



ARCHIVED - Archiving Content

Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

ARCHIVÉE - Contenu archivé

Contenu archivé

L'information dont il est indiqué qu'elle est archivée est fournie à des fins de référence, de recherche ou de tenue de documents. Elle n'est pas assujettie aux normes Web du gouvernement du Canada et elle n'a pas été modifiée ou mise à jour depuis son archivage. Pour obtenir cette information dans un autre format, veuillez communiquer avec nous.

This document is archival in nature and is intended for those who wish to consult archival documents made available from the collection of Public Safety Canada.

Some of these documents are available in only one official language. Translation, to be provided by Public Safety Canada, is available upon request.

Le présent document a une valeur archivistique et fait partie des documents d'archives rendus disponibles par Sécurité publique Canada à ceux qui souhaitent consulter ces documents issus de sa collection.

Certains de ces documents ne sont disponibles que dans une langue officielle. Sécurité publique Canada fournira une traduction sur demande.



Canadian Centre for Justice
Statistics Profile Series



Immigrants in Canada

This paper is one in a series of ten profiles funded through the federal Policy Research Initiative. The objective of these profiles is to provide data analysis on the experience of various groups as victims and offenders* in the criminal justice system.

The profiles are based on Statistics Canada sources and include a mix of demographic, economic and justice data as well as information specific to each group.

Other profiles in this series include:

- Aboriginal People in Canada
- Canadians with Disabilities
- Canadians with Literacy Problems**
- Canadians with Low Incomes
- Children and Youth
- Religious Groups in Canada
- Seniors in Canada
- Visible Minorities in Canada
- Women in Canada

* Data on offenders is only available for the following: Aboriginal People, Children and Youth, Seniors, and Women.

** The literacy profile does not include a criminal justice component.

Catalogue No. 85F0033MIE
ISSN 1496-4562
ISBN 0-662-30006-8

June 2001

Published by authority of the Minister
responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2001

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission from Licence Services, Marketing Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, toll free 1 800 387-2231 or (613) 951-9023, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

For information on the wide range of data available from Statistics Canada, you can contact us by calling one of our toll-free numbers. You can also contact us by e-mail or by visiting our Web site.

National enquiries line	1 800 263-1136
National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired	1 800 363-7629
Depository Services Program inquiries	1 800 700 1033
Fax line for Depository Services Program	1 800 889 9734
E-mail inquiries	Infostats@statcan.ca
Web site	www.statcan.ca

Product availability

This product is available free, in electronic format, on the Statistics Canada Internet site as Catalogue no.85F0033MIE. To obtain this product, visit our Web site at www.statcan.ca, and select Products and Services.

Note of appreciation

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

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner and in the official language of their choice. To this end, the Agency has developed standards of service which its employees observe in serving its clients. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll free at 1 800 263-1136.

Immigrants in Canada

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Immigrants¹

Immigrant population growing

Immigrants (see Box 1) make up a growing share of the population in Canada. As of 1996, the 5 million immigrants living in Canada represented 17% of the total population, the largest proportion in more than five decades (see Table 1). The share of immigrants in the population fluctuated between 15% and 16% in the period between 1951 and 1991. The current percentage of immigrants in the population, however, is lower than in the 1911-1931 period, when immigrants accounted for over 20% of the population.

Period of immigration

The majority of immigrants have been in Canada for many years, although a substantial proportion are relatively recent arrivals. As of 1996, over one-third (37%) of all immigrants living in Canada had arrived before 1971, while 20%

arrived in the 1970-1981 period, and 22% arrived between 1981 and 1990. At the same time, 21% arrived in this country in the period between 1991 and 1996.

Country of origin for immigrants is changing

Perhaps the most dramatic change in immigration to Canada in recent decades has been the shift in the number of immigrants coming from different countries.² In particular, most of the immigrants who have lived in Canada for many years are from Europe, whereas the majority of those who arrived recently are from Asia.

Of immigrants living in Canada who arrived before 1971, 81% were from Europe, with 24% from the United Kingdom and the rest (58%) from other European countries. In contrast, over half (57%) of all immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996 are from Asia, whereas Asian immigrants accounted for just 7% or immigrants who arrived before 1971.

