Occupational Segregation of Black and White Immigrants in Canada: Results From the 2021 Canadian Census

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Previous research on black-white racial occupational segregation

There are relatively few studies on black-white racial occupational segregation outside the US, and existing studies vary in their aims and research design

US research shows:

- Slowed desegregation since 1980s (Childers 2004; King 1992; Watts 1995)

- Gender differences, with black-white segregation higher for women than men (Alonso-Villar, et al., 2012; Childers, 2014; Cotter et al., 2003)

- Main observed mechanisms are through supply-side characteristics: education, experience, language proficiency, and migration-related characteristics (Gradín 2013; Ovadia 2003; Semyonov et al. 2000); but, *results are mixed*

The Black Population in Canada

Of the black population (1.5 million) in 2021, 74% were Foreign Born (Statistics Canada 2023)

Figure 1. Distribution of Birth Region by Period of Arrival, Black Immigrants only, 2021 Census of Canada
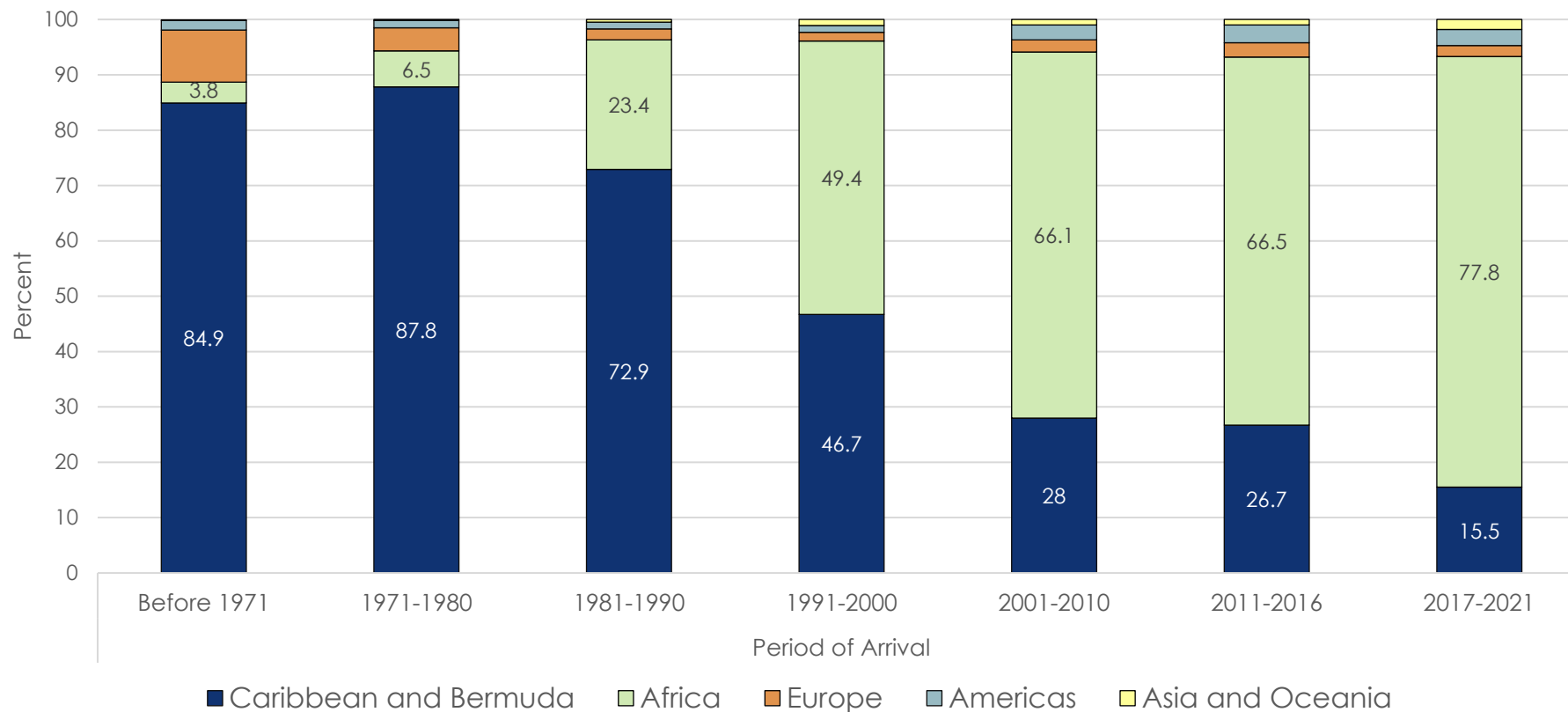
- In 2021, 85% of immigrants arriving before 1971 were born in the Caribbean

