

Comparing weekly earnings of Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority and White categories

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In a comparison of Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority and White categories, Latin American men and women have the lowest weekly earnings

Among Canadian-born individuals aged 25 to 44, the weekly earnings of men in 4 of 10 designated visible minority categories were significantly lower than those of men identified as White. The largest differences were observed among men who identified as Black or Latin American. The weekly earnings of women in designated visible minority categories were either higher than, or not significantly different than, the earnings of women identified as White.

Using data from the 2016 Census, the study "[The weekly earnings of Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority and White categories in the mid-2010s](#)," released today in *Economic and Social Reports*, examines the relative weekly earnings of individuals in 10 designated visible minority categories, as defined in the *Employment Equity Act*. The 10 categories include: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab and West Asian, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Korean, Japanese and Other. The weekly earnings of individuals in each of these categories were compared with White individuals, defined as those who did not report any visible minority designation or an Indigenous ethnic origin.

Average weekly earnings varied considerably across the designated visible minority and White categories. Among men, average weekly earnings ranged from \$1,160 (in 2016 dollars) among Latin American men to \$1,750 among Japanese men—a difference of \$590. White men had average weekly earnings of \$1,530.

Among women, average weekly earnings ranged from \$1,000 among Latin American women to \$1,450 among Korean women—a difference of \$450. White women had average weekly earnings of \$1,120.

These estimates of average weekly earnings do not take into account any differences in the sociodemographic or employment characteristics of individuals in designated visible minority and White categories.

Differences in education, place of residence and employment status among the categories have implications for earnings comparisons

When considering educational attainment, more than 60% of Korean and Chinese men and more than 40% of Arab or West Asian, Japanese and South Asian men had a university degree compared with 24% of White men. Similarly, more than 70% of Korean and Chinese women and around 60% of Japanese and South Asian women had a university degree, compared with 38% of White women. Only Latin American and Black men and women had lower rates of university completion than those observed among Whites.

Other sociodemographic characteristics, such as family context and place of residence, vary as well. Compared with Whites, individuals in designated visible minority categories were more likely to live with their parents and less likely to have started families of their own. With an average age of 31 to 33 years, they were also younger than White individuals, at just over 34 years on average. Well over half of individuals in designated visible minority categories resided in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver—where earnings tend to be higher than in smaller communities and rural areas—compared with just over one-quarter of White individuals.

Full-time/part-time employment status and occupation varied across categories. For example, 32% of Latin American women worked in sales and service occupations—two occupational categories characterized by lower wages—compared with 26% of White women and 16% of Chinese women.

When sociodemographic and employment characteristics were taken into account, the weekly earnings of Black, Latin American, Filipino and Other visible minority men were significantly lower than the weekly earnings of White men. The largest differences were observed among Black men (-11%) and Latin American men (-9%). The weekly earnings of men in five other designated visible minority categories were not significantly different from those of White men, while the weekly earnings of South Asian men were 2% higher.

Among women, weekly earnings were significantly higher among Chinese, Southeast Asian, Filipino and South Asian individuals than among White individuals, with differences ranging from 3% to 8%. The weekly earnings of women in the six other designated visible minority categories were not significantly different from those of White individuals.

Among men and women in most designated visible minority categories, differences in weekly earnings relative to White individuals were about the same in 2015 as they were in 2005. However, the difference in weekly earnings between Black and White men widened by 4% over that period, after taking sociodemographic and employment characteristics into account.

Looking ahead, this study will be updated using data from the 2021 Census. The cohort of individuals examined in the present study will be five years older at that point, offering an opportunity to assess how weekly earnings compare across designated visible minority and White categories when individuals are further along their career and earnings trajectories.

Note to readers

The study is restricted to individuals who were born in Canada. This limits the impacts of immigration-related issues, such as knowledge of official languages, on earnings comparisons. The study is further restricted to individuals who were aged 25 to 44 at the time of the 2016 Census, as relatively few Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority categories were aged 45 or older at the time. Finally, weekly earnings were estimated for 2015, with the study restricted to individuals who worked at least one week, had annual earnings of at least \$500, and were not self-employed that year.

The article "[The weekly earnings of Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority and White categories in the mid-2010s](#)," is now available in the January 2022 online issue of *Economic and Social Reports*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (36-28-0001).

To enquire about the article "The weekly earnings of Canadian-born individuals in designated visible minority and White categories in the mid-2010s," contact Grant Schellenberg (grant.schellenberg@statcan.gc.ca), Social Analysis and Modelling Division.

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