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***HOW IS PROMOTION IN THE WORKPLACE AFFECTED BY NATIVITY,
PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION, ETHNICITY, GENDER, EDUCATION,
OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYMENT TENURE?***

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KEY POINTS:

- This report examines the likelihood of an employee having received a promotion. Among those who have been promoted, it also examines how many promotions they have received.
- As a whole, Canadian-born have a higher probability of promotion compared to both established immigrants and recent immigrants, though the difference is small. However, among those that had been promoted, recent immigrants received fewer promotions than Canadian-born or established immigrants.
- Past performance evaluations and experience gained at previous jobs are the two most important factors in getting a promotion – this applies to both immigrants and Canadian-born.
- When examined by ethno-racial grouping, White employees in the Canadian-born and recent immigrant categories recorded a much higher likelihood of promotion than those from other groups. However, the pattern for the number of promotions received is less straightforward.
- Gender appears to play an insignificant role in determining the likelihood of promotion, but there is a gender disparity in terms of how many times, on average, a person has been promoted.
- Level of education is closely related to the likelihood of receiving a promotion, but the number of promotions a person receives is less clearly related to education.

INTRODUCTION TO TIEDI

The [Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative \(TIEDI\)](#) seeks to assist organizations whose mandate includes the better integration of immigrants into Toronto's labour force. Such partner organizations include immigrant service agencies and advocacy groups, labour organizations, regulatory bodies, professional associations, training organizations, and credential assessment agencies.

The purpose of the project is to provide organizations with free access to statistical data and analysis on various aspects of immigrant labour market integration. The goal is to help organizations access the quantitative data they need in order to: identify priorities, develop programs and services, compose proposals and reports, and carrying out advocacy and public education endeavours.

TIEDI provides a unique service in which community organizations' data needs are met by a team of academic researchers and student analysts. Our partners define the data that they need - the project is thus driven by their agendas and not by academic research priorities.

TIEDI is based at York University, with a team of academic researchers drawn from York, the University of Toronto, and Ryerson University. Core members of the project team also include representatives of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) and World Education Services. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada under its Knowledge Impact in Society program, and by York University.

The datasets used by the project include a range of large-scale surveys such as the Census, the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, the Ethnic Diversity Survey, the Workplace and Employee Survey, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, the Labour Force Survey and the Permanent Residents Data System.

TIEDI Analytical Reports provide tabulations of data, some brief analysis and contextualization, and some necessary caveats about the limitations of the data and analysis. Since the data presented have not been treated to detailed statistical analysis, any conclusions must be seen as preliminary and as starting points for further, more detailed, research.

For further information, contact the TIEDI Principal Investigator, Dr. Philip Kelly (pfkelly@yorku.ca), or the TIEDI Project Coordinator, Stella Park (pstella@yorku.ca).

While the research and analysis are based on data from Statistics Canada, the opinions expressed do not represent the views of Statistics Canada.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How is promotion in the workplace affected by nativity, period of immigration, ethnicity, gender, education, occupation and employment tenure?

BACKGROUND

The career success of immigrants is dependent on many pre- and post-migration factors (Tharmaseelan, Inkson and Carr 2010). Reitz (2007) cites two broad classes of factors that affect immigrant employment success in the Canadian labour market, each of which is shaped by specific social, institutional, cultural, and political environments. The first set of factors refers to individual human capital characteristics such as education and skills, which are often valued less in the host country and lead immigrant skills to be discounted by employers. The other set of factors is access to labour markets, including discrimination based on origins or immigrant status, credential recognition and assessment of foreign qualifications, and access to specific occupations and labour market niches.

