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Visible Minorities: What Individual Characteristics Determine Electoral Success in Municipal Councils in the Greater Toronto Area?

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Visible Minorities:

What Individual Characteristics Determine Electoral Success in
Municipal Councils in the Greater Toronto Area?

MPA Research Report

Submitted to

The Local Government Program
Department of Political Science
The University of Western Ontario

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to answer the following question: to what extent, if any, do individual characteristics contribute to electoral success in the municipal context? In particular, this paper will examine the characteristics of the individual visible minority (VM) candidates. Since we are in a municipal election year, it is apt to study the descriptive representation of visible minorities, those who are non-aboriginals, non-Caucasian or non-white.[1] The VM candidates to be studied are those running in this year's municipal elections in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In particular, ten municipalities have been selected for this study – Ajax, Brampton, Clarington, Markham, Milton, Mississauga, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Toronto and Vaughan. These municipalities were selected because either there have been one to five VM candidates elected in the 2010 election, or the municipality has a large VM community. Included in the list of candidates for this year's election are current VM minority incumbents, of which some have not yet signed-up for re-election.

The theory advanced in this paper argues that four individual characteristics (explained below in detail) play a crucial role in the electoral success of VM candidates at the municipal level. Indeed, electoral success for VM candidates could lead to better representation of visible minorities in certain communities. Visible minorities in the GTA are under-represented in councils relative to their size in the population (Siemiatycki).

In Ontario, evidence shows that visible minority under-representation is occurring in municipal elections.[2] This under-representation leads to an electoral gap for visible minorities, which will likely continue for the 2014 municipal elections. The under-representation of a large segment of the population will contribute to voter apathy and, ultimately lead to less representative

democracy in the province. The electoral gap, created by a lack of representation, will affect the legitimacy of many municipalities that are home to large visible minorities.

Some municipalities in Ontario with large and organized visible minorities, such as the South Asian (SA) community in parts of the GTA, have achieved electoral success in the higher levels of government. As Siemiatycki notes, "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".[3] However, the other visible minority groups (including other Asians, Arabs and blacks) are not seeing as much success as the SA community at the municipal level.[4] Consequently, this paper is focused on the characteristics of the VM candidate from the individual level, instead of the institutional/organizational level, with respect to electoral success.

Some of the literature on electoral representation shows the serious nature of the gap in electoral success of visible minorities, including the SA community. For that reason, Siemiatycki argues, "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".[5] Of the three levels of government, the municipal councils seem to have the lowest representation of visible minorities.

On the national level, the Canadian federal government has a multiculturalism program which calls for civic participation of the ethno-cultural/racial minorities in Canada.[6] Empowered communities are engaged communities, and therefore are politically involved in the policy decision-making process of their communities. According to Siemiatycki, "The GTA would need

to elect six times more visible minorities to local councils to achieve statistical equality of elected members and population share."[7] Achieving proportional representation is the ultimate goal.

For the purpose of this paper, and since Karen Bird's report indicated that the SA community is organized and shows a strong candidate-voter ethnic affinity, attention is directed towards the visible minorities as a whole.[8] Nonetheless, the hypotheses of this study will focus on the characteristics of the individual, instead of the collective. Therefore, the four hypotheses are as follows.

H$_1$: *If the VM candidate is a Canadian-born, then he/she is more likely to have electoral success.*

H$_2$: *If the VM candidate has previous political experience (i.e., board position), then he/she is more likely to be elected to a municipal council.*

H$_3$: *If the VM candidate has a political mentor, then he/she is more likely to have electoral success.*

H$_4$: *If the VM candidate runs for office in a "colour coded" area, then he/she is more likely to have electoral success.*

The phrase "colour coded" refers to the propensity of visible minority candidates to run in areas with large visible minorities.[9] So, the model for the hypotheses is as noted below.

VM Characteristics for Electoral Success Model:
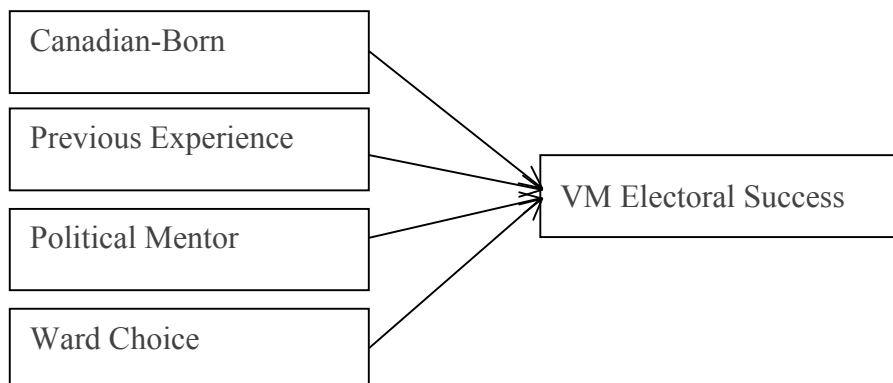
In testing the hypotheses noted above, a cross-sectional study approach was used, which is appropriate for this research. First, municipal election records from each of the 25 municipalities in the GTA were analyzed (see Appendix A). Second, using publicly available data, biographic and photographic analysis on the background characteristics of individual candidates was conducted. Third, after checking municipal records, further analysis was conducted on the elected official/candidate websites, newspaper articles, Statistics Canada reports, and any other pertinent sources. In particular, specific information regarding the four hypotheses was sought – Canadian- or foreign-born, previous political experience, political mentors; and choice of electoral district.

