

Title Canada's Visible Minority Population: 1967-2017  
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WP Number 08-05

Research Question: The goals of this paper are to examine the changing place of visible minorities in Canada within the context of the demographic, social and economic changes and to highlight the related policy initiatives which have occurred over the last four decades.

Importance: Projections of visible minority groups conducted by Statistics Canada in 2005 suggest that Canada's visible minority population will grow substantially by the year 2017. The majority of this growth will take place in Ontario and British Columbia, with specific concentration in the Toronto and Vancouver regions, and with some growth in various mid-size cities such as Edmonton, Calgary and Ottawa. Given that on average the visible minority population will be younger than the white population (but not younger than the Aboriginal population) and that immigrants in general will be more likely to be of working age than the Canadian-born population, Canada will be increasingly reliant on both Aboriginal and visible minority groups to fill labour force requirements, particularly in Canada's large Census Metropolitan Areas.

Findings: In social policy terms two implications need consideration. First, the cost of discrimination and racism has a profound impact on the minorities and newcomers, creating a dichotomous society prone to large-scale inequality, exclusion and resentment. Second, large-scale immigration will invariably create some level of disequilibrium in society, whereby "mainstream" and "new arrival" communities jockey for influence and power for defining the societal norms. To address these issues it is important to observe that governments in Canada have not ignored the implication of this demographic change. Various public policies have been developed.

Implications: If the demographic trend is extended past 2017 it is clear that the non-white population will grow proportionally faster. Inter-marriage will both cause increasing diversity and offer us a bridge between cultures. This country will be as radically different in 2051 compared to 2001 as it is now compared to 1951. It is not clear to us that governments, and society at large, are spending the time and energy required to plan for such fundamental change.