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Settlement and labour force outcomes for Afghan immigrants and their children in Canada

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ABSTRACT

Past research suggests that Afghan immigrants and their children face challenges in settlement stemming from the impact of displacement, language barriers, poor health, limited education, limited knowledge of or access to services, and discrimination. Using data from Canada's 2016 Census, this paper adds to these findings pointing to poor labour force outcomes for Afghan immigrants as compared to other immigrants. Sons of Afghan immigrants fare better than their fathers, but no better than other immigrant men in employment probabilities, but those who are working generally have higher earnings. The daughters of Afghan immigrants fare much better both in terms of employment probabilities and earnings as compared to other immigrant women. Home ownership probabilities for Afghan households are low.

KEYWORDS

Economics of minorities; immigrants; Afghans; Canada; labour force participation; housing tenure

JEL CLASSIFICATION

J15

1. Introduction

From 1988 to 2015, almost 61 thousand Afghan citizens were landed as permanent residents in Canada, making them, for a short time, one of the top five refugee groups in Canada.¹ In 2016, there were about 47 thousand people born in Afghanistan living in Canada. An additional 29 thousand had Afghan parents or reported Afghan as an ethnic origin (Statistics Canada 2018).

The literature looking at the social and economic situation of Afghans in Canada has been somewhat disparate, concentrating on the initial settlement process. These studies are often based on small samples within single cities. There are few studies conducted at the national level, due in part to the small size and recency of the Afghan population. Despite the scattered nature of research, studies consistently suggest that Afghan immigrants and their children face problems related to both settlement and labour force participation. Barriers to settlement were seen to stem from a combination of factors including the impact of displacement and conflict, language skills, poor health, limited education, lack of knowledge of or limited access to support services, and discrimination (e.g. Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Nourpanah 2014; Steinbach 2010). Evidence from three larger multi-city and national level studies also suggest that Afghans fare poorly in the labour market (Mata 2010; Marchand et al. 2014; Bevelander and Pendakur 2014).

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The goals of this paper are to review research on Afghans in Canada and then to assess labour force and housing tenure outcomes for this group, drawing on the most recently available official national level data, Canada's 2016 Census. Following this introduction, the paper provides a brief profile of the Afghan population living in Canada and then summarises the literature. After having built this understanding, the data analyses follow, beginning with an assessment of the employment probabilities of Afghans living in Canada as compared to all immigrants. The discussion then turns to an examination of earnings differentials for the immigrant population as compared to Afghans. This analysis is complemented by an assessment of earnings differentials from the perspective of differing immigrant intake categories. Finally, an assessment of housing tenure is conducted for Afghan households.

Overall, the findings show that Afghan immigrants face poor labour force outcomes (both employment probabilities and wages) as compared to other immigrants and that home ownership probabilities are concomitantly low. However, labour force outcomes for the daughters of Afghan immigrants tend to be much better, exceeding those of female immigrants overall by a wide margin. The sons of Afghan immigrants fare better than their fathers, but not better than immigrant males in general in terms of labour force probabilities. While the probability of working is low, once in the labour market, the sons of Afghan immigrants have higher earnings than the immigrant population overall. These findings point to different levels of horizontal inequality (see Gisselquist 2020) – high levels for Afghan women, but very mixed results for men, where perhaps barriers to entry into the labour market pose challenges.

2. Profile of the Afghan population in Canada

Intake records from Citizenship Immigration and Refugees Canada show that nearly 63 thousand people with citizenship from Afghanistan entered Canada from 1980 to 2015. [Figure 1](#) shows annual intake for immigrants to Canada, by citizens of Afghanistan from 1980 to 2015. Intake was less than 100 persons prior to 1985, after which it rose

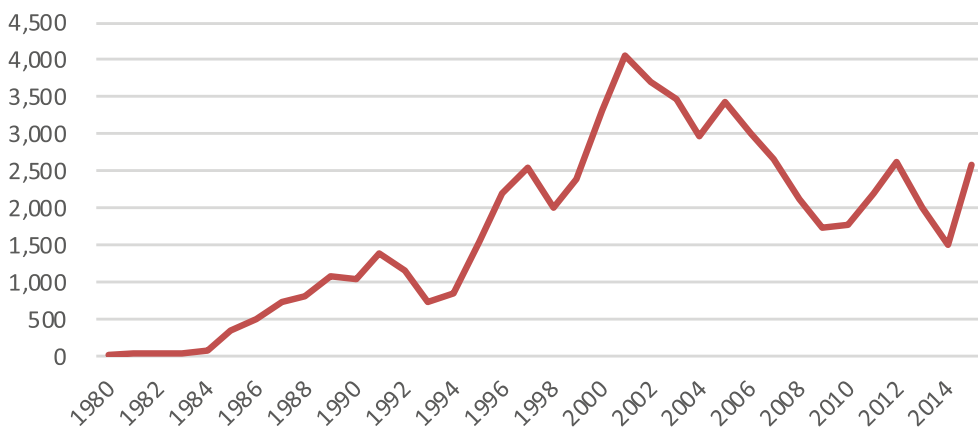


Figure 1. Immigrant intake to Canada from Afghanistan, 1980–2015. <http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/ad975a26-df23-456a-8ada-756191a23695>.

rapidly, hitting a high of 4067 in 2001. After 2001, intake from Afghanistan declined but never went below 1400 persons annually.

As is the case for other recent non-francophone minority populations, about half of Canada's ethnically Afghan population live in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area² (CMA) and about 40 percent live in the CMAs of Montreal, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. Montreal is home to nine thousand Afghans, and Vancouver has 7500 Afghans. Only about 10 percent the Afghan population live outside these CMAs.

Table 1, shows counts from the 2016 Census of Canada for the total Afghan population and our core population of interest – the population 20–64, are not in school full time in households of less than 14 persons. As can be seen, of the 76 thousand Afghan persons living in Canada, about half meet the criteria for our core population. Looking at the core population, we see that 32,785 permanent residents born in Afghanistan live in Canada. Two thousand-two hundred people with Afghan parents were born outside Afghanistan, but not in Canada and just over one thousand (1115) Canadian-born people are ethnically Afghan. The big difference between the two populations is for ethnic Afghans born in Canada – about 20 thousand total, but only 1115 in our core population. This is because the majority of this group are less than 20 years old.

