

Author's Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0014-2921(16)30226-4
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2016.12.005>
Reference: EER2935

To appear in: *European Economic Review*

Received date: 30 October 2015
Accepted date: 11 December 2016

Cite this article as: Anthony Edo and Farid Toubal, Immigration and the Gender Wage Gap, *European Economic Review*
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2016.12.005>

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Immigration and the Gender Wage Gap*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of immigration on the gender wage gap. Using a detailed individual French dataset, we shed lights on the strong feminization of the immigrant workforce which coincides with an rise in the gender wage gap from 1990 to 2010. Our theoretical model predicts that a shift in the supply of female workers increases the gender wage gap when men and women are imperfect substitutes in production. Our structural estimate points to an imperfect substitutability between men and women workers of similar education, experience and occupation. Our econometric result indicates that a 10% increase in the relative supply of immigrant female workers lowers by 4% the relative wage of female native workers belonging to the same education-experience group. Accounting for cross-group effects, our simulations show that the rise in the relative number of female immigrants decreases the relative wage of female native workers, thereby contributing to a widening native gender wage gap.

Keywords: immigration, wages, gender gap, elasticity of substitution

JEL Classification: F22, J16, J21, J31, J61

*We wish to thank Michel Beine, Isabelle Bensidoun, Frédéric Docquier, Gabriel Felbermayr, Lionel Fontagné, Sébastien Jean, Mariapia Mendola, Gianmarco Ottaviano, Hillel Rapoport as well as participants at the 2016 Royal Economic Society and the 6th International Conference on Economics and Global Interactions for helpful comments. We are grateful to the Centre Maurice Halbwachs (CMH) for having granted us access to the data set. Financial support was provided by the iCODE Institute (Idex Paris-Saclay). Any errors which remain are our own.

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