

**Migrating Gender Inequalities?  
Immigrant Women's Participation in Political Survey Research**

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT  
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## **Migrating Gender Inequalities? Immigrant Women's Participation in Political Survey Research**

With the change in immigration policies in the 1960s and technological changes that made migration around the world easier, migration composition has changed radically in Canada and in most Western democracies. New waves of immigrants bring a diversity of social, economic and political experiences from their country of origin. Immigrants come from rich and poor countries, from democratic and repressive countries and from agrarian and post-industrial societies. Research has demonstrated the enduring and structuring character of some of these pre-migration experiences for newcomers' integration in the host society, more specifically focusing on those relating to political repression (Gitelman 1982; McAllister and Makkai 1992; Bueker 2005; Bilodeau 2008; Bilodeau et al. 2010; Maxwell 2010).

Variations in gender inequalities across countries are also important (Inglehart and Norris 2003) and hence immigrants coming to Canada and other Western democracies also carry with them such diverse experiences concerning the role and place of women in society. For instance, since the year 1980, more than two thirds of immigrants to Canada arrived from countries where the gap in human development between men of women is considered severe.<sup>1</sup> This raises the question of how immigrant women raised in contexts of severe gender inequalities integrate to the politics of the host society. Do gender inequalities migrate with newcomers in the host society? Do immigrant women from countries with great gender inequalities seize the opportunities offered to them in the host society or tend to find themselves in situations in which some of the gender inequalities found in the country of origin are reproduced?

This paper provides a preliminary look at the weight of pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities on the political integration of immigrant women. If research on immigrants' political integration is still overall at the 'infancy' stage (Ramakrishnan 2005: 14) our knowledge of the specific situation for immigrant women is even further under developed. Most of the times gender consists of a control variable and not a unit of analysis in itself, except for Gidengil and Stolle (2009). In a preliminary step, this paper does not investigate the substantives political behaviors and attitudes of immigrant women like it is typically done when studying newcomers' political integration. Rather, this paper makes the argument that significant lessons can be learned first by investigating the propensity of immigrant women to participate to political surveys and to provide substantive responses to survey questions. Such a first step is critical to assess whether any inferences regarding immigrant women can claim to be reliable and truly representative of our increasing population of immigrant women from countries where gender inequalities are prevalent. In order to investigate these questions, the paper relies on a pooled data set of the *Canadian Election Studies* conducted between 1997 and 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> Official immigration statistics were categorized based on 1996 countries' classification on the Gender Development Index.

## **Immigrant Women and Survey Research**

There are many reasons to expect that generally immigrants (both women and men) might be under represented in political surveys and more likely to provide non-responses to specific survey questions than the local population of the host society. First, there are cultural (or knowledge) barriers for immigrants when asked to provide political opinions. Acquiring a factual knowledge about the political system is a central step in developing opinions (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996: 229). The idea is that individuals must “know what something is before they can say how they feel about it, or whether or not they like it” (Cook 1985: 1081). Consequently, before immigrants know for instance what are the main political forces, current public authorities, and salient issues in the new political context, it might be difficult to articulate opinions about public affairs or even to accept to take part in a political survey.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the propensity to hold or to provide opinions also varies with the socio-structural positioning (socio-economic status and resources) of individuals (Krosnick and Milburn 1990). On these grounds, immigrants are often disadvantaged in comparison to the local population, facing difficulties in finding decent employment and climbing up the socio-economic ladder. Accordingly, we would expect them to be more likely to provide non-responses to political questions.

Third, and relating to the first point, proficiency in the language of the host society (here English or French) is known to be a determinant factor in the political integration of immigrants (Uhlener, Cain and Kiewiet 1989; Cho 1999; Ramakrishnan 2005). It is certainly likely to play a key role in the acquisition of knowledge of the society and in the development of political opinions. In this vein, Gidengil and Stolle (2009) demonstrate that immigrant women less fluent in French or English in Canada possess lower levels of political knowledge.