Table 2 shows the highest certificate for Canadian-born (non-Afghan), the immigrant population, and different Afghan populations for females (top panel) and males (bottom panel) for our population of interest.³ The bottom line of each panel shows the index of dissimilarity for each group as compared to the Canadian-born (non-Afghan) female or male population.⁴

The table points to the fact that, overall, immigrants tend to have higher levels of schooling than Canadian-born men and women, however, levels of schooling for Afghan immigrants are much lower. Looking at women, we see that 26 percent of the Canadian-born (non-Afghan) population has a university degree, while this true for 38 percent of the immigrant population, but only 13 percent of the population born in Afghanistan (19% vs 38% and 16% respectively for men). The index of dissimilarity for immigrant women as compared to Canadian-born women is 13.8% suggesting that almost 14% of Canadian-born women would have to increase their levels of schooling to match those of immigrant women. However, 31% of Afghan women would have to increase their levels of schooling in order to match the distribution for Canadian-born women. Canadian-born Afghan women have a bimodal schooling distribution as compared to Canadian-born women in general, with a higher proportion reporting both lower and higher levels of schooling as compared to the rest of the Canadian-born population.

Table 1. Total and selected permanent resident Afghan population by sex (weighted counts), Canada, 2016

	Female	Male	Total
Total	37,765	38,325	76,090
Immigrant born in Afghanistan	23,385	23,750	47,135
Immigrant whose parents are born in Afghanistan	4335	4320	8,655
Ethnic Afghan born in Canada	10,045	10,255	20,300
Population 20–64 not in school	17,655	18,480	36,135
Immigrant born in Afghanistan	16,055	16,730	32,785
Immigrant whose parents are born in Afghanistan	1145	1090	2235
Ethnic Afghan born in Canada	455	660	1115

Source: 2016 Census confidential file. Selection: In a household of less than 14 persons, who are not farm operators.

Table 2. Highest certificate for selected groups, population age 15+ not in school full time.

		Canadian-born (not Afghan)	Immigrant	Born in Afghanistan	Parents born in Afghanistan	Canadian-born Afghan
Females	Total	5,866,275	2,043,225	16,055	1145	430
	None	10%	12%	38%	20%	.
	Highschool	26%	22%	29%	35%	35%
	Trades cert	8%	5%	4%	4%	.
	College cert	31%	23%	16%	21%	30%
	University deg	26%	38%	13%	20%	35%
	index of dissimilarity		13.8%	31.0%	18.4%	18.5%
Males	Total	5,948,000	1,868,715	16,730	1,090	660
	None	15%	12%	28%	23%	12%
	Highschool	27%	22%	36%	38%	44%
	Trades cert	17%	8%	5%	6%	6%
	College cert	22%	19%	15%	15%	20%
	University deg	19%	38%	16%	19%	18%
	index of dissimilarity		19.3%	21.4%	18.7%	16.7%

Source: 2016 Census confidential file selection population 20–64, not in school, in households with less than 14 people, and not farm operators.

Turning to men we see a similar story as was seen for women, with immigrant Afghan men reporting lower levels of schooling (index of dissimilarity of 21% for men born in Afghanistan and 19% for immigrant men born outside Afghanistan). While Afghan women born in Canada have a bimodal education distribution, this is not the case for Afghan men born in Canada who have somewhat lower levels of schooling.

The low educational profile of Afghan immigrants stems from the fact that the bulk of Afghan immigrants came as refugees. Refugees, in general, tend to have lower levels of schooling as compared to immigrants who arrived as independent or family class. As a result, Afghan immigrants are likely to have relatively low labour force outcomes, but perhaps not lower than is the case for refugees as a whole.

3. Literature review

Limited research has been conducted on the Afghan population in Canada. For the most part, such studies are small and qualitative in nature aimed at supporting a new and unfamiliar refugee group to settle and prosper in specific locales (e.g. Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Nourpanah 2014; Steinbach 2010).⁵ Part of the challenge in reviewing the research is that often within the analysis of different papers, the Afghan population, because of the relatively small size of the group, is subsumed into larger groups, such as West-Asian and Arab roll-ups. With few exceptions (e.g. Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Bevelander and Pendakur 2014; Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Mata 2010; Sherrell 2010) such studies tend not to disaggregate results for Afghan immigrants (e.g. Hiebert 2015; Hynie, Guruge, and Shakya 2013, 2011; Shakya et al. 2010a, 2010b; Simich, Beiser, and Mawani 2003), or indeed for any specific immigrant group (e.g. Painter 2013; Schellenberg and Maheux 2008).⁶ This is unfortunate because as Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) and Mata (2010) show, there can be significant differences in outcomes between (and within) immigrant sub-groups.

The literature that does present discrete findings for the Afghan population, while small, provides a wide range of perspectives. Some studies focus on the entire Afghan

heritage population (e.g. Marchand et al. 2014; Mata 2010) while others focus on the working age population (e.g. Bevelander and Pendakur 2014), women (Dossa 2006a, 2006b); or youth (e.g. Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Soroor and Popal 2005; Steinbach 2010). Some look at the experiences of the Afghan population, by intake class, including family reunion, government-assisted refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. Bevelander and Pendakur 2014; Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2010; Nourpanah 2014; Simich, Beiser, and Mawani 2003; Sherrell 2010).

The methodological approaches to study differ as well. Community case studies, profiles, evaluations and statistical analyses have been carried out at the national, provincial and municipal levels. At the municipal level, research on the Afghan immigrant population includes studies for Metropolitan Vancouver (Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2010), Toronto (Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Hynie, Guruge, and Shakya 2013, 2011; Shakya et al. 2010a, 2010b; Soroor and Popal 2005), Kitchener-Waterloo (Bezansonp 2003), Montreal (Steinbach 2010) and Halifax (Nourpanah 2014).

Some researchers report challenges in engaging representative or larger samples of research participants (e.g. Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Hynie, Crooks, and Barragan 2011; Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Kisson 2010). Even those studies using Census data were hampered by the fact that for Afghans, it was relatively early in the settlement process, and many had yet to join the labour force. Studies covering more than one city, or different provinces include Mata (2010) who examined the economic vulnerability of immigrants across 15 of Canada's largest census metropolitan districts and Sherrell (2010) who looked at refugee housing in two cities (Vancouver and Winnipeg). Citizenship and Immigration's (2011) programme evaluation covers all of Canada with the exclusion of Quebec. Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) examined economic levels at the national level while Marchand et al. (2014) also focused on the national level.

A number of factors contribute to the scarcity and atomic nature of the research. First, while Afghanistan was for a time one of the largest source countries for refugee in Canada, Afghans remain a relatively small group in the Canadian context. In 2006, for example, there were 36 thousand people born in Afghanistan living in Canada (out of almost 6.2 million immigrants) (Statistics Canada 2006). Researchers at that time were looking not only at Afghan immigrants but also at a number of other 'new' groups arriving in Canada partially as a result of the then-recent implementation of the 2001 Immigration Refugee Protection Act (implemented in 2002). To a degree, these studies were hampered by the fact that the settlement issues they were looking at were relatively new and therefore had not been well studied (see, for example, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2010; Islam and Oremus 2014; Khanlou, Koh, and Mill 2008; Murdie 2010).

