

NHS in Brief

Generation status: Canadian-born children of immigrants



National Household Survey (NHS), 2011



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Standard symbols

The following symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| . | not available for any reference period |
| .. | not available for a specific reference period |
| ... | not applicable |
| 0 | true zero or a value rounded to zero |
| 0 ^s | value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded |
| P | preliminary |
| r | revised |
| x | suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the <i>Statistics Act</i> |
| E | use with caution |
| F | too unreliable to be published |
| * | significantly different from reference category (p < 0.05) |

Generation status: Canadian-born children of immigrants

Box: National Household Survey

This is the first release of data from the National Household Survey (NHS). Roughly 4.5 million households across Canada were selected for the NHS, representing about one-third of all households.

This *NHS in Brief* article, together with the article [Obtaining Canadian citizenship](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011003, complements the analytical document [Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011001.

Further information on the National Household Survey can be found in the [National Household Survey User Guide](#), Catalogue no. 99-001-X. Specific information on the quality and comparability of NHS data on immigration and ethnocultural diversity data can be found in the series of [reference guides](#) for these topics.

Introduction

The ethnocultural characteristics of the population vary considerably according to the number of generations a person's ancestors have lived in Canada. The characteristics of each generation reflect the origins of various waves of immigrants who have settled in Canada over time.

The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) provides data that allow the analysis of the Canadian population on the basis of generation status. This term 'generation status' refers to whether a person or their parents were born in Canada. Specifically, the data identify whether people are first, second or third generation or more in Canada.

This NHS in Brief examines the population according to generation status, focusing on those who are second generation, that is, those who are Canadian-born and for whom one or both parents were born outside Canada. This group is having a growing impact on the nation's future. Its members can be considered as a bridge between the first generation newcomers and those who have been in the country for at least three generations.

The generations: A quick look

Here is a thumbnail sketch of each generation using data from the 2011 NHS:

- **First generation** refers to people who were born outside Canada. The 2011 NHS data showed there were 7,217,300 people in the first generation in 2011, or 22.0% of the total population. This is a diverse group, whose country of birth is represented by around 200 countries. The vast majority (93.9%) are individuals who are, or have ever been, immigrants to Canada. In addition, 4.9% are non-permanent residents, defined as people from another country who, at the time of the survey, have a work or study permit or who are refugee claimants. It also includes any non-Canadian-born family members living with them in Canada. Also included in the first generation are roughly 87,400 people who are Canadian citizens by birth; that is, they were born outside Canada to parents who are Canadian citizens.
- **Second generation** includes individuals who were born in Canada and had at least one parent born outside Canada. In 2011, this group consisted of just over 5,702,700 people, representing 17.4% of the total population. For just over half (54.8%) of them, both parents were born outside Canada.

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- **Third generation or more** refers to people who are born in Canada with both parents born in Canada. In 2011, this group comprised 19,932,300 individuals, accounting for 60.7% of the total population. They may have several generations of ancestors born in Canada, or their grandparents may have been born abroad.