There have also been increases in recent years in the proportion of immigrants coming from the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Africa. Of immigrants living in Canada in 1996 who arrived in the previous five-year period, 13% were from the Caribbean or Central and South America, while 7% were from Africa. In comparison, the respective figures for people from these two sources who arrived before 1971 were 4% and 2%

Immigrants from the United Kingdom, however, still make up the largest single immigrant group living in Canada. In 1996, there were over 650,000 immigrants from the United Kingdom living in Canada, nearly twice the number from Italy, which was the second largest group (332,000). The

¹ This profile provides descriptive socio-demographic and criminal justice characteristics associated with the Immigrant population. It does not however, account for the possibility that some additional factors, such as age, sex, disability status and low income status may also be correlated with immigrant status. For more information on these additional factors, please refer to the other profiles in this series.

² This occurred as a result of changing policy that eliminated immigration restrictions from certain countries of origin.

Box 1: The Immigrant Population

The immigrant population refers to those who have, or have ever had, landed-immigrant status, whether or not they are currently Canadian citizens. Children born in Canada to immigrant parents, however, are not included in the immigrant population, but are grouped with those born in this country. As well, non-permanent residents, such as foreign workers or students or refugee claimants, are not included in the immigrant population, though they are included in the total population.

The information in this section of the profile is taken from the 1996 Census of Canada, describing the various populations living in Canada at the time of the 1996 Census. The reader is cautioned that the definition of recent *immigrant* varies between the demographic and criminal justice components of this profile. In this section of the profile, recent immigrants have been defined as those who arrived in Canada between 1991 and 1996. The criminal justice section of the profile uses the General Social Survey as a data source and therefore defines recent immigrants as arriving between 1995 and 1999, and earlier immigrants as arriving before 1995.

Direct comparisons between the immigrant and non-immigrant populations should be interpreted with caution. There are quite distinct differences in the age structures of these two, which have not been accounted for. These differences, in turn, can have a substantial effect on many socio-economic variables.

Acknowledgements

The invaluable assistance of a number of people responsible for the preparation of these profiles is gratefully acknowledged, in particular, from Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division: Colin Lindsay, Josée Normand, Marcia Almey, and Mario Lisciotto.

From the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics: Jodi-Anne Massicotte, David Gullickson, Tina Hotton, Stacie Ogg and Eileen Cook.

immigrant populations from Poland (193,000), Germany (182,000) and Portugal (159,000) were also among the 10 largest immigrant groups living in Canada that year. At the same time, immigrants born in Hong Kong (241,000), India (236,000), the People's Republic of China (231,000), and the Philippines (185,000) were the fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth largest immigrant groups in Canada, while those from the United States (245,000) represented the third largest group.

Most are Canadian citizens

The large majority of immigrants in Canada have obtained Canadian citizenship. In fact, 83% of all immigrants eligible to become Canadian citizens had done so by 1996. Not surprisingly, immigrants who have been in Canada the longest are the most likely to have taken out Canadian citizenship. As of 1996, over 93% of all immigrants who arrived before 1961 were Canadian citizens, as were around 85% of those who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, and 80% of those who arrived between 1981 and 1990. However, even the majority of eligible recent arrivals have taken out Canadian citizenship. By 1996, 59% of those who arrived in 1991 and 1992 had become citizens.

A highly concentrated population

Immigrants to Canada tend to concentrate in large urban areas. As of 1996, 85% of all immigrants in Canada lived in one of Canada's census metropolitan areas, that is, one of the 25 urban regions with more than 100,000 residents. In contrast, 57% of Canadian-born people lived in one of these areas that year.

Immigrants make up particularly large proportions of the populations of Toronto and Vancouver. In 1996, 42% of all residents of Toronto were immigrants, as were 35% of those living in Vancouver. Immigrants also represented substantial shares of the populations in Hamilton (24%), Kitchener

(22%), Calgary (21%), Windsor (21%), London (19%), Victoria (19%), Edmonton (19%), Montreal (18%), Winnipeg (17%), and Ottawa-Hull (16%).

Recent immigrants are especially likely to live in one of Canada's three largest urban areas. In 1996, nearly three-quarters of recent immigrants lived in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, compared with just over one-quarter of the Canadian-born population. That year, 42% of all immigrants who arrived in the 1991-1996 period lived in Toronto, while 18% were in Vancouver and 13% resided in Montreal.

Largely as a result of the fact that immigrants tend to settle in Canada's major urban areas, the immigrant population is highly concentrated in the most populous provinces. As of 1996, 94% of all immigrants lived in either Ontario (55%), British Columbia (18%), Quebec (13%), or Alberta (8%) (see Table 2). In contrast, only 3% lived in Manitoba, while 3% resided in the remaining provinces and territories combined.

Immigrants currently represent about one in four residents of both Ontario and British Columbia. In 1996, immigrants made up 26% of the population of Ontario and 24% of those in British Columbia. At the same time, immigrants represented 15% of residents of Alberta, 12% in Manitoba, 10% in the Yukon, 9% in Quebec, 5% in each of Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and Nova Scotia, 3% in both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, and 2% in Newfoundland.

