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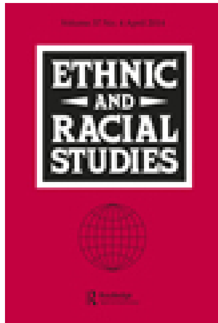

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Gender equity in Canada's newly growing religious minorities

Jeffrey G. Reitz, Mai B. Phan and Rupa Banerjee

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Using data from the 2001 Canadian census and the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey, we find greater gender inequality in labour force participation among the newly growing religious minorities in Canada relative to mainstream Canadians. This gender inequality is only partly conditioned by the presence of young children. Although greatest among Muslim immigrants, other groups including Hindus and Sikhs also exhibit greater gender inequality in labour force participation relative to mainstream Canadians. These patterns fade with time in Canada. Lastly, the differences in gender inequality among religious groups reflect national cultures in the countries of origin more than differences in religious beliefs *per se*.

Keywords: religious minorities; gender inequality; labour force integration; immigrant assimilation; Canada; census data

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1. Issues and objectives

This paper examines the employment status of women among various immigrant ethnic and religious minorities in Canada, to address public concern about whether recent immigration has seen the arrival of religious groups whose commitment to equality for women lags behind mainstream society. It compares Muslims, the group causing the greatest concern, with Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs, as well as with more established religious groups, including Protestants, Catholics and Jews. In public discourse, issues of gender in minority immigrant groups, especially Muslims, have been framed within the context of contemporary global politics rather than migration and integration and are frequently discussed without reference to evidence from broad surveys of actual behaviour of immigrant minorities and/or without comparisons among religious minorities. Evidence often comes from sources such as the treatment of women in Muslim-dominated countries, publicized cases of individual actors within the country, or specific controversies such as sharia law in Ontario or veiling in Quebec. But anecdotal or indirect evidence from public debate may not be indicative of broad-based patterns within immigrant communities. The politicized status of Muslims in the global context may focus greater negative attention on particular situations, while diverting attention from broad social patterns and from similar behaviour in other religious groups. In short, an in-depth assessment of the employment behaviour of immigrant Muslim women requires population-wide data on gender differences across Muslim communities along with an examination of how this compares to other immigrant communities, such as Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs, and to mainstream society.

2. Previous research and theory

The 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Survey of thirteen nations finds that the divide between how Westerners and Muslims view each other is related to the issue of respect for

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women. More than half of the Western respondents (including in the USA, the UK, Germany, Spain and France) thought that Muslims were not respectful to women. These impressions are supported in findings from other countries. Norris and Inglehart's (2002) evaluation of the 1995–2001 World Values/European Values Surveys shows that differences between Western countries and Islamic countries are more pronounced on attitudes to gender equality than to democracy.

That said, regional differences among Muslims around the world are marked (Antecol 2000; Jaumotte 2003; Hassan 2008; Alexander and Welzel 2011; Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester 2013; see also H'madoun 2010). Analysing data from 6,000 Muslim respondents in diverse regions, Hassan (2008) finds patriarchal views more strongly held among Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Egypt, than in Iran, Turkey or Kazakhstan. Alexander and Welzel (2011) suggest that some regional variations are related to the dominance of Islam in a particular country. While individuals living in Muslim-dominant societies tend to hold more patriarchal values than those in non-Muslim societies, Muslims in both espouse patriarchal values more than non-Muslims.

There is less research distinguishing Muslims from other religious groups that constitute growing immigrant populations in Canada. One exception, Seguino's (2011) comparison of religions and gender attitudes across ninety-seven countries, reveals higher gender conservatism among Hindus and Muslims, compared to Protestants and Catholics. When the focus shifts to religious groups within Western countries, studies find gender inequality in employment in almost all religious groups, compared to those without religious preference. In Canada, Heaton and Cornwall (1989) document variations in women's educational attainment and labour force participation across religious groups, using the 1971 and 1981 Canadian census. They find that socio-economic inequalities between men and women are related to traditional family values, also expressed in high fertility levels and low divorce rates. In the USA, Lehrer (1995) uses the National Survey of Families and Households to examine women's labour market activity, finding denominational differences only when young children are present. Sherkat (2000) presents similar results for the effect of Christianity on women's labour force participation. Using the Youth Parent Socialization Panel study tracing families over fifteen years, he finds fundamentalist Christian women more likely than other women to spend their early careers as housewives. Even so, these women are not less likely to enter the paid labour force when their children are older.

A series of studies focusing on Arab Americans by Read (2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b) examines the effect of ethnic and religious culture on women's labour force participation. Arab women work fewer hours than US-born white women even when children, family income and age are considered. Specifically, the presence of children contributes significantly to the differences in their labour force participation (Read 2004b). High religiosity coupled with the presence of young children significantly reduces the likelihood of both Christian and Muslim Arab women to be working; with no children present, these women do not differ in their likelihood of being employed. Finally, US-born Arab American women have labour force participation rates equal to US-born white women. Read concludes:

> Muslim affiliation has little or no effect on respondents' labor force participation and commitment. Gender traditionalism has a much greater effect, but contrary to popular stereotypes, being a Muslim is not synonymous with an Arab woman's belief in traditional gender roles. (2004b, 72)

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Ethnic culture is important as well. Using the 2001 Australian census, Foroutan (2008) examines origins in North Africa and the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, 'developed countries' and Australia. He finds that Muslim women are only half as likely as non-Muslim women to be employed, although almost as likely to work in high-status professional or managerial occupations. As Muslim women have diverse origins, however, he concludes that their labour situation has a 'socio-cultural basis'. Meanwhile, using British data, Heath and Martin (2013) find Muslim women less likely to participate in the labour market than co-ethnics of other religious groups; this Muslim penalty is of similar magnitude across ethnic groups, suggesting that religion, separate from ethnic origin, plays a significant role in women's labour market disadvantage.

