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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 2011 National Household Survey and 2009 Longitudinal Immigration Database, this paper adds to these findings, pointing to poor labour force outcomes for most Afghan immigrants as compared to other immigrants. Home ownership probabilities are found to be concomitantly poor. Sons of Afghan immigrants fare better than their fathers, but no better than other immigrant men. However, the daughters of Afghan immigrants fare much better both in terms of employment probabilities and earnings as compared to other immigrant women.

Keywords: Afghan immigrants, Canada, labour force participation, housing tenure

JEL classification: J15

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1 Introduction

From 1995 to 2011, over 45,000 Afghan citizens were landed as permanent residents in Canada, making them, for a short time, one of the top five refugee groups in Canada. In 2011 there were about 42,000 people born in Afghanistan living in Canada. An additional 21,000 had Afghan parents or reported Afghan as an ethnic origin (Statistics Canada 2011).

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 (Bevelander and Pendakur 2014; Marchand et al. 2014; Mata 2010).

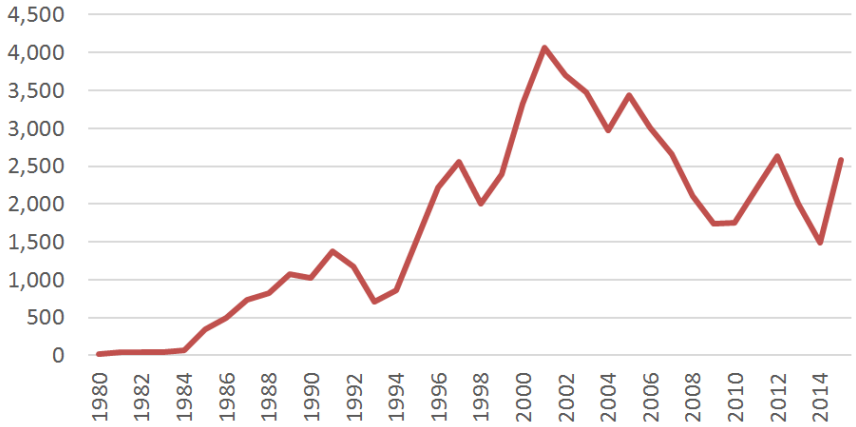
The goals of this paper are to review the research done on Afghans in Canada and then to assess labour force and housing tenure outcomes for this group, drawing on the most recently available official national-level data, Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), as well as the 2009 Canadian Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). Following this introduction, the paper provides a brief profile of the Afghan population living in Canada and then summarizes the literature. After building 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. This last analysis points to the ability and willingness of Afghan households to purchase dwellings as compared to renting.

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 fare better than the immigrant population overall.

2 Profile of the Afghan population in Canada

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 rapidly, hitting a high of 4,067 in 2001. After 2001, intake from Afghanistan declined but never went below 1,400 persons. Thus, Afghans are a relatively recent group entering Canada.

Figure 1: Immigrant intake to Canada from Afghanistan, 1980–2015



Source: Author, based on Government of Canada Permanent Residents—Ad Hoc IRCC dataset.

Intake records from Citizenship Immigration and Refugees Canada show that nearly 54,000 people with citizenship from Afghanistan entered Canada from 1980 to 2011; however, it is possible that not everyone stayed in Canada and that Afghans arrived via different channels. Results in Table 1, drawn from the 2011 NHS, identify 42,110 permanent residents born in Afghanistan living in Canada. Almost 8,000 people with Afghan parents were born outside Afghanistan, but not in Canada, and almost 14,000 Canadian-born people are ethnically Afghan. This means there are almost 64,000 persons who are Afghan by ethnicity living in Canada.

Table 1: Permanent resident Afghan population by sex, Canada, 2011

	Female	Male	Total
Total	31,610	32,125	63,735
Born in Afghanistan	20,825	21,285	42,110
Parents born in Afghanistan, but not born in Canada	3,830	4,075	7,905
Ethnic Afghan born in Canada	6,955	6,765	13,720

Source: Author, based on 2011 National Household Survey confidential file.

As is the case for other non-francophone immigrant populations, about half of Canada's Afghan population live in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area[1] (CMA), and about 40 per cent live in the CMAs of Montreal, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver. Montreal is home to almost 5,000 immigrants born in Afghanistan, and Vancouver has 3,425 immigrants born in Afghanistan. Only about 10 per cent of the Afghan population live outside these CMAs.

Table 2 points to the fact that levels of schooling are lower than is the case for all immigrants. This table shows the schooling distribution of the population 15 years and older who are either immigrants or one of the Afghan populations of interest (Afghan by place of birth, Afghan by place of birth of parents but not born in Canada, or Afghans by ethnicity born in Canada). Results in this table show that, in general, the Afghan population has a lower level of schooling than is the case for all immigrants. Where 18 per cent of all immigrants to Canada do not have any schooling certificate, and 36 per cent have a university degree, the equivalent figures for immigrants born in Afghanistan are 30 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. The distribution is somewhat poorer for

[1] Census Metropolitan Areas are major cities with a population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core (Statistics Canada 2014a: Appendix A).

those not born in Afghanistan or Canada, with almost 40 per cent having no certificate. Schooling levels for Afghans born in Canada are also low compared to the rest of the Canadian-born population. However, this may at least in part be because they are on average much younger than the foreign-born population and may not have finished their schooling.

