
THE DIVERSITY GAP:

The Electoral Under-Representation of Visible Minorities

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I am solely responsible for any shortcomings in this study.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Who our political leaders are is a critical indicator of Canada's progress towards inclusion as a diverse society. Elected officials are our lawmakers and policy-makers. They also symbolically represent who can be the 'face and voice' of our country, province and city. Government is our shared, public arena and its leadership profile can reflect how power, influence and status are distributed in society.

This paper examines visible minority representation among federal, provincial and municipal politicians in Ontario, with particular focus on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It explores whether visible minorities stood as candidates, and were elected to office, in proportion to their share of overall population. The timing of three elections for Ontario voters – municipal, federal and provincial within less than a year from October 2010 to October 2011 – affords an opportunity to assess our progress towards diversity and inclusion in the political arena.

As the title suggests, this paper finds that there is a multi-layered under-representation of visible minorities in the political process.

Visible minorities are under-represented in the GTA – Visible minorities are under-represented as political candidates and elected officials at all three levels of government relative to their share of the population. Visible minorities comprise 40% of the population across the GTA, but only 11% of elected officials. The region would need to elect almost four times as many visible minorities, across all levels of government, for visible minorities to hold elected office in proportion to their share of population.

The highest visible minority representation rate can be found in provincial government – Visible minorities account for 26% of the GTA's 47 members of the provincial legislature and just 17% of GTA's 47 members of the federal House of Commons. The better rate of visible minority representation provincially than federally reflects the far greater number of visible minorities who were candidates provincially. It also is the result of three newly elected visible minority MPPs inheriting the candidacy of retired incumbents in safe seats for their party.

There is not a fixed ethnic vote favouring a single political party – At both the provincial and federal level, visible minorities were elected in constituencies with high concentrations of visible minorities. However, these constituencies elected politicians of differing political parties provincially and federally. This suggests that there is not a fixed 'ethnic vote' loyal to a single political party in the GTA.

Visible minorities are woefully under-represented in municipal government – Only 7% of all 253 municipal council members in the GTA are visible minorities.

All sub-groups of visible minorities are under-represented, but some have no representation at any level of government – While all are under-represented among the GTA's 347 combined elected officials relative to their population share, some fare relatively better than others. Four visible minority sub-groups, despite large populations, have no member of their community elected at any of these three levels of government in the GTA. These are Arabs, Filipinos, non-white Latin Americans and Southeast Asians.

South Asians and Chinese are the most elected sub-groups - At the other end of the continuum are South Asians and Chinese, each holding 15 of the 38 (39%) total visible minority-held elected positions across the GTA. Interestingly South Asian elected officials predominate federally and provincially, while their Chinese counterparts predominate municipally. But even these ‘best case’ sub-groups have considerable ground to make up before achieving elected representation on par with population share. For this to occur, South Asians would need to elect three times their current number of politicians, and the Chinese community two times its current share.

Electoral success varies by region within the GTA - Geographically, the paper also reveals disparities in visible minority electoral representation. Their numbers as both candidates and elected members are better in the 905 suburbs than in the 416 City of Toronto. And within Toronto, they fare far better in the three older suburbs of Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough than in the central city.

Additionally, the paper questions whether there is a pattern of ‘colour coded’ constituencies in place. The large majority of provincial constituencies across Ontario have no visible minority candidates, while several in the GTA with exceptionally high proportions of visible minority residents, feature visible minority candidates for all three major parties.

Electoral success improving only modestly - By drawing on earlier research on the subject, the paper demonstrates that visible minority under-representation in electoral politics is not a new phenomenon. While the recent round of elections yielded somewhat better numbers than previously, progress has been modest at best.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper concludes with recommendations that could lead to more significant gains for electorally under-represented groups. The recommendations include:

- election reform such as addressing the under-representation of the GTA in federal parliament;
- increased institutional commitment by government and other formal institutions;
- interventions by political parties such as targets for nomination and mentoring visible minority aspiring politicians; and
- increased community commitment to the importance of this issue.

INTRODUCTION

Who our political leaders are is a critical indicator of Canada's progress towards inclusion as a diverse society. Elected officials are our lawmakers and policy-makers. They also symbolically represent who can be the 'face and voice' of our country, province and city. Government is our shared, public arena and its leadership profile can reflect how power, influence and status are distributed in society.

Few places in the world can match the demographic diversity of Canada, Ontario and Toronto. Thanks primarily to sustained flows of global migration, we are truly now home to the world. Previous research has revealed a disconnect between our population demographics, and the profile of our elected officials. Aboriginals, women, young adults and visible minorities have been identified in previous research as being significantly under-represented among elected politicians (Mahler & Siemiatycki, Andrew et al, 2008).

Within less than a year, between October 2010 and October 2011, three elections were held across Ontario: municipal, federal and provincial. The results of these three elections within a short period of time provide a good opportunity to take stock of our progress towards diversity and inclusion in the political arena.

The focus of this paper is on the electoral participation of visible minorities as both candidates for public office and winners of such positions. As the title of this paper suggests, visible minorities continue to be under-represented in elected office and at this rate, it will take many more elections until visible minorities occupy seats in municipal councils, the provincial legislature and federal parliament equal to their share of population.

SCOPE OF STUDY: CONTEXT, DEFINITIONS & METHODOLOGY

This study examines visible minority electoral inclusion in Ontario across three different levels of government, with particular emphasis on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The research:

- Identifies the visible minority composition of candidates running for office and elected on behalf of the Liberal, Conservative and New Democratic parties, in the 2011 provincial and federal elections.
- Presents these results at both province-wide and GTA scales for the Ontario election, and at GTA scale for the federal election.
- Identifies the visible minority composition of officials elected to the 25 municipal councils across the GTA in the 2010 municipal election.
- Produces data and analysis comparing visible minority representation among candidates in all GTA constituencies for the three major political parties, in the provincial and federal elections of 2011.

