

An Examination of Factors Affecting Perception of Workplace Discrimination

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Introduction

A shift in the source countries of immigrants over the past three decades has triggered a significant increase in the proportion of ‘visible minorities’ in Canada. Visible minorities are defined by the Employment Equity Act as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”. The largest of these groups in Canada are the Chinese, South Asians, and Blacks. In 1981, there were approximately 1.1 million visible minorities, accounting for 4.7 percent of the total population. By 2001, the number of visible minorities reached almost 4 million or 13.4 percent of the population (Statistics Canada 2003). The visible minority population is growing much faster than the overall Canadian population. It is estimated that at the current pace visible minorities will increase to nearly 20 percent of the total Canadian population by 2016, due to both immigration and the relatively higher birth rates of recent immigrants (Dai and George 2005).

The change in Canada’s racial composition has heightened concerns about racial inequality, particularly in employment. Using field trials and statistical analyses of earnings disparities, previous studies have concluded that ethno-racial inequality does indeed exist in Canada (see for example Henry and Ginsberg 1985; Baker and Benjamin 1997; Pendakur and Pendakur 1998; Ornstein 2000; Reitz 2001). Inequality is more likely to lead to conflict or alienation when it is viewed as resulting from discrimination (Belanger and Pinard 1991). Thus, the perception of discriminatory treatment may be as important as actual inequality. Previous studies examining the perception of ethno-racial discrimination in Canada have found that visible minorities perceive far greater discrimination than their White counterparts. For instance, using the Ethnic Diversity Survey, Reitz and Banerjee (2005) found that while only about 10 percent of White

respondents perceived overall societal discrimination in the past five years, more than a third (35.9 percent) of visible minorities reported experiencing discrimination. Among Blacks, nearly half of all respondents believed they had experienced discrimination in the past five years.

Within the context of employment, perception of discrimination has been found to have significant personal and organizational consequences (see Mays, Coleman and Jackson 1996; Sanchez and Brock 1996; Deitch et al. 2003). However, most studies of employment discrimination have focused on the objective manifestations of discrimination, such as wage disparities. Since workplace discrimination could be manifested in unfair or discriminatory treatment that is not necessarily reflected in wages, many instances of discrimination may be missed in this type of analysis.

Examining individuals' perceptions allows us to explore the subjective side of discrimination. Whether perceptions accurately reflect discriminatory treatment is difficult to determine. However, perceptions do characterize reality for individuals who report it and therefore have real consequences for workers and employers.

Perception of workplace discrimination may be driven by two factors. First, the actual existence of inequality drives perception. Employees who are disadvantaged or treated unfairly are usually most likely to feel discrimination. Second, perception of discrimination is driven by employees' awareness of their rights and their sensitivity to unfair treatment. Thus, individuals' expectation for equity also plays a role in their perception of discrimination (Inman 2001).

In the first section of this study, I examine the effect of immigrant status, education, and occupation on perceptions of workplace discrimination. Each of these characteristics may affect individuals' experiences of inequality, expectations for equity,

or both. By understanding the effects of these characteristics on perceptions of discrimination, employers may be able to identify the groups who feel the most alienated at work.

It is commonly assumed that wage disparities reflect the discrimination in workplaces. Therefore, most researchers and policy makers have focused upon wage disparities, with the belief that reducing or eliminating these disparities will eradicate issues of workplace discrimination. In the second section of this study, I examine whether objective income inequity is indeed related to the perception of discrimination. Since the negative consequences of perceived discrimination are well-known, the link between income inequity and perceived discrimination has important implications for employers and policy makers.

Throughout this analysis, I focus on the experiences of visible minority workers since previous studies have found that visible minorities not only experience greater employment disadvantage, but also perceive more discrimination than their White counterparts.

This study utilizes the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey. This survey, conducted jointly by Statistics Canada and Canadian Heritage, interviewed approximately 41,000 respondents and contains detailed information about ethnicity, perceptions of discrimination and socio-economic status.

Theoretical Background

Reskin (2000) argues that workplace discrimination can be explained by social cognition theory. Social cognition theory posits that individuals automatically and unconsciously classify others into one of two groups: ingroup or outgroup. Once these categorizations have been made, individuals have a tendency to mentally exaggerate

between-group differences and minimize within-group differences (Fiske 1998). Categorization is usually also accompanied by stereotyping, attribution bias and evaluation bias (Fiske 1998). Stereotypes are “unconscious habits of thought that link personal attributes to group membership” (Reskin 2000). When others’ behaviour conforms to established stereotypes, it is likely to be attributed to inherent ability or characteristics, but when behaviour contradicts the expected, it is likely to be attributed to situational or transient factors.

Stereotyping, bias and unfair treatment does not necessarily result in the perception of discrimination. In some cases, individuals may have psychological barriers which prevent them from attributing unfair treatment to discrimination (Crosby 1984). On the other hand, individuals may perceive discrimination in the absence of unfair treatment. The prototype model has been proposed to understand the psychological determinants of perceiving discrimination. The prototype model (Inman 2001; Inman and Baron 1996; Inman, Huerta and Oh 1998) proposes that discrimination is perceived when an event or incident does not conform to expectations.

According to the prototype model, the perceived intention of the decision-maker as well as the perceived harm caused by the decision play a major role in whether or not individuals perceive discrimination (Swim et al. 2003). The prototype model also asserts that individual differences affect perceptions of discrimination. Those who strongly identify with a historically stigmatized ethnic or social subgroup have been found to perceive greater workplace discrimination than those who do not identify with such a subgroup (Johnson and Lecci 2003; Sellers and Shelton 2003; Operario and Fiske 2001; Kobryniewicz and Branscombe 1997). Mood is another individual-level factor that has been found to contribute to perceived discrimination (Sechrist, Swim and Mark 2003).

