesser extent, Canadian-born visible minorities, compared to non-racialized groups, showed a discrepancy between their level of education and occupational status. Among those with university level education, nearly six out of 10 non-racialized groups, regardless of place of birth, had a skill level four occupation (i.e., managerial or professional). In comparison, only four out of 10 foreign-born visible minorities, and five out of 10 Canadian-born visible minorities, with the same education level could claim the same. Five out of 10 university-educated Aboriginals had skill level four jobs.

“We were four on a shift in a fast food restaurant. On one shift it was me (an Aboriginal person) and three white girls. On the other shift it was

Table 2.3 Occupational Status by Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Senior and Middle Managers (Skill level IV)	12.1	10.2	10.3	8.8	10.9	10.0	12.5	11.6	6.3	6.9
Professionals (Skill level IV)	22.1	22.2	14.7	15.3	14.7	16.0	15.3	17.5	9.4	11.1
Semi-professional & technical (Skill level III)	7.6	7.3	5.2	4.9	5.8	5.9	5.4	5.7	6.3	6.8
Supervisors-Foremen/women Administrative & Senior Clerical	11.1	9.3	7.2	6.7	13.4	11.9	11.9	10.8	7.9	6.9
Sales/Service-Skilled crafts/trades (SL III)	9.1	8.6	11.5	11.1	12.7	12.7	14.6	13.9	13.2	15.0
Clerical Workers (SL II)	12.6	14.7	11.9	11.7	11.0	11.5	8.3	8.7	6.3	8.6
Sales and Service (SL II)	9.7	10.7	10.3	11.5	10.3	10.9	9.2	10.1	12.8	11.2
Semi-skilled manual (SL II)	7.6	7.5	14.3	15.2	11.5	11.2	11.3	10.9	15.0	13.8
Sales/Service-Other manual workers (SL I)	8.1	9.6	14.5	14.9	9.7	10.0	11.5	10.9	22.9	19.7
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File

three white people and an East Indian girl. That girl and I always had to clean the toilets and do the garbage. It was never them, always us."

Income

"It's just that you're not White."

Given traditional returns to education and the growing premium on education in a knowledge-based economy, one would expect that higher

education would yield higher income and occupational status. This section focuses on labour market outcomes in relation to education.

Non-racialized groups were much more likely than foreign-born visible minorities and Aboriginal persons to be in the fifth or highest income quintile. Specifically, in 1996, one in five non-racialized group members were in the top 20

Chart 2.3 Percent in a Managerial Position by Employment Status (Age 25-64, 1996)

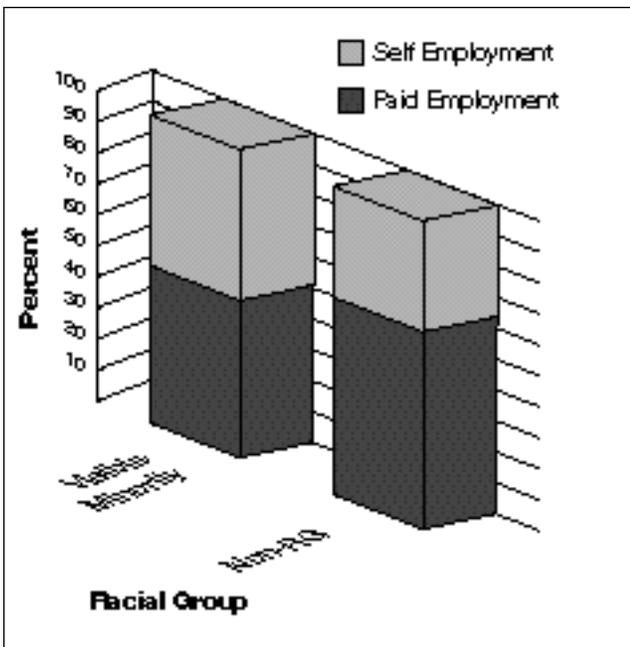
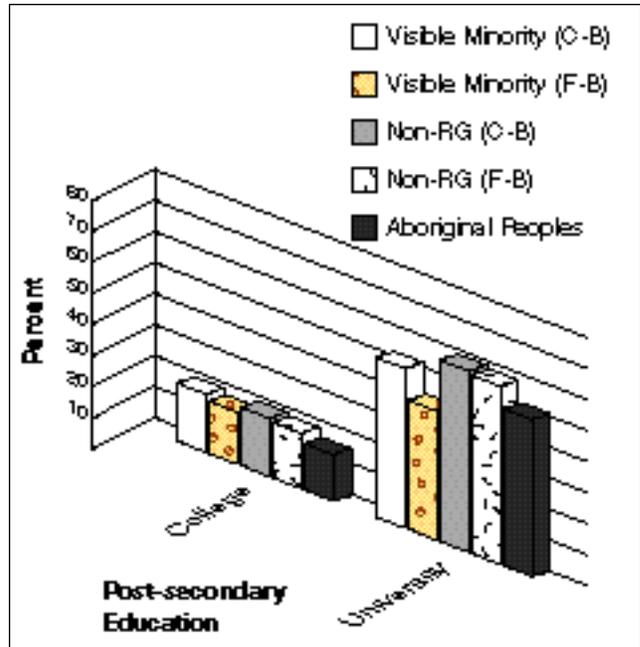


Chart 2.4 Percent of Racial Groups in Skill IV Occupation with Post-Secondary Education (Age 25-64, 1996)



percent of the income distribution while this was the case for only one in eight foreign-born visible minorities and one in 17 Aboriginals (Chart 3.1). Correspondingly, Aboriginals and foreign-born visible minorities were over-represented in the first or lowest income quintile. Nearly four in ten Aboriginals and about 3 in ten foreign-born visible minorities were in the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution.

Higher education was associated with higher economic returns but more for some groups than for others. This is more the case for non-racialized groups than for racialized groups (Chart 3.2). An examination of educational achievement by quintile for 1996 reveals that 31 percent of Aboriginals with college education and 28 percent with university education were in the bottom quintile (Table 3.1). Among the foreign-born, with university level education, 23 percent of visible minorities were in the bottom income quintile, compared to 15 percent among non-racialized groups.

