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

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Previous research on black-white racial occupational segregation

- Temporal trend
  - Slowed desegregation since 1980s (Childers 2004; King 1992; Watts 1995)
- Geographic variation (Gradín et al. 2015; Ovadia 2003; Semyonov et al. 2000; Tesfai and Thomas 2020)
- Mechanism
  - Human capital (Gradín 2013; Ovadia 2003; Semyonov et al. 2000)
- Limited research on black-white racial occupational segregation outside the US

Black population in Canada

- Predominantly:
  - Immigrants (56%)
  - Urban dwellers (94% in large cities)
    - Toronto (37%), Montreal (23%)

- Historical concentration in select occupations
  - Black women in domestic work
  - Black men as railway porters

Research questions

1. What are the temporal trends in black-white occupational segregation in large cities in Canada?

2. Which sociodemographic factors best explain contemporary levels of black-white occupational segregation?

3. Do the results vary by city?

Methods

- **Data**
  - 1981, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2016 Census Masterfiles
  - 2011 National Household Survey Masterfile

- **Sample**
  - Black and white women and men aged 25-54
  - Reported occupation
  - Total Central Metropolitan Areas (CMAs); Toronto; Montreal; other CMAs

Measures

1) Index of Dissimilarity (Duncan and Duncan 1965)