Employment Discrimination in Canada

Previous studies about racial discrimination in employment have focused mainly upon the objective signs of discrimination. Specifically, studies have examined employment, occupation and earnings gaps between similarly qualified visible minorities and Whites. Most of these studies reveal that visible minorities do indeed face disadvantages in Canadian workplaces.

Henry and Ginsberg (1985) first demonstrated in their well-known “field trial” experiments in Toronto that Black and White job seekers with identical qualifications often received very different treatment from employers when applying for jobs. The White applicants received job offers three times more often than the Black applicants. In addition, job seekers with Asian or Caribbean accents were often eliminated when they telephoned employers about job vacancies.

Visible minority workers in Canada have also been found to experience disadvantages in occupation and earnings. Hou and Balakrishnan (1996) found that there are fewer visible minorities in managerial and professional occupations than Canadians of British or French descent. Additionally, most visible minorities who are in management positions are actually self employed (Canadian Council on Social Development 2000).

Some studies have found that visible minorities earn up to 25 percent less than Whites with similar qualifications (Boyd 1992; Reitz and Sklar 1997; Reitz 2001). Howland and Sakellariou (1993) examined the 1986 Census and found that after controlling for human capital characteristics, South Asian men earned approximately 2 percent less than White men, but for Blacks this gap was around 21 percent. Using the

1989 Labour Market Activity Survey, Christofides and Swidinsky (1994) found the earnings disadvantage of visible minority males to be comparable to that of White females, with visible minority women facing even greater disadvantage. From the 1991 Census, Pendakur and Pendakur (1998) reported an earnings gap between Canadian-born White men and Canadian-born visible minority men of 8.2 percent, and concluded that “economic discrimination may play an important role in Canadian labour markets”.

Ornstein (2000) utilized the 1996 Census and found the poverty rate for visible minorities to be 34.3 percent, while that of Whites was 14.4 percent. The three largest visible minority groups (Chinese, South Asians and Blacks) were all found to have high rates of poverty (29.4 percent, 34.6 percent and 44.6 percent respectively). Using the Ethnic Diversity Survey, Reitz and Banerjee (2005) found relative household incomes for virtually all visible minority groups, including the Chinese, South Asians and Blacks, to be substantially lower than relative household incomes for almost all White groups.

However, these findings are not uncontested. De Silva (1997) found no significant earnings differential between Canadian-born visible minorities and Canadian-born Whites. Similarly, Hum and Simpson (1999) examined various visible minority groups separately in the 1993 Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics and found that with the exception of Black men, there was no wage gap between visible minority Canadians and White Canadians. The 2002 study by Swidinsky and Swidinsky also drew similar conclusions. They found that the earnings disadvantage associated with visible minority status were largely confined to immigrant men, with the exception of the Black minority group. Palameta (2004) found that Canadian-born visible minorities were no more likely than White Canadians to earn a low income.

While there may be disagreement over the racial wage gap of Canadian-born workers, there is general consensus that visible minority immigrants face greater workplace disadvantage than their White counterparts. Reitz and Verma (2004) note that nearly all labor force analyses of the earnings of immigrants in Canada (for example, Li 1988; Reitz and Breton 1994; Baker and Benjamin 1997) have found that immigrants of non-European origins earn substantially less than those of European origins, even after taking qualifications into account. Aydemir and Skuterud (2005) attribute one-third of the decline in immigrants' entry wage over the past forty years to the change in source countries away from Europe. They conclude that immigrants from 'non-traditional' source countries (i.e. visible minorities) face greater difficulty in getting foreign work experience recognized than those from 'traditional' source countries.

While these findings are important, they neglect forms of workplace discrimination that may not necessarily be evident in hiring decisions or wages. In order to fully understand the discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that exist in Canadian workplaces, it is necessary to also survey individuals' perceptions of discrimination.

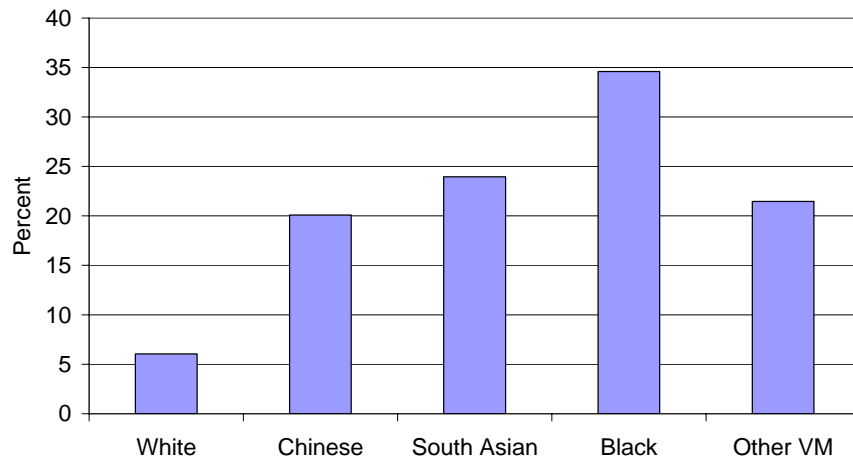
Using a 1985 Toronto survey, Dion (1989) found that visible minorities reported experiencing significantly greater discrimination and prejudice than Whites in various contexts including obtaining work, attaining executive positions in business, wage rates, obtaining government jobs, obtaining management positions in government, and being considered for promotion or advancement. Among visible minorities, Dion (1989) found that East Indian respondents perceived discriminatory treatment most often. West Indian respondents followed closely, and Chinese respondents perceived the least discrimination among visible minority groups. Dion and Kawakami (1996) reported from another

Toronto survey that, once again, visible minorities reported far greater discrimination than White ethnic groups. This study found that among Blacks, 78 percent of respondents thought that they were targets of employment discrimination. South Asians reported the second highest rates of employment discrimination.