Given the same education, visible minorities still trail behind non-racialized groups with regard to income. About 38 percent of the Canadian-born non-racialized group with a university education

were in the top quintile, compared to 29 percent of Canadian-born visible minorities and 21 percent of foreign-born visible minorities (Table 3.2). For the foreign-born, a nearly 17 percentage point difference was observed between visible minorities and non-racialized groups (38% and 21%, respectively). Even among university-educated individuals, Aboriginals were still disadvantaged, with only 13 percent of university graduates belonging to the highest income quintile.

In other words, given the same level of education, non-racialized groups, whether foreign-born or Canadian-born, are three times as likely as Aboriginal peoples and about twice as likely as foreign-born visible minorities to be in the top 20% income distribution. Moreover, even though they are born in Canada, visible minorities are still less likely than foreign-born and Canadian-born non-racialized groups to be in the top 20% income distribution.

Earnings Differences⁴

"I am bilingual so jobs are very easy to find if you are willing to do customer service. But that is a very low-paying sector."

Chart 3.1 Percent in Lowest and Highest Income Quintile (Age 25-64, 1996)

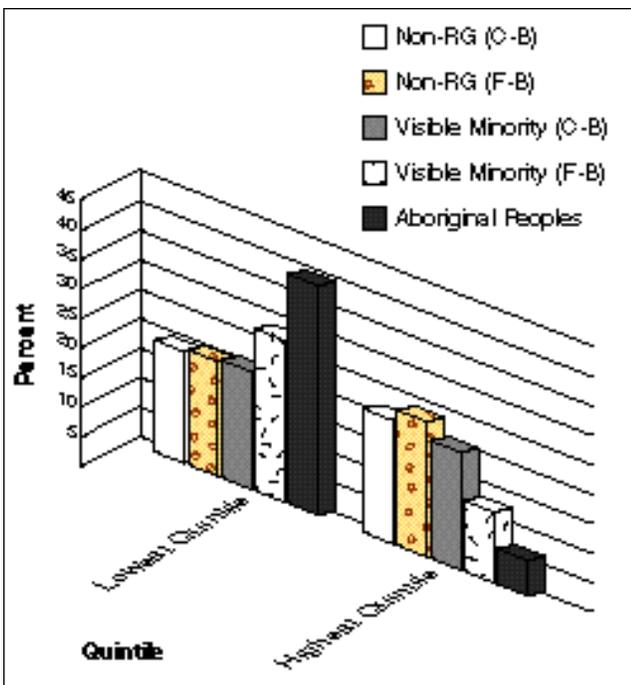
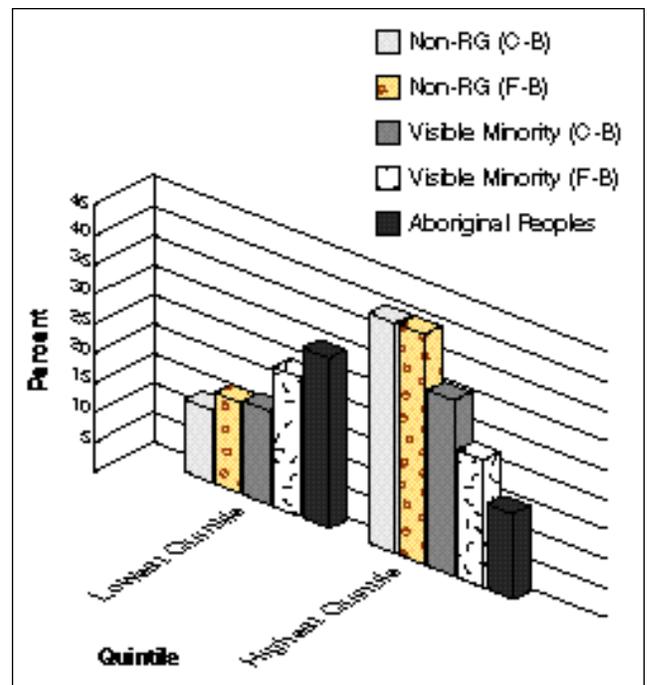


Chart 3.2 Percent of Racial Groups with University Level Education in Lowest and Highest Income Quintile (Age 25-64, 1996)



Part II Quantitative Analysis

Table 3.1 Percent in Lowest Quintile by Education and Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

		<High School		High School		College level		University level	
		1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Visible Minority (CB)	Female	36.1	41.9	22.6	24.9	25.2	20.5	18.1	15.7
	Male	23.7	33.4	–	–	14.4	15.3	12.2	15.1
	Total	29.5	37.5	17.3	20.7	20.2	18.1	14.9	15.4
Visible Minority (FB)	Female	39.8	42.2	31.7	34.4	27.4	26.9	23.7	25.8
	Male	22.2	28.7	20.1	25.7	15.4	20.9	14.8	20.6
	Total	31.5	35.7	26.0	30.3	21.7	24.0	18.6	22.9
Non-RG (CB)	Female	45.5	40.6	29.1	26.2	24.7	21.4	16.7	14.7
	Male	18.1	20.5	8.6	11.1	8.2	10.1	7.0	8.1
	Total	30.4	29.5	18.7	18.6	16.5	15.8	11.6	11.4
Non-RG (FB)	Female	38.5	35.5	29.0	26.2	26.8	24.9	21.0	20.0
	Male	13.3	16.7	10.0	11.9	8.7	10.7	7.5	10.7
	Total	25.7	26.0	19.4	19.0	16.7	17.2	13.3	14.9
Aboriginal Peoples	Female	64.7	53.5	28.5	37.4	40.3	29.5	26.5	29.9
	Male	44.7	44.6	29.1	25.6	33.4	32.3	–	25.5
	Total	54.5	49.1	28.8	31.3	37.1	30.7	26.0	28.2

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File Note: – sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

Table 3.2 Percent in Highest Income Quintile by Education Level and Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

		<High School		High School		College level		University level	
		1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Visible Minority (CB)	Female	–	–	–	–	–	–	22.1	21.8
	Male	15.7	–	22.1	20.4	20.7	20.3	40.2	36.5
	Total	9.3	–	15.0	14.0	13.2	13.8	31.9	29.4
Visible Minority (FB)	Female	1.7	1.4	2.9	3.0	5.2	5.8	13.5	13.6
	Male	8.0	6.5	13.1	8.4	19.1	16.0	31.7	26.9
	Total	4.7	3.9	7.9	5.6	11.8	10.6	23.9	21.1
Non-RG (CB)	Female	2.3	2.4	4.3	4.9	6.1	7.6	22.5	25.6
	Male	16.6	16.1	27.8	26.2	31.2	31.1	51.8	49.8
	Total	10.1	10.0	16.2	15.6	18.6	19.3	37.9	37.9
Non-RG (FB)	Female	3.3	3.1	6.1	6.5	7.6	7.7	23.7	24.4
	Male	20.8	18.1	31.2	27.9	36.7	33.0	55.7	49.2
	Total	12.2	10.7	18.7	17.3	23.7	21.4	41.9	37.9
Aboriginal Peoples	Female	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	11.2
	Male	5.4	5.7	–	15.8	–	8.4	–	–
	Total	3.3	3.4	–	9.8	5.3	5.7	14.9	13.4