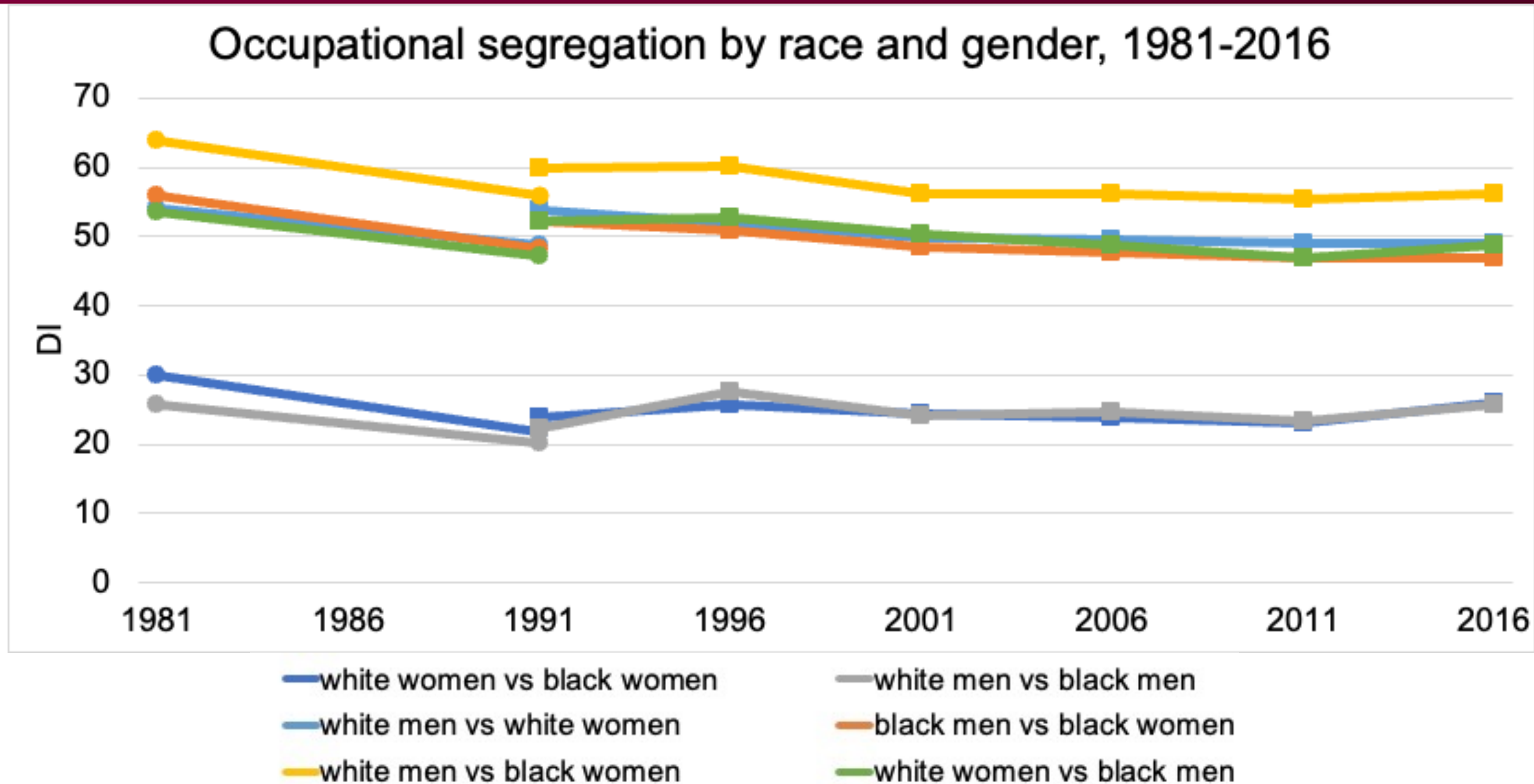$$DI = 0.5 \times \sum_j |q_j - p_j|$$

q_j: proportion of blacks in occupation *j*

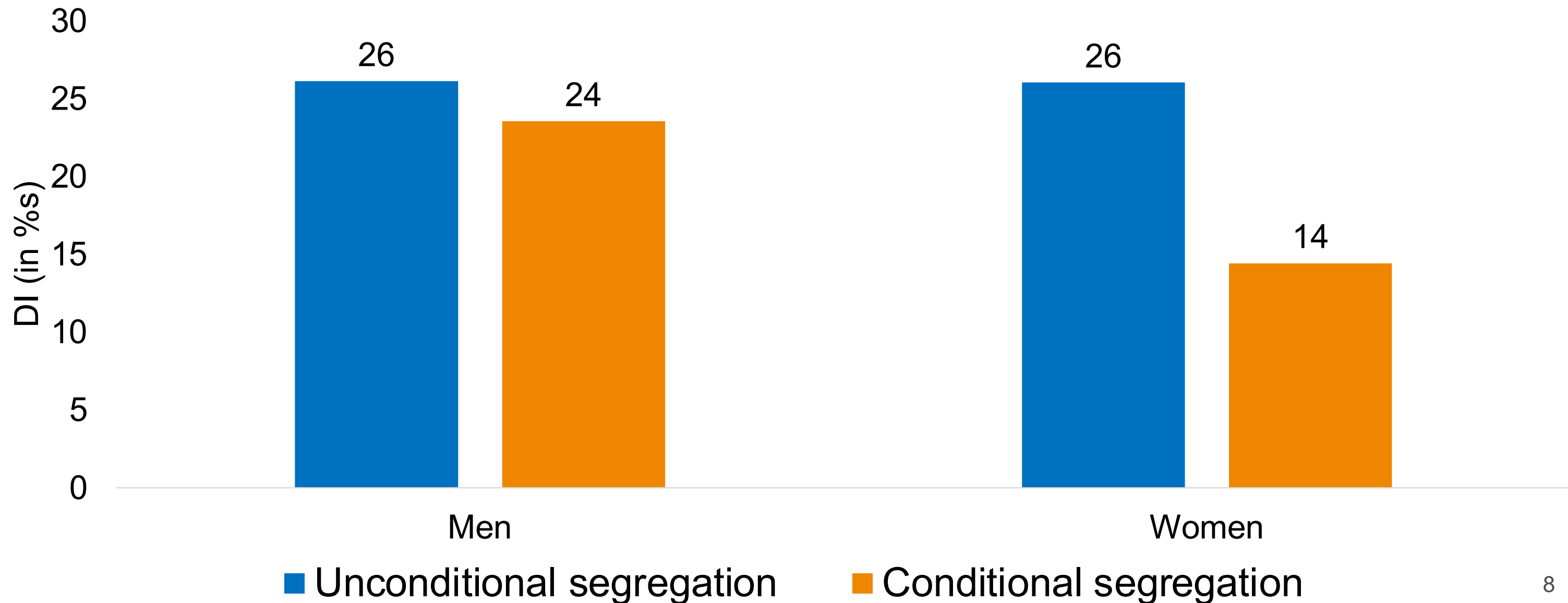p_j: proportion of whites in occupation *j*

2) Conditional segregation

- Counterfactual reweighting approach (Gradín 2013)
- Shapley decomposition (nativity, education, language use)