3.1. Settlement issues

Much of the research conducted since the early 2000s has been designed to inform policy and practice around supports for newcomers, particularly government-assisted refugees without access to family members or private sponsor support. Issues considered to complicate the settlement of Afghan immigrants, in general, include the toll of years of conflict

or displacement, language barriers, poor health, limited education, lack of knowledge of or limited access to support services, discrimination ex-post September 11, 2001, high costs associated with (often) single parenthood and large families, and challenges of getting around via public transportation (e.g. Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2010; Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Sherrell 2010; Tu et al. 2015).

A number of studies, largely from Toronto, indicate that Afghan youths have faced particular challenges with settlement and prejudice, challenges that in turn contribute to mental health problems. At the request of the government of Ontario, Soroor and Popal (2005) conducted research into the mental health needs of Afghan youth in Toronto. They found that many Afghan youths, aged 12–18 were having problems adjusting to school, having trouble at home as their family settled, suffering anxiety, and were facing a great deal of prejudice. Almost 15 per cent of the youths reported ‘always’ experiencing racism and Islamophobia, and a high proportion of Afghan students (21 per cent) were also having problems with suspensions, expulsions, and failing classes (Soroor and Popal 2005, 9). Their survey results also point to differences between boys and girls, with parents reporting that girls were ‘considered more obedient and spent more time on homework and studying’ (page 47). Khanlou et al.’s (2008) case study of Afghan and Iranian youth in Toronto and Steinbach’s (2010) study of the practices of one Montreal high school provide corroborating evidence of similar discriminatory behaviours as well as the need for countervailing measures (see also Shakya, Khanlou, and Gonsalves 2010b who looked at the mental health issues faced by, but did not disaggregate findings for, Afghan, Colombian, Sudanese and Tamil youth in Toronto).

Some studies make specific recommendations for bettering the health and wellbeing of Afghan refugees. Dossa (2006a, 2006b), for example, calls for more inclusive policy interventions, including better access to language resources, to improve the health and wellbeing of older Afghan women in Vancouver. Other health-related studies look at the way that years of dislocation and conflict have impacted Afghan refugees’ human capital and physical and mental health and, as a consequence, contributed to challenges during settlement.

A literature survey conducted by Murdie (2010) shows that finding affordable housing is a challenge for many newly arriving refugees, both in Canada’s larger expensive cities, such as Toronto and Vancouver, and lower cost urban areas such as Montreal. Sherrell (2010) and Bezansonp (2003) argue that Afghan families face particular difficulties. Sherrell (2010) conducted 20 key informant interviews and 80 interviews with government-assisted refugees and asylum claimants in Vancouver and Winnipeg from Afghanistan, Sudan, Mexico and Somalia. She found that place, service levels and legal status are recognisable barriers to housing for some groups, but that

‘... households with larger than the average Canadian family; low literacy; health concerns; single headed households experience barriers that are difficult, if not impossible to overcome’ (Sherrell 2010, 55).

Sherrell (2010, 53) points to issues of overcrowding in part because families tend to be large (over 70 percent of her interview subjects lived in households of 6 or more persons) or they were living in multiple family households to share costs. Bezansonp (2003) looking

at the housing arrangements in Kitchener Waterloo of 15 recently arrived Afghan households also found that low incomes and large family size presented challenges for housing.

Simich, Beiser, and Mawani (2003) looking at secondary migration to and within Ontario, pointed to the existence of family support systems. As one Afghan refugee who wanted to move from New Brunswick to Toronto explained:

Number one is my brother Our children and his were so close to each other that they missed their cousins. Number two, the Afghan community here in Toronto is a large one . . . I thought I could use some of their experiences . . . It was true. When I came here, my community helped me. My brother helped me a lot. (Simich, Beiser, and Mawani 2003, 882)

Studies by Nourpanah (2014) in Halifax, Bezansonp (2003) in Kitchener-Waterloo and Khanlou, Koh, and Mill (2008) in Toronto also speak to the resiliency of the Afghan population whether in finding ways to create social networks, finding housing or settling productively (see also Hiebert 2015). Shakya et al. (2010a) who investigated the academic goals of about 60 Afghan, Karen and Sudanese male and female youth, aged 16–24 found that all of the groups who had been in Canada for up to five years held strong aspirations for higher education.

3.2. Labour force participation, employment and income

As stated, there is relatively little research on economic outcomes for Afghan immigrants, in part because of how recent the Afghan population is to Canada and the concomitant lack of data. Mata's 2010 study on economic vulnerability in Canada drew on special tabulations from the 2006 census to compare the status of over 100 ethnic origin groups (single and multiple origins) across 15 major metropolitan areas in 10 provinces.⁷ The study included approximately 16.7 thousand individuals with Afghan origins (8.4 thousand females, 8.3 thousand male), amongst a population of some 12.3 million working age individuals living in Canada (aged 25–54). Using a combination of Latent Class Analysis and Principal Component Analysis, Mata's general findings pointed to economic vulnerability faced by non-European groups.

With respect to Afghans, Mata found that the group was struggling in Canadian labour markets. Afghan women, for example had the lowest labour force participation rates of all ethnic groups examined (at 48.4 per cent) and one of the highest proportions of women living below the low-income cut-off (Mata 2010, 15). He concluded that Afghans were amongst the five most vulnerable groups across all studied cities in Canada (Mata 2010, 23).

In a study prepared for the International Organization of Migration, Marchand et al. (2014) drew upon the 2006 Canadian census and other official data for their study of the Afghan diaspora across the world. Their assessment with respect to Canada aligns for the most part with Mata's findings, with both labour force participation and earnings of Afghan men and women found to be low. On average in 2005, Afghan men had annual average wages of CAD\$20,755 while Afghan women earned CAD\$14,746. The annual average employment income for all Canadians was CAD\$40,991 for men and CAD\$26,587 for women (Statistics Canada 2006; reported in Marchand et al. 2014: 161).

Evidence of low earnings also comes from a Canadian government evaluation of its support for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2011: 46) found that refugees born in Afghanistan relied on social assistance

for a longer period of time than most other GARs, with the exception of those born in Iran and Somalia. This finding came from an analysis of some 500 survey responses from GARs across the country (excluding Quebec).

Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) use tabular data from the Canadian IMDB and the Swedish Register containing year 2007 earnings information from tax records for age-sex-schooling-place of birth cohorts of immigrants entering Canada and Sweden from 1987 to 2005. Their goal was to assess employment probabilities and earnings for different immigrant groups including Afghan immigrants. Concentrating on non-economic intake (family sponsorship and refugees), they looked at immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia and found that men and women from Afghanistan had lower probabilities of employment and lower earnings than other groups.

Marchand et al. (2014, 23) also add possible insights into the investment priorities of Afghan refugees. They note that the annual value of remittances to Afghanistan from the United States and Canada was considered high, at an estimated US\$75 million, in comparison with remittances from other countries. Further, the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (cited in Marchand et al. 2014, 152) estimated that an Afghan person in the United States or Canada on average remits US\$1,500 annually to Afghanistan.