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File Note: – sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

Table 3.3 Earnings by Region and Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
CANADA	35,010	38,601	30,117	31,821	34,735	38,498	37,429	40,820	26,091	29,051
Atlantic Canada	28,196	28,558	38,102	37,323	30,931	33,190	37,843	37,025	-	27,212
Quebec	34,975	31,705	28,139	28,927	32,916	35,939	34,344	37,287	27,619	30,563
Ontario	36,317	41,313	31,216	33,293	37,409	41,708	38,389	41,691	27,053	31,860
Prairies	34,707	35,648	26,818	27,799	33,032	36,423	35,666	39,144	24,492	25,995
British Columbia	34,933	40,319	29,731	31,417	36,403	41,660	37,576	42,340	26,503	30,597

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata FileNote: Full-time, Full-year earnings
 Note: - sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

“There are plenty of low-end jobs. But long-term high-end employment is not easy to find.”

In terms of personal average earnings, foreign-born visible minorities and Aboriginals were disadvantaged in most categories. Table 3.3 shows average annual earnings by racial groupings and region of residence. Foreign-born and Canadian-born non-racialized groups and Canadian-born visible minorities had broadly comparable levels of income, however, as demonstrated previously, the visible minorities generally have a higher level of education than the other groups. Furthermore, foreign-born and Canadian-born non-racialized groups earned much more on average than foreign-born visible minorities or Aboriginal peoples. According to the 1996 Census, 94 percent of the visible minorities live in large urban centres

⁴ Throughout this section, reference group refers to non-racialized groups born in Canada, unless otherwise specified.

(Statistics Canada, 1998a) where wages are higher. Note that the data are for full-year workers only and so do not reflect the impact of higher rates of unemployment on minority earners. In 1996, Aboriginals and foreign-born visible minorities earned less in every region of Canada compared to Canadian-born non-racialized groups. The region with the greatest differential for Aboriginals and foreign-born visible minorities compared to Canadian-born non-racialized groups was British Columbia. While Canadian-born non-racialized groups in British Columbia earned \$41,660, Aboriginals earned \$30,597 on average, and the corresponding amount for foreign-born visible minorities was \$31,417. Foreign-born non-racialized groups earned a comparable amount to their Canadian-born counterparts in Ontario, and in the remaining regions their earnings exceeded the reference group. In Atlantic Canada, the foreign-born visible minorities appeared to have higher earnings than the Canadian-born. Among the Canadian-born, however, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples earned around \$5,000 less than those who are neither visible minority nor Aboriginal.

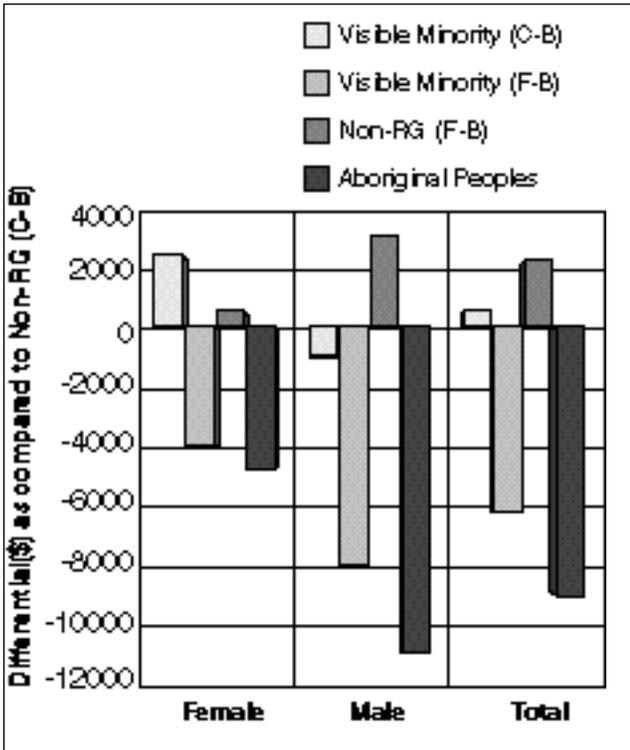
Table 3.4 Earnings by Gender and Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

	Female		Male		Total	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Visible Minority (CB)	29,601	33,519	38,816	42,433	35,003	38,572
Visible Minority (FB)	24,087	27,075	34,605	35,329	30,130	31,829
Non-RG (CB)	27,078	31,150	39,601	43,456	34,755	38,529
Non-RG (FB)	27,633	31,627	43,121	46,457	37,470	40,854
Aboriginal Peoples	24,013	26,361	28,580	32,369	26,356	29,290

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File
 Note: Full-time, Full-year earnings

Table 3.4 shows average earnings by gender. In 1996, Canadian-born non-racialized women earned \$31,150 on average. Canadian-born

Chart 3.3 Earnings Differentials Between Canadian-Born Non-RG and Other Racial Groups by Gender (Age 25-64, 1996)



visible minority women earned \$2,369 more than the reference group, at \$33,519. However, foreign-born visible minority women and Aboriginals both earned substantially less at \$27,075 and \$26,361, respectively. Canadian-born non-racialized men earned \$43,456, on average in 1996. This was \$3,000 less than their foreign-born non-racialized group counterparts. Visible minority men, regard-

less of place of birth, earned less than the reference group, by \$1,023 less when they were born in Canada, and by \$8,127 less when foreign-born (Chart 3.3). Aboriginals also earned much less than the reference group (\$26,361). Among the foreign-born population, visible minorities on average earn 78 cents for every dollar earned by non-racialized groups.