Predictors of Perceived Workplace Discrimination

It is evident from previous studies that visible minorities not only face greater employment disadvantage, but also perceive more workplace discrimination than their White counterparts. Indeed, the Ethnic Diversity Survey shows that visible minorities perceive are far more likely to perceive discrimination at work than Whites. **Figure 1** illustrates racial differences in perceived workplace discrimination. Consistent with previous studies, White employees are far less likely to report discrimination at work than visible minority employees. Among visible minorities, Blacks are most likely to perceive workplace discrimination. Nearly 35 percent of Black respondents reported workplace discrimination, compared to just over 5 percent of White respondents. South Asian employees are second in likelihood of perceiving workplace discrimination. Nearly 25 percent of these employees report experiencing discrimination at work. About 20 percent of Chinese employees perceive workplace discrimination while ‘other visible minorities’ are slightly more likely (22 percent) to perceive discrimination.

FIGURE 1: PERCEIVED WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION BY VISIBLE MINORITY GROUP



Since visible minorities are most affected by employment discrimination, they are the focus of the present study. Certain demographic characteristics may have important effects on visible minorities' perception of workplace discrimination. Some subgroups are especially disadvantaged in the labour market and therefore may be more likely to perceive workplace discrimination. In addition, some groups may have greater awareness of and expectations for equity, and therefore may be more sensitive to discriminatory treatment.

There is general consensus that new immigrants face the greatest inequality in the Canadian labour market (see Bloom, Grenier and Gunderson 1995; Baker and Benjamin 1997; Frenette and Morissette 2003; Aydemir and Skuterud 2005). During their first few years in Canada, new arrivals often face difficulty in getting their foreign credentials and work experience recognized (Li 2001, Green and Worswick 2002). Among those who do find jobs, many are underemployed. Since they face the greatest disadvantage, new immigrants may be more likely to perceive discrimination than both more established immigrants and native born Canadians. On the other hand, new arrivals may have little

expectation for equality as they struggle to adjust to the Canadian labour market. After some time in Canada, immigrants may become more aware of their rights and expect greater equality. If earlier arrived immigrants are unable to integrate into the Canadian labour market, they may be more likely to perceive discrimination than recent arrivals.

In addition to immigrant status, level of education is another factor which may affect perception of workplace discrimination. Studies have found mixed effects of education on workplace discrimination. On one hand, studies have shown that less-educated Whites are more likely to avoid social contact with ethnic minorities, and hold discriminatory attitudes than more-educated Whites (Hello et al. 2004). This may mean that less-educated visible minorities are more likely to experience unfair treatment (since they are likely to work with less-educated Whites) and thus are more likely to perceive workplace discrimination. On the other hand, studies have also found that educated minorities are more perceptive to discrimination (Forman et al. 1997; Kessler et al. 1999), perhaps due to higher expectations and aspirations. Higher education may also increase awareness of equity issues.

Within the workplace, occupation may have an effect on perception of discrimination, particularly for educated individuals. Educated workers in lower status occupations may have expectations for better employment outcomes and therefore feel underemployed and frustrated. Since visible minority immigrants disproportionately face underemployment (see Li 2001; Aydemir and Skuterud 2005), these individuals may especially feel that their inability to find work commensurate with their qualifications is the result of discrimination.

In addition to occupation, income inequity may also affect visible minorities' perceptions of workplace discrimination. In the second section of this study, I explore

the relationship between income inequity and visible minorities' perceptions of discrimination. Perceptions of discrimination may correlate with statistical measures of inequity if employees are able to accurately gauge the extent to which they are underpaid. Alternatively, wage inequity may be accompanied by other signs of prejudice which may cause employees to perceive discrimination.

However, employees' perceptions of workplace discrimination may not always be consistent with traditional statistical measures of discrimination such as wage inequity. Relatively few studies have actually examined the extent to which perceived discrimination is consistent with statistical measures of inequity. Those studies which have investigated this relationship have focused on gender discrimination. Hampton and Heywood (1993) found a significant positive relationship between perceived wage discrimination and statistical wage inequity among women physicians. However, both Kuhn (1987) and Hallock, Hendricks and Broadbent (1998)¹ failed to find a significant relationship between perceived discrimination and statistical measures of wage inequity for women.

Employees may not perceive discrimination even when faced with situations of unfair treatment. They may refuse to attribute unfair treatment to discrimination due to psychological barriers (Crosby 1984). Previous studies have found that individuals perceive a higher level of discrimination directed at their group as a whole than at themselves as individual members of that group. This is referred to as the Personal/Group Discrimination Discrepancy (Taylor et al. 1990). Thus, individuals may underestimate the extent to which they are personally subjected to discrimination.

¹ This study also examined discrimination against persons with disabilities and came to similar conclusions as for women.

On the other hand, individuals may perceive discrimination in the absence of statistical measures of discrimination. It is often assumed that employees who report discrimination without statistical evidence of inequity are simply attributing personal failures and dissatisfaction to discrimination to preserve their self esteem. While this may be true in some cases (Guttek, Cohen and Tsui 1996), there is also another possible explanation. Some employees may experience subtle, pervasive discriminatory treatment in the workplace from coworkers, managers or customers without facing wage inequity. Perhaps employment equity programs, unions and/or public pressure reduce income inequity, but these measures cannot change individuals' prejudiced attitudes and behaviour.