- Produces data and analysis comparing visible minority representation among elected officials across the GTA at all three levels of government following the most recent round of elections.
- Produces data and analysis comparing visible minority representation elected politicians at all three levels of government in select GTA municipalities.

This study relied on publically available published information to determine the identity of individuals who presented themselves as candidates and were elected to government positions in recent municipal, provincial and federal elections (Diversity Institute 2009). These determinations were made based on candidate photographs, biographies, websites and media profiles. This allowed the most comprehensive assessment of election candidates and winners.

There is a long history of discrimination in Canada based on race and racialization (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). This study aims to provide a current assessment of whether non-whites are equitably represented in electoral leadership positions in Ontario. Consistent with past research on this topic, the methodology adopted is to compare the proportion of visible minorities as election candidates and winners, with their share of overall population (Black 2011; Andrew et al 2008).

Before presenting the study findings, a discussion of context, definitions and methodology is helpful. The term ‘visible minority’ is a distinctly Canadian invention. It is the official terminology used in Canadian law to characterize non-Caucasians and non-whites. Originating in Canada’s Employment Equity Act, visible minorities are defined as: “all persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour”.

The term visible minority, then, is Canada’s official way of identifying non-whites. This is operationalized through the Canadian census, which asks Canadians to self-identify if they are visible minorities. According to our most recent 2006 census data, visible minorities comprised 16% of Canada’s population, 23% of Ontario’s population and 40% of the GTA population (Statistics Canada 2008a, 2008b). Once census respondents self-identify as visible minority, they are then asked to specify which of ten specific sub-groups they belong to. These visible minority sub-groups are: Chinese, South Asian, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Southeast Asian, Arab, West Asian, Korean or Japanese.

The term visible minority is highly contested. It has been criticized for its ambiguities and assumptions. There are several problematic aspects of the term visible minority which need to be acknowledged.

First, a literal reading of the term implies that only non-whites are ‘visible’, and that they comprise a statistical minority of the population. Both assumptions are incorrect. Persons of all races are visible in Canadian society, and in several Canadian municipalities it is whites who are the minority population. Within the GTA for instance, visible minorities constitute the majority of the population in the municipalities of Markham (64%) and Brampton (57%).

Second, as a result of the above mis-representations, some non-whites in Canada are offended by the term visible minority. Indeed in 2007, in response to criticism of the term

from non-white Canadians, a United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that Canada reconsider use of this terminology which the UN body deemed potentially discriminatory (CBCNews 2007).

Third, the identified sub-categories of visible minorities lend themselves to confusion. Some are defined by nationality/ethnicity some by continent and some by sub-continent. And sometimes lost in the sub-group examples specified is that they only apply to non-whites. So for instance, not all Latin Americans are visible minorities, only those who are non-white.

Finally, identifying all Canadians as either visible minority or non-visible minority may wrongly convey the message that non-visible minority Canadians are a homogenous group. Of course they are not. They comprise a vast variety of different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, in addition to Aboriginal Canadians.

For all its complexities and confusions however, the term visible minority remains Canada's official category of non-white, non-Aboriginal definition. Our statistical baseline data for non-whites in Canada comes from census responses related to visible minority status. For researchers then, it remains the only statistical basis for measuring and analyzing the integration of non-whites in Canadian society.

ELECTED IN ONTARIO

There are 107 seats in the Ontario Legislature. Visible minorities account for 22.82% of Ontario’s population. The results of the October 2011 provincial election reveal many gaps in visible minority representation among Ontario’s 107 current MPPs.

As Table 1 below indicates, Ontario would need to elect twice as many visible minorities to Queen’s Park for their share of seats to match their share of population. As noted, a total of 13 visible minorities were elected in 2011, or 12.15% of all MPPs. Table 1 also introduces an important indicator of representation identified as the ‘proportionality ratio’. This indicator recurs in many subsequent tables as well.

The proportionality ratio compares a group’s percentage of seats to its percentage of total population. If a group has a greater share of seats than its share of population, the ratio will be over one. If the ratio is exactly one, that means the group’s representation perfectly matches its population share. And if a group’s proportionality ratio is less than one, its share of seats is less than its share of population. In short, a ratio over one reflects statistical over-representation, while a ratio less than one means under-representation.

What stands out from Table 1 is that Ontario would need to double its visible minorities elected in order for provincial MPPs to mirror the province’s racial profile. Looking more carefully at sub-group distribution, it is evident that there are great disparities among different visible minority communities. South Asians account for by far the largest share of visible minority MPPs. Indeed, they are over-represented at Queen’s Park (though not across all levels of government combined) relative to their population share. Meanwhile six sub-groups did not elect any members of their own community to the provincial legislature.

Table 1: Elected MPP representation by visible minority groups, 2011 Ontario election

Visible minority group	Percent of population	Elected MPPs	Percentage of candidates	Proportionality ratio
Arab	0.93	0	0.00	0.00
Black	3.94	2	1.87	0.47
Chinese	4.80	2	1.87	0.39
Filipino	1.69	0	0.00	0.00
Japanese	0.23	0	0.00	0.00
Korean	0.58	0	0.00	0.00
Latin American	1.22	0	0.00	0.00
South Asian	6.60	8	7.48	1.13
South East Asian	0.91	0	0.00	0.00
West Asian	0.80	1	0.93	1.16
All Visible Minorities	22.82	13	12.15	0.53
Non Visible Minority	77.18	94	87.85	1.14

As Table 2 below shows, there is also significant geographic variation in visible minority electoral representation. Twelve of Ontario’s thirteen visible minority MPPs were elected in the GTA, the other in Ottawa. While this concentration might be expected, given the far greater visible minority population in the GTA, there are some surprises in their distribution within the GTA.

More visible minority MPPs were elected in the 905 than the 416 part of the GTA. These labels refer to the 416 telephone area code of the City of Toronto, and the 905 area code of the other 24 municipalities that comprise the GTA. More visible minorities were elected in the 905 suburban municipalities of Mississauga (3), Brampton (2), Markham (1) and Richmond Hill (1) than in the City of Toronto (5). This is despite the fact that the City of Toronto has almost twice the total number of provincial constituencies than its aforementioned neighbouring 905 suburban municipalities. It is also significant that within the 416 City of Toronto, all its visible minority MPPs were elected in Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke (commonly referred to as the ‘inner suburbs’). None were elected in the central part of Toronto.