Table 2: Highest certificate for selected groups, population age 15+

	All immigrants	Afghan population		
		Born in Afghanistan	Not born in Afghanistan or Canada	Born in Canada
Total	6,280,423	40,270	4,375	2,355
No certificate	18%	30%	39%	48%
Highschool certificate	23%	33%	34%	35%
Post-secondary certificate.	23%	18%	13%	8%
University degree	36%	19%	14%	9%

Note: permanent residents only.

Source: Author, based on 2011 National Household Survey confidential file.

The 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. The data analysis in Section 5 will assess these possibilities.

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).[2] 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 a few exceptions (e.g., Bevelander and Pendakur 2014; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Khanlou et al. 2008; Mata 2010; Sherrell 2010), such studies tend not to disaggregate results for Afghan immigrants (e.g., Hiebert 2015; Hynie et al. 2011, 2013; Shakya et al. 2010a, 2010b; Simich et al. 2003), or indeed for any specific immigrant group (e.g., Painter 2013; Schellenberg and Maheux 2008).[3] This is unfortunate for the purpose of this study, because as Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) and Mata

[2] Exceptions include Marchand 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.

[3] 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 a number of countries including Iran, Armenia, Afghanistan, and Turkey (Statistics Canada 2007).

(2010) show, there can be significant differences in outcomes between (and within) differing immigrant groups.

The literature that does present discrete findings for the Afghan population, while small, provides a wide range of perspectives on the population. 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 et al. 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 (GARs) and asylum seekers (e.g., Bevelander and Pendakur 2014; Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Dossa 2006a 2006b; Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2010; Nourpanah 2014; Sherrel 2010; Simich et al. 2003).

The 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 (Hynie et al. 2011, 2013; Khanlou et al. 2008; Shakya et al. 2010a, 2012b; Soroor and Popal 2005), Kitchener-Waterloo (Bezanson 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 et al. 2011; Khanlou et al. 2008; Kissoon 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 Canada's (2011) programme evaluation covers all of Canada with the exclusion of Québec. 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 refugees in Canada, Afghans remain a relatively small group in the Canadian context. In 2006, for example, there were 36,000 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 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 et al. 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 GARs 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 following September 11, 2001, high costs associated with (often) single parenthood and large families, and challenges of getting around via public transportation (e.g., Dossa 2006a, 2006b; Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2010; 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). 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 et al. (2010b), who looked at the mental health issues faced by, but did not disaggregate findings for, Afghan, Colombian, Sudanese, and Tamil youth in Toronto).

The literature also reveals studies aimed at 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 Bezanson (2003) argue that Afghan families face particular difficulties. Sherrell (2010) conducted 20 key informant interviews and 80 interviews with GARs and asylum claimants in Vancouver and Winnipeg from Afghanistan, Sudan, Mexico, and Somalia. She found that place, service levels, and legal status are recognizable 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)

One outcome found by Sherrell (2010: 53) was that Afghan GARs, more than other groups, were living in overcrowded conditions (over 70 per cent of Afghan participants had six or more persons in their households) as they were sharing housing in order to cope. Bezanson (2003), looking at the housing arrangements of 15 recently arrived Afghan households in Kitchener-Waterloo, also found that income and large family size presented challenges for housing.

Simich et al. (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 et al. 2003: 882)

Studies by Nourpanah (2014) in Halifax, Bezanson (2003) in Kitchener-Waterloo, and Khanlou et al. (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.[4] The study included approximately 16,700 individuals with Afghan origins (8,400 females, 8,300 males) among 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 among 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. In 2005 Afghan men had annual average wages of CA$20,755, while Afghan women earned CA$14,746. The annual average employment income for all Canadians was CA$40,991 for men and CA$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 GARs. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2011: 46) found that refugees born in Afghanistan had 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 Québec).

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, 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

[4] Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Hamilton, Moncton, Montréal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Québec, Regina, Saskatoon, St. John's, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, and Winnipeg.

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). As well, as shown by Pendakur and Pendakur (2015), earnings differentials faced by immigrants vary by country of origin.

4 Method

The central goal of the data analysis in this paper is to assess two socioeconomic outcomes for Afghans living in Canada. The first concerns economic integration, based on an examination of labour force outcomes, including employment probabilities and earnings for Afghan immigrants in comparison to all immigrants. The second outcome concerns the ability and willingness to translate earnings into home ownership, as measured through an assessment of housing tenure probabilities.

Two data sources are used. The first is the 2011 NHS, which replaced the census long-form for that year. From the NHS, a sample was built which comprises all immigrants as well as ethnic Afghans born in Canada. Individuals whose primary source of income is from farms or who are in households with more than 12 people are dropped from the analysis. Using these data, a series of regressions assessing employment probabilities and the correlates of earnings are run.

