

EXPLORING DIVERSITY OF REPRESENTATION IN TORONTO AND VANCOUVER:
POLITICAL VOICES

By

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A Major Research Paper
Presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2014

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Exploring Diversity of Representation in Toronto and Vancouver: Political Voices

Master of Arts 2014, Ryerson University

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Immigration and Settlement Studies

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Abstract: Previous research has shown that Canadian municipalities have lower visible minority proportionality rates among elected officials than other levels of government. To understand why, six visible minority city councillors and candidates from Toronto and Vancouver were interviewed. Respondents contributed their personal experiences and perspectives on issues of mirror, symbolic, and substantive representation of visible minorities. They discussed their initial involvement or interest in elite politics, their role models, and their understanding of the term “visible minority.” A broad narrative describes the complexities of political representation in practice and revealed that there were fewer entry points into elite municipal politics for individuals from marginalized groups. These entry points are further obscured by systemic barriers. Barriers were common for both cities despite differences in electoral systems and council structure. This paper recommends reimagining the “visible minority” categorization, and a policy framework that promotes the democratic ideal through institutional evaluations and acclaim for advancements.

Key words: Canadian municipalities, visible minority representation, participation barriers

Acknowledgements

Completion of this work would not have been possible without the help and support of a handful of key individuals. I gratefully recognize the academic and professional mentorship I received throughout my studies in Immigration and Settlement at Ryerson. To my supervisor, Dr. Myer Siemiatycki, thanks for your unending positivity and encouragement, and for leading by example in the fascinating study of immigration and cities. Thanks to my second reader Dr. Anver Saloojee, who instills in his students the importance of constructive policy critique. I am grateful to my research methods instructor Dr. Mehrunnisa Ali, whose rigorous expectations for our final assignment went far in preparing me for successfully seeking Research Ethics Board approval and having the skills to conduct primary research for the first time. To Dr. Israt Ahmed, my placement supervisor at Social Planning Toronto, thank you for your insight into barriers to political participation, and for the opportunity to learn from members of diverse communities.

I owe my health and sanity to friends and family, without whom I would certainly not have finished this project. To my sisters Mikkell and Aleeta, thanks for putting up with my strange schedule, moodiness, and the paper trail that has taken over every surface in the house. Thanks to my parents, Chad and Julie, for valuing higher education and their long-standing belief that I can do whatever I put my mind to. ISS Class of 2014, thanks for being the most supportive and enthusiastic cohort I could wish for. To Breanna McDonald, thanks for timely interventions with food, housekeeping, and friendship. And to Tommy Deliergiev, you never accept my thanks, but know that I consider this paper as much your triumph as mine. You are my rock.

Finally, huge thanks to the six individuals who contributed their time, interest, and input into this subject. I am convinced that your voices can and do make a difference for marginalized individuals and communities, and I am privileged to play the small role of narrator.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Conceptual Frameworks.....	4
2.1. Literature Review.....	5
2.1.1. Evidence of Underrepresentation.....	5
2.1.2. Municipalities in Recent Historical Context.....	8
2.1.3. Theories of Multicultural Pluralism.....	9
2.1.4. Types of Representation and Methods for Achieving It.....	10
2.1.5. Identity Groupings: Problems with Self-Definition and Accountability.....	13
2.2. Questioning the Status Quo.....	14
2.3. Moving Forward: Project, Operational Definitions, and Scope.....	15
3. Methodology/Methods and Approach/Research Design.....	18
3.1. Strategy and Sample.....	18
3.2. Data Collection.....	20
3.3. Analytical Methods.....	22
4. Context.....	23
4.1. Vancouver.....	24
4.2. Toronto.....	25
5. Participants.....	27
6. Discussion.....	30
6.1. The “Slippery Slope” of Mirror Representation and Problematizing the “Visible Minority” Label.....	30
6.1.1. Identification as a Visible Minority.....	30

6.1.2. Problematizing the Nomenclature.....	32
6.1.3. Does the “Visible Minority” Category Have Value?.....	33
6.2. Painting a Picture of Substantive Representation.....	34
6.2.1. I Represent Everyone.....	35
6.2.2. A Closer Connection.....	36
6.2.3. Do We Need More Proportional Representation?.....	37
6.2.4. Race or Ethnicity as Insufficient.....	38
6.2.5. “I try not to embarrass my people”.....	38
6.3. “Through the Looking Glass”: Political Entry Points and Inspiration.....	39
6.3.1. Entry Points.....	40
6.3.2. Role Models.....	42
6.4. Demystifying Systemic Barriers to Elite Political Participation.....	43
6.4.1. Negative or Suppressive Use of Words.....	44
6.4.2. Racism and White Privilege.....	44
6.4.3. Voters’ Relationship with the Electoral System.....	46
6.4.4. Election Regulations.....	47
6.4.5. Lack of a Support Network.....	48
6.4.6. Political Parties.....	49
6.4.7. Cultural Barriers.....	51
6.4.8. Expectations on Women.....	52
6.4.9. Visible Representations of Visible Minorities (and Other Marginalized Groups).....	53
6.4.10. Lacking a Sense of Entitlement.....	54

7. Conclusion.....	57
7.1. Explaining the Municipal Lag.....	57
7.2. Recommendations.....	60
8. Appendices.....	63
8.1. Interview Guide.....	63
8.2. Invitation to Participate.....	68
8.3. Consent Form.....	69
9. References.....	73

1. Introduction

During the summer of 2014, I had the opportunity to work with Social Planning Toronto on the Toronto Civic Literacy Collaborative's production of a "train-the-trainer" civic engagement workshop series, which benefited community leaders from affiliated ethnocultural organizations. Early in the first workshop the participants, who were from Chinese, South Asian, African, Hispanic, and Aboriginal communities, were shown a composite image of Toronto City Council and asked, "What can you tell about your city representatives from this picture?" The first thing anyone noticed in each workshop was always that "they are mostly white," usually followed closely by, "they are mostly men." They were then asked, "Do you feel represented by the people in this picture?" Most participants shook their heads; many had never seen these people before. How could these individuals advocate for the issues faced by their communities if they did not share their experiences?

The question is not merely rhetorical. Scholars, politicians, community activists alike have argued both sides: that either diverse communities should have political representatives that reflect their unique characteristics, or on the other side, that a politician does not need to be from a given community to be a voice for it. The first camp, whose perspective is better known as mirror representation, has an evaluative method that involves a simple numerical comparison of population and legislative demographics. The second camp, in favour of substantive representation, has a more daunting task in determining its existence, as there is a degree of subjectivity involved—both for the representative and the represented. Both, too, are interpretations on what normative democracy should look like in practice.

According to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Canada, as a democratic country, is committed to equality in law and multiculturalism in policy and practice (1982).

Numerically, Canada's electoral system has yielded unequal results in the representation of women and visible minorities at all levels of government (Siemiatycki 2011). Federal and provincial representation has been steadily improving, although it is still far from proportional (Black 2008, Siemiatycki & Saloojee 2003, Siemiatycki 2011); however of concern to this research undertaking is the fact that municipal level representation is stagnating or even worsening in cities across the country (Andrew, Biles, Siemiatycki & Tolley 2008). Meanwhile, population diversity is rising and will continue to rise in the foreseeable future (Statistics Canada 2010). Though elected officials and policymakers may make efforts to be open to or even solicit the voice of special interest groups in their decision-making processes, there is no guarantee that minority interests will be included in final decisions that affect them. Alternative mechanisms for representation such as legislative committee reports or court challenges are insufficient to fulfilling the tenets of democracy (Kymlicka 1998). Moreover, as observed in the above example, it can be disheartening for minority newcomers and youth who are just coming into their capacity as members of the polity to look at their leaders and see that they do not reflect the diverse Canada in which they live. It gives the impression that some members of society count more than others – a *de facto* first- and second-class citizenship by virtue of majority rule.

As a category of statistical measurement, Canada's growing visible minority population fares the worst in municipal-level representation. It is important to acknowledge that "visible minorities" are not a monolithic group, either by their physiognomical categorization as "other," or even when separated into ethnic or geographical groupings, and it is clear from the research that some racial or ethnic groupings fare worse than others (e.g. Siemiatycki 2011). According to the pillars of a pluralist democracy, all citizens deserve – and are entitled – to be fairly and equally represented. Yet perhaps ironically, a story not often told in the representation debate is

that of visible minority politicians. Why are there so few visible minority politicians in city councils? And, who do they feel they represent?

This study sought to answer those questions through interviews with visible minority councillors and council candidates in the immigrant gateway cities of Toronto and Vancouver. The question of representation was approached dialectically, so as to cover different theoretical perspectives. Their responses indicated that there are two main causes for the low rates of visible minority representation: first, that there are simply fewer points of entry into elite-level municipal politics for individuals from marginalized groups; and second, that those entry points are further obscured or limited by systemic barriers. As to the question of substantive representation, interviewees' responses varied. However, issues of identity and identification became a central theme that linked the two questions inexorably. It seems that democracy, while not far from anyone's mind as an ideal, is complicated in practice by the dual challenges of identity and representation.

To broaden my understanding of the central questions, secondary research queries aided the analysis. Because of the differing contexts of Vancouver and Toronto, I was able to ask: Do the same conditions that exclude or limit visible minority candidates exist in different Canadian municipalities, or are the issues locally distinct? Responses were analyzed for patterns that might extend nationally as well as at the local level. A narrower, more focused level of questioning asked: Why do elected municipal politicians who self-define as visible minorities think that they were successful in their electoral bids? What factors do they think contribute to the low levels of representation? These questions develop the method, strategies, and scope of my research.

2. Conceptual Frameworks

In order to commence with a solid theoretical foundation, it is necessary to introduce and explain the influence that pluralism theory has had on Canadian policy, and at a micro level on this researcher's understanding of normative democracy. Robert Dahl's (1961) work *Who Governs?* is widely credited as the formative opus on plural democracy. In this text he acknowledged that although there was a ruling elite who controlled most political processes, there was potential for other interest groups to contest this rule. The "pluralist school" of thought gained influence in Canada in the ensuing decades, as the country grappled with the political task of acknowledging French, English, and Aboriginal Canada as distinct groups with distinct needs. In 1971, Prime Minister Trudeau introduced the world's first Multiculturalism Policy; this formed the beginnings of an entrenchment of pluralist thought and multicultural practice in Canadian society that was later guaranteed in section 27 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and further solidified in the passing of the *Multiculturalism Act* in 1988.

Nevertheless, the *Act* provides only a nominal guarantee that the state will actively look out for multicultural interests. In fact, an important distinction regarding normative versus substantive democracy was laid out in Dahl's follow-up work, *Democracy and its Critics* (1989). Taking a cue from Dahl, this research will proceed on the premise that the Canadian political system is merely a "polyarchy" – that is, a state with all the trappings of democracy, but one which has not achieved the democratic ideal of substantive representation for all in the demos. However, ideals exist for societies and individuals to strive for rather than rest on their laurels, and in that case the place to start will be to identify the limits of democratic inclusion for visible minority elected officials in Canada's cities.

2.1. Literature Review

Before I can address the issue of why there is a deficit in proportional representation, there are a number of conceptual questions that must be addressed. For instance, what is proportional representation, and how can it be defined? Is this a valuable and trustworthy measure of democratic legitimacy? How can I determine who qualifies as a “visible minority,” and what are some of the difficulties with this classification? Essentially, the questions I must attempt to answer will help form the parameters of a study that is ultimately rooted in identity politics and ethnic pluralism theory.

The literature consulted was specifically chosen to answer the above questions. I first summarize the statistical evidence supporting the claim that minorities are underrepresented in Canadian cities. Second, I give historical context for the current state of municipal structures. This leads into a theoretical foundation for the multiculturalism/pluralism debate upon which my research question rests. Next, I consider different conceptualizations of representation, weighing the benefits and liabilities of each. Finally, I discuss some of the problems other scholars have raised with defining identity groups, including the use of the term “visible minority.”

2.1.1. Evidence of underrepresentation. Although percentages were used in many of the studies, the most common measure of representation used was the proportionality index. This is a simple statistical representation of the number of elected officials belonging to a particular group as compared to that group’s presence in the population of the electoral district. It is a useful tool because it is so easy to read: a proportionality index of 1 indicates perfect proportionality; thus, a number less than 1 shows underrepresentation, while numbers greater than 1 demonstrate overrepresentation.

The Canadian studies have been broad, both geographically and in terms of level of government; nevertheless, that relatively few academics have taken an interest is evidenced by the dominance of Siemiatycki's work in this field. In 2002, Siemiatycki and Saloojee evaluated ethnoracial groups in the Greater Toronto Area to determine if there was proportionate representation in municipal government, focussing primarily on the amalgamated City of Toronto but with comparisons across time (1994, 1997, and 2000 elections) space (other "905" municipalities are considered) and jurisdiction (provincial and federal). Their study included a survey of the elected officials in which the individuals were given the option to self-identify as visible minorities. This data was then cross-tabulated with census data on visible minority population percentages for the region in order to calculate the proportionality index. Furthermore, the survey asked politicians whether they felt that they represented the issues and values of their self-defined ethnic groups. Results indicated that there was a "dual representation gap": minority communities were not just statistically underrepresented, but minority politicians did not actually represent their own community's interests as defined by community advocates (Siemiatycki & Saloojee 2002, p.242).