An older population

Immigrants are older, on average, than the population born in Canada. In 1996, 18% of all immigrants living in Canada were aged 65 or over, compared with 10% of people born in Canada. At the same time, 32% of immigrants, versus 19% of Canadian-born people, were aged 45-64. In contrast, only 15% of immigrants, compared with 38% of

people born in Canada, were under age 25.

The immigrant population is older, on average, than the Canadian-born population in part because immigrants tend to arrive while in their prime working years. As well, it is important to note that children born to immigrant parents in Canada are included in the Canadian-born population.

As with the overall population, women make up a majority of immigrant seniors. In 1996, 55% of all immigrants aged 65 and over were female, about the same as the figure for the non-immigrant population.

Language capabilities

A large majority of immigrants living in Canada can speak at least one official language. In 1996, more than nine in ten immigrants aged 15 and older spoke either English or French or both. That year, 78% could conduct a conversation in English only, while 4% could speak French only and 12% could speak both official languages. At the same time, however, 7% could speak neither official language.

Recent immigrants are less likely to be able to speak either English or French than immigrants who have lived in Canada for longer periods of time. As of 1996, 13% of immigrants who arrived in the 1991-1996 period were unable to speak either English or French, compared with 10% or less of those who arrived in prior to 1991. Still, the vast majority of even recent immigrants — 87% in 1996 — were able to conduct a conversation in one of Canada's two official languages.

While most immigrants report they are able to speak one of Canada's official languages, a substantial number still speak a language other than English or French most often in their homes. In 1996, 39% of all immigrants spoke a non-official language most often at home.

Many immigrants belong to a visible minority group

A relatively large proportion of immigrants living in Canada belong to a visible minority group. In 1996, 44% of all immigrants residing in Canada belonged to a visible minority group, compared with 4% of the Canadian-born population.

Given the shift in the source countries of immigration to Canada in the past several decades, recent immigrants are considerably more likely those that have been in the country for longer periods to be part of the visible minority community. Almost three-quarters (74%) of immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996, and 65% of those who arrived between 1981 and 1990, were members of a visible minority group, compared with 19% of those who arrived between 1961 and 1970 and just 3% of those who arrived before 1961.

Family status

As with the overall population, most immigrants live with their immediate or extended family. In 1996, 88% of all immigrants living in Canada resided with their husbands or wives or common-law spouses, their parents, children, or other relatives. This was slightly higher than the figure for people born in Canada, 87% of whom lived with their families that year.

There are substantial differences in the specific family situations of immigrants compared with other Canadians. Among those aged 15-64, for example, immigrants are more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to be living with their husband or wife and less likely to live in a common-law relationship. They are also slightly more likely to be lone parents. At the same time, immigrant seniors are more likely than their non-immigrant counterparts to be living with members of their extended family and much less likely to be living alone.

Educational background

Immigrants come to Canada with a wide range of educational backgrounds. On the one hand, immigrants are more likely than people born in Canada to have a university degree: in 1996, 17% of all immigrants aged 15 and over, compared with 12% of the population born in Canada, had a university degree. Immigrants also make up a relatively large proportion of Canada's most highly educated population. That year, 5% of immigrants had a postgraduate degree, versus only 2% of the non-immigrant population.

At the same time, greater proportions of immigrants than people born in Canada have little or no education. In 1996, 17% of immigrants, compared with 11% of the Canadian-born population, had less than a Grade 9 education.

In general, recent immigrants are quite well educated. In 1996, 21% of immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996 had a university degree, close to twice the level for the non-immigrant population (12%). At the same time, however, recent immigrants were slightly more likely than the Canadian-born population to have less than a Grade 9 education.

Less likely to be employed

Despite higher levels of educational attainment, immigrants are somewhat less likely to be part of the paid workforce than their non-immigrant counterparts. Among men, 62% of immigrants aged 15 and over were employed in 1996, compared with 66% of non-immigrants. Similarly, only 47% of immigrant women, versus 55% of those born in Canada, were employed that year. Recent immigrants have particularly low employment rates. Of immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996, just 57% of men and only 41% of women were part of the workforce in 1996. The situation for earlier arriving immigrants was more favourable, with 63% of men and 49% of women reporting being part of the workforce.