When assessing employment probabilities, the sample is restricted to individuals aged 20–64 who are not attending school. Regressions control for:

- age, age squared;
- years in Canada, years in Canada squared;
- official language ability (four dummy variables for English, French, both English and French, and neither);
- marital status (six dummy variables for single, married, common-law, separated, divorced, and widowed);
- level of schooling (13 dummy variables from no certificate to doctorate);
- selected CMAs (Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and other areas); 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.

Regressions assessing earnings use the same controls as above, but the sample is restricted to the working population, with earnings greater than CA$100 per year. In addition, controls are included for full-time/part-time status.

The second source of data for the analysis is tabular data drawn from Canada's IMDB. The IMDB links immigration intake files and annual tax records to create a comprehensive source of data on the economic behaviour of the immigrant tax-filing population. It includes information on immigrant intake categories along with information on age in tax year, sex, schooling at entry, and selected places of birth. It is the largest dataset that crosses intake class with economic performance (Statistics Canada 2014b).

The IMDB table provides information for each year of entry from 1990 to 2007 showing self-employment and wages income for each year after arrival. Each row of information (or unit of analysis) can be thought of as a separate year of entry–age–sex–schooling–entry category–place of birth cohort.[5] Analysis is limited to a comparison between Afghan immigrants and all immigrants who have been in Canada for more than two years and are 25–64 years old in the tax year.[6]

The dependent variable for this analysis is the mean cohort labour market income from self-employment and wages and salaries for every year following the initial two years in the country.[7] Independent variables are as follows.

Intake category predictors:

- Two categories of economic class immigrants:
    - principal applicants (the individual assessed under the point system);
    - dependents of the skilled applicant (accompanying family);
- family class immigrants (people who are sponsored by a family member already living in Canada);
- three types of refugees:
    - government assisted;
    - landed in Canada (asylum seeking);
    - private sponsored.

Length of stay predictors:

- years since landing;
- years since landing squared;

Sociodemographic predictors:

- age in tax year: four categories (25–34—the comparison group; 35–44, 45–54, and 55–64);
- immigrant/Afghan immigrant status;
- level of schooling: five categories (none, high school or less, post-secondary certificate, bachelor's degree—the comparison group, and graduate degree).

From these data, two sets of analytically weighted linear regressions are run. The first is a general model assessing the impact of variables related to length of time in Canada, socioeconomic characteristics, and entry class, run separately for male and female immigrants. The second

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[5] While it is possible to request more detail than is available in our IMDB table, Statistics Canada confidentiality rules and data rounding criteria means that more detail would result in smaller average cell sizes and more error due to Statistics Canada rounding procedures (Evra and Prokopenko 2017).

[6] The IMDB table includes all immigrants and those who are born in Afghanistan. The comparison group is all immigrants, which includes those born in Afghanistan. This could be viewed as a problem in determining the average income; however, the Afghanistan population is so small that it should not affect the average income for the total of all immigrants.

[7] The dependent variable is actual earnings and has not been transformed into its log form. Transforming an average salary to a log value within a regression context is not possible because logging average incomes (as we have using these tables) leads to distortion of the log metric and its interpretation.

regression equation includes only immigrants born in Afghanistan but uses the same set of controls. This last set allows us to assess how income drivers may differ between all immigrants and those with Afghan ethnicity

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

- highest level of schooling in the household;
- highest age in the household;
- 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);
- presence of children in the household (younger than 20 years old);
- presence of seniors in the household (older than 64 years old);
- the census family structure;
- the maximum number of years in Canada;
- the immigrant status of the household (at least one person in the household is an immigrant);
- the income of the household; and
- a dummy to determine whether the household is considered an Afghan household (at least one person in the household is ethnically Afghan).

5 Analysis

5.1 Employment outcomes

Table 3 shows results for four 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 major groups of interest are those born in Afghanistan, immigrants whose parents are born in Afghanistan, but who themselves were not born in Afghanistan, and people born in Canada who are ethnically Afghan. As stated in the methods section, the regressions also control for age, official language knowledge, marital status, CMA of residence, and level of schooling. 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 other 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, the significance, and the odds ratio.

[8] The 2011 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, but 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.

Table 3: Results from four logistic regressions assessing the correlates of being employed