Human capital has “stock” and “flow” components; “The stock of human capital refers to the list of items that includes levels of education, knowledge, skills, and abilities at a certain point in time. The flow component of human capital includes those conscious investments in human capital that, in the form of training and education, enhance individual capacity for ordinary learning” (Fang et al. 2009). Immigrants may improve their career success in terms of their earnings and promotion rates by increasing the flow component of human capital, which includes self-initiated and employer-sponsored investments in education and training. Fang et al. (2009) showed that self-initiated human capital investment has no effect on immigrant career success. However, employer-sponsored human capital investment has a positive impact on the career success of non-immigrants, but not for immigrants. Immigrants were found not to reap the rewards of higher pay, promotions, or increased job satisfaction reported by their non-immigrant counterparts. Instead, immigrants earn less, have lower promotion rates, are less satisfied with their jobs and compensation and have shorter tenure with their current employers than their Canadian-born counterparts. In many unionized and some non-unionized workplaces, seniority is one key consideration in promotion (Lee 2004). The relatively shorter tenures of immigrants may affect their likelihood of promotion.

Reitz (2007) finds that the nature of particular professions and industries determines the access of immigrants to managerial positions. He notes that immigrant employment tends to be concentrated in particular occupations, enclaves, and work settings and often represents a degree of occupational disadvantage, especially when there are ethnic or racial concentrations in manual labour, service industry, or shift work. In knowledge-based managerial positions, workplace promotions are more codified and related to the educational qualifications of the candidates. In “purely” managerial positions, the job candidates are selected on the basis of criteria that are less strongly related to educational qualifications - for example, responsibility and leadership. This type of managerial position has more social and cultural content, which implies a high level of geographical specificity. This may result in the devaluation of human capital, and fewer promotion opportunities, for immigrants.

Shinnar (2007) studies the growth of the Hispanic immigrant population in the U.S. population and in upper management positions. She concluded that the careers of immigrants are shaped by three sets of interrelated variables, categorized as individual-level, group-level, and contextual variables. Shinnar (2007) argues that a unique form of racial discrimination, the “glass ceiling”, is the major contextual barrier preventing minorities from obtaining managerial positions. The glass ceiling is defined as “a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents ... minorities from moving up in the management hierarchy” (Morrison & Von Glinow 1990). Since the majority of recent immigrants arriving in Canada are visible minorities and several scholars have pointed out that visible minorities face greater economic disadvantage compared to non-visible minority groups (Li 1992), this report also examines whether workplace promotion is affected by nativity, period of immigration, ethnicity and gender.

The glass ceiling in occupational development is closely related to prejudice and discrimination towards women and minorities (Schreiber, Price, & Morrison 1993). Based on Teelucksingh and Galabuzi’s (2005) observations, the percentage of racialized groups in the Canadian population grew continuously over the last few decades. Racialized groups consisted of under 4% of the population in 1971, but reached 13.4% by 2001. In the 1996-2001 census periods, the growth of racialized groups was 24.6%, compared with 3.9% among the non-visible minority Canadian population. Based on its current rate of growth, the racialized population is projected to grow to 20% of total population by 2016. Most of the growth of racialized groups came from immigration. According to Teelucksingh and Galabuzi’s (2005) analysis of 1996-2001 census data, there was some significant improvement in the position of racialized groups in the senior management ranks. The numbers of racialized people in senior management grew by 60.7% between 1996 and 2001. However, racialized groups were still under-represented in upper management by the end of that period. This might imply that racial discrimination against immigrants is a significant barrier that prevents immigrants from being promoted.

THE DATA: WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) 2005 was designed to explore a broad range of issues relating to employers and employees. The survey is unique in that employers and employees are linked at the microdata level; employees are selected from within sampled workplaces. The WES 2005 collected data from 24,197 employees and 6,693 workplaces.

The WES offers several unique innovations: chief among these is the link between events occurring in workplaces and the outcomes for workers. In addition, it is longitudinal which allows for a clearer understanding of change over time. The WES permits the examination of the effect of workplace characteristics, in addition to industry and firm size effects (Statistics Canada, 2009).

This report uses survey data collected in 2005. The time period leading up to the WES data collection in 2005 was marked by economic growth, strong employment gains, and earnings growth in Canada (Lin, 2008: 5). Existing economic conditions (see Table 1 for basic economic data) and government policies may affect the trajectories of respondents. The outcomes of the

respondents presented in this report may not therefore be comparable to the experiences of employees at other times.

