Understanding the Influence of Gender, Language & Entrance Class on the use of Settlement Services among Immigrants in Canada: An Intersectional Approach

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GBA+ From Research to Policy to Measurement
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What is intersectionality?

- A process of including the influence of multiple and overlapping factors of diversity when considering life chances and outcomes

- Factors can be
  - Ascribed: assigned at birth (e.g., skin colour)
  - Achieved: traits that are earned or gained (i.e., education, class) or acquired (e.g., disability)

- Examines the influence of two or more ascribed and/or attained characteristics on a life outcome

- The "trinity" of sex, class and race are the three factors most commonly examined

Donaldson & Jedwab, 2003; Wilkinson, 2003; Creese and Stasiulis, 1996

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What is the policy context of intersectional research?

- "The key challenge for researchers and policy makers interested in issues of diversity is to determine where, how, and why various types of identities intersect" and how they influence various life outcomes.

- Yet programs need to be cost-effective and flexible and serve a large number of diverse people with differing needs

Rummens, 2003: 21; Wilkinson, 2003

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Western Canada Settlement Survey and IMDB

- Western Canada Settlement Survey
  - Random samples drawn from a CIC data file
  - Included all immigrants over 18 years, who landed between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2012 in MB, SK, AB, BC, YK, NWT, NT
  - Indicated intention to reside in target province or territory.
  - Telephone survey conducted in March 2013
  - N: 3,006
  - Response rate: 27%

- IMDB
  - Links landing records file with tax records file
  - <u>All</u> immigrants arriving between 1980 and 2010

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Table 1: Immigrants by Entrance Class and Sex 2012

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2013) IMDB
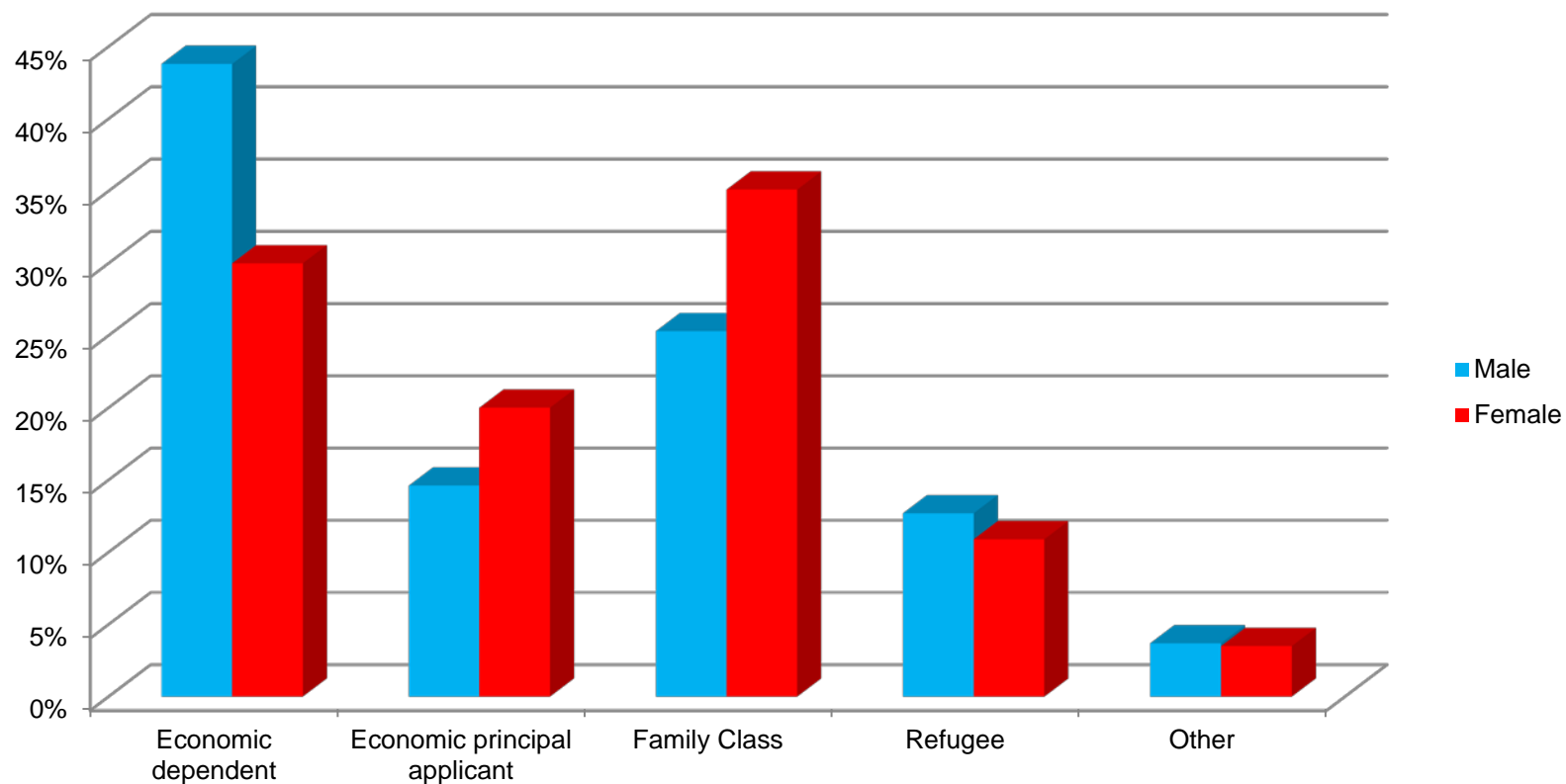
Table 2: Language by Entrance Class and Sex, 2000-2010

