

# **STRUCTURAL RACISM IN MULTICULTURAL CANADA**

Pushpa Kumari  
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## About the Author

Pushpa Kumari is a Senior Economist at Economic Policy Dialogue. She is an M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. in Economics. Besides research and teaching experience of more than a decade, she has many publications to her credit. Economic policy issues are where her profession and passion intersect the most among other interest areas of economic, social, and environmental importance.

Email: [pushpa@epdonline.org](mailto:pushpa@epdonline.org)

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Website: [www.epdonline.org](http://www.epdonline.org)

Email: [epd@epdonline.org](mailto:epd@epdonline.org)

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## Key Findings

The present study looks into structural racism in multicultural Canada. It compares the demographic factors (percentages, age-related features, etc.), and analyzes the outcomes of structural factors (education, employment, income, and poverty) for Canada and its different population groups. This whole exercise is to find if racism has a role in shaping the relative performance of minority people with different color, race, or origin than the majority population.

Canada's population comprised of about 72.9% white, 22.3% visible minorities, and 4.9% aboriginal people in 2016 compared to 83.3%, 13.4%, and 3.3%, respectively, in 2001. Clearly, the white Canadians constitute the supermajority, whereas visible and aboriginal people the minority. However, the proportion of minority (visible minorities and aboriginal) people has been increasing in the total population.

Age-related demographic characteristics – age-wise distribution of the population, median age, and dependency ratio – of Canada and its different race-based groups show that the majority (white) population is older, aging, and has a higher dependency ratio than the minority population.

Two main factors are making Canada's demography increasingly multicultural: growing migration (as natural increase contributed merely 20% to the total annual population increase lately), and rising proportion of non-white immigrants (e.g., Asians' proportion jumped to 48.1% in 2016 from 18.4% in 1986) in all settling in Canada recently.

Concerning educational attainment, out of all population groups, aboriginals seem to perform the worst at all education levels, and visible minorities the best at university-level education.

Aboriginal people had the worst unemployment, participation, and employment rates at 15.2%, 61.4%, and 52.1%, respectively, in 2016. Visible minorities had a worse unemployment rate at 9.2%, the highest participation rate at 66.5%, and a similar employment rate (around 60%) as that for overall Canada, non-aboriginal, and non-visible-minority people. There was a wide range of variation in the unemployment rate within different visible minorities, e.g., Arab (13.5%), Black (12.5%), and West Asian (11%) had a much higher rate than that for all visible minorities. Given the above participation and

employment rates, 9.3% of aboriginal and 6.1% visible minorities workforce could not get work opportunities out of those looking to participate in the labor market; in contrast, this percentage was much lower for the general Canadians (5%), and both non-aboriginal (4.9%) and non-visible-minority (4.7%) groups.

Regarding average annual income, visible minorities and aboriginal people had lower income levels at \$36,955 and \$36,043 than that of their non-visible-minority and non-aboriginal counterparts at \$50,225 and \$47,981, respectively, and also than the average Canadians at \$47,487, in 2015. Therefore, visible minorities paid 22% color-penalty and aboriginal population 24% aboriginal-penalty compared to average Canadian income, and 34% color-penalty and 33% aboriginal-penalty relative to their respective non-visible-minority and non-aboriginal counterparts' average income.

As for the poverty rate, aboriginal and visible minorities were found to have the highest rates across all age groups in Canada. Average poverty rates were 23.6% and 20.8% for aboriginals and visible minorities, as compared to 14.2%, 12.2%, and 13.8% for overall Canada, non-visible-minority, and non-aboriginal people, respectively.

Thus, the present study finds that besides increasing multicultural demography in Canada, racism plays a huge role in the determination of the outcomes of structural factors, namely, education, employment, income, and poverty.

## Preface

The opening period of the decade 2020s might be remembered in the history of two pandemics – the new coronavirus pandemic and generations-old racism pandemic. The confluence of these two pandemics resulted in a disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the racial population. There is nothing unique in the Covid-19 pandemic in this regard. Any man-made or natural disaster would hit harder those vulnerable in society. Who can be more vulnerable than the racial population in the western democratic(!) societies. It was little surprise why anti-racial demonstrations took place worldwide, even violating the Covid-19 restrictions, after the brutal killing of George Floyd by the police officer in the US on May 25, 2020. The demonstrations were a vent to protest against the generations-old racial discrimination in their respective countries. These events have brought the issue of structural racism against minorities once again to the forefront in the US, Canada, and

other Western nations. In the background of such a renewed interest, the present study intends to participate in the discussion on structural racism in multicultural Canada.

In Canada, everyone has equal freedom, opportunities, and justice, however, merely on the face of it. In reality, racial bias is an everyday normal and prevails everywhere whether it is society, education, sports, occupation, finance, business, housing, health, civic organizations, or elsewhere. Canada's inbuilt institutional racism has not left any aspect of life untouched as it is historical, chronic, and endemic. Within such a racially rigged system also emerges the profiling based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, aboriginality, etc., by the law enforcement, judiciary, prison system, and all such institutions. Race-based discrimination against a minority population, whether visible or aboriginal, has actually been multidimensional, multigenerational, and multilevel.

Studies after studies have established consistently that minority aboriginals and people of color have long suffered from the ill-fated racism in Canada. Governments and Churches' apologies for their past wrongdoings have also proven that the nation has been built and governed basically on the (wrong) racist foundations.

How could multicultural Canada normalize racism historically amid its diversity?

At the core, institutions shape the social behavior, actions, and structure of any nation. If these institutions are owned and controlled by the majority population and exclude the minority population – the institutional system would rarely be fair, unbiased, and democratic. The rule of law, democracy, justice, etc., would essentially be symbolic, especially for the minority population. The whole system would, in reality, be of/for/by the dominant majority. This would lay the dynamics of systemic racism. Such a structure would divide the entire institutional system into two contrasting sides – power-&-control on the one and exclusion-&-marginalization on the other. Along these contrasting sides, neither institutions would be neutral nor racial population would have a voice. The other side (minorities) would remain ignored, downgraded, and vulnerable. And, it would never be given real equality, freedom, and fairness. Minorities' liberty, participation, and justice would be at the mercy of the majority owners (makers, executors, and interpreters) of the institutions. With the institutions' proprietorship, the dominant majority would have nearly unlimited authority and total control over the entire system. Such institutional dynamics have virtually produced racism to the level of almost universality in the Canadian system. This is how multicultural Canada has normalized the systemic, deep-rooted, and widespread discrimination against the racial population (aboriginal people and visible minorities) amid its diversity.

Alongside this kind of structural racism, can Canada have true multiculturalism, democracy, equality, or justice?

# STRUCTURAL RACISM IN MULTICULTURAL CANADA

## Introduction

O Canada!

With gloomy hearts, thy native and colored people watch white fellows rule and rise.  
Why all races can't feel equally strong and free!

Canada is known as one of the most multicultural nations in the world. It is touted as having a diverse population who call it home. People of all races, colors, ethnicities, and origins constitute its social fabric. But this is only one side of multicultural Canada. Another side of it reveals the deep-rooted racism normalized as a typical way of life in its multicultural society. Being a Canadian does not mean everyone is treated equally, fairly, and impartially. The same passport does not guarantee all its people the same participation in the nation's social, political, educational, economic, and other setups. There are strong systemic entry barriers, discriminatory treatments, and also differential (lower) outcomes depending on the (non-white) skin color, (aboriginal and non-European) ethnic origin, and (non-Caucasian) race. Canada may be a land of ample opportunities, but unfortunately neither so nor as equitably for its racial population.

The research work on racial discrimination in Canada is not new. In fact, it will remain a work in progress till structural racism exists in whatever form. The present study contributes to the ongoing work by highlighting the racial differences in the outcomes of the structural factors – education, employment, income, and poverty rates – which keep running the vicious cycle of racism perpetually in Canadian life. It compares these factors for overall Canada and its different groups. The latter will include visible minorities, aboriginal people, non-aboriginal people (excluding aboriginal people from the total population), and non-visible-minority people (excluding visible minorities from the total population). In the absence of direct data on the white majority, the last two groups (i.e., non-aboriginal and non-visible-minority people) may better represent them (by excluding aboriginal people or visible minorities) as a proxy, at least better than overall Canada. The data used in the study are mostly sourced from the last available 2016 census (Statistics Canada, Census of Population Survey, 2016).

The current study is divided into three parts. The first part covers the features of Canada's racial demography, like percentage, age-related characteristics, and imminence of migration and composition of immigrants etc. The second part examines the educational attainment of different racial groups. The third part analyzes the economic indicators – employment, income, and poverty rates – for the racial population.

