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THÈMES CANADIENS

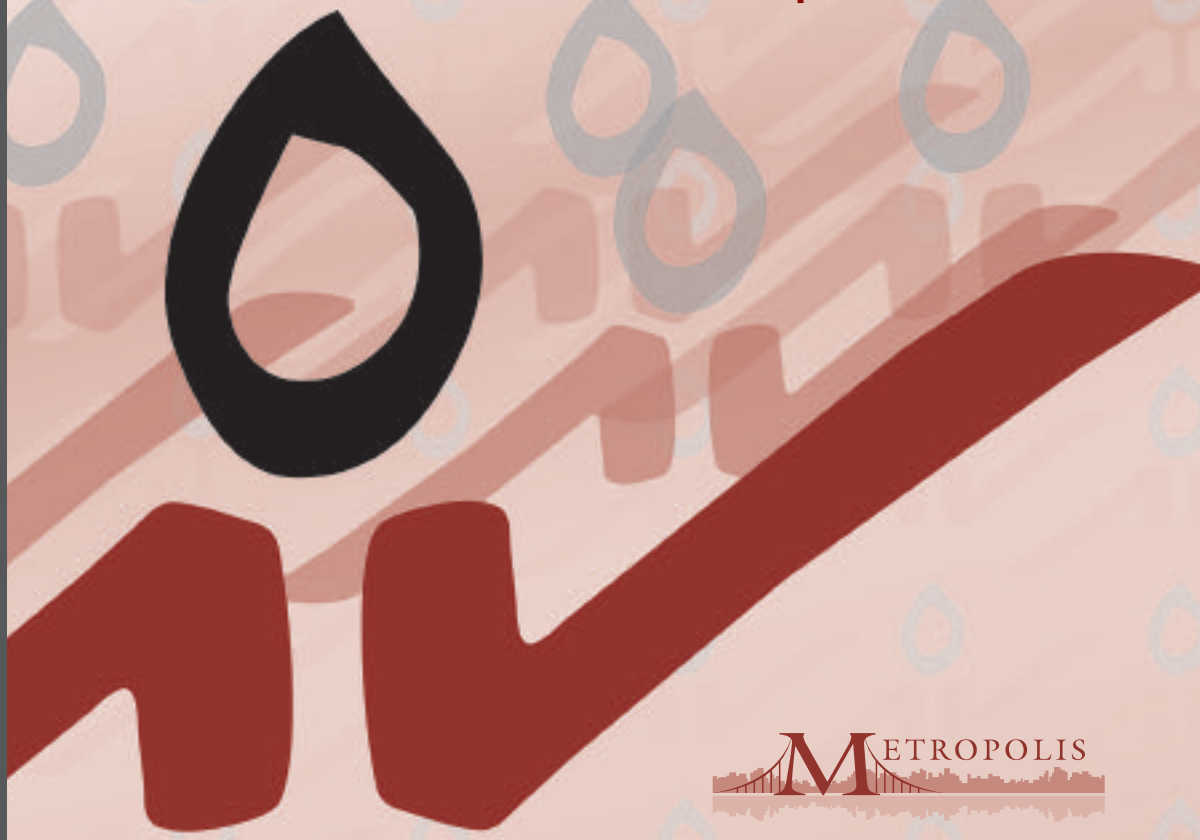
Summer / Été 2005

Newcomers, Minorities and Political Participation in Canada

Getting a Seat at the Table

La participation civique des nouveaux arrivants et des minorités au Canada

Se tailler une place à la table



METROPOLIS

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METROPOLIS

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INTRODUCTION

Getting Seats at the Table(s) / Obtenir un siège à la table

For centuries, questions related to participation and inclusion have framed discussions related to democracy and its functioning. Who should participate? How? To what extent? And to what end? Today, those questions remain. Indeed, Canada's legislative framework, including the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act,* requires that we work toward inclusive institutions and full and equitable participation. Our increasing diversity has, in some ways, cast a spotlight on all of this, as people question our institutions, the processes for gauging public opinion, and the ways in which Canadians are involved in the governance of our country in both the electoral and non-electoral spheres.

Reports of increased apathy, decreased volunteerism, a lack of knowledge about our democratic and political system and of a retreat from public and civic life are all too familiar. Our elected bodies do not provide an accurate reflection of Canada's diversity. And yet, while these stories are familiar, and almost tiresome, we lack the information that would allow us to fully understand the complexities of participation, the root of the problem, and the various ways that these challenges manifest themselves.

Cela est particulièrement évident dans les observations et les écrits sur la participation des collectivités de nouveaux arrivants, d'immigrants et de minorités. La recherche dans ces domaines est sous-développée et commence tout juste à apparaître, et, comme le démontrent les contributions dans ce volume, la pensée s'articule principalement autour d'une mythologie assez fermement enracinée à laquelle font appel les observateurs pour bien cerner le comportement de ces collectivités.

Reporting in the lead-up to the 2004 federal election illustrated this quite plainly. Articles on the involvement of ethnic and immigrant communities in nomination contests tended to critique the onslaught of "instant members," "tribalism" and "stacked" selection processes. These types of stories brand immigrants and minorities as a bloc with a homogeneous outlook that astute politicians can mobilize for electoral victory. Go's article takes issue with this, noting that immigrants are frequently only engaged during elections when politicians are "vying for their votes," but their real issues are ignored and only receive lip-service. Hyder notes that parties need to involve minorities in the policy-making process, rather than simply looking to these communities as a source of votes. Other contributors to this volume are more positive and suggest that tightly-woven networks in immigrant and minority communities can be operationalized at election time to support desired candidates – often candidates who are supportive of the needs of newcomers and minorities, or who are members of those communities themselves (see Bird; Hamdani, Bhatti & Munawar; and Sayers & Jetha).

The perception of immigrant and minority communities as a homogenous bloc has been echoed in stories about recent announcements by the federal government, which many have suggested is early electioneering. Some of these announcements, such as reducing the wait-time for citizenship applications or improving the recognition of foreign credentials, are seen as appeals to immigrant communities and have been criticized as "vote-buying" or an attempt to "lure the ethnic vote." These storylines cast immigrant and minority communities as uncritical, immature and easily-led voters, which Henderson suggests is not, in fact, accurate. Her article in this volume argues that voters arrive at electoral decisions by either evaluating the facts or using shortcuts or cues, such as group membership or partisan identification. Her research suggests that these communities are actually more likely than others to follow election news and debates, and they are less likely to use shortcuts to arrive at their electoral decisions, basing their decisions instead on personal beliefs.

One of the aims of this volume is to start to put some facts behind these fictions, to examine participation in the context of diversity, to find out how we are doing and, more specifically, how immigrants and minorities are doing. What story do people tell about the participation of diverse communities? How do newcomers and minorities participate in politics, in community life, in the electoral process? How has that participation changed over time? Does their participation differ from that of other Canadians? What variations can be found, not only between communities, but also within these communities? What are some of the explanations for those variations? What barriers have been identified? How might those be addressed? And where do we lack information and data? This volume also aims to put political participation, electoral representation, and non-electoral involvement on the radar screens of policy-makers who deal with diversity and the various "inclusion" initiatives that are currently being undertaken. Indeed, the federal government's recently announced Anti-Racism Action Plan sets forth several activities to address racism and exclusion in Canadian society, but the focus is quite squarely on the labour market. The absence of initiatives to address racism and exclusion in the political and civic sphere is noteworthy given that we know far too little about how diversity is included.

The articles in this volume suggest, in various ways, that "diversity" is not a homogenous category, and there is a not a "one size fits all" explanation or description of participation in immigrant and minority communities. As several authors point out, there are significant differences between the participation of Chinese Canadians, who tend to be less engaged, and that of South Asian Canadians, who tend to be more active politically and, in suburban Toronto at least, more likely to be found in elected positions (see Bird; Dhillon; Go; Siemiatycki and Matheson; and Tossutti). Many of the

contributors also point to differences in the participation of youth and, in particular, declines in youth participation, a concern that has been voiced for some time (see Bishop; Cyr; and Tossutti). At the same time, there is evidence, as Hamdani, Bhatti and Munawar point out, that Muslims are becoming more active in civic and political affairs, and this is expected to increase. Nonetheless, participation among religious communities varies. Moreover, even within the same community, as Clemenger's article on evangelicals notes, political views and voting preferences are not homogeneous. In short, the idea of securing the "immigrant vote" or mobilizing a "minority voting bloc" may be somewhat misplaced; these communities are heterogeneous and their participation, preferences and issues are similarly heterogeneous.

Earlier research relied on cultural and contextual factors, rather than institutional or systemic ones, to explain these differences. It was suggested, for example, that we should expect the Chinese to vote less than immigrants from other countries – and especially those countries with an ingrained democratic tradition – because they would be less familiar with democratic processes and active civic participation. The articles in this volume suggest that while political socialization may be one reason that participation varies across immigrant and minority communities, there are other factors at play. Bishop's piece, for example, points to low rates of participation among Aboriginal youth, suggesting that participation may be low even among those who are familiar with democratic traditions.

Ces articles présentent plusieurs explications institutionnelles des variations dans la participation, ainsi que certains des obstacles auxquels peuvent se heurter les collectivités immigrantes et minoritaires. Les ressources financières limitées, les obstacles linguistiques et une méconnaissance du processus et du système politique seraient tous des obstacles potentiels.

Dhillon's article points to the role that political parties can play in facilitating – or limiting – access to political office. Indeed, there was outrage in 2004 when the Liberal Party appointed Bill Cunningham to run under the party banner in the British Columbia riding of Burnaby-Douglas. This occurred despite pleas for an open nomination contest, which came from many, including Tony Kuo, a candidate of Chinese descent who had been organizing in the riding for several months. Some suggested that Cunningham's appointment occurred only after the resignation of Svend Robinson, the popular New Democrat Member of Parliament, when it appeared that the Liberals might be able to win that seat. While the gate-keeper perception is common, many of the contributors in this volume nonetheless characterize Canadian political parties as permeable, open and decentralized and note that this is advantageous for new entrants (see interviews with the party leaders; Bird; Hyder; and Sayers & Jetha).

In terms of potential responses to under-representation and under-participation, contributors point to several. For example, Tanguay and Bittle note that the electoral system may play a role in the representation of minorities in elected office, and they advocate electoral reform as a first step to improving under-representation. Gurnett suggests that education within newcomer communities is important and could lead to increased – and informed – participation. His article points to several initiatives that were undertaken at a community level to raise awareness about elections and educate newcomers about the electoral process. Paul's article also points to education as a possible response, although she suggests targeting candidates and potential public leaders. She argues that training on how to be successful in the public arena may improve the participation of immigrants and minorities not only in electoral politics, but also on boards and commissions.

Même si nombre d'articles de ce volume portent sur la participation électorale formelle, plusieurs articles traitent des liens entre ce genre de participation et la participation à l'extérieur de l'arène électorale. Les articles de Birjandian et de Winnemore soulignent que la participation communautaire, sous ses diverses formes, joue un rôle essentiel dans l'intégration des immigrants, tandis que l'article de Lochhead signale que les réseaux et le capital social créés grâce à la participation à la vie communautaire améliorent l'intégration au marché du travail des immigrants et des minorités. Bref, la question de la participation s'étend bien au-delà de la communauté et de la politique, bien au-delà de l'obtention d'un siège à la table.

In addition to providing evidence for some of our existing hypotheses about patterns of participation, barriers and potential remedies, the articles in this volume provide us with some new directions to explore by challenging familiar perceptions – and sometimes misconceptions – and describing some of the emerging patterns. Bird, for example, suggests that contrary to popular perception, the local level of government may not in fact be more open to diverse candidates than provincial and federal levels of government, a phenomenon that will be explored in a forthcoming volume on electoral representation in 12 Canadian cities, which was spearheaded by the Political Participation Research Network.[1] Siemiatycki and Matheson, in their analysis of diversity among elected officials in suburban Toronto ridings, challenge the assumption that suburban areas are bland bastions of sameness suggesting that this traditional pattern may be changing, while Henderson and Tossutti both suggest that existing assumptions about the voting behaviour of immigrants and minorities may need to be revisited.

This compilation, as well as the ongoing work of the Political Participation Research Network and others, sheds some light on the participation of immigrants and minorities in politics and civic life. This is vital given the dearth of existing research in the area, as well as our democratic and legislative imperatives to construct the public arena in a way that includes all Canadians. There are plenty of seats at the table; we need now to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to take one. Dinner is almost ready, and there is still some work to be done.

Erin Tolley and John Biles
Metropolis Project Team

Notes

Opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Metropolis Project, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, or the Government of Canada.

[1] For information on the Political Participation Research Network, visit http://www.canada.metropolis.net/research-policy/pprn-pub/index.html.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL MARTIN

Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada

1) As you know, the Canadian population is increasingly diverse. Many wonder if that diversity is being reflected in our elected institutions. Can you please give us some idea of the diversity of your caucus? For example, how many women, immigrants, visible minorities, and Aboriginal peoples were elected in your party in the last federal election?

As leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, few questions give me more pleasure in answering than this one. The question also comes at a perfect time. Lately we've been hearing a lot from the official opposition about the diversity of their membership – a claim that frankly mystifies me. The Liberal Party is by far the most diverse party in the House of Commons. Thirteen Members of our caucus are visible minorities. That's just under ten per cent, which is well above the average for the House overall. And as for representation of women, I am at once both proud of our performance and determined to do better. Today, women represent 25 per cent of our caucus, more than any other party though, frankly, to my mind, still not enough. We can and will do better.

That said, the Liberal Party still does much better than any other federal party on both of these fronts – a greater ethnic and immigrant representation and much stronger voice for women *within* our parliamentary caucus. The Liberal Party has made many great strides in its long history, but I'd have to say that drawing these diverse voices *inside* the machinery of political discourse must rank as one of our greatest achievements.

2) What measures have your party taken to involve immigrants and minorities as party members, electoral candidates, and MPs? Are these measures working? Does more need to be done?

Indeed, more needs to be done. One of the greatest strengths of this country is its diversity, in terms of ethnicity and culture, and heritage. It stands to reason that any federal party that strives to represent this county must strive to be just as diverse.

In terms of gender representation, I believe we must do better. However, I take pride in the fact that only the Liberal party has a permanent agency, our National Women's Liberal Commission, specifically mandated to represent the interests of women and to encourage their participation in the political process. We are also the only federal party with a meaningful affirmative action program to support women candidates, the Judy LaMarch Fund, which provides support to Liberal women candidates.

In terms of encouraging ethnic diversity, this Party's position could not be more clear. Our party's constitution is unequivocal. All are eligible for membership, regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, colour or religion. Anybody who understands Liberals will know these rules are entirely consistent with our core principles – the value and dignity of each individual man and woman. Supporting that dignity, giving it voice in our society, is the highest calling of any political party.

Our constitution also provides guidance in the question of diversity. Campaign committees are specifically directed to consider questions of gender equity and minority representation in the conduct of their business. I don't think a Party could be more explicit in its support of diversity than that.

3) Research suggests that in order to secure a party's nomination, immigrants and minorities need to have more education, more experience and deeper roots in their communities. Given that in order to run, a candidate must first be nominated, how do you ensure that immigrants and minorities are able to participate equitably in nomination contests?

Recruiting the kinds of candidates that can best represent their community is always of paramount concern to any political party. As with so many other areas that speak to our party's diversity, I know we'd like to do more. Being the most ethnically diverse party in the House of Commons is something to be proud of, certainly. But we must not allow ourselves to become complacent about it, and I don't think we have. I've already touched on our Party's constitutional imperative to seek diversity in our candidates. That has helped get us where we are today. But the work will continue, and this party has demonstrated time and again its commitment to see that work through.

Just this spring, at our national policy convention, we passed a resolution urging the government to celebrate diversity in Canada's communities. The resolution outlines specific ways in which this should be done, programs and funding methods. It would be easy for a party like ours, a party already so clearly identified with multiculturalism, to rest on its laurels. But we clearly are not and that makes me very proud.

4) Outside of the electoral arena, how does your party involve a diverse range of Canadians in, for example, consultation activities or the setting of party policy? What challenges do you face in trying to reflect the interests of some many individuals?

The example I just mentioned is probably the best example I can give you of how the Liberal Party of Canada is so inclusive. That resolution, urging the government of celebrate diversity, was brought to our policy convention by our party members from Manitoba. It was an excellent resolution and I applaud their work. But it was a resolution that I would not have been surprised to see from any part of this country and for a simple reason: if you are a Liberal and a Canadian, you know both the power and the value of multiculturalism. I've mentioned the diversity of our caucus. Well that is just the tip of the iceberg. In party organizations, on committees, in workshops, rural and urban communities across this country, there is no party as diverse as the Liberal Party.

So obviously there are extraordinary challenges we face in trying to reflect all these views. How we do it is another matter, but the answer is probably no more complicated than to ask you to visit one of our policy conventions, like the one we had this March. Thousands of people, from across Canada, expressing their views, airing their differences, coming to a consensus. It also helps that the party has instituted four separate commissions, one each for women, youth, seniors and Aboriginal Canadians, all of which feed into the party's policy process.

Recruiting the kinds of candidates that can best represent their community is always of paramount concern to any political party. As with so many other areas that speak to our party's diversity, I know we'd like to do more. Being the most ethnically diverse party in the House of Commons is something to be proud of, certainly. But we must not allow ourselves to become complacent about it, and I don't think we have.

It this a challenge? Of course it is. But it's a challenge the Liberal Party welcomes.

5) As you know, any resident of Canada can participate in the nomination of a candidate for an election. As such, party politics brings together both citizens and non-citizens, and the media focused much attention on this issue during the last federal election. Some observers suggested that the involvement of non-citizens was "undemocratic" particularly since it allowed immigrants to "pack" nomination meetings with "instant" members and "take-over" the riding. How would you address these concerns? How do you ensure that immigrants are able to participate in party politics on an equal footing with others?

As far as ensuring the involvement of immigrants in party politics is concerned, you are right in saying that participation in the system is not limited to citizens. Residency is sufficient. That's in the Liberal party's constitution. Canada is a nation built on and by immigration. This is a force that is central to our nation's history, and a force that the Liberal Party of Canada has a long tradition of supporting. Allowing our immigrants to participate in the political process of their adopted country is one way this party honours their contribution to Canada and builds the diversity and strength of the party.

6) Your party has long been viewed as the party that is most open to immigrants and diversity. Over time, however, some have suggested that there has been a retreat from some of the policies that were responsible for enforcing that view. Indeed, funding for multiculturalism has declined, and immigration levels are today lower than they were in the early 1990s. Certainly, there are other indicators of openness. What is your party doing to ensure it remains open to immigrants and diversity and promotes the ideals of multiculturalism and inclusion?

It's no accident that this party has been identified as the traditional party of immigration. Today we continue to honour that tradition. Just this spring we announced over $190 million in funding for three new initiatives that will greatly improve Canada's immigration system. This investment will shorten the waiting times for immigrant parents and grandparents seeking to be reunited with their families in Canada. It will also make it easier for international students and speed up applications for permanent residence waiting to become citizens. When judging how open we are to immigrants,

diversity and multiculturalism, I would simply ask you to judge the Liberal Party by the actions of the Liberal Government. On that evidence I don't think there's any judgment you could draw other than that the Liberal Party remains the party of immigration.

7) The Income Tax Act currently limits the amount of advocacy work that a charitable organization can undertake; many refer to this as the "10% rule." Critics argue that this provision prevents charitable organizations, including those that represent the interests of immigrants and minorities, from participating meaningfully in the political process. How would you respond? Are there other ways that charitable organizations can influence the political process?

The federal rules governing the political activities of charitable groups have been carefully worked out through extensive consultations and the offices of Elections Canada. The result has been regulations designed to serve the interests of both the voluntary sector and the public.

That said, your question presupposes that charitable groups are the only way immigrants and minorities influence the political process. As we've already discussed, that's obviously not the case.

I wouldn't presume to advise charities on how to achieve greater influence. The voluntary sector in this country is too inventive to need my counsel. I *would* say that I'm confident immigrants and minorities in Canada will always have an important role in the political process, just as they have, and will continue to have, within the Liberal Party of Canada.

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN HARPER

Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada

1) As you know, the Canadian population is increasingly diverse. Many wonder if that diversity is being reflected in our elected institutions. Can you please give us some idea of the diversity of your caucus. For example, how many women, immigrants, visible minorities, and Aboriginal peoples were elected in your party in the last federal election?

A belief in the equality of all Canadians is a founding principle of the Conservative Party of Canada; therefore, our party does not conduct demographic profiling, as some other political parties do. To the best of my knowledge, among our caucus, we have the following numbers that correspond to these identified groups: 19 women, 7 immigrants, 10 visible minorities, and 1 Aboriginal person.

2) What measures has your party taken to involve immigrants and minorities as party members, electoral candidates, and MPs? Are these measures working? Does more need to be done?

The Conservative Party of Canada believes that having innovative policies and an open and honest approach to doing politics are key aspects of attracting new members, and potential candidates to our party. For example, at our founding policy convention our party reaffirmed its commitment to immigration reform by adopting a suite of policies which promote diversity and multiculturalism and also restore fairness and compassion to our immigration and refugee system. The following is a sampling of the significant policies and initiatives adopted at our convention which demonstrate our party's pledge to ensuring that both our membership and candidates are derived from all of Canada's cultural and immigrant communities:

Diversity Principles

The Conservative Party believes that Canada's multicultural society is a valued reality and accepts the need to foster understanding and equality of opportunity while promoting common values across Canada.

Multiculturalism

The Conservative Party recognizes the rich, diverse make-up of the Canadian population and the contribution of these communities to our history and the Canadian way of life. The government must ensure that each community is able to enhance and contribute to Canada without discrimination and barriers.

Immigration Principles

The Conservative Party supports a welcoming and well-managed immigration system for Canada based on:

i) a fair and transparent process that earns the respect and confidence of Canadians as well as of the international community;

ii) compassionate measures to assist in family reunification;

iii) ensuring that Canada is successful in encouraging skilled immigrants to make Canada their destination of choice;

iv) a clear and workable process for immigrants to obtain equivalency for their international skills, training and experience;

v) addressing the need for adequate long-term funding for settlement services providers; and

vi) upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition of providing safe haven for refugees.

In keeping with these principles the Conservative Party is committed to streamlining and improving the immigrant application and refugee determination process and also to revamping the

process for recognition of foreign credentials. I believe that it is imperative that new Canadians are afforded the best possible opportunity to use their education and skills here in Canada, and that Canadian society can benefit greatly from their wealth of knowledge and experience. The Liberal government has long talked about immigration reform, but has consistently failed to deliver. Immigration is such an essential part of Canada's social fabric and key component of our country's economic growth that it can no longer be a casualty of broken Liberal promises. Those in the immigrant community no longer trust the Liberals to deliver on commitments to immigration reform and are recognizing the Conservative Party as the only viable choice if they earnestly want to see reforms to the system.

I am excited to see countless members Canada's immigrant and minority communities embracing our policies and choosing to put forth their name as Conservative candidates, making the decision to join our party, and expressing their intention to vote for us in the next election. In addition to the immigration consultations, Conservative MP Deepak Obhrai heads our Bridge Building initiative which consults regularly with cultural community leaders to identify and understand issues of importance to their communities. I have also set up a Community Relations Office which is designed to foster good relationships with cultural communities.

3) Research suggests that in order to secure a party's nomination, immigrants and minorities need to have more education, more experience and deeper roots in their communities. Given that in order to run, a candidate must first be nominated, how do you ensure that immigrants and minorities are able to participate equitably in nomination contests?

I believe that it is vital to have a cohort of candidates which reflects the diversity of Canadian society. I also believe the best way to achieve that diverse mix of candidates is to have an open and honest nomination process. Our party has numerous examples of women and minorities who have experienced resounding electoral success, all-the-while respecting the democratic principles that are so important to the Conservative Party of Canada. I would also like to stress that education levels and socio-economic background have never been a barrier to success for those who seek candidacies in our party. Elitism has no place in our party and I think women, minorities, and new Canadians consider that a refreshing change.

4) Outside of the electoral arena, how does your party involve a diverse range of Canadians in, for example, consultation activities or the setting of party policy? What challenges do you face in trying to reflect the interests of some many individuals?

The recent revelations about the level of politicization in the immigration process have probably shocked quite a few Canadians. Unfortunately, these revelations do not come as a shock to anyone who has gone through the process, or has family members who now find themselves mired in a system which is unnecessarily slow, and prone to unfairness and political interference. I, along with our Citizenship and Immigration critic, Diane Ablonczy, felt that it would be a good idea to provide a forum for new Canadians to express their frustration with the immigration process and to offer them the opportunity to offer constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvement. Accordingly, the Conservative Party launched a series of National Immigration Consultations that have been an overwhelming success.

The Conservative Party listened very carefully to what new Canadians were telling us, and, as I've illustrated in the answer above, we have adopted policies that reflect our commitment to improving the immigration system. That result, in its own right, would have made the process all worth it, but I think one of the most important benefits of the consultations was the level of trust and understanding our party fostered with various immigrant and minority communities. They have seen so many Liberal promises come and go, and so little action ever taken to improve the system, that it was really encouraging to see their enthusiasm in embracing the opportunity to speak up for meaningful immigration reform.

As for challenges in reflecting the interests of so many individuals, I don't see it as a challenge at all. I'm finding that as I travel across the country and meet with Canadians that there are basic and fundamental issues that are common to all of us. We all want a better Canada, and a government that will provide the vision and the policies to make that happen.

5) Although the Conservative Party fielded a diverse slate of candidates in the last federal election, and your caucus includes MPs from all walks of life, the perception that your party is "anti-immigrant" or "intolerant" remains. Why do you think this is, and what steps is your party taking to address that perception?

When I attend our caucus meetings and I look out over our collection of MPs, I'm always amazed that anyone can accuse our party of intolerance. I see Steven Fletcher, the first quadriplegic Member of Parliament. I see Nina and Gurmant Grewal, immigrants to this country and the first husband and wife duo in the House of Commons. I see women who have brought extensive private sector experience and enormous talent to our caucus and have flourished in their roles as senior critics in high profile portfolios. I see our Members of Parliament, the young and the not so young, from various different backgrounds and occupations, all working for a better Canada. I can offer no other explanation than to say that our political opponents have worked very hard to perpetuate the myth that the Conservative Party is intolerant. When a political party is rife with corruption, consistently breaks promises, and no longer reflects Canadians' values it resorts to scaremongering. I trust Canadians to see through the scaremongering and to choose good government over corruption and broken promises.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK LAYTON

Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

1) As you know, the Canadian population is increasingly diverse. Many wonder if that diversity is being reflected in our elected institutions. Can you please give us some idea of the diversity of your caucus? For example, how many women, immigrants, visible minorities, and Aboriginal peoples were elected in your party in the last federal election?

Canada's diversity is a source of resilience, pride and great strength – culturally, economically, and beyond. But that rich diversity is shamefully under-represented in our elected institutions, especially at the federal level.

Women's progress has been slow: One in five MPs in this Parliament is female. Meanwhile, perhaps 5% of my colleagues in the House are visible minorities – compared with some 13% in the general population.

In the 2004 federal election, Canadians elected 19 New Democrats, including five women and two gay/lesbian candidates. One third of our caucus comes from groups identified as under-represented. The NDP also has the highest proportion of women MPs on the Hill (26%), as we have through four successive Parliaments.

We are making progress, but all parties still have a great deal of work to do.

The NDP made a quantum leap this past election, nearly doubling its share of the popular vote. (With proportional representation, we would hold 49 seats, not 19.) But after fielding 27 visible minority candidates, we were unable to welcome even one to our caucus on June 28. That was a grave disappointment, and it cut close to home.

My wife, Toronto City Councillor Olivia Chow, ran a strong campaign in Trinity-Spadina. Olivia and 11 other NDP candidates fell short by fewer than 1000 votes. Five of those candidates were women. Four of them lost to men.

Too many terrific NDP candidates were felled by the Liberals' eleventh-hour "strategic voting" ruse. Stephen Harper seemed to be pressing at the gate. So Paul Martin criss-crossed the country telling NDPers to vote Liberal to guarantee a progressive agenda in Ottawa. In some ridings, that strategy pushed Conservatives over the top to victory – the same Tories that propped up Martin's right-wing budget this February.

2) What measures has your party taken to involve immigrants and minorities as party members, electoral candidates, and MPs? Are these measures working? Does more need to be done?

Before the 1993 election, our party adopted a nominations and affirmative action (AA) policy. Its goal is nothing less than to present voters with a candidate team that fully reflects Canada's diversity. Ultimately, we extend that same ideal to the composition of Parliament itself.

I hear myself talking about "ideals." I look forward, impatiently, to the day when a fully representative House of Commons is an expectation – a given.

At the riding level, NDP candidate nominations are democratic processes. But long before ballots are cast, we can act to make effective nomination campaigns a real possibility for people from under-represented groups. That's where the AA policy does its work.

Much responsibility has rested at the local level. A riding must satisfy two conditions before the national party will accept its nominations. First, the local candidate search committee must itself reflect the riding's special diversity. Second, there must be a candidate for nomination from at least one designated group.

Our policy designates the following groups as under-represented: women, people of colour, Aboriginal people, people living with disabilities, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered people and youth.

Results on the ground have been promising but uneven. That's not surprising: we're aiming for a cultural revolution of sorts at the local level. Recognizing the need to do more, NDP federal council passed a full AA implementation strategy this January – encompassing concrete guidelines, methods and resources to achieve concrete results.

3) Research suggests that in order to secure a party's nomination, immigrants and minorities need to have more education, more experience and deeper roots in their communities. Given that in order to run, a candidate must first be nominated, how do you ensure that immigrants and minorities are able to participate equitably in nomination contests?

More people from under-represented groups are stepping forward for nomination. We will have taken the next step – a bigger step – when more candidates are coming forward with the resources and strength to win. That's the challenge taken up by our new affirmative action implementation strategy.

This is still about doing more to find strong minority candidates – local advocates and community leaders who may not yet envision a place for themselves in federal politics. But it's also about raising the capacity of declared candidates to mount successful campaigns in contested nomination races.

The new strategy is an integrated one compelling involvement at all levels of the party. Here are some of the initiatives that you'll see before the next election…

Finding nomination candidates: National staff will support local candidate selection committees to reach AA goals. Between elections, staff will help riding executives boost the diversity of their own ranks – a real key to shifting the culture. The national candidate search coordinator will stage brainstorming sessions with community leaders to identify strong prospects. Local riding associations will conduct similar sessions with national support. And as leader, I will personally approach promising prospects to discuss their needs and their fit with the party.

Supporting nomination candidates: National staff will organize candidate schools for minority prospects – raising capacity and confidence. We will hire special AA officers to directly support candidates from designated groups. (As dedicated staff, they will work openly, with no implication of quiet bias.) We will also tackle the financial barriers faced by many prospects, who often must take unpaid leave in order to run. Measures will include bursaries, up to the equivalent of salary replacement. Those will supplement grants already available through the donation-supported Agnes Macphail Fund and Affirmative Action Fund (covering childcare, household help, and some campaign expenses).

The strategy includes a special monitoring and input role for the party's equity-seeking committees (representing women, youth, visible minorities, people living with visibilities, Aboriginal people, and GLBT people).

Finally, there are built-in feedback loops to continuously improve the strategy based on results achieved on the ground. The bottom line: Targets are not enough. The entire organization must now take responsibility for delivering results.

I often reflect on the example set by Monia Mazigh, who ran for us in Ottawa South in 2004. Monia's struggle to free Maher Arar, her husband, had thrust her onto the Canadian stage as a human rights defender. Her resilience and integrity certainly captured my attention. Monia will tell you now that she'd never imagined a place for herself in federal politics. But through many conversations – with myself, with Alexa McDonough – that idea became real and realistic for her. It was a process of mutual learning, and the investment was very worthwhile.

We know there are more Monia Mazighs labouring today in the trenches, feeling disjointed from federal politics. Our challenge is to reach out to them far more systematically than we have.

4) Outside of the electoral arena, how does your party involve a diverse range of Canadians in, for example, consultation activities or the setting of party policy? What challenges do you face in trying to reflect the interests of so many individuals?

The NDP is a *policy*-driven party, as opposed to a politics-driven party. Our policy is grounded in principles of social justice and human rights. Policy is set democratically at federal convention – the party's highest governing body. For our MPs, upholding policy is a sober responsibility.

Convention delegates represent both riding associations and affiliated unions. The affiliate structure reflects the NDP's roots as an advocate for working families. Our Associate President responsible for affiliated unions, Hassan Yussuf, is well known for his articulate advocacy for expanding political participation.

The NDP's elected equity-seeking committees are one focus for advocacy on behalf of under-represented groups. These include:

- Participation of Women (POW) Committee;
- Participation of Visible Minorities (POVM) Committee;
- Persons Living with Disabilities Committee;
- Aboriginal Committee; and
- Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered (LGBT) Committee.

Similarly, the New Democratic Youth of Canada (NDYC) advocates for a group of Canadians under-represented both in the halls of power and at the polling booth.

Each equity-seeking body may submit resolutions directly to convention. Their chairpersons also sit *ex officio* on both the federal executive and federal council – our governing body between conventions. In these capacities, they are empowered and expected to assert priorities of inclusion at all levels of policy- and goal-setting.

Consultation is in this party's blood. The NDP is the political face of a broader movement fighting for social, environmental, political and economic justice. To consult with citizens and their movements – and to act with them – is more than natural. It is the core of our mission and identity.

Many NDPers – MPs, officers, members and staff – come to us from community-based groups. They infuse the party with more than the wisdom and experience of those roots. They also carry on continuing relationships with social movements. Those *relationships* are a platform for consultation, for finding and testing good ideas at the local level. You see consultation unfold at many levels outside convention, outside the strictly formal. It may sometimes look like William James' "blooming, buzzing confusion" … but we call it informal democracy at work.

As leader, I have worked toward systematizing some of these community linkages. We created several advocacy teams within caucus, each focussed on a key priority –

from health to democracy to the environment. Each team of MPs is responsible for proposing solutions and connecting Caucus with academics, community groups and citizens. The Diversity Advocacy Team has been reaching out to under-represented groups, working on a whole spectrum of anti-racism, justice and diversity issues. Those have included racial profiling, security certificates and Canada's draconian security laws that – unlike Mr. Harper and Mr. Martin – the NDP strongly opposed.

In recent years, there have been drives within the NDP to formalize our linkages to wider social movements. Debates have been vigorous, and those discussions continue.

5) Your party fielded fewer visible minority candidates than the Conservative Party in the last federal election which, as you know, does not have an affirmative action policy. Why do you think that is? What are some of the challenges you face in trying to nominate a diverse slate of candidates? Is an affirmative action policy the only solution, or are other measures needed?

When Conservatives are fielding more visible minority candidates, that's a good sign. These candidates bring new perspectives to the table, and they have a positive role-modelling effect. Building an inclusive Parliament is a mission for all parties.

But the Conservatives are no model for the NDP! The Conservative Party has regressive immigration policies and bristles at official multiculturalism. Today, Conservatives are pitting minority groups against one another in the equal marriage debate – without telling them that many of their allies against equal marriage are also out there fighting turbans in the RCMP.

Meanwhile, the NDP is dedicated to human rights, diversity and a just society for working families. We know who wins on policy.

We really have to examine the pathways that carry people to candidacy. They are many and varied, and they are different from pathways to the polling booth.

I have discussed this phenomenon with Myer Siemiatycki, a professor at Ryerson University. Myer has spent years examining the dynamics of political participation among Canadian newcomers and minorities. He is also a great friend, and I owe much insight to our conversations.

Myer points to a trend among newcomers to lean toward larger parties that are likely to win. Research suggests newcomers may support governing parties in gratitude for being welcomed here. That impulse may even stronger for newcomers leaving conflict zones or fleeing human rights abuses. There can be a pressure to fit in quickly – to avoid "rocking the boat" by joining a party that's clamouring for change.

I don't dwell on this. The NDP is building support in newcomer communities. And we know we can also develop more candidates from their ranks. These prospective candidates are out there now, and we are committed to doing more to connect with them.

Let's be frank: it takes a special character to run for the NDP. This is a party of leaders and fighters. NDPers have cut their teeth on community frontlines, throwing their lives into struggles. Those backgrounds produce great MPs – but may also make them harder to recruit initially. When people are making a difference on the ground, federal politics can seem remote. Decades of visionless majority rule devastated many Canadians' sense of what's possible in government. NDP MPs worked valiantly to engage ordinary Canadians, but they were vastly outnumbered for the better part of a generation.

What I'm identifying here is a general recruitment challenge for the NDP. Layered on top of that are the special barriers that newcomers and minorities face. And there's another layer still. For many newcomers, getting involved in the community can be a precious first point of identification in a new home. Those powerful bonds are hard to compete with.

Is affirmative action a complete solution? No. It is a step in a process of enduring change. Affirmative action functions for us on at least three interacting levels:

First, barriers to political participation are real. Affirmative action is about naming that as a problem, and accepting our responsibility to act on it now. Canadians expect nothing less from the NDP.

Second, when minority candidates do step forward, they become positive role models within their communities. Their commitment to the process can change people's conception of the possible – of what an MP can look and sound like.

Third, affirmative action is a catalyst for change within the party itself. This shared challenge compels all of us to better understand the dynamics of political participation. That understanding can become a platform for new approaches to diversifying our ranks.

Finally, let's not ignore the elephant in this room. There is a deepening *general* crisis in our democracy. Voter turnout in federal elections has been plummeting for years. Last year's 60.5% turnout was an all-time low. Decades of grim, managerial rule have numbed the popular imagination. Canadians are turning away from government that reeks of scandal and irrelevance. Trying to diversify political participation without also tackling this general crisis would be like mopping the deck of a sinking ship.

This minority Parliament is a precious opportunity. New Democrats are finally back in a position to reignite our great national conversations – conversations that connect with Canadians' lived experience. These are conversations about raising a family in a changing world, about keeping ourselves healthy, about getting an affordable education, about building stronger communities, about cleaning the air we breathe. These are the conversations that can get people excited about politics again.

To fully re-engage Canadians, we must also reform our antiquated electoral system. Dominant parties are sailing to seat counts that far exceed their share of the popular vote. Adopting some form of proportional representation (PR) would assure Canadians that their votes do count. Adopting PR would open a space for other parties and other voices. (Under pure PR, the NDP would hold 49 seats, not 19!) Canadians would almost certainly also elect more women and more visible minorities under PR.

Canada is trailing the world on this one. All but two members of the OECD have already adopted some form of PR. What are we waiting for?

AN INTERVIEW WITH JIM HARRIS

Leader of the Green Party of Canada

1) As you know, the Canadian population is increasingly diverse. Many wonder if that diversity is being reflected in our elected institutions. Can you please give us some idea of the diversity of your caucus? For example, how many women, immigrants, visible minorities, and Aboriginal peoples were elected in your party in the last federal election?

In 2003, fewer than 20% of MPs were women. Minorities and Aboriginals are also considerably underrepresented in the House of Commons. Canada's diversity is not reflected in its government and proportional representation is the only effective way to bring gender equity to the House of Commons.

Due to the present first-past-the-post electoral system, the Green Party did not elect any members to Parliament despite having received nearly 600,000 votes. If Canada had a proportional electoral system in place, we would have nine sitting MPs in the Commons.

The Co-Chair of our Shadow Cabinet is Sharon Labchuk, who was the Green Party candidate in the riding of Malpeque (Prince Edward Island), and won 5.5% of the vote on June 28 – the highest ever of any candidate east of Montreal. As a rule, at least one of the three Co-Chairs must be a woman.

In addition to recruiting more female candidates, the Green Party is also actively recruiting more Aboriginals to run in the next election. In 2004, Gary Sanipass, the Chief of the Bouctouche Reserve, was a Green Party candidate in the riding of Mirimachi, New Brunswick.