The occupational distribution of immigrant labour force participants is generally similar to that for their counterparts in the overall population. Immigrants, however, do make up a relatively large share of professionals employed in the natural sciences. Indeed, while immigrants made up 19% of the experienced Canadian labour force in 1996, they accounted for 25% of all those employed in natural science occupations. Immigrants make up an even greater share of those employed in manufacturing jobs; that year, they made up 28% of the manufacturing labour force. The relatively large share of immigrants employed in manufacturing is accounted for primarily by women; indeed, immigrant women are about twice as likely as their non-immigrant counterparts to have jobs in manufacturing.

Immigrants are also somewhat more likely than non-immigrants to be self-employed. In 1996, 15% of all immigrants with jobs were self-employed, compared with 12% of the non-immigrant workforce.

Unemployment

Overall, immigrants are about as likely as people born in Canada to be unemployed, that is, they want work, but can not find a job. In 1996, 11% of all immigrant labour force participants were unemployed, as were 10% of those born in Canada. However, there is a large variation in the unemployment rates of recent immigrants and those of earlier arriving immigrants. Recent immigrants were much more likely to be unemployed (19%) as compared to their earlier arriving counterparts (9%).

As with the overall population, unemployment rates among immigrant labour force participants are highest among young adults. In 1996, 20% of immigrant labour force participants aged 15-24 were unemployed. This compared with 11% or less for immigrant men and women in age ranges over 25. At the same time, the unemployment rate among recent immigrants, at 19%, was almost double that among people born in Canada.

Income

The average incomes³ of immigrants are about the same as those of people born in Canada. In 1995, immigrants had an average income from all sources of just under \$25,000, only a few hundred dollars less than that for the Canadian-born population.

Average incomes among recent immigrants, however, tend to be much lower. The average income of recent immigrants in 1995 was \$15,100, only about 60% that of the Canadian-born population. Recent immigrants were also more likely to report having no income. Approximately 22% of recent immigrants had no income, as compared to only 5% of earlier arriving immigrants and 7% of the Canadian-born population.

As with the Canadian-born population, immigrant men have higher average incomes than immigrant women. At just \$19,000, the average income of immigrant women in 1995 was only about 62% that of immigrant men, who averaged \$30,900 that year. Furthermore, all women, regardless of their immigrant status, were more likely to report having no income than their male counterparts.

Sources of income

As with the overall population, income from employment, including wages and salaries, as well as net income from self-employment, makes up the largest component of the income of immigrants. In 1995, 73% of all income of immigrants came from this source. This, however, was somewhat below the figure for the non-immigrant population, who got 76% of their income from employment sources.

In contrast, immigrants receive a slightly larger share of their income from government transfer payments than people born in Canada. In 1995, 15.4% of all income of immigrants came from these sources, compared with 13.6% of that of the Canadian-born population.

As with the Canadian-born, immigrant seniors receive a particularly large share of their income from government transfer payments. In 1995, 51% of all income of immigrants aged 65 and over came from these programs, about the same as the figure for seniors born in Canada.

Population with low income⁴

Immigrants are more likely than people born in Canada to have low incomes. In 1995, 26% of immigrants had incomes below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs, compared with 18% of the Canadian-born population.

Among immigrants, children and young adults are more likely than those aged 45 and over to live in a low-income situation. In 1995, 51% of immigrants under age 15 lived in a low-income situation, as did 41% of those aged 15-24 and 29% of those aged 25-44. In contrast, 18% of immigrants aged 45-64 and 22% of those aged 65 and over lived in a low-income situation.

Whatever their age group, however, immigrants are more likely than the Canadian-born population to live in a low-income situation. In fact, immigrant children under the age of 15 were more than twice as likely as their non-immigrant counterparts to be classified as being in a low-income environment in 1995.

Among immigrants, recent arrivals are more likely to have low incomes than earlier arrivals. In fact, half (50%) of recent arrivals were living in a low-income situation in 1995, compared with 31% of those who immigrated between 1981 and 1990 and 16% of those who arrived in Canada before 1981.

Like Canadian-born women, immigrant women are more likely to live in a low-income situation than their male counterparts. In 1995, 27% of immigrant women were living with low incomes, compared with 24% of immigrant men.

Immigrants and the Criminal Justice System

Immigrants and Canadian born have similar overall risks of criminal victimization⁵

According to the 1999 General Social Survey (see Box 2), approximately 22% of recent immigrants were victims of household or personal crime one or more times in the previous twelve months. This was virtually the same as the rate of victimization among earlier immigrants (23%), and lower than the Canadian born (28%).

Immigrants less likely to be victims of violent crime

While the rates of violent crime for recent and earlier immigrants were not publishable due to small sample sizes and high sampling variability, in the case of all immigrants, the rate of violent victimization was one-half the rate of the general population (39 versus 81 per 1,000 population).