Table 1: Economic Performance Indicators, Canada, 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Overall average
Growth in Real GNP	1.8 %	2.9 %	1.9 %	3.1 %	3.1 %	2.6 %
Unemployment Rate	7.2 %	7.6 %	7.6 %	7.2 %	6.8 %	7.3 %

Source: Maslove, 2008: 228

The WES sample design for workplaces is based on a fixed panel of workplaces, which means that the panel is subject to attrition over time. A second concern with the use of a fixed panel design is the deterioration in the efficiency of the stratification over time as the business universe changes. Also, as with any dataset, there are issues of outliers, imputation and estimation.

A further limitation of the WES data is that the sample size restricts the use of local data. When cases are selected to limit the data to respondents from Toronto, the cell counts become too small for meaningful results. For this reason, the report uses Canada-wide data. Even so, in some tables small sample sizes mean that the findings should be treated with caution.

Table 2 shows the distribution of Canadian-born, established immigrants, and recent immigrants in the WES. Canadian-born constitute the largest single group in the sample at 82.1%, followed by established immigrants at 12.2%. Recent immigrants are the smallest group at 5.7%. Together, immigrants constitute 17.9% of the sample.

Table 2: Distribution of Canadian-born and Immigrants by Period of Arrival, Canada, 2005

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Immigrated before 1991	Immigrated between 1991-2003
%	82.1	12.2	5.7
N	10,027,316	1,490,536	697,457

Note: The numbers in the table are weighted by employee weights

Definitions:

Promotion: means a change in duties/responsibilities that leads to both an increase in pay and the complexity or responsibility of the job with current employers (from Statistics Canada WES data dictionary and questionnaire).

Canadian-born: means employees in the survey who were born in Canada.

Established Immigrants: means immigrants who landed before 1991.

Recent Immigrants: in this case is defined as immigrants who landed between 1991 and 2003.

RESULTS

a) Probability of Promotion and Number of Times Promoted

Table 3 shows the percentage of employed Canadian-born and immigrants who have ever been promoted. Table 3 also shows the average number of promotions among all promoted employees.

Table 3: Promotion Rate (%) and Average Number of Times Promoted among Canadian-born, Established Immigrants, and Recent Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
Ever promoted (%)	38.8	36.7	36.7
Number of Promotions	2.2	2.3	1.6

The difference in the incidence of promotions among Canadian-born and immigrants is very small. There is no difference at all in the rate of promotion among established and recent immigrants. When the number of promotions is examined, there is very little difference between Canadian born and established immigrants, but recent immigrants have a much lower average (although their more recent arrival obviously means that they may have been with their employer for less time).

b) Important Factors in Earning Promotions

Table 4 explores various reasons for receiving a promotion while working for current employers, including experience gained at a previous job, seniority, a test or competitive process, training or career development programs and past performance evaluations.

Table 4: Important Factors in Earning Promotions for the Canadian-born, Established Immigrants, Recent and Very Recent Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
Past performance evaluations	22.7 %	22.9 %	23.1 %
Experience gained at previous job	18.9 %	22.4 %	18.1 %
Seniority	10.9 %	10.1 %	8.9 %
Training or career development programs	7.7 %	8.1 %	6.1 %
Test or competitive process	4.0 %	5.0 %	3.3 %
Other	2.2 %	1.4 %	1.7 %

Note: other means reasons in earning a promotion other than the reasons mentioned above.

Overall, immigrants and Canadian-born respondents earn promotions for similar reasons. Across the three immigration categories given in the table (Canadian-born, established and recent immigrants) the various reasons for promotion are found in approximately the same proportions. The most common reasons for promotion were past performance evaluations (22.7% for Canadian-born, 22.9% for established immigrants and 23.1% for more recent immigrants), and experience gained at previous jobs (18.9% of Canadian-born, 22.4% of established immigrants, and 18.1% of recent immigrants).

c) Probability of Promotion by Ethnic Groups

Table 5a shows the detailed probability of promotion among Canadian-born and immigrants by ethnic background. Whites accounted for 77.4% of sampled employees, while other ethnic groups made up much smaller components of the sample, as shown. (Here, some of the specific ethnic or visible minority groups recorded in the Canadian census are amalgamated into larger groupings because of small sample sizes).