Earnings by field of study are presented in Table 3.5. The earnings of foreign-born non-racialized groups exceeded those of Canadian-born non-racialized groups for all fields of study, especially in the health, nursing, and applied sciences field. In contrast, the earnings of foreign-born visible minorities were less than the reference group in all fields of study. In the fields of social science and mathematics, the differences were lowest with foreign-born visible minorities earning about \$11,000 less than Canadian-born non-racialized groups. Aboriginals also had earnings well below the reference group. For example, Aboriginals employed in the health, nursing, and applied sciences field earned almost \$16,000 less than Canadian-born non-racialized groups. While Canadian-born visible minorities had earnings less than the reference group in most fields of study, health, nursing, and applied sciences was the exception. In this field, Canadian-born visible minorities earned \$54,756 compared to the Canadian-born non-racialized groups earnings of \$45,463.

Table 3.5 Earnings by Field of Studies and Racial Groups (Age 25-64, 1991 and 1996)

	Visible Minority (CB)		Visible Minority (FB)		Non-RG (CB)		Non-RG (FB)		Aboriginal Peoples	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
Education	38,374	40,706	30,447	33,675	39,291	43,110	41,278	44,603	28,793	32,326
Fine Arts and Humanities	34,848	34,904	28,827	29,783	33,797	35,690	37,631	39,406	-	26,540
Social Sciences	36,805	40,601	35,566	37,702	46,533	48,673	48,846	49,953	29,870	34,211
Business and Commerce	36,379	40,396	32,603	34,310	38,020	41,855	40,970	44,237	27,118	29,539
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	30,626	31,969	30,523	31,689	33,216	36,206	36,021	37,856	-	-
Engineering	38,598	41,974	37,825	38,700	40,062	44,236	44,993	47,180	31,232	33,479
Health, Nursing and Applied Sciences	45,233	54,756	41,794	45,020	40,812	45,463	48,249	53,682	-	29,596
Mathematics and Physical Sciences	45,505	43,421	41,285	41,996	47,933	53,132	53,257	57,937	-	-

Source: 1996 Census, Public Use Microdata File
 Note: Full-time, Full-year earnings
 Note: - sample size too small to provide a reliable estimate

Summary

- With respect to education, regardless of place of birth, visible minorities have equal or better educational attainment than non-racialized groups.
- Visible minority groups experience significantly lower rates of employment and higher rates of unemployment than non-racialized groups, even holding education constant.
- Occupational differences between foreign-born visible minorities and non-racialized groups, including representation in higher status professions, are evident.
- There are very significant annual income and annual earnings differences between foreign-born visible minorities and Canadian-born non-racialized groups, and this was also true by education level.
- The broad pattern of the data suggests that foreign-born visible minorities experience economic disadvantages above and beyond what would be expected given their educational attainment.
- Canadian-born visible minorities fare relatively well in terms of earnings and income, but this has to be set in the context of superior levels of education compared to the reference group, i.e., Canadian-born non-racialized groups.
- Aboriginal peoples experience very low average earnings and income which are partly related to lower education levels, though discrepancies between education and outcomes seem to be apparent.

Part III Qualitative Analysis

As noted earlier, a key dimension of racism is the exclusion of individuals from full social participation because of their racial backgrounds. “Beyond education, employment, and income, equality extends to people’s interactions with each other and with various institutions - interactions that involve a complex mixture of attitudes and mutual reactions” (Frank, 1997: 10). This type of exclusion is often felt at the individual level, through one’s own experience or the experience of those they know. These personal experiences or perceptions are a more direct measure of racism.

The experience of discrimination, often not measured in quantitative surveys, takes on many different forms. In order to fully understand the extent of discrimination, we conducted qualitative analysis using focus groups with racial minorities.

Similar to the quantitative analysis, the qualitative component collects baseline data for future comparisons. Although the qualitative data could be either longitudinal (following the same group of people over time) or quasi-longitudinal (sampling a different group of people from year to year), the latter method was chosen because it is cost-effective. By not following the same individuals, it is less expensive to carry out the research. Given that people may not be at the same place every five years, it is more convenient to select a different sample. It is also similar to the Census sample where population trends are monitored rather than following specific persons.

Research Methods

Seven focus groups were conducted between April 3rd and April 10th, 2000 in five Canadian cities where a substantial number of racial minorities reside. The selection of the sample is important for focus groups, and in this case, each focus group was based on a random sample from the Aboriginal and visible minority populations. Participants had to be between the ages of 20-50, and were either employed, looking for work, or were students.

One focus group was held in each of the following locations: Halifax, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Two focus groups were conducted in each of Montreal and Toronto. With the exception of the Winnipeg group, which included the participation of Aboriginal people only, the groups included the participation of visible minorities and Aboriginal people. Each group lasted for 90 minutes, and included the participation of eight to ten people who were randomly selected members. A total of 84 percent of participants were employed on either a part-time or full-time basis, and the remainder were students or were looking for employment.

There are many advantages to using focus groups. They allow more detailed information to be collected than is normally available from quantitative surveys or telephone interviews. Each focus group consists of a small group of people, and although they are strangers, the non-threatening environment tends to promote an atmosphere of sharing. They bring together a broad range of experiences and opinions. Finally, they are more cost-effective than personal interviews.

Despite the advantages of focus groups, there are some challenges. Hiebert (1998) refers to an uneven depth to the information collected. While some individuals tell personal stories about their experiences, others may be aware that they are giving “essentially public performances” (Hiebert, 1998:7). When pursuing issues, researchers must be able to establish a rapport with a group of people in a short time period and to balance information needs with a respect for the privacy of individual participants.

In addition, there are some limitations to the comparisons that can be made across focus groups. If different researchers facilitate different groups then this may shape the direction of the focus groups (Hiebert, 1998). Comparisons are also limited by the small group size, and it is difficult to gauge the representativeness of the opinions expressed in

these groups. However, findings from these focus groups corroborate other focus group findings (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000). Further, themes emerging in focus groups often indicate a directionality of trends found in polling data.

Details on the composition of the focus groups are presented in the following table.

Location	Date	Number of Participants	Aboriginal	Other visible minorities
Halifax	Apr-03	9	3	6
Toronto	Apr-04	9	3	6
Toronto	Apr-04	8	1	7
Winnipeg	Apr-05	10	10	0
Montreal	Apr-10	8	3	5
Montreal	Apr-10	8	1	7
Vancouver	Apr-16	10	5	5
Total		62	26	36

Each focus group, facilitated by the same researcher experienced in conducting focus groups among visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples, lasted approximately 90 minutes. All focus groups were conducted in English, with the exception of one of the Montreal groups, which was in French. Each discussion centred on the following issues: What does it take to get a job? What does it take to succeed once a person is in the workplace? Do racial groups still experience discrimination based upon the colour of their skin? How do people respond to discrimination? And, finally, what does it take to reduce racial discrimination in the workplace or in society in general?

