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Selection Committees & the Selection of Women-Led Ventures in Entrepreneurship Accelerators

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Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship

- Women **found fewer businesses** & **raise lower amounts of funding**

- Differences in entry choices & treatment

- **Gender gap** associated with worse outcomes for women entrepreneurs

Structural Barrier: Entry to Entrepreneurship

- Solutions: increase congruence between women entrepreneurs & audiences' expectations / prime audience to be unbiased

- **Structural barriers at entry points**: loans, VCs, selection committees

  - **Better representation** of women in selection committees

Better representation
Entry to Entrepreneurship

- More women in selection committees: women entrepreneurs' businesses better understood

- Theoretical support but **empirical research mixed**

- **Better representation** of women in selection: **positively selection women-led** ventures

Data

- Entrepreneurship Database Program at Emory University & Interviews: **2,521 ventures in 49 accelerators** across globe & archival data (**45%** emerging market)

    - **18%** accept rate; basic training, advice, mentorship for small businesses

    - Share of women founders higher than typical entrepreneurship **(21%)**, but consistent with social enterprise **(26%)**

Research Design

- 2 Surveys: at entry & 1 yr post-graduation

  - Entry survey ~ application — full sample

  - Post graduate survey has **60% response**

  - Distribution comparable between accepted and rejected

- Surveys, and interviews on several of 49 programs

Research Design

- Three stages of analysis:

  - Application: are women applying?

  - **Selection: are women selected?**

  - Acceleration: do women improve?