Additionally, VM office holders in ten of the 25 communities were selected. From the 2010 Municipal Elections, of the 18 VM elected into office (see Appendix A), I was able to identify 15 councillors for surveying (two have become MPPs as of June 12, 2014). Initially, for comparison purposes the plan was to include VM candidates who ran unsuccessfully in the last two elections (2006 and 2010), in the study. However, due to privacy issues, no contact information was available from the Clerks' offices of the municipalities. Thus, it was necessary to use the current list (as of June 18, 2014) of the municipal elections candidates in the ten municipalities. [10] The primary data sources were the websites of the Clerks' offices, and the candidates' personal websites (where available).

From these primary sources, of the 497 candidates who have registered for the election, 203 candidates (including some of the incumbents) were selected. The selection was based on the current VM councilors, and those whose e-mail contact information was available either through the websites of Clerks' offices or the individual candidate's. Many of the candidates who had e-mails listed did not have websites. And those with websites, about half had candidate's photos online. As much as possible, non-visible minority candidates (those in office or those whose

website showed them being non-VM) were excluded from the list of survey participants. The 203 participants were those whose websites indicated as them being VM and those whom it was not easy to determine whether they are VM or non-VM.

As for the secondary data sources used, they included the reports of Siemiatycki (2011) and Bird (2011).[11] For data analysis, I have utilized the processes suggested by O'Sullivan et al.[12] The process involves the enumeration of the data, the development of frequency tables, and the presentation of the data visually as well as in text. From this process, an index of representation or proportionality ratio (see chart in Appendix A) is developed that shows VM representation in the 25 municipalities.

Lastly, a questionnaire was developed, containing nine questions. The questionnaire and the introduction e-mail text were sent to the Ethics Committee for approval before requesting the participation of the municipal candidates chosen. An online survey-conducting firm (interceptum.com) was used to conduct the surveying. The initial participation request was sent the last Friday of June. The response rate was low, so a reminder request/re-invite was sent a week later (the first Saturday of July). Further details of the survey results will be discussed in the Findings section below. In addition, attempts were made to contact current incumbents via telephone to invite them to participate in the study (as only two incumbents have completed the survey, from the first two e-mail invites).

As for the audience for this paper, it is hoped that future VM candidates, academics, municipal elected officials, or indeed anyone who is interested in municipal elections will find this study useful. The paper is organized into four sections. After the Introduction section (1), the Literature Review section (2) provides relevant information about the visible minority representation in Ontario, in Canada, in the U.S. and other parts of the world. Following the

Literature Review section is the Findings Section (3). This section has four sub-sections to it that correspond with the four hypotheses. Section 3a shows the findings with respect to whether the VMs are Canadian- or foreign-born. Section 3b presents the findings of the individual VM candidate's previous political experience. Section 3c provides information about political mentors. Section 3d gives evidence about the electoral district selection choices of the VM candidates. The last Section (4) is the Conclusion and Recommendations section that summarizes the findings of the study and offers suggestions for future studies.

2. Literature Review

The current literature on political involvement of visible minorities speaks of the widespread under-representation of visible minorities in many jurisdictions (Cukier and Yap 2009; Bird 2011: Siemiatycki 2011; Smith and Walks, 2013). In analyzing visible minority descriptive representation, Karin Bird (2011) looked at all three levels of government and found "Visible minorities are severely under-represented in municipal councils across Ontario's large and medium-sized cities".[13] In Ontario, as Siemiatycki suggests (above), the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) must elect six times more visible minorities to correct the under-representation of these groups.

From the working paper series of CERIS – The Ontario Metropolis Centre, Smith and Walks (2013) note, "The contrast between the changing 'face' of urban Canada and the reality of political under-representation could be expected to present a contradiction to many new Canadians who made 'multicultural' Canada their home, in part through promises of equal opportunities and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds and practices".[14] Theoretically, politicians should resemble those they represent, thus achieving descriptive representation. In their examination of the level of descriptive representation, Smith and Walks suggest, "To date,

however, there has been little research on the experiences and opinions of municipal visible

minority candidates…"[15] The under-representation of visible minorities can be corrected by

striving to achieve descriptive representation in local level governments.

Certainly, there is some literature on the importance of descriptive representation (Banducci,

Donovan, and Karp 2004; Black and Hicks 2006; Rocha, Tolbert, Bowen, and Clark 2010; Bird

2011). Rocha et al. note, "We argue empowerment or descriptive representation in legislatures is a

necessary and sufficient condition to increase minority political participation".[16] Giving one

aspect of the rationale for descriptive representation, Black and Hicks (2006) suggest,

"Underlying this idea is the belief that only legislators who share the defining character(s) of a

group have the necessary experience, empathy and resolve to truly advance the group's interests –

all the more so if the group has traditionally been at the margins of Canadian society".[17] At the

same time, Bird (2011) argues the role that descriptive representation plays in the local level

government is undervalued in Canada (as the focus is on the higher levels of government).

Conversely, there is literature on substantive representation (Andrew, Biles, Siemiatycki, and

Tolley 2008; Matheson 2008). Regarding the descriptive and substantive representation (in

Andrew et al. 2008; Black 2011), Siemiatycki posits, "Toronto's elected politicians do not reflect

the city's population profile. Yet, the policies they have espoused and enacted have been

significantly attuned to the diverse communities that comprise Toronto".[18] Matheson suggests,

determining the link between descriptive and substantive representation can be unclear and

unstable.