In sum, the literature suggests that immigrants in general and Afghans in particular face challenges in the labour market. These challenges can be a product of both social and human capital constraints (Aydemir 2011; Husted et al. 2001; Wanner 2003). In addition, country of origin can have an impact on earnings as immigrants can be subject to discrimination in the labour market the magnitude of which varies by origin (Pendakur and Pendakur 2015).

4. Method

The central goal of the data analysis in this paper is to assess two socio-economic outcomes for Afghans living in Canada. The first concerns economic integration, based on an examination of two labour force outcomes – employment probabilities and earnings for Afghan immigrants in comparison to all immigrants. The second outcome concerns measuring differences in housing tenure probabilities.

The data for this analysis are drawn from the 2016 Census of Canada confidential file which is filled out by approximately 25 percent of households. When assessing employment probabilities, the sample is restricted to immigrants who came to Canada from 1987 to 2015 (or people born in Canada with Afghan heritage), aged 20–64 who are not attending school. Individuals whose primary source of income is from farms or who are in households with more than 13 people are dropped from the analysis. Regressions control for:

- age, age squared
- years in Canada, years in Canada squared
- official language knowledge (4 dummy variables for English, French, both English and French, and neither)
- marital status (4 dummy variables for single, married or common-law, separated or divorced and widowed)

- level of schooling (5 dummy variables for no certificate, high school, trades, college certificate and university degree)
- selected Census Metropolitan Areas (Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and other areas),
- number of children (none, 1, 2, 3 or more),
- category of entry for immigrants (economic, family or refugee), and
- population group: Immigrant (not Afghan), born in Afghanistan, not born in Afghanistan or Canada but with parents born in Afghanistan, and born in Canada with Afghan ethnic origins.

When assessing housing tenure (own versus rent) individuals are rolled into households using the household identifier variable on the census database and the following household level variables are used as controls:

- highest level of schooling in the household
- highest age in the household
- the maximum number of years in Canada for immigrants
- official language in the household (at least one person in the household speaks either: English, French, both English or French or no one in the household speaks an official language)
- the census family structure (opposite-sex couple without children, 1-person household, opposite-sex couple with children, same sex couple without children, same sex couple with children, female lone parent, male lone parent)
- the income of the household (in log form) and
- an identifier for Afghan households (at least one person in the household is Afghan by either place of birth or ethnicity).

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Employment outcomes

Table 3 shows partial results for 4 logistic regressions assessing the probability of being employed. In these regressions, *not* being employed is defined broadly, with no controls for whether the individual is *active* in the labour force.⁸ The three primary groups of interest are i. those born in Afghanistan, ii. immigrants whose parents are born in Afghanistan, but who themselves were not born in Afghanistan, and iii. people born in Canada who are ethnically Afghan.⁹ The comparison group is comprised of immigrants who are not Afghan.

Regressions 1 and 2 show results for all immigrants by gender, while Regressions 3 and 4 show results only for Afghan women or men. While the first two regressions provide an overall picture of how immigrants fare in Canada compared to those with Afghan heritage, the latter two regressions provide information on what drives employment specifically for Afghans. The last two regressions are equivalent to the first two if all variables were interacted with Afghan heritage. Each logistic regression shows the coefficient, the standard error, and the odds ratio.

Table 3. Partial regression results from 4 logistic regressions assessing the correlates of being employed.

Row Labels		Regression 1			Regression 2			Regression 3			Regression 4		
		All immigrants						Afghan population					
		Female			Male			Female			Male		
		Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio	Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio	Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio	Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio
Observations		416,370			377,845			4485			4575		
R ²		0.0863			0.0644			0.1748			0.087		
Official language (English)	French	0.13	0.02	1.13	-0.07	0.03	0.94	-0.21	0.24	0.81	0.12	0.31	1.13
	Eng & Fr	0.29	0.02	1.34	0.13	0.02	1.14	0.18	0.17	1.20	0.15	0.17	1.17
	No official language	-0.62	0.02	0.54	-0.71	0.02	0.49	-1.34	0.17	0.26	-0.72	0.17	0.49
Schooling (no certificate)	High school	0.36	0.01	1.43	0.26	0.02	1.30	0.35	0.09	1.41	0.25	0.09	1.28
	Trades cer	0.84	0.02	2.31	0.55	0.02	1.74	0.99	0.19	2.69	0.84	0.20	2.32
	College cert	0.85	0.01	2.34	0.56	0.02	1.75	1.20	0.11	3.33	0.78	0.13	2.17
	University degree	0.91	0.01	2.48	0.65	0.02	1.91	1.22	0.12	3.38	0.69	0.12	2.00
Marital status (single)	Married	-0.52	0.01	0.60	0.86	0.02	2.37	-0.63	0.12	0.53	0.71	0.12	2.03
	Divorced/separated	-0.29	0.02	0.75	0.41	0.02	1.51	-0.85	0.18	0.43	0.18	0.21	1.19
	Widowed	-0.58	0.03	0.56	0.29	0.06	1.33	-0.84	0.22	0.43	0.17	0.57	1.19
number of children (none)	1	-0.28	0.01	0.75	-0.05	0.01	0.95	-0.40	0.13	0.67	-0.08	0.14	0.92
	2	-0.36	0.01	0.70	0.05	0.01	1.05	-0.59	0.12	0.56	-0.10	0.12	0.91
	3	-0.67	0.01	0.51	-0.06	0.02	0.94	-0.50	0.12	0.61	-0.06	0.12	0.94
	4+	-1.15	0.02	0.32	-0.31	0.02	0.73	-0.65	0.12	0.52	-0.18	0.12	0.84
Census Metropolitan Area (outside selected CMAs)	Montreal	-0.24	0.02	0.79	-0.31	0.02	0.73	0.29	0.19	1.34	0.00	0.19	1.00
	Ottawa-Gatineau	-0.08	0.02	0.93	-0.17	0.03	0.84	-0.16	0.18	0.85	0.21	0.21	1.24
	Toronto	-0.12	0.01	0.89	-0.08	0.01	0.92	-0.45	0.12	0.64	-0.20	0.12	0.82
	Hamilton	-0.02	0.03	0.98	-0.08	0.04	0.92	-0.29	0.24	0.75	-0.18	0.26	0.83
	Winnipeg	0.59	0.03	1.80	0.27	0.04	1.32	0.21	0.33	1.23	-0.18	0.33	0.83
	Calgary	0.06	0.02	1.07	-0.22	0.02	0.80	0.30	0.18	1.35	0.46	0.19	1.58
	Edmonton	0.16	0.02	1.17	-0.14	0.03	0.87	0.31	0.23	1.36	0.38	0.23	1.46
	Vancouver	-0.16	0.01	0.85	-0.14	0.02	0.87	0.22	0.16	1.25	0.37	0.16	1.45
Immigrant intake Category (independent)	Family	-0.21	0.01	0.81	0.06	0.01	1.06	-0.28	0.22	0.75	-0.13	0.25	0.88
	Refugee	-0.25	0.01	0.78	-0.20	0.01	0.82	0.07	0.21	1.07	-0.34	0.23	0.71
Afghan category (non-Afghan immigrant)	Born in Afghanistan	-0.46	0.04	0.63	-0.31	0.04	0.73						
	Immigs (parents born in Afghanistan)	-0.31	0.13	0.73	-0.04	0.15	0.96	-0.15	0.15	0.86	-0.27	0.16	0.76
	Canadian-born Afghans	0.91	0.21	2.49	-0.05	0.17	0.95	1.48	0.33	4.39	-0.34	0.33	0.71
Constant		-3.65	0.06	0.03	-1.40	0.07	0.25	-2.74	0.59	0.06	0.37	0.59	1.44

