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Gender Variations in the Socioeconomic Attainment of Immigrants in Canada

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Abstract

Using data from the 2001 Census of Canada, this study examines gender variations in the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants in Canada aged 30-40. Multivariate regression analysis was carried out to test the research hypotheses. In general, the study finds that male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 are likely to have higher educational attainment, higher occupational prestige and higher income attainment than female immigrants of the same age group, even after controlling for human capital variables. A similar gender differential pattern in socioeconomic attainment also prevails across various sub-groups of immigrants based on marital status and region of birth. The study finds evidence in support of the theory of discrimination rather than the theory of human capital, and it explores the possible implications of these findings.

Keywords: Gender, Socioeconomic Attainment, Immigrants, Canada.

1. Introduction

A substantial number of past research have examined the differential pattern of socioeconomic attainment between women and men (e.g., Fernandez-Mateo, 2009; Blau and Kahn 2008; Fuller, 2008; Correll, 2004; Petersen and Saporta, 2004; Bielby, 2000; and Mincer, 1978). However, scant attention has been given on the gender specific differential pattern of socioeconomic attainment among immigrants in Canada. The present study is a modest attempt to examine gender differences in the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants in Canada. The attainments were measured in terms of education, occupation, and income using data from 2001 Census of Canada. Immigrants aged 30-40 in 2001 have been selected for the study. The age group is considered as an important juncture for immigrants' integration into the labour market.

Among various theories developed to explain the differential pattern of socioeconomic attainment, three broad theoretical perspectives are widely used in contemporary literature. First, human-capital theory, which is considered as an extension of Adam Smith's explanation of wage differentials, who argues that individual incomes vary according to the amount of investment in forms of human capital such as education, knowledge, training, and skills (Becker, 1975; Zellner, 1975; Polachek, 1981). However, the theory of discrimination suggests that individual incomes vary because of labour market discrimination, which may involve paying different wages to equally productive workers with different personal characteristics such as sex, age, religion, or nationality (Petersen and Saporta, 2004; Bielby, 2000; England et al., 1998; and Becker, 1957). Consistent with this theory of discrimination, the third theoretical perspective focuses on the idea that the term 'gender' is socially constructed by the male-dominated capitalistic society with a view to ensuring the hegemony of males over their female counterparts, which eventually leads to the occupational segregation of women into low-paying jobs (Acker, 1980; and Fox and Fox, 1986; Nasreen, 1998).

Kollehlon (1989) studied the differences in occupational status attainment between men and women and found that men were heavily concentrated at the very top and bottom of the occupational hierarchy, whereas a significantly higher percentage of women were employed in low-status occupations. The author concluded that women in general were relatively disadvantaged in terms of socioeconomic attainment, because of their marital and childbearing responsibilities. Other studies that have found significant differences in occupational status between men and women include Fernandez-Mateo (2009); Castilla (2008); Correll (2004); Barron et al. (1993); and Beilby and Baron (1986).

Boyd (1984) examined the occupational status of Canadian female immigrant employees in relation to the status displayed by native and foreign born men using data from the wage and salary labour force age 25-64 from 1973 Canadian Mobility Study. In general, Boyd (1984) found that immigrant women have occupational statuses which were lower on the average than that of men. In connection with this, Chattopadhyay (2000) found that males were advantaged in terms of socioeconomic attainment as compared to females. These findings are consistent with the neoclassical theory of family migration decision, which suggests that the net gain from family migration favours males over female because of their superior earning power (Mincer, 1978). Similar findings were also reported by Featherman and Houser (1976), who examined sexual inequalities and socioeconomic achievement in the United States. In general, they argued that although females had the same levels of educational and occupational achievement, the ratio of female to male earnings had declined in the United States over time. This suggests that gender differences in socioeconomic attainment are common not only in the developing world but also in the developed world.

Fuller (2008) examined the consequences of migration for income inequalities between and among women and men in the United States using multilevel modeling and data from the 1979 to 2002 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Fuller (2008)

found significant differences in income attainment between women and men. In addition, the author found that women who were married or had children were more disadvantaged that their respective counterparts. Blau and Kahn (2008) attributed this difference in income attainment to several gender-specific factors, including gender differences in qualifications, labour market treatment, and overall wage structure.

Based on previous research, a series of hypotheses regarding gender differences in socioeconomic attainment across various groups were tested in this research. Of principal importance are the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Male immigrants aged 30-40 in Canada in 2001 had higher educational attainment than female immigrants of the same age group.