As municipal-level proportionality evaluations were still otherwise scant in Canada, Caroline Andrew and colleagues embarked on a comprehensive project which looked at nine Canadian cities with large visible minority populations (2008). Siemiatycki completed a follow-up study of Toronto after the 2004 election, this time presenting aggregate data on representation at all levels of government. The results were similar to his previous finding: "Comprising 43 percent of the city's population in 2001, visible minorities held only 10 (just 11 percent) of the 90 elected positions in the city" (Siemiatycki 2008, p.35). In fact, this pattern is not only

ongoing in Toronto, but can be seen in cities across the country, as the other studies in the volume showed (Andrew et al. 2008).

Siemiatycki's most recent study of Toronto captures the results of the 2010 election, and provides a comprehensive cross-examination of twenty-five municipalities in the GTA. The City of Toronto's visible minority councillor proportionality ratio actually dropped from 0.26 in 2004 to 0.24 in 2010 (Siemiatycki 2011, p.13). Brampton and Mississauga, with visible minority populations comprising 57.04 percent and 49.04 percent respectively, had ratios of 0.16 and 0 (ibid.). Furthermore, the average proportionality ratio of visible minority representation on city councils across 25 municipalities in the GTA was only 0.17 (ibid., p.14). This shocking deficit for a collection of cities with some of the country's largest percentages of visible minorities is not as drastic at other levels of government, however. In Toronto specifically as of the 2011 provincial election, visible minority politicians held 5 out of a possible 23 seats (a proportionality ratio of 0.44)(ibid., p.5). The federal election of the same year netted visible minority candidates 4 of 23, or a ratio of 0.35 (ibid., p.10). Siemiatycki demonstrates how the 2010-2011 elections boosted representation ratios federally and provincially, but points out that municipally it "appears forever stuck at around 11% in a city where visible minorities account for four times that population share" (ibid., p.17). The author suggests that this "municipal lag" might be explained by the absence of political parties at the municipal level, the importance of name recognition and incumbent advantage, and the lower level of prestige or public appreciation local office garners in comparison (ibid., p.18).

Again, the research on Toronto has been conducted almost exclusively by Siemiatycki, which is positive in the sense that we have access to consistent methodology across multiple election periods. Yet comparisons of data are thus limited to a single methodology as well as a

single contributor's analysis of the results. The dearth of interest in this particular area of study has possibly led to a gap in interpretations from different perspectives. Nevertheless, Siemiatycki's work has been extremely important in that it has informed other types of policy work that is more widely pursued, such as the push for permanent resident voting in municipal elections (Munro 2008; Omidvar 2008; Toronto 2013).

Most of the studies were undertaken within approximately the last decade. This may be indicative of a recent trend of noticeably unrepresentative governments, or the scholarly interest may reflect an interest in following the outcomes of the changing Canadian demographics. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that while both of these explanations likely factor in, a primary reason for this line of inquiry is that the changing representational patterns are due to neoliberal changes in the municipal systems. This hypothesis will be further explored in the next section.

2.1.2. Municipalities in recent historical context. In their analyses of the data, a number of authors identified urban amalgamation and municipal reforms in the 1990s as being causally connected to the problem of underrepresentation (Siemiatycki and Saloojee 2002, Bloemraad 2008, Biles and Tolley 2004, Bird 2004, Simard 2004, Siemiatycki 2011). The push for amalgamation in the 1990s came from a move towards neoliberal governance at that time; that is, the trend was in favour of smaller government, which meant less replication of services where possible. Thus Toronto went from a city and five boroughs with over 100 seats, to the inaugural city with 58 seats, and finally was reduced to only 44 council seats. Many of the above authors have contested the systemic problem of simply too few representatives for a city of 2.79 million people. Carolle Simard has also written about the problems of post-amalgamation representation, but in the context of a number of Quebec cities (2004, 2008). She suggests, "One

might have expected the creation of megacities to open up the political system, relatively speaking, to groups traditionally excluded, in particular women and persons from ethnic minorities. But nothing of the sort has taken place—it is as though the new institutional realities have had little consequence” (2004, 190). It will be interesting to see whether the amalgamation theory bears out in the data in the course of my elite interviews.

2.1.3. Theories of multicultural pluralism. The principles of neoliberalism are in direct opposition to the policy of multiculturalism in Canada which, rather than assuming a *laissez-faire* attitude on the part of the state, calls for conscious dialogue and action in order to achieve this ideal. The battles between these ideologies were waged in the late 1980s and 1990s, amidst a flurry of political events and academic debate. It is important to consider the value of promoting multiculturalism versus allowing the existing democratic system to self-regulate political representation: if we determine that time will correct the imbalances, then this study will have no purpose. If, on the other hand, we can determine that the system is repressing the advancement of proportional pluralism, then we may be able to recommend changes.

In one defense of ethnic pluralism, Abu-Laban and Stasiulis (1992) identify the main challenge to multiculturalism as emanating from Quebec, where multiculturalism is seen as a threat to the ‘two nations’ thesis (p.367). The main critique from this camp is that “multiculturalism has a detrimental impact on collectivities such as the Quebecois” (and aboriginal peoples) (ibid.), while other camps argue that the policy actually co-opts group interests for the sake of political benefit, but in effect is a detriment of the disadvantaged group (p.368). Kymlicka addresses the first concern in his chapter on representative democracy (2008). He suggests that we consider “political affirmative action” versus the self-government advocated for by the Quebecois and First Nations. Kymlicka makes the distinction that affirmative action is

a temporary measure meant to reduce barriers to access for marginalized populations, while in contrast, self-government is intended to be a permanent measure to address an inherent difference (p.113). An example of how this would work in the Canadian context would be having quotas for women and visible minorities for Senate appointments (because they have been structurally marginalized), versus allowing Aboriginal populations the right to self-govern on reserves (because they have a distinct society and have been structurally marginalized). Essentially, both Abu-Laban and Stasiulis and Kymlicka suggest that the solution for recognizing inherent differences in ‘distinct societies’ and the solution for recognizing temporary barriers for marginalized groups who are trying to integrate need to be treated differently.

Furthermore, Kymlicka’s assertion that multiculturalism policy requires an “open and inclusive” political process in which “the interests and perspectives of all groups be listened to and taken into account” helps to address some of the other dissenting arguments from the Abu-Laban and Stasiulis paper (1998, p.104). Rather than exacerbating the impact of already-marginalized ethnic groups, multicultural policies can create an environment where in-group representatives can bring the interests and concerns of those groups to the table.

2.1.4. Types of representation and methods for achieving it. Validating the definition of “representation” is essential to overcoming one of the biggest challenges to the credibility of my research. Andrew et al. (2008) identify *mirror* and *substantive representation* as two possible conceptualizations. *Mirror representation* occurs when the elected officials characteristically reflect the population; that is, it is concerned with the *image* of the politician (p.14). Kymlicka further clarifies that “a legislature is said to be representative of the general public if it mirrors the ethnic, gender, and class characteristics of the public. Or...a group of citizens is represented in a legislature if one or more of the assembly’s members are the same sort of people as the

citizens” (1998, p.109). However, both sets of authors assert that mirror representation can be a slippery slope at its theoretical extreme, since it rests on the notion that members of the out-group cannot be trusted to make decisions representative of the in-group. People identify by more than one biographical trait, and the degrees of identification, layered on top of each other, would make for a system too complex to be workable.

Thus we must examine another definition by asking a new question. Rather than making a straight numerical comparison, *substantive representation* asks whether the politician is making a difference for an identity group or for the broader diversity agenda. According to Andrew et al., “the focus is on the results or the impact of elected officials on policies or programs” (2008, p.15). Some commenters have noted that, in Toronto for example, the city has done an exceptional job of ensuring that marginalized groups who are not electorally represented at least have their interests considered in city policies (e.g., Siemiatycki 2011). Although this is not the claim put forward by Siemiatycki, it could be argued that the effectiveness of alternative mechanisms make striving for mirror representation unnecessary. Certain supporters of proportional representation are adamant that out-group representatives can never be fully trusted to respect the values of the in-group. Nevertheless, Kymlicka thinks that this is a losing proposition for society: “To renounce the possibility of cross-group representation is to renounce the possibility of a society in which citizens are committed to addressing each other’s needs and sharing each other’s fate” (1998, p.112).

A less polarizing version of mirror representation which may prove satisfactory is *symbolic representation*, which does not require an exact number, but rather a presence from different group identities (Andrew et al. 2008, p.15). They argue that this goes beyond tokenism because the expectation is that there would be more than one representative; however, there is

debate about what “critical mass” would need to be achieved. The arguments for symbolic representation fit well with Kymlicka’s assertion that “Parliament has a special symbolic role” in reflecting a state’s diversity and preventing feelings of alienation (1998, p.120). Meanwhile, the numbers presented by the numerous sources in the first section of this literature review would suggest that “symbolic” levels have not been reached for many identity groups, according to those authors; but perhaps a better measure would be to ask minority individuals themselves whether they feel that they are being represented, rather than to rely on some arbitrary number.

Many proponents of proportional representation favour democratic reforms that would help achieve this end. Karen Bird, for example, points to three main problems that could be fixed with reforms: the absence of voting rights for non-citizens, single member districts and first-past-the-post vote count, and the opaqueness of the party system (2004). She suggests enfranchising permanent residents (as do Omidvar 2008, Munro 2008, and Siemiatycki 2011) and a preferential voting system like the open list systems used in Belgium and Denmark. In a preferential voting system, all candidates are listed on a ballot, and voters are invited to rank them in order of preference; in the open list variation, voters can choose which candidates they prefer over others within their preferred party. The argument is that having all candidates listed on one ballot would lead to greater transparency and accountability on the part of the political parties. Unfortunately, the experience of Canadian municipalities contradicts this theory in practice: the use of an at-large voting system which does include parties in British Columbia has not yielded more proportionate voting results (Bloemraad 2008). Moreover, Ontario for one does not have a system that allows political parties to form at the municipal level. Another possible reform idea is proposed by Biles and Tolley (2004), among others, who make a case for

investing in newcomer engagement beyond the duties of Elections Canada to encourage greater levels of participation earlier in the integration process.

2.1.5. Identity groupings: problems with self-definition and accountability. As has already surfaced a few times in this discussion so far, there are a number of problems with identity grouping, both methodologically and practically. First, the category of “visible minority” is a construction by Statistics Canada for the purpose of the census, and relies on self-reporting. Given Canada’s racial and immigration history, the concept of visible minority is somewhat of a moving target, as even Southern Europeans were at one point racialized; furthermore, there is the issue of “one drop of blood”: what fraction of a person’s genetic makeup must come from a non-White ancestor for them to be considered a “visible” minority? The answer to this question is arbitrary no matter what, as a person may or may not feel that they belong to the visible minority category even if they do fit the common definition, which the *Employment Equity Act* outlines as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour” (1995). Siemiatycki and Saloojee circumvented having to label their subjects by asking the politicians to choose their own identity.

A second problem is that people have plural identities, and correspondingly, loyalties to more than one set of values or preferences. As in the problem with mirror representation mentioned above, Kymlicka asks whether an able-bodied, heterosexual Chinese immigrant woman can be fairly expected to make decisions for a disabled or lesbian Chinese immigrant woman (1998, p.111). On one hand, placing too high a premium on proportional representation can be dangerous for those in elected positions because it places unfair expectations on their ability to deliver on group-specific interests. On the other, the notion that every elected official has multiple identity “labels” is actually beneficial to the democratic process, as there are in fact

many kinds of representation spread over fewer electoral seats. This concept is referred to as intersectionality in feminist writing, and typically refers to the ways in which different dimensions of identity, such as race, class, gender, nationality, and ethnicity, can interact to result in different dimensions of disadvantage (see for example Collins 2000). To use Kymlicka's example, a disabled Chinese immigrant woman can stand for the interests of the disabled, the Chinese, immigrants, and women – at least in symbolic terms.

However, this is not to overstate the usefulness of symbolic representation, and in fact leads to a third problem. A number of the articles noted that elected officials who “belong” to a particular group at face value may not actually desire to represent that group's interests in practice. Biles and Tolley reference an Ottawa councillor of Lebanese descent who had never even considered it his job to represent the Lebanese community until he was asked (2004, p.176). As mentioned, Siemiatycki and Saloojee (2002) have called this phenomenon part of the “dual representation gap”; that is, minorities are underrepresented both numerically and substantively.