- Controls: *for-profit, revenues since founding, phl. since founding, debt since founding, founder CEO, IP, founder edu., selection pitch, early stage venture, social outcomes, financial outcomes, non-competitive funding, competitive funding, vertical competition, emerging market, number of apps.*
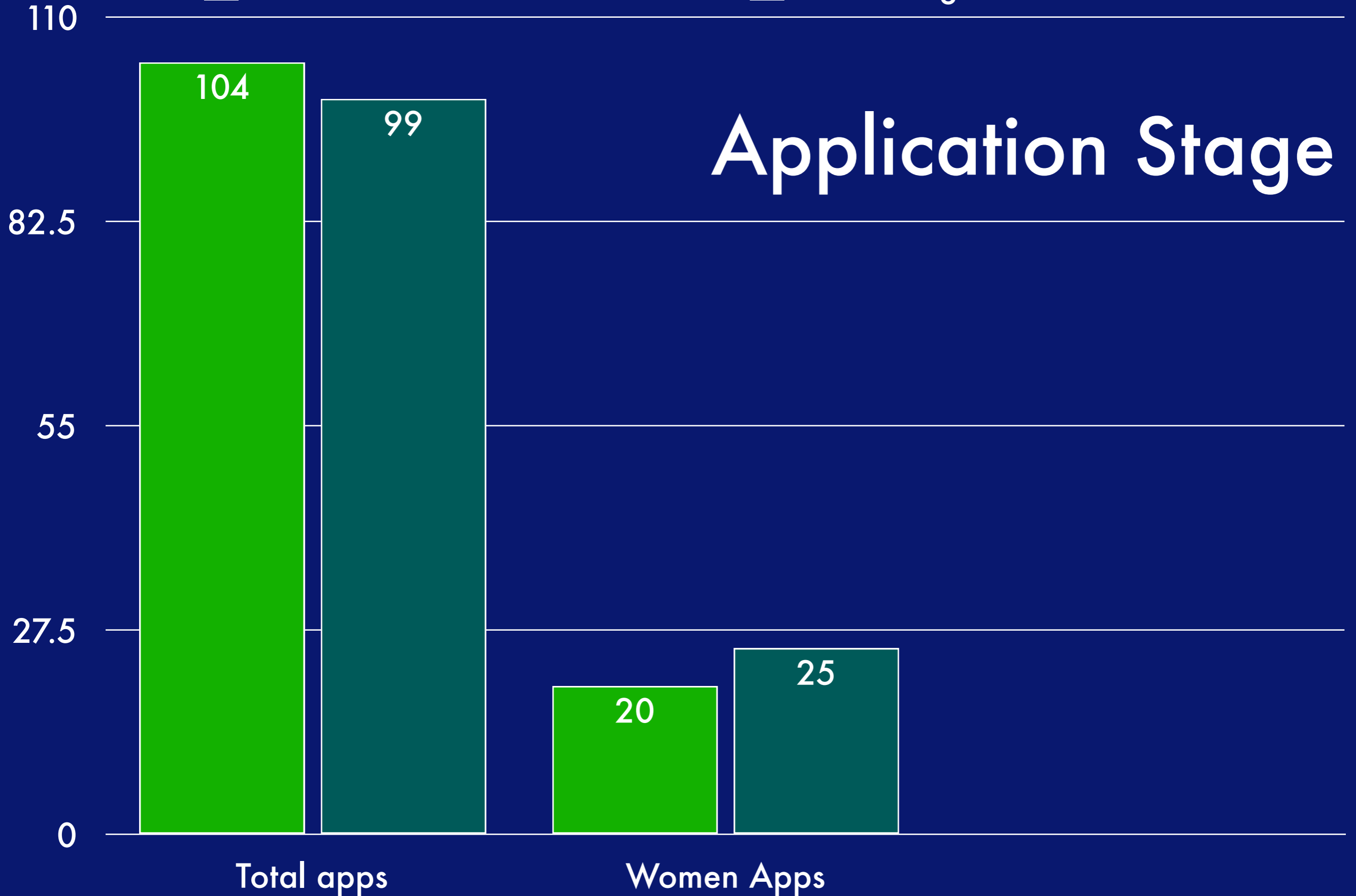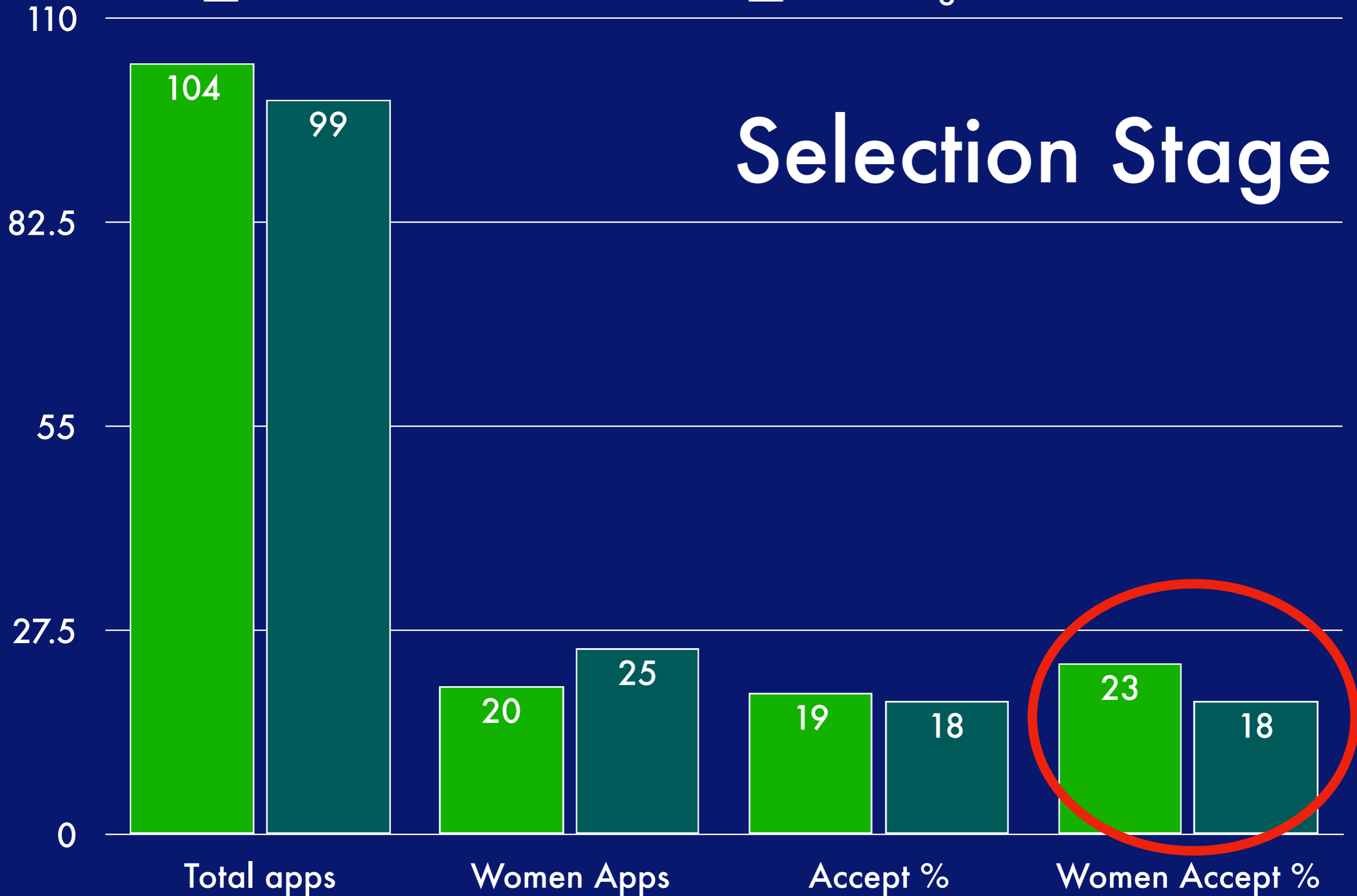
Results Summary

- **Better** women's representation = **more selected** & additional benefits for women-led ventures

- **Better** women's representation occurs in **larger committees** (18 vs. 30)

  - Larger committees = **fewer selected**

- **Women** more likely to **apply to** programs w/ larger committees = **fewer women selected**

Implications

- **Better representation** associated with improved outcomes for women

- Correlated w/ **bigger committees** — women incentivized to apply but rejected at higher rate

  - Consequences of **rejection:** women less likely to reapply, fewer women in pipeline

- Problematic because women improve **performance** more than men, but do not benefit from accelerator programs

Thank you!

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