

**Filipinos in Canada and the
United States—Comparison of
Socioeconomic Equality**

**Joe T. Darden Professor
Department of Geography**

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The Conceptual Framework:

- Immigration policy is an important determinant of the number of immigrants from certain countries of origin.
- Immigration policy, along with a country's willingness to *incorporate* immigrants into mainstream society, provides information about the *differential incorporation* process operating in a particular country.

Differential Incorporation of Immigrant Groups Within

A Biased Race and Nationality Structure

Immigration policies in both Canada and the United States have had a racially biased history which gave preferences to White Europeans until the 1965 Immigration Act in the United States and the 1967 Immigration Act in Canada (Darden, 2004).

- Theoretically, these acts reduced the racial and nationality restrictions on non-European immigration to the two countries. As a consequence, Filipino immigration increased in both countries.
- Prior to 1967 in Canada, the number of Filipino immigrants was relatively small. Between 1946 and 1964, only 770 Filipino immigrants resided in Canada (Laquian, 1973).
- By 2006, there were 436, 190 Filipinos in Canada.
- In 1960, before a change in the racially restrictive immigration policy in the United States, there were only 104,843 Filipino immigrants, constituting only 1% of all immigrants in the United States (*Filipino Immigrants in the United States*, 2008).
- By 2006, the number of Filipinos increased to 1,638,413.
- About a third of Filipinos entered Canada before 1991 compared to a slight majority (51.9%) that entered the United States (Table 1).

**Table 1: Years a Percentage of Filipinos
Entered Canada and the United States**

Canada

| Canada | | United States | |
|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Years | Percentage | Years | Percentage |
| Before 1991 | 34.8 | Before 1990 | 51.9 |
| 1991 – 2000 | 38.9 | 1990 – 1999 | 27.3 |
| 2001 – 2006 | 26.2 | 2000 or Later | 20.9 |

Source: Computed by the author from data obtained from Statistics Canada, 2006; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007

The General Aim

- The aim of this paper is to determine the extent of differences in the incorporation of Filipinos in Canada and the United States—two predominantly White, multi-racial societies with a common history of *differential incorporation* of immigrant groups.
- In predominantly White societies, *incorporation* is a process which characterizes the relationship between the host society and immigrant groups.
 - Historically, the White majority has *differentially incorporated* some non-White immigrant groups into the mainstream society to a greater extent than others (Henry, 1994).
- Incorporation is conceptualized on the basis of equal access to the rewards that the society offers (Breton, Isajiw, Kalbach, & Reitz, 1990)
 - Those rewards can be measured by educational attainment, occupational inequality, income inequality, poverty rates, and overall socioeconomic inequality between the immigrant group and the total population.

Objectives

- This paper's objectives are to determine if the degree to which Filipinos in Canada have achieved socioeconomic equality with the total Canadian population compared to the degree to which Filipinos in the United States have achieved socioeconomic equality with the total United States population, and to discuss the differences that are revealed as a result of the comparative analysis.

Data and Method

- The data were obtained by examining selected demographic, cultural, labor force, educational, and income characteristics from Statistics Canada (2006) and the United States Bureau of the Census 2004 American Community Survey (2007).

- The index of dissimilarity was employed to analyze the data.
 - It measures the inequality in the distribution of Filipinos and the total population in Canada and the United States using the variables of occupational status and educational attainment.
 - The index ranges from “0,” indicating complete equality, to “100,” indicating complete inequality. The higher the index, the greater the degree of socioeconomic inequality between Filipinos and the total population in each country (for calculation of the index, see Darden and Tabachneck, 1980; and Darden, 2009).
- Simple ratios were used to compare other socioeconomic variables such as poverty rates, and median income.
- By examining the same group, i.e. Filipinos in both Canada and the United States, any results may shed light on the *degree* to which the dominant group in one country has had more or less success in incorporating the same group i.e. Filipinos into the mainstream.

Profile of Filipinos in Canada and the United States

- Before presenting the results comparing Filipinos with the total population in each country, a profile of Filipinos is presented for Canada and the United States in 2006 (Table 2).

Table 2: Profile of Filipinos in Canada and the United States 2006

| | Canada | United States |
|--|----------|---------------|
| Poverty Rate | 11.7 | 5.2 |
| Median Income | \$24,634 | \$65,700 |
| Percent in Management, Business, and Finance Occupations | 23.2 | 11.6 |
| Percent BA Degree or Higher | 33.2 | 47.9 |
| Percent Limited English Proficient ¹ | 0.81 | 33 |
| Percent Citizens | 77.6 | 76.1 |
| Total Filipino Population | 436,190 | 1,638,413 |

¹Speak English not at all or not very well based on the United States definition. Refers to the ability to conduct a conversation in neither English nor French based on Canada's Statistics Canada definition.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007.

Summary of Profile

- In sum, the profile shows some differences between the status of Filipinos in Canada and the United States, but *differential incorporation* is best measured in relative terms, i.e., when Filipinos are compared to the total population in each respective country. The remainder of the paper will present such data to demonstrate the degree to which *incorporation* of Filipinos has occurred.