Each of the above problems will inform the methodology of my own study: I am careful not to make assumptions about individuals' multifaceted identities, and furthermore do not assume that one aspect of identity necessarily affiliates an individual with an identity group and its political preferences.

2.2. Questioning the Status Quo

After careful consideration of the philosophical ideals of ethnic pluralism, its Canadian manifestation multiculturalism, and the current state of the literature on the political representation of visible minorities in municipal government, I am left with a clearer understanding of both the status quo (the empirical reality) and some popular suggestions for reform (to strive towards the normative description of democracy). The biggest gap in the

research at this time is from visible minority individuals themselves: do they feel that they are represented, either symbolically or substantively, and do they feel that there are barriers to achieving representation? But, on the flip side: do those visible minorities who hold elected office do so explicitly for the purpose of representing an identity group? Likewise, what are the challenges associated with attaining and holding public office as a visible minority? In procuring answers to these questions, it would then be possible to look for patterns in what factors visible minority politicians think influence the degrees of proportionality in their municipality. Furthermore, the results could be used to compare Canadian cities at a level beyond the proportionality index. With differing provincial municipality acts and electoral systems, not to mention policy agendas, the degree of similarity between the cities in proportionality statistics is surprising. How can this be? This is the question I seek to answer with further research.

2.3. Moving Forward: Project, Operational Definitions, and Scope

This research will proceed with a comparative study of politicians elected to municipal office in two large Canadian cities, wherein elected officials who are visible minorities were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews (details are provided in section 3). Before moving on to explaining the project, some operational definitions need to be elucidated.

First, the term “visible minority” will be used throughout. While this is a Canadian census demographic category, I acknowledge that it should always be a *self-described* characterization. For practical reasons, I needed to make some assumptions in recruitment, but individuals were always given the chance to choose how they wished to be defined (and were able to give multifaceted responses).

It should be mentioned that the extreme sensitivity to the term “visible minority” expressed in this proposal and the choice of paradigmatic frame comes from a place of personal

experience with hybrid identities. I have always struggled with my own identification with the term, being that I am a light-skinned, biracial, and bicultural individual. My father is an Indo-Caribbean immigrant, and my mother is Canadian-born with Scottish-Irish origins, and while I inherited the fair skin and blue eyes of my mother, I also inherited my father's last name. Many people are surprised to learn that I am not actually "White" – I do not identify as White, because that would be to deny my father's blood, in my opinion – and so I am usually automatically ascribed membership in the "visible majority." I personally struggle with the accuracy of characterizing myself as a visible minority, and while I have done so when it suited me (such as on scholarship applications), I have never felt that I would be justified in speaking on behalf of people of Indian origin, Trinidadians, or visible minorities in general. I therefore sympathize with the discomfort associated with being asked to check off a box on a form, and can empathize with the uneasiness one might have at being considered a "representative" of an identity group.

Second, the term "proportional representation" will be understood in two ways, with separate terms used for each. "Mirror representation" is the sense in which proportionality has been measured by Andrew and colleagues (2008). "Substantive representation," while not a purely subjective quality, is here understood within the context of interviewees' responses. It was important for this study not to anticipate a numerical threshold for substantive representation, as the intent was to allow respondents to provide their own interpretation of how/if it works, whether they feel they contribute to it, and whether it is necessary. Both terms and their distinct definitions are essential to this study's ability to connect to the existing literature, and to deepen our understanding of the social condition.

The scope of this project consists of interviews with city councillors in Toronto and Vancouver who could be identified as visible minorities. I intended to include as many current

councillors as possible, but after receiving a lower than anticipated response rate from sitting councillors, expanded the study to past councillors and council candidates in the upcoming elections.

For practical purposes, there are a few types of potential respondents who were excluded from this research. One, it did not include visible majority (White) politicians, as a study of comparative experiences is beyond the scope of this paper. Two, I did not seek out visible minority politicians at other levels of government; however, if it was possible to interview a former council member from one of the two identified cities, they were included as a key informant. Other key informants included candidates currently on the campaign trail, as both cities are anticipating elections in 2014.

The total number of interviewees was capped at six due to time constraints and also due to the intention to keep the focus of the study on currently-elected politicians. Interview questions focussed on the individuals' experiences of how they came to the decision to run for office, the issues and groups they feel they represent, their perspectives on the "visible minority" label and how it does or does not influence their politics, potential barriers to participation in municipal-level politics, and what if anything should be done to improve rates of proportionality in council (see Appendix 1 for specifics).

3. Methodology

I posture my inquiry within the constructivist knowledge paradigm, from which a qualitative approach flows quite naturally. Based on the premise that truth – especially social truth – is relative, and specific to individual realities, no definitive assumptions are made about individuals' identities. Knowledge of others' experiences can only be recovered by reconstructing the evidence provided by subjects themselves, and building a theory around group consensus. The constructivist methodology most commonly employs a hermeneutic or dialectic style (Lincoln and Guba 2003), to which the comparative study strategy and elite interview tool lend themselves well. Elite interviews allowed the respondents to bring forward aspects of their own experience without explicit prompts. Participants were encouraged to treat their responses as a testimony which will contribute to a community dialogue around the subject. I was then able to analyze the dialogues for commonalities, differences, and anomalies to develop a nuanced narrative to describe the statistical pattern of underrepresentation.

3.1.Strategy and Sample

As mentioned above, the data collection tool used is elite interviewing for the purpose of constructing a comparative study of two cities. The cities were chosen for this case because, despite contextual differences, each exhibits the phenomenon of proportionally underrepresented visible minorities (similarities and differences are explained in detail in the Context section of this paper). The elite interview tool was selected for this study because it is the best suited for exploratory research; as there has been little research done to date on proportional representation from visible minority politicians' perspectives, this study aims to establish a theoretical basis for future work.

The sampling frame is drawn from a pool of currently-sitting city councillors in Toronto and Vancouver. To identify potential participants, I consulted biographical information on personal webpages and Wikipedia sites for references to each politician's ethnic background, and failing explicit references, analyzed photographs for visual markers. Based on these somewhat crude measures a determination was made about the suitability of each councillor for inclusion in the study as a visible minority. The selection of the cities was purposive: they are two of the largest cities in the country and each has a relatively high percentage of visible minority residents. The cities each have at least three visible minority councillors at present who fit the criteria of this study. Therefore the sampling was nonprobabilistic, as the research aimed to include all individuals within the sample frame.

Participants who were identified as eligible were recruited using an initial contact email. The email consisted of a letter outlining the study, their contextual relevance to the topic, and the researcher's interest in having them participate. While I made efforts to personalize each initial contact, a basic content frame was used for each (see Appendix 2).

As mentioned above, the research was open to contributions from key informants as identified by myself or study participants. Snowball sampling was used in the following way: at the end of the interview, each respondent was asked if they recommended that I contact another individual who might fit within the scope of the study, but who is not currently a member of council. If a recommendation was given, I determined whether that individual's contributions might enrich the dataset based on the recency and/or length of their incumbency, the frequency with which they are referenced by other respondents, or a strong anecdotal reference. A first contact letter was then sent to recruit them to participate.

There were two main ethical concerns for interviewee recruitment. The first was that the researcher-selected participants could have felt that they were being put in a box under the “visible minority” heading. There were a few mechanisms built into the research design to avoid labelling or insulting participants: the initial contact letter and pre-interview consent form were very clear about the parameters of the study and the reason for their selection; secondly, there were at least two opportunities for each participant to challenge the visible minority category and to elaborate on their own identification. During the interview, I also made clear my own reservations about using the label. The other ethical concern derives from the fact that the participants were asked to speak on the record. As such, they were notified at the time of initial contact and were asked to give written consent in advance of the interview for their contributions to be recorded and used for publication (Appendix 3).

The setting of the interviews was chosen by respondents based on their convenience and comfort level, although I provided suitable options and alternatives. For instance, distance interviews were conducted by phone or Skype, and local interviews were done at the interviewee’s office, by phone, or at another mutually agreed-on location. The main ethical consideration in selecting an appropriate location was that the participants understood that their contributions would be on the record, but were not to be considered political or campaign statements. Privacy and discretion at the time of the interview was necessary on the part of both the researcher and the participant.

3.2.Data collection

Interview data was collected, organized, and stored using tools that are confidential, secure, and systematic. An interview guide was developed (Appendix 1) to provide for convenient and consistent note-taking during the interviews. The guide provided question prompts, space for

pre-interview notes, and thematic boxes for expedient post-interview codification on common themes. While the guide was at times cumbersome when trying to record points of interest not directly related to a question, it helped keep the interview on track and ensured that each respondent had a chance to address the same prompts or questions. However, as participants were able to give differing amounts of time to the interview, I was able to expand further during some interviews, while being forced to pick and choose the best questions in others.

Each interview was also audio-recorded and transcribed immediately following its conclusion, or as soon thereafter as possible. The audio record, the handwritten notes, and transcription provide separate but corresponding data references that could be stored and accessed independently in case of loss or digital corruption.

As the interviewees had their choice of setting, the different settings may have resulted in inconsistent degrees of candidness during interviews. In anticipation of this possibility, I prepared by seeking out background information on each participant in advance of the interview. I used background research to ease the conversation into topics I thought participants would have more to say on, and to put them at ease. While I made an effort to address the same topics in all interviews (as they related to a particular city), I was less attuned to themes and patterns during earlier interviews; this made it harder to identify moments that should be followed up on or clarified.

A few other issues arose due to the timing of this study. First, the original intent was for a three-city comparison; however, I was unable to get sufficient response rates from the third city to be valid for comparison. I had difficulty with response rates in general, likely due to the fact that recruitment occurred in the middle of summer: if councillors were not busy sitting in council, they were attending summer events, campaigning, or on vacation with their families.

The sampling frame had to be adjusted to accommodate these difficulties. Data was considered sufficient when I had conducted a minimum of three respondents (including two sitting councillors) from each city; however, collection continued as long as there was time (according to a data collection deadline set with my supervisor).

To avoid misunderstandings, I ensured that consent to be quoted on-record was attained in advance of the interview date. Valid use of the contributions was further ensured by providing each respondent with a transcript of the interview as soon as it was available, and by allowing them to review the use of their words in the final draft of the document before submission to ensure they are not being misrepresented.

3.3. Analytical Methods

The ethical and conceptual validity of the findings will hinge upon maintaining the integrity of the respondents' contributions; therefore it is crucial that the analytical strategies help minimize the risk of the researcher imposing her own views or interpretations of the respondents' answers in the process of data analysis. For this reason, the researcher will rely on intense exposure to the data through open, axial, and selective coding iterations.

Exploratory and confirmatory design were used after open coding and into axial coding; an emergent conceptual framework was used during axial and into selective coding; and a clustered summary table may make the most sense during the final stages of analysis. The emphasis on exploratory and emergent tools reflects the inductive theoretical process being applied to this work.

4. Context

Vancouver and Toronto were chosen for comparative study because these major Canadian cities have some commonalities that make them worth relating, but also represent significant differences in both political structure and demographic makeup. On the point of similarities, the Toronto and Vancouver Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) have the highest threshold of immigrants and visible minorities in Canada. Indeed, as of 2006, these two CMAs ranked first and second for immigrant thresholds among all North American urban regions (Statistics Canada 2007). The municipalities of Toronto and Vancouver are the central city cores of both CMAs. They are considered “gateway” cities for new immigrants because they boast major international airports (and more traditionally, shipping ports) and tend to attract newcomers as diverse metropolitan areas. Furthermore, Toronto and Vancouver have two of the highest proportions of both immigrants and visible minorities in the country, both near or above 50 percent and growing. Both cities exhibit a lower degree of proportionality of visible minority councillors.

On the side of differences, Toronto uses a single-person ward system with at-large mayoral elections, while Vancouver’s system consists of at-large elections without wards. Both cities are at the foundation of “polycentric metropolitan systems” (Lightbody 2005, p.550); however, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) is governed by multiple municipalities, while, the current City of Toronto has changed boundaries through an amalgamation process in the late 1990s that incorporated six municipalities and drastically reduced the number of municipal electoral seats.

Furthermore, the cities’ differing ethnic demographic makeup may be politically salient, especially given this topic. The Vancouver CMA has an extremely high proportion of ethnic Chinese residents, at 18.2 percent of the total population. The second-largest visible minority

group, at only half the size of the Chinese, is the South Asian population with 9.9 percent. Filipinos were the third-largest visible minority population, accounting for 3.8 percent (Statistics Canada 2010b). In contrast, while Toronto's largest visible minority groups also represent a substantial fraction of the population, there is more diversity of origins and no one dominant group. South Asians are the largest group at 12 percent, followed closely by Chinese at 11.4 percent; Blacks represent 8.4 percent; Filipinos 4.1 percent; and Latin Americans 2.6 percent (City of Toronto, no date). In terms of potential ethnic community votes, these numbers are potentially significant.