## Part 1: Features of Racial Demography in Canada

This part of the study will help find answers to intriguing questions such as: what demographic structure is of Canada's racial groups vis-a-viz other population groups, and also how it has been shaping in recent years; what factors are responsible for making Canada increasingly multicultural demographically; how imminent is the migration for its population growth<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1: Features of Canada's Racial Demography, 2016\*<sup>1</sup>**

	Canada* <sup>2</sup>	Visible Minorities* <sup>3</sup>	Aboriginal Population* <sup>4</sup>	Not Visible Minority Population	Not Aboriginal Population
<b>Median Age (Years)</b>	40.7	33.9	29.1	43.3	41.3
<b>Dependency Ratio</b>	48.8	42.6	51.7	50.6	48.6
<b>Age-wise Demographic Distribution (% unless indicated)</b>					
<b>Population (Total)</b>	34,460,065	7,674,580	1,673,785	26,785,485	32,786,285
<b>Population</b>	100.0	22.3	4.9	77.7	95.1
<b>0-14 years age</b>	16.9	20.9	26.8	15.7	16.4
<b>15-64 years age</b>	67.2	70.1	65.9	66.4	67.3
<b>65 years and over</b>	15.9	9.0	7.3	17.9	16.3

**Notes:**

\*1 Table is based on the total data for the population in private households, 2016 Census - 25% sample data.

\*2 Canada is represented here by the total data for the population in private households - 25% sample data. This is done for the sake of its comparability with the aboriginal and visible minority populations.

\*3 Visible minorities: The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as 'persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.'

\*4 Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the *Constitution Act, 1982*, section 35 (2) as Canada's Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples. 'Aboriginal identity' includes persons who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the *Indian Act of Canada*) and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

**Sources:**

Derived/calculated from the following Statistics Canada Tables (accessed on various dates in 2020):

**Data on Visible Minorities, Not Visible-minority Population, and also Canada**

**For age-wise demographic distribution, and dependency ratio:** Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016190.

**For median age:** Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. ("Table Population by visible minority group and median age, Canada, 2011 and 2016" under the Section "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity".)

**Data on Aboriginal (Total - Residence on or off reserve), Not Aboriginal, and also Canada**

**For median age, age-wise demographic distribution, and dependency ratio:** Statistics Canada.

2018. Canada [Country] (table). Aboriginal Population Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2016001. ("Topics: "Aboriginal Peoples" and "Age")

<sup>1</sup> There are mainly three determinants of growth and structure of the population – fertility, mortality (life expectancy), and migration.



## **1A. White Population has Supermajority, but Proportion of Minority Population (Aboriginal and Colored) has been Increasing**

Canada's population consisted of about 72.9%<sup>2</sup> white, 22.3% visible minorities, and 4.9% aboriginal people, according to the 2016 census.<sup>3</sup> These were 83.3%<sup>4</sup>, 13.4%<sup>5</sup>, and 3.3%<sup>6</sup> (white, visible minorities, and aboriginal people), respectively, in 2001. Clearly, the white population has a supermajority<sup>7</sup>, whereas colored and aboriginal populations make Canada's minority. However, the proportion of minority (visible minorities and aboriginal) population has been increasing in the total population. According to some projections, these will increase further in the future: visible minorities will grow between 31% and 36%<sup>8</sup> of the total population and aboriginal people between 4.6% and 6.1%<sup>9</sup> in 2036. In fact, the actual aboriginal population has already surpassed the lower growth scenario of the projection in 2016.

## **1B. Majority Population is Older, Aging, and has Higher Dependency Ratio than Minority Population**

Besides size, age-related features of different population groups are important as these shape the social, economic, education, accommodation, health type needs at the group level. However, all the groups may not have the same influence on the public policy related to these matters. These will have different influences depending on the relative power of different groups. Powerful groups will obviously try to keep power dynamics in their favor come what may while keeping other groups at the margin. That is how public policy matters are not separable from structural racism.

Age-related features are examined to see how the demographic structure of Canada's minority is different from that of the majority population. These are observed with the help

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<sup>2</sup> Calculated by subtracting aboriginal (976,305 and 1,673,785) and visible minorities (3,983,845 and 7,674,580) populations from the total (29,639,035 and 34,460,065) during 2001 and 2016 (respectively).

Source for 2016 data: see footnote 3 below.

Sources for 2001 data are following:

**Visible minorities** – Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 95F0363XCB2001003.

**Aboriginal population** – Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97F0011XCB2001001.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Canada [Country] and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2 for the Source of 2001 data on visible minorities.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. ["Table 1.6 Number and proportion of the population belonging to a visible minority group, Canada, 2001 to 2016" corresponding to the 'Figure 1.6' under the Section "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity"].

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada (May 2013), Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011001, p. 6.

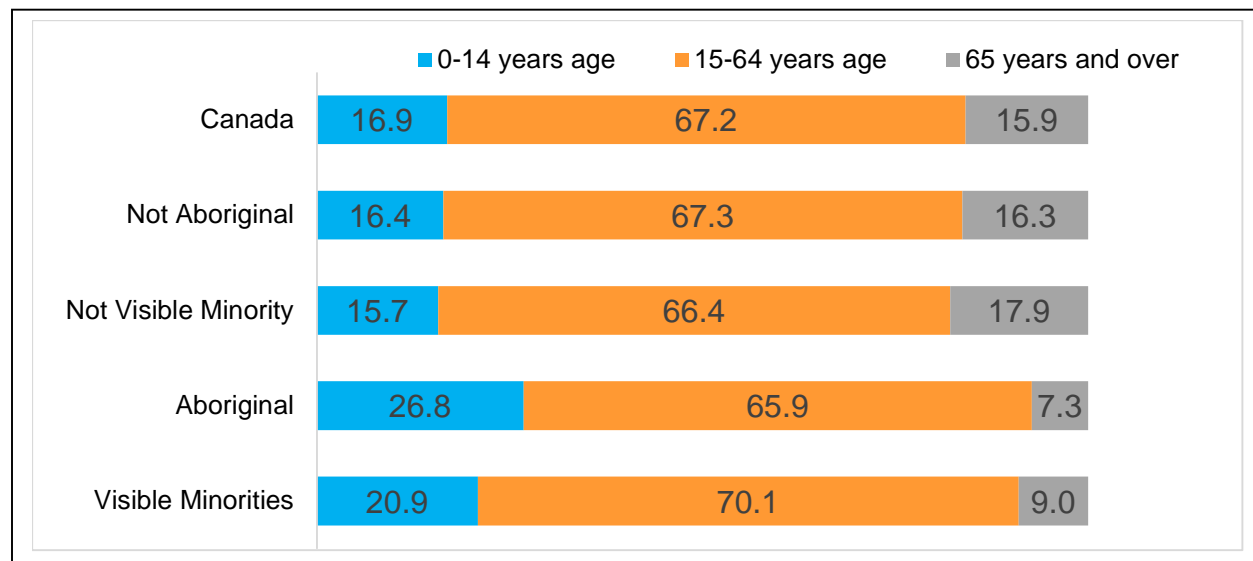
<sup>7</sup> A supermajority is generally two-thirds (66%) of the population.

<sup>8</sup> Morency, et al (2017), p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Morency, et al (2015), p. 6.

of three indicators: one, distribution of population among young (0-14 years), working (15-64 years), and senior (65 and older) people (Table 1 and Graph 1); two, median age (Table 1); and three, the dependency ratio (Table 1 and Graph 2).

**Graph 1: Age-wise Distribution of Canada's Racial Population (in percent), 2016**



**Notes and Sources:** See Table 1.

Table 1 and Graph 1 show Canada's racial demographic distribution in 2016. Regarding the young (0-14 years of age) population, aboriginal people (26.8%) and visible minorities (20.9%) had a much higher proportion of it than overall Canada (16.9%), non-visible-minority (15.7%), and non-aboriginal (16.4%) people. About the working-age (15-64 years) population, it was 70.1% for visible minorities and 65.9% for the aboriginal people<sup>10</sup> as compared to 67.2% for Canada, 66.4% for non-visible-minority and 67.3% for non-aboriginal people. Concerning the older (65 years and over) population's proportion, it was 15.9% for Canada, less than its half at 7.3% for aboriginals, and 9% for visible minorities. Whereas, it rose to 17.9% for non-visible-minority Canadians (outnumbering even the 15.7% population in the 0-14 age group) and 16.3% for non-aboriginal Canadians. Thus, Canada's majority population has a larger share of the old population, which is also a factor in its higher median age and rapidly aging than that of the minority population groups as will be observed in the forthcoming discussion.