What this paper is interested in, however, is not so much the survey representation and levels of non-responses among immigrants and non-immigrants, but rather the specific impact of gender and pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities in shaping responses to survey research among immigrant women. Survey research has demonstrated that women (regardless of their immigrant status) are often less likely than men to provide substantive responses to survey research; women more often than men answer that they ‘don’t know’ or have ‘no opinions’ to survey questions tapping on political issues (Rapoport 1982; Francis and Busch 1975). Early research argued that women were suffering from stereotyped images of politics predominantly dominated by men (Milbrath and Goel 1977) and that such images would make women culturally more insecure about providing political opinions (Rapoport 1982). What holds for women generally might well also hold for immigrant women, and even more so for those coming from countries where gender inequalities are prevalent and political gender

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<sup>2</sup> Research shows that people usually know little about politics, and significantly less than they apparently should, but this does not stop most of people to hold opinions (Neuman 1986; Delli Carpini 1996; Berelson 1952). Possessing knowledge does not always appear as a necessary condition to hold opinions (Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Nevertheless, it is a reasonable assumption to expect that people who know more about politics are more likely to hold opinions than those who know less.

stereotypes even more pronounced. In essence, the factors mentioned above (culture, structural positioning, and language proficiency) might all be amplified for immigrant women's experiences with gender inequalities in the country of origin.

Immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities might be less likely than other women to accept to take part in a political survey and to hold political opinions because, culturally, for them politics might be perceived as a men's business only. More than other women, immigrant women from countries with great gender inequalities grew up in contexts where only men talk about and get involved in politics, and accordingly where it is not a woman's business to think and talk about politics.

This cultural explanation could manifest itself through two different variants. First, and this connects to the knowledge explanation, immigrant women from countries with great gender inequalities would not regard politics as important, and accordingly lack knowledge about politics more than any other group of immigrants, men or women. Here, this group of immigrant women would genuinely have no interest in taking part in a political survey and would not hold political opinions. Interestingly, public opinion research in transitional democracies provides evidence that could be interpreted as consistent with this hypothesis. It demonstrates that it is challenging for people socialized under non-democratic regimes to articulate opinions about democracy. People are hesitant and confused and provide "don't know" responses to survey questions about democracy (Miller, Helsi and Reisinger 1995, 1997: 160; Mishler and Rose 1996; Bratton and Mattes 2001a: 108; 2001b: 454; Carnaghan 1996).

The second variant of the cultural explanation emphasizes a reluctance of expressing opinions rather than a lack of knowledge. A culture of gender inequalities, domination and marginalization in which politics is not a women's business might create strong pressures under which immigrant women prefer to keep for themselves their political opinions. Here, this group of immigrant women would hold opinions but prefer not to express them. This hypothesis is also consistent with some evidence concerning the impact of pre-migration experiences with political repression. Harles (1997) talks about immigrants from Laos who are less willing to talk about politics because that is something they would fear doing in the country of origin. A similar reluctance to that associated with experiences of political repression could be associated with experiences of severe gender inequalities.

Non-responses among immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities could also originate from their structural positioning in society. Resources, especially those associated with education, are among the best predictors of whether or not people provide opinions (Krosnick and Milburn (1990). Social networks are also a key determinant of immigrant women's knowledge of politics (Gidengil and Stolle 2009). Immigrant women from countries where women development in terms of education and employment is low, and especially lagging behind that of men, could be likely to lag behind men of their communities when coming to Canada in terms of education, employment and financial autonomy. Accordingly, this would increase their propensity to hold 'no opinion' on political affairs.

Finally, the language proficiency argument could also be more salient for immigrant women from countries with great gender inequalities. The same way this group of immigrant women could be occupying a less advantageous structural positioning within the host society, their patterns of social interactions and social networks (potential social isolation or bonds more restricted to people of the same ethnic community) could also result into lower proficiency in the official languages of the host society, and hence limit the capacity to participate to political surveys and to provide substantive opinions to political questions.

### Research Design and Data

Pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities are measured using the *Gender Development Index* (GDI) created by the *United Nations Development Program*.<sup>3</sup> The GDI measures the disparity between men and women in terms of life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, combined primary, secondary, tertiary education enrolment ratio, and estimated earned income.<sup>4</sup> Immigrant women (and men) are attributed the GDI score for their country of origin. We thus measure the situation of human development among women in immigrants' country of origin and not individual immigrants' personal experience with gender inequality.<sup>5</sup>

The paper relies on a pooled data set of the *Canadian Election Studies* (CES) - 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006 and 2008.<sup>6</sup> Because of the limited sample size and to accommodate the sample distribution along GDI scores, immigrants are then grouped into three categories: those from a country where 'large' inequalities prevail (GDI scores from 0 to .700), those where 'medium'