Data and Measures

My sample is drawn from the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), conducted jointly by Statistics Canada and Canadian Heritage. This post-censal telephone survey was conducted between April and August of 2002. The EDS sample was designed with increased representation of ethnic minorities and immigrants (Statistic Canada 2002). The EDS target population consists of persons aged 15 and older living in private dwellings in Canada's ten provinces. Just as in the Census, Canadian citizens, landed immigrants and non-permanent residents (holders of student, work or ministerial permits, refugee status claimants and family members living in Canada with them) were part of the target population. However, the following groups were excluded:

- Indian reserves;
- persons who declared an Aboriginal ethnic origin or Aboriginal identity on the 2001 Census;

- the territories and remote areas.

The EDS includes 41,666 respondents (of which 8,622 are visible minorities) and contains 14 modules which cover such topics as ethnic and racial background and identity, socioeconomic activities, attitudes and interactions with society. One component of the survey examines experiences of prejudice and discrimination in various contexts. Since the present analysis focuses on visible minorities' perceptions of discrimination in the employment context, only employed individuals are included. In addition, individuals with missing data on variables of interest are excluded from the analysis. These conditions reduce the sample size to 26,246 (of which 5,872 are visible minorities).

Perceived Workplace Discrimination. This concept was gauged using a single item measure. Respondents were first asked:

“Discrimination may happen when people are treated unfairly because they are seen as being different from others. In the past 5 years (or, for recent immigrants, since you arrived in Canada), do you feel that you have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Canada because of your ethnicity, race, skin colour, language, accent, or religion?”

Those answering ‘yes’, were asked the follow-up question:

“In which places or situations do you feel that you have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly?”

Those respondents who chose ‘at work or while applying for a job or promotion’ were considered to have perceived workplace discrimination. Therefore, perceived workplace discrimination is a dichotomous variable in which respondents either answered ‘yes’ (have experienced workplace discrimination), or ‘no’ (have not experienced workplace discrimination). It should be kept in mind that this variable refers only to

discrimination based on ethnicity, race, skin colour, language, accent, or religion. Sex or age-based discrimination is not included.

Race and Ethnicity. The Ethnic Diversity Survey contains detailed information on individuals' ethnic ancestry, visible minority status and ethnic identity. To determine visible minority status in the EDS, respondents were asked:

“People in Canada come from many racial and cultural groups.
You may belong to more than one group on the following list.”

Are you ...?

- White
- Black
- Southeast Asian
- Korean
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Arab
- Japanese
- South Asian
- Latin American
- West Asian
- Aboriginal
- Other

Respondents were allowed up to 6 responses. From this question, the derived variable of visible minority group was internally created. If a respondent answered ‘mixed’ or ‘bi-racial’, interviewers were instructed to probe for more specific groups and to mark each one separately (e.g. ‘White’ and ‘Black’). Multiple responses of White and a visible minority group were assigned to the category for the visible minority group only (e.g. "White and Black" was assigned to "Black" only). Responses indicating more than one visible minority group (e.g. ‘Black and South Asian’) were assigned to the category ‘multiple visible minority’. In this study I examine the three largest visible minority groups in Canada (Chinese, South Asians and Blacks) as well as ‘other visible minorities’. The ‘other visible minorities’ category consists primarily of Arab and West Asian, Latin American, Japanese, Korean and Southeast Asian respondents.

Immigrant Status. For this study, immigrant generation is divided into three binary coded dummy variables: recent immigrants, earlier immigrants and native born

Canadians. Respondents who immigrated to Canada between 1992 and 2002 are coded as ‘recent immigrants’ and those who immigrated prior to 1992 are coded as ‘earlier immigrants’. Due to the limited number of third and fourth generation visible minorities in the EDS, all native born respondents are included in one category, regardless of whether they belong to the second, third or fourth generation.

Education. There is extensive information in the EDS about respondents’ educational qualifications. For this study, level of education is measured by a dichotomous dummy variable, coded ‘1’ for individuals with a university degree and ‘0’ for those without a university degree².

Occupation. Detailed occupational information was available from the respondents’ Census questionnaires. In the Census, occupation was based on the 2001 National Occupational Classification. This categorizes occupations based on the type of occupation and the main activities of the job. For this study, occupation is coded as either ‘professional/managerial’ or ‘other’. Individuals who work in technical, clerical, trades, labour, sales or service occupations are coded as ‘other’³.

Ethnic-Group Identification and Subjective Well-Being. Since it is known that ethnic-group identification (see Kobrynowicz and Branscombe 1997; Operario and Fiske 2001; Johnson and Lecci 2003; Sellers and Shelton 2003) and mood (see Sechrist, Swim and Mark 2003) are both related to perception of discrimination, these factors are controlled for in the present analyses. Sense of identification to one’s ethnic or cultural group is measured using a single item from the EDS. Respondents were asked: ‘How strong is your sense of belonging to your ethnic or cultural group(s)?’ Scores ranged from

² The analyses were also conducted with a more detailed (4 category) measure of education, and yielded similar results.

³ The analyses were also conducted with occupation divided by functional area (business and finance, health care, science and engineering, etc.). There was no significant effect of occupation on perceived discrimination under this specification.

1 to 5, with one indicating very low sense of belonging to the ethnic group and 5 indicating very high sense of belonging. Overall sense of subjective well-being is used as a proxy for mood, since these are known to be highly correlated (Lyubomirsky, Tkach and DiMatteo 2006). Subjective well-being is measured using a single item from the EDS. Respondents were asked: “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?” Responses ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 means not satisfied at all, and 5 means very satisfied. Descriptive statistics are presented in **Table 1** in the appendix.

