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"Reckless, cavalier, dismissive, petty and vengeful"?: The Impact of Municipal Constituency Change on Candidate Diversity

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Abstract: The demographic composition of electoral districts has an important influence on the identities of candidates because they affect the political opportunity structures of ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups. The 2018 municipal election in Toronto, Canada provides a unique opportunity to examine how changes to electoral districts impacted the participation of visible minority candidates. At the end of the initial nomination period, the right-wing populist provincial government of Doug Ford reduced the number of city council wards from 47 to 25, which also affected the boundaries of school board districts. Candidates and aspirants then had the opportunity to re-register in the new constituencies. This change constitutes a natural experiment that allows us to isolate the impact of district structure on the relationship between demographics and candidate ethnicity. Using logistic and Poisson regression modeling, we compare the proportion and number of Visible Minority and White candidates before and after consolidation. *Contra* expectations, we did not find any effect on minority candidates, but show some evidence that consolidation reduced opportunities for Whites. We trace this unexpected finding to the geographic patterns of ethnic settlement.

Keywords: Social diversity; candidate; minority political participation; municipal elections; Canada

1. Introduction

The diversity of political candidates and elected officials, particularly the presence of traditionally marginalized groups like migrants and ethnic minorities, serves as a proxy for the openness of political systems to such groups. It is also, arguably, necessary for effective and truly representative government. Research has identified the population share of ethnic minorities (Visible Minorities in Canada) in constituencies as a particularly salient factor in the nomination of minority candidates (Akhtar & Peace, 2019; Spicer et al., 2017; Tolley, 2019). More generally, different ward boundaries change the political opportunities structures (POS) for potential minority candidates (aspirants). Consequently, changes to district boundaries merit close inspection for their impacts on minority representation.

The Toronto municipal election of October 22, 2018 provides a useful means to assess the relationship between minority candidates and district-level population share. Ontario's new right-wing populist provincial government reduced the number of city council electoral districts (wards) from 47 to 25 at the end of the initial candidate nomination period in late July, creating a kind of natural experiment. Candidates registered under the 47-ward design, and then either dropped out of the election, registered, or re-registered under the 25-ward plan. The two plans created constituencies with different demographic, economic, and social characteristics. Notably, the consolidation nearly doubled the average total population in each ward, and cut the number of wards with Visible Minority majorities from 24 to 12. Given the "mobilization effect" of ethnic minority districts (Fieldhouse & Cutts, 2008) and the influence of ethnic-affinity voting at the neighbourhood level (van der Zwan et al., 2020), we hypothesized that combining multiple smaller, more concentrated wards into larger wards would decrease opportunities for minority candidates and thus reduce both their number and proportion.

Beyond the opportunity to analyze a natural experiment, Toronto is an important case study because it is Canada's largest city and the preeminent seat of Anglo-Protestant political and social power in Canada (Smyth, 2015), but its highly diverse population is not mirrored on its council and local elected school boards, as shown in Table 1. Scholars have attributed the city's lack of diversity among elected officials to the speed of demographic change and the traditionalism of Canadian municipal government. In addition to these factors, Siemiatycki (2011) argues that progressive initiatives that respond to the city's diversity have come from the largely White council, reducing the salience of ethnicity in municipal elections.

It is important to note that the right-wing populist government of Premier Doug Ford is not anti-migrant or couched in racially exclusionary rhetoric. In contrast to current European- and American-style populism, Ford's version arises from a traditional Canadian neoliberalism that venerates multiculturalism, rurality, and 'common sense' (Budd, 2020). Ford's Progressive Conservative Party won the June 2018 provincial election after waging a campaign contrasting his rural and suburban electoral base with the urbanites in "downtown" Toronto and Ottawa who favoured the Liberal Party of former Premier Kathleen Wynne (Ibbitson, 2018). Situating himself as a "true" outsider, Ford capitalized on the detachment between segments of the electorate and political institutions, a tactic often used by contemporary populist leaders (Agnew & Shin, 2020).

In some ways, Ford's outsider status is genuine: He is a community college dropout and alleged former drug dealer (McArthur & Kari, 2013), and had little political experience before assuming the leadership of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party four months before the provincial election. Prior to his entry into provincial politics, he served a single term as a Toronto city councillor, unsuccessfully sought the Toronto mayor's office in 2014, and acted as the

unofficial deputy to his controversial brother, former Toronto Mayor Rob Ford (Doolittle, 2014; White, 2018).