		All immigrants								Afghan immigrants							
		Regression 1 (female)				Regression 2 (male)				Regression 3 (female)				Regression 4 (male)			
		Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
Observations		421,640				387,760				2,440				2,480			
Prob > χ^2		0.00				0.00				0.00				0.00			
Pseudo R^2		0.09				0.09				0.16				0.10			
	Age	0.22	0.00	***	1.24	0.16	0.00	***	1.18	0.11	0.04	***	1.12	0.06	0.05		1.07
	Age squared	0.00	0.00	***	1.00	0.00	0.00	***	1.00	0.00	0.00	***	1.00	0.00	0.00	**	1.00
	Years in Canada	0.06	0.00	***	1.06	0.05	0.00	***	1.05	0.08	0.02	***	1.08	0.12	0.02	***	1.13
	Years in Canada squared	0.00	0.00	***	1.00	0.00	0.00	***	1.00	0.00	0.00	**	1.00	0.00	0.00	***	1.00
Official language knowledge																	
(English)	French	−0.13	0.03	***	0.88	−0.16	0.03	***	0.86	−0.05	0.38		0.95	−0.48	0.42		0.62
	English and French	0.21	0.02	***	1.23	0.15	0.02	***	1.16	−0.11	0.27		0.89	−0.60	0.26	**	0.55
	No official language	−0.58	0.02	***	0.56	−0.63	0.02	***	0.53	−0.72	0.19	***	0.49	−1.02	0.21	***	0.36
Selected CMAs																	
(not a large CMA)	Montreal	−0.24	0.02	***	0.79	−0.26	0.02	***	0.77	−0.03	0.27		0.97	−0.02	0.26		0.98
	Ottawa-Gatineau	0.03	0.03		1.03	0.01	0.03		1.01	0.34	0.33		1.40	−0.04	0.36		0.96
	Toronto	−0.01	0.01		0.99	0.03	0.01	**	1.03	−0.12	0.16		0.89	−0.23	0.16		0.80
	Hamilton	−0.04	0.03		0.96	−0.12	0.04	***	0.89	0.03	0.40		1.03	−0.21	0.40		0.81
	Winnipeg	0.49	0.03	***	1.63	0.40	0.04	***	1.49	−0.06	0.48		0.94	0.98	0.55	*	2.67
	Edmonton	0.23	0.02	***	1.26	0.38	0.03	***	1.46	0.70	0.29	**	2.02	0.23	0.29		1.26
	Calgary	0.36	0.03	***	1.44	0.44	0.04	***	1.56	0.98	0.39	**	2.66	0.27	0.54		1.31
	Vancouver	0.15	0.05	***	1.17	0.22	0.06	***	1.25	na				−0.19	1.46		0.83

Highest certificate																	
(no certificate)	High school	0.45	0.02	***	1.56	0.28	0.02	***	1.32	0.60	0.16	***	1.82	0.10	0.16		1.11
	Registered apprentice	0.87	0.04	***	2.40	0.62	0.03	***	1.86	1.57	0.49	***	4.80	0.86	0.56		2.37
	Other trades certificate	0.86	0.03	***	2.36	0.54	0.03	***	1.71	1.27	0.32	***	3.55	0.40	0.32		1.50
	College or cegep < 1 yearr	0.90	0.03	***	2.47	0.47	0.05	***	1.61	1.17	0.41	***	3.21	0.01	0.40		1.01
	College 1–2 years	0.97	0.02	***	2.64	0.61	0.03	***	1.84	1.37	0.28	***	3.93	0.72	0.29	**	2.05
	College 2+ years	1.00	0.02	***	2.73	0.66	0.03	***	1.94	1.72	0.26	***	5.60	0.72	0.31	**	2.05
	University cert <BA	0.96	0.02	***	2.62	0.60	0.03	***	1.81	1.13	0.24	***	3.08	0.47	0.26	*	1.61
	BA	1.05	0.02	***	2.85	0.73	0.02	***	2.08	1.91	0.24	***	6.78	0.93	0.27	***	2.54
	BA+	1.11	0.03	***	3.04	0.71	0.03	***	2.02	1.16	0.33	***	3.18	−0.23	0.37		0.80
	MA	1.14	0.02	***	3.14	0.82	0.03	***	2.26	1.56	0.38	***	4.75	0.27	0.36		1.30
	Medicine	1.21	0.05	***	3.36	0.83	0.06	***	2.29	1.75	0.54	***	5.75	0.80	0.51		2.22
	PhD	1.47	0.05	***	4.34	1.01	0.04	***	2.73	1.00	0.82		2.73	0.55	0.55		1.74
Group																	
(Non-Afghan immigrant)	Born in Afghanistan	−0.74	0.06	***	0.48	−0.58	0.06	***	0.56		Comparison group				Comparison group		
	Afghan not born in Canada	−0.27	0.24		0.77	0.12	0.28		1.13	0.06	0.28		1.06	0.23	0.31		1.26
	Afghan born in Canada	1.22	0.47	**	3.39	0.07	0.52		1.07	1.46	0.47	***	4.30	0.65	0.54		1.92
Constant		−4.26	0.07	***	0.01	−2.41	0.08	***	0.09	−2.54	0.76	***	0.08	−0.79	0.85		0.45

Note: Comparison groups are identified in parentheses. Marital status also included in the model.

Significance: * 0.1; ** 0.05; *** 0.01.

Source: Author, based on NHS confidential file.

Looking first at results in Regression 1 (all immigrants, females), as expected, age and year 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 0.06. Speaking English or both English and French has a higher payoff than speaking only French or not speaking an official language at all. As compared to living outside the selected CMAs, immigrants living in Montreal have lower probabilities of being employed, reducing the odds ratio by 21 per cent. However, living in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, or Vancouver increases the probability of being employed. Living in Winnipeg, in particular, increases the odds ratio by over 60 per cent as compared to living in Toronto.

Schooling is positively associated with employment. Having a schooling certificate increases the probability of employment as compared to not having any certificate. Indeed, having any certificate more than high school increases the odds of employment by 2–3 times.