Empirical Strategy

In order to understand how experiences of inequality and expectations for equity influence visible minorities’ perceptions of workplace discrimination, logistic regression is utilized, with likelihood of perceiving workplace discrimination as the dependent variable. The key independent variables in this analysis are: immigrant generation, education, and occupation. In order to examine the differential effect of education by occupation, the interaction between occupation and education is also included. The three largest visible minority groups (Chinese, South Asians and Blacks) are identified in the analysis as well as ‘other’ visible minorities. In addition, other factors which may influence perception of discrimination, such as ethnic group identification, subjective well-being, gender and age are controlled for in the analysis. **Table 2** in the appendix presents the results of this analysis. Since the labour market experiences of immigrant visible minorities differs markedly from their native born counterparts, these two groups are also examined separately. The results of this analysis are exhibited in **Table 3** in the appendix.

To examine whether visible minority employees' perceptions of discrimination reflect their actual income discrimination, I adapt the technique utilized by Kuhn (1987) in his study of sex discrimination. First, I apply Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression techniques⁴ to arrive at the “standard” estimates of income discrimination. “Standard” estimates of racial income discrimination are based on the following two regressions (Oaxaca 1973):

$$1) W_i^{White} = \sum X_i^{White} \beta_i^{White} + \mu_i^{White}$$

$$2) W_i^{vm} = \sum X_i^{vm} \beta_i^{vm} + \mu_i^{vm}$$

in which equation 1 is applied to only White employees and equation 2 is applied to only visible minority employees. W_i^{White} and W_i^{vm} are the logs of individual i 's annual employment income. X_i includes wage-determining factors such as age, age squared, level of education, number of hours worked per week, number of weeks worked per year, province of residence, urban/rural residence, immigrant generation, first language, marital status and number of children. β_i^{White} and β_i^{vm} are the coefficients for each explanatory variable in the regression. This analysis is conducted separately for men and women since labour market experiences are known to differ markedly by gender (see Corcoran and Duncan 1979; Armstrong and Armstrong 1990; Drolet 2002; Cranford, Vosko, and Zukewich 2003). OLS regression results by visible minority status and gender are presented in **Table 4** in the appendix.

From these regression results, I estimate the income discrimination faced by each visible minority man and woman in the sample. The income discrimination faced by visible minority i may be expressed by:

⁴ In this OLS income regression, both White and visible minority employees are included in the sample.

$$3) \hat{D}_i = \sum X_i^{vm} \beta_i^{white} - \sum X_i^{vm} \beta_i^{vm}$$

\hat{D}_i is an individual-specific estimate of the difference between what visible minority i is predicted to earn, and what he or she would earn as a White employee with the same characteristics. In other words, \hat{D}_i estimates the component of the racial income gap experienced by visible minority i that may be attributed to discrimination rather than human capital endowments. To ease interpretation, \hat{D}_i is converted from log dollars to dollars. The mean values of \hat{D}_i for visible minority men and women are presented in **Table 5** in the appendix.

In order to examine the relationship between income inequity and perceived discrimination, I utilize logistic regression, with perception of discrimination as the dependent variable and the individual-specific \hat{D}_i as the explanatory variable of interest. I also control for the psychological factors which may influence perception of discrimination, such as ethnic group identification and subjective well-being. **Table 6** in the appendix presents the results of this analysis. All analyses are conducted using population weights supplied by Statistics Canada⁵. However, the sample N's shown in tables are unweighted.

Findings

The descriptive statistics presented in **Table 1** reveal that among visible minorities, 24.6 percent are Chinese, 23.0 percent are South Asian, 15.6 percent are Black and 36.8 percent are other visible minorities. Overall, 22.5 percent of all visible minorities perceive workplace discrimination. The majority of the visible minorities in

⁵ The analyses were also conducted using bootstrap procedures and produced similar results. Therefore, the results here present the non-bootstrapped estimates.

the sample are immigrants. In fact, one third are recent immigrants and another half are earlier arrived immigrants. On average, the immigrants in the sample have been in Canada for about 15 years. Nearly 35 percent of the sample are university graduates, but only 26 percent work in professional or managerial occupations. Annual employment income is presented separately by gender. On average, visible minority men in the sample earn \$34,601 annually, while visible minority women earn \$24,848.

Table 2 presents the results of logistic regression analysis examining the association between visible minorities' characteristics and their likelihood of perceiving workplace discrimination. Examining the control variables first, it is apparent that age does affect perception of discrimination. Visible minorities in the middle stages of their careers are more likely to perceive discrimination than those who are just starting or those who are near the end of their careers. Gender does not affect perception of ethno-racial discrimination. However, both ethnic group identification and subjective well-being are related to perceived discrimination. Consistent with previous studies, ethnic identification has a positive effect while subjective well-being has a negative effect on perception of workplace discrimination. Also consistent with previous findings, Black respondents are most likely to perceive discrimination, after controlling for other factors. Next are South Asians, followed by 'other' visible minorities. Chinese respondents are the least likely visible minority group to perceive workplace discrimination.

Examining the variables of interest, I find that experiences of inequality and expectations for equity both affect visible minorities' perceptions of workplace discrimination. First, immigrants perceive greater discrimination than native born workers. However, earlier arrived immigrants are actually more likely to perceive

discrimination than recent immigrants. While recent immigrants have 1.26 times the odds of perceiving discrimination compared to the native born, earlier arrived immigrants have 1.36 times odds of perceiving workplace discrimination.

Working in a managerial or professional occupation in itself does not affect perception of discrimination. However, university education increases the odds of perceiving discrimination particularly for those who unable to find work in managerial or professional occupations. This is evident from the negative interaction between university education and managerial/professional occupation. Visible minorities with a university degree who do not work in managerial or professional occupations have 1.44 times the odds of perceiving workplace discrimination compared to less-educated individuals. However, even university educated visible minorities who do find work in managerial or professional occupations have 1.11 times greater odds of perceiving discrimination than lower educated workers in lower status occupations.