Note: model also includes age, age squared, years in Canada and years in Canada squared. Comparison groups are in parentheses.

Source: 2016 Census confidential file.

Selection: Population 20-64, not in school, in a household with less than 14 people, and not a farm operator.

Looking first at results in Regression 1 (all immigrants, females), as expected, age and years since migrating are important determinants in the probability of being employed. The coefficient for each year of age is 0.22 and for years in Canada is 0.07. Speaking an official language (English or French) also has a strong positive impact on the probability of being employed. Immigrant women who speak French or are bilingual are more likely to be employed than those who speak only English. Indeed, after controlling for other variables, speaking both English and French increases the odds ratio by about a third.

As compared to living outside the selected CMAs, living in Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Toronto or Vancouver reduces the odds ratio by between 12 and 21 percent. However, living in Winnipeg, Edmonton, or Calgary increases the probability of being employed. Living in Winnipeg in particular increases the odds ratio by 80 per cent as compared to living outside one of the selected CMAs.

Higher levels of schooling are positively associated with employment. Having a schooling certificate increases the probability of employment (coefficient of .36) as compared to not having any certificate. Having a post-secondary certificate of any kind more than doubles the odds ratio as compared to having no certificate at all.

Being single (as compared to being married, divorced or widowed) is correlated with a higher probability of being employed, while concomitantly, having children is associated with lower probabilities of working. Indeed, the odds of working diminish as the number of children increases (coefficient of -.17 for one child and -.41 for four or more children as compared to having no children).

Economic class immigrant women have a higher probability of working than those entering Canada as family or refugee immigrants, however, the impact is far lower than either the impact of having children or not speaking an official language, suggesting that it is the correlates of being a refugee (i.e.: lower schooling or lower likelihood of speaking English or French) that impact working opportunities for refugee women.

As compared to other female immigrants, women born in Afghanistan have much lower probabilities of being employed. As compared to employment probabilities for all immigrant women, being a woman born in Afghanistan reduces the odds ratio by 37 percent.¹⁰ However, Afghan women born in Canada have much higher odds of being employed than is the case for immigrant women overall. Being an Afghan woman born in Canada increases the odds ratio by almost 2.5 times. This is substantial and as will be seen, is in marked contrast to the situation for Afghan men born in Canada, where there is no real difference with immigrant men.

Overall, results from the first regression support existing research on employment probabilities for women – married, refugee and family category women, those with low levels of schooling and more children have lower probabilities of working, while those with higher levels of schooling who enter as economic immigrants have higher participation rates. However, the marked increase in employment for Afghan women born in Canada is a new finding and is independent of other characteristics such as education. Recall that the results presented in [Table 2](#) also point to overall higher levels of schooling for Canadian-born Afghan women and the picture is even more positive.

Turning to the results for men (Regression 2), we see similar patterns for age, years in Canada and education, but the impacts of marital status, official language knowledge, number of children and category are different. After controlling for other characteristics,

immigrant men working outside the major cities have a higher probability of working compared to those living in gateway cities. The exception is Winnipeg where the odds ratio increases by 32 percent.

As was the case for women, having a schooling certificate increases the probability of being employed, however the effects are somewhat more muted. Where having a university degree increased the odds ratio by 2.5 times for women, for men the effect is on the order of doubling the odds ratio.

As was seen for women born in Afghanistan, men born in Afghanistan have much lower employment probabilities compared to all immigrants (coefficient -0.31). Afghan men born in Canada or Afghan immigrants not born in Afghanistan, however, have about the same probability of being employed as other immigrants. This means that Afghan men born in Canada, while doing better than their immigrant parents, are not faring better than immigrants in general, despite speaking an official language and having Canadian credentials. Further, where Canadian-born Afghan women tend to have higher levels of schooling than either the Canadian-born population or the immigrant population, the reverse is true for Canadian-born Afghan men.

Regressions 3 and 4 look specifically at the Afghan population – those born in Afghanistan, those who are not born in Afghanistan or Canada, but with parents born in Afghanistan, and ethnic Afghans born in Canada. Where the comparison group was all immigrants in Regressions 1 and 2, the comparison group for Regressions 3 and 4 is immigrants born in Afghanistan. These regressions offer a more in-depth understanding of the drivers of employment for the Afghan population in Canada.

Looking first at the results for Afghan women (Regression 3), age and years in Canada remain important determinants of employment. Likewise, marital status and the presence of children in the household has a statistically similar impact for Afghan women as was seen for all immigrant women.¹¹ The ability to speak an official language is about as important for Afghan women as it is for immigrant women as a whole. However, not speaking an official language has a somewhat stronger impact, reducing the odds ratio by 74 per cent. The impact of schooling is similar to that seen for immigrants as a whole.

Category of entry makes little difference in the employment probabilities for immigrant Afghan women – the coefficients are not statistically different from each other.¹² Afghan women with a college certificate or university degree see an increase in the odds ratio of over three times (odds ratio of 3.3 and 3.8 respectively). The results by group suggest that Afghan women born in Canada have much better employment probabilities. As expected, being born in Canada has a strong positive impact, increasing the odds of employment by four times as compared to Afghan women born outside Canada.

Regression 4 looks at Afghan men. As compared to the results for all immigrant men, where age and years in Canada have positive effects on employment probabilities, there is little impact for Afghan men. The impact of schooling for Afghan men is similar in both direction and magnitude to what was seen for immigrants as a whole. The same is also broadly true for marital status, with single persons having lower employment probabilities as compared to men who are married, or widowed.

While there are few differences by Census Metropolitan Area, Calgary and Vancouver stand out as cities where Afghan men are more likely to work as compared to other cities.

Markedly different from the case for women, being born in Canada does not have a statistically significant impact on the probability of being employed as compare to Afghan men born in Afghanistan.