As compared to other female immigrants, women born in Afghanistan have much lower probabilities of being employed. Being born in Afghanistan reduces the odds ratio by over 50 per cent as compared to that for immigrant women as a whole. 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 over three times.

Similar patterns for immigrant men (Regression 2) are evident for age, years in Canada, and official language knowledge. As compared to immigrants living outside the gateway CMAs, immigrants who live in the west have higher employment probabilities than those living in Montreal or Hamilton. Living in Winnipeg, Edmonton, or Calgary increases the odds ratio by about 50 per cent, while living in Montreal reduces the odds ratio by 23 per cent.

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

As was seen for women born in Afghanistan, men born in Afghanistan have much lower employment probabilities compared to all immigrants (coefficient −0.58). Afghan men born in Canada or Afghan immigrants not born in Afghanistan, however, have about the same probability of being employed as other immigrants.

Regressions 3 and 4 look specifically at the Afghan population—those born in Afghanistan, those who are not born in Afghanistan or Canada but have parents born in Afghanistan, and ethnic Afghans born in Canada. These regressions only include people identified within these three groups. 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, age and years in Canada remain important determinants of employment. The ability to speak an official language is about as important for Afghan women as it is for immigrant women as a whole. Not speaking an official language reduces the odds ratio by 47 per cent for Afghan women. Schooling has a stronger impact for Afghan women as compared to immigrant women as a whole, with all certificates (with the exception of a PhD) having a stronger impact. The results by group suggest that Afghan women born in Canada have much better employment probabilities. Being born in Canada increases the odds of employment by four times as compared to Afghan women born in Afghanistan.

Regression 4 looks at Afghan men. Years in Canada has a strong positive impact on the probability of working, but age does not have a significant impact. In addition, the CMA of residence has no significant impact within the Afghan population—those living in Montreal do as well as anywhere else. Level of schooling also has far less impact, with only college and bachelor's degrees having significant and positive impacts. Finally, being born in Canada does not have a statistically significant impact on the probability of being employed.

It is tempting to place the lack of statistical significance on low population counts. However, the model includes almost 2,500 Afghan men born in Canada, and there are many significant impacts found for women. It seems likely, therefore, that it is really the variance that is at the root of insignificant differences. However, even discounting significance and looking only at the coefficients, it seems that the effects are generally more muted among Afghan men as compared to either Afghan women or immigrant men as a whole.

In summary, as compared to the immigrant population as a whole, Afghan men and women have much poorer employment prospects. Among Afghan men, there is little payoff to age, but the payoff associated with years in Canada is actually stronger than that seen for immigrants as a whole (coefficient of 0.12). Afghan women show a much higher payoff for having a schooling certificate and Afghan women born in Canada have much higher odds of employment than Afghan women born outside Canada.

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).[9] 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 in direction and magnitude for male and female immigrants. However, Afghan women do not face a statistically significant difference in earnings as compared to other immigrant women. Further, similar to the outcomes for employment, Afghan women born in Canada earn substantially more than other immigrant women after controlling for personal characteristics (coefficient of 0.56). Afghanistan-born men face about a 20 per cent earnings gap as compared to other immigrant men; however, Afghan men born in Canada see a substantial earnings premium (coefficient of 0.49) over the earnings of immigrant men.

[9] Models were also run using total income and income from wages and salaries (using different samples). Results for both were broadly similar to the results shown for market income. These tables are available on request.

Table 4: Partial results from four regressions assessing the correlates of the log of labour market income

		All immigrants						Afghan only					
		Regression 1 (female)			Regression 2 (male)			Regression 3 (female)			Regression 4 (male)		
		Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.
Observations		284,740			306,400			1,100			1,700		
Prob > F		0.00			0.00			0.00			0.00		
Adj R^2		0.25			0.23			0.28			0.20		
Age	Age	0.06	0.00	***	0.05	0.00	***	0.06	0.02	***	0.03	0.02	**
	Age squared	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	**	0.00	0.00	**
Years in Canada	Years in Canada	0.03	0.00	***	0.02	0.00	***	0.00	0.01		0.02	0.01	**
	Years in Canada squared	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00	***	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	
Official language knowledge													
(English)	French	−0.04	0.01	***	−0.10	0.01	***	0.10	0.26		0.01	0.17	
	English and French	0.09	0.01	***	0.06	0.01	***	0.14	0.13		0.30	0.11	***
	No official language	−0.17	0.01	***	−0.22	0.01	***	0.03	0.13		0.27	0.13	**
Selected CMAs													
(not a large CMA)	Montreal	−0.18	0.01	***	−0.21	0.01	***	0.00	0.15		−0.36	0.11	***
	Ottawa-Gatineau	0.07	0.01	***	0.03	0.01	***	0.07	0.14		0.23	0.12	*
	Toronto	0.03	0.00	***	−0.04	0.00	***	0.11	0.07	*	−0.10	0.06	*
	Hamilton	0.09	0.01	***	0.02	0.01	**	0.23	0.17		0.05	0.14	
	Winnipeg	−0.02	0.01	*	−0.09	0.01	***	0.07	0.20		−0.06	0.19	
	Edmonton	0.17	0.01	***	0.18	0.01	***	0.28	0.11	**	0.35	0.09	***
	Calgary	0.16	0.01	***	0.19	0.01	***	0.55	0.12	***	0.34	0.12	***
	Vancouver	0.08	0.02	***	0.01	0.02		na			0.80	0.47	*
Highest certificate													
(no certificate)	High-school certificate	0.17	0.01	***	0.10	0.01	***	0.14	0.08	*	0.14	0.06	**