Hypothesis 2: Male immigrants aged 30-40 in Canada in 2001 had higher occupational prestige than female immigrants of the same age group.

Hypothesis 3: Male immigrants aged 30-40 in Canada in 2001 had higher income attainment than female immigrants of the same age group.

2. Data and Method

This study was conducted using data from 2001 Census of Canada Public Use Microdata File (PUMF). The file contains information on immigrants' age, sex, marital status, region of birth, language proficiency, education, occupation and income. All of these variables are important for this study. Along with univariate and bivariate analyses, multivariate statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data and to test the research hypotheses. Using the SPSS program of data analysis, Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression models were applied to determine gender differentials in the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants in Canada.

A dummy variable of gender (1=male; 0=female) was created to enter this variable into OLS regression models. To apply marital status to OLS regression models, a series of dummy variables were created as follows: married-dummy (1=married, 0=else); single-dummy (1=single, 0=else); divorce-dummy (1=divorce, 0=else). "Divorce-dummy" was used as the reference category in each regression model.

Based on the available data in the 2001 census file, region of birth was recoded into following categories: (1) born in Asia (West central Asia and the Middle East, India, other Southern Asia, Eastern and South-East Asia: China, Hong Kong, Philippines, Vietnam, and other East); (2) born in Europe (United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, France, and Greece, Poland, USSR-former European compone, Yugoslavia former, and other Europe); (3) born in Africa (Eastern Africa, and other Africa); (4) born in the USA; and (5) born in other regions (Central America, South America and Caribbean, Oceania, and other). The category of "born in other regions" was used as the reference category in all regression

models.

The Census 2001 file classifies knowledge of official languages into four categories: (1) English only, (2) French only, (3) both English and French, and (4) neither English nor French. An ordinal variable was created assigning immigrants' proficiency in official languages scores from 0 to 3 (0 = neither English nor French, 1 = French only, 2 = English only, 3 = both English and French) to fit the variable into OLS regression models. Thus, the higher the score on this variable, the higher is the language proficiency.

The variable of education (total years of schooling) was recoded by taking the mid- points of each group in order to make the variable continuous so that it could be used in OLS regression models. In addition, total years of schooling were recoded into three categories for bivariate analysis: primary education (up to 8 years); secondary education (9 to 12 years); and post-secondary education (13 years or more).

The 2001 Census of Canada combines information on occupation into 14 categories which cannot be directly used in OLS regression models. For this reason, an ordinal variable of occupational prestige was created using a ranking for each category. Higher values were assigned for higher occupational prestige. The ranking based on occupational prestige from high to low was as follows: (13) professionals, (12) senior managers, (11) middle and other managers, (10) semi-professionals and technicians, (9) supervisors, (8) crafts and trade supervisors, (7) administrative and senior clerical personnel, (6) skilled crafts and trade workers, (5) skilled sales and service personnel, (4) clerical, intermediate sales and service personnel, (3) semi-skilled manual workers, (2) other sales and service personnel, and (1) other manual workers. In addition, occupational prestige was recoded into three categories for bivariate analysis: high prestige (all professionals); medium prestige (all senior managers, supervisors, and crafts and trade supervisors, semi professionals and technicians); and low prestige (middle and other managers, administrative and senior clerical personnel, skilled crafts and trade workers, skilled sales and service personnel, clerical, intermediate sales and service personnel, semi-skilled manual workers, other sales and service personnel, and other manual workers).

Income was already a continuous variable in the Census file. However, the natural logarithm of total individual income was used in the OLS regression models to overcome the problem of negative values for the intercept. Moreover, for the purpose of descriptive analysis, total income was recoded into three categories: low income ($0.00 to $29,999); medium income ($30,000 to $59,999); and high income ($60,000 or more).

The regression equations used to test the hypotheses were as follows:

(1) $Y_i = a + b_1*\text{Gender} + \sum b_j*Xij + e_{ij}$

Where, Yi = education/year of schooling for individual case i; a = the intercept term (the

expected average year of schooling when all variables in the model are set to 0); b1 = the slope coefficient denoting the effect of unit change in Gender on education; $\sum b_j*Xij$ = all other slope and predictor variables (controls) in the model (i.e., marital status, age, region of birth, and language proficiency); eij = an error term (i.e., unexplained variance in education).