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, please visit: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi\\_gem/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi_gem/)

<sup>4</sup> In order to measure more precisely immigrant women's pre-migration experience with gender inequalities relating to politics *per se*, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) would have been a more appropriate measurement. GEM measures the percentages of parliament seats occupied by women, women legislators, senior officials, and managers, women professional and technical workers, and finally the ratio of estimated women to men earned income. The GDI was preferred over the GEM because its coverage in terms of countries included and years for which the measurement is available is much broader. Even more importantly, countries missing GEM scores (but having GDI scores) disproportionately come from poor and low-development countries, precisely those more likely to be the focus of this paper. The loss in conceptual precision seems limited however in comparison to the gains made in terms of sample size. In effect, the correlation between GDI and GEM in our sample (when a measurement is available for both) is .75 (Pearson Coefficient).

<sup>5</sup> Only immigrants who arrived after 1950 in Canada are included in the sample. This decision aims at maximizing our sample size while minimizing the distance between the moment immigrants left their country of origin and the moment the GDI score was measure. GDI scores used for the analyses were measured for 1996, the earliest score available.

<sup>6</sup> Other surveys than the CES more specialized on immigrants' integration could have been used such as the 2006 and 2000 *New Immigrant Surveys* conducted as part of the Canadian component of the *World Values Surveys*. The CES, however, seem better suited as a tool to measure the gender gaps present in survey research in the ways it is investigated in this research than these other more immigrant specialized surveys. The immigrant-focused surveys (as opposed to those in which immigrants were randomly drawn along with other members of the society) are likely to include a sample design that could affect the distribution of respondents from what we might 'normally' see in a random sample. For instance, using surveys such as the *New Immigrants Surveys* that target recently arrived immigrants could distort the men/women ratio, especially from specific communities. This could happen because immigrant women often arrive first as economic migrants and are then reunited after several years with their family under the reunification process.

inequalities are observed (GDI scores from .701 to .850), and those from a country where more limited inequalities are observed (GDI scores from .851 to 1.000).

The analyses thus examine the political integration of immigrant women according to the level of gender inequality in their country of origin. The objective is to assess whether pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities shape the political integration of immigrant women, whether the weight of gender inequalities migrate with them to shape the way they will relate to politics in the host society. The analyses also examine immigrant men. Immigrant men provide a useful benchmark to ensure that potential gaps in integration among immigrant women from countries with large, medium and small gender inequalities are actually caused by gender inequalities and not by other structural factors. The pooled 1997-2008 CES provides samples of 551 immigrants from countries with large gender inequalities, 404 immigrants from countries with medium gender inequalities, and 997 immigrants from countries with small gender inequalities.<sup>7</sup>

### **Immigrant Women and Their Representation in the *Canadian Election Studies***

The first step of the analysis requires an examination of immigrant women representation in the 1997-2008 *Canadian Election Studies*. The task is to investigate the extent to which immigrant women from countries with large, medium and small gender inequalities are adequately represented in comparison to immigrant men. Data in Table 1 indicate that according to official immigration statistics, overall slightly more immigrant women than immigrant men are admitted to Canada. For every 100 men arriving from countries with large, medium and small gender inequalities, respectively 104, 108 and 107 women are admitted to Canada. Table 1 also indicates, however, that women in the three immigrant communities are not adequately represented in the campaign surveys of *Canadian Election Studies*. The ratio of women to men among immigrants from countries with large gender inequalities is .80, denoting a larger presence of men than women. In comparison, the ratios are 1.02 and .96 for immigrants from countries with medium and small gender inequalities, indicating a much more balanced ratio of women and men in these communities.

It appears also that the under representation of immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities is further accentuated when the post-election surveys are conducted. The ratio of women and men among immigrants from countries with large gender inequalities drops significantly from 80 women for 100 men in the campaign surveys to only 65 women for 100 men in the post-election surveys. Furthermore, the ratio of women to men among immigrants from countries with large gender inequalities continues to decline in the mail back surveys of the CES to reach 50 women for every 100 men. In comparison, the ratios remain about constant and close to parity in representation for other immigrant communities.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

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<sup>7</sup> These samples are derived from the campaign surveys of the CES.