Racism in the Workplace: “It’s a Hidden Thing”

Finding a Job and Liking It

Participants identified at least three factors critical to employment: a post-secondary degree, the right skill set, and a boom economy. A few participants, mostly highly skilled professionals, felt the job market is great and that there is a labour shortage in their line of work. Most people, however, tended to describe their local labour market as ‘competitive’ or ‘poor’. The challenge is not only finding a job

but, more importantly, to have a job that one would like to keep. One difficulty facing some participants is to find the job that matches their educational background. A number of respondents felt that even though they were working, they were not motivated by what they did. The education-job mismatch is experienced usually by those who got their degree outside Canada.

- “It’s not hard to find work - it’s just hard to find work that you want to keep doing. You don’t necessarily want to be a waitress forever.”
- “I am bilingual so jobs are very easy to find if you are willing to do customer service. But that is a very low-paying sector.”
- “There are plenty of low-end jobs. But long-term high-end employment is not easy to find.”
- “The job market is very competitive. It depends on who you know, your contacts.”
- “There are plenty of minimum-wage jobs. But who wants to work 80 hours a week when you’ve got kids?”
- “I need the job so got to do what it takes - got to feed yourself.”
- “If you have the right resources, it’s not so bad.”
- “If you have the skill set, it’s not so difficult.”

Some participants from Aboriginal groups echoed these sentiments in similar statements about the discounted value of the type of education that they received.

- “When I send out my resume and I’m totally qualified for the position, they’ll look at the courses I’ve taken (First Nations resources). Maybe that’s why I don’t get the job.”

In Montreal, and to a much lesser extent Toronto, language is seen as a main barrier to employment success. For French-speaking participants in

Montreal, they found the lack of English skills often prevented them from getting jobs. Montreal participants agreed that proficiency in both official languages is key to gaining employment. This is a particularly important issue for unilingual Anglophone participants, who explained how they had been overlooked for jobs because of their inability to function in French: “I can’t get a job in this city because I don’t speak French, but I am starting courses soon.” The last part of this quote is worth commenting. It exemplifies participants’ general acceptance of the legitimacy of employers’ insistence that employees possess proficiency in both Official Languages, particularly French: “I think it’s legitimate for a lot of jobs, especially if there are safety considerations or you deal with the public.” At the same time, a number of participants felt that their inability to function in French has been used on at least one occasion as an “excuse” not to hire them because of their ethnic origin. Nevertheless, the lack of French skills has reduced several participants’ access to the local job market. For unilingual French-speaking participants in Montreal, a barrier to job access is the lack of English ability.

- “Language is a very large barrier.”
- “It depends on what sector - language is important in the public sector, the service sector and the financial sector. But for a lot of manufacturing, English is sufficient.”
- “Even for a warehouse job or a dishwashing job, you need French.”

Another barrier, especially among immigrants, is the lack of a ‘Canadian degree’ or ‘Canadian experience’. Participants who had been educated abroad often spoke of their frustration at what they considered to be employers’, and indeed the country’s rigid insistence on “Canadian” experience and credentials. As seen in past research (e.g., NOIMWC, 1999; 1996), immigrants feel that the current approach is arbitrary and often needlessly penalizes them for their lack of Canadian experience and credentials:

- “I have a university degree from Algeria, where they do not have CEGEP. When I came here, they subtracted three years from my educational attainment in order to compensate. This makes no sense.”

While participants acknowledged the need to ensure that immigrants are qualified, particularly in health care, they felt that an equivalency examination should be used rather than discounting existing experience and education. “Something should be done”, many demanded.

- “It’s difficult enough starting over in a new country without the added problem that your diplomas and experience have no value.”
- “These people (i.e., immigrants) are college graduates, they have Ph.D’s, Masters, and most of them are unemployed or underemployed. The only reason is racism or discrimination.”

Involuntary Coasting

Getting a job is hard. Moving ahead in one’s career, however, is even harder. In addition to competence on the job, networking is inseparable from promotion. While most of our participants felt that they work hard and are competent at their jobs, they find it hard to advance in their workplace. The higher the corporate ladder, as some observed, the lighter the skin tone.

- “I was in banking, a manager of a small sized branch. When I came here (Canada) there were mostly entry-level jobs. I worked for eight years. I never had any chance of getting promoted.”
- “(...) Being a visible minority and being a woman, it’s difficult getting recognition and getting a promotion.”
- “All my managers are white males. There’s a couple of female managers but they’re white, too.”
- “I look around and think - there’s no chance of getting ahead. Of all the people in senior positions, no one is from an ethnic group.”

Is It Because of the Colour of My Skin?

Although not all participants personally experienced discrimination, most felt that certain groups in society are especially disadvantaged when it comes to employment. These included youth, immigrants, visible minorities, people with a disability and older workers. The issue of skin colour is extremely important and a great source of frustration for participants who are personally affected by discrimination.

- “Islamic people who chose to wear the head covering (are a specific target for discrimination). A lot of them have been fired. They are told they can’t wear this type of clothing in this environment because it’s upsetting to the clients.”
- “The East-Indians are stereotyped to being cab-drivers for life.”
- “Recent immigrants, clearly, have more trouble finding work.”
- “There’s ethnic, there’s sex, you name it, and there’s a category.”
- “The first thing they’ll see is how I look. If I’m wearing a scarf, they won’t give me a job.”
- “(One of the main barriers for me is) respect as a culturally different individual. Sometimes I need time off on Fridays to prepare for church. It’s a barrier for a corporate job. I’d feel more comfortable in a smaller company.”

Many participants also felt that they do not fit into the existing work/corporate culture. Consequently, they are disadvantaged in advancing in their job. Some of the Aboriginal participants preferred to work in their own community or companies operated by members of their cultural group. By doing this, they would be among employers and colleagues who could respect and understand their cultures.

To many, discrimination in the workplace occurs in subtle or disguised forms. Most companies usually

abide by their Employment Equity policies. Open discrimination would therefore bear grave consequences for the employer. However, there is a grey area that is hard to define. Nevertheless, through the informal cliques, racial minorities are excluded from opportunities of promotion. One person summarised it in this way: “It’s open discrimination but it’s not done in a way that’s visible.”