Ford's electoral base shares some similarities with, for example, the supporters of right-wing populist parties such as *Alternative für Deutschland* – more male, working-class, and suburban than not (Belina, 2019) – but unlike European and American populists, Ford has notable support among Visible Minorities. The "placement" of Ford's populism in Toronto's diverse suburbs creates an unusual "brand" that emphasized pro-suburban/anti-urban and anti-establishment policies rather than race and immigration (Hemmadi, 2018). As such, the decision to reduce the number of municipal wards in Toronto was justified by a desire for efficiency and to reduce the power of a perceived 'downtown elite'. Given this, the intended impact on candidates was arguably focused on their geographic location within the city, not on their ethnic/racial identity.

In this study, we examine diversity among candidates, rather than their electoral success, but the former is obviously a pre-condition for diversity on elected bodies.

	2014 Election Results (n = 84)		**At the 2014-2018 Term's end (n = 84)**		**2018 Election Results (n = 65)**	
Group	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
Visible Minorities (all)	14	16.7%	15	17.9%	13	20%
South Asian	1	1.2%	4	4.8%	5	7.7%
Chinese	4	4.8%	3	3.6%	4	6.1%
Black	5	6%	6	7.1%	3	4.6%
Visible Minority (other)	4	4.8%	4	4.8%	2	3.1%
White	70	83.3%	68	81%	51	78.5%
Women	35	41.7%	35	41.7%	27	41.5%
Queer	1	1.2%	2	2.4%	2	3.1%

Table 1: Elected officials by diversity, 2014 – 2018 for all offices.

Taken as a whole, our results are largely consistent with prior findings that show a strong relationship between the ethnic identity of candidates and the share of that group's population in the constituency. This suggests, *contra* Siemiatycki (2011), that ethnicity has an important impact on representational diversity. Contrary to our own expectations, however, our analysis shows that the sudden 2018 ward consolidation did not affect the relationship between constituency demographics and the identity of candidates, nor did it reduce the proportion of Visible Minority candidates. This result is similar to Spicer, McGregor, and Alcantara (2017), who found that different political opportunity structures in Ontario municipalities had little effect on minority candidacy. For both the 47- and 25-ward plans, only two factors were significant consistently: Incumbency is associated negatively with minority candidates, while the share of population within a ward has a positive influence. A majority of candidates surveyed had strong negative reactions to the change, but consolidation did not appear to change the ethnic composition of the candidate pool significantly nor change the conditions that lead minorities to stand for office. These results are consistent across three elected boards affected by consolidation: the city council, the English Public School Board, and the English Catholic School Board.

2. Constituency composition and candidate identity

Analyses of the identities of candidates (and elected officials) generally focus on the largest or most visible under-represented groups, women and ethnic minorities, although research also includes candidates who are members of the queer community (Jones & Brewer, 2019) and the intersection of identities, *e.g.*, minority women (Gershon & Monforti, 2019). The bulk of such research focuses on African Americans in the US, although Latinx, Asian Americans, and

immigrants *qua* immigrants also draw some attention (Hajnal & Rivera, 2014; Rocha et al., 2015; Visalvanich, 2017a).

While such research on minority candidates engages a wide range of questions, our concern is with the relationship between constituencies and the candidates that stand for office in them in a single-member system.[1] In particular, we are interested in the effects of minority population share on the ethnic/racial identity of candidates: Are candidates more likely to be minority from constituencies with larger minority populations? Among other factors, White and minority voters display co-ethnic affinity (Manzano & Sanchez, 2010) and – particularly for Whites – cross-ethnic hostility (Petrow, 2010; Visalvanich, 2017b). Such affinity or antipathy among voters clearly affects election outcomes, but also influences the decision of aspirants to seek office (or not). Beyond perceptions of voter preference, ethnic communities can also form the basis of networks that support potential minority candidates, particularly in non-partisan contexts.

2.1 Minority Participation and Political Opportunity Structures

Elections in the US generally use single-member districts and voters are typically polarized by race and partisanship. From the mid-1960s, political research and practice in the US showed that the electoral success of African American candidates depended directly on the racial composition of the electorate. Much of this work rested on the implementation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which sought to guarantee African Americans both the franchise and meaningful political participation (Canon et al., 1996; Lublin, 1997). The bases of these measures are the high degree of polarization between Whites and African Americans and the high level of residential segregation (Enders & Scott, 2019).