Reaching out to immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities appears possible yet challenging; they are under-represented in the *Canadian Election Studies*. Trying to reach out to do a follow up interview, however, is even more challenging and hence further distorts our capacity to provide an accurate portrait of their political preferences and integration. Most importantly, these findings suggest a structuring and enduring impact of pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities on immigrant women's political integration in Canada.<sup>8</sup>

### **Immigrant Women and Their Propensity to Answer Survey Questions**

Aside from measuring the representation of immigrant women and men in the CES samples, the political integration of immigrant women can also be investigated by examining their propensity to answer survey questions. Here the focus is not whether or not immigrant women accept to participate to the CES but rather, once they do participate, whether they answer the questions of interviewers. The hypothesis is that immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities are more likely to provide non-responses to survey questions than immigrant women from countries with small gender inequalities. To verify this possibility, the analysis now examines rates of non-responses ('Don't know' and 'refused') to various political questions.<sup>9</sup>

Table 2 presents the gender gaps in non-responses to questions that tap on partisan preferences such as feelings toward parties and leaders and vote choice.<sup>10</sup> First, the results demonstrate that non-responses are not the norm for any group of respondents. The majority of immigrant women, regardless of their origin, do provide substantive responses to questions measuring their political preferences. Second, the results also indicate that non-responses are linked to the overall level of human and economic development in immigrants' country of origin. Overall, non-responses are higher for both women and men of countries with low human development than for women and men from countries with higher human development. Countries with small gender inequalities tend to be more developed than those with large gender inequalities.

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<sup>8</sup> More detailed analyses were conducted on a regional base. Official admission data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada indicate that more men than women settle in Canada only from South Asia and from the regional grouping of Middle-East/Northern Africa/West Asia. The differences are not large however. In comparison, other regions (Western Europe, South and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and South-East Asia) all present larger intakes of women than men. Analyses of the CES data indicate that immigrant women of all regions are almost systematically under represented in the CES in comparison to the official benchmark. Some of the observed distortions are even striking: 25 points for South Asia and close to 30 points for Middle-East/Northern Africa/West Asia. Moreover, the data indicate is a strong correlation between the size of the distortion in representation and the importance of gender inequalities in the country of origin (Pearson correlation = -.71): the greater the gender inequalities in the country of origin, the larger the under representation of immigrant women in the CES samples.

<sup>9</sup> 'Don't know' and 'refused' responses are merged together because very few respondents provide 'refused' responses.

<sup>10</sup> Vote intention is not investigated because responses to this question are influenced by campaign dynamics more than other questions. As opposed to party evaluations it corresponds to an intended behavior that makes require a unique and final decision. Levels 'don't know' responses are also substantially higher than those for party evaluations.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Third, the gender gaps in non-responses for partisan questions are largest for immigrants from countries with large gender inequalities and smallest for those from countries with small gender inequalities. Hence, the gender gaps are .36, .31 and .11 on questions measuring feelings toward parties respectively for immigrants from countries with large, medium and small gender inequalities. Similarly, gender gaps are .32, .25 and .14 for questions measuring feelings toward party leaders. Differences are not pointing to the same pattern for the vote choice question for which gender gaps are broadly the same for all three immigrants groups. It is worth noting, however, that the vote question is (evidently) part of the post-election surveys (in which immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities are even more under represented) while the other questions are part of the campaign surveys. Overall, these findings point to larger differences between immigrant women and men in communities from countries where gender inequalities are largest.

Gender gaps are also observed within the Canadian-born population. Interestingly, the gaps are always larger than those observed among immigrants from countries with small gender inequalities, often close to those from countries with medium gender inequalities. It is worth mentioning that Canada is classified as a country with small gender inequalities. The socio-economic situation of respondents could explain this pattern.

### **Explaining Gender Gaps in Non-Responses to Survey Questions**

The challenge is to demonstrate why precisely the gender gaps are largest in immigrant communities from countries with large gender inequalities. There is no easy and perfect way to accomplish this task with the current data. The CES do not possess information on respondents' English or French proficiency. All respondents are Canadian citizens – a prerequisite to be interviewed – and must have a minimal level of English or French proficiency otherwise they simply could not have participated to the survey. Length of residence varies across communities with average of 20, 25 and 37 years of years respectively for immigrants from countries large, medium and small gender inequalities. Length of residence, however, is on average the same for men and women within each immigrant community. This leaves three potential explanations: the socio-economic situation of immigrant women and men within each community, a lack of knowledge of politics or a reluctance of expressing political opinions.