In addition, minority group size plays an important role in political representation of group

members (Siemiatycki in Andrew et al. 2008; Bird 2011; Smith and Walks 2013). In the last four

decades, Toronto and the GTA have witnessed continuous immigrant settlement, making the area

the "destination of choice" for many immigrants.[19] According to Cukier and Yap (2009), the five

municipalities in Ontario with the highest number visible minorities represent 49.5 percent of the

population in these localities.[20] As of the 2010 municipal election, the average visible minority

size was 52.8 percent of the population in the five municipalities: Toronto, Mississauga,

Brampton, Markham and Richmond Hill (see Appendix A).

Related to group size is minority participation or voter turnout in the locality (Jedwab 2006;

Togeby 2008; Rocha 2010). According to Jedwab, "Results of the 2004 and 2006 federal elections

reveal that ridings with high concentrations of immigrants had lower than average rates of voter

participation. In 2001, nearly 90% of all immigrants resided in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec

and British Columbia – notably in the Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal areas".[21] And Rocha et

al. add, "Most empirical research has tended to support the contention that empowerment affects

civic engagement by making participation easier".[22]

Furthermore, voter bias or "ethnic affinity" matters too (Togebey 2008; Bird 2011). The

"colour coded" electoral districts (Bird 2011) may hold true for higher level of governments.

However, it is not clear whether the tendency for visible minorities to run in high numbers in

concentration is true for ward elections in the local level. Most importantly, name recognition and

incumbency advantages (Bird 2011) are major barriers that visible minorities face.

Moreover, the electoral system determines success (Togeby 2008), and political party

involvement in local government elections matters (Krebs 1998; Togeby 2008). The

characteristics of the municipal electoral system in Ontario include a lack of direct political party

involvement, high incumbency rates in councils, and low visible minority representation – even

when some municipalities have a large number of visible minorities. Therefore, overcoming these

exogenous factors could assist visible minorities achieve improved descriptive representation in Ontario.

Indeed, Ontario municipalities can learn from the Danish system. In Denmark, Togeby argues, "Local elections are especially interesting, because immigrants who retain their foreign citizenship have been eligible to vote and run for election in local elections in Denmark since 1981".[23] Togeby notes it is not easy for immigrants to move up socially and economically in the Danish society; therefore, they are being empowered politically, instead. The local election system in Denmark uses proportional representation and "preferential voting". Indeed, Togeby adds, "It is the small groups, such as ethnic minorities, that are particularly favoured by the Danish local electoral system".[24] Togeby suggests the existence of mutual benefits between parties and minority groups through cooperation, as a result of the system.

In the U.S., Krebs argues, "…success in city council elections is a function both of being widely known and having one's candidacy legitimized by outside sources".[25] Incumbents enjoy name recognition and perhaps legitimacy due to their in-office experience. Additionally, Kushner, Siegela, and Stanwicka (1997) find "Incumbency provides a huge advantage, especially in large cities. The level of campaign spending also has a significant effect as does the number of candidates contesting a seat".[26] Therefore, since most visible minorities in Ontario live in large cities, lack name recognition and the resources to mount strong campaigns, the under-representation of visible minorities will continue.

Finally, since the majority of visible minorities came to Canada in the last 25 years, it might take some time to achieve similar electoral success as the older immigrant communities (i.e., Italians) did. Indeed, Siemiatycki argues, "There is also an evident premium for electoral success attached to length of residency in the city… A particularly significant advantage of longer

residency in the city is the time it takes to climb the political ladder… In most instances, the initial stepping stone was a school board trustee position leading to a municipal council seat…"[27] Incidentally, this long-residency is something that incumbents of municipal councils often mention in their public profiles.

3. Findings

According to the data from Table 7 (see Appendix A), Siemiatycki found in the 2010 municipal election period that the total population for the 25 municipalities in the GTA to be 5,555,847. The ten municipalities included in this study account for 84 percent (4,665,688) of the GTA population. The visible minority figures are approximately 46 percent and 38 percent of the ten municipalities and of the GTA, respectively.

Converting the "Percent visible minority" figures in Table 7, I was able to determine visible minority population numbers for the ten municipalities. The total number of visible minorities, as of the 2010 municipal elections, is approximately 2,238,450 individuals. More than half (52.5%) of these individuals live in the City of Toronto. That figure represents approximately 1,175,290.

In regards to the number of council seats, the ten localities represent approximately 54 percent (137) of all the GTA council members (253). And to put in context, a brief description of the ten municipalities in the GTA is provided below. (The information is summarized in Table 6, as well.)

Ranking the communities by size puts Toronto at the top with over 2.5 million people and about 47 percent are visible minorities. Among the ten municipalities, Toronto has the largest visible minority community, and in Ontario (perhaps in Canada) as well. Toronto's council is made up of 44 ward councillors and a mayor. The mayor is elected at-large from all city residents.

(All the mayors in the province are elected the same way.) Councillors are elected directly by the residents of their respective wards. As of the June 18, 2014 there were 271 candidates registered for this year's election, for 45 positions.