Currently, our Shadow Cabinet is composed of four Francophones, one First Nation, one Asian, one Ukrainian, one Italian, and nine other members of European descent.

2) What measures has your party taken to involve immigrants and minorities as party members, electoral candidates, and MPs? Are these measures working? Does more need to be done?

Again, electoral reform is imperative if women and minorities are to be equally represented in government. A move towards proportional representation in Parliament would be major step forward in having a more balanced political system.

We also advocate respect for diversity, and the importance of honouring cultural, linguistic, ethnic, sexual, religious and spiritual differences within the context of individual responsibility toward all beings. We defend the right of all persons, without discrimination, to an environment supportive of their dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well being, and the building of respectful, positive and responsible relationships across lines of division in the spirit of a multicultural society. This requires:

- Recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to the basic means of their survival, both economic and cultural, including rights to land and self determination; and acknowledgment of their contribution to the common heritage of national and global culture;
- Recognition of the rights of ethnic minorities to develop their culture, religion and language without discrimination, and to full legal, social and cultural participation in the democratic process;
- Recognition of and respect for sexual minorities;
- Equality between women and men in all spheres of social, economic, political and cultural life.

3) Research suggests that in order to secure a party's nomination, immigrants and minorities need to have more education, more experience and deeper roots in their communities. Given that in order to run, a candidate must first be nominated, how do you ensure that immigrants and minorities are able to participate equitably in nomination contests?

Immigrants and minorities must first not be viewed as token candidates chosen to appeal to a specific voting base in a specific riding. Such candidates need to be offered opportunities to run in what are traditionally "safe" ridings for political parties, as opposed to serving as cannon fodder in the face of defeat.

For instance, the Quebec Liberal Party often sacrifices immigrant candidates to ridings that are un-winnable, yet use their participation to promote the diversity of their team. This is unacceptable. A candidate of Haitian descent should not be relegated to only running in ridings with a large Haitian population, or in a riding where the hopes of winning are equivalent to a snow ball's chance in Cancun. Tight limits must be placed on nomination finance rules to ensure that minorities and/or women, who may not have the network of potential donors as other candidates, have an equitable chance at winning. Instant memberships must end, as witnessed by the Green Party's 60 day rule for membership before voting.

If elected, the Green Party would commit to establishing stable and sufficient levels of federal funding to ensure that minority groups in Canada can be full participants in the decisions that affect their lives.

4) Outside of the electoral arena, how does your party involve a diverse range of Canadians in, for example, consultation activities or the setting of party policy? What challenges do you face in trying to reflect the interests of some many individuals?

The Green Party offers a unique approach to policy development: The Living Platform (www.lp.greenparty.ca). A broader consensus needs to emerge on policy questions to reflect a wider ideological spectrum, and that is why we developed a public forum where people can discuss Green Party of Canada policies, contribute to the research and development of the party platform, and explore public policy issues.

5) Communicating with Canadians is a necessary part of politics. What methods do you use to communicate with a diverse range of Canadians? How do you reconcile your party's concern for environmental responsibility with the need to reach a broad audience which may or may not have access to web- or television-based media?

Our communication strategy is not unlike our politics, in that it is a truly grassroots movement. In addition to citizen's assemblies and public forums, we also put out a monthly electronic newsletter and have just recently completed our new membership brochure. Most importantly, however, is our proximity to the issues that affect everyone. Now more than ever, Canadians are looking to the Green Party for solutions to issues that transcend partisan politics; food safety, aboriginal rights, and sustainable economics are just some of the reasons why we connect with Canadians more than any other political party in Canada – because we know what really matters, and what needs to be done.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH AND OF NEW AND ABORIGINAL CANADIANS:

Preliminary Findings From CRIC Research

ABSTRACT

In this article, Gina Bishop examines levels of civic engagement among Canadian youth, including a significant decline in voter turnout which is of particular concern. She outlines the efforts of the Centre for Research and Information on Canada to better understand the attitudes and values of young people today, as it is these which affect their political participation. Research thus far has focused on young leaders from Ontario and New Brunswick. Findings suggest that Canadian youth indeed care deeply about their communities, but choose to contribute in ways other than through traditional institutions.

GINA BISHOP

Gina Bishop is the Interim Director of Research with the Centre for Research and Information on Canada. She holds a Master of Arts degree from Carleton University, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of New Brunswick, specializing in Canadian Politics during both degrees.

The growing interest in democratic reform among Canadian provinces, and the federal government, is one that should not come as a surprise. This renewed interest is closely tied to the fact that many politicians and other decision-makers are grappling with the growing sense that many Canadians are holding increasingly negative and cynical views of political institutions, and public life. Along with declining voter turnout, this has forced political decision-makers to seek ways to reverse these trends, in order to revive feelings of integrity and respect towards political institutions and towards those who choose public life.

The studies of democratic reform which have taken place or are underway across the country provide an important opportunity to examine the role of the citizen in the modern Canadian state, and to initiate an examination of citizen engagement. William Reuben defines civic engagement as follows:

> *Civic engagement is the participation of private actors in the public sphere, conducted through direct and indirect interactions of civil society organizations and citizens-at-large with government, multilateral institutions and business establishments to influence decision making or pursue common goals. Engagement of citizens and citizens' organizations in public policy debate, or in delivering public services and contributing to the management of public goods, is a critical factor in making development policy and action responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people and potentially of the poor.*[1]

Clearly, the civic engagement of a population is directly linked to the quality of its democratic system. One popular way to measure changing levels of civic engagement has been through comparisons of voter turnout over time. Voter turnout in federal elections in Canada has been decreasing steadily since the late 1980s. In 2004, only 61% of eligible voters cast a ballot, the lowest level of voter participation recorded in Canadian history for a federal election. Furthermore, the continuing decline in voter turnout has raised a great deal of concern in that it affects not only Canada, but also many other industrialized countries.

In addition, the evidence suggests that young people today are voting in fewer numbers than young people did a generation ago, and that fewer are joining political parties. The reasons for reduced voter turnout, particularly among young Canadians, are varied and complex. For example, as Brenda O'Neill has pointed out, voting remains a fairly simple exercise and has remained relatively unchanged over the years, except for some changes to the registration process. Furthermore, the frequency at which Canadians are asked to vote has remained relatively stable. Information on political parties and candidates is also widely available to this internet-savvy generation (though as with many things, quantity does not always equal quality, or mean that the information is easy to process).[2] The answers, therefore, must lie elsewhere.

In addition to declining formal political involvement and activity, another important measure of civic engagement is sense of community, and community involvement. Sociologists have identified a variety of factors contributing to a change in the way young people view their community,

and their place within it. These include: the declining importance of organized religion; changes in the structure of the family; the growing importance of new communications media, notably the Internet; a declining emphasis on civic education within schools; growing mobility due to the changing nature of job market; and shifts in values that include a lesser regard for authority, greater moral relativism and growing emphasis on individual autonomy. Many of these changes may contribute to a weakening sense of attachment to the community.

In order to develop the tools to be effective in encouraging higher civic engagement and participation, researchers, politicians, community leaders and public servants must know more about the voter turnout decline among the youngest generation of Canadians. This includes understanding the values they hold towards community and public service.

CRIC's Research on Youth Civic Engagement in Canada

Over the past few years, CRIC has examined the attitudes and values of young leaders to learn about their views of the political process, and gain insight into factors affecting their political participation. The research that CRIC has conducted to date on these issues, focusing on young leaders in Ontario (2003) and in New Brunswick (2004), suggests that what is occurring is not a retreat from community leadership among younger Canadians but rather a shift in priorities and leadership style.

CRIC's focus groups revealed that most respondents placed quite a high value on family, and on community. There was no evidence to suggest that respondents did not care about their communities or their world, were selfish, unduly cynical, or had no ideas about what they would like to see in the way of positive change. One could say that most young Canadians are not less interested in leading and in contributing to their communities than were previous generations, but are instead more likely to make their contributions outside of traditional institutions that include political parties and the electoral system, the public service, and churches.

One could say that most young Canadians are not less interested in leading and in contributing to their communities than were previous generations, but are instead more likely to make their contributions outside of traditional institutions that include political parties and the electoral system, the public service, and churches.

At the same time, the youth in CRIC's focus groups did not usually make the connection between unpaid work that they were already doing in their community, and volunteering. The concept of "volunteering" was perceived as intimidating by most of the young leaders in the focus groups, something that required a major, long-term commitment that most could not or were not willing to make. Furthermore, those who had attempted to volunteer in an official way reported that they found it difficult to know where to start, or that they had encountered organizations that tried to impose a specific schedule of involvement – to which they could not commit.

CRIC's surveys have also found that levels of cynicism towards elected officials and government are no higher among younger Canadians than among the general population. Participants displayed limited political literacy or awareness. Many said that they rarely discussed political issues, and indeed that they were not interested in politics; government and public service were perceived to be in the hands of an elite from which they are excluded. However, with some prodding, most were able to quickly articulate ideas about how to change their world for the better. Many also seemed to be trying to understand how they could better exercise their responsibilities as citizens. Thus, to label young leaders as apathetic, disillusioned, or uncaring about what is happening around them is simplistic.

Differences among young new Canadians

Like the 2004 research project on young leaders in New Brunswick (discussed below), the 2003 study of young leaders in Ontario found differences among certain groups. Of particular interest, the results of the focus groups showed that first or second generation Canadians were much more likely to be aware of and interested in politics and government than those whose families had been established in Canada longer. Yet, young first or second generation Canadians were no more positive or negative about government and politics than their counterparts.

Of the few focus group participants interested in government or political work, most were first or second generation Canadians. Equally interesting, these young leaders stood out from the other participants because they were the only ones who mentioned discussing politics, government or current news with family and friends.[3]

Differences among young Aboriginal Canadians

The existing research on voting patterns of Aboriginal Canadians shows that on average, they are less likely to vote in federal elections than are non-Aboriginal Canadians. However, there can be significant variations in different areas of the country; in some cases, their rate of participation is actually *higher* than the Canadian population as a whole.[4] Based on CRIC's research to date on young leaders, we have learned that while voter turnout is an important indicator to consider when talking about civic engagement, it is not the only barometer.

As previously noted, lower voter turnout should not be confused with political inaction or apathy; this is perhaps even more true in the case of Canada's Aboriginal population. Alain Cairns makes this point clearly: "Political enthusiasm and academic adrenalin are more easily stimulated by the heady wine of Aboriginal nationalism than by the more humdrum business of elections[5] for minority

Aboriginal populations unlikely to gain more than a toehold in legislatures[…]"[6]

In the 2004 New Brunswick research on young leaders, differences were observed between Aboriginal participants, who were generally aware of at least local government and politicians, and non-Aboriginals, who were more likely to think that government and politics had little to do with their day-to-day lives. The focus groups revealed that young Aboriginal participants had a heightened awareness of politics and government, and were better able to see the relationship between government and politics and their everyday life. Young Aboriginal participants who indicated an interest in politics most often said that they were interested in local, regional and national politics as this affects their own communities. Finally, most Aboriginal participants expressed interest in Aboriginal self-government, although some questioned current political practices in their communities.

CRIC's focus groups that young Aboriginal participants were more likely than non-Aboriginal participants to be actively involved and engaged in support of others in their communities, and to feel ownership towards their communities. Some expressed that they felt they personally had the power to make things happen, to make a difference in their communities. However, of all the young Aboriginal participants, only a few felt that they enjoyed respect of those in their community now, and like many of their non-aboriginal counterparts, most believed that if they were ever to have the power to effect change, it would not be in the near future.

In contrast to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, young Aboriginal leaders were more inclined to believe that they were "real" functioning citizens at this stage of their lives. Some were already engaged at some level in political activity now. Several of the Aboriginal participants indicated that they are already working in their communities with the current political leaders, while some spoke about their own efforts to share ideas and concerns with the elders of their communities. This particular group of participants was anxious to take action now, instead of waiting until later in life. Those who took action also reported that, through taking action, they earned a level of respect from the leaders of their communities that surprised them.

Conclusion

Given these findings, the challenges faced by decision-makers are not how to generate interest among young Canadians in community service, nor how to or combat unusually high levels of cynicism within this demographic. Rather, the goal must be connecting with young Canadians by building bridges between their networks and traditional community institutions.

CRIC is continuing its research in this area; this spring, CRIC will be conducting a national qualitative research project to further explore the preliminary findings reported here, to better understand the particular values and attitudes of young Aboriginal Canadians and young new Canadians. Results from this research will be available by June 2005.

Through better understanding the values and attitudes of Canada's next generation, and by encouraging younger citizens to become involved in the development of policies that shape and affect their day-to-day lives, the way is open to achieve two important goals: helping to reverse the trend towards declining voter turnout, and increasing the interest that Canadians have in public policy and the sense of responsibility that people share for our country's future. Success in this can only strengthen Canadian democracy.

Notes

[1] William Reuben, "Civic Engagement, Social Accountability, and Governance Crisis", p. 2. Available at http://www.worldbank.org/participation/civicengagement/civicengagementsocialaccountabilitygovernancecrisis.pdf.

[2] Brenda O'Neill, "Youth Participation – What We Know, and What We Don't Know" in CRIC Paper No. 15 *Canadian Democracy: Bringing Youth Back Into the Political Process,* December 2004, p. 3.

[3] Unfortunately, further conclusions are difficult to reach at this point, given that during the execution of this first project in 2003, priority was not given to exploring these differences in a more systematic way. However, in the subsequent research project focusing on young leaders in New Brunswick, CRIC was better prepared to capture and explore differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants, within the scope of the larger project.

[4] Daniel Guérin, "Aboriginal Participation in Canadian Federal Elections: Trends and Implications" in *Electoral Insights,* November 2003, p. 10

[5] With the exception of the northern territories.

[6] Cairns, p. 7

UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN CANADIAN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:

Canada's Challenge

ABSTRACT

In the years to come, Canada's success will largely depend upon its ability to maintain an environment in which each Canadian, regardless of colour or gender is able to realize his or her full potential and make the greatest possible contribution to our society. Canada must demonstrate an ability and willingness to adapt its most important institutions if it wishes to preserve its notion of itself as a tolerant, multicultural society. However, left unchecked, current levels of under-representation of ethno-racial minorities, Aboriginal peoples, newcomers and women in our public institutions calls in to question our ability to realize this vision of Canada's future.

ANNAMIE PAUL

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Canada is one of the most dynamic places on earth. Our changing population is a case in point. In the past ten years, the visible minority population has increased to almost 14% of the general population. Immigrants now make up almost 19% of the Canadian population, and it is estimated that this group will account for all of our labour market growth by 2011. In our urban centres, this demographic dynamism is even more on display. For instance, in Toronto, more than 40% of the population was born outside of Canada, and visible minorities make up just under 50% of the population. The rapidly increasing diversity of Canada presents a tremendous opportunity for our country. However, it also presents its own unique challenges. Foremost among these challenges is how to harness the potential of our diversity in our public institutions. The truth, the dynamism on display in our population growth is almost completely absent here. As a result, there is a severe and persistent under-representation of visible minorities and new immigrants in our public institutions.

The under-representation of newcomers and visible minorities is particularly acute in provincial and federal politics. For instance, in Ontario, visible minorities constitute more than 19% of the population but less than 5% percent of the Members of the Provincial Legislature. There has been little improvement in Canadian visible minority representation in Canadian legislative bodies for over thirteen years.

Little official information is gathered on the representation of visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples and newcomers on City Councils and locally appointed and elected agencies, boards and commissions. However, what research *is* available indicates that all of these groups are significantly under-represented. For instance, in Toronto, visible minorities make up almost 50% of the population. The city also has the largest Aboriginal population in Canada. However, visible minorities represent only 11% of City Council and there has never been an Aboriginal councillor. In Halifax, there is no visible minority or immigrant representation on council.[1]

In the executive levels of the civil service, visible minorities account for only 4.2% of federal government executive employees and only 7% of new executive hires. Only Aboriginal peoples have enjoyed a significant upswing in executive public service representation, accounting for 10% of new executive hires.[2]

Under-representation of women

While women represent 52% of the Canadian population, they only hold 21% of the seats in the House of Commons. This level of under-representation has persisted through three election cycles, with female representation rising only slightly from 18% in 1993. Women hold only 21% of federal seats and fewer than 18% of provincial seats. This is in spite of the fact that in national polls, Canadians have consistently indicated a willingness to vote for women candidates and have identified under-representation as a problem.

It is difficult to over-emphasize how deeply entrenched we are in the under-representation of women in Canadian electoral politics. For instance, as a result of our poor showing, Canada ranks

37th internationally for female representation in parliament, down from 31st in 2002 and far behind many less robust parliamentary democracies. In fact, at the current rate of progress, it would take 4 more generations of Canadian women to come and go before gender parity is achieved in the House of Commons.

Women also continue to be significantly under-represented in the executive ranks of the federal government and in politically appointed positions. While women represent more than 54% of the federal public service, they account for only 33.8% of federal executive employees. In 2002-2003, women only accounted for 44% of new executive hires within the federal government.

Reasons for chronic under-representation

Under-representation arises from a variety of barriers that women, visible minorities, newcomers and Aboriginal peoples face when pursuing public leadership positions. These barriers will continue to contribute to the significant and persistent under-representation of these groups in public office and include:

1. Individual resources: such as age, marital status, education and income (Junn, 1999)
2. Where an individual places on the trajectory of settlement and integration, including:
   - length of residence
   - language proficiency,
   - acquisition of knowledge of the political system,
   - acquisition of knowledge of the different political parties, and
   - acquisition of knowledge of the different tactics being used in the country for political influence (Junn, 1999)
3. Ability to translate social capital into political capital (Fennema and Tillie, 1999, 2000).
4. The persistence and reproduction of racial oppression and discrimination (Saloojee 2002).

Other factors include poverty, discrimination, institutional non-acceptance or the group's own limited social capital. New immigrants, who are increasing also people of colour, continue to face a host of additional, particular challenges including language, information, social adaptation and credible credentials.[3]

In provincial and federal electoral politics, women and visible minority candidates have less personal wealth to seek party nominations and often have difficulty raising nomination funds. As recent entrants into Canadian politics, women and visible minorities are often not part of the networks used to support nomination bids.

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In the public service, women, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples continue to report facing negative attitudes and stereotyping and consistent undervaluation. Visible minority women still feel that they face the "double jeopardy" of being women and people of colour. Left unaddressed, the predictable result of these barriers has been the persistent under-representation of women and ethno-racial minorities in Canadian electoral politics.

Implications of under-representation

The implications of under-representation extend far beyond the affected groups and are both symbolic and substantive in nature. Substantively, the true harm of under-representation is that the Canadian public is largely deprived of the significant contribution that a greater diversity of representation could have on the formulation of public policy at its highest levels.[4]

Symbolically, there is a growing sense among Canadians that a chronic under-representation of the large segments of our population is a serious threat to our shared notions of participatory democracy. For instance, 90% of Canadians support increasing the number of women in public office as the most important change needed to our political system.[5] A lack of diversity in Canadian elected officials has also contributed to a decline in voter turnout, particularly among youth.[6] At a time when voter turnout is at historical lows and the public's disillusionment with politics is at all-time highs, the message of inequality that under-representation transmits is one which our country can ill afford.

CCPL Mission and Objectives

The Canadian Centre for Political Leadership (CCPL) was created to promote the participation of visible minorities, new immigrants, women and Aboriginal peoples in public leadership with the goal of ultimately increasing their representation in Canadian public institutions. To that end, the CCPL provides its target audiences with non-partisan training and resources to assist them in successfully pursuing public leadership. As the first permanent centre of its kind, the CCPL also provides a forum in which strategies for the benefit of female, visible minority, newcomer and Aboriginal public office seekers may be developed and shared.

CCPL Target Audiences

The CCPL provides resources, education and training to visible minorities, newcomers, Aboriginal peoples and women with a:

- Demonstrated commitment to one or more community issues
- Strong interest in public leadership and civic participation
- Willingness to actively investigate appropriate public leadership opportunities

- Willingness to complete pre-training and post-training exercises and activities

Activities

The CCPL was established in 2002. Over the past 3 years, it has launched a series of innovative programs and materials, focused primarily on the Greater Toronto Area. The Municipal Participation Project, which ran from February 2003-July 2004, was aimed at preparing visible minority, new immigrant and Aboriginal community leaders, including youth, for participation in municipal public leadership in the GTA. Forms of public service included serving on municipal agencies, boards and commissions, running for City Council and school boards and serving on significant community boards. Participants now sit on the Toronto Board of Health, the Toronto Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic. Participants also ran for Council in 2003 in the Cities of Toronto and Markham respectively and for Toronto District School Board Trustee.

In 2003, the CCPL created 4 original case studies as a complement to the Municipal Participation Project. Using community members as examples, these case studies permitted participants to explore issues surrounding municipal public leadership and political participation.

In 2004, the CCPL launched its website – www.theccpl.ca. The website includes information about the Canadian Centre for Political Leadership and information on existing CCPL programs and planned CCPL activities. It also includes facts on women and visible minorities in Canadian public leadership, research and links to other civic and political participation organizations, and a listing of national civic and political participation activities and events.

This year, the CCPL will be hosting a GTA Public Leadership Summit. The goal is to provide training to 200 visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples and newcomers from the GTA who wish to pursue public leadership positions, including elected office, campaign staff, public agencies, boards and commissions, and senior positions within the civil service.

Through its programs and activities, the Canadian Centre for Political Leadership hopes to focus attention and to bring creative solutions to the issue of the chronic under-representation of women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples and newcomers in Canadian public leadership positions.

Steps toward addressing chronic under-representation

Through our training, activities and research, the CCPL has gleaned a number of important lessons about what motivates individuals from under-represented groups to enter public life and what makes them effective once they have assumed positions of public leadership. Some of the lessons we have learned are the following:

Personal passion is what leads to involvement – Public leaders identify a personal passion as the root of their public involvement. Almost all of the public leaders that the CCPL has worked with trace their beginnings back to the grassroots level and their pubic leadership flows from that involvement.

The importance of thoroughly investigating opportunities – Public leaders take the time to research the public office opportunity to determine whether it will allow them to promote the public policy issues they are committed to. They also determine whether they will be able to serve effectively by making inquiries through community networks and by questioning other public leaders directly.

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The importance of working with community gatekeepers – Public leaders stress how important it is to develop, where possible, good relationships with community gatekeepers (those who are in a position to support your pursuit of office and your work once you secure the position). However, public leaders also note the importance of devising strategies to circumvent gatekeepers if they prove to be barriers to effectiveness.

The importance of building networks and alliances – Public leaders identify the importance of building effective networks. This includes building an effective community network that can be used to support your work. It also includes building a network of allies within public institutions willing to work with you to implement your policy agenda.

The importance of evidence-based advocacy – Public leaders indicate that it is important for them to go through a period of intellectual preparation for public leadership. In order to have the most impact, public leaders do their policy research and build a case for their issues. The goal is to be able to advocate as effectively as possible on behalf of their public policy interests.

Is this for me? – At one point or another, each public leader asks themselves, "is this for me?" That is, does this work reflect my values, does it play to my strengths? Is this where I have the best opportunity to make a significant impact on the policy issues that are important to me? For some the answer will be yes, and others no. For those for whom the answer is no, the challenge then becomes pursuing other avenues to achieve public policy impact.

Role for the gatekeepers in reducing under-representation

While women, newcomers, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples clearly need to go through their own rigorous process of self-examination and preparation, it would be misleading to suggest that this in and of itself

will lead to a significant increase in the representation of these groups in public leadership positions. As previously noted, there continue to be a large number of structural barriers faced by racialized communities and women as they seek to enter the public arena. These include a recruitment process that works to confer advantages on established groups and public institutions and political social groups that are reluctant to share power. Therefore, it is essential that public institutions, political parties and community gatekeepers make an explicit and sustained commitment to eliminate the systemic causes of under-representation for which they bear responsibility.

Electoral politics

Political parties are the gatekeepers to political office. It is they that ultimately decide who will secure nominations, who will be awarded the most winnable ridings and who will receive the financial backing and human resources needed to mount successful campaigns. Without the support of the political parties, under-representation becomes much more difficult to eradicate. Research has shown that the countries which achieve the greatest success in increasing the representation of diverse groups in their national assemblies are those in which political parties have adopted explicit measures toward that goal. These measures have at times been combined with legislation or constitutional reform, but often, political party reform has been sufficient and more effective in dramatically increasing the results for under-represented groups.

Political parties could insist that candidates from under-represented groups be identified and nominated in the most winnable of those ridings. The executives of political parties could direct riding associations to become proactive in recruiting diverse candidates and combine this with an accountability mechanism requiring riding associations to demonstrate that they have actively sought out women candidates. The political parties can also set an explicit goal regarding the percentage of women, visible minority and other candidates from under-represented to be run in the next election. A minimum of 33% would be an ideal goal as research has identified this as the critical mass needed to produce substantive public policy results.

Public Appointments

All three levels of government can make simple adjustments that have the potential to produce significant results in public appointments. For instance, there is a push on by citizens and governments alike to make the appointments process more transparent and accessible. To this end, the CCPL and other organizations are promoting the creation of community rosters/talent banks. These talent banks would provide public institutions with almost instant access to a diverse pool of individuals who are ready, willing and qualified to serve on government agencies, boards and commissions and in the executive ranks of the civil service. Talent banks have proven to be very successful in the deployment of Canadians internationally and in diversifying institutions in other jurisdictions, including the United States.

Canadians have the ability to create a real moment in our collective history. By implementing proactive initiatives, we have the opportunity to lead our country to its first breakthrough in under-representation more than a decade. This would transform the face of Canadian public leadership and will have the full support of many Canadians.

Notes

[1] *Diversity in Canadian Governments: Preliminary Research on the Numerical Representation of Women, Minorities and Immigrants in 7 Cities,* Political Participation Research Network, Metropolis, September 2003.

[2] All statistics from: Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, *Employment Equity in the Federal Public Service 2002-2003*

[3] *Ethno-Racial Political Representation in Toronto: Patterns and Problems,* Myer Siemiatycki, Anver Saloojee Ryerson University.

[4] Research show that legislative priorities differ with female representation over 33%, Sylvia Bashevkin, Uof T.

[5] November 2004, Environics poll for Centre for Research and Information on Canada

[6] Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters, Elections Canada, 2003

A PRACTITIONER'S VIEW

Integration and Civic Participation

ABSTRACT

Drawing on extensive personal and professional experiences with resettlement and integration, the author argues that integration and civic participation are concepts which are connected and interrelated. Without the active participation of all stakeholders and the political will to facilitate the full integration of newcomers on all levels in our society, civic participation cannot occur. This leads not only to a loss of the vibrancy of Canadian society, but also to long-term social problems for Canada.

The movement of people across continents and countries can be traced back to the beginnings of human history. Historically, the need to access new resources, live in a more hospitable climate, and find protection from hostile enemies, led to the movement of people around the world leaving their immediate environment for other places. With the development of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states, people learned to live with others that they did not share immediate family or tribal ties with and organize themselves based on political and territorial lines. There are many examples of mass movements of a people to new places, hoping to start a new life and wishing for a better future. Moving to new areas/countries did not, however, guarantee the peaceful coexistence of people or their integration into communities.

Historically, newcomers were looked at as alien threatening the cultural and economic fabric of the established society. Foreigners were feared for having different believes, religions, and cultures. Foreigners were often kept in isolation, separated, and controlled. The ruling class often protected the society from the influences of newcomers by limiting their ability to have political, economic or social influence, while at the same time greatly benefiting from their labour. The situation today is fundamentally not that much different than from the distant past. Currently, the same culture of protectionism can be identified in our societal understandings; international border agreements between countries as well as current immigration policies that are based on protectionist attitudes among states. After WWII and with the rise of the American/Canadian civil rights movement, a general push toward the elimination of barriers to integration and participation of minorities began.

Today in North America systemic barriers and challenges to full integration continue to exist. The new socio-economic reality of globalization leads, on the one hand, to the review of international attitudes toward migration, resettlement, and integration while creating, on the other hand, a growing disparity in wealth distribution among countries and political systems. This growing disparity increases global migration; people desire to improve their lives and move to wealthier and freer societies.

In the past few years and especially after the September 11 attacks, a myriad of work has been published trying to get a better understanding of our societies by re-examining the social fabric that currently defines western culture. The lack of attention given to the issue of long-term integration of newcomers into societies has created major problems for policy makers who are struggling to find speedy and careful solutions to this issue, realizing that our existing policies and practices continue to lack genuine attempts to eliminate systemic barriers to the full participation and integration of newcomers in host societies.

Although migration of people is an old phenomenon the development of currently used and related concepts such as civil society, integration and civic participation (all of which are defined in the broadest sense), is new. Our understandings of these concepts and ideas continue to develop and change and are often influenced by historical events. In recent history we have witnessed the rise of nation-states and democratic governments. These are necessary ingredients for the flourishing of ideas and concepts such as civil society, integration, and civic participation; they, however, do not constitute a guarantee for the practical implementation of these concepts. Even with these changes we continue to witness the systemic oppression of various groups in democratic societies.

Canada, although an immigrant country, has shared many of the discriminatory attitudes often associated with Europe when dealing with the immigration/citizenship of non-Europeans to

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Canada. In the recent past, systematic efforts by policy makers were made to limit the migration of non-Europeans to Canada (e.g. History of immigration of Indians from India to Canada). Only when severe labour shortages made it necessary to bring non-Europeans to Canada (e.g. history of Chinese immigrants to Canada), was a change in policy implemented. Policies were deliberately designed to insure that migrant workers did not settle permanently or bring their families with them. It is hard to believe that Canada's immigration and integration policies were discriminatory toward non-European immigrants until 1965.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canada's *Multiculturalism Act* provided the opportunity to analyze legislation and policy and to start eliminating/minimizing systemic racism and discrimination embedded within government policies. This has positively impacted Canada's policies on immigration. The changes in immigration policy resulted in massive increases of non-European immigrants. In the past twenty years, almost 75% of immigrants came from non-European countries. The current trend has created a new set of opportunities as well as challenges for Canada in constant need of immigrants.

Thus, Canada's policies have come along way. Comparing existing Canadian policies, practices, and attitudes toward newcomers to that of European countries, Canada seems to be in a much better place. Studies on societal attitudes toward immigration and immigrants comparing Europe to North America indicate that Canadians have by far a more positive attitude toward newcomers than most European countries. There is also a higher sense of 'belonging' among Canadian immigrants. A vast majority of newcomers embrace their Canadian citizenship and are proud to call themselves Canadian.

At the same time, newcomers to Canada continue to face numerous challenges throughout their settlement and integration. Integration is viewed as a one-way street; newcomers are expected to assimilate and adapt into the host community's way of life, leaving the onus to adapt and change on the newcomer. People make personal sacrifices to move to democratic and wealthier societies in exchange for a better economic future and a stable political system; political, economic or cultural adaptation of the host community receiving the newcomer is not expected or viewed as necessary. The host community often does not see a need to embrace the newcomer into the dominant culture. In addition, the lack of civic participation of immigrants/newcomers is viewed as a sign of apathy toward the new realities of the host society. One of the results of this 'one-way street' approach is, that while western societies have become more diverse, groups of legal citizens living in the host country for many generations remain separated from the larger community. In the past few years, policy makers as well as academics have paid more attention to the newcomer's position in society. As a result numerous research studies have been conducted and long-term integration concerns have become salient and are making it onto government and community agendas.

Discussing civic participation in particular requires a better overall understanding of the immigrants and of their host society. We need to recognize that healthy resettlement and integration should lead to civic participation and is a long-term process that requires the partnership of many stakeholders including immigrants, governments, local communities, and institutions. Throughout this process a number of distinct stages or phases can be identified. The model below (Fig. 1) shows the full continuum of services needed and the various stages that immigrants go through to become fully engaged in community life by taking part in civic affairs. It also shows that settlement and integration is a process that involves newcomers and the entire community.

Immigrants who decide to leave their country of origin behind and establish themselves anew in an unfamiliar place are people of courage. Regardless of past experiences, education, and resources, the resettlement process remains a stressful and harsh experience. Learning a new language, establishing basic necessities, managing family life, finding jobs to survive, and connecting to the larger community, are just the beginning steps of a long journey. We need to fully recognize the importance of the sacrifices that immigrants make by investing time, finances, and other resources to come to Canada in the hope to integrate and become full participating members of society. In many cases the desired environment is, however, not created. This is often due to the lack of engagement by all necessary stakeholders in the process of integration. As a result, immigrants become discouraged and amalgamate in smaller communities, separated and alienated from the larger society.

As the above model shows, civic participation should be looked at as the ultimate goal of immigration. We need to recognize that immigrants need to have a fair and positive experience in their settlement and integration process and that these positive experiences lead to the willingness and capacity of the immigrant to participate in civic affairs. The sense of 'belonging' and the willingness to participate is developed only if newcomers are valued, respected, and given opportunities to reach their full potential in the host country.

We in Canada have a relatively positive experience with the participation of newcomers or immigrants in all aspects of our society. Our diversity is reflected in many areas and on many levels in society; however, overall improvement in the area of diversity and diversity representation has been slow. Complex barriers to the full recognition of the newcomer's potential continue to exist and need to be addressed. This includes analysis of possible institutional barriers to immigrant integration in key areas. Key areas in the integration process include, but are not limited to:

- access to initial and long-term settlement services
- language training
- access to employment
- cultural orientation
- orientation to the culture of Canadian workplaces
- recognition of qualification and experience
- anti-racism/anti-discrimination policies
- family reunification
- immigration status, and
- building sustainable communities

Table 1 – Immigration and Integration Continuum

Pre-Immigration	Initial Settlement	Settlement	Transition	Full Participation
	Integration			
Provision of basic information for immigrants to help them know what they are coming to (manage expectations) Experiences will be broad and varied based on individual need Tools for inquiry and research are important (e.g. website information packages)	Minimize anxiety by satisfying basic human needs including housing, food, clothing, health care (e.g. post traumatic stress), and safety High level of dependence May cover a period from a few days to 6 months Variety of initial settlement services	Broad skills and understanding developed in areas such as language, social network (friends), entry job, cultural norms and traditions, parenting, financial matters, etc. Typically one to three years in this stage Strong and clear partnerships required between CCIS and others to meet diversity of needs	Start to achieve self-sufficiency through advanced language skills, training in desired profession/career Securing employment	Make transition to mainstream community services Success in having sustainable employment, health, and family life Reliance on CCIS diminishes Community has capacity for successful integration Becoming part of the community may take form of volunteerism, citizenships, etc.

Source: CCIS Strategic Planning Steering Committe analysis, November 2004.

Research suggests further that immigrants and refugees with academic and professional qualifications, who have been trained outside of Canada, also continue to encounter numerous barriers. These barriers include:

- minimal Canadian employer contacts
- lack of information about available programs and services
- misunderstanding of the culture of Canadian workplaces, and
- impracticable requirements for licensing and accreditation where the final authority for assessing and recognizing foreign credentials resides mainly with employers, professional and regulatory bodies, and education institutions

The failure of countries to find solutions, to the most severe political and social problems associated with immigration, integration, civic, and political participation, combined with lack of a vision for the integration of newcomers, results in serious social problems. A holistic approach to integration is needed to ensure the development of integration policy. This includes the formulation of a common definition of integration/civic participation and the design of short and long-term strategies and measurement tools to deal specifically with integration. Ongoing inter-level government communication and coordination to improve overall services in all areas of integration is a necessity. In addition, policy changes on the federal and provincial level must be implemented more expediently. Fragmented and ad hoc changes have taken place with respect to integration/civic participation processes. While current policies may exist on paper, there has been a lack in practical implementation of these policies. Moreover, there needs to be a redefinition of the process and meaning of 'engagement' that incorporates a better understanding of the changing nature of communities. This redefinition includes taking measures to encourage newcomers to participate in community activities that directly benefit themselves or their families. For example, involvement in community associations, sport leagues, social charitable groups, children and youth activities, community agencies, and school councils are some ways to actively engage and participate in civic life.

Indeed, there is far more to civic participation than political involvement, and meaningful engagement in the political process is in fact often the longer-term outcome of other kinds of civic participation. Civic participation starts at the level of voluntarism and smaller more local organizations. Thus, education and training on volunteerism should be provided for newcomers to facilitate their engagement within larger community organizations.

Capacity must also be built within ethno-cultural communities to encourage larger community engagement, and a strategy must be developed to attract and maintain newcomers as association members and volunteers at all levels.

Last but not least, it is essential that new Canadians become educated on the nature and functioning of the Canadian political system, and that there is a means to facilitate their engagement in the political process at all levels. One specific way to do this is to review current voting eligibility in civic elections in order to allow newcomers to vote at an earlier stage in their resettlement in the community. Currently, it takes an average of 5-6 years for newcomers to become eligible to vote in elections. Paradoxically, newcomers are allowed to become party members and vote for party leaders during party leadership campaigns. Political parties have taken advantage of the immigrant vote to influence leadership races, however, true political participation has been denied to new immigrants.

To conclude, integration and civic participation are concepts that are connected and interrelated. Without the active participation of all stakeholders and the political will to facilitate the full integration of newcomers on all levels in our society, civic participation cannot occur. This leads not only to a loss of the vibrancy of the Canadian society, but also to long-term social problems for Canada.

I HAVE A VOICE, BUT NOBODY LISTENS

Will They Hear My Cries?

ABSTRACT

CAYFO is a unique organization in that it plays three essential roles in the community – as a voice for children and youth, a think-tank for the youth sector, and as an essential service provider. In March 2004, CAYFO published its youth-driven report "Removing Barriers: Youth Participation, Leadership and Capacity Building in a Multicultural Community." This report was funded by Canadian Heritage and was published in partnership with over 30 community-based organizations including local school boards, multicultural groups, and youth groups. The focus was to identify issues that are common to new Canadians, and concluded that youth engagement is a necessary first step in creating a just society for all ethnicities and cultures.

Young people in general face a number of stumbling blocks in becoming engaged in their communities. This is attributable to basic issues such as lack of transportation and limited financial resources, as well as more complex issues, such as not being effectively targeted by community organizations. Youth are often treated "just as kids," and are given limited opportunity to apply their skills as an equal participant in community development. As a community, we have the collective obligation to underscore the notion, value and entitlement of inclusion, to ensure that all youth are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of the community.

"In my family, I do all the talking. My mom brings me to the bank, to the doctor and to do groceries. I only tell her the good things that people say… not the bad." Schools and organizations that are most successful in handling multicultural issues, engage youth throughout the planning and implementation of clubs, activities, celebrations and/or procedures. Frontline service providers have identified that multicultural youth are an effective conduit of community information. The scenario is quite simple – information that is given to children in school (in either official language), makes its way home to the parents (in their mother tongue).

"I stole a sandwich from a little kid today at school. I don't like stealing, but I was hungry." The report published by CAYFO in March of last year also highlights the fact that problems related to cultural and ethnic inclusion in Canada have oftentimes been directly linked to poverty. Immigrant children and youth are more likely to live in lower income households than their mainstream peers. Poverty is a barrier that drastically limits a young person's opportunity for education, development, success and ultimately, happiness. The report concludes that urgent citywide action is needed to assess existing fiscal policies, the implications on fairness, inclusion, and adequate wealth redistribution.

"The only thing I can remember from Rwanda is my sister's cries." Immigrant mental health concerns are also somewhat different from concerns of the mainstream population. Many youth arrive to Canada from war-torn countries or areas such as Rwanda, Croatia, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Problems which are vastly foreign to mainstream Canadians, such as child soldiers, end up having a local impact – forcing mainstream Canadians to grapple with concepts and realities that were previously considered to be "another world away." Children and youth who have been affected by war, often find it difficult to adjust to the Canadian environment, and have little if no opportunity to seek comfort through their peers, or even through their parents. Many children have been reported to face traumatic experiences in adjustment, and have struggled to identify themselves within a new environment and a new language.