Recent immigrants more likely to be victims of personal theft

Approximately 52,000 incidents of personal theft were reported in the

³ Income data reported to the 1996 Census are based on those reporting income for the 1995 calendar year.

⁴ Families or individuals fall below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs if they spend, on average, at least 20 percentage points more of their pre-tax income than the Canadian average on food, shelter, and clothing. Using 1992 as the base year, families and individuals with incomes below the Low Income Cut-offs usually spend more than 55% of their income on these items and are considered to be in straitened circumstances. The number of people in the family and the size of the urban or rural area where the family resides are also taken into consideration. Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs, however, are not official poverty lines. They have no officially recognised status as such, nor does Statistics Canada promote their use as poverty lines.

⁵ This section includes personal and household victimization as well as incidents of spousal violence that occurred in the 12 months preceding the survey.

**Box 2:
The General Social Survey**

Statistics Canada, as part of the General Social Survey Program, conducts a survey on criminal victimization every 5 years. The most recent survey was conducted in 1999, and involved telephone interviews with approximately 26,000 people, aged 15 and older, living in the 10 Canadian provinces. Similar to previous surveys, all respondents were asked about their experiences with criminal victimization, and their opinions on a variety of justice related topics including their fear of crime, and their perceptions about the performance of the police, criminal courts, and prison and parole systems.

GSS respondents are asked to identify their country of birth, and the year in which they first came to Canada to live permanently. For the purpose of this discussion, three groups of respondents will be compared: recent immigrants, earlier arriving immigrants, and the Canadian born population. Recent immigrants are those that arrived in Canada between 1995 and 1999, while earlier immigrants came to Canada before 1995.

There is one important limitation with using survey data to analyze the experiences of the recent immigrant population. Only those immigrants who are able to communicate in English or French are eligible to complete the survey. The 1996 Census shows that 13% of immigrants who arrived in the 1991-1996 period were unable to speak either of Canada's official languages. Therefore, the experiences of recent immigrants described in this study more accurately reflect those of immigrants able to communicate in one of the two official languages and not those of the entire immigrant population.

It is important to note that the GSS data are estimates. They are based on information collected from a sample of the population and are therefore subject to sampling error. The GSS analysis uses the coefficient of variation (CV) as a measure of the sampling error. Any estimate with a CV of more than 33.3% is considered unreliable and is not published. When the CV of the estimate is between 16.6% and 33.3%, the symbol '†' is used. These estimates should be used with caution.

1999 GSS, for a rate of 99 incidents per 1,000 recent immigrants. This was higher than the rate for both earlier immigrants and the Canadian-born (67 per 1,000 and 80 per 1,000 respectively).

Although small numbers prohibited a more in depth analysis of the details of these incidents, there does appear to be an elevated risk of theft during the first few years of residency in Canada.

Immigrants and non-immigrants believe crime in their neighbourhood is lower

The majority of Canadians believe that crime in their neighbourhood is lower than in other areas of the country. Approximately 54% of recent immigrants, 56% of earlier immigrants, and 61% of the Canadian-born believed that crime was lower in their residential area. Nevertheless, being new to Canada, recent immigrants were more likely to say that they did not have the knowledge to answer this question, and subsequent questions about their perceptions of crime.

Immigrants feel safe

Regardless to their place of birth, the majority of Canadians (approximately 90%) reported being satisfied with their overall

**Box 3:
Offence Types**

The 1999 GSS measured the incidence of personal and household victimization looking at eight offence types, based on the *Criminal Code* definitions for these crimes. Detailed analysis of the immigrant population only takes into account the four personal offences since for personal crimes, it is an individual who is victimized. For household crimes, it is all members of the household who are victimized. Rates of personal offences are calculated per 1,000 persons aged 15 and older.

Crime category	Offence	Description
Personal crimes	Violent crimes	
	Sexual assault	Forced sexual activity, an attempt at forced sexual activity, or unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling.
	Robbery	Theft or attempted theft in which the perpetrator had a weapon or there was violence or the threat of violence against the victim.
	Assault	An attack (victim hit, slapped, grabbed, knocked down, or beaten), a face-to-face threat of physical harm, or an incident with a weapon present.
	Theft of personal property	Theft or attempted theft of personal property such as money, credit cards, clothing, jewellery, a purse or a wallet. (Unlike robbery, the perpetrator does not confront the victim.)

safety from crime. When asked about specific activities, such as walking alone, using public transportation, and being home alone at night, recent immigrants were no more likely to be fearful than other Canadians (see Table 3).