(2) $Y_i = a + b_1*Gender + \sum b_j*Xij + e_{ij}$

Where, Yi = occupational prestige for case i; a = the intercept term (the expected average occupational prestige when all variables in the model are set to 0); b1 = the slope coefficient denoting the effect of unit change in Gender on occupational prestige; $\sum b_j*Xij$ = all other slope and predictor variables (controls) in the model (i.e., marital status, age, region of birth, language proficiency, and education); eij = an error term (i.e., unexplained variance in occupation).

(3) $Y_i = a + b_1*Gender + \sum b_j*Xij + e_{ij}$

Where, Yi = personal income for case i; a = the intercept term (the expected average income when all variables in the model are set to 0); b1 = the slope coefficient denoting the effect of unit change in Gender on income; $\sum b_j*Xij$ = all other slope and predictor variables (controls) in the model (i.e., marital status, age, region of birth, language proficiency, education, and occupational prestige); eij = an error term (i.e., unexplained variance in income).

An important objective of this study is to determine gender differences pattern of the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants in Canada. The following formula was used to determine whether differences between regression slopes for male immigrants and female immigrants were statistically significant: $t = (b_1 - b_2) / \sqrt{(SE_1^2 + SE_2^2)}$, where b_1 = regression slope for male immigrants, b_2 = regression slope for female immigrants, SE_1 = standard error of the slope b_1, and SE_2 = standard error of the slope b_2. The interaction effect was considered to be statistically significant if they obtained t-value was greater than 1.96 ($p<0.05$). In that case, a higher value of the regression coefficients is associated with the higher socioeconomic attainment for that sample group.

2.1 Sample Characteristics

The total number of immigrants aged 30-40 in 2001 in Canada selected for this study was 938,013. Table 1 shows that 52.1 per cent of these immigrants were female and 47.9 per cent were male. A vast majority (73.1%) were married; 21.6 per cent were single; and 5.3 per cent were divorced. The majority of these immigrants were born in Asia (43.2%); 29.9 per cent were born in Europe; 15.7 per cent were born in other regions; 7.2 per cent were born in Africa; and 4.4 per cent were born in the United States. A substantial number of immigrants (81.2%) were proficient only in English. However, 13.6 per cent of immigrants were proficient in both English and French.

Table 1: Sample characteristics:

Variables	Percentage	(Frequency)
Gender		
Male	52.1	(488,685)
Female	47.9	(449,328)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)
Marital status		
Married	73.1	(685,649)
Single	21.6	(202,512)
Divorced	5.3	(49,852)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)
Region of birth		
Asia	43.2	(405,217)
Europe	29.5	(276,975)
Africa	7.2	(67,205)
United States	4.4	(41,448)
Other foreign born	15.7	(147,168)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)
Language proficiency		
English only	81.2	(761,459)
French only	2.9	(26,835)
Both English and French	13.6	(127,874)
Neither English nor French	2.3	(21,845)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)
Education		
Primary education	4.1	(38,307)
Secondary education	24.6	(230,925)
Post secondary education	71.3	(668,781)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)
Occupation		
Low prestige	57.9	(543,505)
Medium prestige	21.9	(205,379)
High prestige	20.2	(189,129)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)
Income		
Low income	51.8	(486,141)
Middle income	36.2	(339,160)
High income	12.0	(112,712)
Total	100.0	(N = 938,013)

Despite a higher prevalence of post-secondary education (71.3%) among immigrants, the

majority of them (57.9%) were employed in occupations associated with lower prestige. Only 20.2 per cent of immigrants have high-prestige occupations. Concerning income, Table 1 shows that the majority of immigrants (51.8%) had low income, whereas only 12.0 per cent of immigrants had high income.

3. Results

3.1 Bivariate Analyses

3.1.1 Association between gender and educational attainment

Female immigrants had higher educational attainment than male immigrants in Canada in 2001. For example, Table 2 shows that 71.7 per cent of female immigrants had post-secondary education as compared to 70.9 per cent of male immigrants. However, male immigrants had a slightly higher percentage (24.8%) of secondary education than their female counterparts (24.5%). Overall, Table 2 shows that the differences in educational attainment between male and female immigrants are statistically significant (*Chi-Square=215.277, df=2, p<0.001).*

Table 2: Association between Gender and Educational attainment

Educational attainment	Male		Female	
	Percentage	(Frequency)	Percentage	(Frequency)
Primary	4.4	(21,286)	3.8	(17,021)
Secondary	24.8	(120,952)	24.5	(109,973)
Post secondary	70.9	(346,447)	71.7	(322,334)
Total	100.0	(488,685)	100.0	(449,328)