- “It’s very subtle, people are very careful at work, they don’t want to get into trouble.”
- “It (racism) is tempered in the workplace. The workplace is a more controlled environment.”
- “In the workplace- it’s hidden, it’s subtle. People are so worried about being politically correct.”
- “Racism is there but it’s underground. It’s a hidden thing in the workplace.”
- “I’ve called for jobs and had people say ‘come down for an interview’ and when I get there, I get the feeling they are surprised to see that I’m black, because I sound like the average guy on the telephone. They’ve said ‘Oh, the job has just been filled’, or during the interview they will say that I’m overqualified or ask me questions like ‘Are you sure you want to work at this type of job?’ So if you don’t get the job, you wonder if it was discrimination or not.”
- “There’s a very grey area between whether it’s racism or discrimination or it’s legitimate. How do you decide? A lot people go through this: ‘Did I just get discriminated against or what just happened? Was it legitimate?’”
- “I think it (racism) happens in the workplace. Simple looks, gestures, tones, body language, you can read all that. I’ve seen it. It’s out there. Maybe it’s not done on purpose; maybe people are inexperienced with people from other cultures. But it does happen in the workplace.”

Subtle discrimination has been manifested in different ways, including the following:

- *Being passed over for a promotion in favour of a more junior, Caucasian employee:* “They gave the job to someone I trained.”
- “I had applied for a promotion. I didn’t get the job. A guy that I had trained (he’s white) got the promotion. I don’t think he knows anything more than I do about the job. My manager calls me in and tells me ‘we didn’t give you the job’. She tells me I’m a mother and that I’ve got other responsibilities. She never said anything about it being that (race) but prior to that, there was another promotion and a white girl got it.”
- *Being the first to be laid-off:* “I was the only black man working there and I was the first to get laid-off.”
- *Being consistently assigned the most unpleasant work tasks:* “We were four on a shift in a fast food restaurant. On one shift it was me (an Aboriginal person) and three white girls. On the other shift it was three white people and an East Indian girl. That girl and I always had to clean the toilets and do the garbage. It was never them, always us.”
- *Being stereotyped:* “I’m Asian, but I say what’s on my mind. The other Asian girls don’t say much. When I say what’s on my mind, the bosses don’t seem to like it. I get dirty looks. If I was white, I don’t think people would have a problem with it. It’s like they want me to fit into the mould, but I don’t.”
- “The customer demands to speak to somebody else. Until they get a white person to talk to, they’re not happy. They don’t feel like they’re being satisfied by someone who’s non-white when they’re making their complaint. They don’t feel like it’s valid or like it’s going to the right person.”

There is general agreement that racial discrimination is most likely to take place in the higher levels of an organization and that this type of discrimination is likely the subtlest of all. As evidence, partic-

ipants pointed to the fact that visible minorities are often under-represented in management positions and over-represented in the lower end of the labour market: “There are ethnic minorities who are more qualified to be in the position (managerial) but they’re not. In top management, there are hardly any decision makers that are not Anglo-Saxon. It’s not overt. It’s never deliberately said that you’re not promoted because you’re not Canadian - you just don’t see them get advancement.”

Participants often spoke about the formation of “cliques” in the workplace; groups of people who regularly associate with each other, often excluding others. These cliques are said to be commonly segregated along racial and/or gender lines: “We have a group of guys at work, they sit around the boss’s office and talk about what they did over the weekend and stuff like that. They are all white and I’m Black. There’re not mean to me or anything, but those guys get the promotions.”

- “If you’re not part of that dominant clique, you become an outsider. That’s when all the little jokes start happening and they happen at you.”
- “There’s so much politics. You don’t move up unless you’re part of a certain clique.”
- “I don’t often get invited (out to lunch). It’s maybe not discrimination, just exclusion, I guess.”
- “If you’re not in this particular group, which I happen not to be and I sense it’s because of my colour. I don’t have the same kind of lifestyle that they have. I feel that I have been passed over a couple times for promotion.”
- “I feel like I’m not part of this certain group. I’ve noticed that within that group everyone keeps on getting promoted. I don’t feel like I want to go into the office and talk to them.”
- “My manager is from Newfoundland and the girl who got it ahead of me was from Newfoundland.”

- “It’s just that you’re not White”

Admittedly, participants felt racial discrimination to be more open in non-work settings. Unlike the workplace, individuals are not obliged to be ‘politically correct’.

- “Once you are on the outside of work, it’s easier to say racial things. But once you are on the inside (at work), you have to be much more conscious about what you say.”
- “There’s a stereotype: lazy, drunk, dirty. They see them (Aboriginals) on Main Street and think you’re like them.”
- “I get followed in stores. They think I’m going to steal or something.”
- “I got into a fist-fight with a white guy (about three years ago) The cops came by, and who did they tackle? They tackled me, arrested me, and let that other guy go. It wasn’t until Court that this respected guy said he saw what happened and said I wasn’t at fault.”
- “This summer, I was driving and I got pulled over three times in an hour and a half.”
- “They (the cops) assume because you’re Native and you’re driving a nice vehicle that you might have stolen it.”
- “If a coloured person takes in a product for an exchange, they think it’s a scam.”
- “I was at a government office and they are the worse! This black guy came in and he stood at the counter. The security guard said to the black guy: ‘who’s your worker?’. This black guy was the courier and he picked up his package. It was assumed that he was there to get a welfare cheque.”
- “About a month ago, I went into the grocery store. The group of kids standing right in front of the door, I couldn’t get in without going through them. They called me all kinds of names.”

- “I was born here. This man is an immigrant and he thinks he has more rights because he’s European.”
- “There’s a lot of discrimination going on, especially in the smaller communities. I find Toronto is wonderful.”
- “They (stores) assume you’re going to steal.”
- “It’s subtle, it’s just that you’re not white.”

Responding to Racial Discrimination

‘Don’t Let Things Bother Me’ Even though most focus group participants are aware of the subtle and open forms of discrimination against visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples at work and in general, most of them are pragmatic about their situation. Especially for immigrants, they accept, to some extent, that newcomers would need to work harder than others in order to establish themselves. Discrimination, according to some, is inevitable in any culture or society. A similar view was expressed by some recent immigrant youth who believe that in every society, there are friendly and unfriendly individuals (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000).