While walking alone in their neighbourhood at night, the majority of Canadians reported feeling very or reasonably safe. Across all three sub-populations, women, however, were less likely than men to report feeling safe walking alone.

Although there were virtually no differences in levels of fear, recent immigrants were more likely than others to walk alone regularly (once a week or more). Approximately 67% of recent immigrants reported that they walked alone regularly, compared to 52% of later arriving immigrants and 55% of the Canadian born. Recent immigrants were also much more likely to use public transportation.

Among those who reported that they use public transportation, recent immigrants were more likely to report using it alone after dark on a daily basis. Although overall levels of fear did not vary between the three sub-populations, women were less likely than men to report feeling safe using public transportation alone at night.

Immigrants rate police positively

The majority of recent immigrants in Canada rated their local police forces positively. More than half of recent immigrants (59%) believed that the police were doing a good job of enforcing the laws and ensuring the safety of citizens (56%) (see Table 4). Furthermore, they felt that the police were approachable and easy to talk to (54%). Just under half stated that the police were doing a good job of providing information on reducing crime (42%), and in responding to promptly to calls (41%).

When perceptions of the police among recent immigrants are

contrasted with that of earlier immigrant arrivals and the Canadian-born population, no remarkable differences emerge. However, recent immigrants were somewhat more reserved in stating that the police were doing a good job than were other Canadian residents when asked about the approachability of the police, and about police effectiveness in informing the public about crime prevention. However, the higher proportions of recent immigrants indicating that they could not provide a judgement make comparisons difficult.

Recent immigrants have had little contact with the police

Recent immigrants reported having had little contact with the police during the year prior to being surveyed. Ten percent had contact with the police for a public information session or a traffic violation. A slightly lower proportion, 9%[†] had contact with the police as a victim of a personal or household crime. Another 8%[†] reported having had contact with the police for another reason. With the exception of police contact for a public information session, recent immigrants reported having less contact with the police over the past twelve months than the Canadian-born.

Recent immigrants less critical of the court, prison and parole systems⁶

Very few recent immigrants, 3%[†], have had contact with the Canadian criminal courts thus far in their lives. This is not surprising in light of their short residency in Canada at the time of the survey.

Although recent immigrants were more critical of the Canadian

courts and correctional system than they were of the police, they were generally less critical than were other Canadians. One quarter of recent immigrants believed that the courts were doing a good job of providing justice quickly and of helping the victim. Approximately 22% believed that the courts did a good job of determining if the accused was guilty and 30% believed the courts did a good job of ensuring a fair trial for the accused.

Recent immigrants tended to be more critical of the system of supervising offenders in the community than they were of the system of supervision in the institutional setting. Approximately 23% reported that the prison system was doing a good job in supervising offenders and 22% believed they did a good job in helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens. However, like the non-immigrant population, recent immigrants were even more critical of the system of parole supervision in the community. Only 18% believed the parole system did a good job of releasing offenders who were not likely to re-offend, and 17% indicated that parolees were supervised effectively.

Earlier arriving immigrants did not differ significantly from the Canadian-born in their perceptions of the criminal courts and correctional systems.

References

Besserer, Sandra, and Trainor, Catherine. "Criminal Victimization in Canada, 1999," *Juristat*, Catalogue no. 85-002, Vol. 20, No. 10. Ottawa, Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, November 2000.

⁶ It is important to note that a sizeable proportion of recent immigrants did not feel they had the knowledge to answer questions about the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Canada.

[†] Coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3%

Table 1

Selected characteristics of immigrants, people born in Canada, and the total population, 1996

	Total immigrant population	Recent immigrants ¹	Canadian-born population	Total population ²
Total population	4,971,070	1,038,995	23,390,340	28,528,125
As % of the total Canadian population	17.4	3.6	82.0	100.0
% aged				
Less than 25	14.5	35.3	38.3	34.2
25-44	34.9	45.4	32.1	32.7
45-64	32.4	14.5	19.4	21.6
65 and over	18.1	4.8	10.1	11.4
Knowledge of official languages (%)				
English only	77.7	73.1	64.8	67.1
French only	3.7	5.3	16.6	14.3
Both	11.5	8.8	18.2	17.0
Neither	7.1	12.7	0.4	1.7
% speaking a non-official language in the home	39.2	64.3	2.2	9.0
% living with families³				
Aged 15-64	89.8	90.1	85.8	86.4
65 and over	75.0	92.5	67.4	69.4
Total	87.7	92.0	87.2	87.2
% with university degree	16.9	21.2	12.2	13.3
% with less than grade 9	16.7	11.6	10.9	12.1
% of population aged 15-24 attending school	69.8	70.3	64.6	65.2
% employed				
Men	62.0	56.5	66.2	65.2
Women	47.1	40.7	54.5	52.8
Total	54.3	48.1	60.2	58.9
% self-employed⁴				
Men	19.1	13.8	15.0	15.7
Women	10.7	8.0	8.4	8.8
Total	15.3	11.2	12.0	12.6
% employed full-time, full-year				
Men	58.9	42.4	56.3	56.8
Women	46.7	32.5	43.6	44.1
Total	53.3	37.8	50.4	50.9
% unemployed	10.5	18.6	9.9	10.1
Average income(\$)				
Men	30,871	18,048	31,250	31,117
Women	19,010	11,970	19,309	19,208
Total	24,980	15,058	25,308	25,196
% income from employment sources	72.8	75.6	76.0	75.3
% income from government transfer payment	15.4	15.6	13.6	14.0
% with low income⁵	26.4	49.9	18.0	19.7