Educational and occupational levels matter in the employment behaviour of many women, potentially affecting economic pressures that could alter culture-based patterns in religious groups. According to the opportunity-cost hypothesis, highly educated women face greater opportunity costs for not working in terms of income and status (see Becker 1960; Easterlin 1976), raising the cost of labour force withdrawal for married women with children (Desai and Waite 1991). This pattern, which applies in the mainstream population, could dampen the impact of traditional views on the role of women among the most highly educated within religious groups. However, some religious and cultural values may lead to a view of education not as human capital but rather as a family resource, affecting child-rearing and family solidarity (Read and Oselin 2008). An alternative view of the effect of religion on the employment behaviour of women at different educational levels is the 'family investment hypothesis' whereby the primary worker (usually the husband) invests in human capital through post-migration education and training to further his career, while the secondary worker (usually the wife) supports the family in the short term with low status, temporary employment, despite high educational levels in some cases. Once the investment in human capital is complete, the secondary worker may withdraw from the labour market and refocus on caring for the family (Duleep and Sanders 1993; Baker and Benjamin 1997; Cobb-Clark and Crossley 2004; Cobb-Clark, Connolly and Worwick 2005). In religious, gender-conservative families, women's careers may be more likely to take a back seat, with women engaging in low-status occupations that require less investment of time and human capital, particularly when children are young. Based on the family investment hypothesis, we would expect that employment among women in conservative religions and more recent immigrants would be relatively little affected by levels of education.

Existing research and theory has shown that while gender inequality as reflected in the gender gap in labour force participation is often greater among Muslim immigrants, other religious groups also show a significant gender gap. The previous work also shows that national and ethnic cultural patterns may be as important as religion itself, and that the role of religious beliefs in producing the variations is in question and not well documented for many groups. The extent to which group differences reflect child-rearing and child-rearing responsibilities, or other family responsibilities, also matters. The question of the extent to which group differences may erode over time and across generations as a result of economic pressures related to education and economic opportunity is essentially one of the applicability of processes of assimilation, as hypothesized, for example, by Alba and Nee (2003).

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The analysis that follows presents a more comprehensive assessment of these issues than has been possible previously, based on the case of Canadian immigration. The diversity of religions and ethnic origins within religious categories in Canada allows us to compare different religions to the non-religious and different ethnic cultures within particular religious groups. Data from the census provide large samples for the analysis of employment behaviour of religious minorities, and data from Canada's Ethnic Diversity Survey permit us to examine how religious attitudes and commitments relate to women's labour force engagement. We ask: what are the facts of cultural diversity in newly arriving immigrant groups? How specifically does gender inequality in labour force participation and employment vary among Muslims and other religious minorities such as Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, compared to the traditional mainstream religious groups? To what extent are religious beliefs themselves a factor, and to what extent do the group differences vary by national or ethnic origins? And finally, do group differences fade with time in the host country or across generations; does the hypothesis of assimilation apply?

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3. Data sources and analytic strategy

This study uses two micro-data sources: the 2001 Canadian census (20% sample) and the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS). In both, the analysis focuses on the adult permanent resident population aged twenty-four to sixty-five, and excludes Aboriginal people. The EDS was based on the 2001 census; use of the 2001 census here is based on that fact, and also on the fact that the 2006 census did not include a question on religion.

The census's large sample ($N = 3,162,160$) provides a detailed description of the labour force participation and occupational status of men and women across religious groups in Canada. We consider immigrant cohort, years in Canada (for immigrants), age, educational attainment (university degree or not), marital status (married or common law versus other), and presence of pre-school-aged children. Data are also available on ethnic origins and race, or 'visible minority' status. Visible minorities include blacks, various Asian groups, Arabs and West Asians, and other groups all of which are distinguished from 'whites' (some persons with Arab, West Asian or Hispanic ethnic origins reported that they were white on the visible minority variable).

The EDS provides further detail on religious practices. The EDS sample, which was based on the 2001 census, includes an over-sample of immigrants and visible minorities. The analysis is restricted to immigrants aged twenty-four to sixty-five due to small sample sizes of native-born religious minorities within that age range. It also includes only those reporting a religious affiliation, since the EDS analysis focuses on the effect of religiosity on gender inequality ($N = 6,510$).

Religious affiliation in the 2001 Canadian census is the response to the question 'What is this person's religion?' and in the EDS, 'What is your religion, if any?' Respondents are instructed to indicate a specific denomination or religion even if not currently practising their religion. In the EDS, religiosity is measured using three items combined into an index: frequency of public religious participation; frequency of private religious participation; and rating of the importance of religion in one's life. The three components have equal weight.

Tables 1 and 2 present sample data for the 2001 census and the 2002 EDS, respectively. Data are weighted with rescaled weights to approximate actual sample size. Statistical information is provided in the notes to the tables.

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Table 1. Percentage in each religious group by immigrant status and time in Canada, gender and visible minority status; population aged 24–65, Canadian census 2001.