In order to understand differences in perceived discrimination by immigrant status, the above analysis conducted separately for native born and immigrant visible minorities is presented in **Table 3**. The first noteworthy finding is that among native born visible minorities, neither level of education, nor occupational status has any effect on perception of discrimination. These factors influence perception of discrimination only among immigrants. Consistent with the findings in Table 2, among immigrants, university educated individuals are more likely to perceive discrimination, particularly if they are unable to find work in managerial or professional occupations. Also consistent with the previous findings, the number of years since migration has a positive effect on immigrants' likelihood of perceiving discrimination. Thus, visible minority immigrants

who have been in the country for longer are more likely to perceive discrimination than newly arrived immigrants.

To examine the relationship between statistical measures of income inequity and perceived discrimination, OLS income regression was conducted for all employed individuals, separately by race and gender. The results of this regression are presented in **Table 4**. These results indicate that age is positively related to income for all groups but at a declining rate. As expected, education has a positive effect on income, but this effect is greater among Whites than visible minorities for both men and women. Recent immigrant status has a negative effect on income for all groups. As expected, hours and weeks worked have positive effects on income for all groups. While living in a rural area has a negative effect on the income of Whites, it has a positive effect on the income of visible minorities. Speaking a non-official first language has a stronger negative effect on the income of visible minorities than on the income of Whites.

From these regression results, values of \hat{D}_i are estimated for all visible minority men and women. **Table 5** exhibits the mean income discrimination (\hat{D}_i) for visible minority men and women in dollars⁶. The mean income discrimination experienced by visible minority men is \$4,625 dollars, while for visible minority women the mean income discrimination is \$3,082 dollars. As discussed previously, \hat{D}_i represents the difference between what a visible minority is predicted to earn annually with their qualifications and what he or she would earn as a White person with the same qualifications (i.e. it is the component of the racial income gap that may be attributable to discrimination).

⁶ \hat{D}_i was estimated in log dollars, but converted to dollars to ease interpretation.

The individual-specific income discrimination variable (\hat{D}_i) was then entered in a logistic regression in order to examine its relationship with perceived discrimination. The logistic regression estimates in **Table 6** illustrate the association between income discrimination (\hat{D}_i) and perceived discrimination for visible minority men and women, after controlling for ethnic group identification and subjective well-being. Among visible minority men, income discrimination (\hat{D}_i) has a positive effect on perception of workplace discrimination. Every \$1,000 increase in the amount of income discrimination experienced by visible minority men increases their odds of perceiving workplace discrimination by about 3 percent. Among visible minority women, the relationship between income inequity and perceived discrimination is also positive, although not statistically significant.

Is There a Labour Supply Effect of Perceiving Discrimination?

Since only employed individuals are included in this study, there may be some selection bias in the results. That is, individuals who perceive the most discrimination may be unemployed or may have dropped out of the labour force. By dropping the most discriminated individuals, the above estimates of perceived workplace discrimination may be biased downwards. **Table 7** in the appendix compares the mean values of perceived workplace discrimination by employment status. Overall, there is no significant difference in perceived discrimination between employed and unemployed individuals. For those not in the labour force, likelihood of perceiving workplace discrimination is significantly lower. This seems to indicate that individuals who are out of the labour force do not face employment situations and therefore have no occasion to

experience workplace discrimination. Thus, it is believed that selectivity bias is not particularly problematic in this analysis.

Summary and Discussion

Overall, the data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey indicates that perception of workplace discrimination is fairly widespread in Canada among visible minorities. I summarize my findings under the following 5 points:

1. Immigrant visible minorities are more likely to perceive workplace discrimination than their native born counterparts;
2. Among immigrants, time spent in Canada increases the likelihood of perceiving workplace discrimination;
3. University educated immigrants are more likely to perceive workplace discrimination, particularly if they are unable to find work in managerial or professional occupations;
4. Among the native born, neither education, nor occupation affects perception of workplace discrimination;
5. Income discrimination is positively related to perceived workplace discrimination for visible minority men, but not significantly related for visible minority women.

These findings confirm that experiences of inequality and expectations for equity both play a role in visible minorities' perceptions of discrimination. Immigrants are known to face employment disadvantage relative to native born workers. This disadvantage may cause immigrants to perceive greater discrimination than their native born counterparts. It is interesting to note that established immigrants are actually more likely to perceive workplace discrimination than recent arrivals. Perhaps recent

immigrants have low expectations for equality and tolerate unfair treatment as they struggle to establish themselves. But as these immigrants gain experience in Canada, they expect to catch-up to the wages and working conditions of native born Canadians. Studies now suggest that immigrants, particularly visible minorities, arriving in the past 30 years may not be able to catch-up to native born Canadians even after many years in Canada (Bloom and Gunderson 1991; Abbott and Beach 1993; Baker and Benjamin 1994; Bloom, Grenier and Gunderson 1995; Reitz 2001; Frenette and Morissette 2003). Since visible minority earlier immigrants are likely to face continued disadvantage even after spending many years in Canada, they may become disillusioned and thus be more likely to perceive discrimination than their newly arrived counterparts.

The fact that education increases the likelihood of perceiving discrimination, particularly among those visible minority immigrants who are unable to find work in managerial or professional occupations, confirms the notion that underemployment contributes to perceptions of discrimination. Educated immigrants likely have high expectations for career success which are not met when they enter the Canadian labour market. This may contribute to their perceptions of discrimination.

