

WHY DO SO MANY CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS ATTEND UNIVERSITY? EVIDENCE FOR CANADA

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ABSTRACT

The children of Canadian immigrants from some source regions, Asia, Africa and China in particular, attend university at extraordinarily high rates. Most others participate at lower rates, but still compare favourably with non-immigrant Canadians. In this paper, the Youth in Transition Survey is used to analyse the role of various background factors on these outcomes, including parental education, family income, parental expectations, high school grades and PISA test scores. To some degree, the children of immigrants go to a university because they have higher levels of the background attributes associated with university attendance, parental education in particular. But by allowing these effects to vary by immigrant group, this research finds that the high immigrant university participation rates are largely driven by those possessing "unfavourable" characteristics (low levels of parental education in particular) attending university in spite of these apparent disadvantages.

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