

Immigrant Youth & the Transition to Work: Initial Findings from the Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Canada

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Research Questions

- What are the school-to-work transitions of immigrant youth in Canada?
 - What is the effect of Canadian-acquired versus non-Canadian acquired education on the income and job status of immigrant youth?
 - How do immigrant youth find employment?

What are the initial educational trajectories of immigrant youth aged 15-19 years who attended high school in Canada?



School-to-Work Transitions Models

- Involves the process of becoming “adult”
- May include: leaving school, first full-time job, marriage, and parenthood, but not necessarily in that order
- “Tracking” begins in the earliest levels of the education system
- Only individuals streamed within the highest tracks can continue to post-secondary education
- The highest tracks, university/college, are the norm for Canadian-born youth



Anisef, et. al, 2000; Marquardt, 1998; Tomkowicz and Busnik, 2003;

Hango and de Broucker, 2007

Educational Issues specific to Migrant Youth

- Age cap policies versus gaps in education
- Recognition of education attained overseas
- Existing research on youth heavily emphasises language acquisition and mental health
- Studies on ESL and high school completion
 - 74% of all ESL students do not finish high school
 - Mixed results: many are high achievers, other are experiencing extreme difficulties
- Factors that are unique to migrant youth



Shortfalls of Theoretical Debates

- School-to-work transitions literature ignores the circumstances of immigrants
 - Language issues
 - Racism
 - Foreign credential recognition issues
- Immigration literature is incomplete/ignores
 - Refugee versus immigrant issues in schooling
 - Entrance class effects
 - No discussion of work trajectories of those arriving as youth



Overview of Research Design

- **Phase One:** examine educational and work trajectories of immigrant youth using Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada
 - Ages 15-29
- **Phase Two:** 100 qualitative interviews with youth in Canada regarding their school-to-work transitions
 - Vancouver, Winnipeg, Hamilton and Toronto



Overview of LSIC

- Time 1 (2001): interviewed six months after arrival
- Time 2 (2002): interviewed 2 years after arrival
- Time 3 (2004): interviewed 4 years after arrival
 - Not included in this study as the majority of youth had transited through high school by Time 3
- Individual: unit of analysis. No proxy data used
- Data is weighted and bootstrapped
- Analysis used SPSS 16, STATA and SUDAAN
- **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ONLY!**



Educational Status

(Dependent Variable: Version One)