Among university educated native born visible minorities, discounting of qualifications and underemployment are not usually major concerns. Thus, education and occupation do not affect native born visible minorities' perceptions of discrimination.

The positive relationship between income inequity and perception of discrimination among visible minority men could indicate that these individuals are aware of their relative income disadvantage and use this information when making attributions about workplace discrimination. Alternatively, there may be other signs of discrimination in the workplace that exist along with income inequity causing visible

minority men to perceive discrimination. Visible minority women face less income inequity relative to their White counterparts and may be more likely to consider factors other than income inequity when making attributions about workplace discrimination.

Limitations of the Study

Focusing only on demographic characteristics may overlook the importance of situational factors in the perception of workplace discrimination (Balsler 2000).

Characteristics of the workplace such as size and union status may influence perception of discrimination along with demographic characteristics of the perceiver. Information about workplace characteristics was not available in the Ethnic Diversity Survey.

Another limitation of the present study is the use of a single item dependent variable. The reliability of such a measure cannot be assessed (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994) and has generally been found to be lower than that of multi-item measures. People are less likely to provide consistent responses to single items over time. Many factors could influence an individuals' response to a single item measure such lack of understanding of the question (Spector 1992).

Conclusions

The vast majority of studies in the area of ethno-racial discrimination in employment focus on the objective manifestations of discrimination such as wage inequities. Overlooking the subjective experience of discrimination could have both personal and organizational consequences.

Pavalko, Mossakowski and Hamilton (2003) reported in their US study of sex discrimination at work that perceived discrimination predicted both emotional and physical well-being. In addition, perceived discrimination has been found to be negatively correlated with task performance (Hannah 1974) and organizational

commitment (Sanchez and Brock 1996). Sanchez and Brock (1996) also found in their US study of Hispanic employees that perceived discrimination was associated with higher work tension and lower job satisfaction. Mays, Coleman and Jackson (1996) reported that Black females who perceived racial discrimination at work were less likely to engage in skill development or build effective relationships with coworkers and managers. Similarly, Deitch et al. (2003) found that Black employees' heightened perceptions of unfair treatment at work contributed to lower levels of job satisfaction and well-being.

Perceived workplace discrimination may also result in grievances and legal action. Allen and Keaveny (1985) reported that in their US study that employees who felt they were being discriminated against were more likely to file grievance than those who felt they were treated fairly. In Canada, employees who perceive discrimination may file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission (for federal employees) or their provincial Human Rights Commission.

Since perceptions of discrimination carry such serious consequences, it is imperative to understand these perceptions so that steps may be taken to address the issue. By understanding the factors that affect employees' perceptions of discrimination, Human Resource managers may be able to better design and implement diversity training programs as well as councils, networks and mentoring programs for minority employees. If employers recognize the problem of discrimination and take steps to remedy the situation, they may be able to improve employee morale, turnover and productivity and lower the costs of human rights complaints and court cases.

The findings of this study carry important implications for both employers and Canada as a multicultural society. If employers and policy makers can identify the

groups that feel particularly alienated at work, they may be able to take the appropriate steps to address the problem. Since Canadian workplaces are becoming increasingly diverse, this issue is likely to become even more important in the years to come.

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Appendix

TABLE 1
 Characteristics of Visible Minorities in the Sample

	N=5872	
Perceived Discrimination at Work (%)	22.5	
Chinese (%)	24.6	
South Asian (%)	23.0	
Black (%)	15.6	
Other Visible Minority (%)	36.8	
Recent Immigrant (%)	33.3	
Earlier Immigrant (%)	50.4	
Native Born (%)	16.3	
University Degree (%)	34.6	
Management/Professional (%)	26.4	
Age (Years)	38.0	
Female (%)	48.2	
Ethnic Group Identification*	3.82	
Subjective Well-being*	4.16	
Years since Migration (for immigrants)	14.9	
	Men	Women
Yearly Income (\$)	34,601	24,848

¹ May not sum to 100% due to rounding; * scores range from 1 to 5

TABLE 2
Logistic Regression: Probability of Perceiving Discrimination for Visible Minorities

	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error
Ethnicity (Chinese)		
South Asian	0.507***	0.124
Black	0.960***	0.132
Other Visible Minority	0.446***	0.115
Immigrant Generation (Native born)		
Recent Immigrant	0.235*	0.140
Earlier Immigrant	0.309**	0.140
University Degree	0.367***	0.110
Management/Professional Occupation	0.079	0.148
University x Mgmt/Pro	-0.338*	0.199
Age (15 to 24)		
25 to 34	0.535***	0.147
35 to 44	0.660***	0.148
45 to 54	0.624***	0.159
Over 54	0.375**	0.183
Female	0.082	0.082
Ethnic Group Identification	0.154***	0.036
Subjective Well-Being	-0.475***	0.044
Constant	-0.125***	0.257
N	5,873	
Chi Square	245.989***	
Pseudo R²	0.082	

Significance: ***<.01; **<.05; *<.10

TABLE 3
 Logistic Regression: Probability of Perceiving Discrimination for Visible Minorities by
 Immigrant Status