Data presented in Table 3 indicate that education cannot explain why the gender gaps in non-responses are larger for immigrants from countries with large gender inequalities; the gaps in education are not larger within these communities. Maybe counter-intuitively, the gaps in education are actually more favorable to immigrant women in communities from countries with large and medium gender inequalities than those from countries with small gender inequalities.<sup>11</sup>

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

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<sup>11</sup> Maybe this is the result of the under representation of some immigrant women in the CES.



The *Canadian Election Studies* also provide a few questions measuring respondents' knowledge of politics that can be organized into three categories: knowledge of provincial politics, federal politics and foreign politics.<sup>12</sup> Data presented in Table 3 indicate gender gaps in knowledge of politics but it is not clear whether these gaps are larger in immigrant communities from countries with large gender inequalities. For knowledge of federal politics, gender gaps are more or less the same across the three immigrant communities. For knowledge of provincial politics or foreign politics, however, gender gaps do increase with the prevalence of gender inequalities in the country of origin. It is not clear whether these different gender gaps in knowledge of politics could explain gender gaps in non-responses across immigrant communities. Yes, gender gaps in knowledge do follow the lines of gender inequalities in the country of origin for foreign and provincial politics; they do not correlate, however, to gender inequalities in the country of origin when it comes to knowledge of federal politics, and maybe this is what is most important here as this was the topic of our opinion questions in Tables 2.

It is hard to address the reluctance explanation. There is simply no question to measure directly someone's reluctance to answer a series of questions; at best this can only be inferred indirectly. Two strategies are proposed here. The first one is to examine whether larger gender gaps are still observed after controlling for the socio-economic status of immigrants and their knowledge of politics in multivariate analyses. The second strategy examines non-responses to different types of questions.

For the first strategy, a separate set of analyses is conducted for each immigrant community. The analyses proceed in three steps. Model 1 presents the gender gap for each immigrant community when the analysis controls only for the year interview. Model 2 presents the new gender gap when socio-economic factors (age, education, and income) and length of residence in Canada are included in the analyses. Finally, Model 3 indicates whether knowledge of federal, provincial and foreign politics can explain the gender gap within each community.

Table 4 reports the analyses for gender gaps in non-responses for evaluations of parties. The coefficients reported in Model 1 are consistent with those presented in Table 2: gender gaps are larger among immigrants from countries where gender inequalities are large or medium. Model 2 indicates that these differences are not explained by immigrant women's age, levels of education or household income. Furthermore, as hypothesized, length of residence does not explain the gender gaps. Finally, the gender gaps are only somewhat explained by immigrants' knowledge of politics. When controlling for knowledge of politics, the coefficients drop from .24 to .17 and from .25 to .20 respectively for immigrants from countries with large and medium gender inequalities. The pattern of greater gender gaps within immigrant communities from countries with large or medium gender inequalities thus remains mostly unexplained.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

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<sup>12</sup> See the appendix for more details about the specific questions.

Table 5 reports a similar pattern for gender gaps in evaluations of leaders. Gender gaps are larger among immigrants from countries with large and medium gender inequalities and these gaps are only partly explained when socio-economic factors and knowledge of politics are included in the analyses. Even when controlling for immigrants' socio-economic status, length of residence and knowledge of politics, gender gaps in non-responses for questions on party and leader evaluations are still larger within immigrant communities where gender inequalities are large or medium. These investigations for our first strategy do not permit to explain the larger gender gaps for some immigrant communities. The investigation now turns to the second proposed strategy.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

Arguably, not all questions are similar in the type of information that respondents provide when answering them. Questions like those examined in Table 2 have both a knowledge and opinion components. When answering those questions, respondents must know the parties and leaders and must also accept to share their personal preferences with the interviewer, hence the difficulty of identifying the motivation when they do not answer the question. Other questions, however, do not require the respondent to share their personal preference. Question asking respondents to evaluate the most likely winner in the country or in their local riding are of this type. In identifying which party is in their view most likely to win respondents do not indicate which party they personally prefer. Examining gender gaps in non-responses for these fact-based questions can be quite informative to understand the roots of gender gaps in non-responses. If gender gaps are not larger for fact-based questions within immigrant communities from countries with large gender inequalities like they are for more partisan questions, this could suggest that the issue is more a reluctance to sharing political opinions than not knowing what is happening and genuinely holding no opinions.