The next two communities in the ranking after Toronto are located in the Peel region (just west of Toronto). The population numbers for the City of Mississauga and the City of Brampton add up to over 1.1 million. Each municipality is home to a large visible minority community – 49 percent and 57 percent respectively. For Mississauga, 11 councillors are elected for regional and council seats, which correspond to each ward. And for Brampton, there are six Regional and Local Councillors and five Ward Councillors. The mayor of each municipal also sits on the regional council, and can be elected among the members to be the Regional Chair. For this year, there are 51 candidates running for positions in the 12-member council in Mississauga. And in Brampton, 59 candidates are registered for the 11-member council in the municipality.

Next are the three communities from the York Region (just north of Toronto), the City of Markham, the City of Vaughan, and the Town of Richmond Hill. Collectively these communities have over 660 thousand people, with more than 300 thousand of them being visible minorities. Markham has four Regional Councillors and eight Ward Councillors. For Vaughan, there are four Regional and Local Councillors and five Ward Councillors. And for Richmond Hill, the municipality as two Regional and Local Councillors, while six councillors are elected by ward. In regards to the candidates for this year's elections, 35 have already signed up for the 13 positions in Markham; 22 for nine seats in Richmond Hill; and 14 for nine spots in Vaughan council.

The Town of Oakville, in the Halton Region (southwest of Toronto) falls in the middle of the ranking (of the regional municipalities). And the Town of Milton, also in Halton, is the smallest of the communities in the list. Both have one Regional Chair that is elected by all voters

(similar to the mayor election). Oakville has six Regional Councillors, and six Ward Councillors. And Milton has two Regional Councillors and eight councillors, one per each ward. For Milton, there are 27 candidates vying for 11 council positions. And for Oakville, 26 candidates are running for 13 seats in the council.

Lastly, in Durham Region (just east of Toronto), the Town of Ajax and the Municipality of Clarington have a combined population of about 168 thousand, and just over 41 thousand visible minorities in both communities. New for 2014, residents of each municipality in the region will be able to vote for a Regional Chair. And both of these municipalities have two Regional and Local Councillors, and four Ward Councillors. Ajax has, as of July 11, 2014, 14 candidates running for the seven council positions in the locality. Similarly, in Clarington, 15 candidates are registered for the seven council positions there.

By removing Toronto from the list of the municipalities, the visible minority representation of the nine municipalities (combined) improves (13%) compared to the 25 municipalities in the GTA (7.1%). Although visible minorities in general are still under-represented in municipal councils, visible minority women fare worse than their male counterparts in the ten municipalities in this study. Only two visible minority candidates were elected to council in 2010 – two out of 18, or 11.1% VM elected member, or 1.5% of the total council seats for the study communities. In fact, the situation might get worse, as one of the councillors has become an Ontario Member of Parliament, as of June 12, 2014. So, the next council term for the ten communities might have only one female visible minority councillor left – that is if she manages to get re-elected after the October 27 Municipal Election.

Overall, for the ten municipalities, there are about 500 candidates running for office in 254 council positions (including mayors). That means there are about two candidates per one council

seat for this year's Ontario municipal elections. Nonetheless, 203 candidates were selected to participate in the study.

Table 1. Visible minority representation (2010 election) and municipal governance structure

Municipality	Total population	Total VM pop.	Total council members	VM Council members	Regional Councillor	Reg. & Local Councillor	Ward Councillors
City of Toronto	2,503,281	1,175,290	45	5	-	-	44
City of Mississauga	668,549	327,856	12	0		11	
City of Brampton	443,806	247,443	11	1		6	5
City of Markham	261,573	171,069	13	4	4		8
City of Vaughan	238,866	63,419	9	1		4	5
Town of Oakville*	165,613	30,522	13	1		6	6
Town of Richmond Hill	162,074	74,003	9	2		2	6
Town of Ajax**	90,167	32,126	7	1	2		4
Municipality of Clarington**	77,820	3,619	7	1	2		4
Town of Milton*	53,939	9,202	11	1		2	8
Total:	4,665,688	2,134,549	137	17 (12%)			

*One Regional Chair position elected by all voters.
**New for 2014, One Regional Chair elected by all voters.

Of the 203 candidates selected for the survey, six did not have e-mail contact information on either the Clerks' website or on the individual candidate's web page. Further online searches and candidate website contact forms have produced one e-mail for a candidate. Therefore, in the end, 198 candidates (one incorrect e-mail was excluded) were sent an invitation to participate in the completion of the online survey. With two e-mail invitation requests and a few telephone calls (to some of the current VM councillors) for participation, a total of 45 candidates completed the online survey.[28] The response rate is 22.7 percent, which is acceptable for a study of this nature.

Of the 15 VM incumbents in nine of the ten municipalities, three (20%) completed the survey. So, the overall response rate and the VM councillor response rates are close. Nevertheless, the findings from the respondents are discussed in the following four sections. Questions 1, 2 and 8 were designed to provide context for the four main areas (hypotheses). For question number 1 (incumbent or candidate), only four incumbents completed the survey, which means 91 percent of the respondents are non-incumbent candidates.

The response rate of this online survey was affected by several factors, in particular the response rate of the incumbent candidates. One factor relates to the time of year. Summertime means vacation time for many councillors, and indeed a few of the councillors' assistants spoken with mentioned councilors being away on holidays. Another factor might be that an election year brings many opportunities for researchers to contact councilors to participate in a plethora of surveys. A third factor could be that online surveying is relatively new, and therefore, some are hesitant to participate in it. As O'Sullivan et al. noted, "Because Internet surveys are a recent phenomenon, questions about their quality remain largely unanswered".[29] Therefore, it is possible that many councillors or candidates are experiencing questionnaire fatigue, or are simply leery of participating in on-line surveying.