¹ Includes immigrants who arrived between 1991 and 1996.² Includes non-permanent residents.³ Includes people living with members of their extended family.⁴ Includes people in incorporated and unincorporated businesses. Does not include unpaid family workers.⁵ Includes both unattached people as well those living in families.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada.

Table 2

Selected characteristics of immigrants, by province, 1996

	Nfld.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Qc.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
Total population	8,490	4,395	41,960	24,385	664,500	2,724,485	135,940	52,315	405,140	903,190
As % of the total provincial population	1.6	3.3	4.7	3.3	9.4	25.6	12.4	5.4	15.2	24.4
% aged										
Less than 25	11.2	11.1	13.1	13.2	16.3	14.3	13.3	11.9	14.5	14.7
25-44	33.3	25.7	28.9	33.1	36.0	35.2	33.2	27.2	35.7	33.8
45-64	36.2	36.3	33.8	30.6	31.4	32.9	31.5	27.2	31.7	32.7
65 and over	19.4	26.7	24.1	23.2	16.3	17.7	22.0	33.7	18.1	18.8
Period of immigration (%)										
Before 1961	20.9	32.2	27.4	26.3	17.1	21.6	26.4	37.4	21.8	20.6
1961-1970	20.7	15.7	19.1	17.3	16.4	16.5	15.6	13.5	13.3	14.4
1971-1980	23.7	22.2	21.4	27.4	19.9	19.2	22.2	18.1	23.9	20.4
1981-1990	17.0	19.9	16.6	18.3	23.8	22.0	21.6	16.1	23.8	20.6
1991-1996	17.7	9.8	15.4	10.6	22.7	20.7	14.1	14.8	17.2	24.0
Knowledge of official languages (%)										
English only	85.9	88.5	87.0	73.6	20.6	86.4	90.4	90.9	88.4	85.7
French only	..	0.2	..	1.4	26.5	0.2	0.1	..	0.1	0.1
Both	12.6	10.7	11.2	23.9	46.4	6.3	4.4	5.3	5.3	5.5
Neither	1.4	0.6	1.7	1.1	6.4	7.2	5.0	3.8	6.2	8.7
% speaking a non-official language in the home	14.0	9.8	16.4	8.6	43.4	39.7	33.8	23.1	34.5	41.0
% living with families¹										
Aged 15-64	87.4	90.6	88.9	90.2	87.4	90.6	90.0	88.9	89.9	89.2
65 and over	69.5	73.3	71.4	71.1	74.9	76.7	67.8	61.2	72.6	74.0
Total ²	84.6	86.2	85.3	86.2	86.2	88.7	85.6	80.0	87.3	86.9
% with university degree	37.4	22.0	27.6	20.8	18.7	16.2	14.6	17.4	17.1	17.2
% with less than grade 9	5.3	8.0	7.1	10.0	22.4	16.9	19.3	22.4	14.4	12.8
% of population aged 15-24 attending school	78.7	68.4	66.6	56.4	72.3	70.7	59.4	67.8	65.8	69.3
% employed										
Men	70.5	59.2	62.6	63.6	57.1	62.7	64.5	58.5	67.6	60.8
Women	43.5	45.7	41.7	45.8	39.9	47.9	50.6	42.1	52.6	47.1
Total	56.5	52.4	51.9	54.0	48.5	55.0	57.3	49.8	59.9	53.7
% self-employed³										
Men	18.4	30.5	24.5	18.2	18.4	17.8	16.8	25.9	20.5	22.7
Women	15.1	18.4	17.7	11.3	9.3	9.5	10.0	17.0	12.4	13.4
Total	17.1	25.4	21.7	15.0	14.6	14.0	13.7	22.0	16.9	18.4
% employed full-time, full-year										
Men	65.7	59.9	59.9	56.6	55.2	61.6	61.6	58.9	57.7	53.2
Women	47.1	39.0	43.2	41.7	43.2	49.7	48.1	44.0	43.8	40.9
Total	58.0	51.1	52.9	49.7	50.1	56.2	55.3	52.2	51.4	47.5
% unemployed	11.4	11.2	8.3	11.2	16.4	10.1	7.3	6.5	7.4	9.8
Average income(\$)										
Men	46,335	32,595	35,022	33,488	26,773	32,039	28,354	31,915	31,016	30,162
Women	23,360	18,400	18,564	16,703	16,672	19,911	16,931	17,458	17,688	18,908
Total	34,877	25,557	26,901	24,675	21,947	25,986	22,561	24,439	24,400	24,534
% income from employment sources	78.4	63.5	65.4	69.7	69.1	74.2	71.1	64.6	73.4	71.4
% income from government transfer payment	11.8	19.3	16.3	17.8	19.1	14.9	17.3	20.6	14.7	14.6
% with low income⁴	16.7	16.2	18.6	16.7	38.2	24.3	25.0	21.3	24.6	26.0