Finally of note, were the great gaps in visible minority election by political party. Of the 13 visible minority MPPs, 12 are Liberals and one is a member of the NDP. This is despite the fact that the Liberals, NDP and Conservatives ran virtually the same number of visible minority candidates.

Table 2: Elected visible minority MPPs by region, 2011 Ontario election

Region	Total VM candidates	Percent of VM MPPs
Greater Toronto	12	92.3
905 Region	7	53.8
City of Toronto	5	38.5
Outer Toronto	5	38.5
Central Toronto	0	0.0
Other Ontario	1	1.8
Total	13	100.0

VISIBLE MINORITY CANDIDATES

As Table 3 below shows, visible minorities were better represented as candidates for the three major parties, than they were as elected officials. Note the proportionality ratio for visible minority candidates of .78 was 50% higher than their proportionality rate of .53 among elected MPPs. Note too that while South Asians had the highest number of visible minority candidates, there were also significant numbers of both Blacks and Arabs. In terms of party affiliation, visible minority candidates were evenly distributed with 20 running for the NDP, 19 for the Conservatives and 18 for the Liberals.

Geographically, once again, most visible minority candidates (84%) contested seats in the Greater Toronto Area. And the internal GTA distribution recurred with 27 of 48 GTA candidates running in the 905 area, 21 running in the 416 City of Toronto. Within the City of

Toronto 18 ran in Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke; only three ran in the central city area.

There is another important dimension to the distribution of visible minority candidates across Ontario. This involves their clustering in a relatively small number of constituencies in the province. This raises the question of whether Ontario's 107 provincial constituencies are 'colour coded'. In 70 of 107 constituencies there was no visible minority candidate among the three major parties. Meanwhile in seven constituencies with exceptionally high visible minority population concentration, all their candidates were visible minorities.

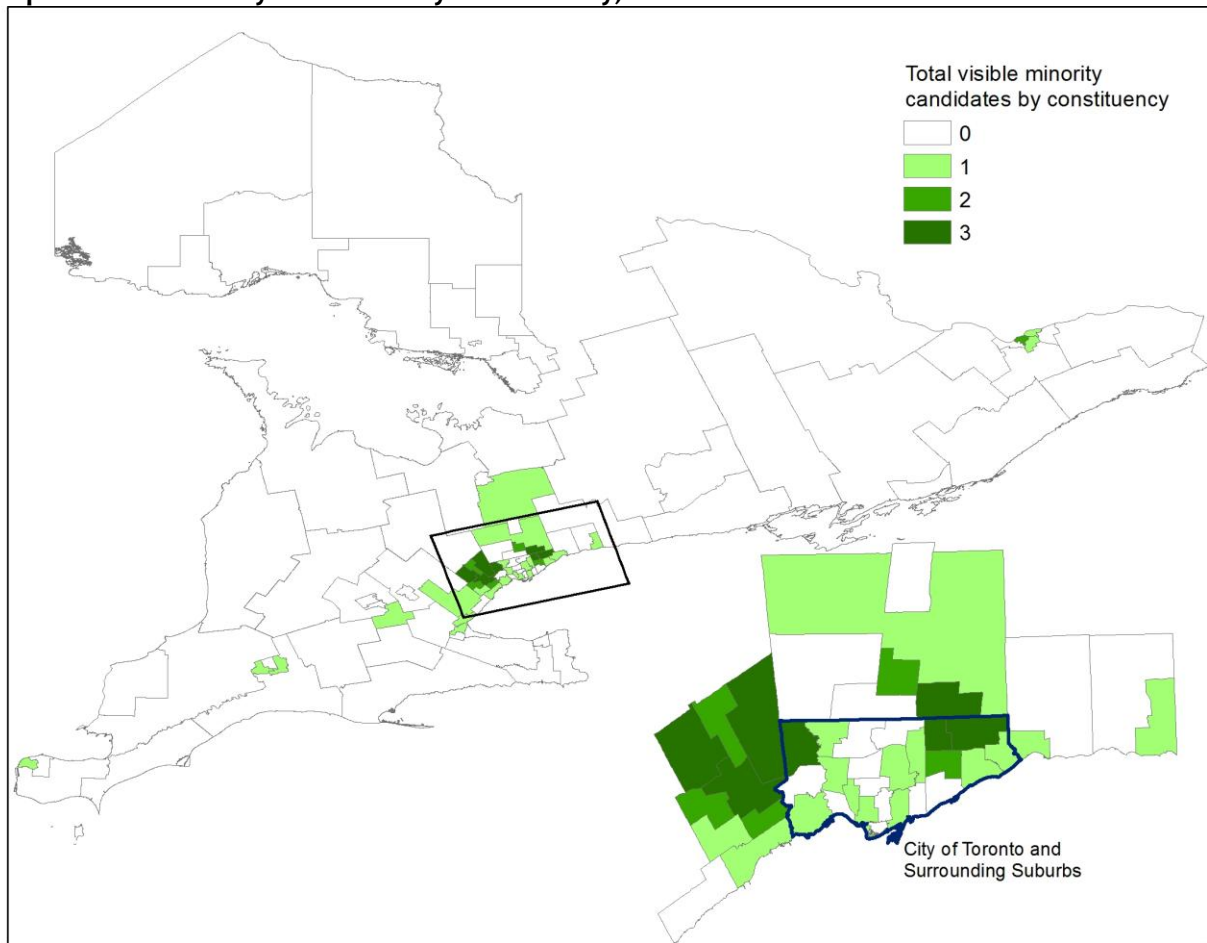
Table 3: Candidate representation by visible minority groups, 2011 Ontario election

