

IMMIGRANTS' INCOME ATTAINMENT IN CANADA: IMPACT OF LOCATION OF RESIDENCE AND VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS

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ABSTRACT

Most of the earlier researches on immigration have examined the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants in relation to the native born population. Limited attention has been given in examining the impact of immigrants' location of residence and visible minority status on their income attainment. In this study, I examined the variations in immigrants' income attainment based on their location of residence and visible minority status using data from the 2001 census of Canada. Using multivariate regression analysis I find that immigrants living in non-CMAs have higher income than their counterparts living in CMAs. I also notice that visible minority immigrants have consistently lower income than non-visible minority immigrants both in CMAs and non-CMAs. Policy implications are discussed.

Keywords: Immigrants, income, CMAs, non-CMAs, visible minority, Canada

INTRODUCTION

Most of the earlier research on immigration and immigrants integration have look at the socioeconomic attainment of immigrants in relation to the native born population. However, limited attention has been given in examining immigrants' income attainment by their place of residence such as Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Non-Census Metropolitan Areas (Non-CMAs). This research is a modest attempt to explore the differential impact of CMAs and Non-CMAs on immigrants' income attainment in Canada. In addition, comparison of immigrants' income attainment in three large CMAs (Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver) with that of small CMAs (Else CMAs) was conducted in this research with a view to explore whether immigrants' living in large CMAs were advantaged in terms of income attainment or not.

It is important to examine immigrants' income attainment by CMAs and Non-CMAs because earlier research shows that location of residence has a significant impact on immigrants' economic integration into the mainstream society (i.e., Massey 1986; Reitz 1988; Balakrishnan and Hou 1999). This is particularly worthwhile for Canada due to higher concentration of Canada's immigrant population in CMAs. The 2001 Census Canada shows that a vast majority of all immigrants (70%) live in the three largest CMAs of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

Demographers have devoted considerable attention to *spatial processes* associated with immigrants' integration into the mainstream host society. Higher concentration of certain immigrant community in an urban area leads to the formation of ethnic communities. Location theory suggests that regional difference in economic endowments and opportunities, among others, accounts for a large part of the current geographical distribution of immigrant communities in Canada (Ward, 1971; Berry, 1967; and Stone, 1967). Therefore, it is justifiable to investigate immigrant's income attainment by CMAs and Non-CMAs which

would facilitate to explore successful integration mechanisms of immigrants into the Canadian society.

Another aspect of this research is that comparison of income attainment between visible minority immigrants and not visible minority immigrants was conducted both for CMAs and Non-CMAs separately. According to Statistics Canada (2005), the visible minority population in Canada is increasing much faster than the total population. Between 1996 and 2001, the total population in Canada has increased by 4%; whereas visible minority population has increased by 25% during the same period (Statistics Canada: 2005). Recent projections of visible minorities by the Statistics Canada suggest that roughly one out of every five people in Canada could be a member of visible minority by 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2005). The increasing number of visible minority in Canada has become an important concern because of their higher concentration in lower income groups (Boyd 1992; Basavarajappa and Jones, 1999).

Two hypotheses are examined in this study: (1) immigrants living in CMAs would have higher income as compared to those who live in Non-CMAs in Canada; and (2) visible minority immigrants would have lower income attainment both in CMAs and Non-CMAs as compared to not visible minority immigrants in Canada. The first hypothesis is based on the premise that immigrants living in CMAs would have greater access to education, training and employment opportunities than those who live in Non-CMAs. These advantages would eventually lead to higher income attainment for immigrants living in CMAs.

The second hypothesis is based on the cogent ground that visible minority immigrants have lower proficiency in official languages and lower educational attainment than not visible minority immigrants. This presumption is expected to hold both for CMAs and Non-CMAs. These drawbacks would lead to lower income attainment for visible minority immigrants as compared to not visible minority immigrants. In addition, there is a direct effect of visible minority status on immigrants' income attainment. Previous research shows that various institutional mechanisms and racial discrimination lead to lower income attainment for visible minority immigrants compared to their not visible minority counterparts (Boyd 1992; Basavarajappa and Jones, 1999).

DATA AND METHOD

This study was conducted using data from the 2001 Census of Canada. The dataset contains information on immigrants' age, education, occupation, income, visible minority status, and year of immigration. All of these variables were relevant for this study. Multivariate statistical techniques were applied to test the research hypotheses. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression was used for predicting immigrants' income attainment in Canada.