Chi-Square=215.277, df=2, p<0.001

3.1.2 Association between gender and occupational prestige

Male immigrants had higher occupational prestige than female immigrants in Canada in 2001. For example, Table 3 shows that male immigrants had relatively higher percentage of high occupational prestige (21.1%) than did female immigrants (19.2%). Moreover, female immigrants had a higher percentage of low occupational prestige (61.9%) than their male counterparts (54.3%). In general, the findings of chi-square test in Table 3 show that the differences in occupational prestige between male immigrants and female immigrants are statistically significant (*Chi-Square=6335.209, df=2, p<0.001).*

Table 3: Association between Gender and Occupational prestige

Occupational prestige	Male	Female

	Percentage	(Frequency)	Percentage	(Frequency)
Low	54.3	(265,202)	61.9	(278,304)
Medium	24.6	(120,447)	18.9	(84,932)
High	21.1	(103,036)	19.2	(86,092)
Total	100.0	(488,685)	100.0	(449,328)

Chi-Square=6335.209, df=2, p<0.001

3.1.3 Association between gender and income attainment

Concerning income, male immigrants had significantly higher income attainment than their female counterparts in Canada in 2001. For example, Table 4 shows that 17.2 per cent of male immigrants had high income compared to only 6.4 per cent of female immigrants. Moreover, a vast majority of female immigrants (61.6%) had low income as compared to male immigrants (42.8%). Thus, the differences in income attainment between male immigrants and female immigrants in Canada are statistically significant (*Chi-Square=42777.894, df=2, p<0.001).*

Table 4: Association between Gender and Income attainment

Income attainment	Male		Female	
	Percentage	(Frequency)	Percentage	(Frequency)
Low	42.8	(209,391)	61.6	(276,751)
Medium	39.9	(195,220)	32.0	(143,940)
High	17.2	(84,074)	6.4	(28,637)
Total	100.0	(488,685)	100.0	(449,328)

Chi-Square=42777.894, df=2, p<0.001

3.2 Multivariate Analyses

3.2.1 Gender differences in educational attainment

Gender was used as the main independent variable in the full model (Table 5) to predict the educational attainment of immigrants in Canada aged 30-40. The control variables of marital status, age, region of birth and language proficiency were included in the full model. This model explains 7.8 per cent of variation (R^2 = 0.078) and is statistically significant *(F=8800.307, df=9 & 938,004, p<0.01)*. The subsequent regression models in Table 5 for males and females were introduced to examine the gender differences in educational attainment among immigrants in Canada. The regression models for male immigrants and female immigrants in Table 5 explain 7.4 per cent and 8.8 per cent of variation respectively.

Table 5: Regression models for gender differential in educational attainment

Variables	Full model B (SE)	Male B (SE)	Female B (SE)
Gender			
Male	0.014*	****	****
Female (R)	(0.007)		
Marital status			
Married	0.165**	0.135** (0.025)	0.172**[1]
Single	(0.016)	0.164** (0.026)	(0.020)
Divorced (R)	0.416**		0.700**[1]
	(0.017)		(0.022)
Age	-0.058**	-0.053**	-0.067**[1]
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Region of birth			
Born in Asia	0.643**	0.798**[1]	0.502** (0.014)
Born in Europe	(0.010)	(0.015)	0.424** (0.015)
Born in Africa	0.535**	0.677**[1]	0.739** (0.022)
Born in USA	(0.011)	(0.016)	1.136**[1]
Other foreign born (R)	1.388**	1.968**[1]	(0.024)
	(0.016)	(0.022)	
	1.118**	1.100** (0.028)	
	(0.019)		
Language proficiency	1.672**	1.602** (0.010)	1.734**[1]
	(0.007)		(0.010)
Constant	12.411	12.313	12.659
R^2	0.078	0.074	0.088
Model F	8800.307**	4896.085**	5444.874**
Df	9 & 938004	8 & 488,677	8 & 449,320
N	938,013	488,685	449,328

** significant at 0.05 level* *** significant at 0.01 level.*

[1]Difference between slopes of education (column 3 and column 4) is statistically significant (t-test, $p<0.05$).

The full model in Table 5 shows that male immigrants aged 30-40 in 2001 had higher educational attainment than female immigrants in the same as group after controlling for marital status, age, region of birth and language proficiency. The comparison of educational

attainment in Table 5 shows that male immigrants who were married had lower educational attainment than their respective female counterparts. This is also true for male immigrants who are single as compared to their respective female counterparts (Table 5). Male immigrants born in Asia, Europe, and Africa had higher educational attainment than their respective female counterparts (Table 5). However, immigrants born in the United States are an exception in this case.