On track

1. Complete HS & continued post-secondary;
OR
2. In HS & at “correct” grade

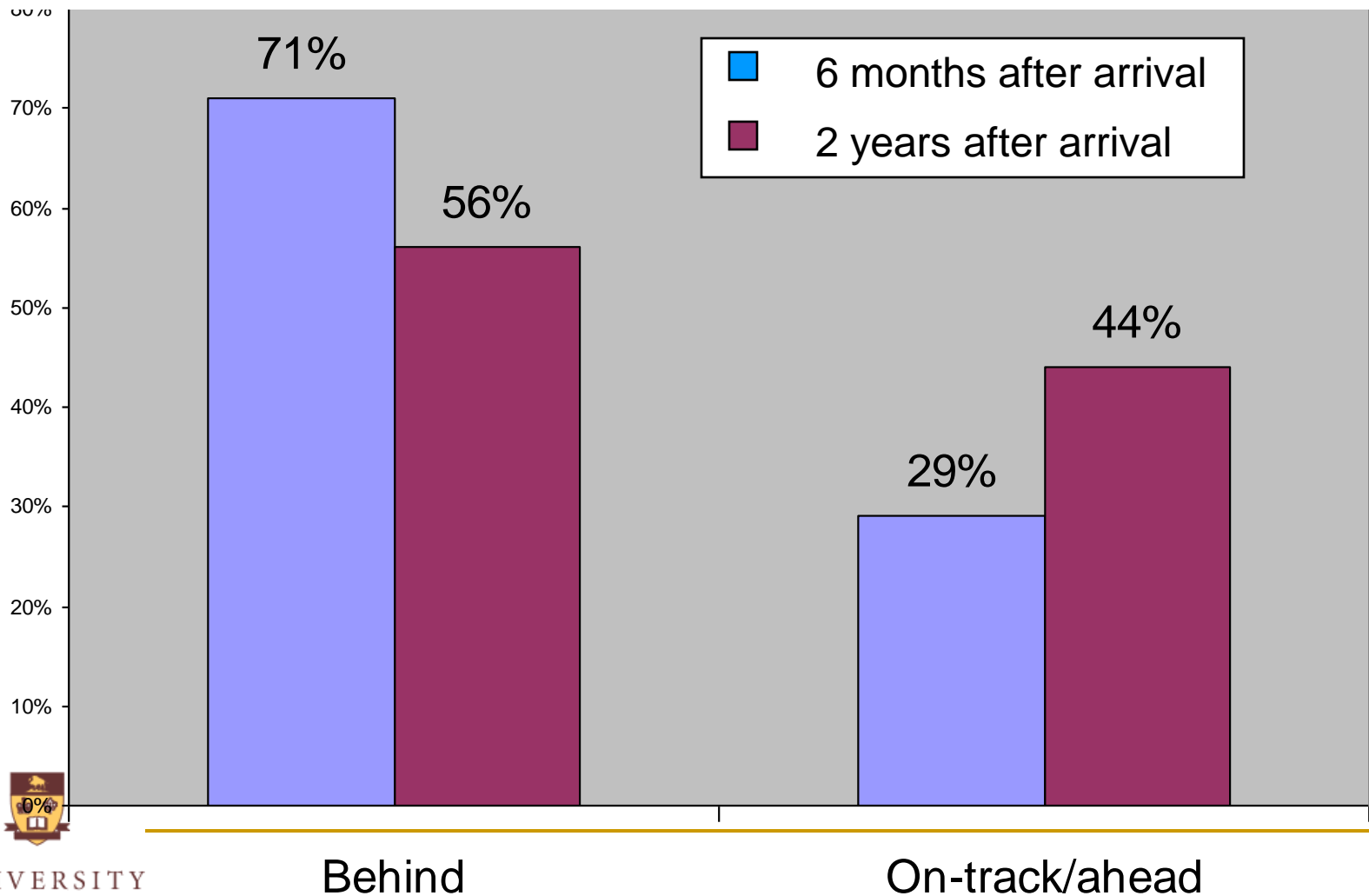
Behind or
Dropped out

1. Dropped out
OR
2. In HS but at grade below age level

Educational Status Version 2: ratio-level variable, derived years ahead, on-track or behind based on age at arrival, grade placement at arrival & Previous educational credentials.



Educational Status by Time of Arrival, Immigrants to Canada, 2002



Educational Status 6 months after arrival by Immigration Class, Canada

	Family Class		Skilled Workers		Business Class		Refugees	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Behind	1,887	77.2%	2,606	69.3%	710	60.9%	1,080	76.7%
On-track/ahead	557	22.8%	1,153	30.7%	455	39.1%	328	23.3%
Total	2,444	100.0%	3,759	100.0%	1,165	100.0%	1,408	100.0%

Weighted data

Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, master data file.