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2013) IMDB
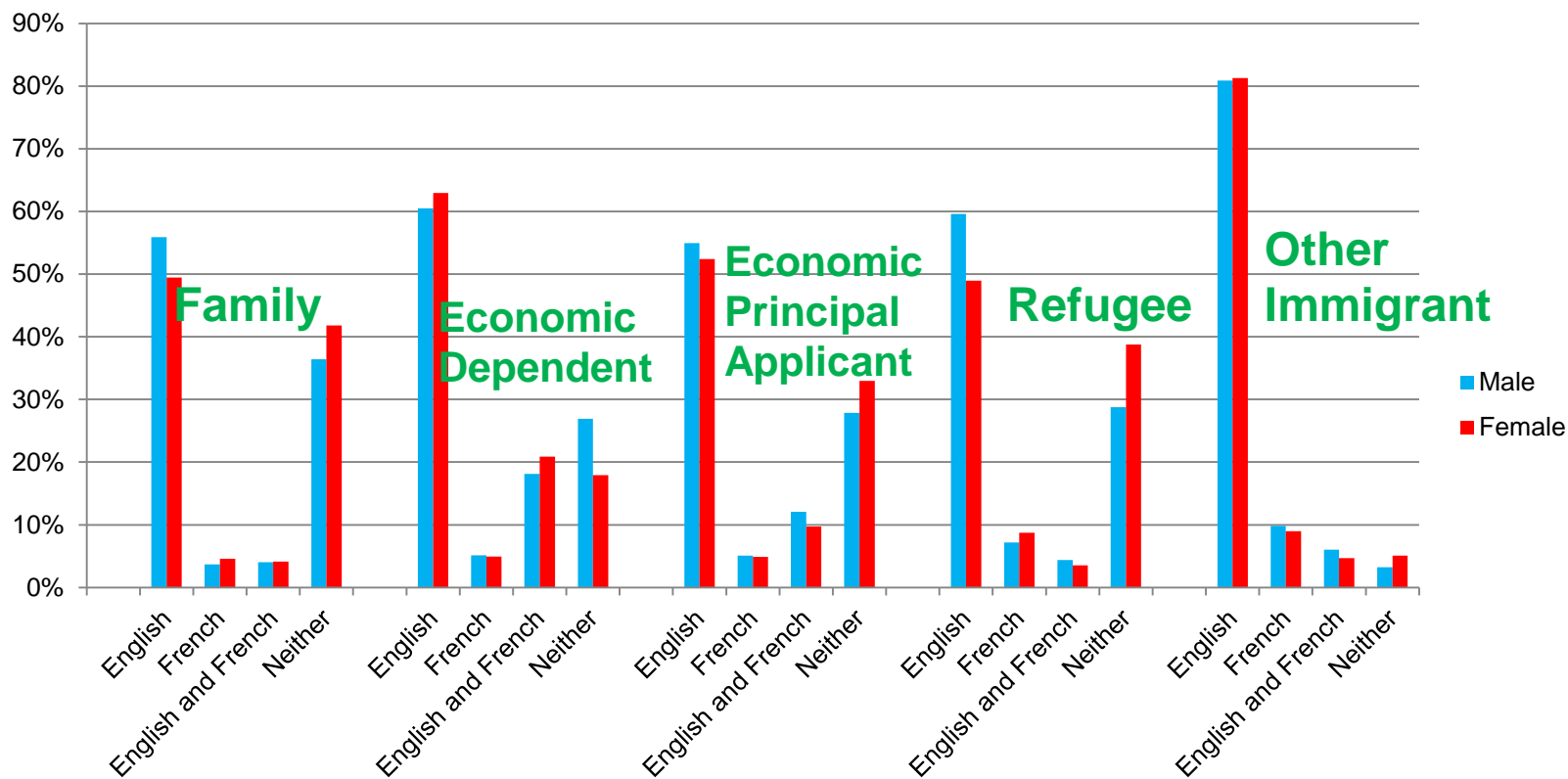
Identities and statuses influence accessibility of settlement services for immigrants

