

POLICY BRIEFING NOTE

Title: Social Capital and the Labour Market Process among New Generation Youth from Visible Minority Immigrant Families

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Research Question:

What are the actual job searching experiences of new generation youth from visible minority immigrant families, what difficulties do they encounter, and what resources do they draw on to adapt to the job market? What values, goals, and future expectations do they hold?

Importance:

The change to immigrant policy in the early 70s has led to an increase of visible minority immigrants in Canada. Youth from these immigrant families, who were either born in Canada or moved there at a very young age, are soon to be the major labour market replacement force to the aging Canadian society. However, little is known about how they enter the job market and what challenges and resources they have in the job search process. This study fills the research gap by providing a preliminary empirical understanding of the actual job search experience of twenty-eight new generation youth from the Chinese, South Asian and Filipino communities.

Research Findings:

Because of the booming economic conditions, our research participants have no problem in finding jobs, but most of their jobs are confined to the service/sales sector. These jobs offer low pay and almost no career prospects. When these youth look for jobs, friends are the major source of help. However, most of their friends are from the same ethnic background, which limits the scope of assistance they can offer. Many of these youth also reported that help from their parents is limited. In general, their parents are largely working in low-level jobs within their own ethnic community, and so, have limited knowledge of the job market and network resources. The majority of these youth have not heard of or used any formal employment services. When envisioning their future, most participants reported a plan to pursue a higher educational qualification, which would both fulfill their parents' wishes and give them a credential leading to a better and professional job.

Implications:

Further research is needed for a more comprehensive understanding of the employment condition of this emerging group of youth. Despite the limitations of this study, we can tentatively speculate that coming from visible minority immigrant families, this group of new generation youth may be limited in their knowledge of and social connections to the labour market beyond their own ethnic community. If so, we contend that consequently, they may end up with long term economic disadvantages. To prevent further economic and social marginalization of this group of youth, we need a better school-to-work transition plan in high school for those new generation youth who choose not to pursue higher education. The existing youth employment services have seemingly not reached this group of youth. Service providers with extra funding should provide or strengthen outreach programs to new generation youth, helping them not only to expand their job search scope but also to plan for a more promising career.