	Recent immigrants (1991–2001)		Earlier immigrants (before 1991)		Born in Canada	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Not a visible minority (white)						
No religion	18%	15%	17%	12%	18%	13%
Catholic	30%	34%	45%	46%	48%	49%
Protestant	14%	15%	25%	30%	31%	34%
Other Christian	25%	25%	8%	8%	3%	3%
Muslim	8%	7%	1%	1%	0.03%	0.05%
Jewish	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Buddhist	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
(*n*)	(28,250)	(30,745)	(140,635)	(144,145)	(1,190,585)	(1,219,485)
Visible minority						
No religion	25%	23%	21%	17%	33%	28%
Catholic	19%	22%	25%	28%	21%	21%
Protestant	8%	10%	13%	17%	26%	31%
Other Christian	6%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Muslim	18%	15%	11%	9%	4%	4%
Buddhist	6%	7%	9%	9%	3%	3%
Hindu	10%	9%	8%	7%	3%	3%
Sikh	8%	7%	7%	7%	5%	5%
(*n*)	(75,660)	(88,135)	(98,130)	(104,690)	(20,875)	(20,825)

Source: Canadian census 2001, sample of population aged twenty-four to sixty-five excludes Aboriginals and non-permanent residents; total unweighted $N = 3,162,160$. Cell n's are based on rescaled weights and rounded. Due to Statistics Canada disclosure regulations, unweighted n's cannot be reported, but variations between unweighted and rescaled weighted n's are less than 0.05%.

Table 2. Percentage in religious group by gender; immigrants aged 24–65 (excluding Aboriginals and non-permanent residents), Ethnic Diversity Survey 2002.

	Men	Women
White Christian	46%	46%
Visible minority Christian	26%	31%
Jewish	2%	1%
Muslim	11%	7%
Buddhist	4%	5%
Hindu or Sikh	11%	10%
(*n*)	(2, 960)	(3, 550)

Source: EDS 2002; total unweighted N = 6, 510. Cell *n*'s are based on rescaled weights and rounded.

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Table 1 shows that among the native-born whites, Christians predominate (82% of men, 86% of women). A significant minority report 'no religion' (18% of men, 13% of women), and about 1% of both men and women indicate Jewish affiliation. By marked contrast, the newly growing religious minorities in Canada are prominent among immigrants, particularly recent immigrants, and most are visible minorities. Among visible minority recent immigrants, Muslims represent 18% of men and 15% of women. Other new religious groups are numerically significant: Hindus (10% of men, 9% of women), Sikhs (8% of men, 7% of women), and Buddhists (6% of men, 7% of women). Among visible minority, recent immigrants, the newly growing religious minorities represent 42% of men and 38% of women. Among the earlier immigrants, their proportions are smaller (35% and 32% for men and women, respectively), and among those born in Canada still smaller (16% and 15% for men and women, respectively). Therefore, the newly growing religious minorities are increasingly prominent among visible minorities.

Table 2 presents a summary of the EDS data on religious groups by gender. For the analysis, the religious classifications are greatly reduced, and recent and earlier arrived immigrants are grouped together to maximize sample sizes. The largest immigrant group is white Christians (Catholic, Protestant, other Christian) at 46%. Visible minority Christians form the next largest at 25% of men and 31% of women. Muslims constitute 11% of the men and 7% of the women. Hindus and Sikhs make up another 11% of the men and 10% of the women. Buddhists and Jews form the smallest groups: Buddhists constitute 4% of the men and 5% of the women; Jews constitute 2% of the men and 1% of the women.

The indicator of economic integration used in this study is labour force participation. Labour force participation is defined as including both employment (full-time and part-time paid employment and self-employment) and unemployment while looking for work. The analysis used in this study examines both men and women, and focuses on the gender gap in labour force participation by race, religion and immigrant cohort.

The analysis proceeds as follows. We first describe the gender gap in labour force participation across religious groups, distinguishing visible minorities from whites, for recently arrived immigrants, earlier immigrants and the second-generation children of immigrants. To see how differences in relative human capital of women and family circumstances affect the gender gap in labour force participation within each religious group, and what differences remain after these factors are taken into account, we

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Table 3. Percentage in labour force by religious group, gender, visible minority status and immigrant status, female-to-male ratio in labour force and gender odds ratio of labour force participation.