According to the 2016 Census, Canada's median age<sup>11</sup> was 40.7 years as compared to 33.9 years for visible minorities and 29.1 years for aboriginal people (Table 1). The median age rose to 43.3 years if people of color were excluded from Canada's total

<sup>10</sup> For aboriginals, a lower proportion of the working-age population was because it had very high proportion of the young population.

<sup>11</sup> The median age is the midpoint if a population is divided into two groups of equal size, one with individuals older and the other with individuals younger than the median.

population and to 41.3 years if aboriginal people were excluded from the total. Thus, the white majority population has a higher median age, which is also another indicator of aging. In other words, visible minorities and aboriginal people are younger than the majority population.

Canada's majority population is aging faster than the minority (aboriginal and visible) racial groups. Three factors have been primarily contributing to its aging – one, baby boomers are approaching fast in their advanced ages; two, Canada's fertility rate is below the replacement rate; and three, increased life expectancy.<sup>12</sup> As baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1965) are reaching more advanced ages, especially since 2011 when the first baby boomer turned 65, the proportion of seniors (65 and over) is increasing and it is happening at a fast pace. The proportion of seniors had increased from 12.5% in 2000 to 13.9% in 2009 growing annually at a 2.12% rate during 2000-2009, whereas it jumped to 17.5% in 2019 rising the annual growth rate to 3.51% during 2010-2019.<sup>13</sup> The Baby-boom cohort made up the majority (51.1%) of total seniors on July 1, 2019, from literally no one from this generation before 2011.<sup>14</sup> Concerning the second factor, Canada's fertility rate – it was 1.54 in 2016, that is 36.4% below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman; actually, after equalling with the replacement level in 1971, it has continuously been below the replacement level and even has a declining trend.<sup>15</sup> According to a study, aboriginal and visible minority women had higher fertility rates than white women; as in 1995/1996 and 2000/2001, the total fertility rate was 2.86 and 2.60 children per woman, respectively, for aboriginal women, 1.94 and 1.70 children for visible minority women, and, in contrast, 1.63 and 1.51 children for white women.<sup>16</sup> Regarding the third contributory factor to Canada's aging population, namely, increased life expectancy at birth – it has risen from 78.1 to 82.0 years between 1994/96 and 2016/18 for Canada.<sup>17,18</sup> Increasing life expectancy has led Canada to have more than 10,000 centenarians (i.e. people of 100 years or more) on July 1, 2020.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Aging means the proportion of the population aged 65 and over is increasing in the total population. Baby boomers reaching advancing ages, and decreases in fertility and mortality rates are increasing this proportion.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada (Sep. 2019), p. 23. Charts 2.2 & 2.3. (Here, proportion of people aged 65 and over is taken from the data table of Chart 2.3, and growth rates calculated from the data table of Chart 2.2).

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada (Sep. 2019), p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> Provencher, et al (June 2018), p. 6. Figure 5: Total fertility rate, Canada, 1921 to 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Malenfant and Bélanger (2006), pp. 84-85.

<sup>17</sup> Data source: Statistics Canada, Table 13-10-0114-01.

<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada (May 2019), The Daily. It provides the following additional information:

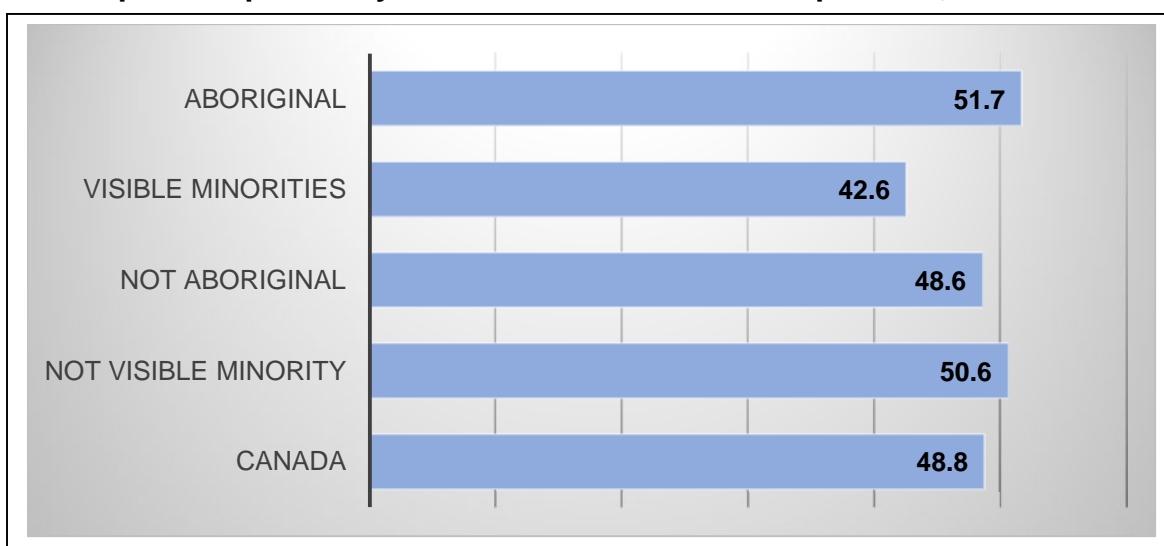
“Life expectancy at birth did not increase from 2016 to 2017 for either males or females, a first in over four decades. This was largely attributable to the opioid crisis.”

“Life expectancy at birth increased on average by 0.2 years per year in Canada from the mid-1990s to 2012. Gains then slowed to a 0.1 year annual increase until 2016.”

<sup>19</sup> “On July 1, 2019, preliminary estimates indicate that there were 10,795 centenarians in Canada. Topping 10,000 for the first time, the number of centenarians in Canada is constantly growing as a result of increased life expectancy.” Statistics Canada (Sep. 2019), p. 21.



**Graph 2: Dependency ratio of Canada's Racial Population, 2016**



**Notes and Sources:** See Table 1

Given the racial demographic distribution discussed above, the dependency ratio<sup>20</sup> was calculated to be 48.8 for Canada, 42.6 for visible minorities, and 51.7 for aboriginal people (Table 1 and Graph 2). It rose to 50.6 for the non-visible-minorities population. On the other hand, it was 48.6 for non-aboriginal people than 51.7 for aboriginal people; the relatively higher dependency ratio for the aboriginal population was not bad as it had more young population than the non-aboriginal population who had more seniors (as seen in Table 1 and Graph 1).<sup>21</sup> Canada's dependency ratio has risen to 50.5 in July 2019 having increased steadily after a record low of 44.0 in 2007.<sup>22</sup> It means there is now one dependent (either child or senior) for every two working Canadians. The ratio was also above 50 during the 1970s (up to 1977 exactly) but then it had more dependent babies whereas in 2019 it became 50.5 again, however, this time because of more seniors as the boomer population is aging fast (by the way, the ratio was under 50 during 1977-2019).<sup>23</sup> It has been rising steadily and more prominently since 2011 when the ratio was 44.6 as the first baby boomers started turning 65.

<sup>20</sup> "The demographic dependency ratio represents the number of children (0 to 14 years) and seniors (65 years and older) per 100 working-age people (15 to 64 years)." Statistics Canada (January 2019), p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Generally speaking, the lower the dependency ratio the better because it would mean fewer people are dependent on the working population. The dependency ratio can be high in two cases: when the population is young and more children are dependent or if the population is aging and more seniors are dependent. However, the former case of a high dependency ratio is better as a demographic dividend will be higher for a nation when children grow into earning ages.

<sup>22</sup> Statistics Canada (Sep. 2019), p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics Canada (Sep 2019), p. 25. Chart 2.4: Demographic dependency ratio, 1971 to 2019, Canada.

## 1C. Imminence of Migration and Changing Composition of Immigrants are Making Canada Increasingly Multicultural Demographically

There are mainly two factors that are making Canada increasingly multicultural demographically: growing migration and changing composition of immigrants. Since Canadian Confederation in 1867, the proportion of the foreign-born population has not gone below 13%<sup>24</sup> any year, and it was 21.9%<sup>25</sup> in 2016. Migration has become more prominent since the mid-1990s as international migratory growth has become the primary source of Canada's total population growth compared to the 20th century when natural growth was the primary source.<sup>26</sup> In 2017/18, out of 14.2 annual crude growth rate (per thousand), natural increase accounted for only 2.9 (i.e., 20% of annual growth) and international migratory increase for the remaining 11.3 of it (i.e., 80% of annual growth).<sup>27</sup> By the way, fertility, mortality, and migration happen to be the main three determinants of population growth in any nation. And as seen above in section 1B, fertility and mortality (life expectancy) rates, the contributing factors to the natural increase of the population, are not doing much favor for the nation in recent years.