The CAYFO report recommends stronger partnerships between federal, provincial, municipal and non-governmental agencies when approaching multiculturalism. Organizations are struggling to face the needs of the multicultural community in a compartmentalized manner. A sharing of responsibilities lies not only in federal hands, but also falls within the jurisdiction of provincial and municipal governments. It is the duty of all to ensure that the safeguard and preservation of rights has been recognized not only for adults, but also for children and youth.

The report also advocates for the creation of a youth advisory board with a mandate to review multiculturalism related curriculum pertinent to various grade levels. This could include the effective use of new technologies (such as chat or text messaging) in order to engage young people in

PIERRE ROBERT CYR

Pierre Robert Cyr is Co-Chair of Child & Youth Friendly Ottawa, a charity that specializes in youth engagement through grassroots community drives, focus groups, regional youth conferences, and annual award celebrations. Since its inception in 1996, CAYFO has acted as a venue where young people can discuss relevant community issues, apply their skills, and celebrate their positive contributions.

fun and interactive ways. Many youth have expressed concern around how the current history curriculum does not adequately and sufficiently address the history of the African-Canadian struggle. Most were surprised at how much more they knew of African-American history through television, pop music and multi-media.

In all, much remains to be done under Canada's multicultural policy, although many inroads have been made in communities across the country, including Ottawa. We note an increased multicultural presence in business, political and professional life and most of all amongst our young students, whom for the most part are gaining a reputation for being high achievers or indeed, over-achievers.

Caution is needed, however, when we address the needs of young people as a group. We worry about the engagement and participation of all youth in matters that confront them, and we particularly worry about the degree of involvement that multi-ethnic youth have in confronting the myriad of issues that include integration, racism and inter-generational cultural conflict. These issues are compounded by the normal developmental challenges that most youth encounter during their adolescent years. Young people are by no means a homogeneous group. While they share common experiences, the ways they experience their transition to adulthood are shaped by many influences, including diversity. We look towards a society that encourages community connectedness, promotes the unique perspectives and needs of young people and values their contributions. This can only be done by approaching the issue in a collaborative manner and listening to the views of those most affected.

For further information regarding CAYFO or for a copy of the report, please visit www.cayfo.ca. The CAYFO office can also be reached at (613) 244-3803.

MUSLIM POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CANADA:

From Marginalization to Empowerment?

ABSTRACT

Historically, Muslim Canadians participated at a lower rate in the political process. However, certain seminal events forced the community to the centre of the political stage and as a result, it became more socially and politically active. The main catalyst for new found activism was 9/11, the ensuing war on terrorism and the subsequent anti-terrorism legislation. This coupled with the release of the Statistics Canada census that confirmed that Muslims are the fastest growing religious community in the country, with the youngest median age of any religious group, resulted in an awareness of potential political clout. This clout manifested itself in the June 2004 federal election where 80% of the Muslim population voted – one of the highest turnouts for any Canadian religious community in history.

HUSSEIN A. HAMDANI, KAMRAN BHATTI AND **NABILA F. MUNAWAR**

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Until the early 1990s, the Muslim community in Canada played a marginal role in society and politics as a distinct group. The early immigrants believed their sojourn in Canada would be a temporary one and did not take much interest in Canadian politics. The bulk of Muslims are fairly recent immigrants, still with roots in their countries of decent. The majority seemed to take more interest in the affairs of those 'home countries' than in Canada. As a result of these and many other complex factors, the Muslim community was significantly outside the margins on many indices, including political and social participation.

It is partly because of this realization of a sense of marginalization that the community began to function as a coherent force in national politics and voice demands in the name of the community as a whole. Earlier, Muslim activism was fragmented. It tended to be restricted to agitation for specific national or regional causes (Kashmir, Palestine, etc.). Political involvement took place within the general context of racial and ethnic polarization, and did not define the participants as specifically Muslim.

Recently, a number of seminal events catapulted Muslims to the centre of the political stage. The tragic events on September 11th and the 2004 invasion of Iraq brought Muslims to the forefront of national and international concern. Muslims found themselves, intentionally or not, at the very centre of Canadian politics. It seemed that all of a sudden, everyone was talking about Islam and Muslims. The media microscope resulted in a growing political activism and evolving sense of identity-formation.

For the first time, major Muslim organizations in Canada organized conferences and meetings to discuss what it meant to be a Canadian Muslim. The idea of 'back home' was quickly fading in these discussions and debate sprang about the formation of a new Canadian Muslim Identity. Major papers were published and articles printed on this topic.

The evolving role of Muslims in Canadian politics raises some important questions about the future of Canadian democracy. It has also raises questions about the limits of tolerance and the paradoxes of democracy. The impact of 9/11 and the ensuing anti-terrorism laws contributed to an atmosphere in which Muslims felt harassed and under suspicion. They became the primary victims of an erosion of civil and political liberties that threaten to undermine Canadian democratic life. Interestingly, the newfound Muslim political activism came at a juncture when their civil liberties were the most threatened.

This paper will draw a profile of the Muslim community in Canada; discuss some historic obstacles to Muslim political participation; explore a number of the seminal events that facilitated an emergence of a political consciousness; highlight some of the emerging trends that developed as a result of this consciousness; examine the 2004 Canadian Federal Elections; and finally, suggest ways to further increase Muslim political participation in Canada.

Who are the Muslims?

According to Daood Hamdani, Islam is now very much a Canadian religion and the Muslim community is a microcosm of Canada's multicultural mosaic and a reflection of Islam's universality.

One-quarter to one-third of Muslim Canadians were born here. While some Muslim immigrants came to Canada to flee religious and ideological persecution and escape the occupation of their homelands, the vast majority came to seek a better life. They had the skills and qualifications and were looking for opportunities.[1]

Muslims are among the most highly educated groups in Canada. 27% percent of those working in what economics calls the "prime labour force group" have university degrees, compared with 17% of the general population. Since Muslims are mainly in the working age population, they contribute far more to sustain and strengthen the social security system than draw from it. While five workers support one retired person in Canada as a whole, Muslims have fifteen people in the working age group to support each retiree.

According to the 2001 National Census, between 1990 and 2000, the Muslim population increased by a blistering 128% – by far the largest percentage increase of any religious group in Canada. Islam is now the third largest religion in Canada trailing only Catholicism and Protestantism. The population of Muslims in Canada is estimated to be approximately 650,000, 45% of whom reside in the Greater Toronto Area. Important to consider is the fact that many new Muslim immigrants came from lands ruled by tyrants and dictators and they were often uncomfortable publicly pronouncing their faith out of fear of possible persecution. The census also confirmed that the median age of the Muslim community is 27, the lowest of any faith group. In other words, the Canadian Muslim community is the most educated, affluent, fastest growing and youngest community. All signs indicate that this community will increase in political and economic clout.[2]

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Historic Obstacles to Participation

Canada has an unflattering history in denying racial and religious minorities political enfranchisement. The effects of these exclusions have implications today. Many minorities may not feel comfortable or welcome politically participating because of these historic obstacles. The Japanese, Chinese and South Asian Canadian communities were all specifically excluded from voting rights and experienced infringement on their civil liberties at one time or another.

Clearly, the 1918 expansion of the franchise to women was significant. However, white women campaigned for the right to vote by capitalizing on the anxiety over the deterioration of the Anglo-Saxon race,[3] and organized against the expansion of the franchise to people of other racial backgrounds. In 1920, the Solicitor General of Canada, the Hon. Hugh Guthrie, brazenly said during a debate on the *Dominion Elections Act:*

> So far as I know, citizenship in no country carries with it the right to vote.
> The right to vote is a conferred right in every case…
> This Parliament says upon what terms men shall vote…
> No Oriental, whether he be Hindu, Japanese or Chinese, acquires the right
> To vote simply by the fact of citizenship…[4]
> (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997:81)

Such racial exclusions to the franchise were not eliminated until after the Second World War. The right to vote and to be a candidate for office was enshrined in the 1982 in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

Besides these and other systemic barriers to Muslim political participation, the immigrant condition was also a barrier to increased political participation. The vast majority of Canada's Muslims arrived in Canada in the last 30 years. Being transplanted from one social milieu to another is, for most immigrants, a very disruptive experience. It requires transformations in their identity, their social relations, their cultural habits, their linguistic capabilities and their institutional knowledge and skills.[5] The longer that one lives in one's new country, the easier the transformation becomes.

The Emergence of a Political Consciousness

A number of seminal events starting with the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Palestinian Intifada in 1987 and the first Gulf war catapulted Muslims into the centre of the political stage in Canada. Years later came the tragedy of September 11th, the war on terrorism, the attack on Afghanistan, the passing of terrorism related legislation, the Maher Arar controversy and the second invasion of Iraq. These events and the anti-Islamic culture surrounding them intensified Muslim activism and a definable Muslim political consciousness emerged.

September 11, 2001

The single greatest motivation for increased Muslim political activism seems to be September 11th, the ensuing anti-terrorism legislation and the "war on terrorism." The *Anti-Terrorism Act* outrages many Muslims, and motivates them to engage in the social discourse.

In addition to the broad and ambiguous definitions, this Act gave the government the power to arrest people "preventatively" to impose conditions without laying criminal charges, to tap telephones more easily, and to detain persons

under a security certificates without publicly revealing the evidence against them. It gave cabinet the power to decide what organizations were labeled "terrorist," with minimal due process, and to impose penalties for supporting or facilitating such organizations and their members, even if the person in question knew of no specific terrorist acts. The legislation also allows cabinet the power to involve the military more easily in enforcing domestic order, to keep information secret that would previously have been public.

A joint brief by a coalition of Muslim organizations and Toronto's Urban Alliance on Race Relations was particularly concerned with the use of "religious, ideological and political" motivations in the Act's definition of terrorism this inherently meant that those whose religion or politics differ from the institutionalized norm are more likely to be targeted under this Act. Currently, there are six Muslim men who are held under these security certificates. Neither the accused nor their lawyers have had the opportunity to examine the government's evidence against them. These certificates are seen by many Canadian citizens as legal abominations. Muslims around Canada were outraged and felt the need to organize and address these problems. One such organization is Ihya Foundation (Ihya).

Ihya Foundation is an Islam-inspired, Toronto-based, not for profit organization that stands for social justice. Ihya has held several events addressing the climate of the Muslim Canadian political landscape. For example, within weeks after September 11th, Ihya organized an event titled "Healing the Wounds: Uniting in the Aftermath of September 11th". At this event, former mayor Barbara Hall, as well as many leaders of the Canadian Muslim community discussed ways of healing and building bridges between the various communities in Canada. In September 2003, Ihya organized the Muslim communities first "Toronto Muslim Summit" where a broad, cross-section of the community gathered to discuss the most important issues affecting the community. The subsequent document was sent to all area politicians. In December 2003, Ihya organized a lecture with North America's leading Islamic scholar, Hamza Yusuf and one of the Americans responsible for drafting the new Iraqi constitution, Dr. Noah Feldman titled "Islam and Democracy: A clash of Civilizations?" Over 1,500 Muslim and non-Muslim attendees listened as the two speakers discussed how to foster a Muslim political identity in Canada. These are just a few of the many events that Ihya organized to facilitate the emergence of a Canadian Muslim identity and community empowerment.[6]

Mobilization for the 2004 Federal Elections

The Muslim community recognized its political power when it exercised its right to vote. In a system that gives one person, one vote, numbers count. According to the Census, no other religious community has increased its numbers in Canada in the last 10 years like the Muslim community. The 2004 federal elections (2004 Elections) were unique because it was the first opportunity after 9/11 for Muslims to express themselves at the ballot box about issues that concerned them. According to Hamdani, in the past, only 49% of Muslims participated in casting a ballot during elections. However, all signs indicated that these elections would be different.

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Journalists and political scientists began commenting on the potential impact of the Muslim community on the 2004 Election. An Ottawa Citizen article's headline declared "City Muslims awaken to emerging power." The article reported that the Ottawa Muslim population is the second largest voting bloc in the city – nearly double the combined strength of Jews, Hindus and Sikhs. Their sheer numbers make Muslims a potential force to be reckoned with, "a veritable power block in certain ridings."[7]

Muslim Canadians recognized their new found political clout. Nearly two months prior to the declaration of the federal elections, the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) published a report called "Elections 2004: Towards Informed and Committed Voting." Based on an analysis of public statements, electoral objectives and legislative voting records of each of Canada's 301 elected parliamentarians, the CIC evaluated each one's record on 20 different domestic and international issues, including promotion of closer ties to Muslim countries and support for domestic civil liberties. The report also highlighted, much to the surprise of many, that Canadian Muslims represent a swing vote in 101 electoral districts, nearly one third of all ridings, where they hold a anywhere from 1.8% to 13.5% of the vote.[8]

Others were not so surprised. Riad Saloojee, the executive director of the Council of American-Islamic Relations – Canada (Cair-Can) wrote an opinion piece in the *Ottawa Citizen,* just three weeks before the elections. In the piece, he gave notice to the various candidates [perhaps directly to the 101 districts where Muslims held the swing vote] what the Muslims may be looking for in their elected representatives. He stated that Muslims want: a review of the anti-terrorism legislation; more thorough scrutiny of the *Public Safety Act* and its unprecedented executive power in collecting and sharing information on Canadian citizens; an overhaul of the non-transparent security certificate process; oversight of our security agencies to ensure that racial profiling – which does exist in Canada – stops; and the need for increased debate and participation in policies on security and safety.[9]

The 2004 Elections were extremely exciting for Muslims. A record number of ten Muslim candidates ran. As a

community, for the first time they felt that their vote represented something of value. As well, it was clear that the usual Liberal monopoly on the Muslim vote was in jeopardy. Alliances began shifting. Approximately 10 year ago, Muslims would not have voted for the New Democratic Party, because of its support for abortion rights. However, in the 2004 Elections, there were 6 NDP Muslim candidates – the most candidates for any party. The most prominent NDP candidate was Monia Mazigh, the wife of Maher Arar, the Canadian who was detained and tortured in Syria.[10]

The results of the 2004 Elections were excellent for Muslims. Three Muslims were elected, including the first ever Muslim woman, Yasmin Ratansi. Perhaps more importantly, the CIC proclaimed that over 80% of the Muslims who could vote, did so – surpassing the national average by nearly 20%.

Such a strong showing made international recognition as many dailies in the Arab world mentioned the impressive electoral showing. As well, the Jerusalem Post recognized the new awakening of the political influence of the Canadian Muslim community in an article dated August 17, 2004, titled "Muslim Power in Canada."[11]

Suggestions to increase political participation of Muslims in Canada

Although the 2004 Elections proved to be a banner year for Muslim Canadians, there needs to be a sustained effort by the community and the respective governments to maintain political participation. In a paper titled, "Inclusion and Exclusion," Anver Saloojee argues that the government has a responsibility to actively encourage the widest possible political participation by members of racialized and newcomer communities. It can do this by working with community-based organizations to reverse the trend towards voter apathy and declining voter turnouts.[12]

Secondly, the government should assist in the viability of organizations representing the interests of the Muslim community. Saloojee posits that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between formal political participation and the strengths of community organizations. The financial and organizational well-being of the latter is essential prerequisites for a healthy democracy.[13]

In summary, the Muslim community is maturing socially and politically in Canada. They are developing a sense of confidence. This confidence is a catalyst for political empowerment. However, it is too early to tell if the massive political participation in the 2004 Elections can be replicated. More transparent lines of communication must be established between the Muslim community and the respective governments.

Notes

1 Daood Hassan Hamdani, "One hundred years of Islam in Canada" *Islamic Horizons.*

2 Statistic Canada, Census 2001

3 Working Group on Racial Equity, City of Hamilton. p. 27

4 Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1957 p. 81

5 Raymond Breton, "Social Capital and the Civic Participation of Immigrants and Members of Ethno-Cultural Groups." Conference on the Opportunities and Challenges of Diversity. A Role for Social Capital. p. 18

6 For more information please visit their website at www.ihyafoundation.com.

7 Ottawa Citizen, "City Muslims Awaken to Emerging Power", Saturday, February 21, 2004.

8 Canadian Islamic Congress, "Election 2004: Towards Informed and Committed Voting", April 13, 2004.

9 Ottawa Citizen "A Tyranny of Choice for Canada's Muslims", June 7, 2004.

10 See www.canadianislamiccongress.com for a full analysis of the 2004 elections.

11 Jerusalem post, "Muslim Power in Canada", August 17, 2004.

12 Anver Saloojee, "Inclusion and Exclusion" Bridging the Worlds Conference material p. 46.

13 Ibid., p. 47.

THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MUNICIPAL POLITICS

ABSTRACT

This article comes from a March 2004 report entitled Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Processes. Using the focus group approach, the research project was managed by Barbara Cottrell, Meta Research and Communications. It was concluded that although women are involved in municipal politics in a variety of ways that range from voting to sitting on Council, they are not involved as much as they could be. If more women participated, the City [of Halifax] would have better access to women's understanding of issues that affect the quality of life for Haligonians, and the City would benefit from women's collaborative style of working. Citizens would also benefit by having more female leadership role models. Many barriers to this are identified in the report, including lack of confidence, lack of information, and logistical problems.

TANIS CROSBY
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In the fall of 2003, The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) began a one-year research project, funded by Status of Women Canada, to strengthen women's involvement in municipal public participation processes. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities selected six organizations to become part of the national *Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Processes* project. One participating organization was The Halifax YWCA. The YWCA undertook the research to better understand why women in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) are under represented in municipal decision-making bodies. As of February 6, 2004, there were 23 Councillors and a Mayor on HRM Regional Council: six women (26%) and 18 men. Additionally, there were 124 men on municipal advisory committees and 61 (33%) women. Twenty of the women are from diverse groups and just two women chair committees.

Methodology

The goal of the Halifax YWCA's project was to identify ways women participate in municipal processes, identify barriers to participation, and to provide an opportunity to share ideas and build partnerships to begin overcoming the barriers to participation. A project Advisory Committee was formed and consisted of 19 women to provide expertise in data collection methods, data analysis and report writing. A guide for use in the focus group discussions was developed in consultation with members of the Advisory Committee.

Focus group questions were designed for participant sharing and interaction:

- What experiences have you had with municipal government? (Have you ever met a Councillor, voted, attended an HRM Council session or a consultation, lobbied, been a member of an Halifax Regional Municipality Board or Committee, run for office?)
- How would women benefit in their community if they could participate? How would municipalities benefit if women were more involved in municipal processes?
- What makes it difficult for women to participate in municipal processes? What would help increase women's participation?

Seven focus groups were held with 60 diverse women residents of HRM – students, youth, immigrants, low-income women, and women serving in community leadership positions. They ranged in age from 14 to over 66. Participants also represented a variety of ethno-cultural groups, including African Canadians, Mi'kmaq and Cree, and new Canadians. Focus groups were held with community organizations including Stepping Stone, Metropolitan Immigrants Settlement Association (MISA), The North End Parent Resource Centre, and the YWCA.

Focus Groups Summary

The women's experience with municipal government was diverse – from not voting or knowing how to vote to running for office and becoming elected to HRM Council. The women who participated in the Stepping Stone and MISA focus groups made very little distinction between municipal and other forms of government.

Participants agreed that men look at issues differently from women, since social and economic issues affect women more than men. The participants felt that men are not as concerned as women about 'women's issues' such as schools and day care, recycling programs, green space, environmental issues and dumping sites. One MISA focus group member said that, "Women walk in women's shoes. They know what women go through, and know what's needed to help them." This is why women's participation is valuable.

The participants also agreed that they feel more comfortable talking to women than to men. The women in leadership positions believe that women are more collaborative than men, and that women's understanding of social connectivity would benefit the planning process. They also feel that women think long term, rather than focus on immediate outcomes, and that women are concerned with how policies will affect the entire community.

The African Nova Scotian (ANS) participants believe that when they participate, they talk about their participation at home and as a result their children hear about politics and are better informed. One woman said, "Girls see that women can grow up to be involved and important; it's important for our Black children to see us participating."

For some immigrant women their own communities present an especially difficult barrier. One participant said, "Ours are patriarchal societies, we have to do what our fathers and husbands say. The men don't like it when we get involved in politics, and our mothers-in-law scold us because of how it looks in the community."

The Dalhousie participants and women in leadership positions said that the increased participation of women generates more female role models for women to look up to and emulate. The youth also believe that if more women are elected, having women in politics will begin to be seen as 'normal'.

The ANS participants said they felt that they would benefit if they were more involved because they could change things. One woman said, "Many 'yuppies' have moved into the area and because they know how to approach the city, they get to change things, and the changes don't improve things for us and our children. For instance, they took the area where our kids used to play baseball and they made it into a community garden. Where can our kids play now? No one's paying attention to the long-term needs of this community. But the politicians know the yuppies vote and the yuppies aren't intimidated by the politicians, so they get what they want at our kids' expense. We need to get out there and vote, and learn how not to be intimidated so that the politicians listen to us instead."

The participants also agreed that they feel more comfortable talking to women than to men. The women in leadership positions believe that women are more collaborative than men, and that women's understanding of social connectivity would benefit the planning process. They also feel that women think long term, rather than focus on immediate outcomes, and that women are concerned with how policies will affect the entire community.

The women who are community leaders agreed that women's participation can effect greater change. It can empower more women to participate, help create a sense of community and improve the quality of life for all Haligonians. They also felt that councillors need women's input to make decisions.

The Barriers to Women's Participation

One of the major barriers to women's participation that was identified is the sense that their voices are unheard. As one woman put it, "The politicians pay attention to where the people vote. They know we don't vote, so they don't take any interest in us. We need to see results." Another participant said that she and a group of women gathered to fill out an application to be on a municipal committee, but "we didn't even get a response." They believe that "they know who they want on their committees and boards, and it's not us. They're looking for people with money and connections. They probably always have the same people."

The Stepping Stone participants echoed these views. In addition, a number of the participants in the Stepping Stone focus group believe that, while women politicians are more likely to hear them, eventually, "They stop listening to us." They feel that when women first take office, they listen and are available to them and try to help, but after a while they realize they have to try to fit in with the other politicians and they can't be seen as favoring women and only being interested in women's issues.

Immigrant women also felt that not seeing any changes as a result of what they say makes them feel there is no point in taking part. They want to be informed about what impact their input has. "Immigrants feel so lucky to be in Canada, they don't want to be seen as complaining," one woman said. "[Still] I need to hear that my opinion is welcome, that the government wants to hear from me." The women who are community leaders felt that some citizens are complacent, or feel that "it's a done deal" and they cannot make a difference.

MISA participants felt that women need to overcome their own cultural thinking. As one participant said, "We don't get involved because traditionally the women look after the family and children, and politics have been part of the man's role in the family. We think the men will take care of it and leave it to them without thinking about it. But things are changing. More women are going out to work now and getting more involved in helping support

their families. We need to get more involved in this too." Another agreed: "If we try, we can fly! We need to get up the courage to do this."

The formality of City Hall and municipal meetings was an issue for all groups. As one participant in the ANS group said, "The process is stiff and formal. The way it works, it is presented, makes it feel very distant from us, like it's out of our league." One of the Professional participants said the many women feel unable to participate because the implicit and explicit hierarchy limits inclusion and the environment is intimidating. Another put it this way: "There is a foolish sense of self importance about the process."

The ANS participants and the Dalhousie students felt that they do not know enough about the municipality, about how it is governed, what the municipality is responsible for, or when meetings are taking place. The participants said that they did not know they could "just call your Councillor" and did not know how to get in touch with councillors. Lack of sufficient information about what municipal government does and how to get involved was cited as a major barrier by participants in the Stepping Stone, MISA, and student focus groups. One student said, "Women don't know how to get started or how to approach increased participation. What can I do?"

> "City Councillors need to get out more and see what is happening in the community. If they got to know us, and found out how we struggle to live, they might be more helpful."
>
> Stepping Stone Focus Group Participant

Child care was also an issue for the ANS focus group participants. One woman said she needed a babysitter but couldn't afford one. The single parents agreed: "When you're a single-parent you're concerned about survival and politics is the last thing on your mind." Both the Dalhousie students and the 'community leaders' felt that women do not participate because of transportation and other responsibilities such as family and/or children. They and ANS women all agreed that lack of time is a barrier to participation.

Not believing the politicians' promises was one barrier to involvement for the Stepping Stone participants. They feel that politicians fail to connect with them and have no idea what their lives are like. One participant said, "They live in big houses and have cars and never have to worry about not having enough to eat or feed their kids, or worry about bills, or worry about how they're going to get from one place to another."

One of the participants in the MISA group felt that people in power are seen as arrogant, and that women in power need to promote a different image, one that will encourage others to get involved. One Dalhousie participant also said that the "intimidating feel of municipal and other government processes" is a barrier. The students expressed a lack of confidence that women's ideas or opinions are valid, or that change is possible with more participation.

Solutions

The ANS participants agreed that if they were to form a group, they may be listened to. As one woman said, "We have a big problem with pit bulls in this area. We're afraid to take any action because we're afraid the people we report will come after us. But, if we got together as a group, we could take some action. No one would come after us if the snitch was a group of us." The ANS women felt that a group would attract others like them and draw them into the discussion. "We need to discuss these issues and what we can do to get involved."

The MISA group also agreed that women need to get together to offer each other support. As one participant said, "We can't leave it to men to train us. We need to increase the solidarity between women." One ANS woman suggested that the women need to attend the meetings, sit in the front seats, introduce themselves to strangers, and not be intimidated.

In order for ANS women to participate, they believe that City Hall should show an interest in them, make them feel invited and welcome, and make sure they are informed about meetings, committees and boards. They suggest community outreach and grassroots publicity, and meeting agendas that are meaningful to women. The MISA participants also suggested more education and outreach so that women could be informed and encouraged to vote. They would like to see a series of public talks and/or workshops on how government is run, and why and how women can participate. They believe this could, "Provide a positive welcome for immigrants so they do not feel they are complaining."

The Stepping Stone participants felt that HRM needs to pay more attention to the "little people" and less attention to wealthy people. They want councillors to be more sincere, more welcoming, and more respectful. They also wanted more open reporting processes about where tax dollars are spent, and added that "it needs to be in a way we can understand; then we'd take an interest." We need a lot more open meetings where we can learn about what they do. A MISA group participant also wanted more information. She said, "We need to learn whether we can make a difference, and how to do it." MISA participants suggested that women should be encouraged to support other women by voting for them.

One Dalhousie student suggested that the City make hours more flexible so that women with other responsibilities can have the opportunity to participate. Another student felt that the City should acknowledge that women do have familial responsibilities and allow for more flexible hours. The ANS, Stepping Stone and Dalhousie participants felt that the provision of daycare would facilitate their involvement.

Conclusion

Although women are involved in municipal processes in a variety of ways that range from voting to sitting on Council, women are not involved in municipal politics as much as they could be. If more women were involved, the City would have better access to women's understanding

of issues that affect the quality of life for Haligonians, and the City would benefit from women's collaborative style of working. The citizens would also benefit by having more female leadership role models.

In order to be more involved, women need to be better informed about municipal affairs and processes, they need a more welcoming environment, and they need to see evidence that their opinions are valued. Strategies need to be in place to overcome the logistical barriers to participation that women face, such as lack of child care and inadequate public transportation.

To overcome the barriers to women's participation, women suggested that partnerships be formed to work on solutions which include finding ways to increase women's confidence in themselves and in the process, to develop a course of action that will include informing women about HRM and educating HRM staff and councillors about women's participation.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS

ABSTRACT

Immigration is an increasingly important source of labour and skills for the Canadian economy. However, many immigrants are experiencing difficulties with labour market integration, particularly in finding employment that is commensurate with their education, training, and work experience. In this article, Clarence Lochhead argues that policy approaches which seek to encourage civic participation, foster social engagement, and build social capital, have the potential to improve both the processes and outcomes of labour market integration.

Over the past several years, the Canadian Labour and Business Centre has focused considerable attention on the role of immigration in meeting Canada's current and future labour and skills requirements. This topic has risen to prominence in policy circles within all three levels of government, right across the country. Its apparent urgency is rooted in three central observations. First, population demographics characterized by below-replacement level fertility rates – found in all provinces and territories with the exception of Nunavut – have led to slowing population growth, an aging population, and a growing wave of retirements. Second, most observers – including CLBC's labour and business constituencies – recognize that a flexible, innovative and skilled workforce is essential to sustain living standards in the context of unprecedented international competition. Third, immigration has rapidly become the major factor in Canada's net labour force growth. Over the past decade, immigrants have accounted for 70% of Canada's labour force growth, and by 2011, this is expected to reach 100%. Already, key sectors of the economy such as manufacturing depend entirely on immigration for labour force growth (Canadian Labour and Business Centre, 2004).

Canada's immigration selection system results in an enormous inflow of human capital. According to the Census of Canada, 56% of immigrants aged 15 and over landing in Canada between 1996 and 2001 possessed some form of post-secondary credential. To put this in perspective, consider that in 2002, the number of new immigrants arriving in Canada with a bachelor's degree, 60,754, was roughly equivalent to the total number of undergraduate degrees granted by all of Ontario's 29 universities (Canadian Labour and Business Centre, 2004). Yet despite these impressive statistics, immigrants to Canada are experiencing difficulties with both the processes and outcomes of labour market integration.

Problems with Labour Market Integration of Newcomers

It would be convenient – albeit incorrect – to think that Canada's long history and past practices with respect to immigration are sufficient to ensure a 'smooth' transition of newcomers into the Canadian labour market. Several recent reports have documented the increased difficulty newcomers have securing employment, particularly in jobs that are commensurate with their education, training, skills and work experience gained abroad (CLBC, 2004; Galarneau and Morissette, 2004; Lochhead, 2003a; Statistics Canada, 2003a).

So what has changed? While many factors are at play, two separate trends have significantly affected the labour market integration of newcomers. The first of these has nothing to do with the immigrant population at all. It is the 'credentialization' that has emerged as a near-pre-requisite for employment in Canada. Such credentialization is most apparent among Canada's regulated professions and trades, but it also exists in the unregulated professions and occupations. In the case of technicians and technologists for example, certification may be voluntary, but is often necessary to take advantage of employment opportunities. Regardless of the requirements for professional certification or licensing, most jobs today call for post-secondary credentials from a recognized institution. Over the last decade, for example, managerial and professional occupations requiring university, college or apprenticeship training accounted for 74% of labour force growth (Statistics Canada, 2003b).

The second trend affecting labour market integration is the changing source countries of immigrants. Today's immigrants are most likely to be from Asian and Middle Eastern countries, unlike the earlier part of the twentieth century when European countries were the primary source countries (Statistics Canada, 2003c). In relation to changing immigration patterns, 73% of immigrants who came

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in the 1990s were members of visible minority groups, compared to 52% of immigrants arriving in the 1970s. The diversity of immigrants to Canada is not only reflected in language, culture and tradition, but in education, skills and work experience gained abroad. In the context of an increasingly global economy, this diversity provides Canada with a unique – although largely untapped – resource. But such diversity also poses challenges in areas such as English/French language training and in the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials and work experience.

The intersection of these two developments – the requirements for certification and credentials demanded by Canada's employers and the diversity of countries in which newcomers obtained their education and work experience – have contributed to a less than effective labour market transition. None of this is news to Canada's employers or to newcomers themselves. A recent survey by Statistics Canada found that after six months in Canada, 70% of newcomers said they had encountered problems in the job finding process (Statistics Canada, 2003a). Coincidentally, CLBC's 2002 survey of business and labour leaders found that among private and public sector managers who were expecting to hire new employees, 72% expected problems if they were to hire foreign-trained workers (Lochhead, 2003b). Both groups agree on the most common problems: transferability of foreign credentials, lack of official language skills and lack of Canadian work experience.

There is an additional dimension to the labour market integration problem that stems from uneven immigrant settlement patterns. Eighty per cent of immigrants arriving between 1991 and 2001 reside in Canada's five largest urban centres, with the Toronto metropolitan area alone accounting for 43% of all recent immigrants. In provinces and cities that do not receive large numbers of newcomers, the question preoccupying policy makers is perhaps more fundamental – how to attract and retain newcomers? Recognizing the importance of immigration to the economy and labour market, Premier Hamm of Nova Scotia for example, recently established a cabinet Office of Immigration with a mandate to attract and retain skilled immigrants for Nova Scotia (Government of Nova Scotia, 2005).

Coincidentally, CLBC's 2002 survey of business and labour leaders found that among private and public sector managers who were expecting to hire new employees, 72% expected problems if they were to hire foreign-trained workers. Both groups agree on the most common problems: transferability of foreign credentials, lack of official language skills and lack of Canadian work experience.

The Role of Civic Participation and Social Capital in Labour Market Integration

At first mention, civic participation may seem like an unrelated or secondary topic for those focused on labour market integration. However, involvement in community life – including political participation as well as social engagement through school councils, neighbourhood associations, voluntary organizations, and so on – has been shown to result in a variety of positive individual and social benefits (Schugurensky, 2003). In a similar way, the burgeoning literature on social capital is demonstrating that "those communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, resolve disputes, and/or take advantage of new opportunities" (Woolcock, 2001). Finally, numerous studies have demonstrated the link between social networks, employment and socio-economic status (King and Waldegrave, 2003; Lin, 1999; Granovetter, 1995).

The relevance of civic participation and social networks with respect to labour market integration of newcomers can be demonstrated in at least two ways. First, family, friendship and community networks appear to be decisively important in the decision newcomers make about settlement location. A recent study by Statistics Canada found that the most important reason immigrants give for choosing a particular location in which to settle is because family or friends were living there (Statistics Canada, 2003a). The same study finds that newcomers most commonly (and overwhelmingly) rely upon friends and relatives when seeking assistance with housing, health care services, and education and training. For those provinces and cities wishing to bolster their labour markets by attracting more immigrants, the implications are clear: social networks involving and engaging newcomers are a must.

Social networks are also relevant to the issue of labour market integration insofar as they affect employment prospects and outcomes. Using the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) Grenon (2004) has examined the role and significance of personal contacts and networks in obtaining a job; his findings show that about one-quarter of all new hirings result from networking with family or friends. Not surprising, immigrants to Canada were even more likely to rely on family and friends when finding jobs. Similarly, initial results from Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) found that among newcomers who encountered problems finding employment, the most frequently cited source of help was friends (36%) and relatives (26%), followed by educational institutions (18%) immigrant serving agencies (11%) and government agencies (11%) (Statistics Canada, 2003a).

The reliance of newcomers on networks of family and friends may be indicative of *bonding* social capital – that is, the relations *among* family members and ethnic groups. On the other hand, social networks that cross ethnic and social groups – so called *bridging* social capital, may be relatively underdeveloped. Evidence from the 2003 General

Social Survey on Social Engagement show that recent immigrants are less likely than the Canadian-born population to have a "very strong" sense of belonging to Canada, to their province of residence, and to their local communities. They are also less likely to be involved in organizations or to have participated in various political activities.

On the other hand, immigrants who have lived in Canada for longer periods of time have levels of social engagement that equal, or in some instances, surpass those of the Canadian-born population. Of course, the apparent correlation between levels of engagement and period of immigration could reflect actual differences between immigrant populations in different landing periods (language, education, source countries, and so on). Or it may be a further indication of the transition period currently required to establish and join social networks and *become* socially engaged – at least on a level equivalent to the non-immigrant population. Irrespective of which interpretation one prefers, from a policy perspective, a central question is whether and how governments and other stakeholders – including business and labour – can promote social engagement and civic participation, and help to build bridging social capital with newcomer communities.[1]

Building Social Capital through Local Social Networks

The Canadian Labour and Business Centre is currently organizing a series of roundtable discussions in five cities across the country to learn more about recent initiatives being taken to facilitate the successful labour market integration of immigrants. These roundtable discussions are focusing on the perspective of business and labour leaders in the communities, but involve active participation from settlement organizations and representatives of municipal, provincial and federal governments.

The roundtables are providing important insights into the unique circumstances and issues confronting local communities across the country and serve to highlight the potential role that social capital investments could play in facilitating more successful immigrant settlement and labour market integration. While the roundtables are currently underway,[2] a few preliminary observations can be offered:

1) The unique economic and social characteristics of local communities and the level and characteristics of the immigrant populations they receive fundamentally shape the nature and priorities of the issues of concern. For instance, the roundtables have taken place in communities that might be considered 'second-tier' in terms of the number of immigrants received. However, there are differences between these communities in terms of immigrant retention, with some areas losing, and other gaining immigrants through secondary migration. So-called 'bottom-up' initiatives at the local level understand their specific challenges and are well-placed for the development of appropriate actions.
2) Emerging partnerships between community-based organizations, business, labour, educational institutions and governments highlight the potential role that strong multi-faceted networks can play in creating awareness of issues, enhancing access to, and utilization of, information and program resources. As the Policy Research Initiative has observed, the establishment of effective connections, is an issue for newcomers as well as host communities: "Canadian communities and employers frequently face a number of difficulties in reaching out to new immigrants and tapping into their potential contributions" (Policy Research Initiative, 2003).
3) Local stakeholders understand well that integration involves more than "getting a job." Addressing the needs of immigrant families, including housing, education, health care, and financial management are part and parcel of successful *community* integration. Individual stakeholder examples of outreach

Selected Measures of Social Engagement

	Immigrated 1990-2003	Immigrated 1980-1989	Immigrated before 1980	Canadian-born
Sense of belonging to Canada (% saying "very strong")	42.8	50.3	64.6	51.2
Sense of belonging to province of residence (% saying "very strong")	23.1	28.3	36.7	32.9
Sense of belonging to local community (% saying "very strong")	14.6	16.7	22.0	19.2
Involved in at least one organization* (% of persons aged 25-54)	48.6	53.6	63.1	65.0
Participated in political activities* (% of persons aged 25-54)				
• Attended a public meeting	14.6	16.6	22.2	24.0
• Signed a petition	12.2	22.0	29.3	33.3
• Contacted newspaper or politician	8.6	11.6	16.3	13.7

* During previous 12 month period.
Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using Statistics Canada, 2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, cycle 17: an overview of findings. Catalogue no. 89-598-XIE.

and assistance to immigrant families can be shared and emulated through local social networks.

While the potential of local social networks to facilitate immigrant integration seems promising, the ways and means of establishing, maintaining, and supporting such networks is not clear. Some observers have suggested that governments can play an important role in supporting local initiatives through a social capital investment strategy (Policy Research Initiative, 2003). However, the heavy concentration of immigrants in certain corners of Canada means that immigrant settlement issues could have more political resonance than in other parts of the country where the prevalence of immigrants within the population is far lower. At the federal level for example, there are now 17 federal ridings where immigrants represent a majority of residents.[3] On the other hand, there are 147 federal ridings in which the number of immigrants represents less than 10% of the total population. But for many communities looking to bolster their economic and skills base, it is the relative absence of immigrants and the need to attract and retain them that is precisely the issue.

Conclusion

Not surprisingly, the question of how to improve the labour market integration of newcomers has come to focus on language training, credential assessment services and the adaptation of Prior Learning and Recognition techniques. All of this is well and good, but insufficient. A simple truism explains why. Immigrants do not come to Canada simply to be workers; they come to be Canadians – to be fully participating and active members in the social, cultural *and* economic life of our communities. The labour market integration of newcomers should be supported through policy approaches that seek to encourage civic participation, foster social engagement and build social capital. Indeed, the idea of building social capital may be more of a policy *responsibility* than a policy *option,* as suggested by Woolcock: "vibrancy or paucity of social capital cannot be understood independently of its broader institutional environment" (Woolcock, 2001). The critical importance of social networks is that they encompass the social, cultural and economic relationships that define the dynamics of integration and settlement. On-going community efforts to build such networks are important investments in social capital that could influence a community's ability to attract and retain immigrants, and improve the processes and outcomes of labour market integration.

Notes

[1] For an overview of the debates and issues surrounding social capital as a policy concept and tool, see "The Opportunity and Challenge of Diversity: A Role for Social Capital?" Ottawa: Policy Research Initiative. http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=oecd_synthesis

[2] At the time of writing, three roundtables have taken place – in Fredericton, Hamilton and Victoria. Additional roundtables are planned in Saskatoon and Windsor, Ontario. A full report on the findings from the roundtables will be available from CLBC in May, 2005.