	Recent immigrants (1991–2001)				Earlier immigrants (before 1991)				Born in Canada			
	Men	Women	F/M ratio	Odds ratio	Men	Women	F/M ratio	Odds ratio	Men	Women	F/M ratio	Odds ratio
Not a visible minority (white)												
No Religion	90%	74%	0.82	0.31	86%	75%	0.88	0.51	88%	79%	0.89	0.51
	(5, 090)	(4, 575)		ref. ***	(23, 210)	(17, 680)		ref. ***	(211, 790)	(158, 900)		ref. NS
Catholic	91%	72%	0.80	0.25	82%	65%	0.79	0.41	85%	73%	0.86	0.48
	(8, 535)	(10,405)		+ ***	(63, 900)	(66, 030)		+++ ***	(568, 375)	(600, 930)		+++ NS
Protestant	93%	70%	0.75	0.18	83%	67%	0.81	0.42	86%	74%	0.85	0.46
	(3, 865)	(4, 515)		+++ NS	(35, 800)	(42, 760)		+++ ***	(365, 845)	(414, 685)		+++ NS
Other Christian	89%	73%	0.82	0.33	82%	64%	0.78	0.39	89%	76%	0.85	0.39
	(7, 125)	(7, 800)		ns ***	(11, 775)	(11, 725)		+++ ***	(32, 095)	(32, 020)		+++ *
Muslim	79%	52%	0.66	0.29	84%	60%	0.72	0.30	89%	75%	0.84	0.36
	(2, 385)	(2, 125)		ns ***	(1, 160)	(960)		+++ NS	(385)	(560)		ns NS
Jewish	90%	72%	0.80	0.29	90%	76%	0.84	0.35	91%	79%	0.86	0.35
	(1, 190)	(1, 270)		ns ***	(4, 420)	(4, 700)		+++ *	(10, 500)	(11, 140)		+++ **
Buddhist	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	87%	84%	0.96	0.76
									(1, 590)	(1, 255)		+++ *
Visible minority												
No Religion	74%	58%	0.79	0.49	85%	72%	0.85	0.46	88%	83%	0.94	0.69
	(18, 945)	(20, 460)		+++ ***	(20, 500)	(17, 960)		++ ***	(6, 980)	(5, 850)		+++ *
Catholic	86%	73%	0.84	0.43	88%	78%	0.88	0.48	88%	81%	0.93	0.61
	(14, 105)	(19, 645)		+++ ***	(24, 150)	(29, 060)		ns ***	(4, 370)	(4, 390)		++ NS
Protestant	86%	71%	0.83	0.39	88%	78%	0.89	0.48	85%	78%	0.92	0.63
	(6, 275)	(8, 855)		++ ***	(12, 995)	(17, 980)		ns ***	(5, 410)	(6, 435)		+++ NS
Other Christian	84%	67%	0.80	0.39	88%	76%	0.87	0.44	90%	80%	0.89	0.45
	(4, 760)	(5, 910)		++ ***	(5, 700)	(6, 520)		++ ***	(1, 070)	(1, 150)		ns NS

Table 3. (*Continued*)

	Recent immigrants (1991–2001)				Earlier immigrants (before 1991)				Born in Canada			
	Men	Women	F/M ratio	Odds ratio	Men	Women	F/M ratio	Odds ratio	Men	Women	F/M ratio	Odds ratio
Muslim	83% (13, 920)	47% (13, 010)	0.57	0.19 +++ ref.	86% (10, 545)	65% (8, 905)	0.76	0.31 +++ ref.	84% (795)	73% (775)	0.87	0.52 ns ref.
Buddhist	73% (4, 370)	56% (6, 380)	0.77	0.47 +++ ***	85% (9, 275)	70% (9, 725)	0.82	0.41 +++ ***	86% (550)	79% (600)	0.91	0.60 ns NS
Hindu	88% (7, 575)	62% (7, 840)	0.71	0.23 +++ **	88% (7, 670)	74% (7, 400)	0.84	0.38 +++ ***	84% (685)	80% (620)	0.96	0.78 ++ *
Sikh	87% (5, 720)	64% (6, 035)	0.74	0.27 + ***	88% (7, 280)	73% (7, 120)	0.83	0.38 +++ ***	87% (1, 025)	84% (1, 015)	0.97	0.81 +++ *

Source: 2001 Canadian census; see note to Table 1. White Buddhist immigrants (recent and earlier) are omitted due to small cell sizes. Statistical significance of difference between odds ratios within each religious group is based on baseline logistic regression (see Table 4 below).

+ $p < .05$, ++ $p < .01$, +++ $p < .001$, ns = not significant (for comparisons with whites having no religion as point of reference)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, NS = not significant (with visible minority Muslims as point of reference)

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introduce controls for human capital and family circumstance in successive regression analyses. Then the role of religious beliefs and ethnic origins are explored, using the EDS and the census data, respectively.

4. Findings: the gender gap in labour force participation by religion

A gender gap in labour force participation exists for all groups, but it varies considerably and is markedly greater for recent immigrants, particularly the growing religious minorities. Table 3 shows the percentage in the labour force for men and women in each religious group by immigrant cohort and by visible minority status. The gender gap by religion is further described in two ways. One is the female-to-male ratio of the percentages (F/M ratio). The other is the gender odds ratio, that is, the odds of female labour force participation relative to the odds of male labour force participation (given by $\frac{f}{1-f} \div \frac{m}{1-m}$ where f and m are, respectively, the female and male proportion in the labour force for each group). In each case, a ratio of 1.00 indicates complete gender equality; the extent to which the ratio deviates from 1.00 indicates a greater gender gap. The ratios differ somewhat in how gender inequality is represented, although in most cases inter-group differences are described similarly.

In the white native-born population, the largest populations are the three Christian groups and those with no religion. Labour force participation for women with no religion is 79% compared to 88% for the men; the F/M ratio is 0.89 and the odds ratio 0.51. The gender gap for the three white Christian groups is greater, although only slightly so.

Compared to these native-born groups, the gender gap is wider among recent immigrants, but for whites with no religion and for the three Christian groups, the difference is fairly small. The major differences are for recent immigrants who are religious minorities, particularly visible minority Muslims but also Hindus and Sikhs. Women's labour force participation is 74% for recent white immigrants who have no religion, but only 47% among recent visible minority Muslim immigrants; among recent Hindu and Sikh immigrants it is 62% and 64%, respectively. Although male labour force participation for recent immigrants in these groups is also lower (83% for visible minority Muslims; 88% and 87%, respectively, for the Hindus and Sikhs; compared to 90% for the whites with no religion), the gender gap as indicated by the F/M and odds ratio shows the critical differences. The F/M ratio is 0.57 for recent visible minority Muslim immigrants, 0.71 for Hindus and 0.74 for Sikhs, compared to 0.82 for whites with no religion. The odds ratios are 0.19, 0.23 and 0.27, respectively, for the three recent immigrant visible minority religious groups, compared to 0.31 for the whites with no religion.