Data presented in Table 6 indicate that for these fact-based questions, women (immigrants and non-immigrants) are once again more likely to provide non-responses than men. Here, however, gender gaps are not larger in immigrant communities from countries with large gender inequalities. Overall, there are very little differences across immigrant communities and the Canadian-born population, and this holds both for evaluations of national and local winners. Immigrant women from countries where severe gender inequalities prevail are not more likely than immigrant women of other communities to provide non-responses to these fact-based questions. There is thus a sharp difference in the patterns of gender gaps across immigrant communities between those fact-based questions and the more partisan or opinion-based questions. Of course, it is not possible to directly identify what explains the differences in patterns of non-responses for both types of questions; it is possible, however, to indirectly infer that reluctance, more so than a lack of knowledge and opinions. At least, the evidence is consistent with such an interpretation.

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

## Conclusions

Migration composition has changed profoundly since the 1960s bringing new Canadians with various social, economic and political experiences contrasting with those of most Canadians. One set of these experiences concerns those with gender inequalities. In effect, about two thirds of immigrant women settling in Canada nowadays come from countries where the gaps between men and women in human development are major and hence where gender inequalities are widely prevalent. Yet, we know little about how these immigrant women integrate the political system of the host society, and whether their political integration is structured by these pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities. This paper aimed at shedding some light on the political integration of these immigrant women and assess whether gender inequalities somehow 'migrated' with women.

The proposed strategy, however, was not to investigate the specific political attitudes and behaviors of immigrant women but rather, in a first step, to investigate with the *Canadian Election Studies* whether they held or expressed any political opinions, and to what extent they were represented in this political survey. These initial explorations reveal two striking findings both pointing to the structuring impact of pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities.

First, immigrant women from countries with large gender inequalities are under represented in the campaign surveys of the *Canadian Election Studies* and that under representation is progressively accentuated in the post-election and mail back surveys. In comparison, no such under representation holds for women of other immigrant communities.

Second, even when they accept to take part in the *Canadian Election Studies*, immigrant women from countries where gender inequalities are large stand out from other immigrant women by their greater propensity to provide non-responses to partisan questions; this is also observed for immigrant women from countries where gender inequalities are medium. The structural socio-economic situation of these immigrant women does not explain this greater propensity for non-responses. Immigrant women from countries where gender inequalities are large or medium also appear to suffer from a greater lack of knowledge than other immigrant women, but this does not seem to account for their propensity for non-responses.

The proposed explanation is a cultural reluctance to expressing opinions among immigrant women socialized in contexts where likely, more than anywhere else, politics is considered a men's business only and where women are confined to roles inside the home. It would not be that these immigrant women do not hold opinion, but rather they prefer not to express them publicly. Of course, the evidence presented in this paper cannot directly demonstrate this relationship between reluctance to express political opinions associated to pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities and the under-representation and non-responses among immigrant women. How does one measure reluctance? It can be indirectly inferred by comparing different groups of women with different experiences of gender inequalities, by comparing non-responses for different types of questions, and by attempting to rule out alternative explanations; this is what this paper tried to do.

This paper thus adds another piece of evidence pointing to the enduring and structuring impact of immigrants' pre-migration experiences on their political integration in the host society. Immigrants are not blank slate when arriving to the host society. They bring a variety of memories that will shape the type of relationship that they will build with political actors, institutions, the political community and politics more generally. The way they will relate to politics in the host society will in part be shaped by the way they used to relate to politics in the country of origin. Previous research demonstrated such an impact for pre-migration experiences with political repression (Gitelman 1982; McAllister and Makkai 1992; Bueker 2005; Bilodeau 2008; Bilodeau et al. 2010; Maxwell 2010); this paper indicates that this holds as well for pre-migration experiences with gender inequalities. And the impact seem to be quite pervasive here: when some groups of the population seem to stay away from participating to a survey and to answer political questions, the chances are their broader political engagement with the host society can only be even more limited, atrophied.