Table 5a: Promotion Probability by Ethnic Background for the Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Sample Distribution of Ethnic Groups	Promotion Probability: Canadian-born	Promotion Probability: Immigrants	
			Before 1991	1991-2003
Arab, West Asian or North African and Black (%)	2.0	39.9	41.1	32.5
East Asian, Filipino and South East Asian (%)	5.4	33.9	35.0	36.7
East Indian (%)	2.1	37.6*	33.0	32.7
Latin American (%)	0.9	16.4*	37.7	32.2*
White (%)	77.4	53.6	25.8	61.1
Other Ethnic Group (%)	12.2	38.9	37.3	49.0

*Note: *these numbers are derived from small samples.*

A striking feature Table 5a is the much higher incidence of promotion among White employees, both Canadian-born and recent immigrants. Although the absence of the same disparity among established immigrants suggests that caution is needed in drawing conclusions, this does suggest that ethnic origin has an impact on promotion. In the case of recent immigrants, White employees were being promoted at almost twice the rate of most other ethno-racial groupings.

Table 5b: Average Number of Times Promoted by Ethnic Background for the Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
Arab, West Asian or North African and Black	1.64	1.81	1.56
East Asian, Filipino and South East Asian	2.23	2.30	1.56
East Indian	2.50*	2.11	1.52
Latin American	1.60*	1.53	1.38*
White	2.18	2.53	1.62
Other Ethnic Group	2.13	2.20	1.71

*Note: *these numbers are derived from small samples.*

Table 5b indicates the number promotions earned (by those who have had at least one promotion). Here the upward mobility of Canadian-born White employees is less outstanding – their average number of promotions is less than those of two other ethno-racial groupings. Indeed, among Canadian-born, it is East Indians who have been promoted the most times (although this figure is based on a small sample size).

Among recent immigrants, the effect of ethno-racial grouping is much less apparent. What is clear, though, is that in all cases recent immigrants have enjoyed fewer promotions on average than their more established or Canadian-born counterparts.

d) Probability of Promotion by Gender

Table 6a examines the probability of getting a promotion by gender for the three groups of employees based on immigration status. In the sample, slightly more than half are male employees.

The most striking feature of Table 6a is that there is relatively little variation in the incidence of promotion among Canadian-born and immigrants – in fact recent immigrant men and women have exactly the same likelihood of having been promoted.

Table 6a: Promotion Probability by Gender for the Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Sample Distribution by Gender	Promotion Probability: Canadian-born	Promotion Probability: Immigrants	
			Before 1991	1991-2003
Male (%)	47.8	40.9	37.5	36.7
Female (%)	52.2	37.0	35.9	36.7

Table 6b: Average Number of Times Promoted by Gender for the Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
Male	2.39	2.54	1.67
Female	1.95	2.05	1.49

Table 6b shows the average number of promotions earned by men and women. Here a gender disparity is very clear, with men having been promoted on average more times than women in all immigration categories. The disparity is most noticeable among Canadian-born and established immigrants, and is less emphatic among recent immigrants.

On average, recent immigrants have had fewer promotions than established immigrants and Canadian-born for both male and female. It is also worth noting that the disparity among different immigration categories is much greater for men than for women.

e) Probability of Promotion by Education

Table 7a explores the probability of promotion among employees with different levels of education. Among all sampled employees, 52.2% had some postsecondary education and 21.3% had at least university education. Only about one quarter of sampled employees had just high school graduation or less.

Across all immigrant groups it is clear that higher levels of education are associated with a greater likelihood of promotion. The one anomaly in this pattern is the very high rate of promotion among recent immigrants with just high school graduation. It is hard to explain this anomaly without further investigation, but it perhaps reflects the very low level in the labour market at which a recent immigrant with just high school education would find themselves starting out.