Regarding the second factor for Canada to become increasingly multicultural, the changing composition of immigrants – immigrants who settled in Canada before the 1970s were mostly from Europe and the United States, and contrastingly current immigration landscape is dominated by Asians.<sup>28</sup> In 1986<sup>29</sup>, of all immigrants who settled in Canada 62.2%, 18.4%, and 2.3% were born in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and about 30 years later these changed to 27.7%, 48.1%, and 8.5%, respectively, in 2016<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> "Data from Canadian censuses since 1871 show that this proportion has never fallen below 13.0% (in 1901) and it even reached 22.3% in 1921. Although the proportion of immigrants remained fairly stable between 1951 and 1991 (between 14.7% and 16.1%), it has risen rapidly since then to reach 20.7% in 2011." Morency, et al (2017), p.28.

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada. 2017. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. ("Figure 1.1 Number and percentage of the foreign-born population, Canada, 1871 to 2016" under the Section "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity".)

<sup>26</sup> "For most of the 20th century, natural increase was the main driver of population growth in Canada. However, migratory increase (the balance of immigration minus emigration) has been the main source of population growth in Canada for the last two decades. A substantial increase in immigration levels in the middle of the 1990s while fertility remained relatively unchanged contributed to this shift." Section 2 – Result at the Canada level, 2018 to 2068. Chagnon, et al. (2019).

<sup>27</sup> See "Table 2.3 Decomposition of annual crude growth rates, historic (1977/1978 to 2017/2018) and projected (2027/2028 to 2067/2068) according to selected scenarios, Canada". Section 2 – Result at the Canada level, 2018 to 2068. Chagnon, et al. (2019).

<sup>28</sup> "This recent period was characterized by sustained immigration, increased diversification of the birthplaces of immigrants and immigrant selection intended to meet economic needs and, to a lesser extent, to promote family reunification and welcome vulnerable people (refugees)." Morency, et al (2017), p. 8.

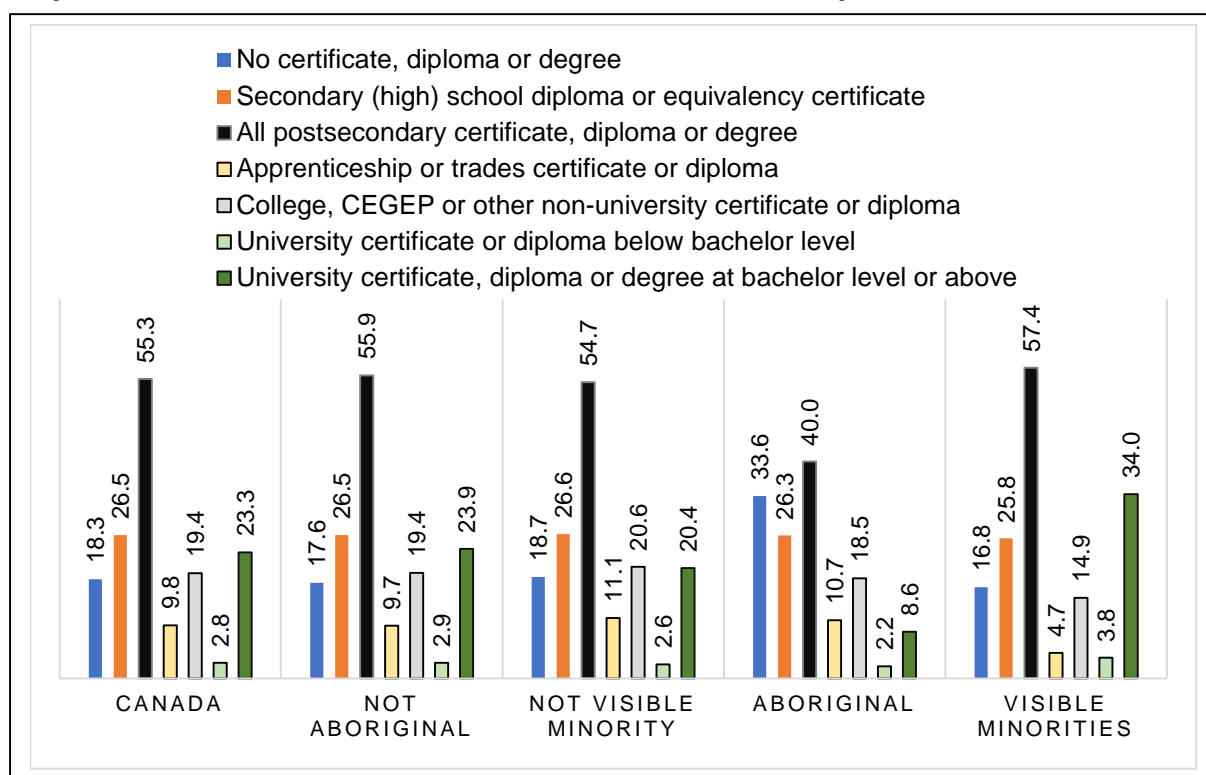
<sup>29</sup> Morency, et al (2017), p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> Statistics Canada. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. (Table "Immigrant population by selected demographic, migration and ethnocultural characteristics, Canada, 2011 and 2016" under the Section "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity")

## Part 2: Educational Attainment – Racial Differences in Canada

As education happens to be one of the main sources of capacity building in any nation, it would be interesting to see how different racial groups are performing in it in Canada.

**Graph 3: Educational Attainment of Canada's Racial Population, 2016**



### Notes:

1. The graph is based on the data on the highest certificate, diploma or degree for the population aged 15 years and over in private households - 25% sample data.
2. There are three main education categories: one, no certificate/diploma/degree; two, secondary diploma/certificate; and three, postsecondary certificate/diploma/degree, which is further divided into four sub-categories: apprenticeship; college-level; university education below bachelor level; and university education equal-or-above bachelor level.
3. 'Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate' includes only people who have this as their highest educational qualification. It excludes persons with a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree.
4. CEGEP means Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (College of General and Vocational Education), a pre-college university program in Quebec province.

**Sources:** Following Statistics Canada Tables (accessed on various dates in 2020) were used:

#### For Canada

Statistics Canada. 2017. Canada [Country] and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. ("Topic: Education")

#### For Visible Minority, and Not Visible Minority

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016275.

#### For Aboriginal (Total - Residence on or off reserve), and Not Aboriginal

Statistics Canada. 2018. Canada [Country] (table). Aboriginal Population Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2016001. ("Topic: Education")



The 2016 Census provides education data<sup>31</sup> for population aged 15 years and over in three main categories: one, no certificate/diploma/degree; two, secondary diploma/certificate; and three, postsecondary certificate/diploma/degree. The third category, postsecondary education, is further divided into four sub-categories: apprenticeship, college-level, university education below bachelor level, and university education equal-or-above bachelor level. It is quite clear from Graph 3 that generally visible minorities have higher educational aspirations and aboriginal people lower than overall Canada and also their respective counterparts, non-visible-minority and non-aboriginal people.

About the first category, no certificate/diploma/degree, an indicator of lower educational attainment: it was the most prominent for the aboriginal population, as 33.6% (i.e., about one-third) of its people (15 years and over) was in this category as compared to 17.6%, 16.8% and 18.3% for non-aboriginals, visible minorities, and general Canadians, respectively.

With regard to the second category, secondary (high) school diploma or equivalent certificate, about one-quarter of the population in Canada and similarly for all its population subgroups gained this level of education in 2016.

Regarding the third postsecondary education category (all four subcategories together), it was the highest at 57.4% for visible minorities, followed by non-aboriginal people at 55.9%, overall Canada at 55.3%, non-visible-minority people at 54.7%, and the lowest for aboriginal people at 40%. With respect to its two subcategories, apprenticeship and college/vocational education – non-visible-minority people (11.1% and 20.6%), aboriginals (10.7% and 18.5%), general Canadians (9.8% and 19.4%), and non-aboriginal people (9.7% and 19.4%) all had a higher percentage in it than the visible minorities (4.7% and 14.9%). The lowest percentage for visible minorities in this non-university level education seemed to reflect their higher educational aspirations (as will be seen in the forthcoming paragraph).