[3] Derek Lee, the Liberal MP for the riding of Scarborough Rouge-River has the highest percentage of immigrants in his riding – 66.8% (2001 Census). With 76,890 immigrants, this single MP represents more immigrants in Parliament than all those elected from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador combined. The representation of immigrants within the Members of Parliament might also be used as a debating point on the government's capacity to mobilize and attend to issues of settlement and labour market integration. In the 38th Parliament, there are currently 39 foreign-born MPs, six of whom are cabinet ministers. A full list of 308 federal ridings, showing percentage of immigrants within the population is available on the CLBC website. www.clbc.ca

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Do You Know Your Canadian Issues?

Êtes-vous au fait de vos Thèmes Canadiens?

MOVING BEYOND TOKENISM

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author questions the token appointment of minorities to ceremonial roles when there is a visible lack of Chinese Canadians in most real positions of power. Given the troubled history of Chinese immigration to Canada, she is not surprised by the low voter turnout and under-representation of the Chinese community in public office. She calls for an effective national anti-racism strategy and redress for the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act.

Norman Kwong, the "living legend" of the Canadian Football League, was recently appointed by the Prime Minister as the new Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta. He is the third Canadian of Chinese descent to be selected to represent the Queen at the federal and/or provincial governments. The other two are the Honourable David Lam of British Columbia, and Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Andrienne Clarkson. All three have had a distinguished career which represents some version of the "rags to riches" story that Canadians like to hear. This is true particularly in the case of Mr. Kwong, who has spoken publicly in the past about the racial prejudice that he and his family experienced growing up at a time when Chinese were legally considered second class citizens.

The appointment of Chinese Canadians to the position of "head of state" is a highly symbolic gesture. But the question remains what that symbol represents. Some would argue that these appointments confirm the status Chinese immigrants have achieved in Canada after 150 years or so since their first arrival. After all, theirs are the ultimate "successful" immigrant stories that fit perfectly well with the Canadian mainstream mythology about the triumph of multiculturalism. Yet underneath the facade of a well integrated community lies the disconcerting reality of inequity. To unveil the truth behind the myth, one must begin with a review of the history of Chinese immigration.

The journey of Chinese immigrants to Canada began with the gold rush in British Columbia in the mid-1800s. At the time, many came from the west coast of the United States where they were originally settled. But when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) began its construction in 1881, Chinese were recruited from China as cheap labour to work on CPR. Between 1881 and 1885, over six thousands Chinese immigrants contributed directly to this nation-building endeavour through the construction of the national railway. Many perished along the Fraser Valley as Chinese workers were often assigned the most dangerous tasks while being paid only half of the white men's wages.

In return for their hard work, Chinese immigrants were then slapped with a head tax which began in 1885, as soon as the last spike was driven. Beginning at $50 per person, the head tax was imposed by the Dominion on all and only Chinese immigrants who entered Canada. It was increased to $100 in 1900 and $500 in 1903, a price that was equivalent to two years wages at the time. The head tax was introduced with the sole purpose of discouraging further immigration of Chinese who, after the railroad was completed, were no longer needed and were thus deemed undesirable immigrants. In total, the Government of Canada made a profit of $23 million from the racist head tax, the same amount that the Government had spent on the building of the CPR.

When the head tax failed to curtail Chinese immigration, the Canadian Government enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923, which barred all but a few privileged Chinese (such as diplomats and businessmen) from entering Canada. Repealed in 1947 – two years after the Second World War – the Act successfully achieved its stated purpose. Within the 24-year period the Exclusion Act was in effect, fewer than 50 Chinese were allowed into Canada.

The Chinese men who had come earlier to help build the CPR or as general labourers were effectively barred from bringing their families over. The cumulative effect of the head tax and the Exclusion Act was tremendous economic hardship and immeasurable emotional suffering caused by decades of family separation. The 62 years of legislated racism also halted the growth of the Chinese Canadian community which essentially turned into a married bachelor society of lonely men with

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no wives or families.

Rather than airing its dirty laundry, however, the government of today has deliberately hidden these dark pages of our history behind the multiculturalism tag. We must not dwell on the past says the government; instead we should be looking forward by building a better future for all Canadians. But one cannot build a better future without addressing the mistakes one has made in the past. The government's conscious denial of past injustice and its refusal to accept responsibility for redress is impeding our ability to move forward as a just and equitable society. It is also this type of denial that serves to maintain the continuing dichotomy that exists between the myth and the reality about Canada, and about the Chinese Canadian community.

Contemporarily, the myth about Chinese Canadians is characterized by, for instance, success of Chinese Canadian entrepreneurs and scientists and/or the academic achievement of children of Chinese immigrant parents. With the change in immigration patterns, the rich Hong Kong Chinese immigrant stereotype that was prevalent in the 1980s has gradually been replaced by that of the innovative mainland Chinese computer genius. But the central theme of these mainstream narratives remains the same: Chinese Canadians are the "model minorities" who have benefited from Canada's generous immigration policy and its liberal multiculturalism experiment.

On the surface, the "happy immigrant" narratives are compelling and are supported by the anecdotal evidence of individual stories. They are also in line with what one would expect from the largest allophone community in Canada, which now stands at one million strong. But economically, politically and socially, Chinese Canadians have remained a minority group with little influence.

Economically, reports from Statistics Canada continue to show Chinese Canadians and other racialized communities as over-represented among the poor. Like other immigrants of colour, recent immigrants from China are struggling to survive in low wage, non-unionized jobs. While the doctors from South Asia are driving taxis, Chinese foreign trained physicians are washing dishes in restaurants or operating sewing machines in garment factories.

Within the mainland Chinese immigrant population, as well, there are further artificial divisions drawn among the independent immigrants, family class members, refugees and economic migrants – as if each category of immigrants/refugees has its own unique set of reasons and circumstances for coming to Canada, while ignoring the inter-related political and economic factors within China as the driving force behind the migration pattern. Those who are seen purely as "economic migrants," such as the "boat people" who arrived at the B.C. shore in the summer of 1999, are least deserving of our sympathy, whereas those at the top, namely, the highly educated and highly skilled immigrants, are most worthy of our support.

Indeed, the public outcry surrounding the four boatloads of Chinese refugees in Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. in 1999 brought back painful memories of the anti-Chinese campaign at the turn of the last century in that province that motivated the Government of Canada to eventually put in place racist anti-Chinese immigration law. Such a connection was lost, however, in the mainstream media reporting of the stories. This was so even though officials from Immigration Canada printed a golf shirt of "Class of 91" to celebrate the successful deportation of the first 91 Chinese boatpeople back to China in 2000.

For close to a decade, China has been the top source country of Canada's immigration. Yet Chinese Canadians are almost invisible among the senior levels of all governmental and most corporate institutions. The lack of representation of Chinese Canadians in positions of power is in part a legacy of our country's troubling history. Chinese Canadians were not recognized as citizens and hence were deprived of the right to vote until 1947, the same year when the first Chinese Canadian was allowed to practise law.

The fact that foreign trained professionals within the Chinese and other racialized communities remain grossly underemployed is also indicative of the systemic discrimination within the Canadian workforce. The irony of Canada's pursuit of the "best and the brightest" who end up being slotted into the bottom of our totem pole once they land here is only matched by the equally ironic policy of the restriction of the "lesser" immigrants like family class immigrants who have become the backbones of our economy by the provision of their hard and cheap labour.

For close to a decade, China has been the top source country of Canada's immigration. Yet Chinese Canadians are almost invisible among the senior levels of all governmental and most corporate institutions. The lack of representation of Chinese Canadians in positions of power is in part a legacy of our country's troubling history. Chinese Canadians were not recognized as citizens and hence were deprived of the right to vote until 1947, the same year when the first Chinese Canadian was allowed to practise law.

The long lasting scar of racism is left on the hearts of many "lo-wah-kew" (the old Chinese immigrants) who have stayed away from politics to avoid the label of "trouble makers." Those who do become actively involved choose only to participate in the dominant political parties such as the Liberals and the

Conservatives, as if it were the only way to prove their unwavering loyalty to Canada.

Recent arrivals from mainland China have yet to flex their political muscle, partly because their path to full integration has been paved with barriers, but also because the regime that they have left behind does not exactly encourage civil participation in any government decision-making process. But more importantly, the Canadian Government has totally failed to address the need to reach out to and incorporate the issues of the newcomers and immigrants into the electoral process.

Whenever the words "immigrants" and "refugees" are used during an election period, they are more often than not uttered by the party with the most rightwing agenda, which feeds on public fear for "floodgates" and for the importation of crimes through immigration into our country. Such political leaders gain easy political mileage by making election promises to close our border to the "abusers" of our generosity. Added to that list of alleged woes, is the post-911 claim that immigrants and refugees are a threat to our national security. No matter that all the available data continue to show immigrants and refugees to be under-represented among those who commit crime, and that all those responsible for the Twin Towers bombing had entered the United States legally as visitors.

The only time that immigrants are even mentioned positively is when politicians are vying for their votes. Even then, political candidates pay lipservice to such issues as equity and funding for immigrant settlement, while at the same time pathetically displaying their ignorance about the real needs facing those who continue to experience marginalization and political disenfrachisement.

And in the face of such reality, the mainstream media and governments alike continue to feign shock and dismay by the low level of political participation by newcomers and immigrant communities, as if for some reasons beyond anyone's control, these communities simply and steadfastly remain unreachable by the long arms of Canadian democracy.

Yet no one should be surprised by the low voter turnout and the under-representation of all racialized communities, but particularly the Chinese Canadian community within our political apparatus. Across the country, there are but a dozen or so city councilors or provincial MLAs who are persons of Chinese descent. There is less than a handful of federally elected Chinese Canadian politicians, and just as few number of judges.

Those whose politics blend well with the mainstream political ideology are more likely to succeed than those who have entered the political arena with a view to bringing about fundamental change in society. At best, the left leaning politicians of colour will get elected to municipal councils. Anything beyond that level is simply out of reach. Indeed the lo-wah-kews are right in believing that the "trouble makers" label is never far off, especially when you are a minority who has a grudge to hold.

Against this backdrop, what then is the message sent by the Canadian Government through the token appointments of minorities to ceremonial roles?

Against this backdrop, what then is the message sent by the Canadian Government through the token appointments of minorities to ceremonial roles? Appointing Chinese Canadians as figure heads is something that some of us might feel proud of, but it cannot be used to mask the continuing need for substantive change.

Sadly, the governments that make these token appointments often like to point to them as a sign of progress, without even attempting to address the underlying systemic discrimination. Worse still, token Chinese Canadians are sometimes paraded by the Canadian Government on trade missions for the purpose of gaining points in trade negotiations with China, as if our contributions could only be measured in dollar term, and that the Chinese Canadian community has only concerns for the economic progress and not human rights violations in China.

For substantive equality to happen, we need more than token minorities playing ceremonial roles. The Canadian government will do well by us if it immediately provides redress for the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act. In the long run, the government must implement a national anti-racism strategy, as it has promised to do at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism. Finally, it should strengthen and expand employment equity initiatives, and increase funding for immigrant settlement services. Only when we are all truly equal, distinguished Chinese Canadians and other persons of colour will no longer bear the burden of being the model minority, and will be celebrated simply for who they are, and what they have accomplished.

Interviews with Three Municipal Leaders

THE ROLE OF NGOS

ABSTRACT

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) is the provincial umbrella organization for agencies, primarily NGOs, that serve immigrants and refugees. In helping to fulfill its mandate, executive director Debbie Douglas has engaged in public education of the membership, during and between elections. As author of this article, she questions what role NGOs can play in setting or influencing the political agenda and in building leadership.

DEBBIE DOUGLAS

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From the point of view of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, the federal, provincial and municipal elections that were held over the last twelve months were particularly significant in light of the findings of the 2001 Census for Canada. The Census found that 13.4% of Canada's 29.5 million people are visible minorities, or to use my preferred term, 'racialized minorities'. The Chinese population in Canada has reached 1 million. More than 19% of Ontario's 11.3 million people are from racialized communities and 18.4% of Canada's population is foreign-born. This figure is 26.8% for Ontario. The majority of immigrants and refugees that come to Canada settle in Ontario. Most of those new arrivals choose to live in Toronto.

Electoral representation

In light of these population numbers, how are we doing in terms of diversity in Canadian Parliament, the Ontario legislature and Toronto City Council? Not very well. Of the 308 members of Parliament, just a little over 5% (6.8%) are from racialized communities, approximately 21 members. While most of these are affiliated with the Liberal Party, only one, Ujjal Dosanjh, is in Cabinet. Of the 103 members of the Ontario legislature, only 8 members (7.8%) are from racialized communities. Compared to the 19% members of racialized communities in Ontario, this is a dismal showing.

The Census identified Chinese, South Asians, Blacks and Filipinos as the most numerous of Canada's racialized populations. No Filipinos were elected to the Canadian Parliament in the last federal elections. Only 3 Chinese, 12 South Asian and 3 Blacks were elected. Of these, only one is in Cabinet. Jean Augustine, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke-Lakeshore and one of two Black women on the government side of the House, was dropped from Cabinet.

The Ontario Liberals fare slightly better. Of the two Black members in the legislature, one is a Minister and the other is the Speaker. 36.8% of Toronto's 4.6 million population are from racialized communities. Only 4 individuals from these communities were elected to City Council in the 2003 Municipal election. In a city with a 6.7% Black population, there are no Black city councillors.

Political Parties

The majority of racialized individuals elected at the federal and provincial (Ontario) levels are members of the Liberal Party. It appears that the long-tarnished promise of Trudeau era multiculturalism retains sufficient glitter to draw members of racialized and immigrant communities to the Liberals. This is despite the fact that the recent liberal governments have introduced harsh legislation, policies and practices that have done more to devastate immigrant and refugee communities than any previous government of any stripe.

The Conservative/Reform/Alliance Party has a proportionately higher number of visible minorities elected, compared to the New Democratic Party. In fact, we have observed that the NDP also fields proportionately fewer visible minority candidates than the other two parties. Meanwhile, the NDP platforms at both levels tend to be more responsive to issues that impact on immigrant, refugee and visible minority communities.

The recent federal elections were conspicuous in the absence of any promises, sincere or contrived; to improve the lives of racialized communities in this country. This is particularly alarming at a time when the rights and freedoms of members of racialized communities have been severely proscribed in the name of the overarching, greater good of protecting Canada.

Political Leadership

As a society, we need to move beyond the politics of mere visual representation of members of racialized communities in elected office. To determine whether there is diversity in politics, I propose that we apply two tests. One: Are members of racialized communities represented in positions of leadership, both in elected office and in political parties? To what extent are they able to exert real influence to create and shape policy? Two: To what extent are the issues that are critical to immigrants, refugees and racialized communities integrated in the party platform and government policy? Until and unless these issues are addressed in core policy, immigrants, refugees and racialized communities will continue to be an adjunct, a disposable element that can be ignored at will, or managed through accommodation, rather than become integrated into the power structure.

Political Engagement

Social observers have tended to argue that political engagement and representation will increase among communities with a longer period of residence and a growth in numbers. In Canada, we have several clear examples of the marginalization and political exclusion of communities that are long-term residents of Canada and that have grown in numbers and built strong social networks. Foremost is the appalling history of the disenfranchisement of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, leaving these communities increasingly marginalized.

Particularly significant in Canada's history of immigration is the experience of Black communities of Nova Scotia and Southwestern Ontario, and Chinese and South Asian communities that settled first in British Columbia and later elsewhere in Canada. Despite a lengthy presence in this country, none of these communities have been able to achieve political representation in elected office or on issues, proportionate to their numbers and their length of residence. Of course, the experience of white immigrant communities who are also long-term residents is quite different.

Social observers have also suggested that strong social and economic networks and organizations in the community can facilitate greater civic engagement through practices such as voting, and increase participation in institutionalized politics. Also, that the presence of numerous NGOs in the community is an indicator of social capital, and that this development can lead to greater civic engagement. Yet we know that this is not the experience of racialized communities.

NGOs

I would like to take a moment to reflect on what we mean by NGOs. While NGOs are generally held to be non-governmental, not-for-profit organizations, this term encompasses an extremely broad range of entities with very different values, roles and functions.

OCASI members and other organizations in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector are primarily service providers to immigrants and refugees in Ontario. They include organizations that prioritize the needs of one or more specific ethno-cultural or linguistic communities, and ones that adopt a broad-based approach to prioritize the needs of all individuals in a geographic region. As such, they apply to various levels of government for funds to deliver services and are held to requirements that are imposed by the funder. These requirements then shape the very nature of the organization, creating a third-party contractor whose continued existence is contingent upon the pleasure of the funder.

The recent trend in Canada is to lump together all such NGOs under the term 'voluntary sector', as witnessed by the federal government's Voluntary Sector Initiative and the Voluntary Sector Accord. Work done in the NGO sector is by no means voluntary, and is often delivered by professionals, para-professionals and other trained individuals.

For example, while many of the organizations in this sector have a mandate of advocating on behalf of clients, the communities they serve or the sector in general, this activity has been greatly curtailed by funding policy and practice. OCASI recently had first-hand experience in losing funding, resulting directly from advocacy work. A year later, OCASI has yet to renew funds with this particular funder.

Advocacy is further curtailed by Revenue Canada through the Charities Act. In fact, obtaining or retaining one's charitable status is an exercise in ongoing frustration and allowable advocacy is carefully limited and proscribed.

Other NGOs perform the function of an association, serving to link community members in period activity that could be social, cultural, religious or political in nature. They can include organizations that are based in a specific ethnocultural community, or are focused on one or more issues such as the prevention of violence against women.

The recent trend in Canada is to lump together all such NGOs under the term 'voluntary sector', as witnessed by the federal government's Voluntary Sector Initiative and the Voluntary Sector Accord. Work done in the NGO sector is by no means voluntary, and is often delivered by professionals, para-professionals and other trained individuals. The work is devalued and underpaid.

Further, the funding environment has undergone a drastic change with the complete and deliberate erosion of core funding, the funds that are necessary to maintain the integrity of an organization. The combination of service downloading, straining to the utmost the resources of the NGOs, and the unfriendly funding regime, has resulted in the sector fighting for survival. NGOs that are advocates on behalf of racialized communities face the further challenge of countering special security measures that target individuals on the basis of ethnicity, religion, language and place of birth.

NGOs have traditionally been seen as a launching ground for members of racialized communities that wish to pursue a political career, either through service on a voluntary board or through paid work in the sector. Yet in the current circumstances, the majority of such individuals have had to devote their efforts to fundraising and related governance activities. This has allowed little scope for developing leadership skills and building strong networks and alliances that could lead to building political influence.

Again, the experience of NGOs that are constituted by racialized communities is qualitatively different, less positive and more challenging.

Conclusions

What role, therefore, can NGOs play in setting or influencing the political agenda and in building leadership? As long as NGOs in general, and especially those that advance the interests or advocate on behalf of racialized and immigrant and refugee communities continue to have a marginal political status, they can have no role in the political agenda. To illustrate, the Province of Ontario is in the process of pursuing an agreement with the federal government on immigration and settlement. Although the process is nearing completion, immigrant communities have not been consulted, and have been shut out.

At the national level, although a broad range of NGOs commented, deputed, spoke and wrote regarding the Bill that eventually became the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), this commentary was virtually ignored in the final version of the legislation. Of course, the prevailing hostility towards immigrants and refugees, particularly members of racialized communities, probably had a lot to do with the outcome.

While addressing objective conditions such as poverty and labour market exclusion of racialized communities is always important, this by itself will not lead to increased political participation, let alone play a tangible role in influencing the political agenda. Real power-sharing will remain a mirage, until we begin to dismantle structural inequalities.

Studies have shown that strong and active community organizations have often led to greater political engagement among those communities. Again, a high voter turnout in those communities would not necessarily translate to achieving political power. This would require that racialized communities are represented in the membership and leadership of political parties, and that equity is at the core of the party platform and political agenda.

In light of Canada's long history of immigration, we need make a real effort to address unequal and incomplete citizenship by re-evaluating the nature of franchise. The requirement of Canadian citizenship to vote at any level of government automatically excludes many immigrants from the voting process. Most recent immigrants are from racialized communities. Structural barriers to obtaining citizenship have prevented other long-standing permanent residents, who pay the same taxes as citizens, from obtaining citizenship. Until the early 1980s, landed immigrants who were British subjects could vote in municipal elections. Instead of extending this right to all immigrants, the government took away voting power from British subjects.

Finally, NGOs will continue to have key role in advocacy, either as partners, collaborators or arms-length commentators. The task of continuing to challenge governments to address structural inequalities and discrimination is one of the core functions of this sector in a liberal democracy. We must focus more clearly on building a political process that is truly equitable and inclusive.

GAINING THE POLITICAL SUPPORT OF MINORITIES IN CANADA

ABSTRACT

Goldy Hyder provides insight into the fastest growing demographic in Canada's cities: the minority vote. He examines the impact that the participation of minority communities has had on politics in Canada and explains the various reasons that the Conservative Party as struggled to reach out to these communities. And yet, he argues, the policy interests of minorities are essentially the same as those of mainstream Canadians and include areas in which Conservatives excel. He therefore urges the Conservative Party to better communicate with minority groups, especially those in urban settings.

As you read this article we are either into a federal election or on the verge of one. If polls are any indication, this election is going to be close – real close – and as such every vote counts and to earn it no stone can be left unturned. One group of voters that will be particularly targeted by the mainstream national parties is the visible minority community, which traditionally has been aligned with the Liberal Party of Canada. No matter how hard other parties try to break through the Liberal stronghold, the barrier (or is it the bond?) seems simply too hard to break. Or so we're led to believe. In fact, I sense change is in the air, and opportunities are appearing for other parties to capture the fastest-growing demographic in Canada's cities – the minority vote. If they are to take advantage of these opportunities, however, they must understand what has happened and how the minority community now finds itself on the cusp of being able to tangibly influence and shape the Canadian political landscape.

The journey to relevance and clout for the minority community has not been an easy one. Many lessons can be learned from it. Despite Canada's good intentions, the experience of minorities in Canadian politics has, in fact, not been without difficulties. Minorities have been engaged in the political process for a long time. There has been an 'evolution' of sorts beginning from the times in which they were literally used in a "rack'em-pack'em-stack'em" style of mobilization. This style allowed political parties to take advantage of the ease with which minorities could – in its crudest form – be 'herded together'. However, this is Canada, so we call it 'organized'.

During this phase, which dates from the mid-1970s to the present, the minority population was, and continues to be, heavily active; the proof reflected in their high participation rates. The emergence of 'power brokers' who could 'deliver' their communities was an early reality of the newfound clout of the minority population. But their participation, however good from the altruistic view of 'being involved in one's community' was, nonetheless, undervalued. In fact, the non-minority population frowned upon it. (Apparently, English was a requirement for democracy in Canada. Likewise, the means of transport one took to get to a polling station was also an issue. For some reason, a group of non-English speaking immigrant voters traveling on a bus together was subject to a different standard than a group of local ladies driving to vote after their curling match.)

Another issue widely reported and frowned upon was the act of giving away five or ten dollar party memberships, an action that likely caused more harm than people could have realized. It allowed minorities to become pawns in a political process which, in the early years, demeaned their contributions and involvement. To this day, such practices continue. The fact is, these practices are dead wrong and need to stop. Moving forward the responsibility to have people purchase their memberships must be borne by the communities themselves and the parties.

The mid-70s through to the '80s was a time of struggle for minorities. However, the ill treatment of minority communities was as much their own fault as it was of the parties themselves. For political parties, their motivation was simple: they had found the commodity most wanted in politics – masses of people who are easily mobilized. For those in the minority communities, it was simply a chance to participate.

Over time, the attitude of minorities has evolved from one of 'participate any way, any how' to finding more meaningful ways of contributing, including seeking political office. It did not take long for minority communities to realize that if they could be mobilized to elect a non-minority, they could just as easily be mobilized to elect 'one of their own'.

GOLDY HYDER

Goldy Hyder is a longtime active Conservative in Alberta and on the federal scene. He is often seen on Canada's major networks, or quoted in leading national newspapers, providing analysis of political happenings. Mr. Hyder is Senior Vice President at Hill & Knowlton Canada where he provides clients with strategic advice and counsel on issues management.

The issue of minorities in politics in Canada is first and foremost an urban phenomenon. The concentration of the minority presence and therefore its impact on the political scene is felt most in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and some select parts of Quebec. That is not to dismiss the rest of Canada, rather it is a simple reflection that politics is a game of numbers and the numbers are where they are. Most obvious evidence is the statistic that 73% of all immigrants settle in the Toronto/GTA area.

Leaving aside how and why immigrants are a) in Canada, and b) settle where they do (those are clearly different topics) I do want nonetheless to underscore that the concentration of the minority vote has made the community a powerful force in those areas in which it resides in large numbers. Often the ridings with the most party memberships – and this is certainly the case for the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party – are those ridings where the minority population is at its highest. Whether in Vancouver or Calgary or Toronto, the facts speak for themselves.

Clearly, it will get more and more difficult for a party to attain a majority government federally without the support of minorities. Despite the fact that the visible minority population makes up about 13% of the Canadian population, it is concentrated in such a way that it can affect the outcome of up to (and this estimate is admittedly on the high side) a full third of the national seats available.

So what impact have minorities had on politics in Canada? I start proudly with the assertion that due in large part to the significant presence and clout of the minority community, no longer can a right-wing, immigrant bashing party succeed in Canada like they have been able to do in Austria, France and Italy, to name a few. Immigration has also brought about the urbanization of Canada, a trend that is bound to continue.

There's an old adage in politics that there are 'no votes in foreign policy'. However, in minority communities foreign policy does matter. It is certainly a prism through which other policies that the party stands for are viewed. I am not suggesting that it is the vote determiner per se but rather that a party's foreign policy perspective can serve as a barrier to minority communities. On this front the 'middle of the road' approach advanced by the Liberal Party has found favour with the minority communities. Decisions made by the Liberal government to not send Canadian troops to Iraq, or the recent decision to not participate in the missile defence (the latter being a big error in judgment in my opinion) are often supported overwhelmingly by minority communities.

While not necessarily a good thing – at least certainly not in my mind – the minority community in Canada has also been one of the leading forces of 'anti-American' attitudes. There is a high level of skepticism of the US and its foreign policies, though this is clearly an area in which the minority community is not alone in Canada or for that matter abroad.

Immigrants, like converts to a faith, tend to believe more in the whole than in parts. That is to say, minorities are more 'Canadian' than they are regional, which spills over into their views on the way Canada should function. Clearly, immigrants – especially first generation immigrants – continue to believe in the role of a strong federal government. These are signs that this is changing as one looks at second generation immigrants, but for now the perception that Liberals believe in a strong central government and Conservatives believe in more provincial rights is one of the many reasons that the Liberal Party has owned the space of capturing minority votes.

Recently the party took a stab at reaching out to minority communities through the same sex issue, but all indications are that that effort has come up short. Perhaps minorities have realized that the very Charter that would have to be used to deny the rights of same sex couples is the same Charter that offers minorities protection from the majority will.

There are other reasons that Conservatives have struggled. The roots of the modern Conservative Party are based mostly in rural Canada where the minority population is just that – a minority. Beyond its rural base, the party has also suffered from the perceptions of its pro-US, pro-Republican, pro-British, pro-monarchy positions. In addition, more recently the party's positions on the Middle East conflict are less and less balanced and more and more prone to picking a side, representing a departure from the 'accepted' practice in Canada of being an honest broker.

The Conservative Party has also been tarnished with a number of instances of 'racist remarks' made by some extremist elements. (Arguably, BC MP Randy White's comments on videotape – "to heck with the courts, eh" – with less than a week to go in the 2004 federal election may well have turned many minority communities in Toronto/GTA ridings away from voting Conservative, essentially doing what Rt. Hon. Joe Clark described as "voting for the devil you know.") To some extent the Conservative brand has been equally unfairly tarnished by a few bad apples – much like the Muslim community today having its image tarnished by the actions of a small, small minority of extremists.

For Conservatives to be successful in the future they are going to need to break into urban centres and by extension into minority communities. Recently the party took a stab at reaching out to minority communities through the same sex issue, but all indications are that that effort has come up short (it appeals to first generation immigrants but not to the second generation). Perhaps minorities have realized that the very Charter that would have to be used to deny the rights of same sex couples is the same Charter that offers minorities protection from the majority will. For the record, the Party's position is to

allow MPs, including cabinet Ministers, the right to have a free vote as a matter of conscience.

For some time now, it has just been taken as a given that minorities support Liberals – that Liberals are more pro-immigration, pro-multiculturalism than other parties. That rhetoric has served the Liberal Party well but it is a dying myth. As such, despite the challenges that Conservatives have faced in attracting or retaining the minority vote, there continue to be opportunities. Like society, the minority population continues to evolve and so, too, do their issues. Minorities are frankly tired of being patronized. Sure immigration and multiculturalism are important public policies, but they are by no means the ones that are the most important, certainly not to immigrants who have called Canada home for decades.

On the contrary, the policy interests of minorities are the same as so-called mainstream Canadians: health care, education, taxes, infrastructure, environment and investment in cities to name a few. Minority issues are essentially the same ones that are of interest to Mr. and Mrs. Main Street. And herein lies the opportunity for the Conservative Party to build and execute a strategy that actually talks with minority Canadians the same way it talks to the majority of them.

The Conservative brand and the values of the party need to be communicated much better to minority communities. When people first come to Canada their issues tend to be more national in scope, ranging from human rights/Charter to immigration to foreign policy and international trade. These are widely believed to represent the 'strengths' of the Liberal Party. As time passes though, the issues tend to be more personal, from both the economic and social perspective. Thus, issues such as lower taxes, less government regulations, better education and quality health care, combined with more moderate yet traditional viewpoints on the social policy questions of the day, create an opening for the Conservative Party to promote its brand.

The place to start is at the Conservative Party's 'first' policy convention as a 'new' party, to be held mid-March in Montreal. The Conservative Party has a very significant presence of visible minorities in its caucus, from Bev Oda to Deepak Obhrai to Rahim Jaffer and the Grewals to name a few, but it clearly needs to do more – particularly to diversify not only its own policies, but also its membership. It needs to encourage and include minorities in its policy-making process. Up until now, for the most part, political parties have been interested in minority votes but not the ideas advanced by minority communities. This has to change.

Add to the mix the impact of the new campaign finance law, which levels the playing field between 'have' and 'have-not' communities. Money no longer gets the attention of political parties as it once did and this will create even more opportunities for the minority population to play a more significant role in policy-making than it has in the past. In this new reality, human resources trump financial resources.

Another emerging trend appears to be the support that is available to the Conservative Party from second-generation Canadians. As a June 2004 election poll in the *National Post* reported, second generation immigrants are more Conservative in their thinking and inclined to be attracted more to 'right-leaning' economic policies. Yet as the election outcome suggests, it appears that neither the first nor second generations have fully made the move to the Conservative Party, especially in the vote-rich Toronto/GTA area.

Nevertheless, for the reasons I have cited, the future looks better than the past. Under the leadership of Stephen Harper, the Conservative Party has successfully begun reaching out to minority communities. Only recently, it was the Conservative Party that took strong stands on issues such as the need for an inquiry into the Air India tragedy as well as the need to probe the manner in which the Kazemi situation has been handled by our government. While these can be seen as issues for minority communities, they are in fact very much Canadian issues reflecting our values of seeking justice and fairness. For that matter, even the sponsorship scandal is a vote-getter from minority communities. To say that minorities expected better in Canada would not be an understatement.

The votes of minority communities are up for grabs and the party that best adjusts to the modern thinking of minority communities has a lot to gain. To ignore this emerging reality is, simply put, political suicide.

Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney once said, and I paraphrase, "if you give the Liberals a seventy-five seat head start in Quebec you will lose ten times out of ten." No doubt if Mr. Mulroney were running today he would see the demographic trends and likely add, "and if you concede over a hundred seats to Liberals in urban Canada you're guaranteed to lose ten times out of ten."

This election and the ones to follow will reveal whether in fact the Conservative Party has succeeded in gaining the support of minorities in Canada. Clearly they are on the right track, and breaking the Liberal stronghold with ethnic communities could well be the difference between a minority Conservative government and a majority one.

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FEDERAL SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PROGRAMS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN CANADA[1]

ABSTRACT

This article outlines Citizenship and Immigration Canada's approach to immigrant integration as it intersects with citizenship as participation. The author provides a brief discussion about the ways in which CIC helps to initiate that process, by looking at the underlying principles of integration policy, the bridging role of settlement programs, and the importance of fostering welcoming communities. She suggests that responsibilities exist for both the newcomer and the host society if integration is to be successful – not only is there a need to develop the capacity to engage in broader Canadian society, but the opportunities to participate must also be available.

"There is a strong consensus that the practice of citizenship in a multicultural country such as Canada needs to continue to move towards citizenship as a way of participating in one's country, rather than as a bundle of rights, or even responsibilities, conferred by the state. There is considerable contingency built into the process of what is variously called 'lived', 'deep' or 'social' citizenship, as the population changes as a result of immigration and other factors of demographic and cultural change. All parties – the state, community organizations, researchers and policy makers – have a role in influencing the ways in which citizenship is imagined and lived." (Kobayashi, 2001)

According to Audrey Kobayashi, citizenship is understood as clearly more than just status. Certainly when looking at the intersection of citizenship and newcomer integration, the concept of citizenship as participation is viewed as the ultimate policy objective of Canada's integration continuum, a process that begins with the initial settlement and adaptation of newcomers to their new country in the early years after their arrival. Integration is achieved, however, over a longer period of time, in many cases beyond the formal acquisition of citizenship.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC) most immediate interest in immigrant integration is the initial settlement needs of newcomers to Canada. As such, the department's role in fostering civic participation, one of the policy goals of Canada's Multiculturalism Policy, might seem less obvious than that of other government actors.[2] Nevertheless, CIC funded settlement programs and citizenship promotion activities are critical components in helping newcomers develop the skills that might foster civic engagement, belonging and attachment to Canada. This is very much in line with the government's multiculturalism policy goals to develop "… active citizens with both the opportunity and the capacity to participate in shaping the future of their communities and their country." Even the manner in which citizenship status is conferred "in public ceremonies of accomplishment, of welcome" is one that suggests the prime message of citizenship is one of membership, and part of becoming a member is "participation in one's community, political processes, the school system, in the voluntary sector" (Duncan 2003).

This paper will briefly discuss the ways in which CIC, through its integration programming, helps to initiate that process, by looking at the underlying principles of integration policy, the bridging role of settlement programs and immigrant and refugee serving organizations, and the importance of fostering welcoming communities.

Integration involves more than helping a newcomer find a job and a place to live.[3] It involves helping newcomers adapt to and understand the values and customs of their adopted society; the ways in which Canadian institutions work; and their rights and responsibilities. At the same time, Canadian society itself must grow and evolve, as it welcomes new people and cultures and adapts to their needs. Integration is, therefore, a two-way street that requires accommodations and adjustments on both sides. Successful integration for a newcomer to Canada is about the ability to contribute free of barriers, to every dimension of Canadian life – economic, social, cultural and political.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is the federal government department with the primary responsibility for the provision of a range of settlement programs and services to eligible newcomers

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through the integration continuum; from pre-arrival through the initial settlement period in Canada and up to and including acquisition of citizenship.[4] Normally, services are provided within the first 3 years of a newcomer's arrival in Canada, but newcomers are still eligible for CIC funded services up until they become citizens.

Settlement programs and services are integral features of the Immigration Program in that they follow as a natural consequence of the decision to admit someone to Canada as an immigrant or refugee. Accordingly, federally funded support provided to newcomers through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation (ISAP), and Host programs not only serve initial newcomer needs related to reception and orientation, translation and interpretation, referrals to mainstream services, employment assistance, paraprofessional counseling, and basic instruction in one of Canada's two official languages. By their very nature, these programs also help to bridge newcomers and make connections beyond their ethno-cultural community. They teach about customs, culture and shared values. Additionally, they help to form networks of social relations, encourage participation and build trust in the broader host society, particularly when that society is open and welcoming.

Language itself is one of the key tools needed for participation in the social, economic, cultural and political life of Canada. Newcomers need to be able to communicate in the language where they live, and not just to access services and find a job. Learning to speak either English or French is imperative to their integration beyond that of their ethnic group. It is necessary for them to become Canadian citizens, in a formative sense, but it is also a prerequisite to the practice of citizenship *as participation.* In absence of a formal citizenship education program for adult newcomers[5], the LINC program not only provides basic language instruction for adult newcomers, but its curriculum guidelines provide a mandate to instruct learners about Canadian laws and norms. As well, because student participation is multi-ethnic, by their very nature LINC classes serve as a microcosm of the multicultural makeup of Canada, allowing for informal lessons on multiculturalism and cross-cultural awareness.

In order for the two-way street approach of integration to be effective, however, it is critical that settlement programs and services also promote an acceptance of immigrants by Canadians. Newcomers need both the tools to develop the capacity to participate, as well as the opportunities. As Voyer has suggested, "…the acquisition of social capital is a two-way street. To accumulate bridging capital not only requires the willingness of immigrants to connect with the society at large, but also the willingness of the receiving society to accept newcomers." This point is underscored in the objectives of the *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act* (2002) which suggest that in order for CIC to help newcomers become contributing members of society, it must also be recognized "that integration involves mutual obligations for new immigrants *and Canadian society*" (emphasis mine). The success of the overall immigration program is very much dependant on both the financial investment and the necessary public support for immigrant integration in Canada, particularly as the level of immigration to Canada increases and diversifies.

At first glance, programs such as Host and ISAP might be viewed primarily as settlement orientation measures targeted squarely toward the newcomer side of the two-way street. However, activities funded through these programs can also create connections across cultures and encourage participation. By matching newcomers with Canadian resident volunteers in order to better familiarize newcomers with life in Canada, programs like Host can provide the initial means to developing a network of social relations, the bridging social capital, which will eventually enable newcomers to develop the capacity to participate and engage in the life of their community, the school system and eventually (it is hoped) political processes and institutions. In many cases, newcomers participating in the Host program go on to volunteer as Hosts themselves, or to participate in other voluntary activities in their communities. At the same time, Host engages members of the receiving society in the immigrant integration process and raises awareness about the immigrant experience and the contributions that newcomers are able to make to Canada.

Various ISAP activities also help to create more welcoming communities. The Settlement Workers in Schools activity, funded through ISAP, places multicultural liaison workers in schools to assist with initial orientation and adjustment issues. Settlement workers act as cultural brokers to facilitate a bridge between parents, newcomers, teachers, the school board and students. Apart from helping newcomer youth and their parents adapt to a new school environment, the initiative also teaches conflict resolution, encourages students to participate in school clubs, increases the cultural competency of schools to deal with diversity issues and race relations, and even sees newcomer parents volunteering on parent teacher advisory associations. It is an excellent example of a settlement activity that not only develops the capacity but provides the opportunities for participation, and eventually, the trust, in Canadian institutions.

While volunteerism is not necessarily a guarantee that newcomers will go on to participate politically and vote, it could be argued that these are all activities that help to foster inclusion, leading newcomers to develop an attachment to their new country by providing them with a vested interest in decisions that affect them.

The idea of full membership, the reciprocal relationship and mutual obligations of both newcomers and the host society, and the personal as well as public policy investment needed to ensure the success of such a model is articulated by Duncan within the context of citizenship policy: *"A vibrant citizenship policy that encourages all Canadians, including those born here, to understand and to adopt the values that Canadian citizenship implies, that expects all to accept the principle of full societal membership for all citizens, might well have tangible effects. For a national citizenship regime to carry this off, however, it may require it to wear an even more public face than it now does, to display more prominently the rights, duties, and societal benefits that flow from it"* (italics mine: 80:2003).