- For those arriving in 2017-2021, over three-quarters (78 %) now are born in Africa

Research Questions

1. What were the levels of black-white occupational segregation in Canada in 2021?

2. Whether and to what extent do social and demographic factors explain contemporary differences in occupational distributions of black/white women/men?

3. Do these explanatory factors vary by immigrant birth region and gender?

2021 Restricted Census Microdata

Sample
- Black and White Women and Men
- Ages 25-54
- Foreign-born Permanent Residents (arrived post 1979)
- Not living in the NWT, Nunavut, or Yukon
- Reported occupation

1) Index of Dissimilarity (Duncan and Duncan 1955)

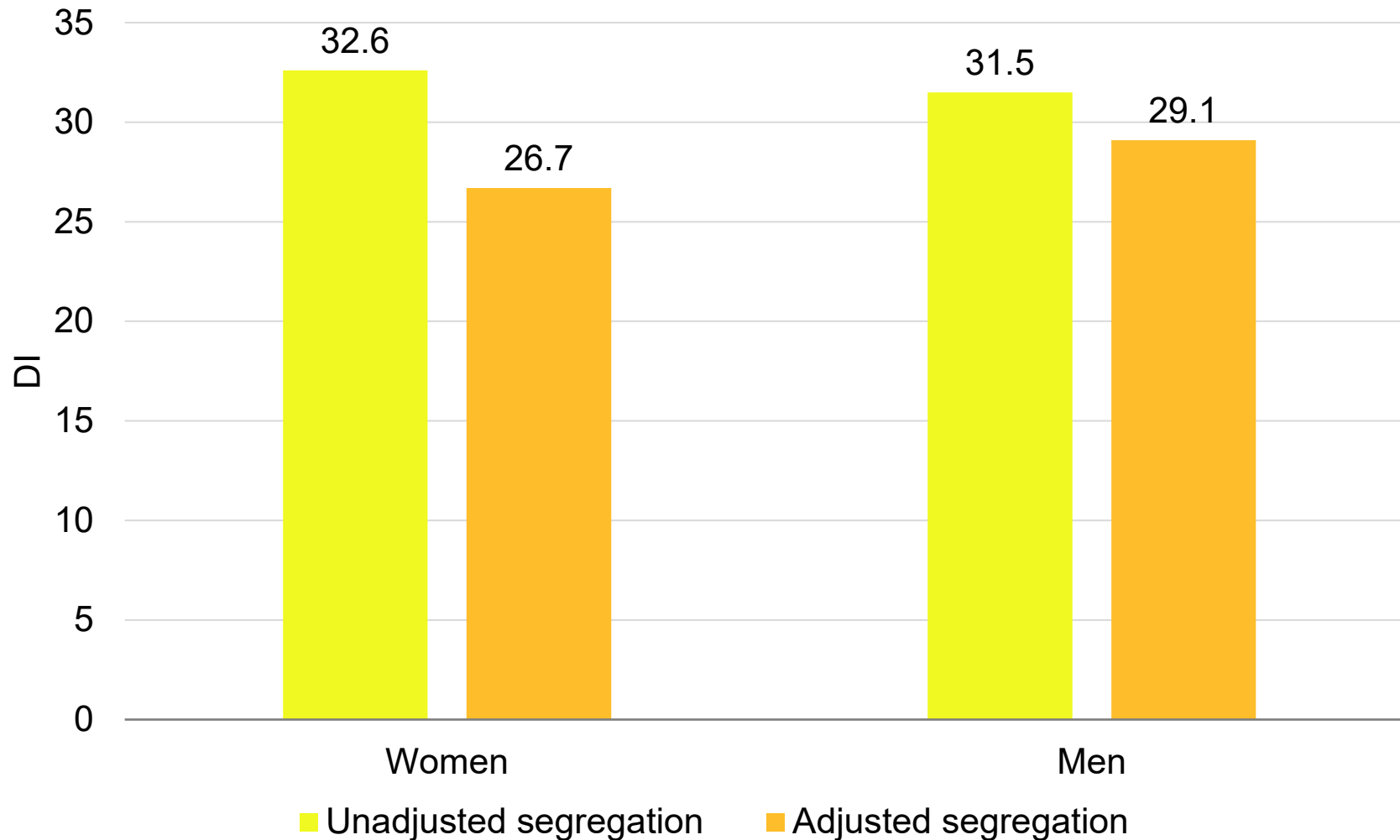$$DI = 0.5 \times \sum_j \left| q_j - p_j \right|$$