5.2. Income

Where Table 3 explores the dynamics of employment probabilities, Table 4 looks at labour income (income from self-employment, wages and salaries) in log form.¹³ Here the sample is restricted to immigrants entering Canada between 1986 and 2015 or people born in Canada of Afghan heritage, age 20–64, not in school in households smaller than 41 persons earning more than \$100 CAD in 2015. Similar to Table 3, Regressions 1 and 2 include all immigrants, while Regressions 3 and 4 include only Afghans.

As expected, when looking at the results for all immigrants the payoffs for age, years in Canada, official language knowledge, schooling and CMA of residence are broadly similar

Table 4. Partial regression results from 4 regressions assessing the correlates of labour market income.

		Regression 1		Regression 2		Regression 3		Regression 4	
		All immigrants				Afghan			
		Female		Male		Female		Male	
		Coef	S.E.	Coef	S.E.	Coef	S.E.	Coef	S.E.
Observations		306,395		331,420		2230		3495	
R ²		0.1267		0.1373		0.118		0.1193	
Official language (English)	French	-0.03	0.01	-0.13	0.01	-0.04	0.14	0.01	0.13
	Eng & Fr	0.12	0.01	0.04	0.01	-0.02	0.09	0.12	0.07
	No OL	-0.26	0.01	-0.38	0.01	-0.01	0.14	0.19	0.11
Schooling (no certificate)	Highschool cert	0.11	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.06	-0.02	0.04
	Trades cert	0.10	0.01	0.19	0.01	-0.11	0.10	0.10	0.07
	College cert	0.29	0.01	0.22	0.01	0.22	0.06	0.21	0.05
	University deg	0.56	0.01	0.48	0.01	0.53	0.07	0.46	0.05
Marital status (single)	Married	-0.09	0.01	0.27	0.01	-0.25	0.06	0.17	0.05
	Divorced/separated	-0.05	0.01	0.10	0.01	-0.07	0.10	-0.06	0.10
	Widowed	-0.05	0.01	0.20	0.03	0.09	0.15	-0.01	0.32
number of children (none)	1	-0.17	0.00	-0.06	0.00	-0.39	0.07	0.02	0.06
	2	-0.20	0.00	-0.04	0.00	-0.29	0.06	-0.03	0.05
	3	-0.31	0.01	-0.12	0.01	-0.27	0.07	-0.13	0.05
	4+	-0.41	0.01	-0.21	0.01	-0.36	0.07	-0.14	0.05
Census Metropolitan Area (outside selected CMAs)	Montreal	-0.17	0.01	-0.29	0.01	-0.07	0.10	-0.10	0.08
	Ottawa-Gat	0.02	0.01	-0.09	0.01	-0.24	0.11	-0.09	0.09
	Toronto	-0.02	0.01	-0.17	0.00	-0.08	0.07	-0.10	0.05
	Hamilton	0.01	0.01	-0.07	0.01	-0.08	0.15	0.09	0.12
	Winnipeg	0.04	0.01	-0.11	0.01	0.10	0.18	0.32	0.15
	Calgary	0.20	0.01	0.15	0.01	0.10	0.09	0.39	0.07
	Edmonton	0.17	0.01	0.18	0.01	0.16	0.12	0.37	0.09
	Vancouver	-0.06	0.01	-0.14	0.01	0.12	0.09	0.19	0.07
Immigrant intake category (independent)	Family	-0.13	0.00	-0.11	0.00	-0.06	0.12	0.01	0.10
	Refugee	-0.14	0.01	-0.22	0.00	0.06	0.12	-0.07	0.09
Afghan category (non-Afghan immigrant)	Born in Afghanistan	-0.15	0.02	-0.18	0.02				
	Immigs, parents born in Afghanistan	-0.13	0.07	-0.05	0.06	-0.09	0.08	-0.05	0.07
	Canadian-born Afghan	0.38	0.09	0.16	0.08	0.52	0.18	0.53	0.14
_cons		7.58	0.03	8.27	0.03	8.24	0.35	8.03	0.27

Note: Model also includes age, age squared, years in Canada and years in Canada squared. Comparison group in parentheses.

Source: 2016 Census confidential file.

Selection: Population 20-64, not in school, in a household with less than 14 people, and not a farm operator.

in direction and magnitude for male and female immigrants. The impact of category of entry is similar in direction for men and women but not magnitude. As compared to independent class immigrants, women entering as either family or refugee class earn about 13% less. Refugee men, however earn about 22 percent less than independent class men. Having children has a higher impact on women's earnings than men's. Having one child reduces women's earnings by 17 percent compared to women who do not have children, while having 3 children reduces earnings by 26 percent (coefficient of $-.31$).

Immigrants born in Afghanistan (both men and women) earn substantially less than immigrants in general. After controlling for other characteristics, women born in Afghanistan earn about 15 percent less than other female immigrants, while men earn about 18 percent less than other male immigrants. Afghan women and men born in Canada, however, earn substantially more than other immigrants in general. Canadian-born Afghan women see a 46 percent bonus (coefficient of $.38$) as compared to immigrant women in general (15 percent for men).

Turning to the results for Afghans only (Regressions 3 and 4) we see that amongst women, the payoffs to age, years in Canada, marital status and schooling are similar to the results seen for immigrants as a whole. Official language knowledge and category of entry have little effect on earnings. The impact of having children is far greater for Afghan women as compared to immigrant women in general. Afghan women with one child see an earnings decline of almost a third as compared to those without children.

Afghan women and men born in Canada both show hefty earnings bonuses as compared to Afghan immigrants. Afghan women and men earn almost 70 percent more than Afghan immigrants after controlling for other characteristics (coefficients of $.52$ and $.53$ respectively).

5.3. Summary of labour market outcomes

Overall, the results are mixed. After controlling for basic characteristics, Afghan immigrant women who are working have earnings outcomes that are on par with other immigrant women, while Afghan women born in Canada fare much better than immigrant women. Looking at differences by category, it appears that entry category is not as important a determinant of earnings for Afghan born immigrants as it is for other immigrants. There do appear to be challenges for Afghan immigrants in getting jobs in the first place. Results from [Table 3](#) suggest that the probability of employment is substantially lower for Afghan men and women born outside Canada. However, Afghan men born in Canada fare much better than immigrants in employment probabilities. Afghan women born in Canada fare better both in employment probabilities and earnings.¹⁴

5.4. Home ownership

While there are not many 'outcomes' that can be assessed using the 2016 Census it is possible to assess the probability of homeownership as compared to renting. Here the unit of analysis is an immigrant or Afghan family (as compared to an individual). Immigrant or Afghan family is defined very broadly, as at least one member of the family being either an immigrant or ethnically Afghan. Afghan households can therefore include people born in

Table 5. Housing tenure for households by immigrant status.

