

Gender and Identity Influences on Public Participation

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Topics

- Public participation
- Political space
- Health policy
- Policy communities
- Identity & representation
- Gender-based analysis
- Conclusion



Public Participation in Health Policy

Benefits

- Process
 - More empowered people
- Outcome
 - Better, more effective health programs



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Political Space

- the space is shaped by mechanisms available to the public to form policy; by prominent discourses that shape willingness to address policy issues; and by the capacity of groups to access policy processes
 - Webster and Engberg-Pederson (2002)



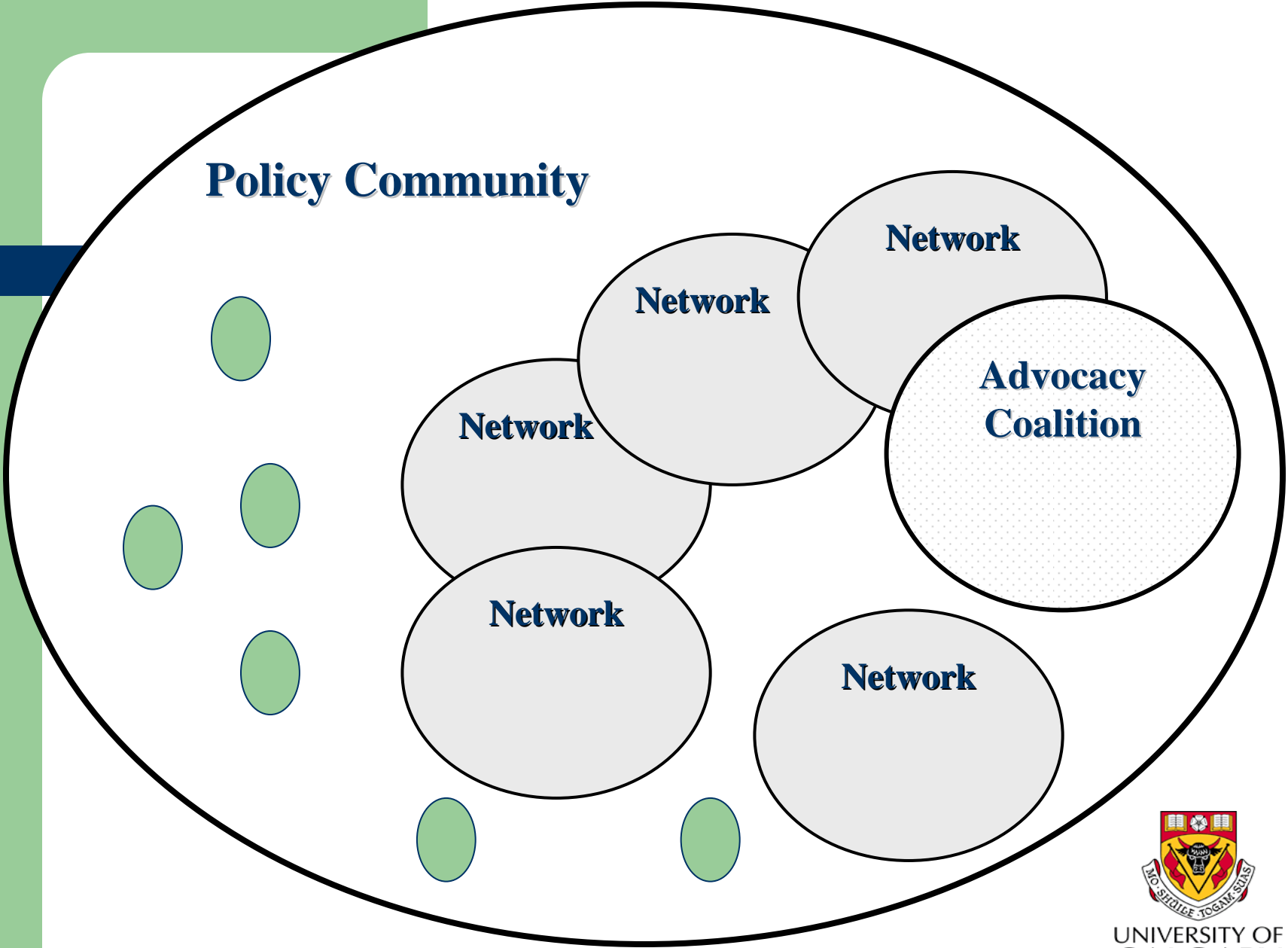
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Health Policy

- Policy Windows
 - Policy Stream
 - Problem Stream
- Policy Outcomes
 - Governance Policy decisions
 - Governance policy statements
 - Operational policy decisions
 - Operational policy statements



Policy Community



Three Interacting Levels

- Micro – individual women
- Meso – organizations representing women
- Macro – gender relations, religion, ‘culture’



Competing Needs

This is Canada and, you know, you might not be able to do that, so you need to, you need to, you know, get money to, to feed your kids... Here in Canada there is no other choice. ... I know it's not just me, it's the system, it's what we have to go through to have a life in Canada as immigrants.



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Identity & Representation

- Ability to know or to speak for all diversity
- Multiple identities
 - Hyphenated identities
- Belonging to networks, coalitions
- Sexism and other forms of discrimination



Identity

“...you know, it never came to see something in front of my eyes that their resistance or their lack of collaboration was due to the fact that I was also an immigrant.”



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Social Elites?

“...but somehow the people who are in power within these organizations try to be also gatekeepers of, you know, their territory of influence”



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Identity Dichotomies

- Grassroots – University
- University – Community
- Immigrant – Non-immigrant
- Masculine – Feminine



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Gender-based Analysis

Gender-based analysis as a process to assess whether policies, programs or laws impact women and men differentially.

Women's Health Bureau, Health Canada



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Conclusions

- Without gender-based analysis, public participation may serve to reify discourse and practice that marginalizes the needs of immigrant women
- Immigrant women are not a homogenous group and migratory experience must also be considered



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