In this study, differential impact of Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Non-CMAs on immigrants' income attainment was examined. There are several categories of CMAs in the Census file. These categories are recoded into two categories: CMAs and Non-CMAs. In addition, CMAs are coded into four categories: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Else to examine income differentials among immigrants' in these large CMAs.

Previous research shows that income attainment differs significantly based on gender, age, education, and occupation. For this reason, these variables were used as control variables in regression analysis. The two gender categories were recorded into a dummy variable (1=male, 0=female). For this study, immigrants aged 30-40 years were selected for testing the research hypotheses. The reason for selecting this age group was that majority immigrants complete their education and enter into the labour market during this age.

Income is the outcome variable of interest in this study. The census file contains total individual annual income. This variable has been used to measure the outcome variable of income. The census file contains information on respondents' education as the total years of schooling into several groups. Mid points of these total years of schooling were taken to make the variable continuous so that it can be used in the OLS regression model.

The 2001 Census of Canada contains information on occupation into 14 categories. An ordinal variable of "occupational prestige" (1=Highest prestige, 10=lowest prestige) was used in OLS regression models. Thus, lower values were associated with higher prestige. The ranking based on occupational prestige from high to low was as follows: (1) Professionals, (2) senior managers, (3) middle and other managers, (4) semi professionals and technicians, (5) supervisors, (6) supervisors: craft and trade, (7) administrative and senior clerical personnel, (8) skilled crafts and trade workers, (9) skilled sales and service personnel, (10) clerical, intermediate sales and service personnel, (11) semi skilled manual workers, (12) other sales and service personnel, and (13) other manual workers.

There are five categories of visible minority indicators in the Census file 2001: (1) Chinese, (2) South Asians, (3) Black, (4) other visible minority, and (5) not visible minority. These indicators were coded into two categories: visible minority (Chinese, South Asians, Black, and other visible minority) and not visible minority. In addition, a dummy variable for visible minority was created for OLS regression models (1=visible minority, 0= not visible minority).

Year of immigration was used as control variable in the regression analyses. In the census file, year of immigration was reported into several groups. Mid points of the years of immigration were taken to make the variable continuous. Previous research shows that year of arrival has a significant impact on immigrants' income attainment (i.e., Beaujot and Rappak, 1990). Chui and Zietsma (2003) found that new immigrants arriving in the 1990s earned less income on the average than their 1980s counterparts. For example, in their second year in Canada, immigrant men who arrived in 1991 earned an average income of \$18,000, as compared to \$32,500 for the immigrant cohort of 1981.

Sample Characteristics

The use of weights in the 2001 Census of Canada produced a population of 29,639,032. Only immigrants of 30-40 years old in 2001 were selected for this study. The total size using the population weight became 895,940. Among these selected immigrants, 52.2 percent are males and 47.8 percent are females. A majority of immigrants (90.3%) live in CMAs and only 9.7% live in Non-CMAs. Among those who live in CMAs, a majority (74.1%) live in three CMAs-Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. However, Toronto has the highest percentage of immigrants (45.1%) living in CMAs followed by Vancouver (15.6%), and Montreal (13.4%).

Table 1 below shows that the mean income of immigrants living in CMAs was \$29,981.92, and the mean income of those immigrants living in Non-CMAs was \$29,840.79 in 2001. Immigrants living in Toronto CMA have the highest mean income (\$31,714.57) followed by Vancouver (\$28,583.79), and Montreal (\$24,740.94). Majority immigrants aged 30-40 years in 2001 were visible minority (62.1%). The mean income of visible minority immigrants living in CMAs in 2001 was \$26,904.98 whereas the mean income of not visible minority immigrants living in CMAs was \$35,851.73. The mean income of visible minority immigrants (\$26,668.00) living in Non-CMAs was also lower than that of the not visible counterparts (\$31,041.73).