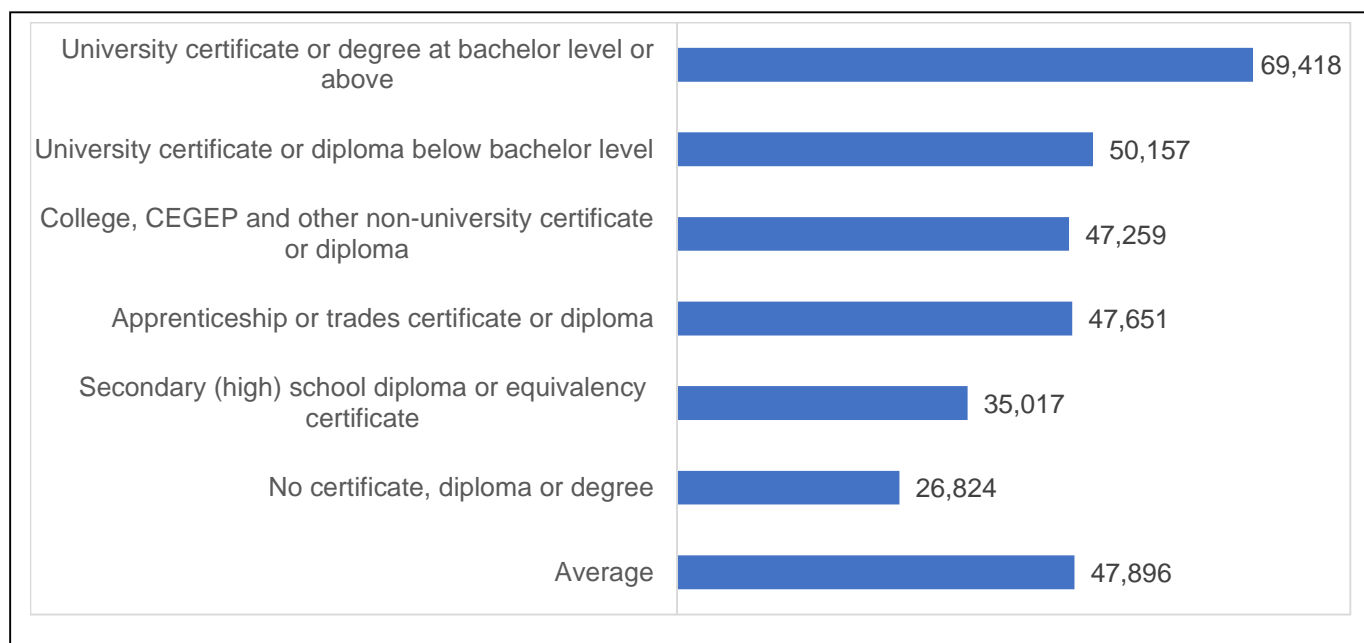
As mentioned above, visible minorities had the highest percentage in university-level education, an indicator of higher educational aspirations – below bachelor (3.8%) and equal/above bachelor level (34.0%) – in contrast to their non-visible minority counterpart (2.6% and 20.4%), overall Canada (2.8% and 23.3%), non-aboriginal population (2.9% and 23.9%), and the aboriginal population with the lowest percentage (2.2% and 8.6%). Maybe visible minorities, otherwise systemically under-privileged, recognize the fact that higher education is the only gateway to compete with the privileged majority population and also achieve higher income levels. Graph 4 shows the positive correlation between the education level and average annual earnings/income. In 2016, average

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<sup>31</sup> Total data for the population in private households – 25% sample data.

earning/income was the maximum at \$69,418 for university-educated (bachelor or above) and the minimum at \$26,824 for those without any certificate/diploma/degree, and bands of earnings for in-between education levels. Canada's average earning/income (all education levels) was \$47,896 for the same year.

**Graph 4: Average Earnings or Employment Income, by Highest Certificate, Diploma, or Degree for Working-age Canadians (15-64 years) in 2016**



**Source:** Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0152-01.

## Part 3: Economic Indicators – Racial Differences in Canada

This part of the study compares three main economic indicators – employment, income, and poverty (i.e. low-income prevalence) – for overall Canada and its different population groups. Since these indicators determine largely the social, economic, political, occupational, and health type outcomes, differences in these will ultimately shape diverge economic realities and institutional hierarchy for different racial groups at the national level. These indicators are covered in three subsequent subparts.

### 3A. Racial Differences in Employment

This subpart presents the unemployment, participation, and employment rates<sup>32</sup> for population aged 15 years and over in Canada and its different population groups in 2016 (Graphs 5 & 6). The aboriginal population was observed to have the worst unemployment, participation, and employment rates at 15.2%, 61.4%, and 52.1% as compared to non-aboriginal counterpart with 7.4%, 65.4%, and 60.5%, respectively. Visible minorities with a 9.2% unemployment rate ranked second and that rate was way higher than their comparable non-visible-minority counterpart with 7.3% and overall Canada with 7.7%. This higher rate of unemployment for the visible minorities was particularly striking in light of their highest participation rate at 66.5% as contrary to 64.5% for the non-visible-minority population, 65.2% for Canada, 61.4% for aboriginal, and 65.4% for the non-aboriginal population.

The employment rate was almost the same at around 60% for Canada and its population groups (visible minorities, non-visible-minority, and non-aboriginal people), excepting aboriginal people (52.1%). This lowest employment rate of 52.1% for aboriginal people should especially be seen in the background of their 61.4% participation rate. It implies that 9.3% (61.4% minus 52.1%) aboriginal workforce couldn't get employment who were looking for it as compared to 6.1% (66.5% minus 60.4%) for visible minorities, 5% (65.2% minus 60.2%) for overall Canada, 4.9% (65.4% minus 60.5%) for non-aboriginal Canadians, and 4.7% (64.8% minus 60.1%) for non-visible-minority Canadian workforce. Perhaps aboriginals pay the highest price for their aboriginal identity in terms of historically rooted deprivation and discrimination, followed by the visible minorities who pay the higher price for their race and color.

Ideally, higher educational attainment should lead to better employment outcomes. But, in a racialized structure, things do not necessarily turn out as an ideal, especially for the

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<sup>32</sup> Unemployment rate (Unemployment/laborforce ratio): Number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

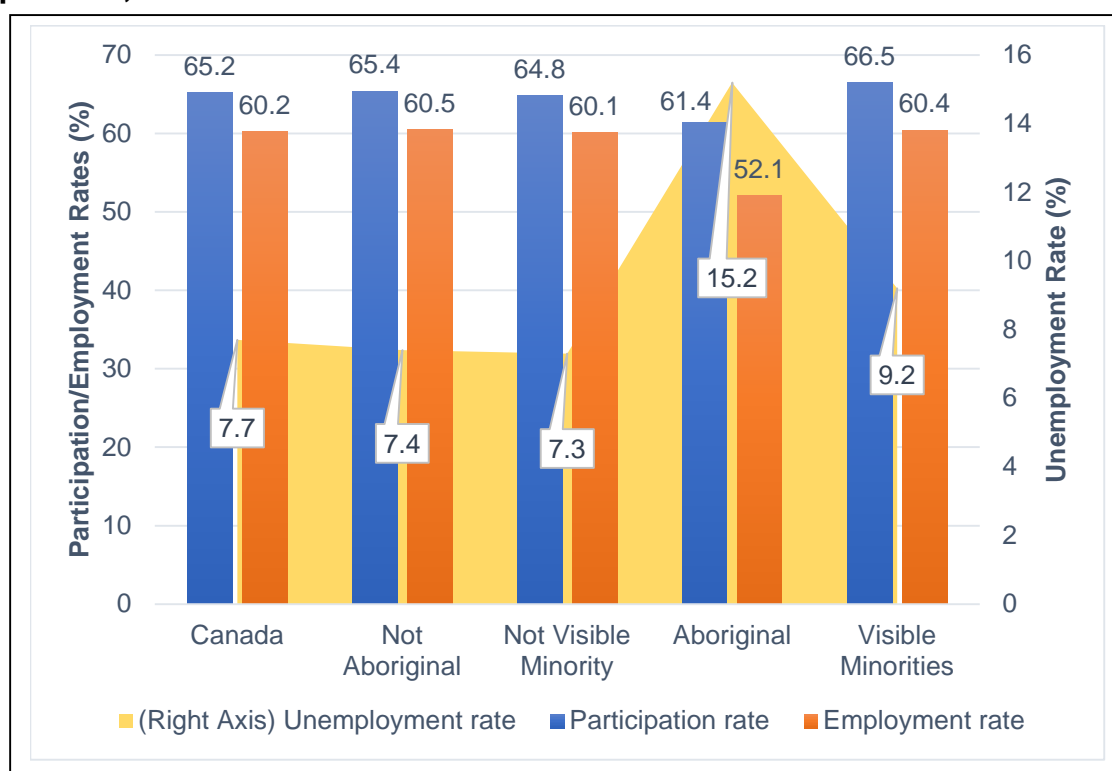
Participation rate (Laborforce/population ratio): Total labor force (employed+unemployed) expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over.