Visible minority group	Percent of population	Number of candidates	Percentage of candidates	Proportionality Ratio
Arab	0.93	9	2.80	3.03
Black	3.94	10	3.12	0.79
Chinese	4.80	5	1.56	0.32
Filipino	1.69	2	0.62	0.37
Japanese	0.23	0	0.00	0.00
Korean	0.58	2	0.62	1.08
Latin American	1.22	0	0.00	0.00
South Asian	6.60	26	8.10	1.23
South East Asian	0.91	2	0.62	0.68
West Asian	0.80	1	0.31	0.39
All Visible Minorities	22.82	57	17.76	0.78
Non Visible Minority	77.18	264	82.24	1.07

This means over one third of all visible minority candidates in the provincial election (21 of 57) ran in just seven ridings. Three of these ridings were in Peel Region, one in York Region, two in Scarborough and one in Etobicoke. In virtually every case the parties selected a candidate whose identity matched the largest visible minority sub-group in the riding. In five other GTA constituencies, two of the three candidates were visible minorities (three in Peel Region, one in York Region and one in Scarborough). This raises questions about whether political parties tend to restrict their interest in visible minority candidates to constituencies with especially large concentrations of a single dominant sub-group.

The map below shows the provincial distribution by constituency of visible minority candidates in the 2011 Ontario election. As noted, the great majority are within the GTA, with smaller numbers scattered in urban ridings across southern Ontario, while in the majority of constituencies no visible minorities ran as candidates for the major political parties.

Map 1: Visible minority candidates by constituency, 2011 Ontario election

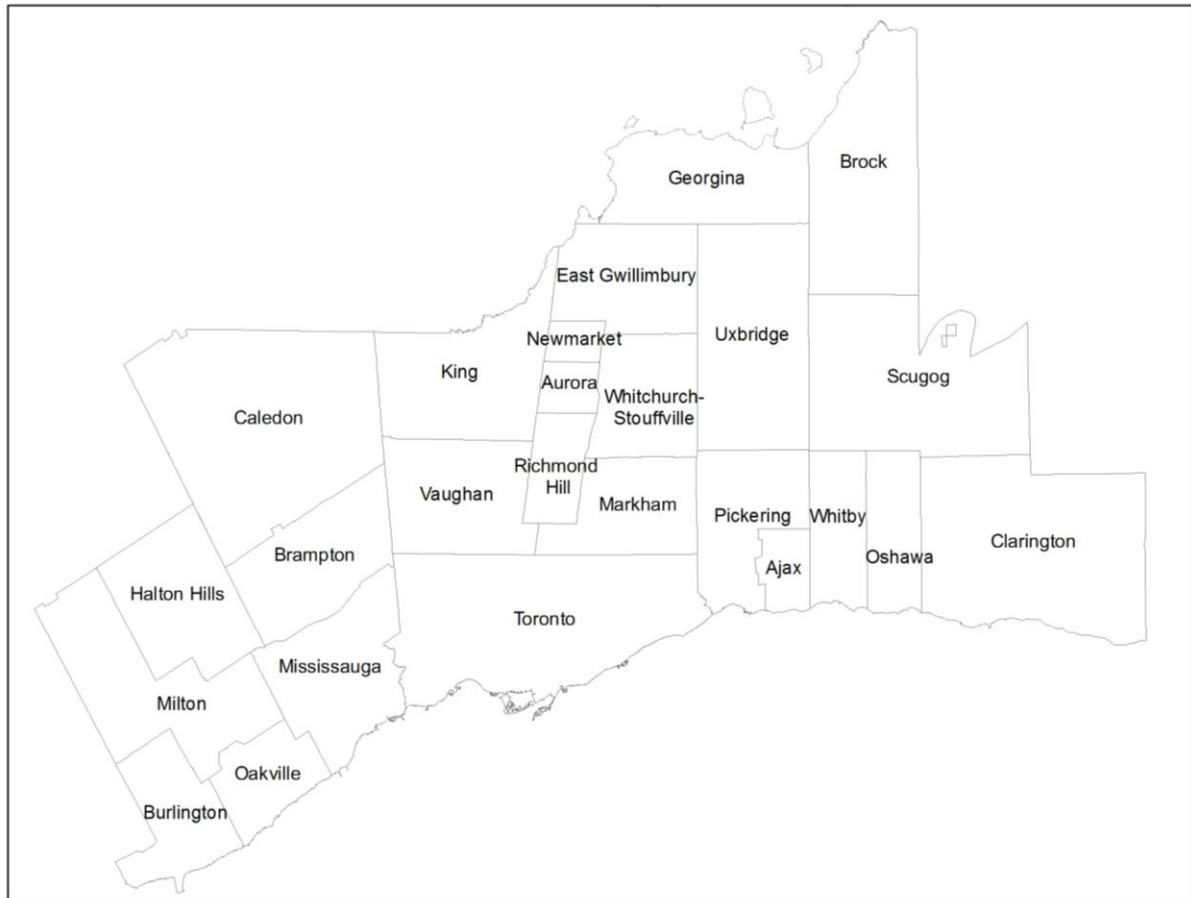


SPOTLIGHT ON THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

The Ontario election was the only one of the three under study for which data on candidates was readily available at a province-wide scale. Our upcoming discussions of the federal and municipal elections therefore focus on the Greater Toronto Area, with its population of 5.5 million people, 40.3% of whom are visible minority. Given its extraordinary demographic diversity, the GTA warrants special attention as an arena of political participation and inclusion.

As Map 2 below indicates, the GTA is a sprawling urban region which includes 25 different municipalities. The GTA is divided into the same 47 constituencies for both provincial and federal elections. Municipally there are 25 local councils across the GTA, with a combined total of 253 elected members. Focusing on the GTA across each level of government will demonstrate a diversity gap at every government level between visible minority population share and share of elected positions. Relatively, the rate of visible minority representation is highest provincially, followed federally, with municipal government lagging far behind.