For question number 2, the incumbents' terms in office, one incumbent indicated they are serving their first term, another a second term, a third respondent noted serving three terms and the fourth indicated to have been serving for more than three terms so far. In the Canadian context, the council-manager or council-CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) structure is in place for the municipalities studied for this paper. According to the Canadian Encyclopedia, "The CAO may be known as the city administrator, municipal manager or city commissioner, and is largely a modified version of the council-manager system popular in the United States... Few Canadian

cities have attempted the rigid, formal division inherent in the council-manager plan".[30] Seven of the ten municipalities use the council-CAO structure, while Mississauga, Toronto and Vaughan have City Managers.

As Trounstine in her study of U.S. municipalities suggests, incumbents fare better under the council-manager structure.[31]With respect to the incumbency rate of councillors, Bird found, for 2010 Municipal Elections that overall 79 percent of incumbents were re-elected to office. And for VM incumbents, the re-election rate was 70 percent.[32]

For question number 8, 20 (44.4%) of the respondents indicated being a VM; and 23 (51.1%) were none-VM, while two (4.4%) respondents did not indicate either way. Bird (2011) suggests, "Finally, across all levels, visible minority under-representation is more pronounced among elected members than among candidates".[33] Indeed, election results of the last two elections (and this year's candidate list) show far more VM candidates than VM elected councillors.

From the 2010 official candidate list, with personal knowledge and Internet searches, 127 names were identified as possibly being VM candidates. Thus, with 18 VM candidates elected in the last election, the success rate of VM candidates is about 14 percent. It might also be true that the success rate of any municipal elections candidates could be in the teens. However, it is given that some candidates will be more successful than others.

Evidently non-visible minorities are over-represented in municipal councils in the ten-municipality study. However, as per the 2010 municipal elections results, councillors of Chinese-heritage are over-represented in the VM council member category. It appears that eleven of the 17 current (before June 12 provincial elections) are of Chinese-heritage.

a. **Place of Birth**

H₁: *If the VM candidate is a Canadian-born, then he/she is more likely to have electoral success*.

Question number 3 asked respondents to indicate their place of birth. Of the total respondents, 25 (55.6%) indicated they are Canadian-born, while the rest (44.4%) selected the foreign-born option of the question. To further break it down, three of the four incumbents are foreign-born, while 24 (58.5%) of the 41 non-incumbent candidates being Canadian-born.

Of all the Canadian-born candidates (25), two (8%) indicated as being visible minorities, and 88 percent (22 candidates) as being non-visible minorities. As shown in Table 5, of the 44.4 percent foreign-born candidates, 90 percent (18) are visible minorities, while one is non-visible minority and another is of undetermined ethnicity.

In her study of the 2010 Ontario municipal elections, Bird found 19.3 percent of the visible minority candidates elected were foreign-born. In contrast, three out of the four incumbents who responded to the survey are foreign-born.

For the candidates who completed the survey, the results appear to be split in the middle as it relates to Canadian- and foreign-born candidates for the 2014 Municipal Elections. Therefore, the hypothesis cannot be proven with the available data. If 19 percent (about three) of the elected VM candidates in 2010 were foreign-born, it is possible that the three incumbents who responded to the online survey represent all of the foreign-born councillors in the nine municipalities studied.

Below, Figure 1 provides a visual breakdown of the candidate's birthplace information.

Figure 1.

Canadian-born and Foreign-born Candidates for the 2014 Municipal Elections - Ten Municipalities in the GTA

- Canadian-born VM
- Canadian-born non-VM
- Foreign-born VM
- Foreign-born non-VM
- Unknown Canadian-born
- Unknown Foreign-born
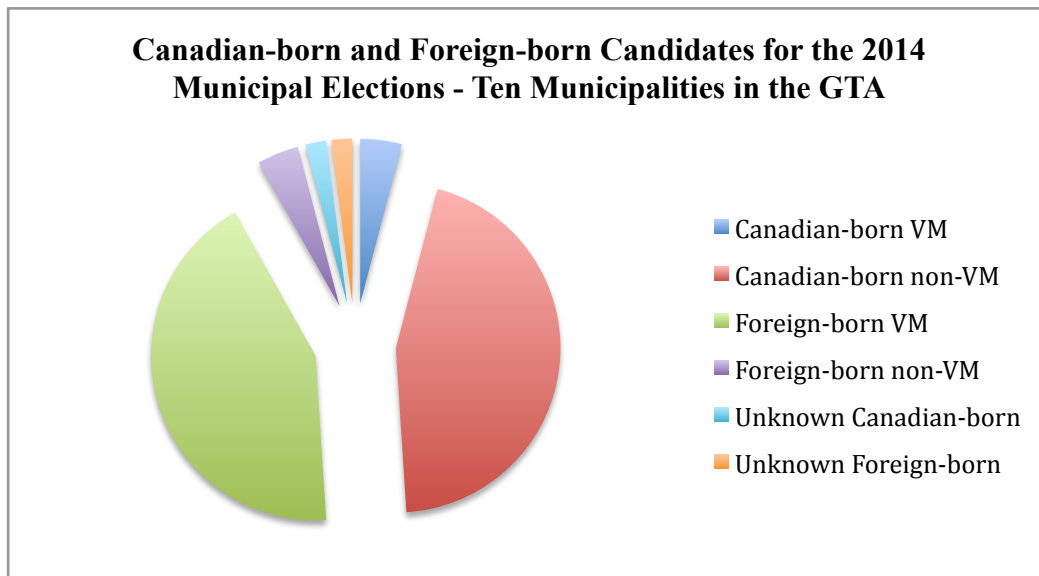
b. Previous Political Experience