Notwithstanding any suggested constraints of current citizenship policy, or the fact that as a society, we could all do more to focus on the other side of the two-way street of integration, CIC's integration promotion activities do

attempt to put a public face on the rights and responsibilities of both newcomers *and* Canadians. While the focus of citizenship promotion activities is, however, mostly on children and youth, it is one of the immigration program areas that has rated strongly in terms of performance in public opinion polling.

CIC develops promotional activities and products related to both settlement needs and experiences of immigrants as well as the celebration of citizenship with the intent of helping to foster more welcoming communities. *Canada's Citizenship Week* is celebrated every year in October. Schools and community groups, along with CIC, hold events and celebrations across the country. *Canada: We All Belong* was an overarching concept developed in 2000 and activity guides are available for educators and youth leaders each year. In 2000 the initial theme of Belonging saw messages of welcoming from children across the country for immigrants about to receive their Canadian citizenship.

Of particular note is CIC's partnership through seed funding to *The Passages to Canada Dominion Institute's Immigrant Speakers' Bureau,* a unique on-line resource containing the names and profiles of community leaders who are ready to visit classrooms or community organizations to share their experiences of immigration. It was launched in Toronto in 2001, and there are now Speakers' Bureaus up and running in Calgary, Montreal, Vancouver, Halifax and Winnipeg.

In addition to these outreach activities, CIC also funded a special issue of TEACH magazine exploring the nature of Canadian citizenship as well as values like respect, freedom, belonging and peace. The goal was to encourage dialogue, learning and understanding among youth on how these concepts provide the basis for a strong commitment to Canada, and to stimulate thought and debate about citizenship, and how to be accepting of different backgrounds and cultures.

CIC also provided funding to Classroom Connections for the award winning *Cultivating Peace* initiative which creates classroom-ready resources to help teachers and community leaders deal directly with issues such as bullying, racism and terrorism while meeting the objectives of provincial curricula. Activities encourage students to recognize their own personal responsibility in creating change and emphasize the practice of skills such as compromise, negotiation and conflict resolution. Ultimately, the resources engage children and youth in the search for a culture of peace in their homes, schools, neighbourhoods and global community.

In this respect, CIC's citizenship promotion activities not only promote the values of respect and belonging as responsibilities of all Canadians, but they could be seen within a similar context as Hebert and Wilkinson's discussion of citizenship education from a global perspective; a model which "can also be used to begin conversations about common human values, such as respect, that transcend nationality, culture, and heritage. This will move the debate away from focusing on the values that constitute a unique Canadian identity and towards a more thought-provoking discussion of issues that contribute to patterns of conflict and paths of peace" (41: 2003).

Arguably, more could be done to promote citizenship. CIC does not necessarily have a mandate for formal citizenship education or to create "citizens of the world" per se, but active citizenship is certainly a goal of the integration program. The department recognizes the need to prepare both newcomers and Canadians if integration is to be successful. In helping newcomers adjust to life in Canada and in helping to foster the creation of welcoming communities, CIC's settlement and citizenship promotion activities certainly facilitate a path for both newcomers and the host society that allows for connections and dialogue of this nature.

There are many steps that need to be taken in order for newcomers to be able to contribute to their full human potential. Acknowledging that newcomer integration is not done alone, CIC's integration programming and partnership activities to a certain extent provide some of the initial tools necessary not only for socio-economic participation but as a means to eventual "citizenship as participation" for all Canadians.

Notes

To view the author's full notes and references, please cisit the ACS website at www.acs-aec.ca

[1] The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of Citizenship and Immigration Canada or the Government of Canada.

[2] The department of Canadian Heritage has the lead responsibility for Canada's multiculturalism policy.

[3] This is not to suggest that access to the labour market for newcomers to Canada is not a present and critical issue. In fact it is a priority for the Government of Canada given disparities between foreign-born professionals and their Canadian-born counterparts, and it is being addressed in partnership with provinces and territories, regulatory bodies and other immigration stakeholders through a range of targeted measures that include enhanced language training.

[4] Although integration is a shared federal/provincial-territorial responsibility, the actual services provided often fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial authorities in combination with the local municipal authorities. While different immigrant and refugee groups often have very different needs, they all rely on the health, education and other social services that provincial, territorial and municipal governments deliver to all members of society. Newcomers also have special needs for language training and other integration services – services that have been funded, to a great extent, by the federal government. Both orders of government share an interest in ensuring that newcomers get the services they need to integrate successfully, and that these services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. And in fact, CIC does have bilateral agreements for administration and delivery of settlement programs and services with provincial governments, BC and MB, and with Quebec via the Canada-Quebec Accord.

As such, partnership with all levels of government, and with the private and voluntary sectors, is essential to achieve effective results in the integration of newcomers to Canada. Additionally, the work of community-based immigrant and refugee-serving organizations has proven invaluable in assisting newcomers with their immediate and ongoing settlement needs. These organizations are sensitive to the needs of the local community as well as to the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences that recent immigrants and refugees bring to Canada.

[5] In their comprehensive overview of citizenship education for adult immigrants in Canada from 1947-1996, Derwing and Joshee suggest that there are challenges of "doing" citizenship education in the LINC classroom due to the emphasis on survival language skills and the fact

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ELECTORAL TURNOUT AND CANADA'S CHANGING CULTURAL MAKEUP:

Interviews with Three Municipal Leaders

ABSTRACT

Using data from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey, this article paints a portrait of the extent to which immigrants and visible minorities are voting in municipal, provincial and federal elections. It also considers how the intersection of immigrant, visible minority status and youth is linked to electoral participation. It finds that declining youth participation rates are not the only source of turnout decline in Canada, and suggests that more attention needs to be paid to how diversity is incorporated into electoral processes.

LIVIANNA TOSSUTTI

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Although declining turnout and the disputed capacity of elections to confer policy mandates on the victors (LeDuc et al. 1991) raise questions about the true meaning of the vote, elections continue to fulfill instrumental and expressive roles in Canadian democracy. They allow citizens to choose their local representatives, to convey general policy preferences, to pass judgment on the incumbents, and to reaffirm their membership in the polity. Ironically, as the extension of the franchise has increased the size of the eligible electorate, fewer citizens are choosing to participate in the low cost act of voting (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). The decline in federal election turnout from 75.3% in 1988 to 60.9% in 2004 has been largely attributed to generational replacement (Blais et al. 2004). Canadians under the age of 30 are less likely to turn out to vote than older Canadians (Pammett and LeDuc, 2003; Blais et al. 2004) and are more likely than older citizens to cite a lack of interest in politics, personal factors, and registration difficulties as the most important reasons for not voting (Pammett and LeDuc).

While the participation rates of 18-21.5 year-old voters appear to have rebounded to 38.7% from 2004, from 25% for 18-24 year-olds in the 2000 election (Kingsley, 2005: 5), the continued decline in overall turnout suggests there may be other groups who are disenfranchising themselves. This study will explore that theme by investigating the electoral participation of immigrant and visible minority Canadians. This analytical focus is warranted because immigrants and visible minorities are increasingly facing unique economic and social challenges that have the potential to reduce their willingness and/or ability to vote. Immigrants arriving in the 1980s to mid-90s experienced lower rates of employment and higher rates of low income (Ruddick, 2003) while visible minority immigrants are more likely to live in poverty than non-visible minorities (Kazemipur and Halli, 2003). In a 2002 survey, 20% of visible minority Canadians reported experiencing discrimination in the previous five years (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Using data drawn from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), this article presents a preliminary portrait of the extent to which immigrant and visible minorities are voting in municipal, provincial and federal elections. Given the links between youth and abstentionism, it will also consider how the intersection of several attributes – immigrant status, racial background and age – is linked to electoral participation.

Who Votes?

Studies of the participation of immigrants in elections have considered how variations in their ethnocultural origins, socio-demographic characteristics, length of residency and political experiences might account for differential turnout rates between foreign-born and Canadian-born citizens. In his analysis of 1974 national survey data, Black found that Canadian-born British and the foreign-born non-British voted at significantly lower rates than Canadian-born French (Black, 1982). In a comparison of the turnout rates of British, North European, South European, East European, and West Indian immigrants to Canadian-born British respondents, a 1983 Toronto-area survey found that only the West Indian respondents voted at significantly lower rates than the benchmark group in the most recent federal and provincial elections. These differences held even after controlling for socio-economic status, political attitudes and organizational involvement (Black, 1991). The participation equality enjoyed by most of the immigrants may have been the result of elite mobilization of the immigrant

vote, and an enhanced political consciousness based on perceived discrimination and ethnic sentiments (149).

The impact of the assimilation process on political integration has also been examined. An analysis of survey data on turnout in the 2000 federal election found that respondents who had immigrated within the last ten years were less likely to vote (Blais et al., 2002). EDS data confirmed that immigrant turnout rates were associated with the amount of time spent in Canada. While emigrants who arrived in Canada between 1981 and 2001 voted less frequently than the Canadian-born, the turnout gap distinguishing immigrants and non-immigrants disappears after twenty years of residency (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Early studies of visible minority participation in elections were based on small samples drawn from limited geographic areas. In a survey of Japanese and Chinese Canadians in Lethbridge, Quo found low turnout rates among the Chinese sample, but Japanese participation rates that were similar to the city and national averages. The differences were attributed to the longer time the Japanese had lived in the area (1971). Wood's study of turnout in a Vancouver riding concluded that East Indians were not significantly less likely than non-East Indians to vote in the 1979 federal and provincial elections (1981). Explanations for the East Indian turnout centred on the size of the community, the interaction of community members with non-East Indians, and the mobilization efforts of political elites (198).

Lapp explored the community mobilization thesis in her ecological analysis of turnout in five ethnic communities in Montreal in the 1993 federal and 1994 provincial and municipal elections. Using enumeration area turnout data, she found that voter participation was higher than that of the general population in the Greek community, lower in the Chinese and Jewish communities, and not significantly different in the Portuguese and Italian communities. In contrast to earlier studies supporting the assimilation thesis, these variations occurred regardless of the length of time spent in Canada (1999). Ethnic leaders who helped interpret the findings pointed to community-based variations in attitudes about elections. Greek community leaders cited "habit, a taste for voting and duty" as the main reasons for relatively high voter participation, while Chinese leaders suggested that electoral participation "was not a significant part of the community's political culture" (35).

These studies have laid important groundwork for research on contemporary patterns of participation, but there were limitations to the survey data upon which they were based. First, since national election studies do not oversample from minority ethnocultural communities, researchers have been limited to remarking upon immigrant/foreign-born patterns of participation, or to classifying respondents into broad ethno-cultural groupings. Second, results from locally-based studies cannot be generalized to other geographic areas. Third, the paucity of surveys featuring questions on turnout in provincial and municipal elections *and* sufficient sample sizes of immigrants and visible minorities has limited our knowledge of their participation in sub-national elections.

Fortunately, the EDS has rectified many of these shortcomings. It is a post-censal, national survey of 42,476 citizens, landed immigrants and temporary residents that was conducted between April and August 2002. It used a two-phase stratified sampling design to target persons aged 15 years and older in two main groups: persons reporting "Canadian" ethnic origin and persons belonging to non-Canadian, non-British or non-French ethnic groups. The sample distribution was established at 1/3 for the first group and 2/3 for the second, ensuring that persons with non-Canadian, non-British, and non-French backgrounds would be well-represented (Statistics Canada, 2002). The unique composition of the sample and the survey's inclusion of items on political participation make it a valuable source of information on how diversity is reflected in the most fundamental acts of democracy.

Immigrant and Visible Minority Participation in Canadian Elections

As with other surveys, the over reporting of electoral participation is evident in the EDS results. Nevertheless, there were no initial, significant differences between the turnout rates of immigrants and Canadian-born respondents in federal and municipal elections. Canadian-born citizens were, more likely to cast a ballot in provincial elections (Table 1).

When the racial backgrounds of the respondents were considered, immigrants were, with one exception, significantly *more* likely than Canadian-born respondents from the same background to have voted in all three types of elections (Table 2). The consistency of these results across different racial groups suggests that citizens born outside the country attached more value to electoral participation than Canadian-born citizens from the same community. Large gaps distinguished the participation rates of foreign-born and Canadian-born Black and South Asian citizens.

It is beyond the scope of this article to fully account for these patterns, but two possible explanations stand out. First, since immigrants must overcome many hurdles to re-establish themselves in a new country, they may be more motivated to exercise their democratic rights in a new setting. The second possibility is that these patterns may be spurious, and that the differences might be explained by variations in characteristics that have been positively associated with political activity. In Canada, these attributes

Table 1 – Turnout in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections, by birthplace (column %)

	Canadian-born	Immigrant
Voted in Last Federal Election	79.3	78.6
Voted in Last Provincial Election	78.4	75.6***
Voted in Last Municipal Election	63.9	63.5

Source: Ethnic Diversity Survey
***p≤.001

include age, higher levels of income and education, limited residential mobility, interest in politics and a sense of civic duty (Pammett and LeDuc).

The data in Table 2 also show that regardless of where they were born, visible minorities voted at lower rates than their cohorts who were not visible minorities. The results suggest that alienation from electoral politics is not confined to young Canadians. Multivariate models of turnout that incorporate other factors that have been linked to differential turnout rates would confirm whether these differences are indicative of higher levels of alienation in specific racial communities.

Among foreign-born citizens, the Chinese voted at lower rates than the South Asians and Blacks (Table 2). Previous studies have used political culture arguments to explain lower rates of Chinese turnout. Yet the similarities in turnout rates between Canadian-born Chinese and South Asian respondents suggest that early socialization in this country can mitigate cultural predispositions (if they exist) not to vote.

Immigrant Status, Race and Youth

It was suggested earlier that the immigrant advantage reported in Table 2 might be explained by other factors. Given the crucial links between age and turnout in Canada, the immigrant and Canadian-born respondents in each racial group were further divided into two age groups composed of 20-29 year-olds and individuals aged 30 and over. Finer age distinctions were not drawn so as to ensure sufficiently large sample sizes for each sub-group. Table 3 reports the results of this analysis.

Upon closer examination, we see that those patterns only held for older, nonvisible Canadians in federal and municipal elections (Table 3). Older, foreign-born Blacks were also significantly more likely to vote than Canadian-born Blacks aged 30 and over, but some of these estimates should be regarded with caution due to the small sample sizes upon which they are based (Table 3).

For all South Asians and younger Chinese, the immigrant/non-immigrant distinctions in turnout rates usually became insignificant. For the older Chinese and younger nonvisible respondents, the initial pattern was reversed. Canadian-born respondents voted at significantly *higher* rates than immigrants in all three types of elections (Table 3). In sum, the immigrant advantage in electoral participation exists for older, nonvisible citizens, as well as for older Blacks in federal elections. Once the intersection of racial background and age characteristics was considered, foreign-born citizens voted at lower rates than Canadian-born respondents in certain instances. Of all the survey respondents, younger immigrants from Chinese and nonvisible backgrounds were the least likely to vote.

Table 3 also reveals that the higher incidence of youth abstentionism transcends immigrant status and racial distinctions. Canadian-born Chinese, South Asian and nonvisible respondents voted at lower rates than their older cohorts. Likewise, younger immigrants, regardless of their racial origins, were less likely than older immigrants from the same backgrounds to vote.

It is apparent that the negative effects of generational replacement on electoral turnout have cut across racial boundaries. Nevertheless, this does not mean that race does not matter. Young Chinese, regardless of where they were born, were less likely to turn out to vote than their nonvisible and South Asian cohorts. This means that assimilation explanations related to the time spent in Canada cannot fully account for participation inequalities across different racial communities (Table 3). Multivariate modeling and qualitative research techniques will help illuminate whether these differences can be explained by

Table 2 – Turnout in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections, by Immigrant and Visible Minority Status (column %)

	Canadian-born	Immigrant
Non Visible		
Voted in Last Federal Election?	79.8	84.7***
Voted in Last Provincial Election?	78.9	82.6***
Voted in Last Municipal Election?	64.5	71***
Chinese		
Voted in Last Federal Election?	64.3	67
Voted in Last Provincial Election?	57.3	64*
Voted in Last Municipal Election?	41.9	50.5**
South Asian		
Voted in Last Federal Election?	61.2	77.1***
Voted in Last Provincial Election?	56.1	72***
Voted in Last Municipal Election?	41.5	59.3***
Black		
Voted In Last Federal Election?	47.2	77.6***
Voted in Last Provincial Election?	41.6	68.8***
Voted in Last Municipal Election?	32.9	57***

Source: Ethnic Diversity Survey
***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05

Table 3 – Turnout by Immigrant Status, Race and Age (column %)

	20-29 Year Olds		30 and over	
	Canadian-born	Foreign-born	Canadian-born	Foreign-born
Non Visible				
Federal	63.4	53**	84.9	87.1***
Provincial	60.8	47.5***	84.5	85.2
Municipal	41.6	33.2*	70.7	73.8***
Chinese				
Federal	56.2	44.8*	84.4	71.7***
Provincial	47.6	44.6	79.6	68.4*
Municipal	26.4	27.1	66.5	55.5*
South Asian				
Federal	63.4	67.6	—	—
Provincial	59.2	54.1	75.8	76.7
Municipal	43	46.3	63.3	63
Black				
Federal	51	41.2[E]	51.5	82.4***
Provincial	49.9	43.4[E]	41.2[E]	72.4***
Municipal	—	—	34.9[E]	61.9***

Source: Ethnic Diversity Survey; ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05
Note: [E] estimate considered "poor"

individual-level demographic or attitudinal attributes, by different community orientations towards the value of elections, or by the mobilization efforts of elites in majority and minority communities.

This article represents a first cut on the subject of how the intersection of one's racial background and age characteristics is associated with rates of Canadian-born and foreign-born participation in elections. Immigrant status was associated with lower participation rates for certain groups even after the introduction of age and race controls. Young Canadians, regardless of their birthplace and racial origins, were usually less likely to vote than their older cohorts in the same race and birthplace categories. For both Canadian-born and foreign-born Chinese and Black respondents, visible minority status was usually associated with participation inequality. These findings point to the need to explore the underlying causes of these community-based differences. They also suggest that race-based differences among Canadian-born respondents do not necessarily disappear with the passage of time. While youth status is linked to higher rates of abstentionism, there are other sources of alienation from electoral processes that merit closer academic inquiry.

Notes

The Research and Analysis are based on data from Statistics Canada and the opinions expressed do not represent the views of Statistics Canada.

To view the author's full references, please cisit the ACS website at www.acs-aec.ca

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IDEAL CITIZENS?

Immigrant Voting Patterns in Canadian Elections

ABSTRACT

Do Canadians born elsewhere exhibit the same attitudes and behaviours as other voters? This article reviews recent evidence and explores in particular the extent to which immigrant voters display greater support for the Liberal party. Different hypotheses for this support are evaluated, in an effort to determine whether immigrants display greater support for incumbents, for Liberal values, or whether they act as purposeful insiders. The article argues that immigrant voters may be perceived as ideal citizens for the way they approach political decisions. At a time when interest in politics is low, immigrant Canadians are more likely to take seriously their role as voters.

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Those taking the pulse of democratic participation in Canada suggest that the diagnosis is not good. Fewer Canadians are participating in political life, fewer are voting and fewer belong to political parties. Our ability to correctly identify key political players, or to answer key questions about our political scene suggests that Canadians are increasingly out of touch with politics and politicians. This in itself is worrying but we know at the same time that external and internal efficacy is low, as are satisfaction and confidence. It is worth asking, though, whether this malaise similarly affects all Canadians, or whether there are pockets of active citizens within our midst. One group worthy of investigation is immigrant Canadians. It is worth determining whether, for example, they exhibit the same rates of participation as other Canadians, whether they hold similar attitudes and behaviours and whether they are similarly affected by democratic malaise. Our evidence suggests that there are elements of immigrant voting behaviour that could describe this group as ideal citizens.

Much of the literature on immigrant voting behaviour suggests that immigrant Canadians hold different attitudes and behaviours than Canadian-born members of the electorate, although assessments of the extent of the difference and its tenor vary. Research in the 1970s appeared to suggest that there were few fundamental differences among Canadians by place of birth and that their rates of participation in elections were similar (Richmond and Gold 1977). At the same time, there is considerable research noting that immigrants tend to be less involved in politics than other Canadians. Immigrant Canadians are, for example, less likely to vote and less likely to join political parties (Chui, Curtis and Lambert 1991).

Research that seeks to explain these overall differences focuses on a number of rival hypotheses. Immigrant voters appear more likely to favour incumbents, backing the government of the day when they case their ballot (Stasiulis and Abu Laban 1991). Such research also suggests that immigrants are more likely to favour left wing parties, perhaps because of their more favourable attitudes towards immigration, or their approach to social policy. In addition, research by Jerome Black demonstrates that the democratic experiences of immigrants before their arrival in Canadian continues to influence their participation and attitudes upon entry into the Canadian electorate (Black 1987, Black 1991). If this is what we know, why might it warrant further attention? Primarily because of the availability of new data. In 2000 two surveys, the World Values Survey and the Canadian Election Study, contained larger-than-normal samples of immigrant Canadian. With these two data sets we can answer three distinct research questions: first, do immigrant voters exhibit the same attitudes and behaviours as Canadian-born voters; second, why do immigrant voters make the voting decisions that they do, and third, is the process by which immigrant voters arrive at their voting decision different from the process employed by others?

Conducted since 1981, the World Values Survey is now conducted in over 50 countries worldwide and contains a number of questions on economic and social well-being, in addition to attitudes towards the federal government, public institutions, fellow citizens and religion. In the 2000 Canadian portion of the World Values Survey, investigators included a large sample of immigrants, 563 to be exact, so that the attitudes and behaviours of this group could be compared to other Canadians. Also in 2000 the Canadian Election Study completed a survey on political attitudes and

behaviours. Conducted since the 1965 Canadian election the Canadian Election Study tracks voter attitudes during and after the election campaign. In 2000 the CES contained 500 immigrants in its sample of over 2000 Canadians. With these two data sources it is possible to paint a more complete picture of immigrant voting patterns than was previously possible.

We have some evidence that levels of political participation among immigrants are indistinguishable from levels of other Canadians. According to the CES data, self-reported turnout among immigrant voters is identical to self-reported turnout for Canadian-born voters. Both measures are higher than the turnout rate for Canada as a whole, something that is common, as survey respondents appear to recognize the social desirability of indicating that they cast a ballot. We also know that immigrant voters are less likely to belong to political parties than Canadian-born voters. Here the differences are statistically significant.

We also have evidence that immigrant voters are more likely to back the Liberals. Of the World Values Survey sample, 74.3% said that they would back the Liberals in a federal election. This compares to only 45.5% who indicated the same among the non-immigrants sample. Within the 2000 Canadian Election Study, 46% of those not born in Canada said that they backed the Liberals in the 2000 election, compared to only 32% of the Canadian-born voters. Indeed if we look at self-reported voting patterns in the federal election, immigrant voters were far more likely to back the Liberals, and were less likely to back any of the other parties. Here the gap is largest with the Bloc Québécois, where immigrant voters were half as likely to back the sovereignist party.

Immigrant voters were not only more likely to back the Liberals in the 2000 election, but consistently supported the Liberals more than other voters, even in years when the Conservative party won the election. If we examine data from each of the election studies conducted since 1984 we see that immigrants have been more likely to back the Liberals in every election. These dates are not selected arbitrarily, but rather allow us to examine the years for which there was a sufficient number of immigrants respondents included in the sample. This trend of Liberal support is most evident in the 1997 and 2000 elections but is clearly the case in earlier elections. What is clear, then, is that this is not just a case of backing electoral winners. In the 1984 and 1988 elections, immigrant voters were far less likely to back the Conservatives and slightly less likely to back them in 1988.

This suggests that immigrants are backing neither winners nor incumbents. For them to back winners they would have had to support the Conservatives in greater number than the Liberals, or at least demonstrated greater support for the Conservatives than other Canadians. Because they also failed to do so in 1988 also suggests that incumbent parties are not necessarily rewarded for their status.

Such patterns of one-party dominance among immigrants are clear, and are not particularly unusual. In the United Kingdom, data collected by the Council on Race Relations show that 97% of visible minority voters back the Labour party, regardless of whether it holds a reasonable chance at electoral success. In Australia, immigrants tend to prefer the Australian Labour party over the Liberals. For example recent data suggest that 43% of immigrants to Australia back Labour, compared to 33% of other voters. We should, of course, be wary of comparing these numbers to Canadian data. First, visible minority voters are not the same population as immigrant voters. In addition, the electoral strength of these parties varies. The electoral dominance of the Liberal party in Canada far surpasses that of the British Labour party, for example.

Two things are worth questioning, though. First, if immigrants prefer left-wing parties, why not back the NDP, which is clearly to the left of the Liberals. Second, backing the Liberals is not necessarily an anti-incumbent move as the Liberals have been in power for much of the twentieth century. The pattern, then, seems to be of a preference for left-wing parties that stand a chance of winning elections.

What we appear to have, though, is evidence of clear and consistent immigrant preference for one political party within a system, rather than divided support. Traditional analyses of electoral behaviour suggested that immigrants tended to support incumbents. These, and the Canadian data, suggest instead that immigrant voters prefer to back more left-wing parties. Two things are worth questioning, though. First, if immigrants prefer left-wing parties, why not back the NDP, which is clearly to the left of the Liberals. Second, backing the Liberals is not necessarily an anti-incumbent move as the Liberals have been in power for much of the twentieth century. The pattern, then, seems to be of a preference for left-wing parties that stand a chance of winning elections.

What possible explanations, then, might help us to understand immigrant voting patterns in Canada? Three alternative hypotheses present themselves. First is the pro-incumbent argument. This suggests that immigrants are backing the party of government because they are supportive of the system, and do so as a way to feel greater attachment to the system, and thus Canada. A second option suggests that immigrant voters are pro-Liberal, and that they are backing the Liberal party because that party best reflects their own values and beliefs, including support for immigration. A third option, however, is that immigrant voters are behaving as purposeful insiders, backing the Liberals not out of support for government incumbents, but because they want their constituency MPs to be close to the centres of power. This third option is distinct from the first in that it is forward

looking. The pro-incumbent argument suggests that immigrants possess higher levels of satisfaction with the governing system, and so cast their ballots with attention to the recent past. The purposeful insider argument suggests that voters are more attentive to whoever will win the election, regardless of the previous government. It is, essentially, a forward-looking analysis.

These propositions do not address the possibility that voters are backing the Liberals because it was Liberal administrations that facilitated their entry to Canada. In part, testing such a hypothesis is made difficult by the comparatively smaller numbers of immigrants who entered the country during Conservative administrations. Although the total number of immigrants arriving in Canada during Conservative administrations is not small, it is comparatively smaller, and less likely to be present in survey samples. This inhibits any potential analysis with immigrants admitted during Liberal administrations

How, then, might we test these various hypotheses? For the first, pro-incumbent, explanation to hold, we would expect immigrants to be more supportive of the system as a whole, more satisfied with democracy, feel a greater sense of deference, feel greater pride in Canada, be more likely to vote and more likely to belong to a political party. For the pro-Liberal argument to hold, immigrants would have to associate the Liberal party with values and behaviours that they hold dear. Examples could include greater perceived support for immigration, for redistributive politics, or for equal opportunities. For the purposeful insider hypothesis to hold we would expect to see immigrant voters back the winning party in their own constituency, or vote for the winning party at the provincial level. In addition, we would expect to find that the likelihood of voting Liberal increases as the margin of victory increases. In other words, immigrants would be more likely to vote Liberal if they receive cues that a particular party is likely to win the constituency contest.

In order to test which of these three hypotheses best explains immigrant voting patterns, we have produced a multivariate model of voting. Against a binary dependent variable, coded as 1 if the respondent backed the Liberals and 0 if they supported another party, we have included four blocks of independent variables. The first block includes standard demographic information such as province of residence, gender, income, age and whether the respondent holds a university degree. The second block includes variables that would help us to test the pro-incumbent model. These include satisfaction with democracy, attachment to Canada, interest in politics and the frequency with which the respondent discusses politics. The third block allows us to test pro-Liberal attitudes. These include centrist ideology and attachment to the Liberals. The fully-specified model includes an additional block of variables that test for the hypothesis of purposeful insiders. This includes evidence of insider calculations such as the size of the Liberal margin of victory and whether the respondent lives in a constituency where the Liberals won.

The results in Table 1 provide the statistically significant logistic regression coefficients for two groups, immigrant voters and Canadian-born voters. In the first block of variables, only Ontario as a province of residence was a significant predictor of voting. When we add in variables that help to test the pro-incumbent hypothesis, we find that satisfaction with democracy serves as a positive predictor for both immigrant and Canadian-born voters. Attachment to Canada, however, is only a predictor for Canadian-born voters. When we include additional pro-Liberal variables, we see striking differences between the behaviour of immigrant and Canadian-born voters. Immigrants are more likely to be influenced by their ideology, while Canadian-born voters are more likely to vote for the Liberals if they are satisfied with democracy and attached to Canada. Last, in the fully-specified model we find that none of the purposeful insider variables can explain immigrant voting. They are, however, positive predictors of Liberal support among other voters.

Table 1 – Reported Voting in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections and reported high levels of attachment to Canada, 2002

	Immigrant voters	Canadian-born voters
Block 1		
Ontario	+ve***	+ve***
Block 2		
Ontario	+ve**	+ve***
Satisfaction with democracy	+ve	+ve**
Attachment to Canada		+ve***
Block 3		
Ontario	+ve**	+ve***
Satisfaction with democracy		+ve**
Attachment to Canada		+ve***
Centrist ideology	+ve*	
Block 4		
Ontario	+ve*	
Satisfaction with democracy		+ve***
Attachment to Canada		+ve***
Centrist ideology	+ve*	
Liberal constituency		+ve**
Margin of victory		+ve*
Pseudo R2	.235	.182

Source: CES 2000. Results are signs of logistic regression coefficients significant at the .01, 05 or .1 level. *** = p<.01, ** = p<.05, * = p<.1

How do these results speak to our research questions? First, they show consistent differences between the voting decisions reached by immigrants and those reached by other Canadians. We know that immigrants are more likely to back the Liberals. What these results also demonstrate is that they way they arrive at their voting decision is informed by different variables. Ideology is more important for immigrant voters than it is for others, while living in a Liberal constituency, or one where the margin of victory is largest, are both irrelevant factors. Satisfaction with democracy and attachment to Canada, significant predictors for Canadian-born voters, do not figure in immigrant voting decisions. Second, then, these results show us that the pro-Liberal hypothesis best explains the voting behaviour of immigrants. Indirectly the results also speak to process, our third research question.

Existing research on electoral behaviour tells us that we cast our ballots either because of a thorough evaluation

of the facts or by using information shortcuts. According to the former hypothesis voters are aware of key issues, gather information about those competing in elections, weigh evidence in favour of one party or another and cast their ballot as a result of this process. This is certainly in line with classic democratic theory. For the process to work the electorate must be composed of informed citizenry, willing if not eager to perform their many civic duties. A rival process, though, suggests that our political behaviour is informed more by cues and shortcuts, whether our social identity or group membership, or partisan identification. If these two approaches dictate how we might understand voting behaviour, the results in our datasets suggest that immigrant and Canadian-born voters employ different processes to arrive at their voting decisions.

Data from the Canadian Election Study and the World Values survey show that immigrants are far more likely to pay attention to election news on the radio, TV and in papers than are Canadian-born voters. Immigrant voters are more likely to have watched the leaders' debate, are more likely to seek political and electoral information on the internet and seek that information more frequently than Canadian-born voters. They are also more likely to answer knowledge questions about the political system correctly. Paradoxically, they are also more likely to have made up their minds on how to cast their ballot than are other Canadians. This suggests, then, that immigrant Canadians are not gathering information in order to arrive at a voting decision, but for the sake of gathering information itself. Their behaviour, then, is far more in line with the ideal citizen, one who is engaged, not because of a particular end, but as a matter of course. These results show that immigrant voters are less prone to using cues and more likely to cast their ballots because of personal beliefs than habit. This suggests that immigrant voters use fewer information shortcuts to arrive at their voting decisions than other voters.

Returning to the issue of ideal voters, then, we might consider immigrants to be ideal citizens in two ways. First, immigrant Canadians could be considered ideal because they back the Liberal party. The governing party can thus count on a stable source of support, and know that the immigrants it admits to Canada are more likely to support them than another rival party. This is, perhaps, a craven interpretation of the ideal citizen. Immigrant Canadians can also be considered ideal citizens because they conform to the notions of ideal citizenship in classical democratic theory. Immigrants discharge their duties as citizens with greater investment of time and effort than do other Canadians. At a time when participation rates in politics are dropping, immigrant voters appear to be one group within the electorate that is taking its civic duty seriously.

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PARLIAMENT AS A MIRROR TO THE NATION:

Promoting Diversity in Representation through Electoral Reform

ABSTRACT

This article argues that a primary goal of reforming the electoral system is to ensure that Parliament is a mirror to the nation, as opposed to the argument that it attempts to create a mirror of the nation. Of particular interest is how adopting a mixed member proportional system could broaden the "selectorate" of candidates, thereby promoting the emergence of new and more diverse voices within Parliament, including those of women, minority group members and Aboriginal peoples. Although electoral reform is not a panacea for addressing the representational deficiencies that characterize the existing political landscape, it is a vital first step to improving democratic governance in Canada.

The idea that Parliament should be a mirror or microcosm of the nation can be traced back to the utilitarian philosophers Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. In their view, representatives were neither trustees of the nation's well-being, as Edmund Burke had argued in his famous speech to the electors of Bristol, nor were they delegates acting at the behest of their constituents. Instead, their "essential function [was] to constitute, in themselves, a microcosm of the nation" (Birch 1971: 55). If Parliament were a miniature replica of society, then the elected representatives' pursuit of their own self-interest would necessarily result in decisions that would maximize the happiness of the community as a whole.

This understanding of representation, not surprisingly, has come under attack for a variety of reasons. In the first place, it would seem to be utterly utopian to try to ensure the election of a representative sample of society. What demographic criteria would be used to determine which groups ought to be represented in Parliament? Perhaps a majority will agree that women as a group ought to be fairly or equally represented in the legislature. But what about Aboriginals? Ukrainians? Persons of mixed Italian-French heritage? Catholics? Wiccans? Left-handers? Short people? Critics of the notion of demographic or mirror representation frequently employ a *reductio ad absurdum* such as this to try to demolish the claims that Parliament ought to be a miniature replica of the nation.

Another, more fundamental flaw in the idea of mirror representation centres on the nature of representation itself: if a woman or an individual from a particular ethnic group is elected to Parliament, does he or she represent the interests of *all* members of the same demographic category? Do all women identify with Belinda Stronach, for example, simply because she is a woman? Can a person represent members of different ethnic, religious or class backgrounds? In a complex, heterogeneous society which values inclusion and pluralism, should we not encourage elected members of the legislature to speak for, to represent, as broad a cross-section of society as possible? Would this not be one of the most effective ways of breaking down barriers of mutual incomprehension and suspicion that still persist among rival ethnic, religious and class-based communities?

These criticisms of the idea of mirror representation have been deployed against proposals for a new electoral system in Canada, such as the one contained in the recent report to Parliament by the Law Commission of Canada, *Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada* (2004). The Law Commission advocates the adoption of a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system similar to those now used in Germany, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. The House of Commons would consist of 308 seats, as it does now, but only two-thirds of these seats (202) would be awarded to the candidates winning a plurality of the vote in constituency races. The remaining 106 seats would be allocated to the provinces and distributed on the basis of each party's share of the provincial vote. This second tier of seats would compensate for distortions in the first-past-the-post portion of the vote. Each voter would be assigned two votes, one for a candidate in his or her riding, and another for a party list.

The Law Commission contends that the party list portion of the ballot would lower the barriers to election now faced by women, minorities and Aboriginals in the existing first-past-the-post system. In effect, the new system would allow for a form of affirmative action, whereby parties could place women and minority candidates in favourable positions on the list portion of the ballot in order to increase their chances of election (Law Commission of Canada, 2004: 62; Schwartz and

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Rettie, 2002: 51; Young, 1994: 6). This is currently the practice in most western European countries that have adopted a form of proportional representation, and helps to explain *in part* why many European nations have much higher proportions of women among their elected representatives than do Canada and the other countries that employ first-past-the-post electoral systems.

One critic of this proposal raised the spectre of "social engineering" as the ultimate goal of the Law Commission. An MMP system, in this view, would alter the basis of representation in Canada, from a system based on "the principle of equality of individuals to a system of representation based on group membership" (Archer 2004). The list of groups demanding representation in Parliament under such a system would constantly expand, according to Archer, fostering unrealistic and unrealizable expectations among a welter of social interests that they would be guaranteed representation in the legislature.

We argue that this critique of proportional representation misses the mark. The objective of electoral reform in Canada is not to transform Parliament into a mirror *of* the nation, but rather to ensure that it is a mirror *to* the nation, a body in which a citizen can see him or herself reflected, however imperfectly. Because individual identities are complex and multiple, this mode of representation can at most mean that citizens must believe that their chances of getting elected, or the chances of people "like them" winning a seat in Parliament, are on an equal footing with those of the dominant group of elected representatives – older, affluent white males. This is where a new electoral system, one which incorporates a degree of proportionality through a party-list portion of the ballot, could produce results, by increasing the chances for election of non-traditional types of candidates. MMP, by broadening the "selectorate" of candidates, could promote the emergence of new and more diverse voices within Parliament.

Whether or not a majority of Canadians implicitly accept the notion of mirror representation, we do know that they are troubled by the "appearance" of existing legislatures in the country. The Law Commission's citizen engagement process for its electoral reform project underscores this fact. Of particular concern for many citizens was that Parliament and provincial legislatures should, to the greatest extent possible, reflect the composition of society. For a growing number of Canadians, the fact that they do not is no longer acceptable.

When it comes to demographic representation, first-past-the-post performs poorly. For example, if we measure the representation of women in terms of the percentage elected to the lower house in various countries, Canada, with 21% female legislators, ranks 34th in the world, after most of European countries (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2005). As the data in Table 1 show, the proportion of women elected to the legislature in countries using list-PR electoral systems is about 10 percentage points higher than in countries using a mixed or semi-PR system (30.4% versus 19.9%), which in turn is about 2 percentage points higher than in countries with first-past-the-post systems.

Statistically, the difference between first-past-the-post and mixed member proportional on this indicator is not huge. However, Arseneau (1990: 140), examining the experience of New Zealand after it adopted a mixed member proportional system in the mid-1990s, shows that the first election conducted under this system, in 1996, resulted in a "record number of women and Maori Members of Parliament." Most important, from her perspective, was that women and Maori candidates tended to be most successful in the list (compensatory) seats.

Table 1 – Women Legislators in Lower Houses of Advanced Industrial Democracies, 2005

Electoral System	Country	% women legislators	Average (mean)
List-PR	Sweden	45.3	30.4
	Norway	38.2	
	Finland	37.5	
	Denmark	36.9	
	Netherlands	36.7	
	Spain	36.0	
	Belgium	34.7	
	Austria	33.9	
	Iceland	30.2	
	Switzerland	25.0	
	Luxembourg	23.3	
	Portugal	19.5	
	Israel	15.0	
	Greece	14.0	
STV	Ireland	13.3	11.3
	Malta	9.2	
MMP/ MMM	Germany	32.8	19.9
	New Zealand	28.3	
	Italy	11.5	
	Japan	7.1	
FPTP	Canada	21.1	18.1
	UK	18.1	
	USA	15.0	
Majoritarian	Australia	24.7	18.5
	France	12.2	
All PR/ semi-PR	(N = 20)		**26.4**
FPTP/ Majoritarian	(N = 5)		**18.2**

Source: Adapted from Studlar (1999: 129, Table 10-1). Data compiled from Inter-Parliamentary Union website http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm (date accessed, 20 March 2005).