Employment rate (Employment/population ratio): Number of employed persons expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over.



visible minorities. Visible minorities had the second-highest unemployment rate after the aboriginal population despite having the highest overall postsecondary educational attainment, especially at the university level (as seen in part 2 above). It means race and the color of the skin matter for an average Canadian to unlock their employment opportunities.

**Graph 5: Participation, Employment, and Unemployment Rates of Canada's Racial Population, 2016**



**Notes:**

1. The graph is based on the population aged 15 years and over by labour force status - 25% sample data
2. Data relates to whether a person aged 15 years and over was employed, unemployed or not in the labour force during the week of Sunday, May 1 to Saturday, May 7, 2016. (Early enumeration was conducted in remote, isolated parts of the provinces and territories. When enumeration has taken place before May 2016, the reference date used is the date on which the household was enumerated.)

**Sources:**

Following Statistics Canada Tables (accessed on various dates in 2020) were used:

For Canada

Statistics Canada. 2017. Canada [Country] and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. ("Topic: Labour")

For Visible Minority, and Not Visible Minority

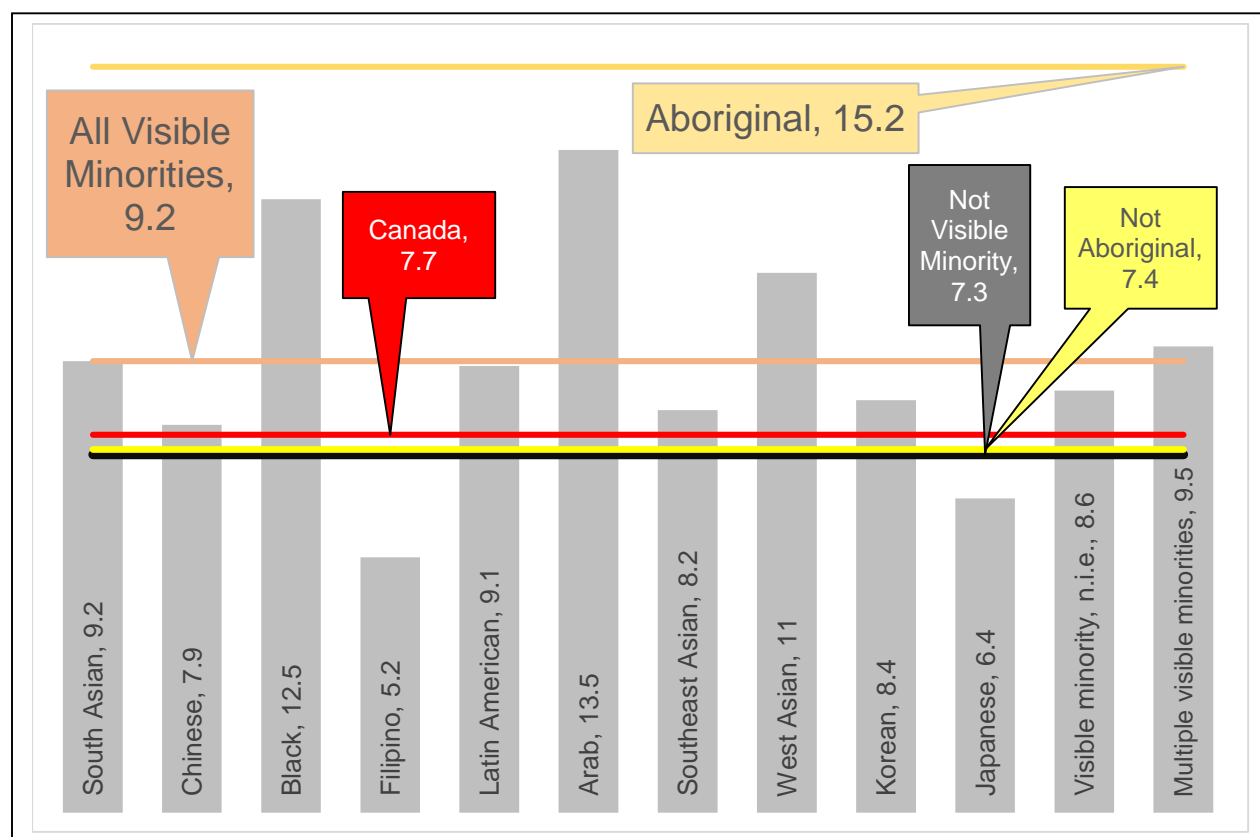
Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016286.

For Aboriginal (Total - Residence on or off reserve), and Not Aboriginal

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016176.

It is also relevant to see how different visible minority groups fair with respect to the unemployment rate (Graph 6). On the one end of the spectrum, Arab (13.5%), Black (12.5%), and West Asian<sup>33</sup> (11%) have much higher than the average visible minority unemployment rate (9.2%), however, yet below the average aboriginal unemployment rate (15.2%). On the other end of the spectrum, the unemployment rate for Filipino (5.2%) and Japanese (6.4%) was not only below the visible minority average unemployment rate, but it was also below the average rate for Canada (7.7%), non-aboriginal (7.4%), and non-visible-minority population (7.3%). Other minority groups having below the average visible minority unemployment rate (9.2%) – but, higher than Canadian, non-aboriginal, and non-visible-minority average rates – were Chinese (7.9%), Southeast Asian (8.2%), Korean (8.4%), and minority groups not included elsewhere<sup>34</sup> (8.6%). Therefore, some visible minority groups pay a much higher price for their color, religion, and race in terms of higher unemployment rates than not only their white and Caucasian counterparts but also their colored cousins.

**Graph 6: Unemployment Rates (percent) of Canada's Racial Population and All Visible Minority Groups, 2016**



**Notes and Sources:** Same as Graph 5.

<sup>33</sup> Comprising Iranian and Afghan etc.

<sup>34</sup> Like 'Guyanese,' 'West Indian,' 'Tibetan,' 'Polynesian,' 'Pacific Islander,' etc.

### 3B. Racial Differences in Income

This sub-part analyzes the income aspect of Canada and its racial groups by comparing their average income<sup>35</sup> (from all sources<sup>36</sup>). If it is a fair system, income will be equitable all across population groups. If racial factor also plays a role in income determination that system will be unfair and inequitable.

**Table 2: Average Income [Absolute (\$) and Relative (%)], and Reward or Penalty for Canada's Racial Population, 2015<sup>\*1,\*2,\*3</sup>**

	Average Total Income Amount (\$)	Racial Reward/Penalty in Income Level: Racial Average Income Relative to Canadian Average Income	Racial Reward/Penalty in Income Level: Racial Average Income Relative to its own Counter Group's Average Income
<b>Canada</b>	47,487	Canada: 100	Canada: 100
<b>Not Aboriginal</b>	47,981	1% Reward (Not Aboriginal/Canada: 101%)	33% Reward (Not Aboriginal/Aboriginal: 133%)
<b>Not Visible Minority</b>	50,225	6% Reward (Not Visible Minority/Canada: 106%)	36% Reward (Not Visible Minority/Visible Minority: 136%)
<b>Aboriginal</b>	36,043	24% Aboriginal Penalty (Aboriginal Population/Canada: 76%)	25% Penalty (Aboriginal/ Not Aboriginal: 75%)
<b>Visible Minorities</b>	36,955	22% Color Penalty (Visible Minorities/Canada: 78%)	23% Penalty (Visible Minorities/Not Visible Minority: 77%)

**Notes:**

<sup>\*1</sup>. Data used here are extracted/calculated from the employment income statistics for the population aged 15 years and over in private households - 25% sample data.

<sup>\*2</sup>. Total income is from all sources before tax and deductions, during a specified reference period. It refers to the inflows from regular sources: employment income (e.g., wages, salaries, self-employment net income), investment income (dividends, interest, etc.), pension income, other regular cash income (e.g., child/spousal support payments, scholarships), and income from government sources (e.g., social assistance, child benefits, Employment Insurance benefits).

<sup>\*3</sup>. For the 2016 Census, the reference period is the calendar year 2015 for all income variables.

**Sources:** Following Statistics Canada Tables (accessed on various dates in 2020) were used:

For Canada

Statistics Canada. 2017. Canada [Country] and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.  
("Topic: Income")

For Visible Minority, and Not Visible Minority

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016213.

For Aboriginal (Total - Residence on or off reserve), and Not Aboriginal

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016176.