4.1.Vancouver

A city of over 603,000 and growing (City of Vancouver 2014), Vancouver has a history of immigration from non-traditional source countries that stretches back to the construction of the transcontinental railway. South and East Asian immigrants have settled in the lower mainland region for 150 years, the most recent influx of which consisted of highly skilled economic migrants from Hong Kong before 1997. The city's visible minority population at present stands at 51.8 percent (National Household Survey 2011). By *Employment Equity Act* definition, currently 3 out of 11 council members are visible minorities. Proportionality stands at 27.3 percent of council, or 0.53 on the proportionality index.

Because Vancouver does not use the ward system, neighbourhood demographics are less likely to come into play during electoral races. However, the city's relatively high partisanship has been extremely significant in overturning incumbent council members, especially recently. There are three main city-level parties: the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), a political organization and frequent governing party situated right of centre and generally business and development-minded; the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), which sits left of centre;

and Vision Vancouver, a centre-left party which grew out of the COPE caucus in 2004 and ran its first slate of candidates in 2005. Vision Vancouver is the current governing party, holding eight out of a possible eleven seats including the mayoralty.

4.2.Toronto

Incorporating the former Metro Toronto, York, North York, Etobicoke, East York, and Scarborough, the present-day City of Toronto boasts 2,615,000 inhabitants (City of Toronto 2012). As of the last National Household Survey, 49.1 of those residents are visible minorities. Presently, only five of 45 city council members are visible minorities in Toronto. Representing 11 percent of council, the city's proportionality index stands at a dismal 0.22.

As a ward-based municipality, the neighbourhood demographic is highly relevant to council contest outcomes. Siemiatycki & Marshall (2014) have documented the drastic differences in voter turnout and its negative correlation with immigrant and visible minority status in the City of Toronto.

Before amalgamation, there was a two-tier council system in Metropolitan Toronto, with the City of Toronto and five boroughs being represented. In the transitional period between 1998-2000 the second-tier status was eliminated and council was comprised of 58 seats, but ultimately, the new City was left with 44 wards and one mayor. While the councillor elections are ward-specific, the mayoral race is city-wide in a region that encompasses 23 federal electoral districts. This presents a logistical and financial challenge to anyone hoping to run for that office, potentially excluding those without influential connections, experience, or personal wealth.

The above profiles provide an interesting study given that the political realities are counterintuitive to the systemic and demographic circumstances. One might expect that Toronto,

with its more diverse population, ward system, and 45 council seats, would result in a council that is more demographically proportionate. In fact, Vancouver's proportionality ratio is double that of Toronto's despite using an at-large system for just ten council seats in a less heterogeneous population. The only other difference, and one which is certainly important here, is the fact that Vancouver's electoral system allows for political parties, while Toronto's does not. The role of political parties was investigated in the interviews to better understand this discrepancy.

5. Participants

The original research for this study took place over a period of one month between July 12 and August 20, 2014. In all, six individuals took part in interviews that lasted from 30 minutes to 75 minutes depending on available time. While all visible minority councillors in Toronto and Vancouver were contacted, the challenge of summer scheduling made it difficult to arrange interviews with many potential respondents.

In Vancouver, Councillors Raymond Louie and Kerry Jang, both of Vision Vancouver, were able to participate. Cllr. Louie is a four-term city councillor. He was elected first as a member of COPE in 2002, and later helped form Vision Vancouver. He is currently Vice-Chair of the Metro Vancouver region (representing 22 municipalities) and first Vice-President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Louie is second-generation Canadian, his parents having immigrated from China; he grew up speaking Cantonese at home, but speaks English as a native language.

Cllr. Jang is completing his second term as a Vision Vancouver councillor, first elected in 2008. He is also a tenured professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia. As a third-generation Canadian (his parents emigrated from China), Jang speaks some Cantonese; however, English is his first and only language of fluency.

On Cllrs. Louie and Jang's recommendation Niki Sharma, an elected Park Board Commissioner, was also contacted. Cmmr. Sharma is running for city councillor with Vision Vancouver in the upcoming November 2014 election. She was deemed to be an appropriate addition to the study based on her previous campaigning and party nomination experience, as well as her position as a visible minority woman who is also the mother of an infant. It was thought that her input would broaden the discussion by bringing in different perspectives.

Sharma was born in Canada to Indian immigrant parents, who raised her in the small town of Sparwood, BC. She speaks some Hindi, but considers herself to be fluent only in English. She has a degree in Environmental Biology and is a lawyer practicing Aboriginal law.

In Toronto, only one out of five possible visible minority councillors was able to make time for this study. Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam is a first-term councillor in Ward 27, elected in 2010 and running for re-election in October 2014. Prior to being elected, she was a small business owner and had worked in the financial and real estate sector for 16 years. As her parents relocated the family from China to Canada when she was four years old, she speaks Cantonese as her first language but is fluent in English. She is also a community activist, and has been recognized as Toronto City Council's first out lesbian.

Given the challenges of recruiting sitting councillors to participate, it was necessary to turn to visible minority candidates who were not currently elected. A *Now Magazine* article was helpful in highlighting a handful of new, younger candidates who fit the profile of this study (Spurr 2014). Andray Domise, running in Ward 2, holds a B.A. in Political Science and is a financial planner for SunLife Financial. He grew up in the Rexdale area of the ward to Jamaican immigrant parents. English is his first language.

Idil Burale, running in Ward 1, was born and raised in that area, where her family settled after leaving Somalia. She has a degree from the University of Toronto and a background working as a Liberal political staffer at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. She is a community advocate who works to highlight issues specific to the Somali community and her neighbourhood. She is fluent in Somali and English, but has an interest in learning romance languages.

While time was undoubtedly the main limitation to recruiting participants to this study, it should also be acknowledged that the avenues of recruitment reflect a left-slanting political bias. Initially, all currently-sitting visible minority councillors in Toronto and Vancouver were contacted for inclusion in this study regardless of their political leanings. Likely not by chance, left-leaning politicians were more interested in discussing a topic related to identity politics, and therefore made time to participate. All three of the sitting visible minority councillors in Vancouver are members of Vision Vancouver; thus, when asked for names for the snowball sample, they suggested members of their own party. In Toronto, the sitting visible minority councillors are more varied in their political views, and it would have been interesting to have that reflected in the participation sample. As only Cllr. Wong-Tam was able to participate, her centre-left perspective is the only one on record here. However, the secondary source of recruitment – the *Now Magazine* article – specifically highlighted progressive candidates who were challenging the populist right-wing status quo in a particular region of the city. Nevertheless, the leftist slant of the respondents may speak to a broader trend in local-level elite participation for visible minority individuals.

On the other hand, the sample is quite representative in other ways. Besides there being three participants from each city in the study, half are men and half are women. The interviewees are ethnically Chinese, Indian, Somali, and Jamaican, and represent first, second, and third-generation Canadians. They speak a range of different languages, and have different religious affiliations including Islam, Hinduism, and the United Church of Canada. They have a variety of educational and employment backgrounds, and range in age from late 20s to mid-50s. Participants represent different stages of the life cycle and identify as both heterosexual and queer.

6. Discussion

In the spirit of the constructivist paradigm, the data was analyzed thematically in a spiraled continuum. As themes and dialogues were identified and iterated within and across interviews, patterns emerged from the dialectic. In considering the central question of why there are fewer visible minorities represented at the local level, I found that there are two main causes: first, that there are simply fewer points of entry into elite-level municipal politics for individuals from marginalized groups; and second, that those entry points are further obscured or limited by systemic barriers. However before those entry points and systemic barriers are identified, it is necessary to consider the identity context of the interviewees, as well as their representational objectives and realities.

6.1.The “Slippery Slope” of Mirror Representation and Problematizing the “Visible Minority” Label

Just as in the literature review, interview respondents identified theoretical and practical challenges to using the term “visible minority,” and also to the validity of mirror representation as a measure of substantive minority representation. Respondents were explicitly asked whether they identified with the *Employment Equity Act* definition, as well as whether they felt the term was offensive or incorrect. Despite this, the question of labelling came up again and again throughout the interviews, in some cases even before it was introduced by the interviewer. Respondents elaborated on their relationship with the term as it is used to describe themselves and others, highlighted other terminology they felt others used to describe them, and asserted their own identities and community affiliations as distinct from the assumptions made about them.

6.1.1. Identification as a visible minority. When questioning respondents about their relationship with the visible minority label, it became clear that there was no comfortable way

either to ask or answer the question in the bald language used by the census, which defines visible minority as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” (Employment Equity Act 1995, s.3). When asked directly, some respondents answered with “I guess I do,” “I probably do,” or “I’m not sure” (Louie 2014, Sharma 2014, Wong-Tam 2014). Their discomfort and hesitancy with the term led to a full-bodied discussion about why they felt it to be problematic. Most interviewees asserted a preference to be identified using different terminology that they felt was either more accurate, less offensive, or both than the statistical category. Jang noted a preference to select “Chinese,” stating, “Call me what I am” because “I hate the word Asian. I don’t want to be lumped in with all the other ones. I’m Chinese. Period.” Sharma also rejected the “South Asian” designation as too unspecific, as “South Asia’s a huge place.” Meanwhile Domise preferred the use of “people of colour” or “African-Canadian.” Sharma and Burale, who were both born and raised in Canada, preferred to be called “Canadian” and “Torontonians” respectively. These responses demonstrate the limitations of the term, as well as the generalizations inherent in it as a category. Respondents seemed to be more likely to refer to themselves by either their ethnic, national, or geographic heritage.

In contrast, Burale (2014) was the only interviewee to respond affirmatively and without hesitation to the visible minority identity question, but qualified her response by asserting her mistrust for the term. She also challenged the “people of colour” alternative: “I’ve always found [it] hilarious, because what are we, crayons? So what are White people, invisible? So if you’re a visible minority then you would assume there’s an ‘invisible majority.’” Burale’s commentary points to a false dichotomy that these terms set up, and hints at the sociological and

psychological impacts they have when internalized by society at large. This problematic was addressed in detail by all respondents, and is further explored next.

6.1.2. Problematizing the nomenclature. A frequent comment from participants was that the “minority” aspect of visible minority was a highly relative measure, and in their own experience it was inaccurate. From a statistical perspective, Louie and Sharma both noted that in the City of Vancouver the majority of the population are people of colour. Burale pointed out that there are demographic discrepancies even within the same city, as in her ward, the White population is in the minority.

Half of the respondents used the word “meaningless” to describe or define visible minority. Jang asserted that it was a “category of convenience” for statisticians and did not have value unless it was disaggregated and applied to a specific question. Like me, Sharma considered the label to be practically problematic when considering mixed-race individuals, such as her daughter. Both she and Burale asked, “What does that mean?” and, although the question first appeared to be rhetorical, both respondents inferred that there was a hidden or sinister implication behind the seemingly innocuous government-issue term. Domise asserted his distaste for census vocabulary, citing the historical usage of the word “Black” to identify chattel slaves and to enforce the social hierarchy.

Some respondents challenged the majority-minority binary as a “*de facto* norm” (Wong-Tam 2014), calling it a “symbolic inaccuracy” (Burale 2014). Wong-Tam elaborated on her position:

Sometimes I stand in the middle of a busy subway platform and I turn around and I think, you know, I’m now part of the world majority. I don’t see myself as being the visible minority anymore. But what I think is very important is that we recognize the differences that ... live among all of us, and that we don’t necessarily buy into what is the norm. So for me, the norm is not necessarily the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Because I’m not sure that’s the norm of Toronto anymore. In 21st century Toronto I actually think there’s

such a cacophony of diversity with respect to race and skin colour, ethnicity and religion, and gender and gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, class...it's really hard to say what is the norm.

Significantly, the binary opposite to “norm” would be “alternative,” “abnormal,” or “unusual,” all of which smack of marginalization. As Wong-Tam argues here, this perspective is both statistically untrue and runs counter to the spirit of Toronto as a diverse, multicultural city.

Sharma identified both halves of the term as being offensive: “visible” puts the focus on skin colour, and “minority” is othering: “just in its actual terminology, [it] makes the other feel like you're not part of the “normal” majority ... so I don't know, I don't like it.” On the same train of thought, Burale states, “I think that words have power, and that's how people forget. So when people say visible minority it shouldn't be to diminish the power that a group would have.” Wong-Tam picked up on the connotations of exclusion in the terminology and called for systemic change:

I think we need to try to find language that is going to be far more inclusive, and far more reflective of a true, diverse reality, based on the demographic shifts that are upon us. Because we've been able to do it in many other instances ... we have the evolution of language to ensure that no one gets left behind, that everyone feels included. And I think we are going to find a way to adapt new language whether it's pre-existing but we haven't figured out which words to use yet, or for (a new) language that is made up. We are going to be able to identify people as diverse people and let it be inclusive and not necessarily create a *de facto* norm based on whiteness.