H_2: *If the VM candidate has previous political experience (i.e., board position), then he/she is more likely to be elected to a municipal council.*

For question number 4, Previous Political Experience, the options given in the questionnaire were "Ran for office previously", "Member of a governing body (i.e., boards)", "Political party executive position", "Community association", and "Other [where the respondents could list them] – the respondents were given the option to list as many as apply to their experience.

Community Association & Governing Body

A full 33 percent (15) indicated being involved in community associations as one of their choices, while another 26.7 percent (12) noted being a member of a governing body provided them with previous political experience. All four of the incumbent candidates selected having a community association experience prior to being elected to office.

Ran for Office & Political Party Involvement

As for political party involvement, 17.8 percent (8) indicated they were involved in executive positions. Nine candidates (20%) indicated having ran for office previously. Only one incumbent indicated to have run for office prior to being elected. And as it is obvious, some of the current year's candidates are experienced in running for office previously.

In regards to holding a political party executive position, none of the four incumbents selected that option in the questionnaire. However, of the eight candidates who indicated having experience in a political party executive position, four were visible minorities.

Other Political Experience

The majority of respondents (37.8%) indicated having "Other" previous political experience. For those choosing Other, six have either left the comment section blank or indicated NA (Not Applicable) or "No political experience". Others indicated they volunteered at campaigns, or sat in committees, professional associations and boards, or were involved in unions. One respondent noted, "Ran for Union positions, held an elected delegate position in my union as well" (Anonymous, 2014).

Three other respondents indicated working in government (agency or local government) as providing them political experience. One respondent wrote, "Worked for Municipal Gov. for 35 yrs…" (Anonymous, 2014). Another candidate wrote, "I was a school board trustee (one term)" (Anonymous, 2014). Indeed, this is a candidate who seems to be on the right track, as school board trustee experience is used as a springboard to a municipal council role (Siemiatycki).

Beyond the survey results, and having conducted Internet searches (on official websites of councillors and news outlets), I found that six councillors have had political experience prior to being elected to office.

Table 2. 2014 Ontario local elections: visible minority vs. non-visible minority candidates' experience

	Previous Political Experience				
	Ran for office previously	Member of a governing body	Political party executive position	Community association	Other-NPE
Visible Minority	4	6	4	9	9*
Non-visible Minority	5	6	4	6	12**
Unknown ethnicity					2
Total number of respondents: 45					

*Two noted no previous experience (NPE).
**Three noted NPE.

As far as the hypothesis 2 is concerned, it appears that there are several ways a municipal elections candidate can gain political experience. But the most important experience a would-be councillor can have is to be involved in a community association. So, the hypothesis is partially supported by the evidence.

c. Mentor and Mentoring

H_3: *If the VM candidate has a political mentor, then he/she is more likely to have electoral success.*

For question number 5, participants were asked to select one option from five (Likert scale), from having a "Strong mentor" to having "No mentor". This question asked if the candidate has or had a mentor. As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents, 28 (62.2%) indicated they have/had no mentor, while seven (15.6%) indicated they have/had a "Strong mentor" and another seven (15.6%) noted having moderate mentor experience.

Three individuals chose either the "Okay" (1) or "Weak mentor" (2) options. But overall, the choices are skewed toward no side of the mentor experience spectrum.

Table 3. 2014 Ontario local elections candidates' mentor experience

	Strong mentor	Moderate mentor	Okay mentor	Weak mentor	No mentor
			Mentor type		
Visible Minority	2	4	1	1	12
Non-visible Minority	4	2		1	16
Unknown ethnicity	1	1			
Total number of respondents: 45					

From the publicly available information on the Internet, it was determined that, of the current VM councillors, one had a family member in politics. Therefore, it can be assumed that the councillor had received some form of political mentoring from their family member.

Indeed, the null hypothesis is true, that having a political mentor does not correlate with electoral success. Over 60 percent of the respondents have had no political mentor. And two of the four incumbent candidates had a moderate mentor experience.

On the other hand, question number 6 asked the participants to answer a similar Likert scale question about whether they do or did mentor someone for a political career. Once again, the majority 29 (64.4%) chose "No mentoring". And seven (15.5%) indicated they do or did provide "Limited mentoring". Four (8.9%) said they provided some mentoring, while three (6.7%) noted to providing moderate mentoring, and one indicated having mentored significantly.

It seems that having no mentor correlates to providing no mentoring. The 24 candidates (53.3%) who indicated having "No mentor" have also indicated to providing "No mentoring" to others. Four of those having no mentor have indicated they provide limited or some mentoring.

On the flip side, another four candidates who provide no mentoring have had "Strong mentor"

(three) or "Weak mentor" (one).

The candidates who indicated receiving "moderate mentoring" (seven) have also noted to give

moderate mentoring (two) or limited mentoring (three), or some mentoring, or no mentoring at all.

