

Lisa Kaida, Monica Boyd, and Soli Dubash. 2024. "Black-White Occupational Segregation in Canada, 2021: What do we know." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Population Society, Montreal, QC, June 18-20.

### **Abstract**

Although Canadian demographic research on racial economic inequalities is growing, it is relatively recent. Only in 1996 and thereafter was the census ethnic ancestry question augmented by a new more robust question on race, brought about by employment equity considerations. However, today most attention is paid to economic indicators of labour force participation, and earnings, with racial occupational inequalities less studied. In this paper we narrow the knowledge gap by focusing on the occupational segregation of blacks and whites in Canada using data from the 2021 census housed in the research data centres. Historically, the inequitable treatment of blacks since the settlement of Canada by Europeans is well documented. More recently, as one of the three largest visible minority groups in Canada, attention and concern over continued inequalities has grown. We ask two questions: first, what are the current levels of black-white occupational segregation in Canada and relatedly in what occupations do black Canadians and white Canadians concentrate? Second, we ask which sociodemographic factors best explain contemporary levels of black-white occupational segregation in Canada. To answer this question, we decompose the gender- and location-specific indices of dissimilarity (DIs) to show which variables (educational attainments, nativity, language use in the home and region of residence) are most important in producing black-white dissimilarities in occupational distributions. Our analytical population are black or white respondents ages 25-64 (excluding those residing in the territories) who provided information to the census question about their only or main occupation between January 2020 and May 2021. The NOC2021MIN variable provides information on 172 occupational categories from which we calculate the well-known and used index of dissimilarity (segregation index) between black and white men and women (holding gender constant to demonstrate racial inequalities rather than gender inequalities). We also demonstrate variations in the magnitude of occupational segregation by level of highest education, region of residence, language use in the home, and nativity. We then ask which of these four sociodemographic factors best explain contemporary levels of black-white occupational segregation in Canada. To answer this question we employ the counterfactual conditional segregation techniques proposed by Gradin (2013) which decompose the indices of dissimilarity (DIs) to indicate which variables (educational attainments, region, language use, and nativity) are most important in producing black-white dissimilarities in occupational distributions. Province-specific segregation indices are also decomposed to illustrate that Ontario and Quebec differ in the importance of language use in the home for understanding occupational segregation patterns in these two provinces where most black Canadians reside.