Map 2: The Greater Toronto Area (GTA)



As Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate, the proportionality rate of both visible minority candidates and elected MPPs is somewhat higher in the GTA than in the province as a whole. Yet even in the GTA, with its large clustering of visible minorities, they remain significantly under-represented in elected positions at Queen's Park. In the 2011 provincial election, 12 visible minority MPPs were elected. To achieve statistically equal representation, 19 would need to be elected.

Table 4: Candidate representation by visible minority group, GTA constituencies, Ontario 2011 election

Visible minority group	Percent of GTA population	Number of candidates	Percent of candidates	Proportionality ratio
Arab	1.01	6	4.26	4.22
Black	6.65	7	4.96	0.75
Chinese	8.93	6	4.26	0.48
Filipino	3.17	2	1.42	0.45
Japanese	0.36	0	0.00	0.00
Korean	1.02	1	0.71	0.69
Latin American	1.85	0	0.00	0.00
South Asian	12.60	24	17.02	1.35
Southeast Asian	1.29	1	0.71	0.55
West Asian	1.40	1	0.71	0.51
All visible minorities	40.29	48	34.04	0.84
Not a visible minority	59.71	93	65.96	1.10
Total	100.00	141	100.00	1.00

Table 5: MPP representation by visible minority group, GTA constituencies, Ontario 2011 election

Visible minority group	Percent of GTA population	Number of elected MPPs	Percent of elected MPPs	Proportionality ratio
Arab	1.01	0	0.00	0.00
Black	6.65	2	4.26	0.64
Chinese	8.93	2	4.26	0.48
Filipino	3.17	0	0.00	0.00
Japanese	0.36	0	0.00	0.00
Korean	1.02	0	0.00	0.00
Latin American	1.85	0	0.00	0.00
South Asian	12.60	7	14.89	1.18
Southeast Asian	1.29	0	0.00	0.00
West Asian	1.40	1	2.13	1.52
All visible minorities	40.29	12	25.53	0.63
Not a visible minority	59.71	35	74.47	1.25
Total	100.00	47	100.00	1.00

ELECTED IN THE GTA

As Table 6 below reveals, visible minority representation among elected politicians is significantly lower federally than provincially. Only eight visible minority MPs were elected, compared with 12 MPPs. The number of federal visible minority MPs in the GTA would need to more than double to 19, in order to achieve statistical parity. Seven of ten visible minority sub-groups saw none of their own members elected in 2011.

Table 6: MP representation by visible minority group, GTA constituencies, 2011 Canadian federal election

Visible minority group	Percent of GTA population	Elected MPs (%)	Ratio
Arab	1.01	0 (0.0)	0
Black	6.65	0 (0.0)	0
Chinese	8.93	3 (6.4)	0.72
Filipino	3.17	0 (0.0)	0
Japanese	0.36	1 (2.1)	5.3
Korean	1.02	0 (0.0)	0
Latin American	1.85	0 (0.0)	0
South Asian	12.60	4 (8.5)	0.67
Southeast Asian	1.29	0 (0.0)	0
West Asian	1.40	0 (0.0)	0
All visible minorities	40.29	8 (17.1)	0.42
Not a visible minority	59.71	39 (82.9)	1.39
Total	100	47	1

Geographically, the distribution of MPs across the GTA generally mirrors the pattern found in the Ontario provincial election. Half the MPs (4 of 8) were elected in the 905 region, three in the 416 ‘inner suburbs’ of North York and Scarborough, and one in Toronto’s central city area.

The party affiliation however of elected visible minorities was very different federally than provincially. Of the GTA’s eight visible minority MPs elected in 2011, six were Conservative and two were NDP. Recall that in the provincial election, 11 of 12 GTA visible minorities were Liberal and one was NDP. As most of these officials were elected in constituencies with high concentrations of visible minorities, the difference in federal and provincial parties of success, suggests that there is not a fixed ‘ethnic vote’ loyal to a single political party in the GTA.

VISIBLE MINORITY CANDIDATES

As Table 7 below shows, the visible minority rate of candidates across GTA constituencies (20.6%) was slightly higher than their ultimate rate of inclusion among elected MPs shown in the prior table (17.1%). Still, there would have to be almost double the 30 visible minority candidates running, to reach statistically equitable representation. Again South Asians predominate as by far the largest sub-group, accounting for more than half of all visible minority candidates. Meanwhile, a majority of the sub-groups fielded just one or no candidates across the entire GTA.

Table 7: Candidate representation by visible minority group, GTA constituencies, 2011 Canadian federal election

Visible minority group	Percent of GTA population	Number of candidates	Percent of candidates	Proportionality ratio
Arab	1.01	1	0.71	0.70
Black	6.65	3	2.12	0.31
Chinese	8.93	5	3.55	0.39
Filipino	3.17	0	0.00	0.00
Japanese	0.36	1	0.71	1.94
Korean	1.02	0	0.00	0.69
Latin American	1.85	0	0.0	0.00
South Asian	12.60	18	12.8	1.02
Southeast Asian	1.29	0	0.00	0.00
West Asian	1.40	2	1.4	1.01
All visible minorities	40.29	30	21.27	0.53
Not a visible minority	59.71	112	79.43	1.33
Total	100.00	141	100.00	1.00

Geographically, a now-familiar distribution of candidates occurred with more running for office in the 905 area (16) than the 416 area (14); and within the City of Toronto far more (12) were in the ‘inner suburbs’ of Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke than in the central city area of Toronto (2). By party affiliation, candidate distribution was less evenly distributed than in the provincial election. In the federal election the Conservatives fielded 13 visible minority candidates, the NDP ten and the Liberals seven. Clearly, visible minorities are unlikely to approach equitable statistical inclusion as elected MPs in Parliament until they significantly raise their number of candidates.

There are 25 municipalities in the Greater Toronto area – each with its own municipal council. As Table 8 below demonstrates there is huge variation in these municipalities. They range in population from Toronto’s 2.5 million people to just under 12,000 people in Brock; their concentration of visible minorities varies from 65.4% in Markham to 1.61% in Brock.