	Registered apprentice	0.15	0.01	***	0.28	0.01	***	0.42	0.22	*	0.22	0.14	
	Other trades certificate	0.19	0.01	***	0.15	0.01	***	0.10	0.14		0.27	0.11	**
	Colleg or cegep < 1 year	0.32	0.01	***	0.23	0.01	***	0.30	0.18	*	−0.16	0.16	
	College 1–2 years	0.33	0.01	***	0.27	0.01	***	0.52	0.10	***	0.20	0.10	**
	College 2+ years	0.41	0.01	***	0.32	0.01	***	0.48	0.11	***	0.42	0.11	***
	University cert <BA	0.44	0.01	***	0.32	0.01	***	0.46	0.12	***	0.45	0.11	***
	BA	0.60	0.01	***	0.51	0.01	***	0.48	0.10	***	0.43	0.08	***
	BA+	0.64	0.01	***	0.56	0.01	***	0.74	0.19	***	0.74	0.17	***
	MA	0.74	0.01	***	0.68	0.01	***	0.71	0.15	***	0.46	0.13	***
	Medicine	1.08	0.02	***	1.08	0.02	***	0.65	0.21	***	0.16	0.20	
	PhD	0.99	0.02	***	0.93	0.01	***	0.93	0.48	*	0.64	0.25	**
Full-time													
	Part-time	−0.90	0.00	***	−1.07	0.01	***	−0.87	0.06	***	−0.97	0.06	***
Group													
Immigrant (not Afghan)	Born in Afghanistan	−0.04	0.03		−0.20	0.02	***	Comparison group			Comparison group		
	Afghan not born in Canada	−0.16	0.10		0.01	0.09		−0.05	0.12		0.14	0.10	
	Afghan born in Canada	0.56	0.21	***	0.49	0.14	***	0.24	0.23		0.55	0.18	***
Constant		8.26	0.03	***	8.83	0.03	***	8.43	0.40	***	8.95	0.32	***

Note: Marital status also included in the model. Comparison group in parentheses.

Significance: * 0.1; ** 0.05; *** 0.01.

Source: Author, based on NHS confidential file.

Turning to the results for just Afghans (Regressions 3 and 4), we see that among women the payoffs to schooling tend to be a little higher than is the case for all immigrant women. However, there is no statistically significant payoff for being born in Canada. In other words, Afghan women born in Canada earn about the same as Afghan women born outside Canada. However, the base income (the constant) is higher for Afghan women than it is for all immigrant women (log of income of 8.43 versus 8.26 respectively).

Afghan men born in Canada enjoy substantially higher earnings than those born outside Canada (coefficient of 0.55). In addition, as was the case for Afghan women, the base labour market income is higher than for all immigrant men (log of income of 8.95 versus 8.83 respectively).

Where the NHS data allowed us to look at outcomes for Afghans, controlling for fairly detailed personal and locational characteristics, data from the IMDB allows us to look at outcomes by immigrant intake class, but at the expense of detail on the characteristics. As described above, the IMDB provides information that matches immigrant landing records to tax records for every year after landing. It is the only substantive Canadian data source that includes information on the category of entry for a large number of immigrants. However, the IMDB does not include information on the Canadian-born population or on place of birth of parents, so unlike Tables 2 and 3 it is not possible to include an assessment of Afghans born outside Afghanistan.

Table 5 provides results from four regressions assessing mean labour market income for immigrants landing between 1990 and 2009. Because the analysis is drawn from tabular data, the unit of analysis is the age–education–landing year–intake category–immigrant group cohort for women and men weighted by the population in the cohort. Incomes are expressed in actual dollars as compared to Table 4, which is expressed in the log of income.[10]

Similar to Tables 3 and 4, Regressions 1 and 2 assess earnings for all immigrants (controlling for being born in Afghanistan), while Regressions 3 and 4 include only the population born in Afghanistan.[11] However, results from the IMDB do not include controls for official language knowledge, CMA of residence, part-time status, or detailed level of schooling.

Looking at results for all immigrants, men and women born in Afghanistan have lower incomes than is the case for all immigrants (−CA$4,812 for women and −CA$4,051 for men). There are substantive differences by intake category. As compared to skilled principle applicants, those entering under other categories have lower labour market incomes. Among female immigrants, refugees have the poorest outcomes (CA$6,000 to CA$8,000 dollars lower than skilled principle applicants). For men, the spread in earnings across entry categories is much greater (although the base income—the constant—is higher than is the case for women). While skilled independent immigrants fare the best, the incomes of their male dependents are only slightly lower. However, government-sponsored refugees have earnings that are almost CA$12,000 lower than skilled principle applicants.