So, the hypothesis is partially proven. Since two of the incumbents indicated having moderate

mentor experience, it could be said that mentoring somewhat contributed to their electoral success

in municipal elections (as VM and non-VM candidates).

Table 4. 2014 Ontario local elections candidates' mentoring experience

	Mentoring type				
	No mentoring	Limited mentoring	Some mentoring	Moderate mentoring	Significant mentoring
Visible Minority	11	5	1	2	1
Non-visible Minority	17	1	3	2	
Unknown ethnicity	1	1			
Total number of respondents: 45					

d. Ward Choice

H_4: *If the VM candidate runs for office in a "colour coded" area, then he/she is more likely to*

have electoral success.

For question number 7, participants were asked to select (as many as apply to them) from a list

of reasons for choosing to run in the particular ward. The responses to this question did not

specifically reveal if a candidate's choice, to run for office in a particular ward, was based on their

propensity to run in an area where others like them are running. The choices provided in the

questionnaire contained no reference to the notion of "colour coded" area. Therefore, the reason

for the omission might be an oversight on the part of the investigator. But in retrospect, it might

have been awkward to ask a VM candidate, via a questionnaire, if he/she tends to choose

strategically where to run based on whether other VM candidates are running or not. In any case,

the respondents, if they were aware of this particular theory or tendency, might have indicated so

in the "Other" option provided in the survey.

Conversely, the survey results provided enough information about other motivating factors

that contribute to a candidate's decision to run in a particular municipality. Most of the

respondents, 22 (48.9%) said they were "Drawn to the area due to particular issues(s)", while

another 19 (42.2%) indicated they "Own property in the ward". In addition, 21 (46.7%) were

"Residents of the ward (at least 10 years)" as another 14 (31.1%) said they "Work in the ward".

Five (11.1%) noted they "Grew up there" while four (8.9%) said they "Own property in the

ward". And lastly, 11 (24.4%) indicated "Other" reasons for running for office in the particular

ward.

Table 5. 2014 Ontario local elections candidates' ward/municipality selection

	Reason for choosing to run in area						
	Grew up there	Resident of the ward*	Drawn to area**	Work in ward	Own property	Operate a business	Other
Visible Minority	3	10	7	6	8	2	5
Non-visible Minority	2	9	14	8	10	2	6
Unknown ethnicity		2	1		1		1
Total respondents: 45							

 *Resident for at least 10 years.
**Due to particular issue(s)

As noted earlier, longer residence in a ward adds to the candidate's appeal (Siemiatycki).

Working in the area carries another importance for a candidate, especially when the council

position is considered as a part-time job.

The top three reasons for a candidate to run in a municipality are having been drawn to the area due to particular issue(s), being a longtime resident of the ward and owning a property there. Growing up in the area or owning/operating a business in the ward are the least popular choices when it comes to running for a municipal council position.

Other reasons indicated by the respondents include the following – in a direct quote form.

Altruistic reasons:

"Want to help the community"

"Implement a community vision"

"I want to fix the ward, and the City of Toronto"

Reasons for change:

"Encourage voters to turf the incumbents"

"Poverty is at pandemic levels and the middle class is being wiped out"

"Weak incumbent who has opposite views from me…"

Indeed, as Trounstine (2012) argued, "Risk-averse challengers are likely to time their runs when incumbents are weak or retiring, adding to the incumbency advantage".[34]

Personal reasons:

"I am unemployed and want a job that pays a lot and do very little"

"Want to continue [to] serve the public and not be concerned about re-election as I believe in term elections"

"Was asked by retiring Councillor to run" (Anonymous, 2014).

And finally, the evidence is not conclusive for the existence of "colour coded" areas in relation to municipal elections. Therefore, it is evident that several factors influence a VM candidate to run for council position in a particular ward. Above all, it seems being long-time

residence, owning a property and being drawn to area due to an issue are important reasons

identified by the respondents.

Table 6. 2014 Ontario local elections - incumbent and candidate comparisons

Canadian-Born / Foreign-Born:	Incumbents VM C-B	VM F-B	NVM C-B	NVM F-B	Candidates VM C-B	VM F-B	NVM C-B	NVM F-B	N/A C-B	N/A F-B
Political Experience										
Ran for office previously:		1				3	5			
Member of Governing Body:		1	1			5	5			
Political party executive position:						4	4			
Community association:		3	1		1	5	5			
Other:		1			1	5	7	1	1	1
No political experience:						4				
Mentor Experience										
Strong mentor:						2	4			1
Moderate mentor:		1	1			3	1	1		
Okay mentor:						1				
Weak mentor:						1		1		
No mentor:			2		2	8	16			
Mentoring Experience										
No mentoring:					2	9	17		1	
Limited mentoring:	2		1			3				1
Some mentoring:	1						2	1		
Moderate mentoring:						2	2			
Significant mentoring:						1				
Ward Choice										
Grew up there:					1	2	2			
Resident of ward (at least 10 yrs):	2		1		1	7	7	1	1	1
Drawn to area due to issue(s):	1					6	14			1
Work in the ward:	1		1			5	7			
Own property in the ward:	2		1			6	9			1
Own/operate business in the ward:						2	2			
Other:			1			4	4	1	1	
Total # of respondents = 45		3	1		2	15	20	2	1	1

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the evidence from the survey results is inconclusive in relation to the arguments presented in the four hypotheses. The four individual characteristics for success of VM candidates in municipal elections could not be ascertained from the survey data. The data lacks enough representation from current incumbents (successful VM candidates). Obviously, more participation by current VM councillors would have produced richer dataset.