What stands out clearest however from Table 8 is how dramatically worse visible minority inclusion among elected municipal officials is than among their provincial and federal counterparts. Note that across all 25 GTA municipalities, visible minorities hold only 18 of 253 (7.1%) municipal council positions. With visible minorities comprising 40.29% of all GTA residents this yields a lowly .17 proportionality rate. The GTA would need to elect six times more visible minorities to local councils to achieve statistical equality of elected members and population share.

Significantly, more than half the GTA municipalities – a total of 16 – currently have no visible minority members. While some of these municipalities have relatively small visible minority populations, others have large concentrations. Mississauga with a 49% visible minority population share and Pickering at 30.5% stand out in particular.

Meanwhile the City of Toronto continues to elect municipal councils which do not reflect the City’s own official slogan: ‘Diversity Our Strength’. Just five of Toronto’s 45 council members are visible minorities, and it would require four times that number to achieve statistical equity. Brampton’s record of just one visible minority on its 11 member council also lags badly behind its demographics.

Few GTA municipalities can boast a statistically inclusive council composition. Smaller sized Clarington and Milton are leaders in this regard.

Table 8: Visible minority representation on GTA municipal councils, 2010 election

Municipality	Total Population	Percent visible minority	Total council members	VM council members (%)	Proportionality ratio
Toronto	2,503,281	46.95	45	5 (11.1)	0.24
Mississauga	668,549	49.04	12	0	0
Brampton	433,806	57.04	11	1 (9.1)	0.16
Markham	261,573	65.4	13	4 (30.8)	0.47
Vaughan	238,866	26.55	9	1 (11.1)	0.42
Oakville	165,613	18.43	13	1 (7.7)	0.42
Burlington	164,415	9.66	7	0	0
Richmond Hill	162,074	45.66	9	2 (22.2)	0.49
Oshawa	141,590	8.11	11	0	0
Whitby	111,814	17	8	0	0
Ajax	90,167	35.63	7	1 (14.3)	0.4
Pickering	87,838	30.55	7	0	0
Clarington	77,820	4.65	7	1 (14.3)	3.07
Newmarket	74,295	15.16	9	0	0
Caledon	57,050	7.2	9	0	0
Halton Hills	55,289	4.01	9	0	0
Milton	53,939	17.06	11	2 (18.2)	1.07
Aurora	47,629	13.11	9	0	0
Georgina	42,346	3.97	7	0	0
Whitchurch-Stouffville	24,390	13.58	7	0	0
Scugog	21,439	1.87	7	0	0
East Gwillimbury	21,069	3.5	5	0	0
King	19,847	4.61	7	0	0
Uxbridge	19,169	2.33	7	0	0
Brock	11,979	1.61	7	0	0
All GTA municipalities	5,555,847	40.29	253	18 (7.1)	0.17

Brampton and Mississauga are especially interesting for how their visible minority representation varies across levels of government. Currently their respective municipal council visible minority representation is 1/11 and 0/12 respectively. Meanwhile respectively their provincial government record is 2/3 and 3/5, and federally 2/3 and 1/5. Explanations for the ‘municipal lag’ are discussed later in this paper.

Finally, the distinct sub-group representation of visible minorities municipally is also striking. Previously we have seen that provincially and federally South Asians predominated among all visible minorities as both candidates and elected officials. Due to the timing of this research, it has not been possible to establish the identities of all municipal candidates in the 2010 elections. However as Table 9 below reveals, it is Chinese politicians (10/18) who stand out among visible minorities elected to local councils.

Table 9: Aggregate representation of visible minorities on GTA municipal councils, 2010 municipal election

Visible minority group	VM population	Percent of population	Percent of council members	Proportionality ratio
Arab	55,595	1.01	0	0
Black	366,290	6.65	3 (1.1)	0.18
Chinese	492,160	8.93	10 (3.9)	0.44
Filipino	174,715	3.17	0	0
Japanese	20,040	0.36	0	0
Korean	56,385	1.02	1 (0.4)	0.39
Latin American	101,715	1.85	0	0
South Asian	694,405	12.60	4 (1.6)	0.13
Southeast Asian	71,325	1.29	0	0
West Asian	77,015	1.40	0	0
Total visible minorities	2,220,030	40.29	18 (7.1)	0.17
Not a visible minority	3,290,670	59.71	235 (92.9)	1.56
Total population	5,510,710	100.00	253	1.00

**VISIBLE MINORITY ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION IN THE GTA:
INCLUSION OR EXCLUSION**

Table 10 below summarizes our findings across all three levels of government and all ten visible minority sub-groups.

Table 10: Political representation by visible minority group for three levels of government in GTA, 2010 municipal elections and 2011 federal and provincial elections

Visible minority group	Percent of GTA population	Elected VM Federal MPs (%)	Ratio	Elected VM Provincial MPPs (%)	Ratio	Elected VM Municipal Council Members (%)	Ratio	Total VM Elected Politicians (%)	Ratio
Arab	1.01	0 (0.0)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	6.65	0 (0.0)	0	2 (4.3)	0.66	3 (1.1)	0.18	5 (1.4)	0.21
Chinese	8.93	3 (6.4)	0.72	2 (4.3)	0.49	10 (3.9)	0.44	15 (4.3)	0.48
Filipino	3.17	0 (0.0)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Japanese	0.36	1 (2.1)	5.8	0	0	0	0	1 (0.3)	0.83
Korean	1.02	0	0	0	0	1 (0.4)	0.39	1 (0.3)	0.29
Latin American	1.85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Asian	12.60	4 (8.5)	0.67	7 (14.9)	1.18	4 (1.6)	0.13	15 (4.3)	0.34
Southeast Asian	1.29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Asian	1.40	0	0	1 (2.1)	1.50	0	0	1 (0.3)	0.21
All visible minorities	40.29	8 (17.0)	0.42	12 (25.5)	0.63	18 (7.1)	0.17	38 (10.9)	0.27
Not a visible minority	59.71	39 (83.0)	1.39	35 (74.5)	1.25	235 (92.5)	1.68	309 (89.1)	1.49
Total	100	47	1	47	1	253	1	347	1