	Canadian-born	Immigrant	Afghan	Total
Total	8,639,720	3,508,415	21,190	12,169,325
own	68%	70%	48%	69%
rent	32%	30%	52%	31%

Note: The groups are independent (i.e.: Canadian-born does not include Afghan households born in Canada). Band-housing (on Indigenous reserves) has been dropped.

Source: 2016 Census confidential file.

Canada who are ethnically Afghan and may also include non-Afghan household members. The dependent variable is whether the household is living in an owned dwelling.

Table 5 provides descriptive statistics drawn from the 2016 Census showing housing tenure at the household level for Canadian-born, immigrant and Afghan households.¹⁵ Sixty-eight percent of Canadian-born household live in owner-occupied dwellings. Immigrant households are slightly more likely to own as compared to Canadian-born households (70% versus 68% respectively). However, less than half of Afghan families live in owner occupied dwellings (48%). As least part of this may be explained by other factors correlated with being in an Afghan family such as length of time in the country or income. Indeed, five years earlier, according results from the 2011 National Household survey, only 43% of Afghan households were in owner occupied households (Pendakur 2017).

Table 6 provides partial results from 4 logistic regressions which seek to speak to these issues. The dependent variable is the probability of a household living in an owned dwelling. Two regressions are run for each of two samples (either all immigrants or only Afghan households). The first includes age of the oldest household member, years in Canada, household size, official language capacity of the household, highest level of schooling of the household, family structure and an identifier for Afghan households. The second model adds the log of household income to the list of regressors.

Looking first at the results for all immigrants (Regression 1), generally husband-wife immigrant households (either with or without children) have higher prospects of home ownership than other household types. Single person households and female lone parent households have the lowest probability of homeownership (coefficient of -1.13 and $-.73$ respectively). As expected, household income is an important determinant of home ownership as is the number of years in Canada, however, even after controlling for all other variables, Afghan households are less likely to be home owners. Indeed being in an Afghan household reduces the odds of owning by 35 percent even after controlling for total household income (Regression 2). The CMA of residence does appear to be an important factor in determining the probability of home ownership. In general, with the exception of living in Calgary, the probability of owning a dwelling is lower in the selected CMAs. In particular, home ownership is lower in Montreal (decreasing the odds ratio by almost half as compared to living outside the major CMAs).

Looking at the results for Afghan households (Regressions 3 and 4), there are few statistically significant effects aside from years in Canada and household income. However, even here, the very low coefficients for the constants suggests that home ownership for Afghans is low (-0.77 for the model without income and -11.59 for the model with income). CMA of residence can make a difference. Living in Edmonton or Calgary

Table 6. Partial regression coefficients for 4 models assessing the probability of being in an owner occupied dwelling.

		Regression 1			Regression 2			Regression 3			Regression 4		
		All Immigrant hhlds			Afghan hhlds								
		No income			Model w income			No income			Model w income		
		Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio	Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio	Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio	Coef	S.E.	Odds ratio
Observations		681,040			679,685			5,565			5,560		
R ²		0.17			0.20			0.16			0.22		
Official language	French	-0.45	0.02	0.63	-0.43	0.02	0.65	-0.23	0.39	0.80	-0.16	0.39	0.85
(English)	Eng & Fr.	-0.05	0.01	0.95	-0.11	0.01	0.89	0.30	0.09	1.35	0.25	0.10	1.28
	No official language	-0.09	0.02	0.92	0.20	0.02	1.22	-1.22	0.43	0.30	-0.67	0.43	0.51
Schooling	High school cert.	0.17	0.01	1.18	0.07	0.01	1.07	0.23	0.12	1.26	0.09	0.12	1.09
(no certificate)	Trades cert.	0.27	0.01	1.31	0.13	0.01	1.14	0.46	0.16	1.58	0.26	0.16	1.29
	College cert	0.48	0.01	1.62	0.26	0.01	1.29	0.77	0.12	2.15	0.42	0.13	1.52
	University deg	0.86	0.01	2.37	0.52	0.01	1.68	0.84	0.12	2.31	0.31	0.13	1.37
Number of people in hhld		0.09	0.00	1.09	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.19	0.02	1.21	0.04	0.03	1.05
Household structure	Single	-1.13	0.01	0.32	-0.79	0.01	0.45	-0.34	0.17	0.72	0.17	0.17	1.19
(male-female couple no kids)	Same sex couple no kids	-0.32	0.04	0.73	-0.49	0.04	0.61	0.01	0.77	1.01	-0.45	0.76	0.64
	Male-female couple w kids	0.14	0.01	1.15	0.19	0.01	1.21	0.11	0.12	1.12	0.25	0.13	1.28
	Same sex couple w kids	0.12	0.14	1.13	-0.01	0.14	0.99	-1.63	1.55	0.20	-1.11	0.96	0.33
	Male lone parent	-0.61	0.02	0.54	-0.50	0.02	0.61	-0.39	0.28	0.68	-0.28	0.30	0.75
	Female lone parent	-0.73	0.01	0.48	-0.54	0.01	0.59	-0.52	0.14	0.59	-0.34	0.14	0.71
Census Metropolitan Area	Montreal	-0.76	0.01	0.47	-0.68	0.01	0.51	-0.67	0.15	0.51	-0.73	0.15	0.48
(not in one of the CMAs)	Ottawa-Gatineau	-0.31	0.02	0.73	-0.33	0.02	0.72	-0.42	0.16	0.66	-0.38	0.17	0.69
	Toronto	-0.20	0.01	0.82	-0.20	0.01	0.82	-0.45	0.10	0.64	-0.38	0.10	0.69
	Hamilton	-0.18	0.02	0.84	-0.19	0.02	0.82	-0.06	0.21	0.94	-0.01	0.21	0.99
	Winnipeg	-0.17	0.02	0.85	-0.15	0.02	0.86	0.07	0.27	1.07	-0.09	0.29	0.92
	Calgary	0.29	0.02	1.34	0.14	0.02	1.15	0.61	0.15	1.84	0.34	0.15	1.40
	Edmonton	0.03	0.02	1.03	-0.13	0.02	0.88	0.47	0.19	1.60	0.18	0.20	1.20
	Vancouver	-0.10	0.01	0.91	-0.08	0.01	0.93	-0.39	0.13	0.68	-0.53	0.14	0.59
Afghan household		-0.57	0.03	0.57	-0.43	0.03	0.65						
Log of household income					0.66	0.01	1.94				1.20	0.09	3.32
Constant		-0.33	0.12	0.72	-6.20	0.17	0.00	-0.77	0.98	0.47	-11.59	1.95	0.00

Note: Comparison group in parentheses models also include 11 age groups for oldest hhld member and the maximum number of years in Canada for an immigrant in the household.