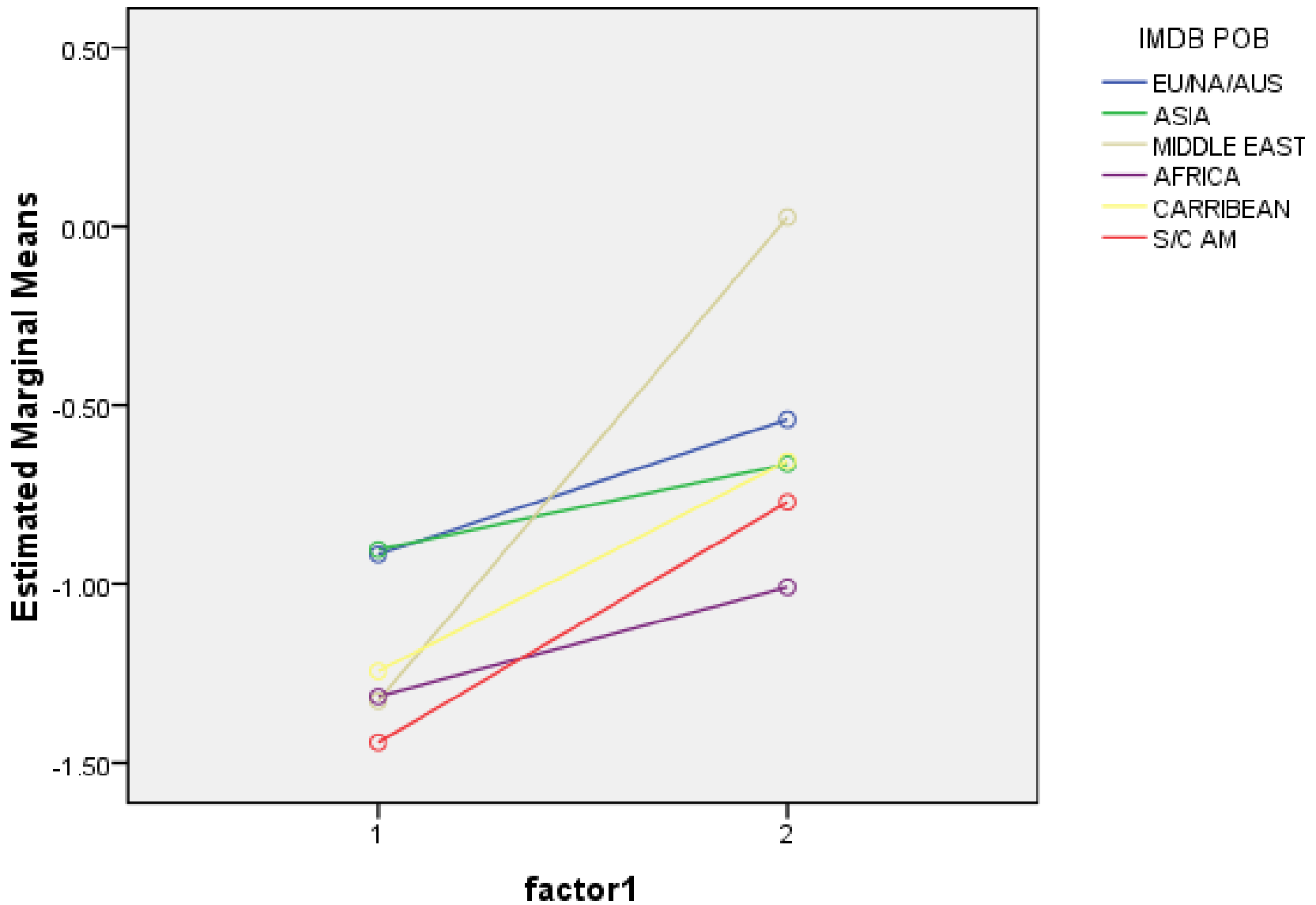


Educational Status 2 Years after arrival by Area of Origin, Canada

	Europe, US Australia		Asia		Middle East, Africa Caribbean & C/S Am.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Behind	967	59.7%	2,461	49.4%	1,645	70.3%
On-track/ahead	654	40.3%	2,522	50.6%	695	29.7%
Total	1,621	100.0%	4,983	100.0%	2,340	100.0%

Weighted data





Next Steps

■ Phase One:

- Examine the labour market trajectories of the 15-19 year olds
- Examine the educational and labour market trajectories of 20-24 and 25-29 year old cohorts

■ Phase Two

- Round one of interviews with immigrant youth
- Revise questionnaires and conduct phase two of interviews



NOTE

- The Manitoba Research Data Centre of Statistics Canada provided invaluable advice relating to the statistical analysis and access to the confidential data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. All errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author.
- Parts of the research and analysis are based on confidential micro-data received from Statistics Canada and the opinions expressed do not represent the views of Statistics Canada.



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