This table provides a troubling profile for an urban region that aspires to be a global leader in diversity inclusion, integration and equity. The data presented identifies a multi-dimensional ‘diversity gap’ in the political representation of visible minorities among elected officials in the GTA. Key findings are as follows:

- **Visible minorities are under-represented in the GTA** – Visible minorities comprise 40% of the GTA population, but hold only 11% of the combined federal, provincial and municipal council elected positions in the region. The GTA would need to elect almost four times as many visible minorities in order to mirror the diversity of its population. Conversely, non-visible minorities (Caucasians and whites) are over-represented among elected officials at all levels of government in the GTA.
- **Visible minorities are best represented in provincial government, and least in municipal** – There are significant variations of visible minority representation across different levels of government. The provincial level leads the way with visible

minorities accounting for 25% of GTA seats, surpassing the federal level with its 17% share, while the municipal level lags badly with only 7% of council seats held by visible minorities.

- **All sub-groups of visible minorities are under-represented** – The ten visible minority sub-groups share one important common experience. They all have a lower share of total political positions in the GTA than their share of GTA population. However their relative rates of under-representation vary greatly.
- **Four of ten visible minority sub-groups have no member of their community elected at any of these three levels of government** – These are Arabs, Filipinos, Latin Americans (who are non-white) and Southeast Asians. Note that some of these communities are very large in the GTA, for instance Filipinos with a GTA population approaching 175,000. One way to think of this community's size, is that only five of 25 GTA municipalities have a larger population. Yet no GTA Filipino holds a seat on a municipal council, at Queen's Park or in Parliament.
- **South Asians and Chinese are tied for the sub-group with the most elected members, each having 15** – South Asian elected officials predominate federally and provincially, while their Chinese counterparts predominate municipally. But even these 'best case' sub-groups have considerable ground to make up before achieving statistical mirror representation of elected officials to population share. For this to occur, South Asians would need to elect three times their current number of politicians, and the Chinese community two times its current share.
- **Electoral success varies by region within the GTA** – Their electoral success is greatest in the growing 905 suburban areas bordering the 416 City of Toronto, followed by the 416 'inner suburbs' of Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke, with the central city of Toronto lagging badly behind.

This is a difficult question to answer because comparable data to what we have presented here has not been produced for earlier periods. Previous studies of GTA political representation have not examined the entire region geographically, and have not analyzed the patterns by visible minority sub-group.

Our closest comparison study is the 2009 report *DiverseCity Counts: A Snapshot of Diversity in the Greater Toronto Area* (Diversity Institute 2009). This study identified visible minority representation in a host of institutional leadership sectors including government elected officials and public sector leadership staff, the corporate sector, the voluntary sector, the educational sector as well as leaders in public agencies, boards and commissions. However, in ambitiously seeking to track visible minority representation in so many different sectors, the authors of this study understandably chose to limit their geographic scope to only five GTA municipalities. They selected the five municipalities with the highest proportion of visible minorities: Markham, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto and Richmond Hill. All their data was presented as combined visible minority statistics, without sub-group breakdown.

For our purposes, this 2009 study provides a valuable initial benchmark, as it profiles who was elected federally, provincially and municipally in these five municipalities in the elections prior to those analyzed here. If we compare the current number of visible minorities elected with those elected in the prior elections at all three levels of government, we do have greater visible minority numbers today. But the progress has been slow compared with the ground needing to be made up.

As of 2009 these five municipalities had a total of 22 elected visible minorities at all three levels of government. Today they have 28. This is progress, but as we have seen, the diversity gap remains wide even with this improved representation. And there is certainly no guarantee of steady, continued improvement. As Jerome Black has shown, visible minority representation for all of Canada in Parliament has fluctuated over successive elections (sometimes rising, sometimes dropping) despite an ever rising share of visible minorities in the population (Black 2011).

Another basis of comparison for the findings presented here, are earlier studies I have conducted of visible minority representation on the City of Toronto's municipal council over successive civic elections (Siemiatycki and Saloojee 2003; Siemiatycki 2008; Siemiatycki 2011). Representation appears forever stuck at around 11%, in a city where visible minorities account for four times that population share. Visible minority members comprised 7.5% of council members in 1994, 12% in 1997, 11% in 2000, 11% in 2003, 9% in 2006, and 11% in the 2010 municipal election.

WHAT EXPLAINS DIFFERENT RATES OF VISIBLE MINORITY REPRESENTATION?

As we have seen, representation rates vary significantly by level of government, by visible minority sub-group and by urban/suburban location. More research would enrich our understanding of factors underlying these variations, but a number of explanations of divergent patterns can be offered.

VARIATIONS BY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT

Municipal councils have by far the lowest rates of visible minority representation. In the absence of political parties, municipal elections largely hinge on name recognition. This gives incumbents a huge advantage. Successful campaigns require a major financial and time commitment from candidates, for a level of government not always well understood or appreciated. Understandably, ambitious persons hoping to 'break into politics' are more likely to seek provincial or federal office.

Federally and provincially, political parties now facilitate visible minority access to elected office. This is especially the case in constituencies where a particular concentration of typically a single visible minority sub-group prompts parties to select a candidate from that identity group.

The provincial level of government has consistently elected more visible minorities in recent elections than the federal level. It is surely significant that there were far more visible minority candidates across the same 47 GTA constituencies running for office provincially (48) than federally (30). Gaining nominations matters and increases likelihood of success.

It also matters in which constituencies visible minorities run. Three new visible minority MPPs elected in the GTA in 2011 were Liberals who ran in safe seats where the Liberal incumbent retired.

VARIATIONS BY VISIBLE MINORITY SUB-GROUP

We have seen wide discrepancies among the ten visible minority sub-groups. While all are under-represented among elected officials relative to their population share in the GTA, the gap is larger for some groups than others. Political scientists would suggest a variety of factors influence a group's electoral participation. These include: its size, residential concentration, shared community values and networks, tradition of political participation, familiarity with the Canadian political process, affluence and media access (Mollenkopf and Hochschild 2009; Bilodeau and Kanji 2006; Freeman 2004).