The statistical tests for group differences in the gender gap in Table 3, indicated adjacent to the corresponding odds ratio, derive from a baseline logistic regression model with only gender, dummy variables for religion, and gender–religion interaction terms. The significance levels reported are those for the interaction term. There are two sets of tests: one where the reference group is whites with no religion, and the other where it is visible minority Muslims. Recent immigrant visible minority Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs all have significantly greater gender gaps compared to white recent immigrants with no religion; but the gender gaps for Hindus and Sikhs are significantly lower than for the visible minority Muslims.

Among recent immigrant Muslims, there is a significant difference in the gender gap for whites compared to visible minorities. Variations in the gender gap among Muslims by origin group are very significant, a fact that receives more attention below.

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Also among recent immigrants, note that the F/M ratio shows a substantially greater gender gap for the white Muslims compared to whites with no religion, but the odds ratio shows the two groups to be statistically the same. This arises because for white Muslims, the labour force participation rates for both men and women are lower than for the whites having no religion, and the two measures are affected differently by the varying relative rates for women and men. Another such case involves visible minority Buddhists who are recent immigrants. The labour force participation of women in this group is relatively low, but because the rates are also relatively low for the men, the odds ratio measure interprets the gap more favourably.

Longer time in Canada leads to a smaller gender gap, not only for Christians and those with no religion, but also for religious minority groups. Among visible minority Muslims, the F/M ratio rises from 0.57 among recent immigrants to 0.76 for earlier immigrants, and 0.87 among the native-born – virtually the same as for the mainstream population. The odds ratio rises from 0.19 to 0.31 for earlier immigrants and 0.52 among the native-born, which is not significantly different, statistically, from 0.51 in the white no-religion group. Convergence to mainstream patterns can be also seen for other groups. Among immigrant visible minorities, all four newly growing religious minorities have F/M ratios in the range 0.57–0.77. For the native-born, the ratios are all near 0.90; women and men are as equally likely to be in the labour force in these groups as in the mainstream population.

Variations in levels of education, marital status and presence of children indicate that these variables could account for some of the lower labour force participation of women in the recently arrived religious minorities. Educational levels vary among immigrant women in newly growing religious minorities, differences that are eliminated for the Canadian-born generation. And many religious groups are more likely to have young children at home (descriptive tables are available upon request). To explore the role of these human capital and family status differences in the gender gap in labour force participation, we use logistic regression, conducted separately for each of three immigrant status cohorts: recent immigrants, earlier immigrants and the Canadian-born. The baseline equation includes only gender, religious dummy variables and gender–religion interactions. Model 1 includes controls for university education, age, years since migration and language ability; Model 2 adds controls for marital status and presence of children. Since education, marital status and the presence of children have different effects for men and women, interactions of each with gender are included.

The regression results, in Table 4, show predicted odds ratios (based on the main effect of gender and gender–religion interactions) with the significance tests being those for the gender–religion interactions only. The results indicate that education, demographic variables, marital status and presence of young children only partially account for the greater gender gap among immigrants and religious minorities. Among visible minority Muslims who are recent immigrants, only family circumstances (presence of children) matters, but the net odds ratio is still quite low at 0.21, barely higher than in the baseline model (0.19) and far lower than for the benchmark group with no religion. Among recent immigrant Hindus and Sikhs, family circumstances represent a greater part of the difference from whites with no religion. For these groups family circumstances explain virtually all of gender gap difference compared to whites with no religion. However, for the new religious minorities, the most powerful factor is the change across groups according to time in Canada. For the native-born, the gender gap is not significantly different from that of whites with no religion.

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Table 4. Predicted gender odds ratios of labour force participation, by religion, visible minority status and immigrant status (based on exponentiated logistic regression coefficients).