q_j: proportion of blacks in occupation j

p_j: proportion of whites in occupation j

2) Conditional segregation (Gradín 2013)
- Counterfactual reweighting approach

# RQ1. Black-white occupational segregation in Canada, 2021

- For foreign-born black and white **women**, adjusting for compositional differences in education, region, home language, and visa entry class reduces occupational segregation by 5.6%

- Correspondingly, for all foreign-born black and white **men**, adjustment reduces occupational segregation by 2.4%

RQ2. Compositional differences in education, region, language use, and visa entry class explain racial segregation of women more than men
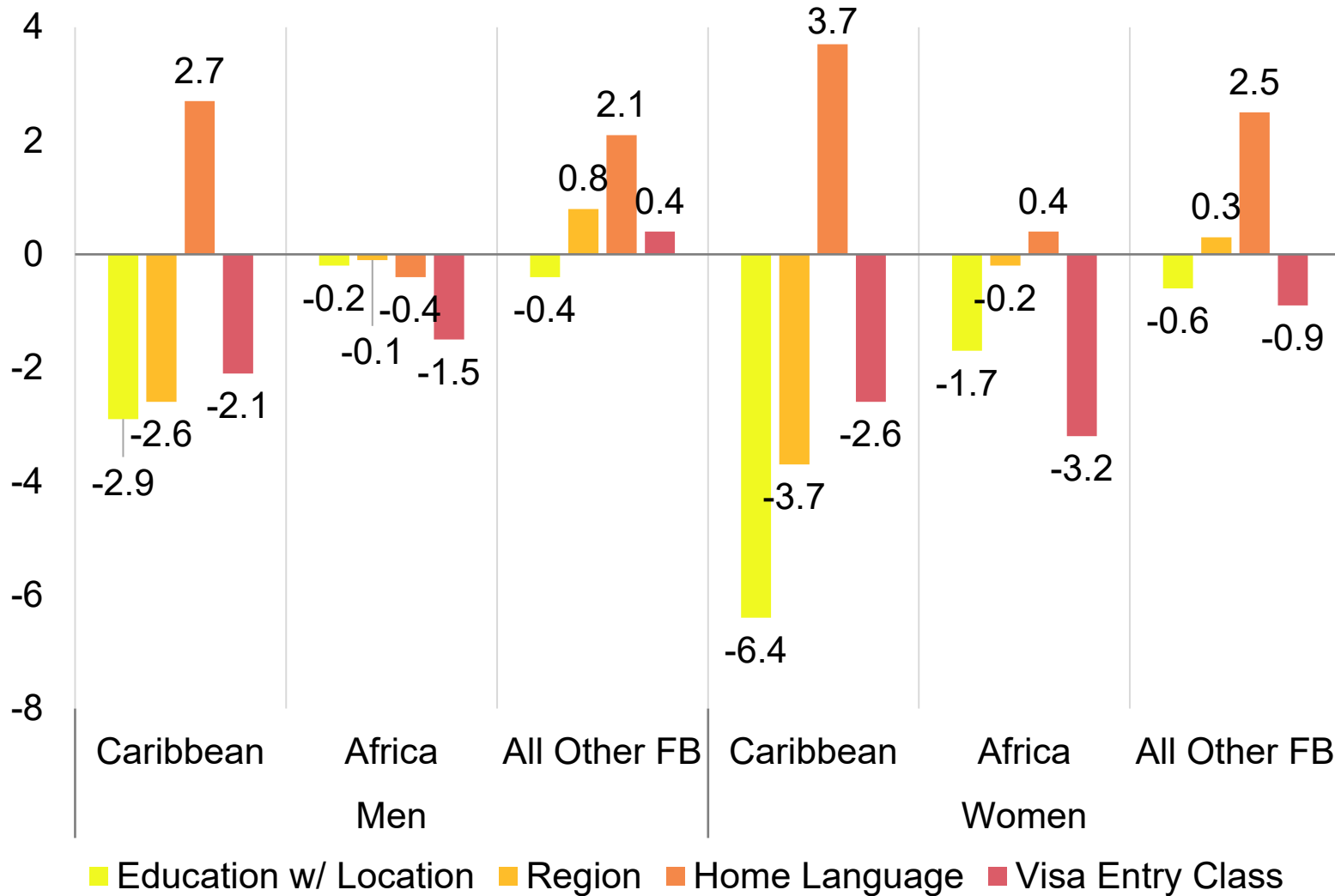

