

Same results but different mechanisms? Occupational segregation of blacks and whites in Canadian cities

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Abstract

While the occupational disadvantage of blacks in the United States is studied extensively, it is less explored in other white-majority/ black-minority countries. Using confidential Canadian Census microdata files, we analyze the occupational segregation of blacks and whites in large cities, where most blacks in Canada live. The 1981-2016 Census data show persistent levels of occupational segregation of blacks and whites over the past 35 years; 20-30% of black women and men would have to change their occupations to attain occupational parity with their white counterparts. When we unpack the contemporary black-white occupational segregation levels using counterfactual conditional segregation proposed by Gradin (2013), the notably high percentages of immigrants among blacks in urban Canada and related linguistic characteristics help explain the racial segregation of women in particular. The results call for a more nuanced understanding of black labor market inequalities in Western societies.