Table 1. Sample characteristics of the selected respondents

	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male	52.2
	Female	47.8
<i>Visible Minority Status</i>	Visible Minority	62.1
	Not Visible Minority	39.1
<i>Location</i>	CMA	90.3
	Non-CMA	9.7
<i>CMA</i>	Toronto	45.1
	Montreal	13.4
	Vancouver	15.6
	Else	25.9
<i>Mean Income</i>	CMA	\$29,981.92
	Non-CMA	\$29,840.79
	Toronto	\$31,714.57
<i>Mean Income in CMA</i>	Montreal	\$24,740.94
	Vancouver	\$28,583.79
	Other CMA	\$30,542.53
	Visible Minority	\$26,904.98
<i>Mean Income in CMA</i>	Not Visible Minority	\$35,851.73
	Visible Minority	\$26,668.00
<i>Mean Income in Non-CMA</i>	Not Visible Minority	\$31,041.73
	N	895,940

RESULTS

Comparison of Immigrants' Income: CMAs versus Non-CMAs

Table 2 presents the OLS regression estimates of immigrants' income. I found that both in CMAs and Non-CMAs, males have higher income than females after controlling for age, education, occupational status, visible minority status, and year of immigration. The difference in income between males living in CMAs and Non-CMAs are statistically significant, which suggests that males living in non-CMAs have higher income than their counterparts living in CMAs. Table 2 also shows that visible minority immigrants have lower income than not visible minority immigrants living in either CMAs or non-CMAs adjusted for the selected control variables. Overall, the findings in Table 2 suggest that immigrants living in Non-CMAs are advantaged in terms of income attainment compared to their counterparts living in CMAs.

Table 2. Income of Immigrants in CMAs and Non-CMAs

<i>Variables</i>	<i>CMAs</i>		<i>Non-CMAs</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
<i>Constant</i>	47.022		31.043	
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	0.265*	(0.002)	0.487* ¹	(0.007)
Female (ref)				
<i>Age</i>	0.014*	(0.001)	0.012* ¹	(0.001)
<i>Education</i>	0.015*	(0.001)	0.030* ¹	(0.001)
<i>Occupational status</i>	-0.048*	(0.003)	-0.036* ¹	(0.001)
<i>Visible minority status</i>				
Visible minority	-0.097*	(0.002)	-0.025* ¹	(0.008)
Not visible minority (ref)				
<i>Year of immigration</i>	-0.019*	(0.003)	-0.011*	(0.004)
<i>R</i> ²	0.133		0.125	
<i>F (df)</i>	20865.692*	(6 & 818,837)	1828.816*	(6 & 77091)
<i>N</i>	818,843		77,097	

*significant at 0.01 levels

¹Difference between slopes (i.e., between column 2 and column 3) is statistically significance (t-test; p<0.05).

Comparison of Immigrants' Income between CMAs

The regression model for immigrants' income in Toronto CMA shows that male immigrants are likely to have higher income attainment than female immigrants after controlling for age, education, occupational status, visible minority status, and year of immigration (Table 3). The model explains 13.4 percent of variation. Moreover, the regression model for immigrants' income in Else CMAs (Table 3) also shows that male immigrants have higher income attainment compared to female immigrants after controlling for age, education, occupational status, visible minority status, and year of immigration. This model explains 15.3 percent of variation.

Table 3. Income of Immigrants in Toronto CMA and Else CMAs (Continued...)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Toronto CMA</i>		<i>Else CMAs</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
<i>Constant</i>	50.807		39.868	
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	0.261*	(0.003)	0.357* ¹	(0.004)
Female (ref)				
<i>Age</i>	0.014*	(0.004)	0.013*	(0.001)
<i>Education</i>	0.014*	(0.003)	0.015*	(0.001)
<i>Occupational status</i>	-0.046*	(0.001)	-0.052*	(0.001)

Table 3. Income of Immigrants in Toronto CMA and Else CMAs (.....Continued)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Toronto CMA</i>		<i>Else CMAs</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
<i>Visible minority status</i>				
Visible minority	-0.131*	(0.003)	-0.124*	(0.004)
Not visible minority (ref)				
<i>Year of immigration</i>	-0.021*	(0.001)	-0.015*	(0.002)
<i>R²</i>	0.134		0.153	
<i>F (df)</i>	9826.848* (6 & 382,302)		6349.737* (6 & 211,561)	
<i>N</i>	382,308		211,567	

*significant at 0.01 levels

¹Difference between slopes (i.e., between column 2 and column 3) is statistically significance (t-test; p<0.05).

Comparison of income attainment in Toronto and Else CMAs shows that male immigrants living in Else CMAs have higher income attainment than male immigrants living in Toronto CMA (Table 3). Table 3 also shows that visible minority immigrants living in Else CMAs have higher income attainment compared to visible minority immigrants living in Toronto CMA.