Although the Canadian-born still have a higher rate of promotion than immigrant groups in most cases, it is notable that that the disparity is relatively small among those with post-secondary and university education.

Table 7a: Promotion Probability by Education for Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Sample Distribution of Education	Promotion Probability: Canadian-born	Promotion Probability: Immigrants	
			Before 1991	1991-2003
Less Than High School (%)	10.0	28.2	19.8	14.4*
High School (%)	16.6	38.3	34.1	44.1
Some Postsecondary (%)	52.2	39.3	36.3	36.2
University (%)	21.3	44.1	43.2	38.7

Note: University education means that the highest degrees earned are bachelor, master's and doctorates. It also includes medical school graduates.

*Note: * this number is derived from small sample.*

Table 7b: Average Number of Times Promoted, by Education, for Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
Less Than High School	2.20	1.87	2.13
High School	2.16	1.62	1.65
Some Postsecondary	2.15	2.38	1.65
University	2.22	2.50	1.48

Table 7b shows the average number of times respondents were promoted (among those with at least one promotion). For Canadian born, the number of promotions varies very little as level of education increases. Among immigrants, however, some intriguing patterns are evident. For established immigrants, the number of promotions generally increases with higher education. For recent immigrants, however, the average number of promotions actually declines with higher levels education. It is difficult to attribute causes, except perhaps to speculate once again that recent immigrants with low levels of education start so low in the labour market that some upward mobility is more likely.

f) Promotion Probability by Occupation

Table 8a shows the probability of promotion by occupation. Among all sampled employees, 29.8% are managers and professionals, while 70.2% are in technical/fields/trades, marketing/sales, clerical/administrative work, or production workers with no trade/certification, or in operation/maintenance.

Table 8a: Promotion Probability by Occupation for Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Sample Distribution of Occupation	Promotion Probability: Canadian-born	Promotion Probability: Immigrants	
			Before 1991	1991-2003
Managers and Professionals (%)	29.8	47.4	48.7	51.0
Technical/Trades, Marketing/Sales, Clerical/Administrative, Production workers with no trade/certification, operation and maintenance (%)	70.2	35.3	30.5	29.6

Table 8a shows that among managers and professionals, immigrant status appears to make very little difference to the likelihood of promotion. In other occupations, the likelihood of promotion is lower, but again the difference based on immigrant status is not large.

Table 8b: Average Number of Times Promoted by Occupation for Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
Managers and Professionals	2.43	2.35	1.56
Technical/Trades, Marketing/Sales, Clerical/Administrative, Production workers with no trade/certification, operation and maintenance	2.03	2.24	1.60

Table 8b shows the average number of times respondents had been promoted (among those with at least one promotion). Here, immigrant status does appear to make a difference. Canadian-born had slightly more promotions on average than established immigrants among managers and professionals, and established immigrants had significantly more than recent immigrants. The pattern is different among other occupations, with a higher average number of promotions among established immigrants, but again recent immigrants had far fewer promotions.

g) Promotion Probability by Employment Tenure

Table 9a: Promotion Probability by Tenure for Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Sample Distribution of Tenure	Promotion Probability: Canadian-born	Promotion Probability: Immigrants	
			Before 1991	1991-2003
0-2 Years with current Employer (%)	27.9	25.7	24.6	27.1
3-4 Years with current Employer (%)	16.1	36.5	26.1	41.3
5-6 Years with current Employer (%)	12.2	38.8	40.6	41.1
More Than 6 years with current Employer (%)	43.7	48.0	42.8	47.5

Table 9a examines the probability of promotion by length of tenure with current employers. Among all sampled employees, 27.9% had a tenure of 2 years or less with their current employers, 16.1% had 3 or 4 years tenure with their current employers, 12.2% had 5 or 6 years of tenure and 43.7% had more than 6 years of tenure with their current employers. Table 9a shows, as might be expected, that there is a strong relationship between length of tenure with an employer and the likelihood of having received a promotion. This applies across all immigration categories. Furthermore, for any given length of tenure the likelihood of promotion is fairly similar across all immigration categories. The only exception to this is in the group with 3-4 years of tenure, where established immigrants have significantly lower rates of promotion.