Given the responses of the interviewees, a shift to new terminology seems imperative going forward. However, the differences in word preference among even these six individuals is indicative of the difficulties in finding language that would be agreeable to everyone.

6.1.3. Does the “visible minority” category have value? After having a chance to consider and dissect the nomenclature, respondents were asked whether they thought that the demographic category was a useful one. Domise argued that it is “useful for sort of broad social implications,” but then needed to be broken down by sub-categories. With regard to this

particular study, he agreed that “it does provide you with a place to start, to say that, you know, given that there are so many people that are not being represented on council, then you have room for a whole lot of blind spots to develop.” Burale made the distinction between being a visible majority in one’s own community and being a minority on council. From this view, council members could be thought of as a distinct community which does or does not reflect its electorate.

An alternative argument was put forward by Jang, who regarded the category as a “proxy variable” for ideas. He argued, “It’s not the skin colour that matters, it’s the variety of their views. It’s in their perspectives.” This argument supports the notion that an individual does not need to belong to a particular community in order to represent their perspectives and interests. As was suggested by Andrew et al. (2008), substantive representation has little to do with mirror representation.

Given the dissatisfaction, distaste, and illogic surrounding the visible minority term and category, it might be helpful going forward to employ a lens of racialization when discussing populations of colour. Critical race theory provides the conceptual clarity needed to be able to discuss “visible minority” status as a constructed category, and it allows us to take into consideration the social baggage of exclusion.

6.2.Painting a Picture of Substantive Representation

In section 2, I established that substantive representation can be measured using a question such as: Are you making a difference for a particular group or for the broader diversity agenda? In order to derive an answer to this, respondents were asked to identify specific groups or causes that they felt they advocated for, and to describe their relationship with their own communities of belonging. This section seeks to paint a picture of these relationships by detailing the ways in

which these communities are represented on council and illuminating the gaps where certain perspectives may not be represented. The resultant picture portrays the respondents as socially conscientious but politically cautious: they are mindful if not driven by their communities of origin, but take seriously the role of representing the inhabitants of a geographical territory.

6.2.1. “I represent everyone.” A common but not unexpected response to the question of representation was that a councillor’s role is to represent everyone in the electoral district where they hold office. Louie thought very highly of his colleagues’ diversity of perspectives, regardless of their community affiliations, and suggested that his city may not have a substantive representation problem:

...I try very hard to represent every ethnic group and give them the best opportunity to be represented on council. I work very hard at that, and I know my other colleagues that, whether they are of ethnic minority or not, value highly the input and feedback that we receive from our minority populations in the City of Vancouver. And that’s why I think it’s...it is different here in Vancouver.

In a different political context, Domise saw the need to expand his advocacy to issues that affected the ward as a whole:

...No, I don’t see myself as representing African-Canadians. I represent Ward 2. And there’s a whole lot of people inside of Ward 2, right? So I’m not here to represent any one group. ... [When other ethnic groups] tell me what it is they need I’m not going to say, “Well my job is to represent African-Canadians. Sorry.” I’m here to represent everyone. I am one voice on one council that happens to be African-Canadian, so therefore I understand African-Canadian issues better than some other people might. So that’s the full extent of what I think that means.

Burale framed her own answer to the question in the context of a conversation she had had with Wong-Tam in the past, in which Burale asked Wong-Tam whether her Chinese identity, her gender identity, and her sexual orientation were ever in conflict. “She gave a good answer,” Burale confirmed, relaying that “she doesn’t think like that. Other people may see her in that role. But for her it’s about what makes more sense for the majority of people in her ward. And that’s how she votes and makes decisions. Not constantly being aware of ‘Oh my God, I need to

represent as the token!’” Presumably, Burale agrees with the point of view that a visible minority councillor should not exclusively represent a particular ethnic community, nor should they be held to that expectation.

6.2.2. A closer connection. All of the politicians interviewed agreed that, while they may not have set out with the intention of representing their ethnic group, they were happy to advocate for them from time to time. Louie explained,

I think it is natural for those that are newer to the country to try to look for associations, and affiliations with those of like mind – you know, ‘birds of a feather flock together,’ as the saying goes. And because I speak an additional language, and it may or may not be their language, but there may be a closer connection to a person of colour because they hopefully will understand the struggle that they’re going through. And usually that would be the case. In my instance I have some level of understanding, and they don’t feel as threatened perhaps, or challenged, than speaking with others.

Other respondents said that their multifaceted identities and employment backgrounds offered up a variety of opportunities to represent different groups. Sharma felt that she could speak to the “Canadian experience” that is common to second-generation Canadians and others born in the country. She also said, “Because I am of an Indian background, people see me and think, ‘Oh, that’s a path for us to talk to her about what my issue is.’ And I think that’s a natural human reaction.” While this is a service she is happy to provide, she does not feel like she represents them more as there are many facets to her identity that she strives to advocate for. One of these facets is motherhood, and she hopes to bring forward issues and be a role model for women in the reproductive stage of their lives. On the other hand, Sharma also acknowledges that ethnic community members may have a different take on her role. Further discussion on the topic of representation yielded the interesting point that Sharma supports battered women support services. She pointed out that domestic violence affects her (Indian) community in particular due to a cultural aversion to discuss family problems outside of the home. She agreed

that issues affecting a particular community were addressed to best effect when raised by a member of the in-group.

Burale positioned herself as a champion for marginalized communities as someone who “operates from the periphery”: “My whole endeavour, my whole goal, is to bring those stories, those experiences, into the mainstream discussions of how we plan for the city, but also how we celebrate it. And how we describe it on to others. How do we create our own mythology?” As perhaps the only respondent to reject the centrist representative position, Burale stands out among the group; yet, it is important to consider that she may believe her ward as a whole exists on the city’s periphery, as it is physically removed from the urban core, has high rates of poverty and crime, and a particularly large immigrant and racialized population.

6.2.3. Do we need more proportional representation? When asked to interviewees, this question prompted responses that unpeeled some of the layers of assumptions inherent in the issue of representation. Highlighting diverse dimensions of identity, Louie felt that there was a need for more women and a greater diversity of age on council, but remained unconvinced that more visible minorities would bring a greater range of perspectives. Domise, who emphasized the need for different points of view on council, also challenged the perspective of some racial or ethnic communities that are content with a single representative at any level of government. Such is the case, according to Domise, with the Black community in Toronto. “Why’re you trying to project everything onto [Cllr. Michael Thompson] instead of trying to get more people from the community elected? Therefore you have more representation on council! But we’ve satisfied ourselves with low representation; that’s just all it’s gonna be. So he’ll just solve all of our problems. And that’s a completely defeatist mentality.”

While Domise advocated for actively pushing for greater levels of representation, Wong-Tam suggested that it is only a matter of time before things begin to even out:

[A]s we see more people of colour rise to senior management positions, take up elected office, as we see more women sit in roles of decision-making at the corporate level, or perhaps you know, take up trades that have not been traditional, all of that to me is very positive and is just part of the evolution of what is a diverse city. So I don't believe it's going to happen overnight, but in my lifetime I have seen it happen. And I myself represent that change.

This perspective brings us back to the question of whether or not there are systemic barriers that need to be removed in order for marginalized groups to gain access to elite politics.

6.2.4. Race or ethnicity as insufficient. A number of the respondents suggested that it was not enough for an individual to be a member of a minority group in order to represent them responsibly in council. For his part, Jang refuted the notion that a visible minority presence is needed in council, saying that “it’s what skills you bring to the table. ... Some people make a big deal about race; I don’t.” Sharma added that it was not enough to simply belong to a particular community; you had to be good at your job. When I asked her whether she thought that disadvantaged or minority candidates had to be better at their jobs than White candidates, she talked about the pressure involved in campaigning as a South Asian candidate (previous South Asians had had poor results, despite a solid party showing). It would seem that a candidate who is both a member of a visible minority group and who wishes to represent them would be required to work hard to get their ideas heard by a majority of the electorate above the noise of their supposed group bias, while maintaining a positive relationship with their community who may be hoping for their advocacy.

6.2.5. “I try not to embarrass my people.” Four out of the six participants mentioned the desire to stay in the good graces of their ethnic community, regardless of whether it was their intention to represent them. Louie explained his personal accountability to his community thus:

“I make sure that I try to not embarrass anyone. But it’s not dissimilar to the old saying of, you know, ‘What would your mother say?’”

When asked about the potential for conflicts between his identity group and other interest groups, Jang agreed that there are “absolutely” conflicts at times. “You’re really pushing because of your identification; your ethnic identification as a Chinese, for ‘your people,’ if you like,” he explained. “There’s the expectation I should be their advocate for Chinese affairs. And I am, and have been. And that’s an expectation I’m happy to do, because I’m one of [them.] They’re my people too, right?”

But on the other side of the equation, Burale discusses the pressure involved in being a community advocate, in particular, when you are the first or only representative the region has seen: “You want to do your job as a councillor, but the burden of representation will always be there. Like, if you screw up, it’s not just you, Idil Burale, who screwed up: people are going to find a way to tarnish your entire community as a result.” Individuals who belong to marginalized groups appear to carry far more political weight in their actions than do individuals who come from dominant groups.

6.3. “Through the Looking Glass”: Political Entry Points and Inspiration

The individuals that I spoke to were at different points in their political careers, but each had achieved a level of political engagement that engendered them to enter into the elite level. Of the six respondents, four had already been elected to a municipal office, and three were city councillors. However, all these individuals deserve equal credit for putting themselves in such a risky position of public visibility and scrutiny, regardless of whether it was intended as a career advancement or as an opportunity to draw attention to community issues. While three of the respondents are untested council candidates whose political success rates cannot yet be

measured, the factors that led to their decision to run for council can still be analyzed alongside the sitting councillors. This section brings into focus the various points of entry that led to career politics, and the role models that inspire them.

6.3.1. Entry points. Notably, every single interviewee cited involvement in an organization prior to their decision to run for office. The most common of these was, unsurprisingly, political party experience. Jang, Domise, and Sharma became familiar with party politics as volunteers during earlier campaigns. Sharma volunteered on Vision Vancouver's advisory committees, lending her professional expertise and opinion. She found that she really "loved what they were doing," so when she was later asked if she would consider running, she said yes. Having won the nomination, her name is now on the ballot for the upcoming election.

While this seems like quite a straightforward path, it differs somewhat from the experiences of Jang and Domise, who became involved with federal and provincial parties before moving to municipal politics. Domise had experience as a "low-level" volunteer on a number of leadership and riding campaigns at both levels of government, though he noticed a lack of engagement between the party executive and the volunteers. Jang quite comically described his initial decision to volunteer for the NDP as an essentially spiteful attempt to ensure the failure of another individual who had made a sexist comment at a club dinner: "And so, I joined the NDP to support [his opponent's] campaign, and we kicked the sh*t out of him. I was happy, and I've been active ever since." While the story was told somewhat glibly, it does demonstrate that people tend to get involved in politics when they feel a personal connection to the issues or the candidates.

Prior to getting involved in party politics, Louie was a national-level union activist with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. He was asked to run for

municipal office by the secretary-treasurer of his local. Upon reflection, he considered that his young age at that time, his skills in debating, and his minority status factored into the suggestion for him to run: “I think part of that equation was the fact that I was an ethnic minority. That it was something that my union was supportive of, to give voice and vote and opportunity to all peoples, and this would be a good opportunity to have that happen not just in a union framework or a job site, but in a wider ... government-type arena.” Louie was able to use the skills and experience he gained in union activism, as well as professional recommendations, to gain the party nomination. Although he lost in his first bid in 1999, he credits his eventual success in becoming one of the youngest members of council to the name recognition he gained during the first attempt. I would add that he was also fortunate that his party maintained him on the ballot three years later, affording him the opportunity to increase his knowledge of local issues.

Sharma, Wong-Tam, and Burale all referenced experience in grassroots community organizations prior to and during their political careers. Sharma was involved with environmental activism and a local battered women’s shelter. Wong-Tam was a founding member of a neighbourhood organization and a Business Improvement Area (BIA) as well as a human rights activist. Burale had gotten involved in a Somali women’s group called Positive Change that advocated for systemic change to address the issue of young Black men perpetrating and falling victim to gun violence.

An interesting point about these organizational connections is that each of the respondents self-selected and committed themselves based on a value system. Their decision to run for office in some cases was a reaction to a suggestion from another individual, but for others evolved naturally out of their activities.

Finally but not insignificantly, Burale was the only individual to have gone through a specific leadership training program. She is currently a Studio Y fellow at MaRS, the largest research and innovation institute in the country. Studio Y fellows are young Canadians (between 18-29) who bring an idea they are excited about into the program, where they receive mentorship and support as they develop it. Burale's idea centres on community capacity-building and political engagement. As her full-time fellowship began in January, she told me, she came to the conclusion that if she was going to encourage other people to get involved, she would have to lead by example. When prompted, she said that the fellowship was a huge part of the reason she decided to run, as it afforded her the communal, technical, and financial support she needed to be able to mount a campaign. Because she is an individual who rejects party politics, the Studio Y fellowship provided an alternative entry point for Burale.