Source: 2016 Census confidential file.

increases the odds of owning a dwelling, while living in Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Toronto or Vancouver decreases it.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The goal of this paper was to provide an overview of research on the Afghan population in Canada, along with an assessment of labour force and housing tenure options using data from the 2016 Census of Canada. As noted earlier, between 1980 and 2015, almost 63 thousand Afghan immigrants arrived in Canada, the majority coming as refugees. About two-thirds of all Afghan immigrants arrived post 2000. This means that the Afghans are recent entrants relative to other immigrant groups in Canada.

In general, the literature on Afghan immigrants in Canada is sparse, often focusing on small samples during the initial settlement period. Overall, however, the findings point to Afghan immigrants in Canada facing substantive challenges with both settlement and integration into the labour market (e.g. Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Mata 2010; Nourpanah 2014; Steinbach 2010).

Findings from the data analysis in this paper generally uphold these conclusions, with some interesting caveats. Findings from Pendakur and Pendakur (2015) suggest that immigrant women, overall, fare worse than Canadian-born women in the labour market, with immigrant women who arrived later in life facing steeper earnings penalties than those born in Canada. However, those born in Canada with an Afghan heritage, regardless of gender, do better than their parents and often have better outcomes than immigrants in general. This is to be expected – they leave school with Canadian credentials, are fluent in an official language and are socialised in Canada. However, there are some provisos. First, based on the analysis of employment outcomes, it appears that Afghan women born in Canada are more successful at integrating into the labour market than their male counterparts. Canadian-born Afghan women are more likely to be working than immigrant women overall and have higher earnings. While Canadian-born Afghan men who are active in the labour market earn more than immigrant men, they are no more likely to be employed than immigrant men.

With respect to the labour market, the census metropolitan area of residence has uneven impacts across genders. Female Afghans have better employment prospects in Alberta CMAs, but there is no substantive impact for males. Living in Edmonton and Calgary appear to help the earnings of both male and female Afghans, however, living in Montreal has a substantial negative impact on male earnings. This latter finding is consistent with Pendakur and Pendakur (2015) who found that earnings penalties for male immigrants in general were higher in Montreal than in other CMAs.

Second, the analysis of home ownership probabilities suggests that Afghan households are substantially less likely to own a house as compared to immigrant households, even after controlling for income and other characteristics. At least part of the difference is likely a product of challenges faced in the labour market, however Marchand et al. (2014) points to the fact that Afghans have high rates of remittance payments. This could limit the ability to enter the home ownership market. Other possibilities include the relative recency of the Afghan immigrant population and higher costs of larger homes for larger families (see Sherrell 2010). Thus, the combination of family composition and the importance of sending money back to Afghanistan may act to limit options for

home ownership. Concomitantly, the negative impact of larger families may lessen over time for multigenerational households as households age. This is because, results from the analysis on home ownership suggest that increased household size results in higher rates of home ownership, possibly because there may be more workers in the household.

As the other articles in this collection suggest, the integration challenges faced by Afghan immigrants are not unique to Canada or even to other groups of refugees (see for example: Stempel and Alemi 2020; Gladwell et al. 2020). However, the time specificity and context of Afghan refugees, the bulk of whom arrived post-911 likely pose additional integration challenges that refugees from Vietnam perhaps did not (see Gisselquist 2020). As Hou (2020) points out, the Vietnamese refugee movement benefited from the creation of the Private Sponsorship Program, which allowed Canadians to actively take part in welcoming of this new group of immigrants. Afghan refugees arrived without the fanfare and without the same level of support. Indeed, the Canadian Council for Refugees argues that even prior to 1994, ninety per cent of private sponsorships involving Aghans were rejected (CCR 1994). Thus, where Vietnamese refugees were more likely to be welcomed, those from Afghan faced a tougher initial integration process.

This study then, serves to reinforce the fact that Afghan immigrants living in Canada continue to face both social and economic challenges. However, it should be noted that the situation appears brighter for their children and are possibly particularly bright for their daughters.

Notes

1. Source: www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_PRAdmiss_0004_E.xls
2. Census Metropolitan Areas are major cities with a population of at least 100,000 of which 50 thousand or more must live in the core (Statistics Canada 2014a: Appendix A).
3. Age 20–64, not in school, in a household of less than 14 persons, and not a farm operator.
4. The index of dissimilarity compares two distributions. In this case, the index reports the proportion of people in a selected distribution who would have to change levels of schooling in order to match the distribution of the comparison group (immigrants). The index does not identify the direction of difference (i.e.: would levels of schooling have to increase or decrease) but does say how close the distributions are (zero=exactly the same, 1=completely different). The formula is as follows:

$$ID = \frac{1}{2} \sum |x_i - y_i|$$

where x_i is the proportion of the base group with a given level of schooling, and y_i is the proportion of the comparison group with same level of schooling

5. Exceptions incluMarchand et al. (2014) who drew upon official national and international statistics for the development of their profile of the Afghan diaspora around the world, as well as Soroor and Popal (2005), who used a mix of surveys, interviews and focus groups involving up to 300 people and 16 agencies to investigate the mental health needs of Afghan youth (aged 12–18) in Toronto.
6. Hiebert (2015), for example, used 2006 Census roll-ups for his study of immigrant enclaves in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. As such, the Afghan population was rolled up into Statistic Canada's grouping 'West Asian' which includes immigrants from number of countries including Iran, Armenia, Afghanistan and Turkey (Statistics Canada 2007).
7. Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Hamilton, Moncton, Montréal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Québec, Regina, Saskatoon, St. John's, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg.

8. The 2016 Census includes identifiers as to whether someone is active in the labour force (either employed or looking for work) as compared to not being employed, and not active in the labour force. These controls were not used because it is not a standard control for international research and because it omits people who have given up looking for work, but would work if employment was available.
9. The regressions also control for age, years in Canada, immigration intake category, official language knowledge, marital status, CMA of residence, number of children and level of schooling.
10. Immigrant women born outside Afghanistan, whose parents are born in Afghanistan have statistically, the same probability of being employed as those born in Afghanistan.
11. As noted by Sherrell (2010), Afghan families have challenges finding housing because families tend to be large. Given the impact of the number of children on employment probabilities, it is likely that on average, Afghan mothers are also less likely to work because of child rearing responsibilities.
12. This may be because the vast majority of Afghans entered Canada as family or refugee immigrants, leaving little room for statistically different results between independent category Afghan women and the other two categories.
13. The coefficient of log values are roughly equivalent to percent differences for values of about -0.20 to +0.20. Outside of those bounds percent and coefficient values diverge. I have provided percent values where the coefficient values are substantially different from the percent value.
14. Tests of employment probabilities and income differentials which included the entire Canadian-born population suggest that Canadian-born Afghan women have statistically the same probability of working and similar earnings to those of the rest of the Canadian-born population. However, Canadian-born Afghan men have a much lower probability of employment (coefficient of -0.44) and lower earnings (coefficient of -0.32). These results are available on request.
15. For the purposes of this analysis, band housing (housing on indigenous reserves which is owned collectively) has been dropped.

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