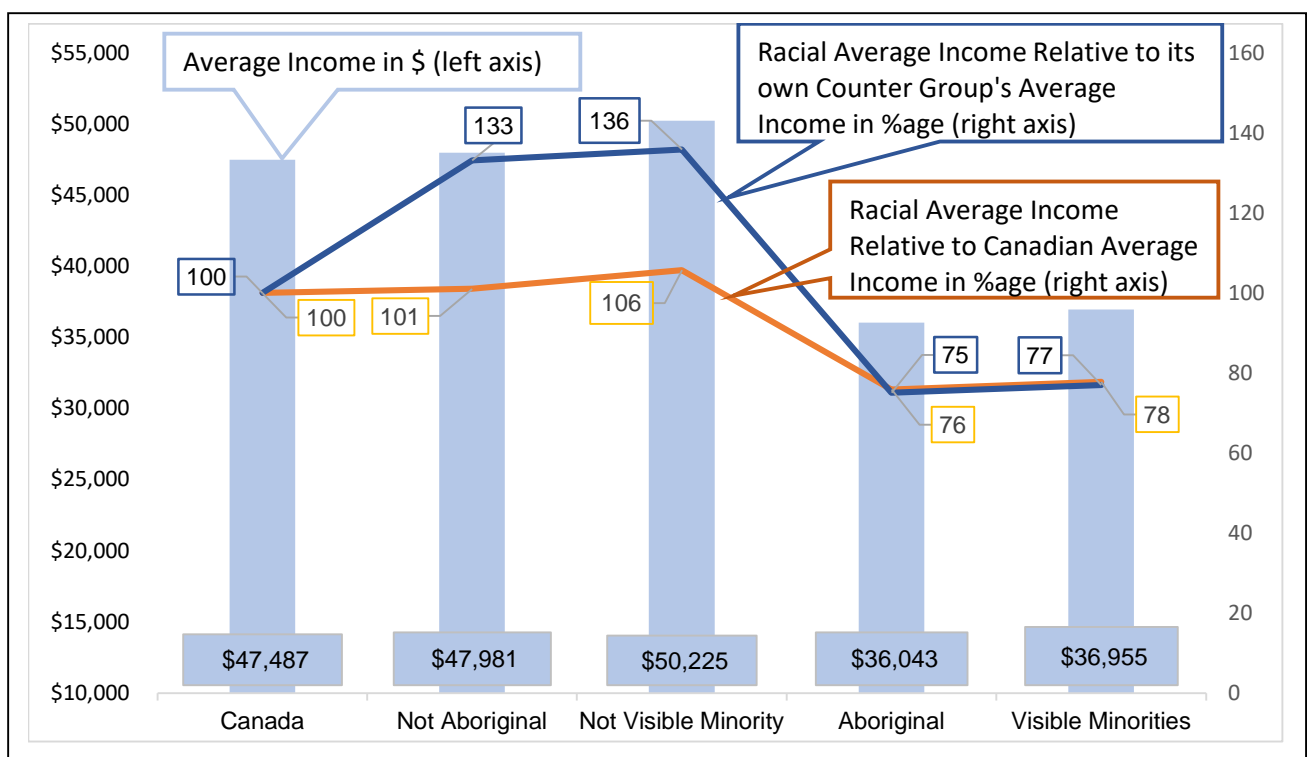
Canada doesn't seem to have a level playing field as all the racial groups don't seem to get a fair share of income, that is what is seen in Table 2 and Graph 7. Canada's average

<sup>35</sup> The average income of a specified group is calculated by dividing the aggregate income of that group by the number of units in that group.

<sup>36</sup> Income from all sources is here total income before tax and deductions, during a specified reference period. It refers to the inflows from regular sources: employment income (e.g. wages, salaries, self-employment net income), investment income (dividends, interest, etc.), pension income, other regular cash income (e.g. child/spousal support payments, scholarships), and income from government sources (e.g. social assistance, child benefits, Employment Insurance benefits).

income of \$47,487 was much higher than \$36,955 which was what a visible minority person could earn, or than \$36,043 what an aboriginal person could get as per the census figures on income for the year 2015. It amounts to 22% color penalty (\$36,955 vs. \$47,487) for a visible minority person and 24% aboriginality penalty (\$36,043 vs. \$47,487) for an aboriginal person. As the average income of a non-visible-minority Canadian was yet higher at \$50,225 and of a non-aboriginal person at \$47,981, consequently the color-penalty escalates to 23% and aboriginal-penalty to 25% when compared with a non-visible-minority counterpart (\$36,955 vs. \$50,225) and a non-aboriginal counterpart (\$36,043 vs. \$47,981), respectively. In other words, a non-visible-minority person is rewarded with a 6% higher income than the Canadian average (\$50,225 vs. \$47,487), and a non-aboriginal person with 1% higher income than the Canadian average (\$47,981 vs. \$47,487). On the other hand, reward figures soar to 36% for a non-visible-minority Canadian (\$50,225 vs. \$36,955), and 33% for a non-aboriginal Canadian (\$47,981 vs. \$36,043) when compared with their respective counterparts, namely, visible minority and aboriginal persons. Not to forget, a higher income connotes not only a better buying capacity during a year, but it also provides an ability to remain on a higher scale perpetually if higher income is maintained over the period; and a sustained higher income elevates the status and power of that group in the society! That is how racism has been normalized structurally and institutionally in Canada.

**Graph 7: Average Income – Absolute (\$) and Relative (%) – for Canada’s Racial Population, 2015**



**Notes and Sources:** Same as Table 2.



### 3C. Racial Differences in Poverty

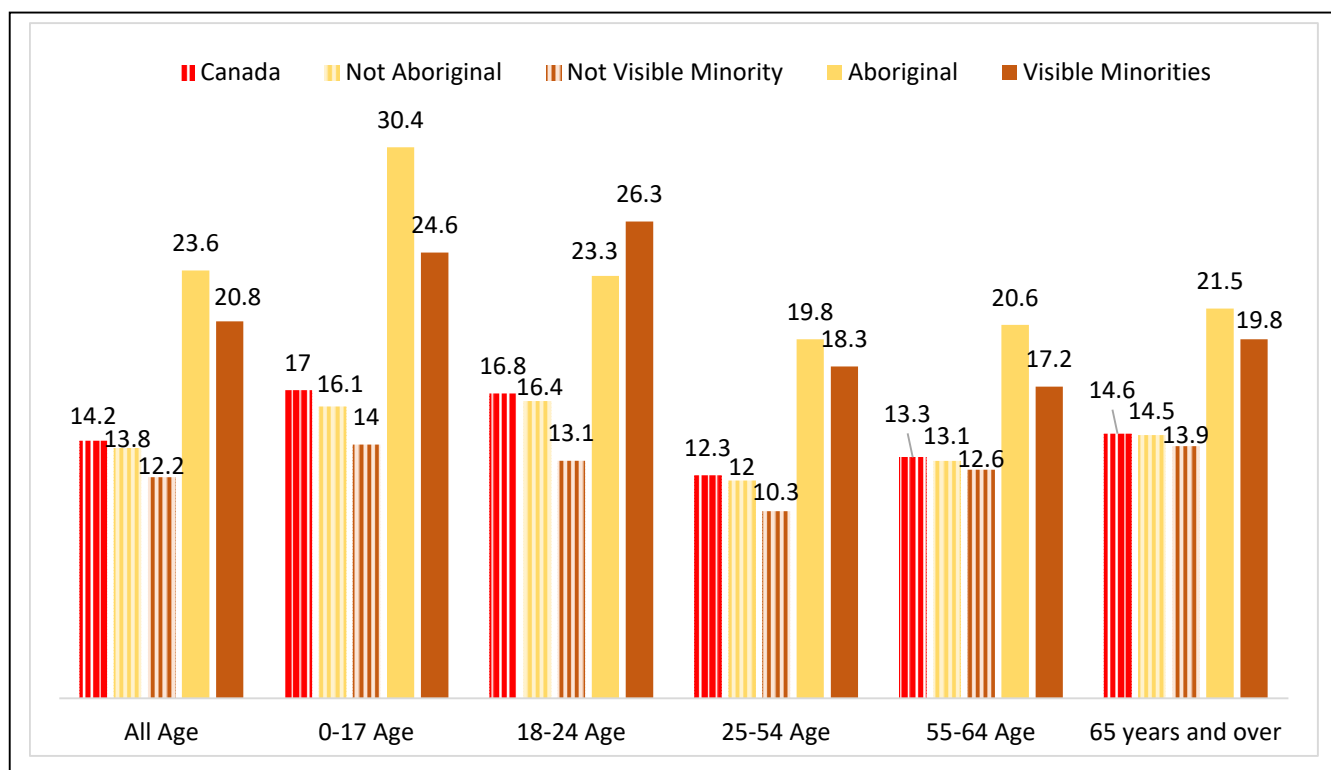
The color penalty is strikingly visible when poverty rates<sup>37</sup> are compared across different racial groups, especially through various age categories. Non-visible-minority people, non-aboriginal people, and general Canadians had the lowest poverty rates in all the age categories as depicted in Graph 8. Canada's poverty rate was 14.2% as compared to 20.8% for visible minorities and 23.6% for aboriginal people. The poverty rate further goes down to 12.2% for non-visible-minority Canadians and 13.8% for non-aboriginal Canadians.