¹ Includes people living with members of their extended family.

² Includes people of all ages.

³ Includes people in incorporated and unincorporated businesses. Does not include unpaid family workers.

⁴ Includes both unattached people as well those living in families.

.. Figures not available

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada.

Table 3

Feelings of safety from crime among foreign born and Canadian-born population aged 15 and older¹, 1999

	% of population		
	Recent immigrant population ²	Early immigrant population ³	Canadian-born population
While waiting for/using public transportation alone after dark, how do you feel about your safety from crime?			
Not at all worried	62	51	54
Somewhat worried	31	38	40
Very worried	6 [†]	10	6
Don't know/Not stated	--	--	--
How safe do you feel from crime when walking alone in your area after dark?			
Very safe	41	40	44
Reasonably safe	44	47	45
Somewhat or very unsafe	14	13	10
Don't know/Not stated	--	1 [†]	--
While alone in your home in the evening or at night, how do you feel about your safety from crime?			
Not at all worried	76	77	80
Somewhat worried	19	20	18
Very worried	4 [†]	3	2
Don't know/Not stated	--	--	--
In general, how do you feel about your safety from crime?			
Very satisfied	36	39	47
Somewhat satisfied	52	52	46
Somewhat dissatisfied	6 [†]	4	4
Very dissatisfied	--	2	2
Don't know/Not stated	5 [†]	4	1

¹ Includes only respondents who engaged in these activities.

² Refers to those who arrived in Canada between 1995 and 1999.

³ Refers to those who arrived in Canada before 1995.

-- amount too small to be expressed.

Note: [†] Coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3%.

Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.

Table 4

Perceptions of the justice system among the recent immigrant population¹ aged 15+, 1999

	Recent immigrant population 15+									
	Total	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated	Total	Good job	Average job	Poor job	Don't know/ Not stated
	(000s)					%				
What kind of job are your local police doing at ...										
Being approachable?	531	288	84	25 [†]	134	100	54	16	5 [†]	25
Ensuring the safety of citizens?	531	298	124	34 [†]	75 [†]	100	56	23	6 [†]	14 [†]
Enforcing the laws?	531	315	110	26 [†]	81	100	59	21	5 [†]	15
Supplying information on reducing crime?	531	222	133	58	119	100	42	25	11	22
Responding promptly to calls?	531	220	84	22 [†]	205	100	41	16	4 [†]	39
What kind of job are criminal courts doing at ...										
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused?	531	162	130	36 [†]	204	100	30	24	7 [†]	38
Determining the guilt of the accused?	531	114	141	51	225	100	22	27	10	42
Helping the victim?	531	131	123	67	210	100	25	23	13	40
Providing justice quickly?	531	134	138	63	196	100	25	26	12	37
What kind of job is the prison system doing at ...										
Supervising/controlling prisoners?	531	122	103	43 [†]	263	100	23	19	8 [†]	50
Helping prisoners become law-abiding?	531	115	93	46	277	101	22	18	9	52
What kind of job is the parole system doing at ...										
Releasing offenders who are not likely to re-offend?	531	96	122	65	248	100	18	23	12	47
Supervising offenders on parole?	531	92	109	52	279	100	17	21	10	53

¹ Refers to those who arrived in Canada between 1995 and 1999.

Note: [†] Coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3%.

Figures may not add to total due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1999.