- “I think it (discrimination) is as much of a problem as you’re willing to allow it to be. I’m not going to allow someone to talk to me in a tone or a manner that I don’t think is fit. I’ve been fired for that reason.”
- “One way or another, there’s always a bad apple in the bag.”

One of the most interesting findings of this research is the pragmatism with which most participants approach the issue. This view appeared to be founded on two basic premises. Discrimination, or more fundamentally, judging people by their appearance, is a common trait found across cultures. The second is the view that compared to other countries, including some participants’ country of origin; Canada is a very tolerant and open

society. From this perspective, it is apparent that participants do not expect to live free of racism and discrimination. “You are born looking a certain way, from a certain background. It’s much easier, let’s face it, if you’re Caucasian in a western country. You’re going to have to learn to deal with it (racism) because it’s going to happen to you any way, everywhere.”

While most expect the situation to improve and have clear ideas about what is unacceptable, participants expressed a certain amount of resignation at the fact that they would be stereotyped, judged and perhaps negatively affected due to their ethnic origin/cultural background. For example, many of the participants who did not indicate that they had ever personally been discriminated against on the job or in the labour market, would often make comments later in the discussion that perhaps contradicted their initial comments: “Well, it really depends on how much you let things bother you”, was an often made comment. Similarly, a few immigrants to Canada indicated that they are prepared to “work harder” than other people in order to achieve similar results: “When you come to another country you have to realize that you’re a guest in a way and that things are not always going to be easy. If you accept that, then it’s easier to deal with some of the things we’ve been talking about.”

Some also took a proactive approach to employment by investing in their education and training.

- “It (discrimination) might have an impact on the jobs I get and the money I earn. I’m doing what I can to train myself and further my education. Hopefully, I’ll land a job in an open-minded workplace. But I understand that there will probably be some hurdles and obstacles. Maybe because of my race and my colour.”

“They Always Had Other Reasons” It is also apparent that participants did not have much knowledge or confidence in the various redress procedures and mechanisms available to those who suffer racial discrimination. In participants’ calculation of the pros and cons involved in lodging a complaint,

more often than not, they concluded that such action is “not worth it.” Very few of those who felt they have been discriminated against have lodged a complaint or pursued the matter in some other way. The few who had complained to managers or supervisors did not obtain the outcome they had hoped for: “They always deny it’s because of racism. They always have another reason and when discrimination is subtle, what can you do?” The handful of participants who spoke of union involvement in the issue were divided on the extent to which these organizations could help, with some assuming that unions are quite vigilant in fighting discrimination, while others noting that racial discrimination exists in unions as much as anywhere else.

None of the participants had lodged a complaint with a federal or provincial human rights commission. In instances where this possibility was discussed, again, most felt that such action might ultimately make matters worse: *“It’s going OK but if you actually want to fight and defend your rights, you can’t because the same people you are going to complain to are probably working with the people who are making you upset.”* It seems that for the majority of participants for whom racial discrimination is a personal issue, their approach to dealing with it is based more on circumvention or adaptation as opposed to confrontation: “Imagine putting up a fight every time this happens? There’s no way.”

Looking ahead

Focus on Children Participants are generally optimistic that the problem of racism, both in employment and more generally in society, is decreasing. There is strong support for continued action to address the issue. Government is seen to have a major role in promoting tolerance in all areas of Canadian society and the key target group of programs and strategies is most often identified to be young people and children.

Most believed that their children would face less discrimination for several reasons. First, these children, having been brought up in Canada, would speak fluent English or French with a ‘Canadian

accent'. Second, these people would be familiar with the ways of life in Canada. Third, some also felt that through public education and legislation, racial discrimination would decrease in the future. Even now, many observed that racial discrimination is less of a problem among younger cohorts.

- "I haven't had any discriminatory issues with my peers, because most of the people I've worked with are close to the same age. (...) There's not much discrimination, they're more open-minded." — "It's the older generations that are in higher positions."

Educating the Public: Still A Ways to Go

Canada, with its official Multiculturalism policy, is often considered to be an international leader in cultural diversity. Some participants agreed that the extent of racial discrimination has decreased over the years. This finding corroborated what is found in other studies. For example, a survey among organizations involved in anti-racism in Canada found that two-thirds of the respondents felt that race relations in Canada have improved over the past five years (Kunz, Engler, and Laliberté, 1999). Public education would be useful for promoting racial diversity and generating common understanding among individuals of various cultural backgrounds. Many participants believed that racial equality should be taught to children.

- "It's an ongoing process for people. It's gotten a lot better since I first immigrated, that was 20 years ago. The governments have done a lot to re-educate a lot of people, society as a whole. There's a ways to go yet. The education process will never come to an end. Unfortunately, we have to teach tolerance and teach acceptance to everybody."
- "I think things are becoming better for people who aren't white because there are people who are interested in knowing what's going on and doing something about it. It doesn't matter to me if it's the government, it's all through education."
- "It's essential that the parents instill in their children to be more accepting and more considerate. I don't know if you can change the thoughts of

the older generation, they have these pre-conceived notions that can't be changed at this point."

- "It's people's attitudes and beliefs passed down from their parents. You can't change people's way of thinking with a quick fix."
- "We should continue current efforts – education ads to get the message to everyone. The proper procedures should also be in place to let people protect their rights."
- "We should continue to enforce the regulations and have more public education on tolerance and multiculturalism."
- "There's immorality in people's minds that needs to be broken. I don't know how it starts. If we leave it on the wayside, it's just going to build up and explode one day."

Recent surveys have shown that more than half of Canadians agreed that women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities would not have fair access to jobs and promotions had it not been for employment equity policies supported by the federal government (Ekos Research Associates Inc., 1999). All participants were familiar with such programs and some, particularly Aboriginal participants, have benefited from them. Most participants felt that such programs are necessary in order to "give people a chance". Participants did not seem very attuned to any of the public policy and philosophical rationale for such programs, nor did they appear to know much about the evolution of equity programs. Rather, and more simply, they saw these as programs that help people who need to be helped.

- "You can educate people as much as you can but that doesn't guarantee that it's going to get better."
- "They're pretty fair. The federal government has employment equity. For Aboriginal peoples, they'll kind of bend the rules a little as far as education goes. They'll lower it because you're Native, they'll know you haven't access to the education."