- For all foreign-born black and white **women**, *visa entry class* and *education* are about equally important factors

- For all foreign-born black and white **men**, *visa entry class* is the most important factor

RQ3. Birth Region Specific Findings
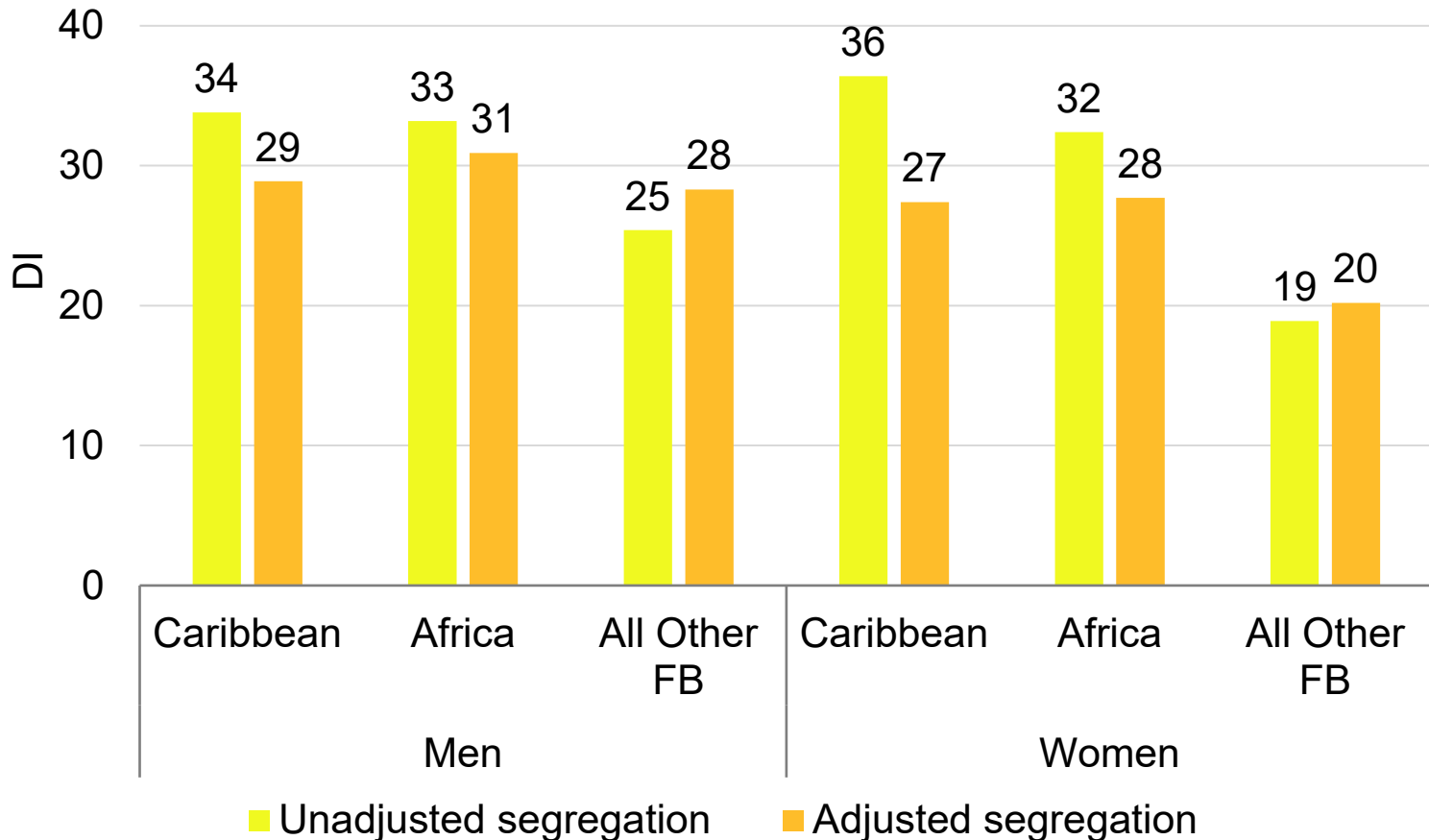
- This investigation finds a notable source of heterogeneity: *immigrant birth region*

- Compositional factors better explain black-white discrepancies for Caribbean women and men, compared with their African counterparts

- For all other FB birth regions, *counterfactual adjustment shows increased occupational segregation*. In this case, black workers are relatively distributionally advantaged

- *The examined factors for explaining occupational segregation notably vary across immigrant birth regions*

- Except for FB black men not from the Caribbean or Africa, visa entry class is an important predictor for occupational segregation.

- For non-African black workers, home language is a source of relative advantage over FB white workers. Black Caribbean workers often speak French at home, which provides a supply-side advantage in the labour market

Chart values:

Men:
- Caribbean: Education w/ Location -2.9, Region -2.6, Home Language 2.7, Visa Entry Class -2.1
- Africa: Education w/ Location -0.2, Region -0.1, Home Language -0.4, Visa Entry Class -1.5
- All Other FB: Education w/ Location -0.4, Region 0.8, Home Language 2.1, Visa Entry Class 0.4

Women:
- Caribbean: Education w/ Location -6.4, Region -3.7, Home Language 3.7, Visa Entry Class -2.6
- Africa: Education w/ Location -1.7, Region -0.2, Home Language 0.4, Visa Entry Class -3.2
- All Other FB: Education w/ Location -0.6, Region 0.3, Home Language 2.5, Visa Entry Class -0.9

Legend: Education w/ Location, Region, Home Language, Visa Entry Class

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Conclusions & future research

1. Black-white occupational segregation is around 33% for foreign-born women and 31% for foreign-born men

2. Factors explaining black-white occupational segregation vary by immigrant birth region and gender
   - Caribbean — education matters more for women than men
   - African — visa is the most important factor for women and men
   - Other FB black workers would be *more* segregated if they had the same characteristics as all FB whites, particularly for home-language

3. Visa entry class matters, especially for black women

Thank you!

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