6.3.2. Role models. Participants were asked to identify their political role models or “heroes”; people who inspired or influenced them in their political view of the world. Almost all respondents listed at least one individual who was not only a person of colour, but notable for their racial or cultural activism.

Nelson Mandela was cited by both Sharma and Wong-Tam. Sharma spent some time volunteering in post-apartheid South Africa, and was impressed by his ability to “find a path toward peace” in the midst of such a desperate situation. Wong-Tam pointed to his ability to “rise up against so much oppression” as a non-violent resister. Other civil rights leaders, such as Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Bayard Rustin, and Stokely Carmichael, were listed by Domise as game-changers for the racialized African diasporic community. Jang referenced Li Hongzhang, a Chinese diplomat who, during the Opium wars with Britain, fought to eradicate the harmful drug's influence from his society. Though the Chinese lost the war, Li Hongzhang negotiated

the treaty that saw Hong Kong's to China over 100 years later. Wong-Tam also mentioned an ethnic group, Canada's First Nations community, as one deserving notice and respect for its use of nonviolence and dialogue to draw attention to issues.

Other people of influence included individuals with whom the respondents had worked closely. Louie mentioned other city councillors whom he respected and learned from during his time in office. Burale spoke highly of fellow members of her community organization, Positive Change, for their strength of character and perseverance for the cause in the face of personal loss.

Perhaps more conventionally, Jang put forward NDP hero and founder of Medicare Tommy Douglas, as well as two British Prime Ministers, Thatcher and Churchill. Each of these individuals was notable for their strong leadership and personal quirks in the face of intense opposition.

Another interesting addition from Burale was her mention of current City of Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi, who was originally considered for inclusion in this study. She claimed that, as the first Muslim mayor of a major North American city, he provided inspiration and proof that it could be done—in addition to being an innovator and a people's favourite. The significance of a young woman from a marginalized community striving for elected office on the coattails of a popular visible minority mayor in another part of the country should not be understated; this idea is fleshed out further in a later part of this paper.

6.4.Demystifying Systemic Barriers to Elite Political Participation

Systemic barriers can be slippery to pin down, as institutions are rarely overtly biased in a country that upholds equality by constitutional charter. However, as study participants divulged some of the challenges they personally came across, or that were described to them by others, there were a number of recurring issues. Some of these barriers brushed up against specific

aspects of the interviewees' identity, such as the negative use of words, racism, cultural barriers, and expectations placed on women. Other barriers were systemic gaps through which disadvantaged groups were likely to fall, such as with election rules, political party operations, and voter group relationships with the electoral system. Running through all of these are the two subtexts identified in the preceding section, which become barriers in and of themselves: first, that organizational support is an important access point; and second, that individuals need to feel engaged and connected to the democratic ideal on a personal level or they will not participate.

6.4.1. Negative or oppressive use of words. As Burale mentioned above, “words have power.” It is critical that vocabulary be selected with care, and that governing institutions re-evaluate their effect regularly. Sharma talked about her day-to-day experience living under the banner of a person of colour. People who are deemed to be “visible minorities” are subject to more public inquiry as to their background, regardless of their wishes. She made the analogy of the “ethnic foods” section of the grocery store, in which she needed to walk down a specialized aisle to access food that might be normal for her, but as it was non-White, was deemed too different to be integrated. As Wong-Tam noted, racialized individuals deserve to be afforded the respect of language that other groups are getting, such as the attention that gender identity has started to receive. By bringing the conversation of nomenclature into the spotlight, issues faced by non-cis-gendered individuals also get attention. Meanwhile, for as long as the visible minority terminology goes untested, the suppressive nature of the language and the accompanying problems that racialized individuals face will continue to fly under the radar.

6.4.2. Racism and White privilege. Unlike in some parts of the world, in Canada the existence of racism and White privilege is harder to prove because it is insidious: it is an access barrier that defies the equality we are guaranteed by *Charter* right. Respondents mentioned

some examples of racism impacting their abilities to succeed politically. For instance: Sharma was required to work harder than her competitors to dispel the negative assumptions that she, as a South Asian candidate, was running just to represent her ethnic group. Domise and Burale talked about the scarcity of people of colour in paid positions within political parties, and with reference to the experiences of people they knew, speculated that racialized individuals were less likely to be called back for job interviews. Another problem, raised by Domise, is that members of the dominant culture—young White males in particular—are viewed by the party establishment as “having potential,” whereas peripheral group contributors are expected to come in with the skills and experience ready to do the job. Young White males are thus more likely to benefit from training and mentorship within the party than other people.

Louie and Jang recounted experiences as councillors where they were attacked for their positions on issues of interest to their own ethnic group, such as the Chinese head tax. Both councillors responded to these sometimes overtly racist challenges by publicly shrugging them off, though they may have wanted to denounce them.

Besides being less likely to be challenged on their views, dominant group individuals benefit from the “invisibility” of their culture and ethnicity in other ways, too. Sharma and Burale suggested that White individuals had the benefit of being accepted as “the norm,” and were able to go about their lives without being constantly required to defend their status, culture, language ability, or beliefs. Burale argued that it goes beyond one group’s self-importance, and extends into the marginalized community as well: “There is this unfair bias that only a White person can govern for all, but a visible minority will have a biased appreciation for their own first and foremost. So other visible minorities don’t feel comfortable voting for another visible

minority; they would rather vote for a White person.” This shows how deeply generations of White governance has permeated the psyche of non-Whites.

6.4.3. Voters’ relationship with the electoral system. While voter apathy or disengagement is certainly a problem across the board, certain groups are less likely to be involved or interested than others. Burale gave the example of her mother, an immigrant for 25 years who still votes for the Liberal party because they are “the nice people who let us in the country”—and only attends the polls at the insistence of Burale herself. She also talked about her struggles canvassing in explaining to disengaged voters, again and again, that there were no political parties in municipal government. Most voters seemed to be more comfortable with the idea of parties because it was easier for them to recognize candidates whose policies they were likely to agree with without having to get to know what those policies were.

Louie, Burale, and Domise all mentioned that residents generally had a dislike for politicians, a view for which Domise did not blame them. Politicians have a habit of promising big things for their communities when they need to get elected, but years of waiting on their delivery has left many residents jaded and distrustful of new promises. Louie, who comes from a print media background, argued that the media had a role to play in making politics more digestible for citizens. He pointed to the media’s current manic obsession with producing new content as being damaging to the quality and coherence of real, actionable news. A few respondents also stated that local government was “the closest to the people.” This is an interesting proposition within the context of the general populace’s current state of minimal knowledge and involvement with municipal politics. Although it is seemingly at odds with present realities, the sentiment is that the services and infrastructure provided for by municipalities have the most immediate impact on most people’s daily lives, and so they should

in theory have more of a stake in their outcomes. The barrier here, then, is a relational one which might be corrected with better information-sharing and relationship-building.

6.4.4. Election regulations. Elections are regulated by the level of government they impact, with the legislative exception that municipalities are governed by provincial law. Burale mentioned that campaigning rules had an impact on the ability of unprivileged and unsupported candidates to mount a competitive campaign. She argued that the current nine-month campaign period is beneficial because it provides time for new candidates to learn the ropes and build momentum (although others have argued that it is too long and difficult to sustain for individuals with limited funds.) She also pointed to campaign donation caps as being helpful in levelling the playing field to some degree.

Jang, Sharma, and Louie all discussed Vancouver's recent referendum which debated the merits of the ward system over the city's current at-large system. This was a detailed and recurring topic; however, respondents generally had little background information with which to back up their opinions. Moreover, the Vancouver commentary as contrasted with the lived experiences of the Toronto respondents did not bring to light any clear advantages of either system. For instance, Domise and Jang both asserted strong preferences for the at-large system in their cities. Domise thought that an at-large system would help bring together different parts of the city to achieve common goals, rather than working against each other. Jang recounted a debate with an acquaintance wherein he defended the at-large system as being more democratic for more dispersed populations against his friend's suggestion that it was inherently racist. On the other hand, Louie thought that the ward system had value, but likely served a larger metropolis like Toronto better; mid-sized and growing cities like Vancouver would benefit best from at-large voting. The added complication of allowing political parties at the municipal level

was also up for debate. Burale and Domise both had a marked disinclination for allowing parties (for reasons discussed below) but liked the idea of ranked ballots, whereas all three Vancouver respondents felt that their own party was doing a great job of mentoring and integrating a diverse new political membership. In sum, both systems appear to have benefits and drawbacks for visible minorities and in general.

6.4.5. Lack of a support network. Section 6.3. argued that organizations were crucial as entry points into elite politics; however, many of the respondents had something to say about the challenges they faced in obtaining support from established organizations. Wong-Tam, Burale, and Domise talked about the difficulties of mounting a campaign without any endorsements or aid from the political establishment or the media. Domise described how, after he asserted the need for more African-Canadian candidates on radio to a studio producer, she told him that he was the only person who had ever said that to her. Not only had the station not taken any precautionary measures to balance out the political voices being heard, but the Black community also had not been demanding it.

The government itself can be viewed as a type of organization which can help or hinder marginalized groups' opportunities to engage. Wong-Tam expressed her belief that it is the responsibility of decision-makers to base their decisions not only on the "evidence" as it is presented, since statistics and reports reflect the biases of their creators; rather, decision-makers need to undergird their decisions with their own value systems. Domise's run for office was provoked in part by what he saw as a lack of leadership from current and previous Ward 2 councillors who had made big promises but who, in his view, failed to act in the best interests of the community. In the outgoing councillor's wake, he felt that it was harder for him to reach out to grassroots groups that had been burned before: "I have had a couple of organizations sort of

change their minds [about the kind of politician I am], and then want to start working with me. But I don't expect that, and I don't think many other Caribbean-Canadians expect that either, because they've played this game already. They know that there's no help coming." Domise is referring to the organizations' disenchantment with the political process and their skepticism with anyone associated with it, regardless of the integrity of their promises to help. This is one example of how the accumulated experience of marginalization and powerlessness can become a barrier for in-group community members to get political support from their own community.

A specific example of poor organizational relationships was given by Domise, who had a negative experience when he approached a particular Caribbean ethnospecific organization for support with his electoral bid. He expressed his frustration, both during the interview and in person to the President of that organization, with his community's lack of leadership and support for individuals who were striving to accomplish something new. He argued that the Caribbean-Canadian community has a passive attitude towards helping themselves that is self-destructive. Domise called for community political incubators to foster leadership and build political capacity among youth. Interestingly, Burale is a member of two such organizations: the Studio Y fellowship described above, and Women in Toronto Politics, which is a grassroots, nonpartisan, capacity-building organization that brings together like-minded young women and their allies. Her involvement in these types of community groups precluding her bid for office enforces the power that community support has.

6.4.6. Political parties. Under the umbrella of organizational support, political parties are in a position of significant influence, both as an entry point for political newcomers, and with regards to their potential to influence the makeup of the political landscape. Depending on the

management structure of a political party as either top-down or bottom-up, they can be a barrier or a gateway to participation.

Respondents picked out the nomination process as their first significant hurdle in running for office, particularly in Vancouver where the party system is in place at the local level. All three Vision Vancouver members lauded their party's transparent and democratic nomination process, but pointed to other parties as being far more opaque, involving executive appointments behind closed doors. Burale also mentioned her dislike for the control exerted over candidates with regards to the ridings in which they were allowed to run. She found it "condescending" that visible minorities are generally allowed to run either in ridings where their own ethnic group holds a plurality, or where the party does not expect to win the seat but can still take credit for having a diversified slate. Moreover, she suggested that party executives played favourites with campaign support, in terms of financial resources and visits by the party leadership, to the detriment of women candidates and minorities. All of these were listed as reasons why Burale eschews partisanship and made the decision to run locally to avoid it.

Political parties have an important role to play in supporting newcomer candidates, argue Jang and Sharma. In fact, Jang asserted that it was the party's responsibility to grow their candidates and increase their capacity, rather than that of nonprofit organizations, as political engagement is the parties' reason for being. He also cautioned against certain parties' cultures of hate or beat-the-opponent mentality, which run counter to the democratic spirit of consensus and respect for diverse perspectives.

To bring the point home, Domise puts the party involvement at other levels of government into the perspective of a municipal first-time candidate. He noted how the disadvantage that people of colour face in getting hired for jobs or even accepted as volunteers

for political parties further disadvantages them because they do not have the same access to campaign know-how, resources, endorsements, or volunteers that individuals with party experience would be able to use for their own electoral bids. Beyond racial disadvantage, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds also have fewer opportunities to get involved in parties because there is an expectation that volunteers commit large amounts of time and energy to the campaign. As Domise said,

Ninety-nine percent of people don't have that [ability]. So we need to stop talking about, you know, "hard work"; blood, sweat, and tears. Because to be honest, if hard work ... was what put you in the position that you're in, if hard work was going to lead to leadership, hard work was going to lead to wealth, everybody in this neighbourhood would own the world.