Approximately a third of Canadian voters in 2000 believed that the under-representation of women in the House of Commons constituted a problem (Howe and Northrup, 2000: 17, Table 7). Electoral reform that brings some element of proportionality into our existing system would undoubtedly ameliorate the situation, though to what extent remains to be seen. For example, Arseneau (1999: 144) points out that while the proportion of female legislators in New Zealand increased after the adoption of MMP, the percentage of women in cabinet positions actually dropped.

Ethnic minorities and Aboriginals also have fewer representatives than their share of the population warrants: they constituted 11 and 3.5%, respectively, of the Canadian population in 1996, but only 6% and 2% of Members of Parliament (Howe and Northrup, 2000: 19). As with the under-representation of women, some 35% of Canadian voters find this situation to be cause for

concern, and nearly half of voters are favourable to measures that would increase the number of ethnic and Aboriginal candidates running for office (Howe and Northrup, 2000: 20). With respect of Aboriginal peoples, 57% of respondents favoured creating seats in Parliament for Aboriginal representatives (Howe and Northrup, 2000: 19).

As we noted above, the advantage that proportional representation systems have over first-past-the-post in promoting demographic representation is thought to stem from the fact that the lists drawn up for compensatory seats (in mixed member proportional) or multi-member districts (List-PR) can be used to place women and minority candidates in a favourable position, making their election all the more likely (they allow, in other words, for a form of affirmative action). And while proportional representation alone may not be sufficient for securing effective representation of women, minority group members and Aboriginal peoples, at the very least, it presents "fewer barriers to achieving demographically representative outcomes than do single member systems" (Schwartz and Rettie, 2002: 51; Young, 1994: 6).

Although electoral system reform can help address the representational deficiencies of the status quo, it is not a panacea. For example, even if Canada adopted a MMP system, there are other considerations related to representation within electoral politics that would need to be addressed. Issues relating to campaign financing, party recruitment policies, and the inclusion of women and minority group candidates in cabinet, among others, would also need to be addressed to ensure that a broader diversity of voices are included in the system of democratic governance.

It is also important to recognize that representational issues extend beyond electoral politics. In their analysis of contemporary forms of representation, Earles and Findlay (2003: 10) advocate for a broader notion of representation that embraces ideas of participatory democracy and other meaningful opportunities for citizens to participate in their democracy. Although the authors recognize the importance of electoral politics, as this remains a vital location for political action, they also suggest that we must adopt other methods for women, members of minority groups, the poor, and Aboriginal people to gain a voice in the system of democratic governance. For Earles and Findlay, "[t]his view of representation, which encompasses a more diverse set of interests, identities and ideas, must bridge the gap between representative and participatory democracy, and include not only elected politics, but also non-elected and non-state spheres" (2003: 60).

Overall, we argue that the importance of electoral reform stems from the opportunity it presents for including a broader diversity of voices in the political decision-making process. In this respect, the debate over changing the electoral system so that our elected representatives better "mirror the nation" is misplaced. As we noted at the outset, it is overly optimistic and unreasonable to believe that the House of Commons or a provincial legislature can adequately mirror the representational make-up of Canadian society. As well, even it this goal were attainable it would not guarantee effective representation.

Our argument is that allowing a broader diversity of voices in the legislature not only provides an opportunity to enrich the electoral process as it currently exists, but also represents a starting point for further reflection about the nature of representation in Canada's increasingly diverse society. One of the ways to accomplish this is through the election of more women, minority candidates and Aboriginal peoples who come from different backgrounds than the typical Member of Parliament or provincial legislatures. And while electoral reform is not a panacea for addressing the representational shortcomings that characterize the existing political landscape, it is a vital first step to improving democratic governance in Canada.

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Law Commission of Canada.

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OTHERS' LANGUAGES AND VOTING IN CANADA:

Recent Findings on Political Participation and Perception of Non-Official Language Groups

ABSTRACT

What factors contribute to low voter turnout? According to the author, more electoral studies need to focus on non-official language communities, where participation rates tend to be lower than the average. In this article, Dr. Jedwab looks at recent findings on political participation in Canada. He suggests that those who use socio-demographic data to examine immigrant voter participation should also take into account other intersecting factors, such as income for example.

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Defining the responsibilities of citizenship has become the object of increasing attention on the part of scholars and policy-makers in many pluralist democracies. It is widely assumed that immigrants and members of ethnocultural groups participate less in the democratic process as reflected in part by relatively lower voter turnout in elections. Results of the 2004 federal contest may further confirm such hypotheses as it would appear that, on average, immigrants voted less than non-immigrants. As we shall observe, for the most part those ridings with the highest concentrations of immigrants tend to have lower than average rates of voter participation. Few studies have examined the relationship between immigrant status, ethnic identification, language skills and voter participation in Canada. Where immigrants are concentrated, one is often struck by anecdotal evidence of poor turnout contrasted with the sometimes emotional charges of candidate nomination contests being overwhelmed by large concentrations of such individuals.

Reviewing the Literature

Few studies of electoral behaviour have focused directly on non-official language communities. However it is via the body of research on ethnocultural groups and immigrants that observations are made in this regard. Over the years, several analysts have attempted to identify those factors that account for lower turnout amongst immigrants and whether its causes are similar to those found amongst the broader population. To date, the findings from this literature are inconclusive as researchers have reached different conclusions on how politically involved immigrants are compared with non-immigrants. Some writers who believe that immigrants are less involved in politics have emphasized, by way of explanation, that newcomers are less knowledgeable about Canadian political norms and values than native-born Canadians. Bell and Tepperman (1979), for example, argue that native-born Canadians are "tradition carriers who must train the many newcomers in the 'Canadian way'." A relatively large number of immigrants to Canada, in their view, posed serious problems for cultural integration and national unity. Bell and Tepperman did not directly test the proposition that there are immigrant/non-immigrant differences in political activity and voting behaviour. They simply reviewed literature around such issues, much of it non-Canadian.

Much focus has also been directed at the rhythm and process of integration, considered a prerequisite to civic and voter participation. Poor language skills are sometimes cited as a major barrier to participation. Many new Canadians are not comfortable using English or French when dealing with potentially complicated governmental or political matters. Therefore, explaining voter procedures and electoral issues in their mother tongue can facilitate access to a process that some may find confusing. Immigrants may lack social ties in Canada and sufficient capacity in English or French, both of which will help in learning about politics. Some new arrivals will find it difficult to participate politically because of their limited knowledge of their new political environment. The fact that immigrants come from different cultures also may differentially affect their political participation in Canada. They may encounter difficulty in transferring their political experiences in their countries of origin onto the political process in Canada.

Fewer studies have chosen to emphasize "why immigrants vote" as opposed to why they don't vote. In this regard, various dimensions of civic participation are examined, such as the role of minority advocacy groups as providing possible opportunities for better understanding the value of political participation. As Chui et al. (1991) note, research must pay greater attention to the explanatory

mechanisms driving voter turnout in ethnic communities. Advocacy bodies may assist in attracting or recruiting individuals to political campaigns. They add that among immigrant and non-immigrant (i.e. settled) minority individuals, "ties with ethnic leaders encourage political participation."

The political system may fuel disinterest amongst ethnocultural groups and thereby contribute to reduce voter participation amongst a number of communities. The capacity to rally members of the ethnic community is where ethnic representatives have an upper hand over non-ethnic candidates. According to Sayers and Jetha (2002), increased minority representation has been attributed to the numerical concentration of minorities in urban ridings, assertive ethnic communities, party activists who recruited and mobilized new members for nomination battles, and to party initiatives such as ethnic community liaison committees or affirmative action measures.

Using data from the 1974 Canadian National Election Study, Jerome Black compared the participation rates of Canadian-born British, French and "others" as well as foreign-born British and Non-British. He found significantly lower rates of turnout for the Canadian-born British in his sample (Black, 1982) thus illustrating the need for exercising caution when making assertions about immigrant versus non-immigrant voting behaviour. Black found that British immigrants, non-British immigrants and the native-born were not very different in their levels of political participation. A subsequent study by Black (1988) used a 1983 Toronto-area survey of immigrants of five different ethnic origins to argue that most of them were able to transfer past political experiences to the new Canadian system. British immigrants did not enjoy advantages in terms of transferability, and each type of immigrant resembled native Canadians in participation levels. Immigrants' political interest in the country of origin also had a significant positive impact on interest in Canadian politics.

In a 1991 study on voter turnout Black measured the relative impact of ethnicity and nativity on turnout. Controlling for socio-economic status, age, political attitudes and organizational involvement he finds that only the West Indian respondents (all of whom were foreign-born) vote significantly less than the reference group (Canadian-born British). It is interesting to note that controlling for length of residence in Canada weakens, but does not eliminate, the West Indian vote differential (Black, 1991).

Some studies have pointed to problems associated with studying the effects of immigrant background upon political involvement by comparing only Canadian-born and foreign-born. The native-born, like the foreign-born, appear to be heterogeneous group, and this complexity should be taken into account. The diverse character of voting behaviour is illustrated in a study on the perceptions of Montreal ethnic community leaders regarding voter participation. Miriam Lapp (1999) note that amongst some ethnic groups, voter turnout is higher than it is for the entire population. She finds this to be true for the Greek community, though not the case in the Chinese and Jewish communities. In the case of the Italian and Portuguese, group rates of voter participation were on par with those of the broader population. Lapp points out that variations occur despite controls for citizenship, period of immigration and home language. In effect, turnout is not merely a function of length of time spent in Canada. Consequently, she concludes that assimilation alone is not the best predictor of voter participation.

Lapp (1999) points out that ethnic community leaders tended to offer different explanations for low voter turnout. In the case of Montreal's Chinese community leaders felt it was generally quite difficult to convince people to vote and expected low turnout by community members in all three elections. The most frequently cited reason for low voter turnout was lack of interest in politics. On the other hand, leaders in the Greek community cited a strong interest in politics as the primary reason for high turnout in their community.

Traditional arguments insisting that integration or assimilation are preconditions for greater political participation have rarely defined what they imply in using these notions. In fact, at times their arguments have a 'chicken and egg' character where one is tempted to ask whether low participation is assessed at the front or end of the integration process. A popular assumption arising from the integrationist argument is that immigrants from non-democratic countries (NDCs) are less likely to participate in elections – an idea recently debunked in a study by Antoine Bilodeau and Neil Nevitte (2003). According to a special immigrant sample of the World Values Survey the vast majority of immigrants from NDCs say that they have a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in political institutions of Canada. About 78% of immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 years or less say they have a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in the government in Ottawa; 81% supply the same answer when asked about the civil service, and 71% for the parliament. The political parties seem to suffer from lower levels of confidence from the immigrant population socialized in a non-democratic environment.

Immigrants from NDCs are almost twice as likely as people born in Canada to say that they have a 'great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence for each of the political institutions mentioned above: 78 vs. 39% for the government in Ottawa, 81 vs. 47% for the civil service, 71 vs. 38% for the parliament, and finally, 39 vs. 22% for political parties. Though the opinions of immigrants from NDCs change substantially over time their levels of confidence remain significantly higher than those found in the Canadian-born population.

Bilodeau and Nevitte (2003) contend that upon arrival in Canada immigrants from NDCs bring with them a 'reservoir' of diffuse support that is independent of how well or poorly the regime performs. Contrary to findings on the role of knowledge in the formation of public opinion, Nevitte et al. contend that factual knowledge about the host environment plays no significant role in immigrants' process of developing political trust in the host political institutions. Immigrants who knew more about the host democratic environment did not exhibit higher or lower levels of confidence than those who knew little. That said, Bilodeau and Nevitte remark that the 'honeymoon' does not last. After a decade in the host country, there are no significant differences between levels of confidence in political institution of immigrants from NDCs and people born in Canada. Paradoxically one might conclude that adaptation

to Canada's political reality breeds greater skepticism with institutions than growing attachment to them.

Demographic Characteristics and Voter Turnout

In 2001, more than five million Canadians reported that the language they first leaned and still understood was neither English nor French, thus representing more than one out of every six Canadians. Of that group approximately 8.3% or one in twelve individuals knew neither English nor French. Though such allophones tend to be present in nearly all federal electoral districts, in 2001 over one-third knowing neither official language resided in some twenty ridings, most of which are in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec – and especially in the Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal areas. As observed in Table 1, the ridings with highest percentage of allophones that know neither English nor French are the three Vancouver ridings and Trinity-Spadina.

While a poll-by-poll analysis would shed significant light on the degree to which immigrant non-official language groups participated in the 2004 contest, the evidence from ridings with the higher percentages of such individuals suggests generally lower than average turnout in most instances. In the province of Quebec provincial voter turnout was 60.5%, in Ontario it was 61.8% and in British Columbia it was 63.3%. As observed in Table 1, in the 20 ridings with the highest number and percentage of allophones that voter participation tended to hover around the mid-fifties. There were, however, some exceptions in the case of the Ontario riding of Trinity-Spadina and the British Columbia constituencies of Burnaby-Douglas and Newton North Delta.

Again, while a poll-by-poll analysis remains essential, certain communities appear to be less likely to have voted in 2004. With respect to Chinese languages where Cantonese speakers are more prevalent than Mandarin speakers, the ridings in which they are concentrated (in Scarborough, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia) all fell below the sixty percent marker.

Though in general it is a more established community, the Ontario ridings with high concentrations of persons of Italian mother tongue also suffered from much lower than average voter turnout. In Vaughan, where more than one-third of constituents were of Italian mother tongue, turnout was 56% and as low as 48.5% in York West where one out of six voters are of Italian mother tongue. In Quebec's Saint-Leonard-Saint-Michel riding, with one-quarter of eligible voters of Italian mother tongue, turnout was at 54.5%. In the case of the mother tongue Portuguese group, the riding of Davenport has the highest concentration (approximately three of ten electors) and in 2004 the turnout rate (52.9%) was quite low.

In the case of ridings with high percentages of persons whose mother tongue is Punjabi there is much variation in voter turnouts and, for example, in the case of Calgary Northeast the low turnout (47.8%) may be attributable to considerations other than the presence of some 10,000 persons with Punjabi mother tongue. In the case of

Table 1 – Mother Tongue neither English nor French, know neither English nor French and Voter Turnout in Selected Ridings, 2001 and Voter Turnout in 2004 Federal Election

	Mother Tongue Other than English or French (Allophones)	Neither English nor French	Voter Turnout in 2004 Federal Election (%)
Vancouver South	72,205	11,635	55.8
Vancouver Kingsway	71,965	13,940	58.0
Scarborough Agincourt	66,755	10,735	56.4
Scarborough Rouge River	65,690	10,580	51.1
Markham Unionville	63,900	8,090	56.1
York Centre	62,640	6,025	56.8
York West	61,945	8,290	48.5
Richmond	58,820	8,180	56.7
York South Weston	56,925	6,195	51.7
Richmond Hill	54,065	4,570	58.2
Etobicoke North	53,365	5,275	51.0
Saint-Leonard-Saint-Michel	52,855	4,875	54.5
Burnaby-New Westminster	52,705	6,100	59.0
Vancouver East	52,390	12,510	58.2
Burnaby-Douglas	51,105	5,155	61.5
Newton-North Delta	48,980	6,760	63.0
Papineau	48,130	6,385	57.1
Trinity-Spadina	47,270	9,370	63.7
Surrey North	43,420	5,470	55.4
Calgary Northeast	34,945	4,360	47.8

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Newton-North Delta and Abbotsford, the overall rates of voter participation (63% and 64.6% respectively) are in line with the provincial average despite the fact that a relatively high percentage of the Punjabi group declares an inability to speak either English or French.

Federal versus Provincial Election Results

It follows that if voter turnout is lower than average for non-official language communities at the federal level than the same would be true for elections at other levels. Table 2 contrasts voter turnouts in like ridings federally and provincially to determine whether low turnout is generic or is somehow related to problems associated at a particular level of government. In British Columbia overall voter turnout in the 2001 provincial election was approximately 71%, more than seven point higher than the federal turnout. By contrast, in Ontario the provincial turnout in 2004 was five points below the federal turnout, while in Quebec the provincial turnout in 2003 was 70.4%, some ten points higher than the federal turnout. As for those ridings in the provinces with the higher percentage of allophones, while turnout is somewhat lower than the average, behaviours tend to conform to what occurs province wide. Thus BC and Quebec ridings with a significant allophone presence appear more likely to vote in provincial than federal contests, while the opposite is true in Ontario in such ridings where federal is stronger than provincial participation.

Table 2 – Voter Turnout in Selected Federal and Provincial Ridings with significant shares of allophones in Most Recent Contests, 2001-2005

	Voter Turnout in 2004 Federal Election	Voter Turnout Ontario Election (2003), BC Election (2001) and Quebec Election (2003)
Vancouver Kingsway	58.0	67.1
Scarborough Agincourt	56.4	52.9
Scarborough Rouge River	51.1	48.1
Markham Unionville	56.1	53.9
York Centre	56.8	49.6
York West	48.5	44.0
Richmond	56.7	69.0
York South Weston	51.7	58.7
Etobicoke North	51.0	47.9
Saint-Leonard-Saint-Michel	54.5	67.7
Burnaby-New Westminster	59.0	71.5
Burnaby-Douglas	61.5	70.0
Newton-North Delta	63.0	72.6
Papineau	57.1	62.8
Trinity Spadina	63.7	52.0
Surrey North	55.4	66.7

Sources: Elections Canada, 2004, Elections BC, 2001, Elections Quebec, 2003 Elections Ontario, 2003

Other Dimensions of Low Voter Turnout

Those who employ socio-demographic data to examine immigrant voter participation ideally need to consider other intersecting factors to offer more precise conclusions around turnout issues. For example, such issues as age, region of residence, generational status, length of residence, income and unemployment are all factors that may in some instances operate in conjunction with language background and ability. Without proper controls for these variables it is difficult to establish causality as regards the economic and socio-demographic considerations influencing voter participation.

Analysts have established strong correlations between age and voter turnout but we do not know whether low participation amongst youth is compounded by ethnolinguistic background. Income is yet another issue that needs to be considered in making observations around the voting behaviour of several non-official language communities in that a number of the communities in the areas of high concentration of allophones also generally possess lower than average incomes. When considering income for example we observe below that those ridings with persons in the highest income bracket tend to participate to a greater than average extent in the 2004 elections. Canada's five highest income ridings in 2004, Don Valley West (66.3), Oakville (69.5%), Thornhill (62.7%), Oak Ridges-Markham (63.4%), and Carleton-Lanark (75.4%) tended to have relatively sound voter turnout rates in the federal election of that year.

As observed in Table 3, ridings with lower income tend to produce lower voter turnout thus suggesting a relationship between personal deficits and democratic ones. It is worth noting that the four poorest ridings have a noteworthy presence of recent immigrants (as does the riding of Vancouver East).

Table 3 – Federal Ridings with Lowest Income in 2001 and voter turnout Rates in 2004

Ridings		Voter Turnout
Winnipeg Centre	34,419	45.1
Hochelaga	36,434	57.8
Bourassa	36,848	57.0
Rosemont-La Petite Patrie	37,052	61.5
Dauphin-Swan River	37,361	58.6
Matapedia-Matane	37,441	54.2
Random-Burin-St. George's	38,152	44.9
Vancouver East	38,347	58.2
Quebec	38,396	60.8
Sydney-Victoria	39,150	60.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada 2001 and Elections Canada, results of the 38th general election, 2004

National Identification and Voter Participation

There is little evidence to support the idea that either weak national or strong ethnic attachments result in lower rates of voter participation. The 2003 Ethnic Diversity Survey conducted by Statistics Canada shows little correlation between reported voter turnout rates and attachment to the country. It is worth noting that when asked whether they vote, Canadians tend to overestimate their rate of participation and the EDS survey revealed that such reporting applied to ethnocultural groups.

Table 4 – Reported Voting in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections and reported high levels of attachment to Canada, 2002

	Federal	Provincial	Municipal	Strong Attachment to Canada
Chinese	67	63	49	72
East Indian	77	71	56	81
Filipino	75	74	63	85
Portuguese	74	74	64	85
Italian	82	81	78	70
Russian	77	75	59	82
French Canadian	88	88	70	73
Canadian	79	79	65	80
Irish	82	80	67	85

Source: Ethnic Diversity results Survey, Statistics Canada, 2003

Civic Participation: Non-Electoral Activity

Contentions about lesser degrees of interest in political issues on the part of minority electors are something that to-date have been the object of generalization rather than empirical tests. Recently released data from the 2003 General Social Survey of Statistics Canada (GSS) may provide some insights however partial into how accurate the notion that minority electors show less interest in political matters. The GSS revealed that allophones (22%) were only slightly less inclined than members of official language communities (25.7%) to search for information on a political issue. While allophones (8.3%) were less likely to contact a newspaper or politician than anglophones (15%) they tend to be more so inclined than francophones (7.3%). Signing petitions and attending public meetings are far less common amongst allophones (14%) than they are for francophone (26%) and anglophone Canadians (30%). As to the issue of attending public meetings, this too was more common amongst Canada's anglophones (23.5%) and francophones (18%) than for allophones (14.3%).

Political Interests: Most Common Factors Cited by Canadians for Low Voter Turnout

A recent survey conducted for the Association for Canadian Studies by the firm Environics provides interesting insight into what factors the population believes contribute most to low voter turnout. The survey conducted in the last week of September 2004 reveals that 41% of Canadians think the main reason for not voting is the view that the vote has no impact. On the basis of language spoken at home, such views are most strongly held by English Canadians, with one-third of allophones making the same observation as did 30% of francophones.

Table 5 – In your opinion, what is the main reason so many Canadians choose not to vote in elections?

	Language Spoken at Home		
	English	French	Other
They believe their vote has no impact	45	30	33
They don't like any of the choices	25	22	17
They are just not interested in politics	20	29	34
They do not find the issues relevant	5	13	6
They do not have the time to go vote	2	4	7

Source: Environics-Association for Canadian Studies, September, 2004

On the basis of immigrant origins it is persons of European descent (44%) who tend to believe that people's votes have no impact is contributing to reduced turnout, while non-European immigrants (35%), who have generally arrived more recently, feel somewhat less than way. Paradoxically, those with higher individual income (40,000 dollars or more) tend to believe that voter impact is at the root of low turnout (45%) whereas amongst those with the lowest income (less than 40,000 dollars) some 28% attribute low turnout to believing the vote has no impact.

Observers of the 2004 federal election have pointed to significant degrees of disaffection on the part of the voters to explain yet a further decline in voter turnout. In a survey conducted by the firm Environics for the Association for Canadian Studies in late July-early August, an attempt was made to determine the degree to which interest in federal politics was on the wane. On this issue – following the federal elections – some 73% of respondents felt that there was no change in their attitude. However, amongst the other respondents, more said their interest increased (19%) than said that it declined (8%).

On the basis of mother tongue nearly one out of five anglophones and allophones said they became more interested in politics after the 2004 federal election, while 7% of anglophones and 14% of allophones surveyed said their interest diminished. Some 73% of anglophones reported no change to their attitude while 63% of allophones expressed similar sentiment. As to francophones, slightly more (15%) said their interest rose after the 2004 contest as opposed to diminishing (11%) with nearly three-quarters declaring that nothing had changed. In the case of immigrants they were more likely, on average, to report rising interest and this was particularly true for the more recently arrived non-European immigrants with some 30% indicating greater interest in politics in the aftermath of the 2004 contest, with 60% declaring no change (9% reported a decline in interest).

As to concerns over low voter turnout, the Environics survey revealed that this is much more prevalent amongst Canadians of English mother tongue (44% saying they are very concerned) than francophones (41%) and allophones (29%). Again, language is unlikely to be the dominant consideration in evaluating concern over declining voter turnout as generation appears to be a significant factor where such preoccupation is manifested. Of those surveyed between the age of 18 and 29, some 35% said they were very concerned about declining voter turnout as opposed to 51% of respondents over the age of 60 that indicate similar concern.

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To view the author's references, please cisit the ACS website at www.acs-aec.ca

Suburban Success

IMMIGRANT AND MINORITY ELECTORAL GAINS IN SUBURBAN TORONTO

ABSTRACT

In the Toronto area, the suburbs now elect more visible minority politicians than the central city. This pattern is not, however, equally manifest at all levels of government, nor among all large minority communities. This essay explores evidence and explanation behind these trends.

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It is fashionable to slag the suburbs. High on the list of alleged transgressions is the charge that suburbia promotes conformity, that its formulaic spatial characteristics reproduce a relentless sameness to all that meets the eye. Yet recent results in the Toronto area's electoral arena paint a very different picture. The most significant electoral gains by immigrant and visible minority candidates are now occurring not in central city, but in suburban constituencies. Could the suburbs be the leading edge in promoting diversity of political representation in Canada?

In this article, we examine this question in the sprawling territory of the Toronto city-region. In the process, the impact of several variables on the ethno-racial profile of elected politicians comes into play. We explore the implications of urban form (suburb or city), immigrant homeland (liberal democratic tradition or not) and level of government (federal, provincial or municipal) on the representation of newcomers and minorities in elected office. Our findings suggest that for the Toronto area, the most significant electoral gains by immigrants and newcomers are occurring in federal and provincial suburban constituencies where candidates of South Asian origin have made impressive electoral breakthroughs.

Toronto in Perspective

Late 20th century global migration has transformed Toronto into "The World in a City" (Anisef and Lanphier, 2003). In 2001, immigrants comprised close to 42% of the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) population of just over 5 million residents (Statistics Canada, 2001. Unless otherwise noted, all statistics in this paper are derived from the 2001 Canadian census.) More than one in every 3 GTA residents that year belonged to a visible minority community. As of 2001, the Toronto city-region had the highest proportion of foreign-born residents of any metropolitan area in North America.

Spatially, the fastest growing immigrant settlement area in the GTA has not been the central city, but the post-war suburbs within the amalgamated City of Toronto and, most notably, the newer edge-city suburbs on the City's periphery (Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997). Geo-politically, this massive swath of territory is most typically referred to as the Greater Toronto Area, as shown in Figure 1 below. The GTA consists of the amalgamated City of Toronto, and its four surrounding two-tier Regional Municipalities of Durham, York, Peel and Halton. These Regional Municipalities are themselves comprised of a total 24 member municipalities, each with its own local council. To locals,

Figure 1 – The Greater Toronto Area

Map created by and reprinted with permission of Professor Philip Coppack, Department of Geography, Ryerson University.

the component parts of the GTA are most often distinguished by their telephone area codes: 416 for the City of Toronto, and 905 for the Regional Municipalities. The GTA population in 2001 of 5,043,340 was divided almost equally between the City of Toronto, and the slightly higher number spread across the 905 area.

Immigration settlement in the GTA is especially pronounced in the City of Toronto, Peel and York Regions where immigrants account for 49.4%, 43.1% and 39.1% of total population respectively. More specifically for the City of Toronto, the greatest foreign-born concentrations are in the post-war suburban areas of Scarborough and North York. In Peel Region the standouts are the edge-city suburban municipalities of Mississauga and Brampton, while in York Region immigrant settlement is highest in the similar vintage municipalities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan (Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997).

By 2001, five GTA municipalities stood out far beyond others for their substantial proportion of visible minority residents. In order they were: Markham (55.5%), City of Toronto (42.8%), Richmond Hill (40.4%) Mississauga (40.3%), and Brampton (40.2%).

Less impressive than the Toronto area's demographic transformation has been our political system's capacity to reflect this diversity in the ranks of elected politicians (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003; Black).

Who Gets Elected in Toronto?

Surprisingly little research has been done on ethno-racial identity and electoral representation, in Canada generally and in Toronto particularly. Such local studies that have been conducted have typically focussed on the central City of Toronto and not the outlying suburbs in the rest of the GTA.

Thus, in their study for the period prior to the most recent round of federal, provincial and municipal elections, Siemiatycki and Saloojee found overwhelming disparities between who lived in the City of Toronto and who was elected to public office there. While visible minorities accounted for almost 50% of the City's population, they held only 11% of Toronto City Council seats, and just 4.5% of the City's seats in both the federal and provincial parliaments. Conversely, with under 30% of the City's population, those of British ethnic ancestry accounted for 44% of City Council seats, 59% of provincial and 64% of federal City of Toronto seats (Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003).

Surprisingly little research has been done on ethno-racial identity and electoral representation, in Canada generally and in Toronto particularly. Such local studies that have been conducted have typically focussed on the central City of Toronto and not the outlying suburbs in the rest of the GTA.

Since that study, residents of the GTA have gone to the polls on three separate occasions – sequentially in provincial (2003), municipal (2003) and federal (2004) elections. The results were a striking mix of continuity and change with respect to ethno-racial representation. Our interest here is comparing the outcome of these elections in the City of Toronto and its four outlying edge city suburbs of Brampton, Mississauga, Markham and Richmond Hill.

Four patterns stand out from the results of the most recent elections across these 5 Toronto area municipalities. First is the significant increase in the number of positions won by minority candidates at both the provincial and federal levels. Second is the fact that all these seats were won in suburban, not central city constituencies. Third is the fact that some minorities fared considerably better than others in electing members of their community. Fourth is the lack of progress and continued lag in minority representation at the municipal level.

Suburban Success

As Table 1 reveals, the 5 municipalities under study here contained a total of 31 seats in the 2003 Ontario provincial election, 35 seats in the newly redistributed constituencies of the 2004 federal election, and 88 municipal council seats in the 2003 local election. There are now, as Table 1 indicates, 13 visible minority politicians representing the GTA's 5 most diverse municipalities in the federal and provincial parliament. This is more than double the total from the previous federal and provincial elections. By contrast, the total of 8 local council seats won across our five municipalities in 2003 is actually a drop from the previous municipal vote.

All thirteen visible minority politicians elected to seats in the federal and provincial parliament represent suburban constituencies. As Table 2 shows, 5 are from Brampton, 2 from Mississauga and 1 from Markham. Less evident from the table is the fact that all 5 seats held in the City of Toronto are located in the post-war suburbs that merged with Toronto in 1998. Of these, 2 are in Scarborough, 2 in Etobicoke and 1 in North York. Significantly no visible minority candidates were elected in the original, central City of Toronto which merged with these post-war suburbs. (Elsewhere in the GTA, beyond our five municipalities of study, another visible minority was elected in a mixed suburban/rural constituency – Canada's first MP of Japanese origin.)

Table 1 – Elected Positions Won by Visible Minority Candidates

	Provincial	Federal	Municipal
Total Seats	32	35	88
Seats Held by Visible Minority	7	6	8
% Seats Held by Visible Minority	21.8%	17.1%	9%

Several additional trends stand out from Table 2. First, Brampton is by far the GTA leader in its visible minority success rate in federal and provincial elections. All five of its federal and provincial visible minority politicians are South Asian. Brampton is thus one of the very few places in Canada where a visible minority is overwhelmingly *over-represented* statistically in elected office. With just under 20% of the City's population, South Asians hold 71% of available federal and provincial seats. Second, it is noteworthy that the City of Toronto's success rate electing visible minorities federally and provincially lags significantly behind both Mississauga's and Markham's. Finally, in none of the five municipalities is the success rate at municipal elections as high as their combined federal and provincial rate. This is, on the face of things, at odds with local governments' claims to being closest and most accessible to citizens.

As Table 3 shows, more than half the visible minority politicians elected in the cities under review are of South Asian origin. (Of the 9 South Asians sitting in the federal and provincial parliaments for Toronto area constituencies, 3 were born abroad and 6 in Canada.) The pre-eminence of South Asians is despite the fact that their population across all five cities is barely 15% of the entire visible minority population here. The Table also reveals that close to one in four visible minority politicians at all three levels of government are women, comparable to the rate for non-visible minority politicians.

Explaining the Patterns

The above data raise a number of significant questions about newcomer and visible minority entry into "the political labour market." Why are success rates greater in the suburbs? Why are they greatest for South Asians? Why are they greater now federally and provincially than municipally? We now explore these questions.

It would appear that the opportunity structure for visible minorities to succeed electorally is greater in the suburbs than central city. This has to do with significant socio-political factors in both places. The core of the City of Toronto has a lower concentration of visible minorities than either the post-war or edge-city suburbs. And its visible minority population is generally less affluent than their counterparts in the suburbs. Both numbers and social class therefore constitute relatively greater barriers in the central city. So too may a political culture that places great status on venerable constituencies in the heart of the city.

Meanwhile the suburbs have seen dramatic visible minority population growth in recent years. There is a spatial residential concentration among members of the same community in the suburbs which is not matched in the central city. This creates a greater critical mass able to support a community candidate. Higher suburban rates of homeownership also correlate with prospects of higher voter turn-out among minorities there. Finally, it would appear that political parties in the Toronto area have made a greater priority of attracting visible minority candidates in the suburbs than central city. In large measure this reflects an instrumental recognition of the importance of the 'ethnic vote' in the suburbs. Additionally, political ambitions and machines appear more entrenched in the heart of the city.

The electoral success of South Asian candidates is striking, especially in comparison to the Chinese community. Among the 13 visible minority politicians elected federally and provincially, 9 are South Asian and 1 is Chinese. This is despite the fact that for the total area under review in this essay, the South Asian population of 442,815 is only marginally greater than the Chinese community's size of 392,225. Several factors stand out as hypotheses worthy of further research in explaining the different outcomes. South Asians come from countries of multiple political parties and regular elections. South Asians are more likely to arrive in Canada with facility in English. And then there is the matter of sheer numbers. In Brampton and Mississauga, South Asians are the largest visible minority group totaling far more members than the Chinese hold in Markham and Richmond Hill where they are the largest visible minority group. Taken together, these are some factors that account for dramatically differing political achievement rates by two different visible minority communities.

Lastly, there is municipal lag to be explained. This runs against much research which has argued that municipal government is more accessible to traditionally underrepresented groups such as women, gays and visible minorities (Trimble, 1995; Thomlinson, 1997; Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2003). It may be that our findings are doubly circumstantial. They may be unique to the Toronto area, and they certainly are here a recent phenomenon of the last round of elections at all three levels of government. Yet even anomalies require explanation.

It is noteworthy, for starters, that incumbency is a far more daunting barrier to newcomers seeking municipal office than federal or provincial positions. Municipal

Table 2 – Seats Held by Visible Minority Candidates by Location & Jurisdiction

	City of Toronto	Brampton	Mississauga	Markham	Richmond Hill
Provincial	3/22	2/3	1/4	1/2	0/1
Federal	2/23	3/4	1/4	0/3	0/1
Municipal	5/45	1/11	0/10	2/13	0/9

Table 3 – Demographics of Elected Visible Minority Politicians

South Asian	Black	Chinese	Korean	Males	Females
11	5	4	1	16	5

politicians hold onto office longer. By way of illustration: across the four edge-city suburbs, the average number of elections won by all federal and provincial incumbents combined was 2.16; for all member of municipal council it was 4. Turnover is thus far more rapid among federal and provincial politicians than among their municipal counterparts. The absence of parliamentary government and political parties locally goes a long way to explaining the difference. It may also be that federal and provincial offices are more compelling draws on the political aspirations of prospective minority candidates.

What Next?

If the experience in the Toronto area is anything to judge by, the suburbs may lead the way in promoting greater electoral equity in Canada. For all the transgressions laid against suburbia by its critics, it would certainly go against the script for suburbs to forge a greater diversity and inclusion in our political system. Yet the geography of political change may well be most robust today in the suburbs. What impact greater numbers of suburban elected officials from newcomer and minority communities will have on public discourse and policy will make for interesting study.

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LES ENJEUX, LES QUESTIONS ET LES OBSTACLES

De la représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article résume deux chapitres de l'avis que le Conseil des relations interculturelles (CRI) a rendu public en mars 2002 et intitulé « Pour une démocratie inclusive pouvoir politique et représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle »[1] Il présente les questions et les enjeux relatifs à la problématique de la représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle. Il examine ensuite les obstacles à la représentation politique des minorités ethnoculturelles, puis termine en proposant des modalités et des pistes d'action susceptibles de remédier au déficit de représentation constaté.

La représentation politique[2] est la capacité pour un État de créer un espace qui permette à tout citoyen, quels que soient sa condition sociale, son sexe ou son origine, de participer et d'être représenté aux processus de délibération et de décision, en tenant compte des intérêts à la fois collectifs et particuliers. La représentation politique des membres des minorités ethnoculturelles et visibles constitue un enjeu majeur pour les États modernes. Le Québec se voit, lui aussi, interpellé par cette problématique notamment au sommet des structures publiques incarnées par les appareils politique et administratif de l'État.

Le présent article résume deux chapitres de l'avis que le Conseil des relations interculturelles (CRI) a rendu public en mars 2002 et intitulé « Pour une démocratie inclusive pouvoir politique et représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle »[3] Il présente les questions et les enjeux relatifs à la problématique de la représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle. Il examine ensuite les obstacles à la représentation politique des minorités ethnoculturelles, puis termine en proposant des modalités et des pistes d'action susceptibles de remédier au déficit de représentation constaté.

Dans son avis le CRI avait aussi abordé la représentation de la diversité sous l'angle quantitatif, en comparant la proportion des élus ou des candidats issus des minorités ethnoculturelles à leur taux de présence dans la population, globalement ou par circonscription électorale. Le constat global de sous-représentation qui a été fait avec les données alors disponibles est toujours valable en 2005 selon l'avis des chercheurs que le CRI avait alors consulté. Cette analyse quantitative n'est pas reprise ici.

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Les enjeux

Selon les données du Recensement de 2001, environ 15 % de la population québécoise est d'origine autre que française, britannique, canadienne ou autochtone. La société québécoise étant donc une société de plus en plus diversifiée, ses institutions politiques reflètent-elles la diversité ethnoculturelle de sa population ?

Force est de constater que les minorités ethnoculturelles, et plus particulièrement les minorités visibles, sont peu présentes aux postes décisionnels au sein des instances politiques et administratives des secteurs publics. Cela malgré le postulat que le Québec se définit comme une société ouverte aux apports multiples des autres cultures dans le respect des valeurs démocratiques fondamentales. Ce déficit de représentation constitue un frein important au plein exercice de la citoyenneté.

Ce qui renvoie à la notion même de la représentation démocratique. En effet, s'il est admis que dans les sociétés modernes la démocratie implique que les citoyens participent aux décisions affectant l'ensemble du groupe par l'entremise de leurs représentants, cette représentation ou ce mandat est essentiellement basé sur quatre éléments : la division du territoire, la représentation de la population locale, la représentation des intérêts nationaux et la représentation de parti ou la fidélité partisane. Ces quatre éléments résument la substance du mandat démocratique classique.

L'enjeu principal de la représentation politique et institutionnelle de la diversité renvoie au fait qu'il y a encore des citoyens de seconde zone qui n'exercent pas dans les faits les droits qui leur sont conférés. Des formes d'exclusion se reproduisent et se renouvellent au sein des partis comme au sein des différentes instances gouvernementales.

On peut aussi envisager la représentation politique des minorités ethnoculturelles selon le principe d'égalité de *fait* entre les citoyens. Plus clairement, il s'agit d'expliquer le principe du

pluralisme qui exige d'ouvrir l'accès, en toute égalité, des membres de minorités aux institutions d'une société. Ce principe vise, plus généralement, à renforcer l'égalité entre les citoyens à travers leurs particularités mêmes.

Il semble qu'il faille aussi s'appuyer sur le *principe de la démocratie représentative*[4] pour cerner une telle question et envisager des actions pour éviter et corriger des situations de sous-représentation dans le domaine du pouvoir politique. La faible représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle dans le domaine du pouvoir politique apparaît comme une anomalie et, comme le soulève Michèle Riot-Sarcey[5] : « Serait-ce le symptôme révélateur du dysfonctionnement d'une démocratie fondée sur une représentativité singulièrement réductrice ? »

Les questions soulevées

Si des interventions en faveur de la représentation politique adéquate de la diversité ethnoculturelle sont nécessaires, cela implique qu'il y ait une prise en compte de l'origine ethnique. Comment concilier la conception classique du mandat démocratique avec un projet de représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle ? Autrement dit, en fonction de quel mandat agiront ces élus issus des minorités ethnoculturelles ? Entre la représentation d'un territoire donné, d'un parti, des électeurs

Au Canada les nombreux travaux et débats ayant traité de la question de la participation et de la représentation politique des minoritaires ont laissé entrevoir deux courants. Le premier courant, dit *assimilationniste,* a longtemps associé la durée de résidence au pays aux taux de participation et d'engagement politiques. Pour sa part, le modèle *communautariste* lie l'existence de comportements politiques différents à l'appartenance ethnique et aux particularités générationnelles.