It is not surprising that the two sub-groups with the most elected politicians are South Asians and Chinese. They benefit from a number of the attributes cited above. Yet even they are significantly under-represented relative to their population share.

URBAN/SUBURBAN VARIATIONS

Traditionally city centre areas have been regarded as spaces of diversity, while suburbs appeared one dimensional and conformist. Research in the GTA has revised this assumption when applied to population settlement patterns and political participation (Walks 2007; Matheson 2006; Siemiatycki and Matheson 2005).

As noted in our findings, political representation of visible minorities in elected office improves as one moves from Toronto's central core to its 'inner suburbs' and then onto surrounding municipalities of the 905 area. Further research is required to best explain this pattern. Worth exploring are: the extent to which party candidate nominations in the central city are more contested and difficult to secure; possible assumptions that visible minorities are most 'appropriate' as candidates where their own community members are highly concentrated; more fluid and flexible constituency associations in areas where the diversity of the population has increased rapidly; and the presence of community networks (business, social, religious, media) to support candidates.

GENDER VARIATIONS

Does the gender balance among visible minority candidates and elected members differ from the pattern among whites? In his study of visible minority representation for all of Canada in Parliament, Jerome Black found that women are a higher percentage of visible minority MPs than non-visible minority MPs. He attributes this to political parties being more pro-active in recruiting women among visible minorities so as to secure the 'double benefit' of raising their equity numbers on both gender and visible minority grounds (Black 2008).

No similar pattern emerged in this study. Rather, the rate of women as both candidates and winners of elected office largely matched the balance among their non-visible minority counterparts. In Ontario's 2011 provincial election for instance, women comprised 32% of all 321 candidates for the three major parties. Among the 57 visible minority candidates, 33% were women. And while 28% of all elected MPPs in this election were women, women accounted for 30% of the visible minority MPPs elected. In other words, women of all identities are equally under-represented in elected office relative to their male counterparts.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO RAISE VISIBLE MINORITY
REPRESENTATION IN ELECTED OFFICE**

Who our political leaders are matters. In a country and society as diverse as ours, there are many reasons to want our political process and institutions to equitably include all Canadians. This is especially pressing in the country's most diverse region – the Greater Toronto Area.

There are many reasons to strive for a better balance between who governs and who is governed.

- It draws on the widest talent pool for political leadership.
- It assures that lawmakers and policy-makers are attuned to a broad range of experiences and interests.
- It gives all Canadians a sense of belonging and access to government.
- It minimizes community marginalization.
- It promotes an inclusive Canadian identity and value-system.

To be sure, political participation takes many forms. These go well beyond participation in elections to include organizing and lobbying, contributing time or money to a cause, speaking out and sometimes acting out. These are all crucial dimensions of a democratic society. But they don't diminish the significance of elections and who governs. Quite the opposite, a robust democracy would want decision makers who best reflect the population in all its diversity and complexity.

Canada is hardly alone in having a diversity gap in its elected political leadership. The under-representation of distinct groups (eg. Aboriginal populations, women, youth, racial, ethnic and religious minorities) is common across all western political systems. Indeed, it is likely what prompted the great Canadian political philosopher Charles Taylor to declare: "Democracy, particularly liberal democracy, is a great philosophy of inclusion... And yet, there is something in the dynamics of democracy which pushes to exclusion" (Taylor 1999: 265).

While there is no single, quick fix to better balance political representation, there are a host of measures that could make a significant difference in the profile of who gets elected. They range from big system-wide changes to smaller more focused initiatives.

A. ELECTION REFORM

Countries with the best record of diverse representation typically base their election system on proportional representation (Bird 2011). This system of government assigns elected positions to parties in some proportion to their share of votes. The effect is often that parties place candidates of different identities on their lists, in part to attract votes from those

communities. Efforts to date in Canada to adopt proportional representation have not been successful.

However, even in our current system electoral reform could have a positive impact on visible minority representation. As Pal and Choudhry have shown, the GTA has fewer seats in Parliament than their population warrants, and this has the effect of reducing the voting power of the visible minority electorate (Pal and Choudhry 2007). The federal government's plan to increase the number of seats for Ontario in Parliament will create more constituencies in the GTA, and this could increase the number of visible minority MPs in future elections.

B. INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

Governments must name equitable political representation as a goal that is in the public interest, and then identify steps to promote it. The under-representation of distinct groups in elected office will likely persist until it is named as a problem to be overcome by leading Canadian institutions, starting with governments themselves.

This is especially pressing at the municipal level, where visible minority representation is so poor. Cities have the advantage of local schools, libraries and community centres present in all neighborhoods. Municipalities need to roll out popular civic education programs to stimulate political participation among traditionally under-represented groups.

Some countries have established quotas of minimum numbers of elected positions to be held by representatives of under-represented groups. This is clearly a contentious measure to take. Yet it is certainly not unfamiliar in Canada, where provincial representation in the Senate and in some cases the House of Commons is guaranteed on a quota basis.

C. POLITICAL PARTY COMMITMENT

Political Parties have a major role to play in advancing equitable representation. They can:

- Establish a 'Diverse Representation' Committee to champion pro-active steps throughout the party.
- Set goals for the proportion of candidates to be members of under-represented groups (typically proposed at 30%) and prioritize such candidate nominations in winnable constituencies.
- Set a goal to have half of all seats vacated by incumbents fielding a candidate from an under-represented group.
- Devote more party focus to developing leadership capacity among under-represented groups. Use social media, technology, local constituency offices as hubs of political education, skill-building and networking.

- Review candidate nomination rules and processes to facilitate the candidacies of traditionally under-represented groups. This could entail revisions to how candidate nomination campaigns are funded, conducted and voted upon.

D. COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

None of the above steps will be taken without public voices calling for change. This includes those concerned about their own group's under-representation, as well as those committed to living in a society and having a political system that affords equitable influence and inclusion for all.

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