	Recent Immigrants			Earlier Immigrants			Native-born		
	Baseline	*Model 1*[a]	*Model 2*[b]	*Baseline*	*Model 1*[a]	*Model 2*[b]	*Baseline*	*Model 1*[a]	*Model 2*[b]
White (not a visible minority)									
No religion	0.31 ref. ***	0.30 ref. ***	0.31 ref. ***	0.51 ref. ***	0.47 ref ***	0.44 ref. ***	0.51 ref. NS	0.45 ref. NS	0.43 ref. NS
Christian	0.27 + ***	0.26 + ***	0.28 ns ***	0.41 +++ ***	0.39 +++ ***	0.41 + **	0.46 +++ NS	0.43 +++ NS	0.44 +++ NS
Muslim	0.29 ns ***	0.30 ns ***	0.34 ns ***	0.30 +++ NS	0.24 +++ NS	0.27 +++ NS	0.36 ns NS	0.31 ns NS	0.37 ns NS
Jewish	0.29 ns ***	0.29 ns **	0.32 ns **	0.35 +++ *	0.33 +++ *	0.34 +++ NS	0.35 +++ **	0.33 +++ *	0.32 +++ *
Buddhist	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.76 +++ *	0.70 +++ *	0.53 +++ NS
Visible minority									
No Religion	0.49 +++ ***	0.50 +++ ***	0.51 +++ ***	0.46 ++ ***	0.45 ns ***	0.48 ns ***	0.69 +++ *	0.62 +++ *	0.56 +++ NS
Catholic	0.43 +++ ***	0.43 +++ ***	0.46 +++ ***	0.48 ns ***	0.49 ns ***	0.52 +++ ***	0.61 + NS	0.58 +++ NS	0.55 ++ NS
Protestant	0.39 ++ ***	0.40 +++ ***	0.43 +++ ***	0.48 ns ***	0.48 ns ***	0.51 + ***	0.63 +++ NS	0.58 +++ NS	0.56 +++ NS
Other Christian	0.39 ++ ***	0.40 ++ ***	0.42 +++ ***	0.44 ++ ***	0.43 ns ***	0.46 ns ***	0.45 ns NS	0.42 ns NS	0.41 ns NS
Muslim	0.19 +++ ref.	0.18 +++ ref.	0.21 +++ ref.	0.31 +++ ref.	0.28 +++ ref.	0.31 +++ ref.	0.52 ns ref.	0.47 ns ref.	0.46 ns ref.
Buddhist	0.47 +++ ***	0.49 +++ ***	0.48 +++ ***	0.41 +++ ***	0.44 ns ***	0.48 ns ***	0.60 ns NS	0.54 ns NS	0.46 ns NS
Hindu	0.23 +++ **	0.23 ++ ***	0.27 ns ***	0.38 +++ ***	0.34 +++ **	0.40 + ***	0.78 ++ *	0.71 + *	0.54 ns NS
Sikh	0.27 + ***	0.27 ns ***	0.31 ns ***	0.38 +++ ***	0.37 +++ ***	0.47 ns ***	0.81 +++ *	0.74 ++ *	0.77 +++ *

Source: 2001 census; see notes to Table 1 and Table 3. Baseline model includes only dummy variables for religious groups by race. Model 1 also includes controls for university degree (and gender interaction), age, years since migration and official language ability (for immigrants); Model 2 adds controls for marital status, presence of pre-school-aged children, and gender interactions with each.

We also examined whether religion affects the gender gap in professional/managerial employment (results available upon request). We found that although there was a gender gap in occupational status among recent immigrants from all religious backgrounds, the gap was greatest for the growing religious minorities. However, an impact of religion on the occupational status of women relative to men is much less apparent than its impact on labour force participation. Among those born in Canada, the occupational gender gap was much smaller for most groups, implying that time in Canada has a positive effect on gendered occupational choices.

5. Findings: effects of religiosity

Differences between religions might be due to the higher degrees of religiosity in some groups or differences in the impact of religiosity on behaviour. The pattern of religiosity by race and religious group for EDS data is reported in Reitz et al. (2009); although some new immigrant groups are more frequently highly religious, including Muslims and visible minority Protestants (many of whom are Caribbean blacks), religiosity itself has relatively small effects on seven measures of social integration in society. As often positive as negative, these effects parallel the effects of ethnic community involvement generally, suggesting that religiosity reflects ethnic community involvement (Reitz et al. 2009, 718–720).

In the EDS data, religiosity has very little relation to labour force participation for either men or women in any immigrant religious group. Table 5 presents zero-order Pearson correlations of labour force participation and importance of religion, frequency of religious participation, and frequency of private worship. There are no significant effects for men, small negative relations for white Christian women, somewhat larger but positive effects for Hindu women, and positive effects for Buddhist women. There are no effects for Muslim women. These results indicate that religiosity has little bearing on the gender gap in labour force participation.

Table 5. Correlation between labour force participation and religiosity of immigrants by religion, visible minority status and gender.

	Importance of religion	Frequency of participation	Frequency of private worship	Religiosity index
Men				
White Christian	−0.016	−0.039	−0.022	−0.028
Visible minority Christian	0.004	−0.01	−0.018	0.012
Muslim	−0.014	−0.013	0.024	0.011
Visible minority Buddhist	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hindu/Sikh	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Women				
White Christian	−0.079**	−0.077**	−0.07*	−0.079**
Visible minority Christian	0.038	−0.02	0.002	−0.005
Muslim	−0.053	−0.013	−0.096	0.001
Visible minority Buddhist	0.172*	−0.004	0.073	0.059
Hindu/Sikh	N/A	0.124*	−0.075	0.012

Source: EDS 2002; see note to Table 2.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

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6. Findings: nationality, ethnicity and religion

Differences in the status of women among religious groups may reflect national or ethnic cultures that are shared by religious groups but independent of the religion as practised in other nations or by other ethnic groups of the same religion. Therefore, we examine national or ethnic variations in the gender gap for two religious groups with diverse origins: Muslims and Christians. The effects of ethnic cultures are expected to be most salient for immigrants, so we compare recent and earlier immigrants and omit the native-born from this analysis.

Muslim immigrants in Canada come from many origins in South Asia, the Middle East, West Asia, Africa and southeastern Europe. Christian immigrants come not only from Europe but also from South and East Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean. We investigate the gender gap in labour force participation of selected ethnic origins for Muslim and Christian immigrants, in Tables 6 and 7, respectively. These tables present the labour force participation rates of men and women and the odds ratios (of women relative to men). In each table, significance tests examine differences in odds ratios (exponentiated log-odds coefficients in a logistic regression) for each national origin group compared with a group common to both tables, the Lebanese.