- Language fluency at entry different for dependents and among entrance classes

- Class of entry influences the number and services that can be accessed
    - Those on temporary workers visas aren't eligible for any settlement services

- Dependents may not be eligible for some settlement & language services

Vineberg, 2014

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Who Accesses Services? (part 1)
Service Use by Sex, 2013

	Male	Female
Yes	33%	33%
No	67%	67%

Source: Western Canada Settlement Survey, 2013

Note: $P<0.371$ (no sex differences)

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Who accesses services? (Part 2)

Service Use by Entrance Class and Sex, 2013

	Male		Female	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Skilled worker	37%	63%	37%	63%
Family	24%	76%	28%	73%
Provincial nominee	32%	68%	40%	60%
Refugee	61%	39%	53%	47%
Other	32%	69%	32%	68%

Source: Western Canada Settlement Survey, 2013

Note: $P<0.001$ for males and females

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Who accesses services? (Part 3)
Service Use by Various Characteristics, 2013

- **African Newcomers**: <u>Male</u> (1.7X), French speaking (3.3X), Refugee (2.6X), newly arrived (0.6X)

- **Asian Newcomers**: Refugee (4.3X), University-educated outside of Canada (1.4X), newly arrived (0.7X), older

- **European newcomers**: University-educated outside of Canada (2.2X), newly arrived (0.6X), English language fluency problems (0.6X)

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What are the policy considerations of these intersections?

- Should/can we be creating special services for all intersecting groups?
- Could existing infrastructure be reorganized to address the difficulties in accessing services?
  - Do we need new infrastructure?
- Who will design the program? Who will run the program?
- How much will it cost? Who will fund the program?
- Is there a likelihood that a change in external conditions might influence service use?
  - Change in worldwide refugee-like situations
  - Change in Canadian immigration policies regarding labour and language knowledge
- Is there support from stakeholders?
  - Constituents, immigrant community, service providers, government & private funders, citizens
- Will support for targeted services undermine established services for others?

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What are the limitations of the intersectional approach?

- Definitions of identities may change
  - Changes to immigration categories; methodological disputes regarding age
- Some identities change throughout the lifecourse
  - Immigrants become naturalized citizens
  - Young become old
- There remains a tendency to prioritize some identities over others

Lester, 2002; Wilkinson, 2003

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Moving forward

- Current policies for marginalized groups deal with only one identity
  - e.g. Indian Act, Multiculturalism Act
- Policies intended to address inequality are sometimes construed as reverse racism or sexist. We need an education strategy
  - e.g. belief that all indigenous peoples receive free post-secondary education

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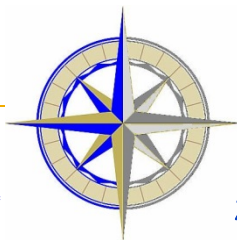
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