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The existing Ukrainian-Canadian communities will play an important role in helping with the settlement of Ukrainians displaced by the Russian invasion. Canada has a long history of admitting Ukrainians—especially Ukrainians displaced by war (CIHS, 2022). The first Ukrainians arrived in Canada in 1891, with 150,000 estimated to have landed between 1891 and 1914 (Government of Canada, 2020). Most Ukrainians from this period settled in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where they could obtain farmland; others settled in towns across Canada to work in industrial occupations (Government of Canada, 2020). After the First World War, Canada witnessed a large wave of Ukrainian arrivals when Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union. Most arrived as refugees who settled in established Ukrainian communities, particularly in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and southern Ontario (Gerus & Rea, 1985; Government of Canada, 2020). At the end of the Second World War, a third wave of Ukrainians arrived in Canada (Government of Canada, 2020), and by 1952 approximately 30,000 Ukrainians landed in Canada, primarily as refugees (Government of Canada, 2020; Hou & Yan, 2020). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, about 112,000 immigrants arrived in Canada from Ukraine by 2016 (Hou & Yan, 2020), and another 14,000 arrived between 2017 and 2021 (IRCC 2022).¹ With the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, millions of Ukrainians have been displaced. In response, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has introduced new measures to admit Ukrainians to Canada (Government of Canada, 2022).

This article compares the Ukrainian-Canadian population with Canada's national population using the 2016 Census of Population. The findings provide information on current Ukrainian-Canadians, including their geographic distribution, demographics, employment and economic profiles.

In the 2016 Census, about 1.36 million people, or close to 4% of the Canadian population, reported at least one of their ethnic origins as Ukrainian.² Among this 4%, about 20% reported Ukrainian as their only ethnic origin, 29% reported one other ethnic origin in addition to Ukrainian, and 51% reported two or more other ethnic origins. Among Ukrainians reporting multiple ethnic origins, the most common other ethnic origins were British, Polish, German and other European origins, as well as “Canadian.” Individuals reporting Ukrainian as their sole ethnic origin were more likely to have Ukrainian as their mother tongue (27%) compared with those reporting multiple ethnic origins (2%). About 2% of Ukrainian-Canadians spoke Ukrainian most often at home, and this rate was higher among those reporting sole ethnic origin (8%) than those reporting multiple ethnic origins (0.5%).

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1. Authors calculated from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada permanent residents—Monthly updates (<https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/d1c1f4f3-2d7f-4e02-9a79-7af98209c2f3>).
 2. The 2016 Census ethnic origin question asked: “What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person’s ancestors?” Respondents were instructed to specify as many ethnic groups as applicable. The census data captured up to six ethnic origins (Statistics Canada 2017).

Table 1
Geographic distribution of Ukrainian-Canadians and the national population, 2016

	Ukrainian Canadians			National population
	Total	Single ethnic origin	Multiple ethnic origins	
		percent		
Province or region				
Atlantic provinces	1.10	0.69	1.19	6.66
Quebec	3.13	3.95	2.92	23.12
Ontario	27.69	29.18	27.31	38.43
Manitoba	13.24	14.48	12.93	3.60
Saskatchewan	10.57	11.67	10.29	3.11
Alberta	27.15	27.25	27.12	11.54
British Columbia	16.86	12.64	17.92	13.23
Territories	0.27	0.13	0.30	0.32
Census metropolitan area				
Toronto	10.62	14.81	9.56	17.01
Montréal	2.58	3.33	2.39	11.64
Vancouver	6.94	5.22	7.38	7.04
Calgary	6.67	5.30	7.02	3.99
Ottawa-Gatineau	2.07	1.49	2.22	3.77
Edmonton	11.76	13.50	11.33	3.76
Québec	0.08	0.10	0.08	2.26
Winnipeg	8.55	9.02	8.43	2.21
Hamilton	2.11	2.08	2.11	2.13
Small census metropolitan area	18.90	16.28	19.56	17.33
Census agglomerations	12.62	10.87	13.06	12.12
Rural areas	17.10	18.00	16.87	16.73

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

Table 1 shows the geographic distribution of Ukrainian-Canadians and the national population. The top panel shows the distribution by province or region. Most Ukrainian-Canadians live in Ontario (28%), Alberta (27%) or British Columbia (17%). A larger proportion of Ukrainian-Canadians live in Manitoba (13%) and Saskatchewan (11%), compared with about 4% and 3% of the national population, respectively. About 3% of Ukrainian-Canadians reside in Quebec, where 23% of the national population lives, and about 1% of Ukrainian-Canadians live in the Atlantic provinces and the territories.

The bottom panel of Table 1 shows the geographic distribution of Ukrainian-Canadians by census metropolitan area (CMA). Consistent with the national population, large proportions of Ukrainian-Canadians live in small CMAs (19%), census agglomerations (13%) and rural areas (17%). Ukrainian-Canadians are much less likely to live in the two largest CMAs than the national population. About 11% of all Ukrainian-Canadians live in Toronto (versus 17% of the national population) and 3% in Montréal (versus 12% of the national population). In contrast, about 7% of all Ukrainian-Canadians live in Calgary (versus 4% of the national population), 12% live in Edmonton (versus 4% of the national population) and 9% live in Winnipeg (versus 2% of the national population). In addition to the CMAs listed in Table 1, other CMAs with 10,000 or more Ukrainian-Canadians include Saskatoon, Regina, St. Catharines–Niagara, Victoria, Kelowna, Thunder Bay, Oshawa, Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo, London and Windsor.