Occupational Inequality

- Overall, the degree of occupational inequality between Filipinos and the total population in Canada was 5 times greater than in the United States.

Educational Attainment

- Unlike occupational inequality, the degree of inequality between Filipinos and the total population in Canada is less than the inequality in the United States.
- The index of dissimilarity between Filipinos and the total population in Canada was 15 compared to 20.9 in the United States
- Filipinos were greatly overrepresented among bachelor degree holders.
- In the United States, a higher percentage of all Filipinos (compared to those in Canada) had achieved a bachelor's degree or higher level of education (48%), but a higher percentage of the total population in the United States (compared to Canada) had also achieved a bachelor's degree or higher level of education (27%).
- Thus, the difference in the percentage of Filipino bachelor degree holders in the United States and total population was less when compared to the difference between the two groups in Canada.

Other Socioeconomic Indicators

- Table 3 also shows the socioeconomic differences between Filipinos and the total population in Canada and the United States based on the poverty rate and median income.
- In Canada, Filipinos had a poverty rate of 11.7 compared to 11.9 for the total population, a slight difference of 0.2 percentage points.

- The poverty rate among Filipinos was lower in the United States at 5.2% compared to 13.1% for the total population.
- In other words, unlike the Filipinos in Canada, the degree of poverty among Filipinos in the United States was 2 ½ times *lower* than the poverty rate among the total population.
 - Filipinos in Canada earn less income (\$24,634 Canadian dollars) than the total Canadian population (\$25,615 Canadian dollars).
 - However, Filipinos in the United States earn much more (\$65,700 U.S. dollars) than the total population (\$44,684 U.S. dollars) (Table 3).

Table 3: Composite Socioeconomic Indicators between Filipinos and the Total Population in Canada and the United States

| Indicator | Canada | United States | Country Providing the Advantage in Incorporation of Filipinos |
|---|---|---|---|
| Occupational Inequality (D) | 46.4 | 9.0 | United States |
| Educational Inequality (D) | 15 | 20.9 | Canada |
| Poverty Rate | 11.7 Filipino 11.9 Total Population | 5.2 Filipino 13.1 Total Population | United States |
| Median Income | \$24,634 Filipino \$25,615 Total Population | \$65,700 Filipino \$44,684 Total Population | United States |
| Income Gap (Filipinos vs. Total Population) | -981 | +\$21,016 | United States |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006; United States Bureau of the Census, 2007.

D = Index of dissimilarity. The index ranges from 0 to 100. The higher the index, the greater the inequality.

Conclusions

- This paper examined the extent of differences in the *degree of incorporation* of Filipinos in Canada and the United States—two predominantly White, multi-racial societies with a history of racial/ethnic discrimination against non white, non European groups.
- Data was obtained from the United States Bureau of the Census and Statistics Canada.
- Using the index of dissimilarity and simple ratios the results revealed that, based on the socioeconomic indicators of occupational inequality, poverty, and median income, Filipinos in the United States are more incorporated; i.e. they have achieved a greater degree of socioeconomic equality with the total population than Filipinos in Canada.
- Only in the area of educational attainment have Filipinos in Canada reached a greater degree of equality with the total population than Filipinos in the United States

Discussion

- The differences in the degree of *incorporation* of Filipinos in the United States and Canada may be due to multiple factors.
 - They may include time of arrival, i.e. a greater percentage of Filipinos have been in the United States longer.
- Usually, the longer the period of time a group has been in a country, the greater the degree of *incorporation*.
 - The fact that Filipinos have not been able to translate their high level of educational attainment into *higher paying occupations* compared to the total population of Canada may be related to the fact that foreign credentials are often not in Canada by professional societies and the requirement that immigrants have Canadian experience.

Regulated Occupations and the Lack of Canadian Experience

- Many occupations in Canada are regulated by professional associations.
 - Immigrants often are not hired because their credentials from their country of origin may not be recognized in Canada (Ferrer & Riddell, 2004).
 - They may also be required to have prior work experience in Canada (Boyd, 2000).

Sex Ratios

- The difference in the degree of *incorporation* could be due in part to differences in sex ratios in the two countries.
 - Although Filipino women immigrants outnumber men in both countries, the predominance of women is higher in Canada (64.5 women to 35.4 men) for a ratio of 1.81.
 - In the United States, Filipino immigrants outnumber Filipino men by 58.7 to 42.1 for a ratio of 1.39.
 - Since women's earnings are usually lower than men, this may account in part for the lower incomes of Filipinos in Canada compared to the total population.
 - Further study is needed to test these hypotheses.

Implications of the Study

- The implication of this research is that Filipinos are not experiencing the same *degree of incorporation* in the two multi-racial, White-dominated societies.
 - The degree of *incorporation* of Filipinos is greater in the United States than in Canada.
- Such information may be useful for potential Filipino immigrants in choosing their country of destination in an era of globalization.

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