Mais, par-delà leurs différences, ces deux courants préconisent l'intégration des minorités ethnoculturelles et une participation accrue de ces dernières au sein des structures décisionnelles des partis politiques et des institutions parlementaires. Cette participation et cette représentation accrue soulèvent essentiellement trois questions : Premièrement, eu égard au nombre limité de postes électifs à pourvoir, la représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle doit-elle se faire sur un mode de représentation spécifique[6] ou plutôt sur un mode de représentation globale ?

Deuxièmement, l'intervention favorisant la représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle peut-elle, et si oui jusqu'à quel point, s'inspirer de précédents en matière d'efforts d'affirmation des minorités face à la majorité ? Troisièmement, les mécanismes étatiques de la représentation démocratique sont-ils, au Québec, adaptés à une participation politique des minorités ethnoculturelles ?

À la première question le CRI répond que l'intégration des minorités et leur pleine participation citoyenne se situent ailleurs que dans la perspective d'une représentation de chaque groupe ou sous-groupe. Elle se trouve plutôt dans une représentation politique globale de la diversité ethnoculturelle, afin que les institutions soient, de façon générale et à un degré d'approximation raisonnable, à l'image de la population du Québec.

À la seconde question le CRI répond que l'exemple de l'histoire de la condition des femmes est éclairant. D'abord tenues à l'écart durant plusieurs siècles, puis tenues en minorité dans la sphère politique, leur expérience est probante pour voir que l'amélioration de leur représentativité a été possible même s'il reste beaucoup à faire.

À la troisième le CRI appui l'affirmation à l'effet que, « l'accès des membres des minorités aux instances politiques et aux institutions publiques est indissociable de la refonte des mécanismes de la représentation démocratique pour permettre une plus grande participation civique des individus issus des minorités »[7].

Ces pratiques ont fortement contribué à ralentir l'intégration politique des minorités visibles et de certaines minorités ethnoculturelles, en retardant leur établissement au Canada puis en limitant leur participation politique. Ces pratiques ont aussi contribué à enfermer le discours et les enjeux politiques à l'intérieur d'une vision hégémonique marquée par l'importance accordée à la question des relations entre Français et Britanniques.

Les obstacles

L'objet de cette section est de formuler un portrait concis des différents obstacles qui empêchent une meilleure représentation politique de la diversité ethnoculturelle.

Les obstacles historiques

Ce sont des obstacles liés à l'histoire des politiques d'immigration ainsi que l'évolution des attitudes propres à la culture politique canadienne et québécoise. D'abord, la faible présence des minorités ethnoculturelles dans les institutions politiques et publiques est liée à la faible proportion que représentent ces groupes par rapport à l'ensemble de la population.

En effet, la politique d'immigration canadienne a longtemps été ouvertement restrictive et *racialement* discriminatoire. Cette pratique discriminatoire s'est étalée sur une période allant à peu près de 1860 à 1960, avec pour conséquence une sévère atteinte à la croissance des minorités visibles et de certaines minorités ethnoculturelles dont le statut politique s'est retrouvé précarisé.

Ces pratiques ont fortement contribué à ralentir l'intégration politique des minorités visibles et de certaines minorités ethnoculturelles, en retardant leur établissement au Canada puis en limitant leur participation politique.

Ces pratiques ont aussi contribué à enfermer le discours et les enjeux politiques à l'intérieur d'une vision hégémonique marquée par l'importance accordée à la question des relations entre Français et Britanniques.

Les obstacles découlant des stéréotypes

Ces perceptions et attitudes constituent ce que nous avons qualifié d'« obstacles culturels ». Elles ont trait aux attitudes de certains secteurs de la population québécoise face aux minorités ethnoculturelles et plus particulièrement face aux minorités visibles, et à la question de leur sous-représentation

Parmi celles-là, nous retrouvons entre autres, ce que certains élus membres de minorités ethnoculturelles, rencontrés dans le cadre d'une consultation du CRI[8], ont appelé « des rigidités culturelles ». Ces derniers veulent, par ce vocable, exprimer ce qu'ils perçoivent comme un manque d'ouverture de certains secteurs de la société québécoise à l'endroit surtout des minorités visibles.

Bien que leurs perceptions se rejoignent sur l'existence de difficultés particulières rencontrées par les membres de minorités ethnoculturelles et visibles, les répondants ont exprimé des visions différentes quant à la nature de ces obstacles. Pour une minorité d'élus rencontrés, ces obstacles proviennent d'abord de l'attitude même des membres des minorités ethnoculturelles et visibles. Selon ceux-ci, « les communautés ethniques pensent que la politique est réservée aux Québécois de vieille souche », « elles n'osent pas » et elles démontrent « des limites dans la connaissance des pratiques politiques » ainsi qu'un manque de solidarité et d'organisation en vue de la constitution de réseaux économiques et politiques.

D'autres évoquent le manque d'ouverture de la société à l'égard des minorités ethnoculturelles et des minorités visibles ; ils parlent des « rigidités culturelles » à Montréal et au Québec en général, qui créent une peur de l'autre et des différences, même si quelques améliorations en cette matière sont observables.

Concernant les attitudes face à la sous-représentation politique des minorités visibles, un sondage de l'Institut de recherche en politiques publiques (IRPP, 2000) indique qu'une majorité (50,3 %)[9] de Québécois ne considèrent pas problématique la sous-représentation des minorités visibles aux Communes. Même si cette proportion est moins grande que celle de l'Ontario et des régions des Prairies, une telle indifférence à l'égard du problème de la sous-représentation des minorités visibles tend à renforcer l'idée selon laquelle il n'y a pas d'urgence à intervenir en cette matière.

D'autres obstacles relatifs, cette fois, aux attitudes mêmes des membres des minorités ethnoculturelles ont été évoqués par les élus, candidats et leaders d'origine ethnoculturelle rencontrés :

- la méconnaissance de la langue et des institutions de la part de certains membres des minorités ethnoculturelles ;
- le manque d'intérêt de certains membres des minorités ethnoculturelles à l'égard des enjeux socio-politiques généraux ;
- la faible participation des minorités visibles au processus de représentation.

Les obstacles liés au statut économique

Les conditions socio-économiques précaires de certaines minorités ethnoculturelles et plus particulièrement celles des minorités visibles constituent en soi un obstacle majeur à leur représentation politique. À cet effet, plusieurs répondants de la consultation du Conseil expliquent, en partie, la sous-représentation politique des minorités visibles par la faiblesse de leur assise économique et de leurs moyens financiers. Cette précarité ne favoriserait pas la constitution de forces politiques et économiques qui assureraient la défense de leurs intérêts et qui leur ouvriraient de meilleures perspectives.

Partout au Canada, d'un recensement à l'autre les données indiquent que le rapport emploi/population est toujours plus bas pour les membres des minorités visibles.

Les données indiquent que même lorsqu'ils sont actifs sur le marché du travail, les membres des minorités visibles tirent des revenus moins élevés de l'emploi qu'ils occupent que l'ensemble de la population. Une proportion plus élevée des minorités visibles est par ailleurs touchée par la pauvreté. Les personnes issues des minorités visibles n'arrivent que difficilement à accéder à des postes supérieurs de gestion.

Les obstacles provenant des partis politiques

Certains obstacles structurels à la représentation politique des minorités ethnoculturelles demeurent au sein des partis politiques au Québec :

- indifférence du processus de désignation des candidats et des chefs de partis concernant la représentation politique des minorités ethnoculturelles ;
- très faible intégration des minorités aux différents niveaux de l'appareil et de la direction des partis ;
- faible intégration des membres d'origine ethnoculturelle minoritaire au sein des structures partisanes des régions ;
- insuffisance des mécanismes susceptibles d'assurer l'ouverture et le renouvellement des partis ;
- discipline de parti trop serrée, qui n'encourage pas les élus ou candidats d'origines ethnoculturelles minoritaires à promouvoir les dossiers relatifs à la situation des minorités ethnoculturelles au Québec ;
- instrumentalisation des candidats d'origines ethnoculturelles minoritaires dans le but de rejoindre les électeurs de leurs communautés (*ethnicisme*) ;
- attitude des leaders de partis, qui ne promeuvent pas la question de représentation politique des minorités comme enjeu politique important ;
- absence de mesures concrètes visant à assurer une représentation équitable des minorités ethnoculturelles dans les associations locales et nationales ;
- faiblesse ou absence d'instances statutaires dévouées à la question de la diversité ethnoculturelle ;
- absence de politiques officielles de recrutement et de formation des personnes issues des minorités ethnoculturelles.

4 Propositions pour améliorer la représentation

Deux types de mesures ont été proposés afin de corriger la sous-représentation des minorités ethnoculturelles et visibles lors de consultations menées par le Conseil.

Celles incitatives ou de support, comme les suivantes :

- Organiser des campagnes de sensibilisation auprès des communautés sur l'importance de la participation et de la représentation politique ;
- Mettre en place un fonds pour favoriser et soutenir la participation des candidats issus des groupes cibles en politique ;
- Mettre en place des moyens pour favoriser la participation des membres des minorités ethnoculturelles et visibles au sein des associations de comtés des partis ;
- Assurer le remboursement (par les partis) des dépenses liées aux campagnes électorales.

Ou celles coercitives et législatives comme celles-ci :

- Mettre en place un système de quotas pour forcer les partis à être représentatifs de la diversité ethnoculturelle de la société ;
- Mettre en place un système de désignation de sièges réservés pour les membres des minorités ethnoculturelles et visibles.

Le CRI préconise, pour le moment des mesures volontaires de type incitatif et de support. Toutefois, si elles ne portent pas fruits, il faudra penser ultérieurement à proposer des mesures coercitives pour faire évoluer positivement et rapidement la situation.

De plus, le CRI croit que l'État devrait affirmer son engagement par une déclaration solennelle en faveur d'une représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle dans les sphères de délibération et de prise de décision. Le Conseil croit également que la société dans son ensemble doit être sensibilisée à la question puisque la participation et la représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle dans les institutions s'inscrivent dans la perspective d'un approfondissement substantiel du caractère pluraliste de la démocratie québécoise.

Le débat actuel sur la révision du système électoral semble propice pour soulever les problèmes de représentation politique équitable en particulier celle des minorités ethnoculturelles. Toute modification du système électoral devrait comporter parmi ses objectifs une meilleure représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle.

Le Conseil croit que le système de représentation proportionnelle est une voie à explorer. Ce système permettrait probablement une meilleure représentation des minoritaires surtout parle biais du scrutin de liste. En effet les États membres de l'Union européenne, qui comptent la plus forte représentation de femmes parlementaires (Suède, Finlande, Danemark, Pays-bas), ont tous des systèmes proportionnels.

C'est sans doute dans un système proportionnel que les minorités ethnoculturelles auraient le plus de chances d'accroître leur représentation en considérant, bien entendu, que les partis politiques assument leur responsabilité de promotion des candidatures des personnes appartenant aux groupes cibles en vue d'une représentation politique plus équitable et plus conforme à la diversité ethnoculturelle de la société.

Conclusion

Toute société a avantage à intégrer en son sein l'ensemble de ses éléments, de manière à ce qu'il n'y ait pas de citoyens de seconde zone. Pour favoriser la participation de la diversité ethnoculturelle *aux* processus décisionnels, il faut que tous aient le sentiment de faire partie de la société et des projets que celle-ci génère.

Pour qu'advienne ou se maintienne un tel sentiment d'appartenance, il importe que toute personne puisse voir refléter son existence dans les instances publiques ou politiques. Voilà donc pourquoi le Conseil pense qu'il importe de tout mettre en œuvre au chapitre de la représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle. Car c'est grâce à cette présence visible, inspirante ou rassurante, à laquelle on peut s'identifier, que la participation et la représentation démocratiques du plus grand nombre de citoyens pourront croître et se maintenir à un niveau satisfaisant.

Notes

[1] Conseil des relations interculturelles, *Pour une démocratie inclusive – pouvoir politique et représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle,* mars 2002-79p.

[2] Cette définition a été élaborée et mise au point par les membres du Conseil lors de leurs débats en 2002.

[3] Conseil des relations interculturelles, *Pour une démocratie inclusive – pouvoir politique et représentation de la diversité ethnoculturelle,* mars 2002-79p.

[4] RIOT-SARCEY, M. (1994), mentionne que la notion de démocratie représentative est une combinaison dont on ne retient que le premier mot en faisant abstraction du deuxième.

[5] RIOT-SARCEY, M. (1994), *Démocratie et représentation,* Actes du Colloque d'Albi. Centre culturel de l'Albigeois.

[6] La représentation spécifique répond à l'idée que chaque groupe ou sous-groupe ait son représentant.

[7] MARHRAOUI, A., *Représentation politique et institutionnelle des minorités ethnoculturelles au Québec,* Bulletin du Conseil des relations interculturelles, volume 1, numéro 4, janvier 2002. (L'auteur est doctorant en sociologie et chercheur au Centre de recherche sur l'immigration, l'ethnicité et la citoyenneté (CRIEC), UQÀM).

[8] Dans le cadre de la consultation menée par le Conseil des relations interculturelles (CRI) en préparation de l'avis de 2002, des élus, des candidats, d'origine ethnoculturelle minoritaire (des niveaux fédéral, provincial, municipal), des leaders des communautés du Québec ainsi que des représentants du DGE du Québec et du Canada ont accepté de participer aux entrevues. Au total, 29 personnes ont été rencontrées. Le thème de l'enquête a porté essentiellement sur la représentation des minorités ethnoculturelles en politique et au sein des fonctions publiques provinciale et fédérale. Il est évident que le nombre peu élevé des répondants à l'enquête ne se prête pas à une analyse quantitative, d'où le caractère qualitatif que revêt celle-ci.

[9] Ce pourcentage représente une majorité déclarée excluant les indécis et ceux qui ne se prononcent pas.

ENCOURAGING DEMOCRACY

ABSTRACT

In 2004, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers – a community agency with a wide range of programs and services for immigrants and refugees – undertook an extensive project to have more immigrants vote and to have more non-immigrants make issues relevant to the lives of immigrants part of their voting decisions during three election campaigns. This article outlines the various steps that were taken to this end.

JIM GURNETT

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During the year 2004 Albertans had the opportunity to vote in three elections within a six-month period. Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers was involved in a variety of initiatives to encourage and support immigrant participation in these events. Many newcomers to Canada are people who have been at least deeply interested in politics before migration, and often have been politically active in countries from which they have come. Many also understand how important participation is for democracy to be healthy and they are very interested in Canadian politics, following issues and debates carefully.

A number of obstacles challenge political involvement, however. The pressing economic needs that require working long hours and having limited financial resources are significant barriers. Lack of English proficiency can lead to discomfort taking part in meetings or being able to read materials. Different cultural understanding, even about basic things such as time, can keep immigrants at a distance from political activity. Suspicion about possible implications of being identified as politically active also concerns some newer immigrants. Some are worried that if they are identified as having worked on a campaign for a certain candidate who is unsuccessful they may be "punished" by the winner later. Even distrust about the secrecy of actually voting may discourage some from casting a ballot. And for some, something as basic as not knowing where to get information to determine whether a person is eligible to vote can exclude.

Working in a community agency involved with immigrants, my own varied involvement with democratic activity through partisan politics is known to many. As a result it is a common occurrence for people who are around our locations to want to "talk politics" with me. Our agency has clear policies about partisan politics that all staff know and that mean we do not support or criticize on a partisan basis, but we do strongly encourage democratic participation.

Late in 2003 the certainty of a federal election and the scheduled regular municipal elections meant it was certain there would be at least two elections. Many of us felt a provincial election was also probable. From many conversations it was clear a lot of immigrants were keen to be involved in these elections. As a first step, an open invitation was extended to people who wanted to begin meeting as an informal group to talk about how these elections could be used in a positive way. Four goals were identified through these meetings:

1) Increase the low percentage of immigrants who voted at all,
2) Ensure that as immigrants prepared to vote they did so with good information,
3) Have issues relevant to the lives of immigrants addressed by candidates during the campaign, and
4) Expand the awareness of non-immigrant voters about issues important to immigrants and have them express to candidates that stands on these issues would influence their voting decisions.

These goals created an ambitious agenda but there was a lot of enthusiasm and meetings were attended by people who wanted to see things happen. Having no resources to support activity, difficult decisions had to be made. Early in the spring before the federal election was called, invitations were extended to candidates from the Liberal, Conservative and New Democratic Parties to take part in a forum. David Kilgour (Liberal), Rahim Jaffer (Conservative) and Malcolm Azania (New Democrat) agreed to take part. They were not all candidates in the same riding. Our goal was a forum on the issues that would be of interest to the whole city. These were candidates we felt

had strong public profiles and good understanding of immigrant issues. A date and convenient location were selected, gambling on the probable election date but with the decision to go forward whether we were in an official campaign period or not.

We then worked to develop two different leaflets. One was an introduction to voting written with immigrants in mind. It answered many of the issues leaders from ethnocultural communities felt were common to many people and had phone numbers and websites for many kinds of additional information, including the political parties. The other was a checklist of questions on issues important to immigrants that could be used as a guide to compare and evaluate candidates. These leaflets were provided to many community agencies for distribution in addition to distribution through our own organization, and were available for downloading at our website.

"Issues important to immigrants" was a topic that was much discussed and the decision was to include a range of economic issues such as income and housing that have a disproportionate affect on the lives of many immigrants even though they are not specifically issues related to people just because they are immigrants.

Staff at our organization were encouraged to invite people to think and talk about the election once the campaign got underway. The agency has a range of programs that offer programs in English as a Second Language and employment. In many of the classes taking place teachers brought in articles and material from candidates and discussed it. Some set up sample polling places so people could actually experience what going to vote would be like. Areas were provided at our service locations for pamphlets from any candidate.

To extend awareness we issued press releases explaining what we were doing and there was quite a bit of media interest. A number of stories were done interviewing immigrants about voting, the issues that mattered to them, and related topics. The forum was well covered by media and reached many more people. There was a real sense of excitement in the hall where the forum took place and as soon as the opening comments by each candidate finished there was a long line at the microphone of people eager to ask questions.

The final aspect of our work locally was that on election day several staff used part of their day to drive people to polls who did not have their own transportation. We do not have any way to know how many more people voted than would have voted without these activities, nor how many people might have made more informed decisions or included a candidate's stand on immigration issues as part of their decision on how to vote, but a few people did indicate they had done so.

We also know that a number of people became very interested in politics and made appointments to meet with various candidates and in several cases decided to get involved in various individual campaigns working for different parties. Some even organized small meetings of members of their ethnic communities with a particular candidate in whom they were interested.

Because the municipal election was the most accessible, with many candidates, a number of politically keen people from ethnocultural communities became quite involved in campaigns. In at least two cases, individuals, with their deepened understanding of the process, are already talking about running as school board candidates in the next election. Because many immigrants are finding difficulties with schools for their children this is an aspect of politics where they see a clear need for people in office who understand the issues.

Beyond Edmonton, our agency participated with about 25 other organizations across the country in developing an open letter to all the party leaders on the key issue of internationally-educated professionals and their employment in licensed professions. We also provided our leaflets to immigrant serving agencies in the rest of Alberta through the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies and to the national website of Citizens for Public Justice. We shared our leaflets and distributed the leaflets of the One Woman One Vote campaign of the YWCA in each election as well.

The day after the election there were people dropping by my office to tell me we needed to get to work on the municipal election. And get to work we did. For the municipal election we again developed two leaflets similar to those from the federal election but with relevant information. Because the municipal elections included mayor, city council and school board, and the boundaries for different offices differed, there was a demand for a lot of assistance from people wanting to determine which candidates they should learn about. We did not host a forum during the municipal election.

Because the municipal election was the most accessible, with many candidates, a number of politically keen people from ethnocultural communities became quite involved in campaigns. In at least two cases, individuals, with their deepened understanding of the process, are already talking about running as school board candidates in the next election. Because many immigrants are finding difficulties with schools for their children this is an aspect of politics where they see a clear need for people in office who understand the issues. They have the confidence they know how a campaign works now, and they see the potential of being elected and having a

continuing opportunity to bring their perspectives to the development of public policy.

As the municipal campaign was underway a provincial election was called. By this time we were becoming "expert" at what we were doing. We moved quickly to identify candidates for a forum, again looking for candidates with high profiles and some likelihood of knowing issues most relevant to immigrants. The Progressive Conservative participant was a cabinet minister with a long connection to multiculturalism in Alberta, Gene Zwozdesky. The Liberal candidate was the Deputy Leader of the party, representing a constituency with a very diverse demographic, Laurie Blakeman. And the New Democrats were represented by a former leader, Ray Martin.

In seeking to get the participants we wanted we agreed to an afternoon forum and the attendance was poorer than for the federal campaign as a result. Some of the candidates indicated in the brief period of the campaign (provincial campaigns in Alberta are only 28 days) they could not afford to commit to an evening event that did not relate to their own constituency. We also received less media coverage for this forum than had been the case in the federal campaign. We did, however, support some excellent media coverage of the experience of immigrants and the election, including an excellent panel discussion with several immigrant women on the local CBC Radio station.

For the third time we produced companion leaflets, one to focus voter attention on relevant issues and one to support immigrant new voters being familiar with the processes and rules. Distribution was again substantial.

And so, as the year ended, we could look back on having made a small contribution to moving forward with our four goals from the spring. We do not have explicit measures of this contribution – how many more people voted or voted in a more informed way as a result of any of our activities. But we have received a great deal of informal feedback that one or another of our activities was useful to someone. Journalists who covered aspects of our focus on democracy and who spoke with immigrants were impressed at how thoughtful and knowledgeable many new voters were and how clearly they valued and appreciated the opportunity to be politically active. And the stories that presented these things have contributed to people in the dominant culture being better informed and having a more complete understanding of the lives of newcomers.

The success of what we did depended largely on the enthusiasm and commitment of many staff of the agency and of volunteers from ethnic communities who were generous in giving their time. The costs of all we did were quite small in dollars, but we believe we have heard clearly that immigrants want to be involved in Canada's electoral process and will make good use of any opportunities that are provided.

GUESS WHO'S RUNNING FOR OFFICE?

Visible Minority Representation in the 2004 Canadian Election

ABSTRACT

The 2004 election saw more visible minority candidates, and more visible minorities elected, than ever before. This article describes the factors that have contributed to increasing levels of visible minority representation in Canadian national politics. Three factors in particular – the general rules and norms of citizenship, the characteristics and location of particular ethnic groups, and the features of the electoral system – are key to understanding this trend.

For a variety of reasons, visible ethnic minorities have long been absent or notably underrepresented in the legislatures of the world's established democracies. Recently though, things have begun to change. Visible minorities have not yet made spectacular gains towards more equitable political representation, but notable improvements are apparent in many countries. In this article, I outline an analytical model that is useful for understanding patterns of visible minority representation across different political systems. I then apply the model to Canada. I describe the processes that have led to increased levels of minority representation witnessed at the 2004 federal election, and I draw brief comparisons between minority representation within Canada – at both the national and local levels – and other established democracies.

Political Opportunity Structure for Visible Minority Representation

To assess the capacity for visible minority representation, it is helpful to draw upon the concept of *political opportunity structures.* This concept, initially developed in the context of research on social movements, denotes the degree of openness or accessibility of a given political system for movement initiators. In a very influential study, Herbert Kitschelt describes political opportunity structures as "specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others."[1]

Here, I postulate three broad factors whose configuration is expected to influence political opportunity structures for visible minority representation. The first of these is the particular citizenship regime within a country. For example, in countries where newcomers access voting rights very quickly, and where minorities are encouraged to retain their cultural distinctiveness, they should be more likely to mobilize and achieve political representation as a group. Another important consideration is the principal source of immigration, and the historical relationship between receiving and sending societies. For example, post-colonial minorities may be subject to old colonial stereotypes, and may be viewed by the majority population and by party leaders as less qualified to participate in the task of government. Another important element of a *citizenship regime* is the extent to which it produces equal social and economic rights among all members. Where large portions of the ethnic minority in a country are unemployed and segmented within the labour force and housing market, if they are poor, or lacking in basic educational and health services, they are less likely to enjoy the resources necessary to achieve political representation.

The second element incorporates the different *institutional features* observed across and within countries. Electoral rules, the openness of the candidate nomination process, and the degree of party competition all have significant effects on the level of representation for visible minorities. Finally, the *interest constellations* of ethnic groups from locale to locale play a key role in determining whether ethnic minorities will be selected as candidates in competitive ridings, and whether they will win seats. Ethnic groups may be especially influential if their spatial location corresponds with electoral boundaries, if they have a strong social network and can be mobilized to vote as a bloc, and if they are located in a competitive constituency where they can deliver seats for one party at the expense of another.

As the name implies, political opportunity structures emphasize the exogenous conditions for ethnic minority representation, in contrast to actor-centred theories of mobilization and electoral

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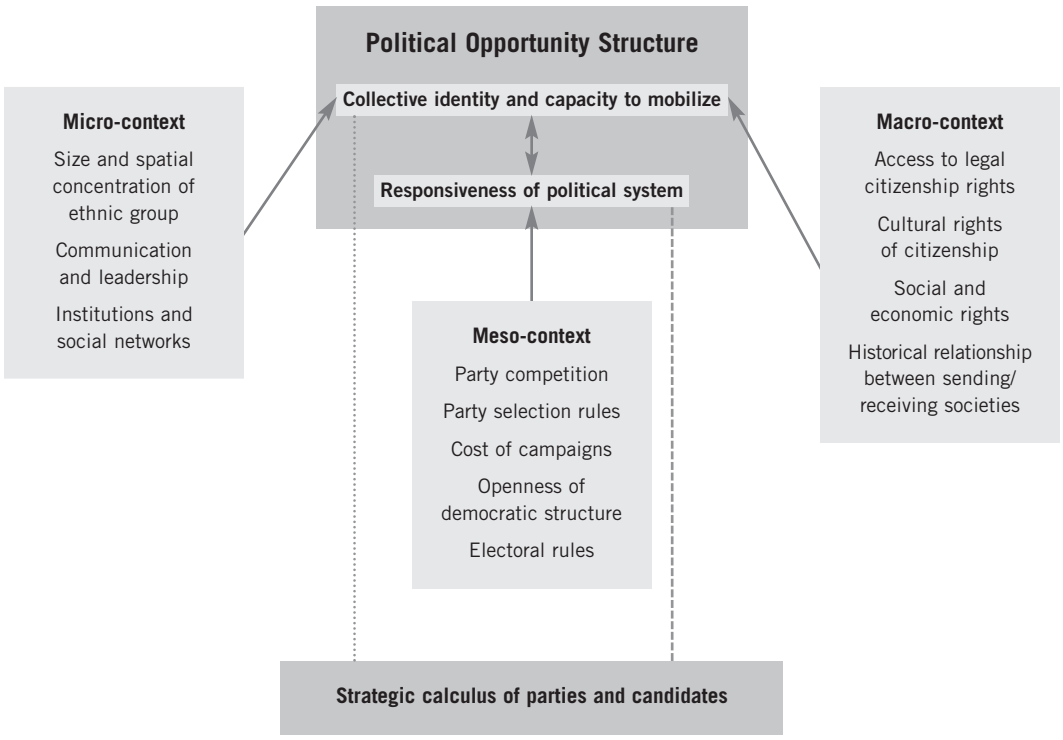
Figure 1 – Political Opportunity Structure for Visible Minority Representation



success.[2] In this study, I extend the model to consider how the actions of individual candidates (whether visible minorities or non-minorities) are shaped by the political opportunity structure, and how their actions may in turn serve to mobilize voters. To some extent, of course, parties use ethnic candidates instrumentally as part of vote-winning strategy. But from an actor-centred perspective, it is clear that candidates themselves use ethnicity in a highly selective and entrepreneurial fashion in mobilizing support from minority and/or majority voters.[3] Within this model, the political opportunity structure shapes the *electoral strategies* of candidates who may themselves be visible minorities, or who are non-minorities running in an area with a large minority population. The model is presented in Figure 1.

Visible Minority Representation in Canada

Canada is a country of significant immigration, with the world's highest per capita rate of naturalizations: about 6,700 new citizenships per million people each year. In a given year, this means the admission of approximately 200,000 to 250,000 new Canadians. Visible minorities represent more than 80% of all newcomers arriving in Canada. Currently, 18% of the total population of Canada is foreign-born, while approximately 13.4% identify as visible minorities. Statistics Canada projects that by 2017, roughly one in five persons living in Canada will be a visible minority, and in cities like Toronto, the number will be more than one in two.[4] In addition, Canada makes it clear that cultural diversity is welcomed and supported, through funding for cultural activities, maintenance of heritage languages, and significant employment equity standards.

Is all this ethnic diversity reflected in Canada's elected and governing bodies? The answer depends on where we look. Visible minority representation in Canadian national politics has increased steadily over the past two decades. In the current House of Commons, visible minorities occupy 20 of 308 (6.5%) seats, up from five in 1988, 13 in 1993, and 19 in 1997.[5] Two of the visible minorities elected to Parliament serve as cabinet ministers.[6] And Canada's Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, is a visible minority woman. While still under-represented at this level, visible minorities are doing slightly better (in proportional terms) than women, who account for just 21.1% of members of Parliament while they make up 52% of the population. Foreign-born Canadians are also well represented, holding 14% of seats.[7]

Surprisingly, visible minorities are far less numerous in local politics in Canada. Most notably, this is the case in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, Canada's three most multicultural cities. In Toronto, for example, just 11.1% of seats on city council are held by visible minorities, though 36.8% of the population in the metropolitan area identify as visible minorities.[8] A number of world cities do far better than Canadian cities at producing ethnically representative governing councils, including many of the larger cities in Britain, Belgium, and Denmark. The low level of representation of visible minorities in Canada's cities is puzzling. It is generally assumed that local politics is more accessible to groups such as women and minorities. Factors such as smaller electoral districts, cheaper electoral campaigns, a more flexible party structure, and residential concentration among some ethnic groups, are assumed to make it easier for members

of disadvantaged groups to get elected. Yet these features do not appear to have helped visible minorities achieve anything close to proportional representation in Canada's largest immigrant-receiving cities. In fact, the significantly stronger representation of visible minorities in Canadian national politics flies in the face of these arguments.

Canada's citizenship regime

Regardless of their country of origin, immigrants to Canada acquire voting rights as soon as they become citizens, after three consecutive years of legal residence in Canada.[9] This makes access to voting rights for newcomers to Canada more open than in any European country, where foreigners may wait as long as 12 years for nationality and national voting rights. While Canada admits a relatively high number of refugees and family-class immigrants, the bulk of newcomers are economic migrants, who have been selected on the basis of their education and employment skills, as well as their competency in at least one of Canada's official languages. These migrants are expected to move into good paying jobs relatively quickly, and are seen as vital to Canada's economic growth. On average, Canada's newcomers enjoy higher levels of employment and wealth compared to newcomers in most European countries, and compared to visible minorities in the United States. These resources can be expected to ease the path to political involvement. In addition, Canada is formally a multicultural polity, where the constitution and various national policies provide special protection for linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity. If an open and welcoming citizenship regime were the key to opportunities for visible minority representation, then Canada should have a strong record at every level. Yet this is not the case.

The electoral system and strategic incentives for mobilizing ethnic minority voters

There are a number of factors that account for the relatively stronger representation of visible minorities in national, compared to local politics. Where they are densely concentrated, electoral rules and nomination procedures at the national level produce strong incentives for parties and individual candidates to mobilize visible minority voters. This same configuration of incentives is missing at the local level, where parties play a minimal role in the electoral process.

Candidates for national election run in single member districts (SMD), and are typically selected through a local nomination contest, in which members of the party's local riding association cast ballots on who should be the party's candidate for that riding. Incumbents enjoy a strong advantage in these contests, and in most cases face no serious challengers. However, in open ridings the nomination is hotly contested. This candidate selection procedure leads parties to engage in mass recruitment drives to sign up as many new party members as possible, with each wing of a party trying to recruit members to support their nominee. It is common for nominees in these contests to focus on recruiting party members within ethnic communities – especially communities with tightly knit social networks, where it is easier to mobilize and turn out large numbers of supporters on nomination day.

This strategy is facilitated by party rules that allow legally resident non-citizens to become party members, and to vote in the candidate selection process. Party membership levels are usually highest in those ridings with the largest visible minority populations. It is not unusual, in such ridings, to find that 75% or more of new party members signed up by nominees are visible minorities. This is typical in both the Liberal and Conservative parties, and whether or not the nominee him or herself is a visible minority.[10] This candidate selection process provides ample opportunity for visible minority mobilization and influence within political parties. Yet it can also produce a certain degree of manipulation by party elites and ethnic power brokers. Typical practices of nominees include hiring people within the ethnic community to sign up members, delivering busloads of instant party members from mosques, temples and other ethnic/religious centres, and paying the dues of new members. Nomination battles are internal party matters and as such, there has often been little oversight of these practices.

While this open and decentralized candidate selection process tends to facilitate the nomination of visible minority candidates, the very high incumbency factor in Canadian politics remains a significant obstacle to electing visible minorities. The Liberal Party enjoys the strongest incumbency advantage, having formed the government for all but ten of the last forty years.[11] But with a higher proportion of incumbents, the party has tended to nominate fewer visible minorities than the other major parties.[12] At the same time, this incumbency advantage has tended to produce a clientelistic pattern of relationships between Liberal MPs and ethnic leaders. Consequently, the Liberals have done exceptionally well in urban areas with large immigrant and visible minority populations, despite running very few visible minority candidates in those ridings. Consider the nineteen ridings in the Greater Toronto Area with the largest (each has at least 40%) visible minority populations. All went to the Liberals in the 2004 election, yet the party ran a visible minority candidate in just four of these ridings, while the Conservatives and NDP each ran six. Despite making up more than 50% of the population in these ridings, visible minorities are proportionately *less* well represented in the GTA than they are across Canada.[13]

Recognizing the importance of this critical mass of minority voters, the Conservative Party has adopted an ethnic outreach strategy to make inroads into these Liberal strongholds. They have run more visible minority candidates than other parties.[14] They have courted minority voters through publicity campaigns in the ethnic press.[15] On issues like homosexual marriage, a significant portion of the visible minority community holds views that are congruous with Conservative positions. Tax relief is another issue that plays well among many economic migrants and their children. And the Party has made a concerted effort to remind immigrants that many of them arrived in Canada during Brian Mulroney's Conservative reign (1984 to 1993), when immigration to Canada reached historically high levels.

Only one party, the NDP, has stipulated an affirmative action guideline for selecting visible minorities as candidates. The party has established as a target that 50% of all

candidates must be from marginalized groups (including visible minorities, women, handicapped persons, gays and lesbians). Riding associations must show the party's Elections Planning Committee that they have made efforts to attract such candidates. The party also maintains an affirmative action fund that is intended to assist candidates from marginalized groups with their election expenses.[16] The NDP is one of very few parties in the world that have formal guidelines for recruiting more visible minority candidates.

Ethnic constellations, participation and political interests

All ethnic groups are not equally involved or represented in electoral politics. The patterns of political representation among Canada's two largest visible minority groups – Chinese and South Asians – could not be more different. The South Asian community has had an impressive performance in national politics: in the 2004 election, ten South Asian Canadians were elected to parliament.[17] By comparison, there is just one Chinese Member of Parliament. By all accounts, the South Asian community is extraordinarily active politically, and their support tends to be highly sought after through the nomination and campaign process in many ridings. Campaign chairs describe South Asians (Sikhs and Ismaili Muslims, in particular) as "legendary organizers," whose geographic clustering, dense and overlapping networks of religious, social and business memberships, and strong elder-centric culture make them a key community for political mobilization. In addition, they enjoy a tradition of democratic participation in their countries of origin, strong English language skills, and a high degree of economic security – all important resources for political participation that other visible minorities (notably the Chinese) often lack. This brief portrait of South Asian political involvement should help to dispel the traditional notion that visible minorities tend to be politically passive, or that recent immigrants must go through a fairly long transition phase before becoming involved in politics in their new country. In fact, political activism among visible minorities varies widely according to community-linked differences. So, too, do political interests.

Visible Minority Representation in Other Democracies

Visible minority representation in Canadian national politics is particularly strong when compared to other countries. In France, for example, there are no visible minorities among 527 seats in the national parliament; there are just 12 of 659 in Britain; in Germany there are just five of 603; in Australia just one of 150; and in New Zealand just two of 120. A cursory review of visible minority representation across more than a dozen established democracies suggests that the two necessary conditions for significant visible minority representation – spatial concentration and high levels of political engagement among minority voters – will not produce visible minority candidacies, unless also accompanied a fairly open candidate selection process, and a low incumbency rate. This is clearly the case in France, where visible minorities are highly concentrated and politically engaged (especially within and around the public housing estates of many large urban centres), but where Socialist political domination of those ridings has all but excluded them from local and national politics.

Countries such as Denmark and Belgium have similar concentrations of visible minorities in many urban centres. Like France, both countries also favour the cultural assimilation of migrants and their descendants over the multicultural model. However, the political representation of visible minorities in the latter two countries has approached proportionality, both at the national and local levels. The explanation appears to lie in the candidate selection and election rules used in these countries: proportional representation with preferential voting. Under these rules, voters are able to alter the order of the list of candidates presented for election. Visible minority candidates use this feature to mobilize voter support within minority communities, and are often promoted by their communities to eligible positions within their lists.

Conclusion

The conceptual framework presented here provides a useful model for understanding visible minority representation in Canada, and in comparative context. Through the case of Canada, this paper has demonstrated how the key elements of this model – the general rules and norms of citizenship, the characteristics and location of particular groups, and the features of the electoral and political system – interact with each other to produce unique effects in terms of the statistical representation of these groups. It is crucial to understand that these effects differ not only across countries, but also within countries, depending on both the electoral rules at each level, and on the characteristics and spatial location of different groups throughout the country.

Notes

To view the author's full notes, please cisit the ACS website at www.acs-aec.ca

1 Herbert Kitschelt, "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (1986), pp 57-85.

2 See Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

3 See Mehmet Umit Necef, "Impression Management and Political Entrepreneurship in Denmark," and Thomas Saalfeld, "Representation, Integration and Political Entrepreneurship: Institutions and Strategic Options for Ethnic Minority Elites in Western Europe." Both papers presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Turin, Italy (2002).

4 Statistics Canada, "Study: Canada's Visible Minority Population in 2017." http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050322/d050322b.htm (March 22, 2005).

5 See Jerome Black, "Minority Representation in the Canadian Parliament following the 1997 Election: Patterns of Continuity and Change." Paper presented at the Fourth National Metropolis Conference, Toronto, 2000.

6 Ujjal Dosanjh is Minister of Health, and Raymond Chan is Secretary of State for Multiculturalism. Dosanjh was formerly Premier of the NDP government in British Columbia.

7 In Canada, it is possible to calculate with relative accuracy a proportionality index for various groups (PI=the proportion of group members within an elected body / the proportion of group members within the general population). A score of 1.00 indicates that a group is represented

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Lorsque l'Alberta et la Saskatchewan entrèrent dans la Confédération en 1905, le Canada était une société principalement rurale et peu peuplée sur la sphère internationale. Aujourd'hui, le Canada est un pays fortement urbanisé sur la scène internationale.