Table 4 shows that male immigrants living in Montreal CMA are likely to have higher income attainment compared to their female counterparts after controlling for age, education, occupational status, visible minority status, and year of immigration. Comparison of income attainment shows that male immigrants living in Else CMAs are likely to have higher income compared to male immigrants living in Montreal CMA (Table 4). However, visible minority immigrants living in Montreal CMA have higher income compared to visible minority immigrants living in Else CMAs (Table 4).

Table 4. Income of Immigrants in Montreal CMA and Else CMAs

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Montreal CMA</i>		<i>Else CMAs</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
<i>Constant</i>	43.935		39.868	
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	0.157*	(0.006)	0.357* ¹	(0.004)
Female (ref)				
<i>Age</i>	0.019*	(0.001)	0.013*	(0.001)
<i>Education</i>	0.019*	(0.001)	0.015*	(0.001)
<i>Occupational status</i>	-0.055*	(0.001)	-0.052*	(0.001)
<i>Visible minority status</i>				
Visible minority	-0.069*	(0.006)	-0.124* ¹	(0.004)
Not visible minority (ref)				
<i>Year of immigration</i>	-0.017*	(0.004)	-0.015*	(0.003)
<i>R²</i>	0.148		0.153	
<i>F (df)</i>	2840.084* (6 & 98,168)		6349.737* (6 & 211,561)	
<i>N</i>	98,174		211,567	

*significant at 0.01 levels (t-test; p<0.05).

¹Difference between slopes (i.e., between column 2 and column 3) is statistically significance

Table 5 shows that male immigrants living in Vancouver CMA are likely to have higher income attainment compared their female counterparts after controlling for age, education, occupational status, visible minority status, and year of immigration. The model explains 11.3 percent of variation. Comparison of income attainment shows that male immigrants living in Else CMAs have higher income than male immigrants living in Vancouver CMA (Table 5). However, visible minority immigrants living in Vancouver CMA have higher income than visible minority immigrants living in Else CMAs.

Table 5: Income of Immigrants in Vancouver CMA and Else CMAs

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Vancouver CMA</i>		<i>Else CMAs</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>(SE)</i>
<i>Constant</i>	50.736		39.868	
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	0.226*	(0.005)	0.357* ¹	(0.004)
Female (ref)				
<i>Age</i>	0.014*	(0.001)	0.013*	(0.001)
<i>Education</i>	0.008*	(0.002)	0.015*	(0.004)
<i>Occupational status</i>	-0.041*	(0.001)	-0.052*	(0.001)
<i>Visible minority status</i>				
Visible minority	-0.098*	(0.006)	-0.124* ¹	(0.004)
Not visible minority (ref)				
<i>Year of immigration</i>	-0.021*	(0.003)	-0.015*	(0.004)
<i>R</i> ²	0.113		0.153	
<i>F (df)</i>	2679.312* (6 & 126,785)		6349.737* (6 & 211,561)	
<i>N</i>	126,791		211,567	

*significant at 0.01 levels

¹Difference between slopes (i.e., between column 2 and column 3) is statistically significance (t-test; p<0.05).

Comparison of Immigrants' Income: Visible Minority versus Not Visible Minority

The regression model (full sample) for immigrants' income in CMAs in Table 6 shows that visible minority immigrants' are likely to have lower income compared to their not visible minority counterparts after controlling for gender, age, education, occupational status, and year of immigration. The model (full sample) explains 13.3 percent of variation. The interaction effect in Table 6 shows that the difference in income attainment between visible minority male immigrants and not visible minority male immigrants is statistically significant. More specifically, Table 6 shows that visible minority male immigrants have lower income in CMAs than their not visible minority counterparts.

The regression model for immigrants' income in Non-CMAs (full sample) in Table 7 shows that visible minority immigrants are likely to have lower income compared to not visible minority immigrants after controlling for gender, age, education, occupational status, and year of immigration. This model (full sample) explains 12.5 percent of variation. Table 7 also shows that the difference in income attainment between male visible minority immigrants and

male not visible minority immigrants in Non-CMAs is statistically significant, which suggests that visible minority male immigrants have lower income attainment than not visible minority immigrants.