	Native Born	Immigrant
	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)	Regression Coefficient (Standard Error)
Ethnicity (Chinese)		
South Asian	0.786** (0.366)	0.450*** (0.132)
Black	1.308*** (0.332)	0.857*** (0.149)
Other Visible Minority	0.316 (0.342)	0.422*** (0.123)
Years Since Migration (YSM)	-	0.030* (0.017)
YSM²	-	-0.0007 (0.0005)
University Degree	0.026 (0.331)	0.452*** (0.119)
Management/Professional Occupation	0.057 (0.429)	0.086 (0.159)
University x Mgmt/Pro	0.115 (0.583)	-0.397* (0.214)
Age (15 to 24)		
25 to 34	0.655*** (0.267)	0.486*** (0.185)
35 to 44	0.108 (0.410)	0.650*** (0.176)
45 to 54	0.845* (0.450)	0.544*** (0.188)
Over 54	0.462 (0.614)	0.326 (0.221)
Female	-0.031 (0.224)	0.087 (0.090)
Ethnic Group Identification	0.187* (0.098)	0.136*** (0.040)
Subjective Well-Being	-0.582*** (0.115)	-0.440*** (0.048)
Constant	-0.992 (0.633)	-1.172*** (0.300)
N	2,697	3,092
Chi Square	80.488***	164.054***
Pseudo R²	0.133	0.078

Significance: ***<.01; **<.05; *<.10

TABLE 4
 OLS Regression: Log Income Estimates by Visible Minority Status and Gender

		Men		Women	
		White	Visible Minority	White	Visible Minority
		Coefficient (Standard Error)	Coefficient (Standard Error)	Coefficient (Standard Error)	Coefficient (Standard Error)
Age		0.141*** (0.005)	0.118*** (0.014)	0.116*** (0.005)	0.117*** (0.012)
Age Squared		-0.001*** (0.00005)	-0.001*** (0.0002)	-0.001*** (0.00006)	-0.001*** (0.0001)
Province^a	Alberta	-0.072*** (0.029)	-0.253*** (0.077)	-0.147*** (0.029)	-0.093 (0.077)
	Atlantic	-0.197*** (0.034)	0.079 (0.210)	-0.233*** (0.034)	0.195 (0.273)
	Manitoba	-0.167*** (0.048)	-0.202 (0.143)	-0.127*** (0.047)	-0.019 (0.121)
	BC	-0.080*** (0.029)	-0.153*** (0.057)	-0.097*** (0.029)	-0.012 (0.056)
	Quebec	-0.127*** (0.022)	-0.297*** (0.070)	-0.089*** (0.022)	-0.181*** (0.071)
	Saskatchewan	-0.216*** (0.049)	-0.249 (0.266)	-0.203*** (0.048)	-0.008 (0.252)
Education^b	High School	0.144*** (0.027)	0.088 (0.077)	0.243*** (0.031)	-0.004 (0.077)
	Some Post Secondary	0.211*** (0.025)	0.225*** (0.074)	0.401*** (0.029)	0.105 (0.073)
	University Degree	0.487*** (0.028)	0.446*** (0.071)	0.742*** (0.031)	0.525*** (0.075)
Immigrant Generation^c	Recent Immigrant	-0.174*** (0.070)	-0.171** (0.078)	-0.231*** (0.067)	-0.207*** (0.075)
	Earlier Immigrant	-0.063* (0.033)	0.013 (0.075)	0.066** (0.033)	-0.010 (0.072)
Hours per week		0.011*** (0.0006)	0.011*** (0.002)	0.020*** (0.0007)	0.013*** (0.002)
Weeks worked/year		0.030*** (0.0009)	0.033*** (0.002)	0.033*** (0.0008)	0.029*** (0.002)
Rural		-0.135*** (0.022)	0.263* (0.140)	-0.126*** (0.022)	0.146 (0.170)
Non-official 1st language		-0.053* (0.032)	-0.134*** (0.053)	-0.063** (0.032)	-0.215*** (0.050)
Married		0.191*** (0.022)	0.047 (0.064)	0.116*** (0.020)	0.097* (0.050)
Number of Children		0.017* (0.009)	0.009 (0.023)	-0.036*** (0.009)	-0.051** (0.022)
Constant		5.065*** (0.081)	5.484*** (0.240)	4.787*** (0.087)	5.401*** (0.213)
N		9,660	2,283	9,259	2,235
R²		0.453	0.347	0.463	0.349

Note: ^aOmitted group is 'Ontario'; ^bOmitted group is less than high school; ^cOmitted group is native born;
 Significance: ***<.01; **<.05; *<.10

TABLE 5
Mean Income Discrimination (\hat{D}_i) of Visible Minorities by Gender

	Men	Women
Income Discrimination (\hat{D}_i)	\$4,625	\$3,082

Note: \hat{D}_i is measured in dollars

TABLE 6
Logistic Estimates of Effects of Income Discrimination
On Perceived Discrimination for Visible Minorities by Gender

	Men	Women
	Coefficient (standard error)	Coefficient (standard error)
Income Discrimination (\hat{D}_i) (000's)	0.030*** (0.012)	0.019 (0.012)
Ethnic Group Identification	0.273*** (0.057)	0.138*** (0.057)
Subjective Well-Being	-0.387*** (0.069)	-0.494*** (0.070)
Constant	-0.859*** (0.342)	0.301 (0.348)
Number of Observations	2217	2214
Chi Square	54.928***	58.798***
Pseudo R²	0.065	0.050

Note: The effect of \hat{D}_i is shown per \$1,000; Significance: ***<.01; **<.05; *<.10

TABLE 7
Perceived Workplace Discrimination by Employment Status, Visible Minority Status and Gender

	Men				Women			
	White		Visible Minority		White		Visible Minority	
	N	% ^a	N	% ^a	N	% ^a	N	% ^a
Employed	10247	6.6	2440	22.0	9947	4.7	2433	24.2
Unemployed	647	7.1	260	25.6	625	3.9	269	23.3
Out of the labour force	2867	2.8***	578	13.2***	4620	1.9***	758	13.6***

Note: *** Represents statistically significant difference relative to employed individuals at the 0.01 level of Significance; ^a Represents the percentage of respondents who perceived workplace discrimination