[10] The IMDB table provides the average income within a given cohort. While it is possible to conduct a regression on the average impact of characteristics on the average income of a cohort, it is not possible to convert those average cohort incomes into log values and then run the regression. Essentially the log of the average is not the same as the average of the log.

[11] Working with tabular data generally results in smaller standard errors and therefore higher R-squared values. This is because the results reflect cell means rather than means of individuals, resulting in greatly reduced variance.

Table 5: Average cohort effects on labour market incomes

		All immigrants				Immigrants born in Afghanistan			
		Regression 1 (female)		Regression 2 (male)		Regression 3 (female)		Regression 4 (male)	
		Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Cohorts		49,948		51,564		3,250		4,903	
sig		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
R^2		0.40		0.48		0.30		0.26	
Age									
(15–24)	25–34	9,025	296	14,528	388	6,438	270	12,030	462
	35–44	14,571	258	24,999	394	5,394	268	13,528	518
	45–54	18,006	248	31,612	397	6,207	380	15,113	567
	55–64	11,169	291	23,243	505	na		9,934	977
Years in Canada		805	63	692	89	−56	94	−360	153
Years in Canada squared		−13	2	−3	3	11	4	20	6
Schooling certificate									
(No schooling)	< High school	−762	376	−1,747	451	−426	263	265	462
	Post-secondary	2,807	403	2,410	504	−726	409	−3,820	644
	University	13,727	439	19,265	565	629	570	−4,284	733
Immigrant									
(All immigrants)	Born in Afghanistan	−4,812	242	−4,051	364				
Intake category									
	Dependant of skilled	−3,260	333	−1,297	517	na		5,652	1,841

(Skilled primary applicant)	Family	−5,037	278	−5,772	368	−2,564	1,474	5,086	1,385
	Government sponsored refugee	−6,296	328	−11,810	394	−1,355	1,451	5,541	1,361
	Privately sponsored refugee	−5,918	367	−9,669	431	−1,247	1,452	5,295	1,363
	Asylum refugee	−6,325	333	−10,399	447	21	1,468	5,017	1,375
	Refugee dependant	−8,448	402	−5,283	598	13	1,554	4,395	1,507
Constant		9,906	680	12,591	942	10,174	1,577	8,115	1,739

Note: Selection is immigrant cohorts arriving between 1990 and 2009. Minimum cell size if 10, minimum labour market income is $100. Comparison group in parentheses.

Source: Author, based on IMDB special tabulation.

Turning to the results for immigrants born in Afghanistan (Regressions 3 and 4), it is apparent that entry class makes little difference to the outcomes for women. This is generally true of Afghanistan-born men, with the exception that skilled principle applicants fare worse than those entering under other categories.

5.3 Summary of labour market outcomes

Overall, the results are mixed. After controlling for basic characteristics, Afghan immigrant women who are working have 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. However, there 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 and women born in Canada fare much better than other immigrants in employment probabilities and earnings.

5.4 Home ownership

While there are not many 'outcomes' that can be assessed using the 2011 NHS, it is possible to assess the probability of home ownership. Here the unit of analysis is an immigrant or Afghan family. 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 thus include people born in 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 6 shows descriptive statistics drawn from the 2011 NHS showing housing tenure for all immigrant families and for Afghan families. Almost 70 per cent of immigrant families live in owned dwellings; however, this is true for only 43 per cent of Afghan families. 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.

Table 6: Housing tenure for households

	All immigrant families	Afghan families
Total	13,289,990	17,155
Do not own	31%	57%
Own	69%	43%

Note: permanent residents only.

Source: Author, based on NHS confidential file.

Table 7 provides results from four regression models which seek to speak to these issues. In both, the dependent variable is the probability of a household living in an owned dwelling. Two regressions are run for each population of 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.

Table 7: Partial results for the probability of home ownership for immigrant and Afghani households