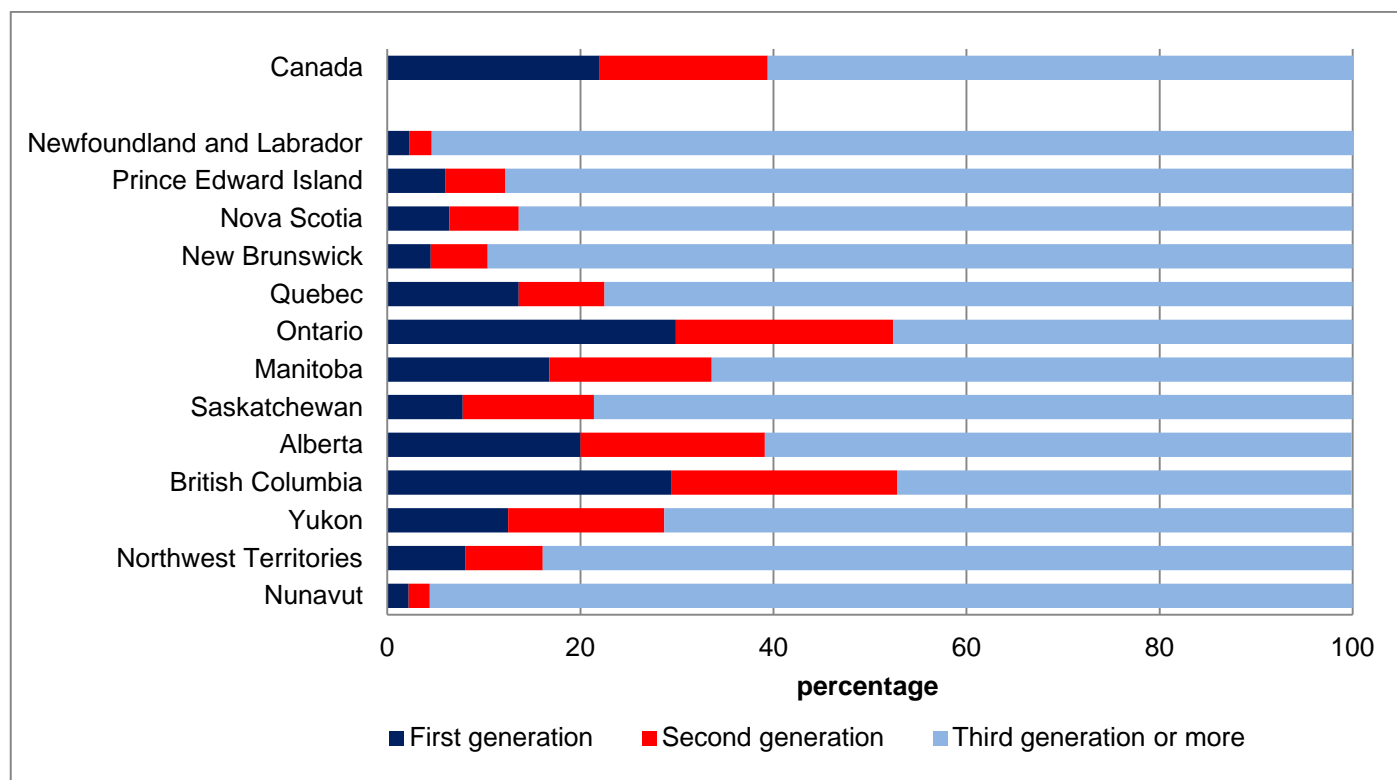
Provinces and territories

Second generation individuals accounted for 23.4% of the population of British Columbia in 2011, the highest proportion among the provinces and territories. Two other provinces were above the national average of 17.4%: Ontario, where the second generation represented 22.5% of the population and Alberta, where it represented 19.1%.

In Quebec, 8.9% of the population were second generation. The lowest proportions of second generation were in Nunavut (2.2%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (2.3%).

Combined, individuals in the first and second generation accounted for just over one-half (52.9%) of British Columbia's population. This group consisted of people who were either born outside Canada or had at least one parent who was born outside the country. In Ontario, people who belonged to these two generations accounted for 52.4% of the province's population, while in Alberta, these two generations combined accounted for 39.2% of the provincial population.

Figure 1 Generation status, Canada, provinces and territories, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Census metropolitan areas

The foreign-born population tends to settle in the largest urban centres. It is also the case for their Canadian-born children, with 80.9% of them living in census metropolitan areas (CMAs). Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal were home to almost half (47.1%) of the second generation population in Canada. In comparison, these three CMAs were home to slightly over one-third (35.2%) of the total population.

Toronto has the largest proportion of second generation of all 33 census metropolitan areas. The second generation accounted for 28.0% of Toronto's population in 2011, followed by Abbotsford - Mission (25.9%) and Vancouver (25.2%). Combined, first generation and second generation people accounted for a majority of the population of all three of these CMAs. In Toronto, three-quarters (75.8%) of its population consisted of people who were foreign-born or had at least one parent born outside Canada. In Vancouver, the first and second generation represented two-thirds (67.9%) of its population, while in Abbotsford - Mission, they accounted for just over half (50.7%) of its population.