3.2.2 Gender differences in occupational prestige

The effect of gender on the occupational prestige of immigrants aged 30-40 in 2001 is shown in Table 6. Marital status, age, region of birth, language proficiency and education were used as control variables in the full model. This model explains 22.4 per cent of variation (R^2=0.224) and is statistically significant (*F=27076.549, df=10 & 938,003, p<0.01*). The subsequent regression models for male and female immigrants were introduced in order to determine whether gender differences in occupational prestige were statistically significant. The regression models for males only and females only explain 22.8 per cent and 21.7 per cent of variation respectively (Table 6).

Table 6: Regression models for gender differential in occupational prestige

Variables	Full model		Male		Female	
	B	(SE)	B	(SE)	B	(SE)
Gender						
Male	0.423**		****		****	
Female (R)	(0.008)					
Marital status						
Married	0.179**		0.353**[1]		0.054**	(0.023)
Single	(0.018)		(0.028)		0.172*	(0.026)
Divorced (R)	0.254**		0.394**[1]			
	(0.020)		(0.030)			
Age	-0.004	(0.001)	-0.019**		0.012**[1]	
			(0.002)		(0.002)	
Region of birth						
Born in Asia	0.175**		0.481**[1]		-0.139**	
Born in Europe	(0.012)		(0.017)		(0.017)	
Born in Africa	0.827**		0.937**[1]		0.737**	(0.018)
Born in USA	(0.013)		(0.018)		0.282**	(0.026)
Other foreign born (R)	0.311**		0.375**[1]		1.405**[1]	
	(0.018)		(0.025)		(0.029)	
	1.338**		1.245**	(0.032)		
	(0.022)					

Language proficiency	0.470** (0.008)	0.490**[1] (0.012)	0.451** (0.012)
Education	0.554** (0.001)	0.556** (0.002)	0.550** (0.002)
Constant	1.827	1.274	2.013
R^2	0.224	0.228	0.217
Model F	27076.549**	16048.487**	13808.270**
Df	10 & 938,003	9 & 488,676	9 & 449,319
N	938,013	488,685	449,328

** significant at 0.05 level* *** significant at 0.01 level.*

[1]Difference between slopes of occupation (column 3 and column 4) is statistically significant (t-test, $p<0.05$).

The full model in Table 6 shows that male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 had higher occupational prestige than female immigrants in the same age group, even after controlling for marital status, age, region of birth, language proficiency, and education. A comparison of occupational prestige shows that male immigrants who were married had higher occupational prestige than female immigrants who were married. Similarly, male immigrants who were single had higher occupational prestige than female immigrants who were single (Table 6). In addition, male immigrants born in Asia, Europe, and Africa had higher occupational prestige than their respective female counterparts (Table 6). However, this is not true for male immigrants born in the United States.

3.2.3 Gender differences in income attainment

The effect of gender on the income attainment of immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 is examined in Table 7. The control variables of marital status, age region of birth, education, and occupation prestige were used in the full model. This model explains 10.4 per cent of variation (R^2=0.104) and is statistically significant (*F=9899.345, df=11 & 938,002, p<0.01*). The regression models for males and females, shown in Table 7, were introduced to determine gender differences in income attainment, which explain 9.6 per cent and 7.7 per cent of variation respectively.

Table 7: Regression models for gender differential in income attainment

Variables	Full model B (SE)	Male B (SE)	Female B (SE)
Gender			

Male	0.280**	****	****
Female (R)	(0.002)		
Marital status			
Married	-0.009**	0.087**[1]	-0.067**
Single	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Divorced (R)	-0.058**	0.069**[1]	-0.008
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Age	0.021**	0.021** (0.001)	0.020**
	(0.001)		(0.001)
Region of birth			
Born in Asia	-0.110**	-0.155**	-0.057**[1]
Born in Europe	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Born in Africa	0.111**	0.161**[1]	0.064**
Born in USA	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Other foreign born (R)	-0.138**	-0.210**	-0.048**[1]
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)
	0.148**	0.211**[1] (0.008)	0.107**
	(0.005)		(0.007)
Language proficiency	0.070**	0.103**[1]	0.042** (0.003)
	(0.002)	(0.003)	
Education	0.010**	0.013**[1]	0.005** (0.001)
	(0.001)	(0.001)	
Occupation prestige	0.050**	0.049**	0.052** (0.001)
	(0.001)	(0.001)	
Constant	8.537	8.653	8.718
R^2	0.104	0.096	0.077
Model F	9899.345**	5210.973**	3740.687**
Df	11 & 938,002	10 & 488,675	10 & 449,318
N	938,013	488,685	449,328

** significant at 0.05 level* *** significant at 0.01 level.*

[1]Difference between slopes of income (column 3 and column 4) is statistically significant (t-test, $p<0.05$).