RQ1. Racial occupational segregation level is lower than gender segregation but persistent.
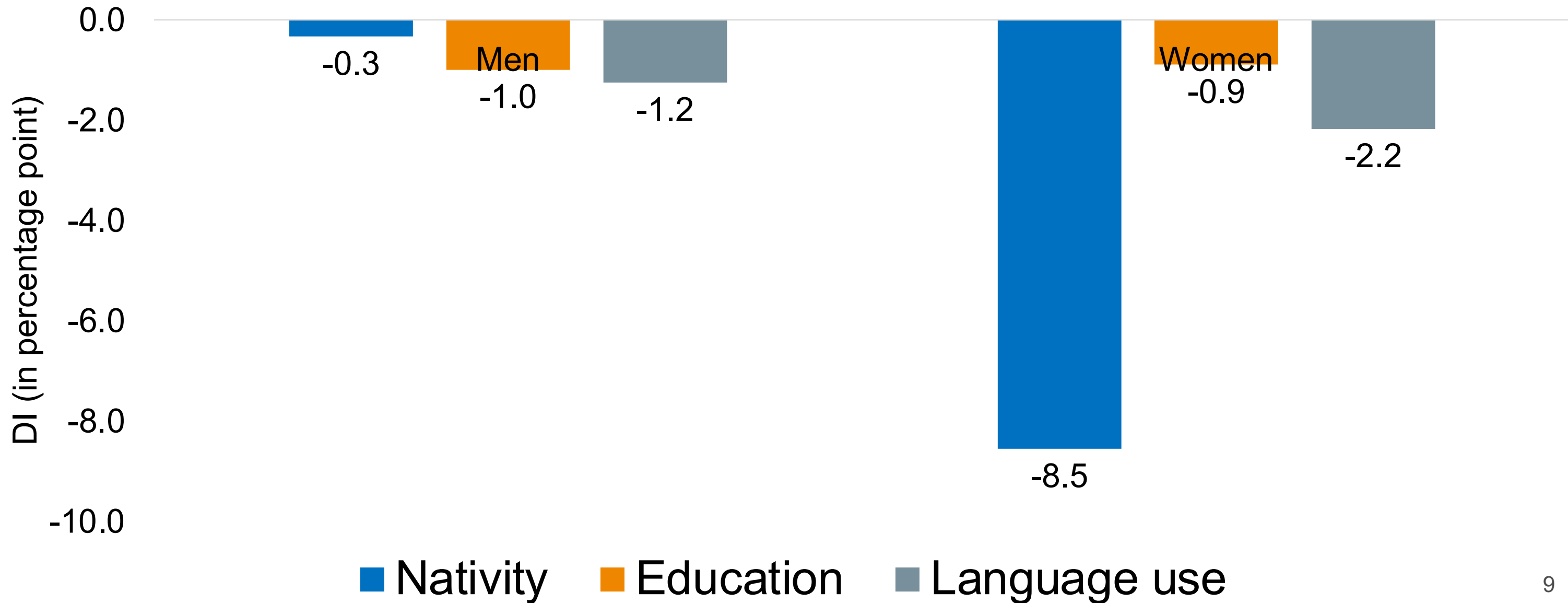

Occupational segregation by race and gender, 1981-2016

Legend:
- white women vs black women
- white men vs black men
- white men vs white women
- black men vs black women
- white men vs black women
- white women vs black men

Unconditional/ conditional occupational segregation of blacks and whites in all CMAs, by gender, 2016

For women, high % of immigrants among blacks largely explains their racial occupational segregation level

Contributions of nativity, education, and language use to change from unconditional to conditional segregation

DI (in percentage point)

Men: -0.3, -1.0, -1.2
Women: -8.5, -0.9, -2.2

Nativity   Education   Language use

RQ3. City-specific findings

- Higher segregation levels in **Montreal**
  - Concentration of black workers in select occupations

- Compositional differences explain racial segregation of men in **other CMAs** more
  - Whites' characteristics vary by city

- High conditional segregation of women in **Toronto**
  - Blacks' linguistic advantage and whites' nativity/ education advantage cancel out

Conclusion & future research

- Persistent racial occupational segregation of blacks in Canada
  - Impact of *Employment Equity* in public sector

- Immigration experience matters, especially for black women
  - Roles of migration-related factors (entry class, age at migration, place of education)

- Un/conditional segregation varies by city
  - Variations in local labor supply/ demand (Perales and Vidal 2015 Semyonov et al. 2000)

Thank you!

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https://occupationalsegregation.artsci.utoronto.ca/

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