In any event, there is enough information to work with from the respondents. The current group of candidates is almost divided in half as to their place of birth – foreign- and Canadian-born – and VM and non-VM. As the survey results reveal over 50 percent of the candidates are Canadian-born, and three out of four of the incumbents are foreign-born. The majority of the Canadian-born candidates are non-visible minorities. On the other hand, nine out of ten foreign-born candidates are visible minorities. So, it means if a candidate is Canadian-born, he/she is more likely a non-visible minority, while the reverse is true for VM candidates, who are more likely foreign-born. Although the sample size of the current incumbents is not representative of the whole, the limited evidence at hand points in favour of the foreign-born candidates' success instead of the Canadian-born. But the reality is visible minorities are under-represented in councils, and that Canadian-born candidates out number their foreign-born counterparts in the municipal politics context.

In regards to political experience, the evidence points to wide-ranging avenues in which candidates are drawing experience from, and not a single defining source for political experience. From the survey, the incumbents (successful candidates) and a large number of the other candidates noted involvement in community associations as a popular choice, in providing

political experience. Although community association work appears to be the single most chosen option from the survey, the majority of respondents give other examples of political experience they had. Other forms of political experience the candidates identified include school board trusteeship, government work, and volunteer work. So, it can be inferred that having some form of political experience is sufficient but not necessary for municipal politics.

Political experience can also be shared through mentoring. However, mentoring in a political context appears to not exist among the candidates surveyed. Over 60 percent said they had no mentors, and almost two thirds mentioned to not mentor anyone. But it is interesting to note that half of the incumbents have mentoring experience. So, the notion of political mentoring is not entirely foreign in the municipal politics context. On the mentorship side, the evidence shows having a mentor is not that important to the majority of the candidates.

In terms of ward choice, candidates seem to be drawn to an area due to particular issue(s), first and for most. As for VM candidates' propensity to run in colour coded areas, where a large visible minority community exists, and other VM candidates are running, it could not be determined. Due to the study design, it was not possible for VM candidates to specify if they tend to run in predominantly VM community area or not. Nevertheless, the candidates surveyed indicated many other reasons for deciding to run in their respective wards. However, VM under-representation in municipal councils still remains. Learning more about the characteristics of individual candidates, be it VM or non-VM candidates, is important for the field of study, which as mentioned earlier lacks research data (Smith and Walks).

As the current data suggests, VM and non-VM candidates get into municipal politics much the same way. Therefore, future academic research might be useful in uncovering whether the current VM incumbents have benefited from community associations, or ethnic organizations. There

might the perception that, as may be the case for the South Asian community, ethnic affinity plays a role in electing a VM candidate into a particular council.

Another area that could benefit further research is investigating if there are serial VM candidates. Serial candidates are those who run for office several times, on different districts/wards, unsuccessfully. In particular, the research could focus on the last four municipal elections (since 2003), because most visible minorities would have been in Canada ten to 15 years at that point.

For future VM candidates, given the data from this study, I would recommend that they get involved in community associations, or ethnic organizations. In the absence of political parties in the local politics context, it is evident that grassroots associations serve as an excellent source of gaining political experience. Indeed, both VM and non-VM candidates studied here attribute some of their political experience to community association involvement.

Finally, a second recommendation for aspiring VM candidates is to seek political mentors. Although the majority of those surveyed indicating having no mentors or mentoring anyone, two of the incumbents indicated to having mentoring experience. It is possible that there are incumbents willing to mentor future political leaders, be it VM or non-VM. So, why not take advantage of the opportunity, if given?

APPENDIX A

Table 7. 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-Stouffvile	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

Source: Siemiatycki 2011

APPENDIX B
Online survey questionnaire

1. Are you an incumbent?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. If incumbent, how many terms have you served in council (including current term)?
   a. 1 Term
   b. 2 Terms
   c. 3 Terms
   d. More than 3 terms

3. Are you Canadian-born or foreign-born?
   a. Canadian-born
   b. Foreign-born

4. Do you , or did you, have a previous political experience? (Choose as many items that apply)
   a. Ran for municipal office previously
   b. Member of a governing body (i.e., boards)
   c. Political party executive
   d. Community association
   e. Other (list them)

5. Please indicate which of the following best describes the mentoring experience you have/had:
   a. Strong mentor
   b. Moderate mentor
   c. Okay mentor
   d. Weak mentor
   e. No mentor

6. Please indicate which of the following best describes the mentoring you provide/provided:
   a. No mentoring
   b. Limited mentoring
   c. Some mentoring
   d. Moderate mentoring
   e. Significant mentoring

7. Please indicate your reason(s) for choosing to run for office in the ward. (Select as many that apply to you.)
   a. Grew up there
   b. Resident of the ward (at least 10 years)
   c. Drawn to area due to particular issue(s)
   d. Work in the ward
   e. Own property in the ward
   f. Own/operate a business in the area
   g. Other (list them)

8. Do you self-identify as a visible minority?
    a. Yes
    b. No

9. Would you be amenable to being interviewed for further research purposes? (If you yes, please indicate name and your preferred communication method – e-mail or telephone.)
    a. Name_____
    b. E-mail_____
    c. Phone_____

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