The policy implications of such findings are substantial. The paper highlights some of the challenges that social sciences research and policy makers will face in trying to make sound and reliable inferences from survey research. Immigrant women from countries with large gender will be an increasing proportion of the Canadian population. This study suggests that reaching out to these new citizens to find out about their preferences but also possibly their needs is likely to be difficult.

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## Appendix A. Classification of Countries by Prevalence of Gender Inequalities

Large Inequalities	Medium Inequalities	Small Inequalities	n
India	133	Hungary	36
China	85	Portugal	65
Philippines	69	Poland	62
Jamaica	50	Hong Kong	41
Guyana	36	Romania	29
Pakistan	27	Lithuania	28
Sri Lanka	24	Russia	26
Haiti	22	Mexico	24
Iran	17	Ireland	24
Vietnam	15	Trinidad	20
Lebanon	14	Croatia	12
Bangladesh	10	Chile	10
Morocco	9	Korea	8
Iraq	8	Bulgaria	6
Ukraine	8	Argentina	5
El Salvador	7	Brazil	4
Ethiopia	5	Macedonia	2
Guatemala	4	Columbia	2
Dominica	3		
Turkey	3		
Nigeria	2		
		Finland	2
		Bahamas	1
		Spain	1
		Norway	1
		Iceland	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>997</b>

## **Appendix B. Construction of Variables**

*Non-responses to questions on evaluations of parties:* Scale from 0 to 3 indicating the number of times respondents answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused” when asked about their feelings towards federal parties (Liberal, NDP and Conservative - Reform, Canadian Alliance or Conservative Party of Canada). Bloc Québécois not included because the question was only asked in Québec.

*Non-responses to questions on evaluations of leaders:* Scale from 0 to 3 indicating the number of times respondents answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused” when asked about their feelings towards federal leaders (Liberal, NDP and Conservative - Reform, Canadian Alliance or Conservative Party of Canada). Leader of Bloc Québécois is not included because the question was only asked in Québec.

*Knowledge of federal politics:* Variable coded 1 if respondent provided a wrong answer when asked about their knowledge of federal political figures (Cabinet Ministers, Governor General, etc.) or answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused”. Coded 0 when provided the right answer.

*Knowledge of provincial politics:* Variable coded 1 if respondent provided a wrong answer when asked to name the premier in their province of residence or answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused”. Coded 0 when provided the right answer.

*Knowledge of foreign politics:* Variable coded 1 if respondent provided a wrong answer when asked about their political knowledge of the United States or Britain (Presidential candidates, national capitals, British Prime Minister, etc.) or answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused”. Coded 0 when provided the right answer.

*Party likely to win nationally:* Variable coded 1 if respondent answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused” when asked to determine the party that is likely to win the most seats federally. Coded 0 otherwise.

*Party likely to win locally:* Variable coded 1 if respondent answered “Don’t Know” or “Refused” when asked to determine the likely winner in their riding. Coded 0 otherwise.

*Age:* Indicate respondent’s age in years.

*Education:* Coded 1 if respondent has a Primary Education, 2 if Secondary, 3 if Post-Secondary

*Household income:* Coded 1 through 5 (5 being highest income quintile)



## Tables

**Table 1. Origin of Immigrant Women and Men by Gender Inequalities in Country of Origin**

	<b>Gender Inequalities in Country of Origin</b>			
Women/Men representation:	<b>Large</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Canadian-born</b>
Official Immigration Statistics	1.04	1.08	1.07	1.03
CES Campaign surveys	.80 (245 vs. 306)	1.02 (203 vs. 199)	.96 (487 vs. 509)	1.15 (17,690 vs. 15,361)
CES Post-election surveys	.65 (127 vs. 195)	1.00 (135 vs. 135)	.87 (343 vs. 394)	1.11 (6,127 vs. 5,517)
CES Mail back surveys*	.50 (36 vs. 72)	1.08 (54 vs. 50)	.90 (156 vs. 173)	1.17 (2,945 vs. 2,514)

Numbers in parentheses indicates sample size of immigrant women and men.

\*No mail back survey in 2006.