Graph 8 also shows Canada's age-wise poverty rates. These were generally higher for young Canadians (below 25 years of age) and senior Canadians (aged 65 years and above), and yet much higher for the colored and aboriginal Canadians within these age categories. For example, amongst all the population groups in Canada, aboriginal children (0-17 years) had the highest poverty rate at 30.4%, followed by 24.6% of those belonging to visible minorities, this was in contrast to 14%, 16%, and 17% for non-visible-minority, non-aboriginal, and average Canadian children, respectively. The second-highest poverty rate, among all age categories, was for 18-24 years' people in all population groups, except for the non-visible-minority group who had the second-highest poverty rate for the seniors. It was the highest at 26.3% for visible minorities followed by 23.3% for aboriginals, contrarily it was 13.1% for non-visible-minority people, 16.4% for non-aboriginals, and 16.8% for overall Canada. Then comes the Canadian seniors aged 65 years and above with the overall third-highest poverty rates. There were 21.5% and 19.8% seniors who were poor in aboriginal and visible minorities' groups, respectively, in comparison to around 14% seniors in the non-visible-minority and non-aboriginal counterparts, and overall Canada (exactly 13.9%, 14.5%, and 14.6%, respectively). Regarding working age (25-65 years), same as in all other groups, poverty burden was higher for the aboriginal people and visible minorities being in the range of 17%-21% in contrast to 10%-13% for the non-aboriginal and non-visible-minority counterparts, and also overall Canada.

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<sup>37</sup> Poverty rate refers here to the 'prevalence of Low Income (%)', i.e. the proportion or percentage of units whose income falls below a specified low-income line. The 'prevalence of Low Income (%)' is based on the 'Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT)'. This is the most commonly used relative poverty measure internationally, and it represents the income threshold below which a family will likely spend a larger share of its income on necessities (food, shelter, and clothing) than the average family. The main purpose here in this subpart of the study is not to depict the poverty problem of Canada but to compare the position of different low-income racial groups. Perhaps, the relative position of different low-income racial groups may not change much if any other measure than LIM-AT is used.

**Graph 8: Age-wise Poverty Rates (%) for Canada's Racial Population, 2016**



**Notes:**

1. The poverty rate in the graph is the 'prevalence of Low Income (%)', i.e., the proportion of units whose income falls below a specified low-income line. The 'prevalence of Low Income (%)' is based here on the 'Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT)'.
2. The LIM-AT refers to "a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of private households. The household after-tax income is adjusted by an equivalence scale to take economies of scale into account. This adjustment for different household sizes reflects the fact that a household's needs increase, but at a decreasing rate, as the number of members increases." In simple words, it is 50% of the median income of an equivalent household.
3. The main purpose here in this subpart of the study is not to depict the poverty problem of Canada but to compare the position of different racial groups regarding low-income. The relative position of different low-income racial groups probably will not change much if any other measure than LIM-AT is used.

**Sources:**

Following Statistics Canada Tables (accessed on various dates in 2020) were used:

For Visible Minority, Not Visible Minority, and also Canada (total 25% sample)

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016211.

For Aboriginal (Total - Residence on or off reserve), Not Aboriginal, and also Canada (total 25% sample)

Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016173.

## Reflection

The racial population is found to pay the penalty for their race, origin, and color in terms of higher unemployment, lower income, and higher poverty in Canada, the so-called land of opportunities. Its structural racism leaves the racial groups' demographic potential – young, diverse, and less dependent population – untapped. The numbers witnessed in the present study, unfortunately, don't reflect the real suffering, pain, and agony of the racial population caused by its structural bias, discrimination, and injustice. This type of racialized social structure is undoubtedly a result of the majority population's urge to systemically own and control the power and dominance.

The study witnesses aboriginal people experiencing the worst educational and economic outcomes – lowest educational attainment, highest unemployment, lowest average income, and highest poverty – in Canada. The worst indicators, however, don't reveal the chronic and institutionalized real torture resulting from racism (and colonialism) on their several generations and also consequent painful mental, physical and social health impacts. This is how rich Canada's rigged system has trapped the aboriginal people in the third-world type vicious cycle: **high poverty low education low employment low income poor health worse (all-round) performance**. This absolute systemic human misery has unquestionably been the (white) man-made, unnecessary, and avoidable!

The lower numbers observed in the study on the economic indicators (employment, income, and poverty) for visible minorities despite their better educational performance are equally painful. These numbers don't tell the real stories of those highly skilled immigrants (qualified professionals like doctors, engineers, scientists, professors, lawyers, etc.) who drive taxi/trucks or do petty jobs in the service sector (financial/hospitality/retail/other) for survival on getting rejected (in areas of their skills) by Canada's racially rigged system. These numbers also hide immigrants who leave the employment market completely, discouraged and hopeless, on being unable to get employment opportunities in their life-invested passion professions. Many of them, unfortunately, become (partially or fully) dependent (on family or friends) permanently instead of collecting courage to invest in Canadian education or changed profession as these options also require competing resources which immigrants generally lack who struggle most of the times to settle themselves and their families/children in the new land.

Canada's racialized, rigged, and discriminatory system mostly turns rich, healthy, skilled, and shining immigrant human-resource into poor, unhealthy, unwanted, and second-or-third class people of color. The well-known "healthy immigrant effect"<sup>38</sup> (HIE) is actually the man-made unhealthy system that is responsible for making the most of the healthy immigrants unhealthy. Non-acceptance of the skill of a highly skilled professional – which

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<sup>38</sup> It points out that "immigrants' health is generally better than that of the Canadian-born, although it tends to decline as their years in Canada increase." Ng (2011), p. 1.

happens to be a permit to settle in Canada in the first place – is almost equivalent to murdering a professional by denying not only one's career, occupation, and livelihood but also one's identity, dignity, and individuality. Can a Canadian passport compensate for that loss? How can one not expect such an individual (loser) to have eroded his mental and physical health as time passes? Which number will quantify that loss? "Go back to your countries where you come from", or its refined professional version "can you go back to your home country?" type phrases are not new for colored immigrants. Won't such humiliating phrases at the top of unwanted stares all around plus discriminating treatment at work (if lucky enough to get one) affect their overall health in a systemically racial Canada?

The majority, white-colored, population may hooray for their success. But such an institutional arrangement causes not only aboriginal and colored minorities to lose, but it also causes Canada to lose, as a whole. Racial population loses because of exclusion, partial (unfair) treatment, missed opportunities, waste of talent, increased vulnerabilities, poor socio-economic-health consequences, and all other such factors. Canada, as a nation, loses also on account of overall lower social, institutional, health, and economic outcomes resulting from the un/under-used human resources, discouraged populations, disharmony, distrust, and power imbalance, etc. Nationwide social problems like isolation, homelessness, mental illnesses, addictions, crimes, and incarcerations are unfortunately generated (mainly) from within the system itself. Racialization of such social problems has certainly a correlation with deprivation, denial, and discrimination at every step related to capacity-building, participation, interactions, and benefits. Racial people who somehow break the barrier and join the majority remain subject to constant scrutiny, judgment, and discrimination; and also, face the so-called invisible glass ceiling on the higher professional ladder.

Freedom, equity, and justice form the foundations of the nation's strong social fabric. When these values are just nominal and rarely being practiced in reality for some populations, the nation suffers due to a lack of social capital. The economic potential of any nation is fully utilized when economic capital is complemented with social capital. Therefore, such nations neither can maximize their economic potential nor can have unbiased institutional structure nor real social harmony. It makes not only their racial population suffer because of systemic discrimination but also makes the nation structurally weak on account of social distrust, inequality, and injustice. The nation, with the institutionalization of racism, can never have a true democracy. National apologies for the past wrongs, unfortunately, become a regular feature as the present continues having the same historical (wrong) foundations, only with the changed (if there are any) forms of the wrongs. Mere apologies cannot help the racial populations, what is needed is structural correctness. Canada will truly be multicultural when its institutions and institutional power will include people of all races, religions, origins, and colors the way its demography does.



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