Quels changements sociaux, économiques, démographiques, culturels et politiques expliquent la profonde transformation du Canada au cours du 20e siècle ? Jusqu'à quel point ces changements ont-ils variés à travers le pays et selon différents individus et groupes ? Comment ces changements au Canada se comparent-ils avec les développements dans les autres pays à travers le monde et comment sont-ils reliés avec ceux-ci ?

Cette conférence explorera de telles questions dans le but de contribuer à une plus grande compréhension du Canada au 20e siècle et encouragera une réflexion sur les défis des prochaines décennies. Nous invitons chercheurs, universitaires, décideurs politiques et toutes autres personnes intéressées des domaines des sciences sociales à proposer des sujets et des séances.

L'échéance pour les propositions est le 15 juin 2005. Veuillez, s'il vous plaît, faire parvenir l'information concernant les conférenciers, ainsi qu'une brève description des articles ou des séances proposés, à James Ondrick par courriel à james.ondrick@acs-aec.ca ou par télécopieur au (514) 925-3095.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ETHNIC PARTICIPATION:

A Question of Access

ABSTRACT

Canada is a plural society and is likely to become more socially diverse due to continuing demographic changes, especially in regards to newer immigrant communities which are visible minorities. Within Canada, a key route to integration into the "dominant society" is through the political system. Entry into the political process is controlled by those who organize the selection process – that is political parties. Participation in electoral politics can serve as indicator of the integration of visible minorities into the political system.

In 1991, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing (Lortie Commission) documented the "persistent under representation of certain groups" and linked this to "the practices of national political parties, particularly their local associations, which function as gatekeepers of access to their candidacy, but whose relative autonomy constitutes a barrier to change." (Final Report, 1991: 115) The Lortie Commission addressed the representational deficits of women, Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities, and made several recommendations which proposed structural changes that focused on encouraging greater access to candidacy. Changing recruitment structures may have significant effects on the social composition of legislatures, the way they function, the policy process and political representation. Entry to the political process is controlled by those who organize the selection process – that is, the political parties. One of the most critical functions of political parties is to recruit, select and nominate candidates. The right of citizens to be candidates can be exercised effectively only to the extent that the nomination process of political parties provides fair access. This article will seek to examine the issue of diversity as it relates to visible minorities, particularly Asian Canadians and South Asian Canadians, in the Greater Vancouver area of British Columbia. The dynamics of ethnicity, immigration and access to candidacy within political parties in Canada will all enrich the understanding in Canadian Politics on political participation and new immigrants.

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Immigration and Political Integration

Canada is a plural society and is likely to become more socially diverse due to continuing demographic changes. Within Canada, a key route to integration into "the dominant society" is through the political system. Participation in electoral politics in particular serves as an important indicator of the emergence of recent immigrants from "social isolation into the mainstream of Canadian political life" (Wood 1981: 178). Issues such as the democratic political institutions and traditions in place from the country of departure, time of arrival, existing length of time in Canada, can all affect the patterns of ethnic political participation. Some of the barriers to participation that are associated with immigrant status in the new country disappear of grow smaller for second and further generations after an adaptation period.

Although immigrants' share of the total population has remained relatively stable over the years, their cultural and socio-economic characteristics have changed considerably. The 1962 and 1967 changes in the Immigration Act have allowed for a more open and nondiscriminatory immigration policy. There have generated changes in the composition of the immigrant population of Canada. A shift in immigration away from European to non-European sources has ensured that Canadian society has increasingly become not only ethnically diverse, but also relatively recently, racially diverse. As well "metropolitan ethnicity" has emerged as a demographic reality, with the majority of new immigrants going to Canada's largest cities (Wilson 1993: 647).

Visible Minorities in Canada

The federal government's Employment Equity legislation states "visible minorities are persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-white in colour or non-Caucasian in race." Visible minorities, comprised 6.3% of the Canadian population in 1986, 9.1% in 1991, and 11.2% in 1996. Among the adult visible minority population, more than three out of four were immigrants (78%)

and approximately 15% were born in Canada, with approximately 7% being non-permanent residents (Synnott and Howes 1996: 138). The concept of "visible minority" was coined in the early 1970s. It is now widely used in Canadian public discourse, and the term has been entrenched in affirmative action, employment equity, and multiculturalism legislation, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There are variations in the levels of citizenship status, unemployment, education, income and occupational distribution of visible minority populations. There are variations in political participation and community maturation both between and within groups, as well as variations in regional and constituency concentration. Synnott and Howes criticize the use of "visibility" as a social category. They see it as inappropriate because "it homogenizes specificities," ignoring differences in power, status, history, culture and even visibility (1996: 145).

Canadian Political Science and Ethnicity

The opening up of access in political institutions to the growing numbers of visible minorities in the Canadian population is an important topic. Yet, it is not immediately obvious how to address this topic. There has been a surprising negligence in the literature, of how particular social groups have been politically incorporated. Jerome Black (1997) comments that the current literature on the intersection of citizenship, immigration and political engagement is a nascent one with many gaps, largely characterized by uneven theoretical development and limited empirical examination. These gaps in our knowledge provide the opportunities to contribute to an underdeveloped academic area – the topic of political participation of newcomers and minorities in Canada.

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Cairns (1993) remarks that Canadian political science's traditional concentration on the institutional forms of federalism distorts our view of ethnicity by directing our attention to territorially concentrated ethnic or national groups that can be accommodated by "provincehood or a third order of government." Wilson (1993) acknowledges that this bias has led us to pay too little attention to dispersed metropolitan ethnicity, and emerging demographic reality destined to have important implications for Canadian social and political life.

Participation and Immigrant Groups

In their examination of the 1993 House of Commons, Black and Lakhani (1997) comment that while Members of Parliament of the British-only and French-only origins exceeded their proportions of the general population, racial minorities were distinctly underrepresented in Parliament with only 13 elected. In his later study, Black (2001) found that in the 1997 election, 19 visible minority candidates were elected, and after the 2000 election there were only 17 visible minority candidates elected to Parliament. In my own sketch compilation of the results of the 2004 federal election, taking the redistricting and addition of new seats, I came up with total of 21, using party biographies of candidates and a content analysis of newspaper articles.

Vancouver's Asian Canadians, Indo-Canadians and the federal Election 2004

Whereas residents of British heritage made up the majority of Vancouver's population as recently as 1961, in the 1991 census barely 24% acknowledged British origins (Stasiulis 1995: 193). According to the results of the 1996 Census on immigrant numbers, Vancouver had the highest growth rate in its immigrant population of any metropolitan area between 1991 and 1996, moving into second position (34.5%) after Toronto (42%) in terms of the concentration of immigrant populations (Mitchell 1997: A10). Approximately 80% of the immigrants to Vancouver were Asian born (Ibid).

British Columbia's growing visible minority population is proportionately the largest in Canada. In 1991, the census found that 14% of its residents were counted as visible minorities. By 1996, this number was now 18% and in the last census of 2001, their numbers reached 22%. Visible minorities in British Columbia are concentrated in the Lower Mainland, which includes the city of Vancouver, nearby suburbs and the Fraser Valley. In this region, one in every three residents is a member of a visible minority (McMartin 2004: 3). Chinese and South Asians are the top two visible minority groups in this area. Chinese residents represent over nine percent of the total population, and South Asian residents over five percent.

The Asian population at 366,000, numbers greater than Indo-Canadians at 210,000 in B.C. Looking at the federal election of 2004 in particular, one can see that only one Asian-Canadian was elected in the riding of Richmond, B.C. which holds the largest proportion of this group's numbers. Raymond Chan, a Liberal won the riding. He now sits in the federal cabinet of Prime Minister Paul Martin, as well as serving as Minister of state for Multiculturalism.

Of the South Asian members elected (including those with original South Asian heritage), 5 were elected – Conservative members Nina Grewal (the newly created riding of Fleetwood-Port Kells) and her husband, incumbent Gurmant Grewal (Newton-North Delta); and Liberal members Keith Martin (formerly of Canadian Alliance and whose grandmother is of South Asian origin, from the

Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca riding), Hedy Fry and former NDP Premier of B.C. and now federal Health Minister, Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South). These ridings have a high density of the South Asian population. In the 2000 election, 2 Members of Parliament were elected in the Lower Mainland, already mentioned Conservative Gurmant Grewal, and the Liberal Herb Dhaliwal (Vancouver South-Burnaby) who went on to become a cabinet minister (Natural Resources).

There seems to be a tight correlation between the percentage of the riding's population that hail from one of the visible minority groups and the successful candidacy and election of one of their members in the case of South Asians in particular. In its July 26th, 2004, issue, *The Hill Times,* observes that the Punjabi language is now the fourth language in the House of Commons, after English, French and Italian, now that 8 Punjabi-speaking MPs have been elected.

The Candidate Selection Process

The nomination of candidates in Canadian general elections reflects the constituency based character of the electoral system. Parties within ridings determine most of their own rules and practices for choosing their nominee, and practices may vary from constituency to constituency. According to Williams (1981) there are party variations on such questions as who calls and controls the nomination meetings, and who is eligible to vote at these meetings. Qualifications for party membership may be open to local alterations, in terms of membership fees, and cut-off dates for purchasing a membership to be eligible to participate in a nomination contest (p. 89).

Although the primary centre of decision-making for party nominations in Canada remains localized, national party organizations have begun to assume a larger role in the process, and the system as a whole appears to have become more institutionalized. For example, Erickson (1997) comments that by 1993, a shift in the selectors from local associations to the national leader began occurring in some parties. She found that the greatest interference with local associations' autonomy in selecting candidates in the 1993 campaign occurred in the Liberal Party, whereby the leader, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, appointed 14 candidates of which 10 were women. As well, in 1993, parties were more active overall in determining the supply of prospective candidates, by using nomination committees in constituencies without incumbents. Again, in 2004, Prime Minister Paul Martin followed the practices of appointing "star" candidates to run uncontested in particular ridings – Vancouver South being one that was highly criticized.

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Given the comparatively open nature of the nomination meetings, those competing for the nomination could actively recruit supporters to join the party and support them at the selection meeting. Membership recruitment is facilitated by the rules of many local parties. Carty and Erickson (1991) found that less than 20% of local party associations required participants at nomination meetings to have been members for more than one month. "This evidence suggests that, if length of membership is an indicator of party commitment, party rules generally do not restrict participation in the candidate selection process to committed partisans." (341)

They used as an indicator of the mobilization of new members, the rate of growth of a local association's membership between two general elections (in their study 1988), and the time of the constituency nomination meeting. Erickson (1997) criticizes that "if winning a party candidacy is not so much about gaining the support of a group of local party notables as it is about selling enough new party memberships to personal supporters, whether or not these supporters had any commitment to the party, the idea of local party democracy seems compromised." (p. 11) She feels that party democracy would seem to require that most of those involved in the democratic exercises of the party had some commitment to that party.

In his study on parties in the constituencies, Carty (1991) uses visible minorities as a case study of special efforts to increase the participation of previously excluded groups into party affairs. He finds these mobilization efforts to be driven by "cold electoral calculation." (see Carty 1991: 231) Like Wood (1981), he finds that the proportion of constituency associations that are making special efforts to open up and involve visible minorities in their central activities is higher where such groups "exist in significant numbers" and even greater where such groups are perceived to have "become a factor in the constituency association's politics." (Ibid)

During the 1996 British Columbia provincial election campaign, in order to target two of B.C.'s largest ethnic constituencies, for the first time, the NDP included two ethnic group branches – South Asian and Chinese, as part of a concerted mobilization strategy (The Democrat 1996). During the June 1997 federal election, two new ridings in Greater Vancouver – Vancouver-Kingsway and Surrey Central contained high levels of Chinese and South Asian populations respectively. In the case of Vancouver-Kingsway, in what has been called, "British Columbia's most multicultural and the Liberal Party's most safe riding," six out of ten of the various

parties' challengers for the nomination were of Chinese descent (Yaffe 1997: A3). The Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien used special powers to appoint a woman of Chinese descent – Sophia Leung, who eventually won this seat. In the case of Surrey Central (in 2004 divided into Surrey North and Surrey-North Delta), the riding with the largest South Asian population in Canada (about 20%) four South Asian candidates were nomianted, with the Reform Party electing its South Asian candidate (currently Conservative member Gurmant Grewal).

Conclusion

It appears that the access of ethnic groups, in this case, visible minorities, specifically, Asian Canadians and South Asian Canadians, to candidacy depends on the percentage of ethnic groups in the population of a constituency. As well, access of ethnic groups, depends on their political apprenticeship (party membership, running at lower levels of government, interest group involvement, and community associations); however, the speed may vary with the amount of mobilization of the community. There may be differences in community maturation, such as gaps in rates of citizenship acquisition. As the ethnic composition of the electorate changes, parties will modify their recruitment practices. While South Asians appear to making gains in terms of participation in political parties and representation (no longer limited only the Liberal Party of Canada) in the federal House of Commons, Asians are lagging behind but accelerating their participation to political parties as access is slowly improving and representation is being seen of both members of these visible minority communities.

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HOW MINORITY POLITICIANS BUILD ELECTORAL SUPPORT

ABSTRACT

Successful minority politicians must bring together support from three overlapping but somewhat distinct arenas: political parties, cultural communities and their riding community. The authors argue that to do this, they must be able to evidence to a party that they can bring to it new supporters, to their cultural community that they understand how the political process operates, and to these two groups and the wider community, that they are comfortable with membership of multiple communities and competent in managing the resulting social networks.

Given their control of the nomination process and local campaigning, the local associations of Canadian political parties are central to party politics in Canada. Their cyclical existence – springing to life around elections and leadership contests and remaining nearly moribund at other times – makes them relatively permeable, often allowing easy access to new members and aspiring politicians. As such, local party associations may provide immigrants access to the political process and act as a key socialization agent for ethnic politicians. The challenge for aspiring minority politicians is to meld the resources of one or more cultural communities with those available in their party and geographic communities without doing damage to any one source of support.

Direct knowledge of the political process, such as nominating candidates and running local campaigns, is a key political resource that aspiring minority politicians can trade on within the party and in their own cultural and geographic communities. Combining this knowledge with a public profile enhances the appeal of minority candidates in all three arenas and provides the raw material on which to build a political career. To do this minority politicians must be able to evidence to a party that they can *bring to it* new supporters, to their cultural community that they understand how the *political process* operates and can *bring the party to them,* and to these two groups and the wider community, that they are comfortable with membership of *multiple communities* and competent in managing the resulting *social networks.*

Political Parties and Cultural Communities

For most minority politicians, long periods of volunteering in a party preceded their move into electoral politics. Credibility as someone with a history of working for the party is a first step to winning a nomination for many minority politicians.[1] For party members, it is seen as evidence that the person is a good party member. From the perspective of cultural communities, a history of party involvement and access to the party hierarchy is seen as a resource and underpins their appeal for electoral support. They are seen as having special knowledge: an understanding of nomination dynamics and the world of elected officials. Of course, this special status has long been associated with successful politicians:

> *Involvement in party work provides future legislators with opportunities to interact with and observe the behaviour of those relatively few individuals…who have detailed information about the job of being a provincial legislator and/or first-hand knowledge of the role expectations associated with this position.*[2]

This insider knowledge is particularly valued in cultural communities for whom representative politics is a novelty and which have clear political claims arising out of their immigrant experience. In moving from volunteer to candidate, ethnic political insiders are well placed to make use of their links to various ethnic networks to help them succeed in electoral politics.

The enthusiasm with which immigrants engage with politics is often crucial to the success of minority politicians. Many immigrants have experienced exclusion from political participation and take seriously the opportunity to become involved in the political life of their new community. They see involvement as evidence of unity and strength within the community, a precondition for personal and community success, and evidence of the inclusiveness and the democratic process.

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The support of ethnic and cultural communities is usually central to many minority politicians' nomination and campaign strategies. Members of cultural communities usually provide the inner circle of friends, relatives and business contacts that underpin nomination and campaign teams:

> *It is natural to start with acquaintances that are closest to you, and then work your way out…the process for signing up members is similar for every candidate. First you will go to your friends then you go further.[3] Its true that over the years, [the] ethnic communities and ethnic votes can make it or break it at a nomination, especially in ridings that have an ethnic presence… ethnic communities come in flocks…they are political animals.[4]*

The capacity to rally members of the ethnic community provides ethnic representatives with a strategic advantage in nomination have an upper hand over non-ethnic candidates. John Nuraney points out, that he has access to networks that can be used to bring out supporters to party events.[5] Furthermore, the support of cultural communities is an asset that is consistent with democratic politics and Canadian political traditions and part of the broad coalition needed for any candidate to be successful.[6]

Given their importance to both their nomination and election campaigns, minority politicians are aware that they cannot take the support of ethnic communities for granted. Their relationship with these communities needs constant attention:

> *Sometimes you are going to get the backing of certain ethnic groups if the candidate is from their community, but a lot of them are smarter than that, they don't just vote blindly. Some of them do, but a lot of them will actually scrutinize. If you look at the communities that have been here a while, I find that they are becoming more sophisticated. In Art Hanger's nomination fight in Calgary East, [in which he faced-off against members of the local Sikh community] some members of that community who worked for Hangar's opponents actually voted for Hangar.[7]*

Yet there are also dangers to over-reliance on ethnic group mobilization. Gurmant Grewal argues that although "birds of a feather flock together, that should not be the case, it should be based on merit. It is dangerous for democracy for people to vote without understanding the issues." Moreover, this may alienate other party members or voters. A broad understanding of politics was seen as essential to a successful political career. The second part of this strategy requires them to meld ethnic networks with those in the broader community.

The Geographic Constituency

It is unlikely that the support of ethnic voters will itself guarantee electoral success. As with all members of parliament, ethnic politicians must bring together support from many segments of their constituency if they are to be successful. Party supporters, those who agree with the politician's position on a particular issue, swinging voters, personal acquaintances, professional associates, members of ethnic communities are just some of components of a winning electoral coalition.

But given this, being able to evidence the support of cultural communities has important symbolic value. Party organizers see this as an important resource and evidence of the candidate's contacts, organizational abilities, and access to resources. Moreover, if this can be translated into votes, the party may believe its chances of success in a riding are enhanced. On the other hand, a failure to attract ethnic support might well be seen by others as evidence of either incompetence or some difficulty. That is, being seen as an effective organizer and representative of that community may signal political competency. Minority politicians then, hope to leverage this support into wider partisan and community support.

Most minority politicians realize the importance of combining an appeal to their own ethnic group with that to the wider constituency. There is a clear danger of relying too heavily on any one base of support. While it might bring a nomination victory, it could be a handicap in the subsequent electoral contest. In this regard, minority politicians often speak favourably of the value of their connections with the wider community: connections often rooted not in any political agenda, but in efforts to become familiar with the wider society:

> *My dad always encouraged us to take part in the community. I was involved with quite a few organizations in Surrey. All the key community organizations such as the Surrey Chamber of Commerce, I was involved as a member then director, then 2nd vice-president, then 1st vice president, then president. As part of the Rotary club Surrey, I was involved as the first non-European member. Then I was involved as Director, vice president and president. Then I became involved with the Surrey Crime Prevention Society; the first time they had someone as a non-European descent involved as an executive. I was involved as the director there and also as the president. So I have a part in all the community organizations that most people from non-Euro descent were not really involved.[8]*

This is has been true for other ethnic politicians. When running for elected office, Lebanese in the Maritimes portrayed themselves as "islanders" in an attempt to gain the trust and acceptance of the local population, especially given the lack of a influential Lebanese community:

> *Norman Mansour joined just about every social and civic organization in Amherst, Nova Scotia, before being elected mayor and then going on to run for a seat in the provincial legislature. By participating in so many organizations he not only sharpened his political skills, but also demonstrated to the public that he had done so.[9]*

Jabbra argues that this approach is not so important in ridings where "large ethnic groups are densely settled and rely heavily upon ethnic resources."[10] While the threshold for 'large' is difficult to define, we did not find much evidence to support this claim. All our respondents

considered it necessary to develop strong contacts with and knowledge of the broader community.

Even in communities with large ethnic populations, part of the process of attracting support from such communities is to be seen to understand and be taken seriously by the wider community. Political aspirants establish themselves in the mainstream community as part of the mechanism for building trust within their ethnic community and in order to bring more people into their support network.

As with all politicians, certain personal characteristics are important for success in attracting broad support. Jabbra has noted the importance of education in this regard.[11] Of the twelve representatives interviewed in this study, ten have university degrees (including two with a Master's degree), while the remaining two have professional accreditation in fields such as real estate, and accounting. Without these education credentials it would be difficult to imagine that ethnic candidates would be seen as qualified among the mainstream or their own community to seek election.

Social mobility is also important to electoral success, as "it is harder to despise the rich than the poor. Power is more accessible with wealth and education."[12] All our respondents had lucrative careers prior to running for election, many operating small businesses in the service sector. It appears that these occupations may teach important people skills and help establish the representative as a fixture within their neighbourhood – a local notable both in the ethnic and riding communities:

> *Then in 1985 I opened up a small business with my wife, which grew to three dry-cleaning stores, while I was working with the city… at the same time I started getting involved into community affairs with whatever free time I had.*[13]

Becoming an provider of jobs and being seen as successful prior to seeking office create the sort of public profile that an aspiring politician can build upon.

Career success provides an aspiring politician with a public profile in their ethnic community, as someone who has successfully adapted to the new society. On the other hand, it also exposes them to political networks in the broader society. As a result, they are well positioned to act as intermediaries between the two groups. Maintaining support in both camps rests in part on how well ethnic politicians present themselves to their various publics.[14] The ethnic community must believe the member has influence in the wider society, and can deliver certain political advantages. The wider community has to be convinced that the member is a reliable spokesperson for his or her cultural group, and can shape minority sentiment on important matters.

Conclusion

Successful ethnic minority politicians must negotiate three political communities: the local political party, ethnic communities and that of the local geographic constituency. While nomination success for minority politicians can often be based on an appeal to one or more ethnic communities in a riding, moving beyond the nomination to electoral success requires a much broader coalition of support. In building such a coalition, they must make use of their profile in the three communities – local party, the riding and minority cultural groups – by presenting themselves as successful in each and reliable intermediaries between the three.

The complexities of this bridging exercise should not be understated. Not only are there differences in organizational and cultural norms, the communities may not easily overlap. In some instances, there may be little contact between local party organizations and immigrant and ethnic communities. Some members of a politician's ethnic community may be spread well outside the riding. Ethnic communities other than that of which the candidate is a member may be important in the riding. Yet to the degree they are seen as particularly sympathetic to the issues confronting immigrants, ethnic politicians may also have special access to ethnic communities other than their own. Finally, the geographic community may have little experience of minority politicians and be relatively unaware of the ethnic communities within its borders.

Elected minority politicians, from both the federal and provincial levels of government, different communities, and a range of parties, tend to exhibit a set of shared characteristics that help them to bridge these groups. While in the broad these characteristics are much the same as for any aspiring politician – an understanding of the dynamics of nominations and campaigns in Canada and a public profile – there is particular content to each of these for such politicians. Work in the party helps the candidate impress upon members that he or she will bring new support and voters *to the party,* not only the party to new supporters and voters. It is a sign to members of his or her cultural community of *understanding of and access to* the political process and the capacity to bring the party *to these voters.* For its part, the public profile must be of the sort that allows the party, cultural community and broader geographic community to see the candidate as successful, and which allows for opportunities to network in and between these communities. Among our respondents a range of occupations from business to social work and social activism provided the necessary proof of successful adaptation to membership of a *multiple communities* – minority and other – and a penchant for building and maintaining *social networks.*

In this way, ethnic minority politicians provide an important link between minority communities and the broader society in Canada. That they can do so is in part of function of the organizational autonomy of local party associations in Canadian political parties and their control of the nomination process.

Notes

To view the author's full notes, please cisit the ACS website at www.acs-aec.ca

1 Patty Sahota, personal interview, 2001.

2 Clarke, Harold D. and Richard D. Price. "Learning to be a Legislator: The Case of Provincial MLAs." *Parliament Policy and Representation.* Eds. Harold Clarke et al. Toronto: Methuen, 1980. 88.

3 Patty Sahota, personal interview, 2001.

4 Moe Amery, personal interview, 2001.

Do You Know Your Canadian Issues?

Êtes-vous au fait de vos Thèmes Canadiens ?

EVANGELICALS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

ABSTRACT

The participation of evangelical Christians in politics has prompted suspicion and expressions of fear, reflecting some misunderstandings about Canadian evangelicals. Canada is a religiously plural society. The author maintains that if we want a participatory democracy, all should be welcome to engage in a constructive discussion about how we shape our common lives together. No one should be excluded or told explicitly or implicitly that they are not welcome.

BRUCE CLEMENGER

Bruce Clemenger is President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, a national association of Protestant evangelicals whose affiliates include 130 denominations and ministry organizations as well as 1,100 individual churches.

The political engagement of evangelicals is often greeted with expressions of concern about the emergence of the "religious right" in Canada. It is presumed that evangelicals are fiscally and socially conservative, and a Canadian version of the Republican Party at prayer. With the re-election of evangelical George Bush, many presume evangelicals in Canada are hoping to flex their political muscle.

Of course, in light of such musings about the possible emergence of the religious right in Canada there is little commentary about the religious left, or their political aspirations. Nor are pronouncements of churches espousing liberal political concerns met with accusations of mixing church and state. It was the intervention of some Catholic Bishops against same sex marriage and not the United Church's endorsement of the civil marriage legislation that provoked one Cabinet minister to suggest churches stay out of the debate over marriage. And it was US funding to Canadian religious organizations opposed to the government's legislation on civil marriage that prompted the Justice Minister to wonder aloud about restrictions on third party spending outside of elections when a gay and lesbian lobby group's web site thanked Canadians and those around the world who have contributed to their fight for equality.

In all, it is the political engagement of evangelicals that, it seems, requires an apologetic. Of all the politicians who are open about their faith commitment, why is it the evangelicals who are "scary?" Immediately prior to the 2004 election, liberal pollsters reportedly asked Ontarians if they were "more or less likely to vote for the Conservatives if you knew they had been taken over by evangelical Christians." Merely naming a group in such a political strategy creates an impression that the group is suspect. It is the first step in a process of disinformation that leads to discrimination and marginalization. This occurred a week after the Prime Minister and Minister of Justice were calling for religious tolerance in the wake of anti-Semitic violence and religious intolerance was denounced as un-Canadian.

So why isolate evangelicals? As with other religious minorities, evangelicals do have strong views on issues such as marriage. So is the case with many other religious and cultural minority groups. Yet do strong views alone make a group suspect? Such prejudice against faith communities will serve only to undermine the fabric of the kind of Canada we want. The temptation in politics to vilify for political gain is no doubt strong; but let us practice the tolerance we desire even when it is not expedient, for that is what true tolerance and respect demands. I will return to this theme, but first a bit more about evangelicals and politics.

Who are evangelicals?

Evangelicals are theologically orthodox Protestants. There are four defining characteristics: they believe that Jesus is the divine son of God and that through the life, death, resurrection of Jesus, God provided the way for the forgiveness of one's sins; that the Bible is the word of God and is reliable and trustworthy; they have committed their life to Christ and consider themselves to be a converted Christian; and that it is important to attend church regularly and share one's faith. It should be noted the first two of these beliefs are held by a majority of Canadians.

The most recent data on evangelicals in Canada is provided by an Ipsos Reid survey of religious attitudes and beliefs of Canadians conducted in the fall of 2003. Sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, Focus on the Family and World

Vision, it was designed to compare results with a similar survey conducted in 1993 by Angus Reid and Dr. George Rawlyk of Queen's University. In a poll of three thousand Canadians, a poll which included questions framed in terms of the four characteristics of evangelicalism, the results indicate that protestant evangelicals comprise 12% of the Canadian population, with another 7% of the population being Catholics who also share the same beliefs. Thus some 6 million share evangelical beliefs.

Slightly more female than male, evangelicals tend to be married or widowed more than non-evangelicals, and fewer are divorced or living common law. There are no significant differences between evangelicals and the general population in family size or highest level of formal education achieved. The income levels of evangelicals are slightly lower, and evangelicals are slightly grayer than the general population. They are more likely to volunteer in the community and more likely to give to charity than non-evangelicals – and this is over and above what they contribute to their church.

The survey also asked respondents about the relative importance of nine areas of church social action, activities ranging from child poverty to racisim and the environment. Both evangelicals and non-evangelicals ranked supporting Canadian children living in poverty, preventing the exploitation of children in pornography and the sex trade in Canada and around the world, and reducing homelessness in Canada as the top three priorities. Care for the vulnerable is a dominant social concern for evangelicals and non-evangelicals agree this is a priority for the church. A notable difference between the priorities of evangelicals and non-evangelicals concerned abortion. Evangelicals include the unborn among the vulnerable that need protection; non-evangelicals gave the environment higher priority.

Evangelicals are also committed to marriage as the union of one man and one woman. When asked whether marriage should be defined as between a man and a woman, should be redefined, or remain man and woman and another legal category be used for gay and lesbian relationships, 94% did not want marriage redefined. Marriage and abortion are two of the social issues that are usually identified when identifying social conservatism and which distinguishes evangelicals from many other Canadians.

However, these socially conservative views are not strong predictors for a person's views on other social policy issues. When commentators muse about the religious right in Canada, the presumption is that is that social conservatives are also fiscal conservatives. This is not necessarily the case and this difference is something that distinguishes Canadian evangelicals from their American counterparts.

Seymour Martin Lipset contends that America is distinctive in terms of a conservative moralism and economic individualism. He argues that this is a uniquely American feature and polling indicates that he is correct. Canadian evangelicals are socially conservative on issues like marriage and abortion. However, in attitudes towards income inequality and the government's role in society and the welfare state, the views of Canadian evangelicals are similar to Canadian non-evangelicals.

Evangelicals and politics

The alignment of economic and social conservatism is not as strong among Canadian evangelicals as among their American counterparts. Seymour Martin Lipset contends that America is distinctive in terms of a conservative moralism and economic individualism. He argues that this is a uniquely American feature and polling indicates that he is correct. Canadian evangelicals are socially conservative on issues like marriage and abortion. However, in attitudes towards income inequality and the government's role in society and the welfare state, the views of Canadian evangelicals are similar to Canadian non-evangelicals. If you ask evangelicals whether they are concerned about poverty, they will answer yes. If you ask them what the role of government is in addressing poverty, they will disagree. Thus evangelicals are not as right wing in their voting patters as their American counterparts.

Polls indicate that in terms of voting intentions; slightly over half of Canadian evangelicals vote to the right (voted or preferred Reform Party/Canadian Alliance or Progressive Conservative in 1993, 1996, 2000, 2001). In each of these years, the Reform Party and Canadian Alliance were led by evangelicals Preston Manning and Stockwell Day respectively. There was a pronounced shift to the Canadian Alliance during the 2000 election, not only by evangelicals but by mainline Protestants and Catholics who regularly attend church. However, this support dissipated dramatically by 2001 where some of the support shifted to the Progressive Conservatives to the political left. Many contend that the shift to the Alliance was likely due to sympathies aroused as a result of the public ridicule of Day's personal beliefs during the 2000 campaign rather than a shift in support for Alliance, and more broadly conservative policies.

In a poll conducted the week prior to the 2004 election, and before a shift towards the Liberal party that surprised many, the results indicated Canadian Protestants who regularly attend church were 12% more likely to vote Conservative, while regular Catholic attendees were 10% more likely to vote Liberal. Overall, 51% of Protestants who attend regularly intended to vote conservative compared to 46% of all other Protestants. As Andrew Grenville of Ipsos-Reid and Bill Flederus of *Faith Today* magazine summarized the data:

Among Christians who attend less frequently, these trends were less pronounced: such Protestants were only seven percent more likely to vote Conservative, and such catholics were only seven percent more likely to vote Liberal. These linkages are not something new associated with Liberal leader Paul Martin self-identifying as a Catholic and Conservative leader Stephen Harper as a Protestant. These voting patterns have been observed to varying degrees for the past half-century. Traditional wisdom suggests that the more community mindset of Catholicism finds some common ground with the more socially conscious Liberals. And Protestants, who are known for emphasizing the individual's relationship with God, link more easily with the do-it-yourself philosophy of the Conservative.

They ask whether this will continue or whether Canada will reflect an American trend where weekly church goers, including Catholics who used to vote Democrat, are now voting Republican.

The answer will depend on a number of factors. For example, will positions on social issues become a permanent dividing factor between the Conservative and Liberal parties? Historically, both parties when in power, despite their specific party policies, have operated as big tent coalitions and have successfully attracted support from social conservatives. The Liberal party has a number of Members of Parliament that are socially conservative (blue liberals) on issues of abortion or redefining marriage. Will the Liberal Party continue to be successful in providing a political home for blue liberals? Likewise with the Conservative Party? A considerable amount of ink has been used to muse about the helpfulness of the Conservative Party's attempt to provide a home for the Reform/Alliance social conservatives and how it might balance their interests with those of the party's progressive wing. If positions on social issues become a clear defining line between a party's policies and free votes are not allowed on these issues of conscience, then there may be a more permanent shift for regular church attendees to one of the two historically centrist parties.

Alternatively, there is no federal political party that mirrors the social agenda of Catholic social teaching and that of many evangelicals. Those evangelicals and catholics, who are both socially conservative in matters of marriage and abortion, and socially progressive in areas of social justice, have no natural political home. While individual MPs vary, by in large the Liberal party by its resolutions is more unwelcoming to social conservatives, while the Conservative Party tends be more fiscally conservative and not as welcoming to those concerned about social justice as the Liberal or New Democratic Party.

The policy aspirations of evangelicals

Another common accusation leveled at evangelicals is that they are seeking to impose their morality on Canadian society. Practically speaking, this is difficult for a minority to accomplish in a democracy and evangelicals are proponents of democracy. Theologically, the various traditions that inform Canadian evangelicals emphasize persuasion in politics and not imposition. Of course, it is governments through criminal codes and human rights codes that "impose" morality, not citizen groups. The criminal code is a moral code and evangelicals, as other Canadians and communities, seek to influence it.

Most of the issues that the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has engaged in can be clustered under four themes: the sanctity of human life, care for the vulnerable, family, and religious freedom. All of these are manifest in Canadian law and public policy and are themes promoted by other communities in Canada. The policy approach the EFC undertakes is to show how proposed legislative changes on a related issue will either promote or undermine our society's commitment to these themes.

Most of the issues that the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has engaged in can be clustered under four themes: the sanctity of human life, care for the vulnerable, family, and religious freedom. All of these are manifest in Canadian law and public policy and are themes promoted by other communities in Canada. The policy approach the EFC undertakes is to show how proposed legislative changes on a related issue will either promote or undermine our society's commitment to these themes. For example, when the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia was last on the political agenda, we argued that Canadian law historically is characterized by specific values and is rooted in certain moral principles. We then identified four principles; the sanctity of life, the stewardship of life, the compassion for life, and communal responsibility. In each case we explained our biblical understanding of these themes and then attempted to show how these themes are reflected in Canadian law and public policy. Thus for the principle compassion for life we quoted from scripture (Love your neighbour as yourself – Leviticus 19:18, Luke 10:27) and said the following:

As we believe human life is created in the image of God and the object of God's love and grace, life is something that we should cherish and care for. We should love others as we love ourselves. In both the Old and New Testaments, the people of Israel and the followers of Jesus were commanded to care for the alien, the widow, the orphan, and the poor.

It is this principle which is also reflected in our society's concern for the poor and the vulnerable,

for those who are unable to care for themselves. It is reflected in our refugee programs and in our private and our governmental relief and development programs overseas. It is also reflected in the myriad of voluntary associations and programs that care for a variety of human needs here in Canada.

We went on to discuss the life affirming ethos that has shaped Canadian policy in health care and after reviewing the current law, explained how the legalization of assisted suicide or euthanasia would undermine this ethos and place vulnerable person's at risk. We also explained the implications for health care providers and the health care system.

When we appeared before Canada's Supreme Court on a related issue, our argument followed the same lines. Intervening with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, we argued that a commitment to the sanctity of human life undergirds much of Canadian social policy. In a split decision; the majority grounded its decision to uphold the law on the importance of recognizing the sanctity of human life in Canadian law. Even though the law against assisted suicide was found to violate the section of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* that guarantee life, liberty and the security of the person, the court ruled that this infringement was justified due to the state's interest in preserving the sanctity of human life.

The nature of Canadian pluralism

The reception of evangelicals at the table of public policy is a reflection of the nature of pluralism at play in Canadian public life. Are we truly a religious and cultural mosaic? If so, then all should be welcome to engage in a constructive discussion about how we shape our common lives together. No one should be excluded or told explicitly or implicitly that they are not welcome. Nor should participation be contingent on someone obscuring what John Rawls calls their comprehensive doctrine. To require this is not an expression of deep pluralism but the imposition of a secularist view that public life and personal faith should be divorced. It pretends that faith can be bifurcated and that this is the cost of public engagement in a secular society.

This secularist view of religion is not neutral. It accommodates only secularists and is itself a form of sectarianism that many seek to avoid. And maybe it is concern for sectarianism that prompts discomfort. Perhaps the reaction to the policy engagement of evangelicals is a suspicion that they are seeking to reinstate a Christian hegemony that arguably once shaped Canadian life. But this suspicion of and discomfort with sectarianism is also shared by people of faith. Can we find a way of managing our lives together that is non sectarian, be it religious or secular?

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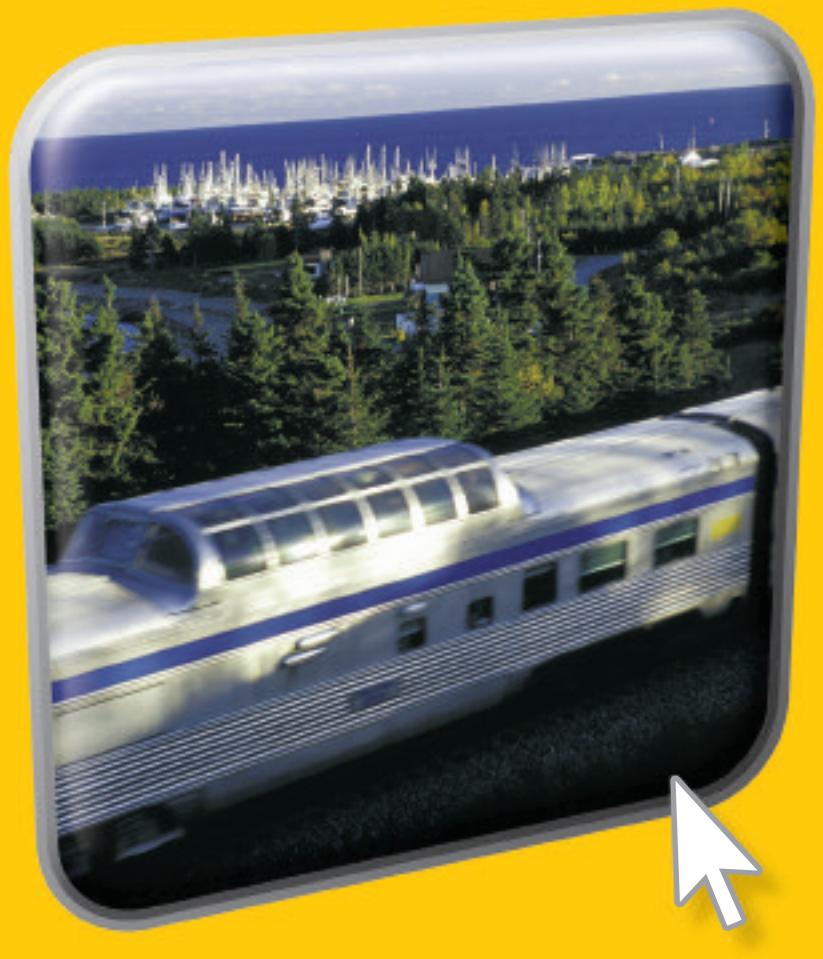

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