Table 6. Income of Immigrants in CMAs by Visible minority status

Variables	Full Sample B (SE)	Visible Minority B (SE)	Not Visible Minority B (SE)
<i>Visible minority status</i>			
Visible minority	-0.097* (0.002)	----	----
Not visible minority (ref)			
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	0.265* (0.002)	0.212* (0.003)	0.366* ¹ (0.003)
Female (ref)			
<i>Age</i>	0.014* (0.001)	0.012* (0.001)	0.019* ¹ (0.003)
<i>Education</i>	0.015* (0.003)	0.017* (0.001)	0.009* ¹ (0.001)
<i>Occupational status</i>	-0.048* (0.002)	-0.044* (0.005)	-0.054* (0.004)
<i>Year of immigration</i>	-0.019* (0.001)	-0.025* (0.001)	-0.013* (0.001)
<i>Constant</i>	47.022	58.282	35.597
<i>R²</i>	0.133	0.118	0.136
<i>F (df)</i>	20865.692* (6 & 818,843)	14227.156* (5 & 532,808)	9013.788* (5 & 286,025)
<i>N</i>	818,843	532,813	286,030

*significant at 0.01 levels

¹Difference between slopes (i.e., between column 2 and column 3) is statistically significance (t-test; p<0.05).

Table 7. Income of Immigrants in Non-CMAs by Visible minority status

Variables	Full Sample B (SE)	Visible Minority B (SE)	Not Visible Minority B (SE)
<i>Visible minority status</i>			
Visible minority	-0.025* (0.008)	----	----
Not visible minority (ref)			
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	0.487* (0.007)	0.340* (0.012)	0.551* ¹ (0.008)
Female (ref)			
<i>Age</i>	0.012* (0.001)	0.004* (0.002)	0.016* ¹ (0.001)
<i>Education</i>	0.030* (0.001)	0.012* (0.002)	0.041* ¹ (0.001)
<i>Occupational status</i>	-0.036* (0.001)	-0.033* (0.002)	-0.037* ¹ (0.001)
<i>Year of immigration</i>	-0.011* (0.000)	-0.025* (0.001)	-0.007* ¹ (0.000)
<i>Constant</i>	31.043	58.670	23.155
<i>R²</i>	0.125	0.132	0.134
<i>F (df)</i>	1828.816* (6 & 77,091)	670.624* (5 & 22,134)	1699.493* (5 & 54,953)
<i>N</i>	77,097	22,139	54,958

*significant at 0.01 levels

¹Difference between slopes (i.e., between column 2 and column 3) is statistically significance (t-test; p<0.05).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, I examined the income attainment of immigrants living in CMAs and Non-CMAs in Canada using data from the 2001 census of Canada. Separate analyses were also conducted for three larger CMAs: Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. I examined immigrants' earnings living in these three CMAs with that of their counterparts living in other CMAs. Another important aspect of this study is that income differences between visible minority immigrants and not visible minority immigrants were also examined in the context of their place of residence: whether living in CMAs or not.

This study arrives at three basic conclusions. First, immigrants living in non-CMAs have higher income than their counterparts living in CMAs after controlling for selected sociodemographic characteristics. This is consistent with previous research conducted by Li (2000). Overall, Li found that the relative earning opportunities of immigrants are comparatively better in Non-CMAs than different CMA levels, when comparisons were made with their native born counterparts of the same gender and racial origin. In addition, Li (2000) also found that the relative earning opportunities of various immigrant groups were better in smaller CMAs than in larger ones.

Second, consistent with the expectations visible minority immigrants have lower income attainment than their not visible minority counterparts both in CMAs and non-CMAs even after controlling for sociodemographic characteristics. This finding suggests that visible minority immigrants are disadvantaged in the labour market and also experience some sort of discrimination because of their identity. Therefore, proper initiative should be taken to eliminate discrimination in the labour market that prevailed based on race and colour. It is worthwhile to investigate income attainment of visible minority immigrants by their country of origin.

Third, male immigrants have consistently higher income than female immigrants both in CMAs and non-CMAs even after controlling for age, education, visible minority status, occupational status and years of immigration. This finding clearly illuminates the fact that female immigrants are disadvantaged in the host society. Future research should focus on this aspect of gender variations in income attainment with a view to uncover factors associated with the inequality in income attainment. Also various policy initiatives should be taken to ensure that female immigrants have the opportunity to obtain equal education and skills to compete in the labour market with their male counterparts.

This study was conducted using census data which has some limitations. It is best to use longitudinal data to properly track the changing pattern of income attainment among immigrants living in CMAs and non-CMAs. Another limitation of this study is that immigrants' duration of residence was not included in the analysis. Prior research shows that there are substantial variations in income attainment among immigrants based on their duration of residence in the host country. Despite these limitations, this study will have important contributions to the literature on immigration and immigrants' integration into the host society.

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