6.4.7. Cultural barriers. Respondents spoke about cultural differences between the way they were raised or the ways of their community and the mainstream which they saw as impacting their political effectiveness. For instance, Jang suggested that a primary reason that more Chinese do not run for municipal office is that the pay is low and the job is unstable. In a culture that puts family first, stability and security are key factors in most decisions. He noted that most Chinese who do enter politics already have successful careers in other industries, and referenced his own decision to hold off on running for federal office while he was still climbing the academic tenure ladder.

An example from a different ethnic community came from Burale, who talked about experiencing unanticipated cultural challenges on the campaign trail. Besides the difficulties of explaining the machinery of municipal politics to an immigrant demographic that lacked the base knowledge to engage her on the issues, she found that her potential voters were unlikely to value participation in Canadian politics as their focus was on the politics of the homeland. Furthermore, compared to her all-male ward opponents, Burale thought that she did not "have the character to be successful in electioneering":

I'm noticing the limitations of my upbringing coming to life as I'm running for office. And one of that is the culture of modesty which is prevalent in the Muslim community. It's this thing where you don't gloat, you don't brag; you just keep your head down and accept it or whatever. In politics, you have to brag; you have to be like, "I'm the better candidate."

The Canadian political culture of self-promotion and negative campaigning is disadvantageous to newcomer candidates who are either unaware of or unwilling to engage in these behaviours.

The Caribbean-Canadian community, according to Domise, suffers from a collective inferiority complex that is the result of historical colonization and contemporary marginalization. However, he does not believe that this is a viable excuse for doing nothing, and his choice of political role models speaks to this as well, such as James Baldwin "mak[ing] it okay and acceptable for African-Americans to love themselves for who they are, their history, and so on" (Domise 2014).

As previously mentioned, many racialized communities have difficulties trusting each other, and prefer the "safety" of mainstream White candidates. Yet communities of belonging exist at macro and micro levels, as pointed out by Burale. She found that she was subject to identity politics at the level of clan affiliation within the Somali community, cultural heritage within the Black community, ethnic group within communities of colour, and immigration status and age within the city as a whole. The broadest community tensions could be addressed by systemic change, but the micro-communal issues need to be addressed from within.

6.4.8. Expectations on women. Due to the intersectional nature of women's issues, societal expectations placed on women range from community-specific to the mainstream. In addition to the cultural challenges she identified, Burale explained how there was an understanding in the Somali community that women do not participate in politics—despite the fact that the societal structure is matriarchal. In fact, it was this difficulty that led Burale and others to form Positive Change, to give women more voice on the issues affecting their

community. Another community-specific challenge Burale has found herself dealing with is the expectation from fellow Somalis for her to cover her head in public now that she is a public figure, despite the fact that she does not normally do so. Burale acknowledged that this is an unspoken expectation, but one she feels the burden of.

At a macro level, Jang, Louie, and Sharma all referenced the disproportionate showing of female councillors as an issue that needed to be addressed. Jang and Louie both suggested that domestic duties and the difficulty of finding affordable and available childcare is likely a barrier to women's elite participation. Sharma was more specific in isolating the participation drop-off point to the motherhood part of the life cycle. She agreed that child care was an issue, but also argued that mothers need to feel that they can and should engage in political life, and she valiantly puts herself forward as a symbolic representation of what is possible.

Domise contributed valuable insight to the meta-dialogue that exists around marginalized groups. "Have you heard the expression 'women and minorities?'" He asked. The implication is that White women should be treated as a different disadvantaged group than women of colour, whose plight is lumped in with that of men. Once again, we see the failure of language to appropriately capture the intersectional nature and diversity of circumstances, to the further detriment of marginalized communities.

6.4.9. Visible representations of visible minorities (and other marginalized groups).

The topic of visible or symbolic representation generated a lot of dialogue from participants, most of whom found its presence or lack to be an important factor in breaking down participation barriers. Sharma, who hopes to be a political inspiration for South Asian women and mothers of all backgrounds, explained her understanding of symbolic representation: "I see that kind of symbolism as power; as a powerful thing." It has been pointed out to Louie that he is the

longest-serving ethnic councillor in the city, that he will likely become the first visible minority to become President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. His response was that

it's important and inspirational for [others] that this is happening despite the fact that there is a perceived barrier or an impediment, that you're helping to break down those impediments. And I think from that standpoint, I think it's important to recognize it, that that is the case. But in the implementation, or the execution of my duties, it's of little impact to the performance of my job.

Thus, for symbolic representation to take effect, the individual does not necessarily need to substantively represent their community on a particular set of issues.

In fact, even high-profile politicians in other parts of the world have an impact. Sharma spoke of the symbolic power and beauty of a picture she had seen of a child touching US President Obama's hair, saying "You have hair like me!" Burale mentioned the American president, Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi, and others in talking about the individuals who came before her and broke down the psychological barriers to participation: "If it wasn't for Obama; if it wasn't for, even locally, Michaëlle Jean being Governor General, or Lincoln Alexander...I would not think it's possible."

Wong-Tam said that visible representation was the main barrier to participation for Canada's Aboriginal community. This is true whether in politics or elite leadership positions, although political representation looks different for the First Nations communities, who prefer self-governance. Sharma and Burale both cited the added barrier of not seeing oneself represented in non-elected civic roles, such as in the police force, as political aides, or in the bureaucracy, and Burale pledged to work towards more diversity of civic appointments if elected.

6.4.10. Lacking a sense of entitlement. People who feel entitled to power or resources do not hesitate to take them, believing that they are theirs by rights. As detailed above, there are more opportunities for White, dominant culture males to get involved in politics at all levels

because as a group they benefit from an institutionalized set of privileges that give them an edge over other groups; however this does not necessarily make this group entitled, unless they are working to maintain their own advantage. On the other hand, being disadvantaged can also bar an individual from feeling entitled. Sharma explained, “I think there are a lot of people who may have the competency to do it but don’t feel like they have access to that or that there’s space for them there. ... And I think that affects people even if they’re not consciously thinking about it.”

Entitlement is usually used in the negative sense to describe a mentality that is individualistic and self-centred, as in the examples above. However, I suggest a new, positive connotation to entitlement as democratic, reflecting a mentality that is empowered, rights-focused, and communal. Burale described the difference in political engagement between herself and her immigrant mother: “I think my mom always saw herself here maybe as a visitor, whereas I feel more entitled to be like, ‘Oh I want better transit access,’ you know? And I want better education. So that’s why I’m willing to be more engaged and work for it.” Significantly, Burale equates community resource entitlement with civic engagement and commitment. She goes on to specify her “entitlement” not just as an individual who was socialized in Canada, but as a member of the “millennial” generation—a demographic that is often censured for exactly this trait.

The interview question that asked participants about their own role models and their views of themselves as role models unveiled a further entitlement dilemma. Most respondents saw their political heroes as figures far removed and superior to themselves, and as they were asked the questions in the order listed here, many found they had a hard time moving from discussion of another’s best qualities to admission of their own. Modesty aside, this highlights the problem that political icons are often ascribed an unattainable status. For everyday citizens,

especially marginalized ones, this can be discouraging. However, Domise challenged the very notion of political heroism by claiming, “To me there are no saints”:

We spend so much time looking backwards to our heroes in the past and revering our forefathers that we don’t spend enough time trying to develop future leaders. ... [W]e’ve taken away all those past leaders’ faults, we’ve basically been scrubbing them clean, that nobody else can match up. And I think there’s—especially when I look around and talk to young people, there are so many potential awesome future leaders. But they’ve been sort of brushed into obsequiousness by the older generation who have told them, “No, you can’t accomplish this; this is how you have to do it.”

This psychological barrier to participation is reinforced constantly, from one generation to the next, in the media, and in our classrooms. The solution to these barriers has both individual and collective dimensions. Individuals need to recognize that political participation is self-selected, and not by invitation only. Moreover, civic heroes do not achieve success alone; they need the support of a community.

7. Conclusion

Through the process of conducting interviews with city councillors and council hopefuls who belong to communities of colour, new perspectives on some well-known systemic issues (including “visible minority” both as a term and a category, representation gaps, and privilege versus marginalization) began to take shape. As we talked through these issues, it became easier to establish patterns of entry and exclusion. Barriers to elite-level political participation (and, by default, to visible minority numerical representation) were described as: discriminating terminology, overt or veiled racism, voters’ poor relationship with the electoral system, electoral regulations, weak organizational support, political parties’ internal structures, inter- and intra-cultural barriers, issues affecting women, lack of symbolic representation, and lack of entitlement to power.

7.1. Explaining the Municipal Lag

This analysis would not be complete without a return to the initial research question, which asks why there is such extreme disproportionality of representation at the *municipal* level, as compared with provincial and federal levels of government. Of the various barriers that are outlined above, there are three in particular which help explain this particular phenomenon. The first is the voters’ relationship with and understanding of local politics as distinct from federal or provincial. The interviewees reported that people they talked to did not have a clear understanding of municipal civics, did not trust local politicians, or did not see local politics as a priority in their lives. They also suggested that these views were perpetuated by the media’s framing of both issues and candidates.

Secondly, political parties were a significant factor for municipal political inclusion, regardless of whether they were allowed at the city level (Vancouver) or not (Toronto). Parties

have the ability to train and mentor individuals from the grassroots, building their capacity to represent communities and issues in their own right. They also have the potential to nurture diversity substantively and symbolically through their policies and their organizational structure. Conversely, parties have the ability to exclude as well.

The political party factor ties in with the third barrier affecting local-level incorporation, which is visible or symbolic representation. As has been argued here, symbolic representation of a disadvantaged community can have a powerful psychological impact on people's abilities to see themselves in similar positions of authority, regardless of the location or jurisdiction. Yet all respondents made note of the role they played for their ethnic community as a "closer connection" based on their shared backgrounds or personal traits. This would seem to indicate that having a councillor with whom you feel connected, and who is willing to advocate for you, is just as significant as being able to see a physical reflection of yourself in a political figure who cannot advocate for you. Furthermore, it does not seem to make a difference whether the councillor in question exclusively represents a community, or whether she feels that she represents everyone.

Interestingly, these conclusions agree in some respects and differ in others from those drawn by other studies. Siemiatycki (2011) thought that name recognition through incumbency was an impediment for getting fresh blood into council chambers. While respondents tended to agree that name recognition and incumbency were important, there was nothing in the discussions to indicate that this had an impact on visible minorities in particular. Incumbency might go some way to explaining the slow progress of council diversification; however, the Toronto data (for example) showed zero diversification over successive elections over a period of significant population diversification. Another explanation offered by Siemiatycki (2011) was

that lengthy and expensive campaigns in the absence of municipal political parties were burdensome and discouraging for first-time politicians, who might have an easier time getting financial support and grassroots enthusiasm at other levels of government. Interviewees' contributions seem to agree: disengaged voters were more willing to entertain a candidate when they could pin them to a known party. In Vancouver, where parties do exist at the municipal level, interviewees felt that their own party (Vision Vancouver) provided certain advantages for individuals trying to "break into politics." In another study on political incorporation, Black's (2011) data on winning candidates led him to conclude that visible minorities were not more likely than Whites to be relegated to "lost-cause" districts. Although this conclusion is at odds with the views expressed by respondents in the present study, the fact that the perception persists may point to a relationship cleavage between minorities and political parties. A second argument made by Black, that parties' inconsistent or unfair nomination approaches impact visible minority representation, was echoed by respondents from Vancouver. Perhaps not coincidentally, all made claims about right-leaning parties being less consistent or transparent in their nomination processes.

There are many similarities between the municipalities, and the issues do not seem to be locally distinct despite the fact that there are several divergent factors. This can be attributed in part to post-colonial race and gender relationships in a global political context and the Canadian context in particular. Despite legal entitlements to and societal values of equality, it is still the case in this country that White men benefit from *de facto* cultural and authoritative normativity. As has been articulated by participants in this study, this hierarchy is upheld by the political elite, by governmental infrastructure, and by attitudes perpetuated by grassroots communities.

7.2. Recommendations

Returning to Dahl's critique of Canadian government as a polyarchy, the logical next step would be to consider ways in which representation can become more substantive. I think that the subtexts of entitlement and community support, which emerged during the respondents' identification of systemic barriers, provide a starting point in this regard. I have established that organizations are a major point of entry into politics, and can act as either a barrier or a bridge to political inclusion. Thus I endorse the recommendation put forward by some of the respondents to develop "political incubators" where individuals can go to learn the ins and outs of elite politics, share and develop ideas, and be mentored by people with experience. However, implementation questions remain: who should be responsible for establishing and funding this endeavour? How can we ensure equal access to this opportunity? Should such an organization be nonpartisan?