Table 6 clearly shows that gender inequity in labour force participation among Muslim immigrants varies not only by race (as shown in Tables 3 and 4) but also across several national origins groups. For recent immigrants, it is greatest among Pakistanis (0.09), East Indians (0.16), other South Asians (0.12) and also Egyptians (0.16), Turks (0.17) and Lebanese (0.13); somewhat smaller among Somalis (0.22), Algerians (0.22), Moroccans (0.27), Afghans (0.27), Iranians (0.31) and Albanians (0.33); and smallest among Bosnians (0.55). Among recent immigrant Muslims, generally there is contrast between greater inequality among those of South Asian origins, less among those of African origin, and still less among those of European origin, with Middle Eastern origin showing varying patterns of gender inequality. In many groups, there is less inequality for the earlier immigrants, particularly for the South Asians; for some groups there is little difference by period of immigration; while for still others (notably the Moroccans and Algerians), inequality is greater for those who have been in Canada longer.

Interestingly, Table 7 shows national variation in the gender gap for Christian immigrants as well, rivalling the range in variation among the Muslim immigrant nationalities. Among recent immigrants, certain Christian ethnic groups such as recent immigrant Germans (0.14), Lebanese (0.19) and Portuguese (0.19) present similar gender gaps to some Muslim groups. Christians from these national groups have larger gender gaps in labour force participation when compared with other Christian ethnic groups. Interestingly, among Christians the smallest gender gaps (largest odds ratios) appear not only for some European origins such as the French, but also for a number of Asian and Caribbean origins: Filipino, Chinese, East Indian and Korean; Jamaican and Haitian.

When comparing co-ethnics of different religions, Muslims display greater gender inequity than Christians in labour force participation. For example, the odds ratio is significantly lower for recent immigrant East Indian Muslims compared to their Christian counterparts (0.16 vs 0.30). The pattern is the same for Lebanese Muslims (0.13) compared to Christians (0.19). However, the variations by nationality are greater, and the distinctiveness of the visible minority Muslim group in general in the previous analyses is

Table 6. Labour force participation rates of Muslim immigrant men and women, and odds ratios, by immigrant status and national origins.

	Recent immigrants			Earlier immigrants		
	Men	Women	Odds ratio	Men	Women	Odds ratio
Bosnian*	79%	67%	0.55+++			
	(430)	(380)		80%	56%	0.42+++
Albanian*	67%	41%	0.33+++	(110)	(90)	
	(265)	(245)				
Algerian	87%	61%	0.22++	90%	58%	0.16 ns
	(565)	(450)		(125)	(60)	
Egyptian	85%	47%	0.16 ns	81%	65%	0.44+++
	(260)	(170)		(275)	(160)	
Lebanese	81%	37%	0.13 ref.	85%	45%	0.14 ref.
	(755)	(680)		(1,055)	(855)	
Moroccan	83%	56%	0.27+++	92%	58%	0.12 ns
	(480)	(450)		(230)	(130)	
Iranian	81%	57%	0.31+++	88%	72%	0.34+++
	(2,265)	(2,210)		(1,155)	(885)	
Turk	85%	48%	0.17 ns	82%	63%	0.38+++
	(400)	(350)		(325)	(240)	
Afghan	70%	38%	0.27+++	79%	52%	0.30++
	(670)	(725)		(310)	(220)	
Other Arab	78%	40%	0.19+	79%	52%	0.29+++
	(1,325)	(1,010)		(690)	(410)	
Pakistani	87%	36%	0.09++	85%	59%	0.26+++
	(1,920)	(1,650)		(915)	(765)	
East Indian	88%	53%	0.16 ns	88%	71%	0.34+++
	(2,175)	(2,090)		(3,825)	(3,800)	
Other South Asian	87%	44%	0.12 ns	85%	58%	0.25+
	(500)	(465)		(215)	(205)	
Somali	77%	42%	0.22++	86%	50%	0.16 ns
	(585)	(995)		(265)	(220)	

Source: Canadian census 2001; see note to Table 1; unweighted n = 23,970 (recent immigrants) and n = 17,340 (earlier immigrants). Cell n's are based on rescaled weights and rounded. Bosnian and Albanian Muslims are combined for earlier immigrants due to small sample sizes.

+ $p < .05$, ++ $p < .01$, +++ $p < .001$, ns = not significant (for comparison of odds ratios for each group with Lebanese as point of reference)

affected by strong representation from South Asia, especially Pakistanis, and the Middle East.

7. Conclusions

The data suggest that the newly growing religious minorities in Canada present different and more pronounced patterns of gender inequality as reflected in labour force participation, partly because of fertility levels and the presence of young children. Although gender inequality is greatest for Muslims, it is also substantially greater among

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Table 7. Labour force participation rates of Christian immigrant men and women, and odds ratios, by immigrant status and national origins.