Surprisingly, the probability of a promotion for more recent immigrants is universally higher than for established immigrants. In contrast, the promotion probability for established immigrants is less than Canadian-born. This promotion probability pattern may be due to the “bottleneck effect” of immigrant career development over time. Once an immigrant attains certain level, it is very difficult for them to move up further.

Table 9b: Average Number of Times Promoted by Tenure for Canadian-Born and Immigrants

	Canadian-born	Immigrants	
		Before 1991	1991-2003
0-2 Years with current Employer	1.48	1.42	1.48
3-4 Years with current Employer	1.56	1.82	1.61
5-6 Years with current Employer	1.86	1.98	1.59
More Than 6 years with current Employer	2.64	2.63	1.68

Table 9b shows the number of promotions earned by those with at least one promotion. Again, it is to be expected that those with longer tenure will have received more promotions, and this

applies across all immigrant groups. The main disparity in Table 9b arises for recent immigrants with longer periods of tenure with their employers. While Canadian-born and established immigrants with 6+ years of tenure have received an average of 2.63 and 2.64 promotions, recent immigrants have received only 1.68. There is a possibility, of course, that within the category '6+ years of tenure' there are a wide range of tenure lengths, and recent immigrants will inevitably have shorter tenures. A better comparison, then, is in the '5-6 years of tenure' category. But here again we see recent immigrants receiving fewer promotions, albeit with a much smaller disparity.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, only tentative conclusions can be reached from the data compiled in this report. In part, this is because many reasons may affect promotions, and this report has examined just some of them. The report has also analyzed these reasons individually rather than examining their combined effects. It is also worth bearing in mind that the data presented here represent a relatively small sample of employed immigrants in 2005.

In terms of the specific pattern of promotion that we examined, the following conclusions emerge:

- On average, Canadian-born have a higher probability of promotion compared to both established immigrants and recent immigrants, though the difference is small. However, among those that had received a promotion, recent immigrants received fewer promotions than Canadian-born or established immigrants.
- Past performance evaluations and experience gained at previous jobs are the two most important factors in getting a promotion – this applies to both immigrants and Canadian-born.
- When examined by ethno-racial grouping, White employees in the Canadian-born and recent immigrant categories recorded a much higher likelihood of promotion than those from other groups. However, the pattern for the number of promotions received is less straightforward.
- Gender appears to play an insignificant role in determining the likelihood of promotion, but there is a gender disparity in terms of how many times, on average, a person has been promoted.
- Level of education is closely related to the likelihood of receiving a promotion, but the number of promotions a person receives is less clearly related to education.

When length of tenure in a job is held constant, recent immigrants are actually more likely to have received a promotion than either established immigrants or Canadian born, except at the longest periods of tenure. Recent immigrants with long tenure also received fewer promotions compared to the Canadian-born workers.

APPENDIX

RELEVANT QUESTIONS FROM WES SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE :

X4.1 (b) When did you start working for this employer?

20. Have you ever been promoted while working for this employer? (By promotion, we mean a change in duties/responsibilities that lead to both an increase in pay and the complexity or responsibility of the job.)

20 (a) How many times have you been promoted?

20 (b) When did your most recent promotion occur?

20 (c) Which of the following factors were important in earning that promotion? (Check all that apply.)

44. Gender

47. What is the highest grade of elementary or high school (secondary school) that you have completed?

Please report the highest grade, not the year when it was completed.

48. Did you graduate from high school (secondary school)?

49. Have you received any other education?

50. What was that education?

55. Canadians come from many ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds. From which groups did your parents or grandparents descend?

WES 2005 Questionnaire :

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SurvId=2615&SurvVer=1&InstaId=13978&InstaVer=8&SDDS=2615&lang=en&db=imdb&adm=8&dis=2>

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FURTHER READINGS:

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