The renewed entitlement concept helps put these concerns into perspective. If we can foster a sense of democratic entitlement among marginalized, traditionally disenfranchised groups, they will become more politically-minded. However, while certain groups clearly have more access barriers, it should not be overlooked that political interest and participation is at an overall low. This is true for a variety of reasons, not the least of which stems from a lack of trust in political parties and poor civic knowledge.

I recommend the establishment of a government-mandated democracy "watchdog" program whose role would be to ensure that society continues to strive toward the democratic ideal. Such a program could be implemented by any level of government with an eye on evaluating the system within that particular jurisdiction. Possible focuses of such a program could include: issuing democracy report cards to registered political parties based on their power

structure, recruitment, transparency, and nomination procedures; an annual “Democracy Awards” event which showcases organizational best and worst practices and highlights democratic advancements as well as barriers; a prestigious award or ordinance for individuals at all levels of the political spectrum who have made a significant contribution to democracy; and not least of all, funding groups that contribute to democracy through equitable civic engagement and training.

There are currently non-governmental organizations who champion democracy and social justice issues with initiatives not too different from those listed here. Yet those organizations operate on the periphery, and there is a strong case for entrenching democracy and democratic entitlement into the Canadian consciousness through formal policy and substantive programming, much the way that multiculturalism has very much become a national ideology. Nevertheless, it is crucial that such a program would emphasize the *idealistic* nature of democracy rather than simply championing it as a national descriptor. It is just as important to note our failings as a society in this regard as our accomplishments.

It is clear from the responses of the interviewees that visible minority politicians are perpetually confronted with the dilemma of representing the inhabitants of an electoral terrain, or an ethno-specific constituency. While this study did not come to any firm conclusions about the impact of one electoral system over another in achieving greater diversity on city councils, this may be an area for future research. This work also draws attention to certain socio-political tensions, such as the dynamics between individuals and their ethnic communities, among ethnic communities, and between ethnic communities and established institutions (political parties in particular). Further study is needed to get a clearer picture of the ways in which these various relationships affect the elite political participation of members of marginalized groups.

While the democratic system is by no means balanced at this point and there are a seemingly overwhelming number of barriers to achieving truly substantive representation, the respondents expressed optimism about its potential to improve and the role they play in doing so. Above all, this spirit of progress is exactly what is needed to overcome barriers to participation and to nurture a healthy sense of democratic entitlement in the hearts and minds of all members of Canadian society.

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Date	Name		Location
City	Ward	Elected? Yes / No	Incumbency
Immigrant? Yes / No	Date of arrival in Canada		Year Citizenship obtained
Country of Origin	Native language		Other languages
Political affiliation:			
Positions currently held:			
Pre-interview notes:			
1. How did you first get started running for office in _____(name of city)? a. Were you successful in your first attempt? b. What do you think contributed to your success(es)? c. ...to your failure(s)?			Ethnic group support <input type="checkbox"/> Interest group affiliation <input type="checkbox"/> Tailored policies <input type="checkbox"/> In-group success transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Amalgamation <input type="checkbox"/> Media spin <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Attacks <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being labelled
2. What were the policies that prompt/ed your interest in municipal politics?			

	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Do you have a political role model or “hero”? Who was influential in your early political career (in Canada or abroad)?</p> <p>a. Has this changed since the first time you ran for office? Why/how?</p>	<p>Ethnic group support <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Interest group affiliation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Tailored policies <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In-group success transfer <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Amalgamation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Media spin <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Personal Attacks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Fear of being labelled <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>4. You have been selected for this study because I considered that you fit the <i>Employment Equity Act</i> definition for visible minority, which is: 'persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.' Do you agree with this description of yourself?</p> <p>Yes / No</p> <p>If No: Why not? Is there anything offensive or inherently incorrect in this description?</p>	
<p>5. It's important to acknowledge that people are multifaceted, and that different aspects of their identity influence their personal and political preferences. What are some other ways in which you identify yourself that you think influence your politics?</p>	

<p>6. The statistics are clear: our city councils are not proportionate in terms of visible minority populations versus elected councillors. Why do you think that provincial and federal governments have better proportionality?</p>	<p>Ethnic group support <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Interest group affiliation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Tailored policies <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>7. Taking into consideration the political and democratic arena in which you work – electoral structure, council setup, political alliances, media bias – what factors do you think contribute to the disproportionately low incidences of visible minority representation in council? (Refer to statistics if necessary)</p> <p>a. Electoral</p> <p>b. Amalgamation</p> <p>c. Council</p> <p>d. Political Alliances</p> <p>e. Media</p>	<p>In-group success transfer <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Amalgamation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Media spin <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Personal Attacks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Fear of being labelled <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>8. Do you think there is a problem of underrepresentation on councils generally, and on yours in particular?</p> <p>a) If yes: Why do you think so?</p> <p>b) If no: Why isn't it a problem?</p>	

<p>9. What, if anything, should be done to improve municipal council proportionality?</p>	<p>Ethnic group support <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Interest group affiliation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>10. How do you see your role as a visible minority elected official?</p> <p>a) What groups or individuals do you feel you represent?</p> <p>b) Does an individual need to be from a visible minority community to represent it?</p> <p>c) Is there any conflict between representing a geographic community and an ethnic community?</p>	<p>Tailored policies <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In-group success transfer <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Amalgamation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Media spin <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Personal Attacks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Fear of being labelled <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>11. Are there any particular groups whose causes you have specifically advocated for?</p> <p>a. How easy or difficult is it for you to advance this cause?</p> <p>b. Have you encountered any backlash or resistance to your political goals due to your race, ethnicity, or identity? What happened?</p>	

12. Do you see yourself as a role model? Who do you think you might be an influence for?	
13. Are there other council members or council hopefuls who you think would make a valuable contribution to this study? (Name, contact info if possible, or follow-up) Name: Contact Information: Follow-up required? Yes / No	

Appendix 2 – Invitation to Participate



YEATES SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES | IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT STUDIES

Skylar Maharaj
Immigration and Settlement Studies, Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3
Skylar.maharaj@ryerson.ca
416-979-5000, ext. 6293

Dear (Name),

I am a graduate student at Ryerson University conducting a study on why visible minorities are poorly represented on the councils Canada's largest cities. You have been contacted because I think your input on this subject would be valuable.

Here are a few reasons why your contribution is important:

1. In (Toronto), visible minorities make up (over 43 percent) of the population, but hold only (13 percent) of the council seats.
2. The proportionality of visible minority municipal councillors in (Toronto) has been decreasing over the last (10) years, even while it increases provincially and federally.
3. A strong democracy is one that represents all elements of society.
4. Children, youth, and newcomers from marginalized backgrounds may feel that they are politically excluded on the evidence of who gets elected.

If you are willing to **speak on the record** and would like to participate, please contact me to make arrangements. The interview will be one-on-one with me in a setting of your choice that provides privacy, comfort, and a quiet atmosphere (Skype is an option) and will last about an hour. I will also request your formal consent to be recorded and quoted prior to the interview.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification on the purpose or methods of this study, please do not hesitate to ask. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Skylar Maharaj

Appendix 3 – Consent Form



YEATES SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES | IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT STUDIES

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Exploring Diversity of Representation in Canadian Cities: Political Voices

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Please read this Consent Form so that you understand what your participation will involve. Before you consent to participate, please ask any questions necessary to be sure you understand what your participation will involve.

INVESTIGATORS

This research study is being conducted by Skylar Maharaj, from the Yeates School of Graduate Studies, Immigration and Settlement Studies Program at Ryerson University, the results of which will contribute to a Major Research Paper necessary for the completion of a Master's degree.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Skylar Maharaj at skylar.maharaj@ryerson.ca; Dr. Myer Siemiatycki is the supervisor for this project, and can be contacted at msiemiat@ryerson.ca or by phone at 416-979-5000, ext. 6293.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The intent of this study is to understand the implications of and possible reasons for the disproportionately low degree of visible minority representation in municipal politics. Current statistics show that cities elect fewer persons of colour to council positions than they do members of provincial or federal government. We are interested in learning from visible minority city councillors about their experiences in their jobs, their views on who they represent, and their thoughts on whether or why it might be difficult for visible minorities to get elected municipally.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR PARTICIPATION

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

Meet with the researcher either in person or via Skype, at a time and location of your convenience. Give an interview of approximately one hour on the topic of your views and experiences as a city councillor.

Interview questions include biographical information such as:

- Full name
- City and ward represented, positions held
- Dates of election; incumbency
- Political affiliation, if any
- Immigration status, country of origin, date of arrival, year citizenship was obtained (if applicable, and if you choose to disclose)
- Primary language other than English (if applicable)

Open-ended interview questions allow for discussion and elaboration, including (but not limited to):

14. How did you first get started running for office in _____(name of city)?

15. What were the policies that prompt/ed your interest in municipal politics?
16. Do you have a political role model or “hero”? Who was influential in your early political career (in Canada or abroad)?
17. You have been selected for this study because I considered that you fit the Employment Equity Act definition for visible minority, which is: 'persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.' Do you agree with this description of yourself?
18. What are some other ways in which you identify yourself that you think influence your politics?
19. Why do you think that provincial and federal governments have better proportionality?
20. What factors do you think contribute to the disproportionately low incidences of visible minority representation in council?
21. Do you think there is a problem of underrepresentation on councils generally, and on yours in particular?
22. What, if anything, should be done to improve municipal council proportionality?
23. How do you see your role as a visible minority elected official?
24. Are there any particular groups whose causes you have specifically advocated for?
25. Do you see yourself as a role model? Who do you think you might be an influence for?
26. Are there other council members or council hopefuls who you think would make a valuable contribution to this study?

You will also need to:

Consent to speaking on the record; that is, your name will appear next to your comments in the final published version of this study.

Participate in fact-checking your own transcript or contribution samples, if you wish. This will occur within a month of your interview date.

A final copy of the report can be distributed to you digitally if you wish; requests for this can be made in person at the time of the interview, or by phone or email.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Risk to participants is very low for this study, as individuals will be able to self-monitor what they wish to disclose based on their own comfort level. However, as some of the questions involve personal biographical or physical traits, you may experience some discomfort at the types of questions asked. You will be able to pass on questions you do not wish to answer, or limit the extent of your response if necessary. You may also end the interview at any time. As the study will be publicly distributed upon completion, the greatest risk is social or political: your words will remain on the record. Again, you will have the opportunity to review your own interview transcript for inaccuracies, as well as a draft of the report that includes your contributions, to ensure that your words are appropriately reflected in the study findings.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

By participating in this study, you are contributing to academic and social knowledge of Canadian political behaviour that could provide fuel for broader discussions of race. A debate on race in politics is long overdue, as many Canadians assume (incorrectly, according to statistics) that race “is not an issue.” In the event that this study is further disseminated beyond the researcher’s Master’s thesis (such as in academic journals or in presentations), your contributions may spark more widespread dialogue. You may personally benefit from participating by enriching your own understanding of how race may affect, and have already affected, your political career. Furthermore, you stand to positively affect up-and-coming young politicians in need of direction and mentorship.

I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be paid to participate in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your contributions will be connected to you by name in the completed report on this study. As stated above, you will have the opportunity to approve specific samples and their presentation within the manuscript prior to completion. Written transcripts and notes from the interview will be kept private, but may be used in future studies or alternate versions of the report; if different samples are used, the researcher (Skylar Maharaj) will make a reasonable effort to have you review their usage within the context of the whole document. In the event that the same samples are used in a document that is not substantively different from the thesis, the researcher may not request your approval. Other parties (excluding the supervisor) will not have access to the raw data unless you grant permission in advance. Raw data will be stored securely by the researcher in hard copy for as long as is required to complete the Master's thesis (or related publications, if applicable); they will then be held securely by the supervisor, to be destroyed after five years.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. If you choose to withdraw from this study you may also choose to withdraw your data from the study. You may also choose not to answer any question(s) and still remain in the study. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact:

Skylar Maharaj (Principal Investigator)
skylar.maharaj@ryerson.ca
Myer Siemiatycki (Supervisor)
msiemiat@ryerson.ca
416-979-5000, ext. 6293

This study has been reviewed by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact:

Toni Fletcher, Research Ethics Coordinator
Research Ethics Board
Office of the Vice President, Research and Innovation
Ryerson University
350 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K3
416-979-5042
toni.fletcher@ryerson.ca or
rebchair@ryerson.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study “Exploring Diversity of Representation in Canadian Cities: Political Voices” as described herein. You understand that this research will be used primarily to fulfil the requirement of the researcher’s Master’s thesis, but may also be published in a journal or otherwise disseminated at a later date. Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and you agree to participate in this study. You have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

You agree to be audio-recorded as part of this study, for the sole purposes of providing raw data to be reviewed only by the researcher of this study (Skylar Maharaj) and her supervisor (Myer Siemiatycki). All other access to this data will require further permission from you.

Signature of Participant

Date

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