	Recent immigrants			Earlier immigrants		
	Men	Women	Odds ratio	Men	Women	Odds ratio
English	94% (1,815)	74% (2,005)	0.19 ns	85% (16,740)	71% (20,490)	0.42+++
Irish	94% (445)	77% (505)	0.21 ns	86% (4,150)	72% (4,930)	0.43+++
Scottish	91% (420)	77% (465)	0.34+	83% (6,420)	70% (8,060)	0.46+++
German	92% (985)	62% (1,225)	0.14 ns	78% (9,020)	60% (10,525)	0.42+++
French	92% (1,205)	81% (1,200)	0.40+++	83% (3,380)	74% (3,750)	0.57+++
Dutch	95% (410)	77% (385)	0.17 ns	84% (5,810)	63% (5,630)	0.32 ns
Polish	93% (2,245)	74% (3,155)	0.22 ns	90% (6,965)	76% (7,650)	0.37++
Romanian	92% (1,940)	81% (2,040)	0.36+++	86% (835)	77% (735)	0.53+++
Greek	88% (240)	60% (200)	0.21 ns	79% (5,215)	59% (5,065)	0.39+++
Spanish	89% (1,075)	68% (1,445)	0.27+	88% (2,475)	71% (2,815)	0.34 ns
Italian	88% (620)	70% (575)	0.32+	77% (20,375)	55% (19,360)	0.35++
Portuguese	92% (970)	68% (995)	0.19 ns	84% (11,350)	64% (11,495)	0.34+
Lebanese	85% (755)	53% (800)	0.19 ref.	86% (2,080)	63% (1,765)	0.28 ref.
East Indian	92% (1,390)	77% (1,620)	0.30++	89% (2,475)	77% (2,785)	0.42+++
Chinese	79% (3,970)	62% (5,735)	0.45+++	88% (7,160)	76% (9,265)	0.43+++
Korean	74% (1,595)	53% (1,920)	0.41+++	86% (1,645)	74% (1,890)	0.45+++
Filipino	89% (5,620)	81% (9,565)	0.54+++	89% (6,395)	83% (9,865)	0.60+++
Jamaican	92% (1,070)	84% (1,595)	0.44+++	89% (4,055)	83% (6,305)	0.61+++
Haitian	87% (585)	74% (850)	0.44+++	84% (1,935)	77% (2,660)	0.62+++

Source: Census 2001; see note to Table 1; unweighted n = 63, 320 (recent immigrants) and n = 251, 760 (earlier immigrants). Cell n's are based on rescaled weights and rounded.

+ $p < .05$, ++ $p < .01$, +++ $p < .001$, ns = not significant (for comparison of odds ratios for each group with Lebanese as point of reference).

other groups, including Hindus and Sikhs, compared to Christians or those with no religion, among immigrants and in the native-born population. However, these

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differences among religious groups have little relation to expression of religious commitment; they partly reflect national cultures in the countries of origin as well as differences in religious beliefs themselves. Within both Muslim and Christian immigrant groups there is more gender inequality for those from origins in South Asia and parts of the Middle East, for example, than for those from some European origins. Finally, we find that these patterns fade with longer experience in Canada, and they are not at all a significant factor affecting gender inequality among the native-born in any of the newly growing religious minorities.

Our results confirm that Read and Oselin's (2008) US findings apply in Canada, but we extend their work in two ways. First, our analysis is based on a survey across the population, including mainstream religious groups and a variety of growing religious minorities. Muslim Canadians come from a variety of backgrounds, and we show that Muslims of certain origins are more conservative regarding gender roles than the Arab group at the centre of the earlier US studies, who, in turn, are more conservative than Muslims of European origin. Furthermore, we find that Christians from certain ethnic origins share similar gender gaps to Muslims. Thus, the patterns at issue are also ethnic or national and cultural, not just religious.

Second, we show that the strength of religious commitment is not critical to conservative behaviour in any of these minority groups. Admittedly, within each group the status of women may be associated with religious teachings, but this does not necessarily mean that commitment to religion is at the root of gender inequity. In fact, traditional gender roles are observed by those not strongly committed to a religious doctrine.

The results from this analysis highlight the ways in which culture and religion work in conjunction to affect gendered economic behaviours. Immigrants, particularly recently arrived immigrants, bring with them ideas about gender roles from their countries of origin. These ideas come not only from religious beliefs, but also from the socio-cultural norms in their home countries. Certain ethnic groups (e.g. the South Asians and Lebanese), regardless of religion, seem to hold more traditional views about the role of women in society. These results are consistent with previous studies (see Foroutan 2008; Hassan 2008), which have found that views on gender roles have a 'socio-cultural' basis.

However, we also find a distinct effect of religion, separate from culture, on gender inequity. This implies that although culture does play a role, religious affiliation also has significance in determining one's beliefs about women's roles in society. The relationship between culture and religion is itself complex and difficult to disentangle, of course. In any country, religion both influences and is influenced by social and ideological culture. Religious beliefs affect cultural norms in overt and subtle ways and in turn culture affects the way that religion is practised in various countries. Our findings underscore the intersection between religion and culture and the fact that both have important effects on gender inequity.

The convergence of gender differences across generations suggests that the social integration of religious minorities is not fatally obstructed by conservative views on the status of women among specific immigrant groups. Neither men nor women in these groups are isolated from mainstream society specifically by their views on gender. Even so, the challenges that women with young children face in entering the labour force transcend religion. Immigration experiences across generational cohorts indicate that cultural integration and assimilation of minorities do occur (Breton 2012).

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What is observed for the present Canadian-born generation reflects experiences flowing from previous waves of immigration. In addition, the mainstream gender attitudes that influence immigrant community life are changing, shaped by policies that create incentives and risks for women in the labour force: the availability of childcare, tax codes rewarding women's work and benefit structures promoting labour market involvement differently for different occupations. These effects can be expected to interact with religious and cultural attitudes about gender roles to determine women's labour market outcomes. Hence, the future for the children of today's immigrants may be quite different from those observed here.

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