- “There may be legislation out there but companies feel they can get away with it, with impunity.”
- “If there were fines, then companies would be less likely to do this discrimination.”

Accolades aside, many participants felt that regulations aimed at promoting equity could be misinterpreted and lead to unintended consequences. Two related concerns were raised about equity programs. First, some felt that equity programs devalue the people who benefit from them, particularly in the eyes of colleagues and superiors: “I don’t want to win a job because of my skin colour. I want to win because I am the best qualified.” The possibility of a “backlash” was the second main concern raised by participants about equity programs. In other words, the principles of employment equity need to be better understood. Participants, including supporters of equity programs, often remarked that such programs could lead to “reverse discrimination” and to resentment on the part of those who are negatively affected by them: “You could get a backlash.” It became apparent that participants’ general lack of in-depth understanding of how equity programs work, sometimes led them to question their virtue: “If they hire people who are not qualified, then it’s a problem.”

- “Some companies have introduced employment-equity. If someone goes in there, even if you have all the right qualifications, other people will think *‘that person got in because of their race’*. There’s already a backlash, that person is discriminated against.”
- “I don’t agree like the idea (employment equity) at all. You’ll get reverse-discrimination, people say they’ve been discriminated against because they’re a white male.”
- “People thought I just walked in the door: *‘girl, native, she’s hired’*. It wasn’t like that. I had to go through the screening process like any other employee. I had to compete against other Aboriginal people, too.”

- “You don’t want to feel that you got the job just because you’re a minority.”
- “I don’t fill out the self-declaration form. I didn’t want to get the job because I’m a Native and to fill your quota.”
- “I agree with employment equity.”
- “Employment equity [sic] has caused a lot of problems in terms of non-Aboriginal people feeling like they’re losing out on positions.”
- “The solution is education. It’s not just for Native people, it’s for anybody.”

Focus group research is not generalizable and great caution should be used when commenting about differences across focus groups based on location or other participant characteristics. We feel that it is nevertheless useful to note a few observations on differences among participants that may provide guidance for future research and analysis.

The following key differences were observed concerning the experiences and perceptions of participants.

- Older participants appear more likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace and labour market.
- Black people appear more likely to have experienced discrimination in the workplace and labour market. Similarly, the “less visible” minority participants seem to have experienced less racism.
- Aboriginal peoples seemed to be more likely to cope with discrimination by working for and with Aboriginal owned businesses and organizations.
- Racism towards Black people appears to be more prevalent in Halifax.

Summary

According to many participants, racial discrimination in the workplace is a “hidden thing” but never-

theless affects negatively their career prospects. Public attitudes about cultural diversity will no doubt bear influence in our offices and work stations. All agreed that racial discrimination at work and in society is a very important issue that should be addressed by governments and others. Reflecting their view that racial discrimination is more prevalent in society at large than in the labour market and workplace, most participants felt that governments and their partners should adopt a

broad approach to the issue. Moreover, they reason that because intolerance and bigotry are learned at a young age and “ingrained” in some people, reductions of racial discrimination in the labour market should occur in tandem with reduction of racism in society: “The boundary between work and the rest is artificial. Kids learn racism from their parents. If we want to eliminate it in the workplace we need to focus on the source.”

Conclusion

Unequal Access, a Canadian Profile of Racial Differences in Education, Employment and Income, clearly demonstrates that in order to improve the labour market outcomes (i.e., employment opportunities and income) of visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples the issue of racism in the workplace should be addressed seriously. Canada's workforce is becoming increasingly both racially and culturally diverse. Despite the evidence that visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples have gained better access to employment than before, access is still generally limited.

Diversity is generally seen at the bottom and middle level of the labour force pyramid. Specifically, the access may show an increase for lower level jobs (wide at the bottom), but continues to be static for higher level positions (still narrow at the top). The higher the pyramid, the less diverse and the whiter it becomes. In the public sector, for example, equity groups (women, visible minority, Aboriginal and persons with disability) are less likely to obtain promotion than white able-bodied men (Pendakur, Mata, Lee and Dole, 2000). Visible minorities accounted for one in 17 among all employees in the public service, but only one in 33 among those in management level positions (Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service, 2000:20).

As evident in this and many other studies, level of education greatly influences one's employment and income. The return on education, however, appears to be greater for those who belong to neither visible minority nor Aboriginal groups. Even though racial minorities have made some inroads with regard to employment, equity is still an elusive goal to many. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses in this report show that racial minorities, especially Aboriginals and foreign-born visible minorities, are still trailing behind in relation to education, employment, and income. For example, even when Aboriginal peoples and foreign-born visible minorities have a university

education, they are still less likely than non-racialized groups to have incomes in the top 20% of the income scale. Data on earnings revealed that foreign-born visible minorities earned, on average, only 78 cents for every dollar earned by foreign-born, non-racialized groups.

While legislation, such as the Employment Equity Act, has assisted visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples in gaining jobs in some sectors, many have yet to find jobs that are meaningful or match their credentials. The findings of this report show that compared to non-racialized groups, visible minorities and Aboriginals with a university education are less likely to hold managerial or professional jobs. For those who do obtain managerial jobs, half of them are self-employed, compared to only one-third among non-racialized groups.

In addition, the Employment Equity Act only applies to federal public services and federally regulated industries as well as crown corporations with more than 100 employees, but does not cover provincial organizations or the private sector. The application of employment equity policies varies across provinces (Bakan and Kobayashi, 2000), reflecting provincial political, social and cultural characteristics. Furthermore, legislation may regulate behaviour, but not change the thinking of people in positions of power, as well as the general public. Employers may comply with employment equity regulations, but it takes a whole society to change the way racial minorities are perceived and treated. Public education is instrumental in raising awareness of these issues as a crucial step in promoting respect, understanding, and acceptance of racial differences.

Legislation is more effective in recruitment than in retention and promotion. An important obstacle to equity is the difficulty in eradicating the many forms of discrimination that are hard to quantify, especially at the systemic and personal levels. In this case, racial discrimination in the workplace is

becoming more subtle - often described as a 'hidden thing'. For example, some visible minority employees saw their managers using subjective factors such as 'accent' to exclude them from access to jobs. In other cases, minorities are shut out of the 'inner circle' that is crucial for their

career advancement. Visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples continue to be treated as strangers in the workplace, reflecting the reality that racialized groups face barriers to socio-economic equality in this country.

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