Within the CMA of Toronto, the municipality of Vaughan had the highest proportion of second generation, 35.4%. As for the three largest municipalities in the Toronto CMA, the second generation accounted for slightly over one-quarter (27.0%) each of the populations in the municipalities of Toronto and Mississauga, and close to one-third (31.3%) in Brampton.

Among the three largest municipalities in the Vancouver CMA, Surrey had the highest proportion of second generation (27.3%), followed by Vancouver (26.0%) and Burnaby (25.3%).

Relatively young population

The second generation is younger than the general Canadian population. In 2011, the median age of second generation Canadians was 31.9 years, compared with 40.1 years for the general population. They were also younger than the other two generations. The median age of the first generation was 46.3 and the third generation, 38.9.

The age profile of the second generation varied considerably across the country, reflecting where different waves of immigrants have settled over time. The youngest second generation was in Quebec and Ontario, where the median age was 22.7 years and 29.7 years, respectively. Most of the second generation in these provinces are the Canadian-born children of recent cohorts of immigrants.

In contrast, the oldest second generation was in the Prairie provinces and the Atlantic provinces. Saskatchewan had the oldest second generation population, with a median age of 63.0 years. It was followed by New Brunswick (45.6 years), Prince Edward Island (45.1), Nova Scotia (44.8) and Manitoba (43.4). Many of the second generation in these provinces were children whose parents immigrated to Canada from Europe or the United States during earlier decades.

In British Columbia, the median age of the second generation was 36.2 years.

Three in 10 second generation were visible minorities

In 2011, just over 1.7 million of the second generation were members of a visible minority group. They accounted for 3 in 10 (29.8%) of all second generation, compared with one in five (19.1%) visible minorities in Canada's total population. In contrast, visible minorities made up 60.2% of first generation Canadians, and only 1.1% of third or higher generation Canadians.

Visible minority second generation Canadians are considerably younger than their non-visible-minority counterparts. The median age for all visible minority groups in the second generation was 13.6 years, compared with a median age of 43.4 years for the second generation who are not visible minorities.

The age profile of the second generation visible minorities was largely a result of immigration from non-European countries in recent decades. The young visible minority second generation were mostly Canadian-born children of immigrant parents who were themselves members of visible minorities.

Among the second generation visible minority groups, Japanese had an older age structure. The median age of second generation Japanese in 2011 was 32.4 years. In contrast, the second generation visible minority groups with the youngest age profile were West Asians and Arabs. Second generation West Asians had a median age of only 8.0 years, while the median age for Arabs was 8.8.

In 2011, the median age of second generation for Canada's three largest visible minorities were 12.2 years for South Asians, 16.8 for Chinese and 14.5 for Blacks.

Additional information

Additional information on the ethno-cultural characteristics of the population can be found in the [NHS Data Tables](#), Catalogue nos. 99-010-X2011026 through 99-010-X2011034, the [NHS Profile](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X, as well as in the [NHS Focus on Geography Series](#), Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011005.

For details on the concepts, definitions, universes, variables and geographic terms used in the 2011 National Household Survey, please consult the [National Household Survey Dictionary](#), Catalogue no. 99-000-X. For detailed explanations on concepts and for information on data quality, please refer to the reference guides on the [2011 National Household Survey \(NHS\)](#) website.

Note to readers

Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 National Household Survey while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, estimates and percentages may vary slightly between different 2011 National Household Survey products, such as the analytical documents and various data tables.

Comparability between estimates from the 2006 Census long form and the 2011 National Household Survey estimates: When comparing estimates from the 2006 Census long form and estimates from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) users should take into account the fact that the two sources represent different populations. The target population for the 2006 Census long form includes usual residents in collective dwellings and persons living abroad whereas the target population for the NHS excludes them. Moreover, the NHS estimates are derived from a voluntary survey and are therefore subject to potentially higher non-response error than those derived from the 2006 Census long form.

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