**Table 2. Gender Gaps in Non-responses for Partisan Questions**

	<b>Gender Gap in Non-responses by Gender Inequalities in the country of origin (Women vs. Men)</b>			
Non-responses for...	<b>Large</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Canadian-born</b>
Feelings toward parties Scale results (0-3)	.36 (.57 vs. .20)	.31 (.48 vs. .17)	.11 (.25 vs. .14)	.19 (.37 vs. .18)
Feelings toward leaders Scale results (0-3)	.32 (.70 vs. .38)	.25 (.58 vs. .33)	.14 (.33 vs. .19)	.25 (.52 vs. .27)
Vote Choice	4.1 (15.9 vs. 11.8)	5.8 (13.6 vs. 7.8)	-0.1 (9.4 vs. 9.5)	2.5 (12.8 vs. 10.3)

'Don't know' and 'Refused' are presented together.

Numbers in parentheses report the specific scores for women and men.

**Table 3. Gender Gaps in Education and Knowledge of Politics**

	Gender Gap by Gender Inequalities in Country of Origin (Women vs. Men)			
	Large	Medium	Small	Canadian-born
<b>Education</b>				
% With post-secondary education	1.4 (73.8 vs. 72.4)	.7 (61.9 vs. 61.2)	-4.8 (66.3 vs. 71.1)	.4 (42.5 vs. 42.2)
<b>Knowledge of Politics</b>				
Federal politics (2 questions)	.25 (1.39 vs. 1.14)	.22 (1.35 vs. 1.13)	.26 (1.15 vs. .90)	.23 (1.19 vs. .96)
Foreign politics (1 question on UK or USA)	17.7 (36.3 vs. 18.6)	10.3 (33.3 vs. 23.0)	6.8 (22.3 vs. 15.5)	11.2 (39.0 vs. 27.8)
Provincial politics (1 question)	12.2 (35.1 vs. 22.9)	6.9 (32.4 vs. 25.5)	5.4 (21.9 vs. 16.5)	8.2 (25.4 vs. 17.2)

Numbers in parentheses report the specific scores for females and males.

**Table 4. Gender Gaps in Non-responses for Parties' Evaluations (Multivariate Analyses)**

	Non-Responses to Questions on Feelings Toward Parties (0-3 scale)					
	Model 1		Model 2 (SES/Length)		Model 3 (Knowledge)	
Gender gaps in communities from countries with...	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
<b>Large</b>						
<b>gender inequalities</b>	.22	.08 <sup>***</sup>	.24	.08 <sup>***</sup>	.17	.08 <sup>**</sup>
<b>Medium</b>						
<b>gender inequalities</b>	.25	.09 <sup>***</sup>	.25	.09 <sup>***</sup>	.20	.08 <sup>**</sup>
<b>Small</b>						
<b>gender inequalities</b>	.08	.04 <sup>*</sup>	.05	.04	.04	.04

Entries report OLS regressions non-standardized B coefficients.

Each B coefficient reports the gender gap for a different regression analysis.

**Table 5. Gender Gaps in Non-responses for Leaders' Evaluations (Multivariate Analyses)**

Non-Responses to Questions on Feelings Toward Parties (0-3 scale)						
Gender gaps in communities from countries with...	Model 1		Model 2 (SES/Length)		Model 3 (Knowledge)	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
<b>Large</b> gender inequalities	.37	.10 <sup>***</sup>	.34	.10 <sup>***</sup>	.19	.10 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Medium</b> gender inequalities	.29	.11 <sup>**</sup>	.31	.11 <sup>***</sup>	.20	.11 <sup>*</sup>
<b>Small</b> gender inequalities	.15	.06 <sup>***</sup>	.11	.06 <sup>**</sup>	.09	.05

Entries report OLS regressions non-standardized B coefficients.

Each B coefficient reports the gender gap for a different regression analysis.

**Table 6. Gender Gaps in Non-responses for Fact-Based Questions**

Non-responses for...	Gender Gap in Non-responses by Gender Inequalities in the country of origin (Women vs. Men)			
	<b>Large</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Canadian-born</b>
Identifying likely winner nationally	6.6 (17.0 vs. 10.4)	7.1 (18.1 vs. 11.0)	10.1 (16.3 vs. 6.2)	6.8 (14.5 vs. 7.7)
Identifying likely winner locally	9.3 (20.1 vs. 10.8)	7.7 (19.1 vs. 11.4)	12.7 (18.9 vs. 6.2)	8.1 (16.9 vs. 8.8)

'Don't know' and 'Refused' are presented together.

Numbers in parentheses report the specific scores for females and males.