Table 2
Selected sociodemographic characteristics of Ukrainian-Canadians and the national population, 2016

	Ukrainian-Canadians			National population
	Total	Single ethnic origin	Multiple ethnic origins	
	percent			
Age group				
0 to 14	20.73	5.48	24.57	16.88
15 to 24	13.90	6.03	15.89	12.28
25 to 44	27.05	20.47	28.72	26.36
45 to 64	25.85	35.42	23.44	28.58
65 or older	12.46	32.60	7.38	15.90
Household type				
One-census-family household: couple without children	20.77	32.74	17.76	21.07
One-census-family household: couple with children	45.90	28.98	50.16	41.77
One-census-family household: lone-parent family	9.34	7.59	9.79	9.23
Multigenerational household	3.53	3.09	3.64	6.34
Other household types	20.46	27.61	18.65	21.59
Immigration generation status				
Third generation or more	73.87	54.36	78.79	58.44
Second generation	17.04	26.31	14.71	17.70
Foreign-born, permanent residents	8.66	18.28	6.24	22.38
Foreign-born, non-permanent residents	0.43	1.04	0.27	1.47
Education among adults aged 25 to 64				
Less than high school	7.28	8.08	7.07	11.46
High school graduation	25.25	26.54	24.90	23.74
Some postsecondary education	36.67	35.99	36.86	36.26
Bachelor's degree	20.86	18.29	21.55	18.96
Graduate degree	9.94	11.10	9.63	9.57
Employment rate among adults aged 25 to 64				
Men	82.17	79.32	82.99	79.35
Women	75.77	71.68	76.80	71.59
Occupational skills among workers aged 25 to 64				
Low-skilled	31.07	33.54	30.43	35.79
Medium-skilled	41.34	41.87	41.20	38.86
High-skilled	27.59	24.59	28.37	25.35
2015 dollars				
Median employment incomes among workers with positive earnings				
Men	47,900	47,700	47,900	40,400
Women	31,900	32,500	31,800	28,900

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

Table 2 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of Ukrainian-Canadians and the national population. Ukrainian-Canadians, overall, are slightly younger than the national population. However, there are higher proportions of Ukrainian-Canadians with a single ethnic origin aged 45 to 64 (35%) and 65 or older (33%) compared with the national population (29% and 16%, respectively).

For household composition, there is a slightly lower proportion of Ukrainian-Canadian multigenerational households (4%) and a slightly higher proportion of couples with children (46%) compared with the national population (6% and 42%, respectively). There are larger disparities between Ukrainian-Canadians with a single ethnic origin and those with multiple ethnic origins. The households of Ukrainian-Canadians with a single ethnic origin are less likely to consist of couples with children (29%) than those of Ukrainian-Canadians with multiple ethnic origins (50%), likely reflecting the group difference in age structure.

By immigrant generation status, Ukrainian-Canadians with a single ethnic origin and those with multiple ethnic origins are both more likely to have lived in Canada for over a generation than the national population. For example, about 79% of Ukrainian-Canadians with multiple ethnic origins are members of the third generation or more, about 20 percentage points higher than the national population.

Ukrainian-Canadians have slightly higher levels of education and employment rates than the national population. For instance, Ukrainian-Canadians with a single ethnic origin and those with multiple ethnic origins are less likely to have less than a high school diploma (8% and 7%, respectively) than the national population (12%). Furthermore, a slightly higher proportion of Ukrainian-Canadians have a bachelor's or graduate degree. Similarly, the employment rate for Ukrainian-Canadian men is about 3 percentage points higher than that of the national male population, and, for Ukrainian-Canadian women, about 4 percentage points higher than that of the national female population.

Ukrainian-Canadians tend to work in jobs with higher occupational skills than the national population. Specifically, the proportion of Ukrainian-Canadian workers in low-skilled occupations³ (31%) is lower than that of the national population (36%). Furthermore, the proportions of Ukrainian-Canadians in occupations requiring medium (41%) and high skills (28%) are greater than those of the national population (39% and 25%, respectively). By industrial sector, Ukrainian-Canadians are more likely than the national population to be employed in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; construction; professional, scientific and technical services; educational services; and public administration. However, they are less likely to work in manufacturing and accommodation and food services when compared with the national population (data not shown).

Ukrainian-Canadian workers also have higher median employment incomes than the national population among workers with positive earnings. Male Ukrainian-Canadian workers have a median income of \$47,900, \$7,500 more than their counterparts in the national male population. Similarly, female Ukrainian-Canadian workers have a median income of \$31,900, compared with \$28,900 for their counterparts in the national female population.

In summary, most Ukrainian-Canadians live in Ontario, British Columbia and the Prairies. They are less concentrated in Toronto and Montréal and are generally well distributed across CMAs. Most Ukrainian-Canadians have also lived in Canada for generations and have stronger educational and employment profiles, as well as higher occupational skills, than the national population.

3. Low-skilled jobs in this article refer to occupations that require a high school diploma or less education. Medium-skilled jobs refer to occupations that require some postsecondary education, as well as middle management occupations in retail and wholesale trade and customer services, and in trades, transportation, production and utilities. High-skilled jobs refer to occupations that require a university degree, senior management occupations and specialized middle management occupations.

Authors

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