The full model in Table 7 shows that male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 had higher income attainment than female immigrants in the same group after controlling for marital status, age, region of birth, language proficiency, education and occupational prestige. The comparison of income attainment in Table 7 shows that male immigrants who were

married had higher income attainment than their respective female counterparts. Similarly, male immigrants who were single had higher income attainment than female immigrants who were single (Table 7). Male immigrants born in Europe, and the United States had higher income than their respective female counterparts (Table 7). However, immigrants born in Asia and Africa are exceptions in this case.

4. Discussion

Regarding education, I found that male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 had higher educational attainment than female immigrants in the same age group after controlling for marital status, age, region of birth and language proficiency (Full model in Table 5). Moreover, male immigrants born in Asia, Europe, and Africa had higher educational attainment than their respective female counterparts (Table 5). These findings clearly demonstrate that female immigrants are disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment as compared to their male counterparts. It should be mentioned that a vast majority of these immigrants obtained their education in their country of origin, which suggests that significant differences in educational attainment between males and females also prevail in the region of Asia, Africa, and Europe. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Penner (2008), Chottopadhyay (2000), and Kollehlon (1989). Penner (2008) attributed the gender differences in educational attainment to macrosocial factors (e.g., culture, parents' attitude, formal education, peer effects, etc.) rather than biological factors.

Concerning occupational prestige, the findings in the Table 6 shows that male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 were likely to have higher occupational prestige compared to female immigrants of the same age group, even after controlling for marital status, age, region of birth, language proficiency, and education. This is also true across various groups based on marital status and region of birth. Similar findings were also reported by Fernandez-Mateo (2009), Castilla (2008), Petersen and Saporta (2004), Browne and Misra (2003), and Kollehlon (1989). Browne and Misra (2003) found that wage inequality was an important determinant for the lower occupational prestige of female immigrants as compared to male immigrants. They argued that structural discrimination and gender stereotyping further deteriorated the position of female immigrants in the labour market.

Net of marital status, age, region of birth, education, and occupational prestige, male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 had higher income attainment than female immigrants of the same group. Similar differences in income attainment between male and female immigrants were found across various groups based on marital status and region of birth (Table 7). This can be explained by the effect of the *glass ceiling*, which suggests that gender identity works as an important impediment for women to obtain high-prestige occupations. For this reason, despite similar qualifications, fewer women than men have high income jobs (e.g., Cohen, 2007; Budig, 2006; and Cohen, 2007). Overall, these findings on income attainment are consistent with previous research conducted by Kalev (2009), Blau and Kahn (2008), Fuller (2008), Leicht (2008), and Christie-Mizell (2006). In general, the

findings of these studies show that females are disadvantaged in terms of income attainment as compared to their male counterparts despite having the same formal education and skills. In this connection, Christie-Mizell (2006) argued that one important determinant of reduced earnings of female immigrants was the traditional attitudes regarding the role of women. In many cases, on both the individual and societal levels, women's participation in the labour force is discouraged using various discriminatory mechanisms.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that male immigrants in Canada aged 30-40 in 2001 had higher educational attainment, higher occupational prestige, and higher income attainment than female immigrants in the same age group. These differences in socioeconomic attainment between male immigrants and female immigrants prevailed, even after controlling for human capital variables. Hence, it can be concluded that various social mechanisms work as barriers against higher socioeconomic attainment by female immigrants in Canada.

Regarding the relevance of various theoretical perspectives introduced at the very beginning of this study, no evidence is observed in support of the theory of human capital, which attributed gender inequality to various human capital variables such as education, knowledge, and skills. However, the findings of this study are consistent with the theory of discrimination, which suggests that gender inequality is the manifestation of various forms of formal and informal discrimination introduced by male-dominated society. Such discrimination has far reaching consequences on social development in general and on women's empowerment in particular.

An important limitation of this study is that only a single indicator of occupational prestige was used to examine the relative performance of female immigrants in the labour market. However, additional information about the internal structure and segregation of the labour market may further explain how gender discrimination influences the earning potential of female immigrants as compared to their male counterparts. In addition, future research should focus on the specific social mechanisms through which gender discrimination affects the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants.

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