	All immigrant households								Afghan households							
	No income in model				Income in model				No income in model				Income in model			
	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coef.	S.E.	Sig.	Odds ratio
observations	695,810				692,845				2,840				2,820			
Prob > χ^2	0.00				0.00				0.00				0.00			
R^2	0.17				0.20				0.18				0.23			
Afghan household	−0.90	0.05	***	0.41	−0.77	0.05	***	0.46								
Household size	0.11	0.00	***	1.11	0.03	0.00	***	1.03	0.22	0.04	***	1.24	0.08	0.04	**	1.08
Years in Canada	0.04	0.00	***	1.04	0.03	0.00	***	1.03	0.09	0.01	***	1.09	0.08	0.01	***	1.08
Schooling certificate																
High school	0.12	0.02	***	1.13	0.04	0.02	**	1.04	0.54	0.24	**	1.72	0.39	0.24		1.48
Non-university certificate	0.44	0.02	***	1.55	0.26	0.02	***	1.30	0.85	0.24	***	2.35	0.62	0.25	**	1.86
University certificate	0.79	0.02	***	2.20	0.48	0.02	***	1.62	1.18	0.23	***	3.26	0.81	0.24	***	2.26
CMA																
Montreal	−0.87	0.01	***	0.42	−0.79	0.01	***	0.45	−0.59	0.23	**	0.55	−0.57	0.23	**	0.57
Ottawa-Gatineau	−0.24	0.02	***	0.78	−0.31	0.02	***	0.73	−0.32	0.28		0.73	−0.42	0.29		0.66
Toronto	−0.21	0.01	***	0.81	−0.25	0.01	***	0.78	−0.23	0.15		0.80	−0.18	0.16		0.83
Hamilton	−0.14	0.03	***	0.87	−0.18	0.03	***	0.84	−0.49	0.42		0.61	−0.43	0.41		0.65
Winnipeg	−0.20	0.03	***	0.82	−0.18	0.03	***	0.83	−0.17	0.38		0.84	−0.16	0.37		0.85
Edmonton	0.30	0.02	***	1.36	0.21	0.02	***	1.23	1.45	0.27	***	4.26	1.39	0.27	***	4.00
Calgary	0.05	0.02	**	1.05	−0.05	0.02	**	0.95	0.63	0.30	**	1.88	0.36	0.31		1.43
Vancouver	−0.25	0.04	***	0.78	−0.29	0.04	***	0.75	−0.32	3.08		0.73	−0.58	3.13		0.56
Household structure																
Single	−1.23	0.01	***	0.29	−0.94	0.01	***	0.39	−0.97	0.41	**	0.38	−0.53	0.46		0.59
Same-sex couple no kids	−0.33	0.05	***	0.72	−0.48	0.05	***	0.62	−0.19	0.73		0.83	−0.58	0.73		0.56

	M-F couple with kids	0.17	0.01	***	1.19	0.21	0.01	***	1.23	0.08	0.21		1.09	0.19	0.21		1.21
	Same-sex couple with kids	−0.02	0.18		0.99	−0.06	0.18		0.94			***				***	
	Male lone parent	−0.56	0.03	***	0.57	−0.47	0.03	***	0.62	−0.61	0.43		0.55	−0.55	0.45		0.58
	Female lone parent	−0.81	0.02	***	0.45	−0.62	0.02	***	0.54	−0.21	0.24		0.81	−0.06	0.25		0.94
	Log of household income					0.55	0.01		1.74					0.89	0.11		2.42
Constant		−0.65	0.18	***	0.52	−5.76	0.24	***	0.00	−2.58	0.39	***	0.08	−11.46	1.24	***	0.00

Note: Age of oldest household member and official language ability of household also included in the model.

Significance: * 0.1; ** 0.05; *** 0.01.

Source: Author, based on NHS confidential file.

Looking first at the results for all immigrants, generally husband–wife immigrant households (either with or without children) have higher prospects of home ownership than other household types. Female lone parent households have the lowest probability of home ownership (coefficient of −0.83). 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. 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 Edmonton or Calgary, the probability of owning a dwelling is lower in the selected CMAs. In particular, home ownership is lower in Montreal (lowering the odds of owning by 55 per cent as compared to living outside the major CMAs). This is true regardless of whether or not income is included in the model.

Looking at the results for Afghan households, 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 (−3.5 for the model without income and −13.4 for the model with income). While CMA of residence is not generally statistically significant, living in Edmonton increases the odds of owning a dwelling, while living in Montreal decreases it (odds ratio of 4 and 0.57 respectively).

6 Discussion and conclusions

The goal of this paper was to provide a review of research on the Afghan population in Canada, along with an assessment of labour force and housing tenure options using data from the 2011 NHS and the 2009 IMDB. As noted earlier, between 1980 and 2015, almost 63,000 Afghan immigrants arrived in Canada, the majority coming as resettled, privately sponsored, or asylum refugees. About two-thirds of all Afghan immigrants arrived post-2000. This means that the Afghans are, in general, 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 socialized in Canada. However, there are some interesting caveats. 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. Looking at the results of Pendakur and Pendakur (2015) and the present analysis together, the findings from the present research suggest that Canadian-born Afghan

women may have higher earnings than Canadian-born European-origin women.[12] However, this is likely not the case for the Afghan men, who do not have the same proportionate income gain as compared to their parents.

In part, this is because the earnings gaps among men are simply higher than those among women. However, there is also evidence that Afghan girls face fewer settlement challenges outside the family as compared to Afghan boys, resulting in an easier transition into the labour market (see Soroor and Popal 2005).

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. While there are some differences by CMA of residence, overall, location does not have a significant impact on home ownership. At least part of the difference is likely a product of challenges faced in the labour market; however, Marchand et al. (2014) point to the fact that Afghans in Canada and the United States have high rates of remittance payments, which 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 if the preference for multigenerational households is maintained. 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.

This study 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.

[12] Pendakur and Pendakur (2015) estimated earnings for male and female immigrant and visible minority workers. They found that as compared to Canadian-born white women, immigrant women faced an earnings penalty of about 40 per cent after controlling for basic personal characteristics such as age, schooling, and marital status. Visible minority women faced an earnings differential of only −4 per cent. The figures for men are −35 per cent and −18 per cent respectively. The present study estimates that Afghan women born in Canada earn substantially more than immigrant women (coefficient of 0.56 or about 74 per cent more), which far outweighs the Canadian-born immigrant earnings gap.

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