[1] We confine our discussion to single-member district systems. Open-party list proportional representation have been shown to have a particularly positive influence on candidate diversity (John et al., 2018).

Factors specific to the US, including the dominance of the two-party system, the use of competitive primary elections, and partisan polarization by race complicates the generalizability of these studies (See, for example, Boatright, 2014). These caveats aside, research has consistently shown that the electoral success of minority candidates, and African Americans in particular, in single-member districts requires a considerable population share in a constituency because political preferences remain stratified by race/ethnicity. Even in contexts with less polarization, candidates choose to stand for office based on their expectations of success and voters display co-ethnic affinity (and/or cross-ethnic hostility).

In contexts with less polarization and/or different party structures, scholars have typically turned to a "supply and demand" framework to analyze patterns of women and ethnic minority candidacy (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). From a supply perspective, candidates should be a more or less a random sample of a constituency's population, so the share of minority candidates should increase directly with the minority share of population. More precisely, the quantity of such candidates is governed by the number willing and able to campaign for office, which is in turn affected by their social and economic status more generally (Juenke & Shah, 2015).

On one level, the "demand" for these candidates is governed by the preference of voters and parties. In this approach parties are the key institution governing political access (Tolley, 2019). Generally, women and minority candidates are associated with a strong ideological commitment to diversity among left-leaning parties (Togeby, 2008). Parties can provide support or erect barriers to candidates but may respond to factors beyond their perception of voter preference (Farrer & Zingher, 2018; Niven, 2006). Most notably, parties may run women or ethnic minorities as "sacrificial lambs" in areas where they have limited partisan support (Kulich et al., 2014). This boosts the diversity of the party's pool of candidates, but rarely results in the election

of a woman or minority candidate. Consequently, if parties engage in this strategy, it can obscure effects of constituency composition.

Municipal elections in Ontario are formally non-partisan, and there is far less ethnic polarization among political parties in Canada compared to the US (Black, 2017). Both of these make it difficult to apply a strict supply and demand framework to such a case study. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to think that like parties, aspirants make assessments about demand when contemplating candidacy. For example, Shah (2014) found that in the US potential minority candidates will self-deselect from contests in order to forego potential "racial competition," although Spicer, McGregor, and Alcantara (2017) did not find this pattern in municipal elections in Ontario. More generally, socio-demographic factors such as gender, education, social class, labour force participation, and the like make electors more or less likely to support a woman or minority candidate. To the degree that these factors vary among districts, aspirants will make judgements about which constituencies are likely to support their candidacy.

In a non-partisan context like Toronto's municipal election, we turn to a political opportunity structure (POS) approach for analyzing candidate diversity. POS refers to the institutional and contextual factors that influence an aspirant's decision to run for election, and are treated as distinct from voter preferences and attitudes (Bird, 2005). Spicer, McGregor, and Alcantara (2017), for example, examine the effects of incumbency, district magnitude (the number of seats per district), and salary on candidate diversity in the 2014 Ontario municipal elections. None are found to be consistently significant for minority candidates, although they do find that minority population share has a positive, significant influence. Other work focuses on the effect of municipal electoral structures on the electoral participation and success of women and minority candidates (Bird, 2008; Bloemraad, 2008; Tremblay & Mévellec, 2013). Good (2017), for

example, argues that the constraints imposed on Canadian cities by provincial governments - including mandated non-partisanship in all but two provinces, the use of the council-manager form of government, and routine municipal restructuring - have hampered the electoral participation and success of minority candidates, while benefiting incumbents.

The importance of minority population share for municipal candidates suggests that they could be considered part of the POS, apart from the effects of (perceived) voter co-ethnic affinity. One of Norris and Lovenduski's (1995) original findings was the importance of support by labor unions for minority and women candidates. Such organizations provide formal and informal support outside political parties, a role that can also be played by social, professional and/or commercial networks (Medeiros et al., 2019; Ocampo, 2018). In some cases, ethnically-based organizations may serve a similar role, recruiting or encouraging members to acquire representation in municipal government. Such networks are presumably associated with residential concentration, so the degree of network support should be correlated with population share.

In short, after controlling for other important socio-demographic characteristics of both constituencies and candidates, we expect a strong relationship between the presence of minority candidates and their population share in constituencies. If ward consolidation reduced the number of constituencies with significant minority population share, or otherwise disrupted the relationship between aspirants, candidates, and their supporting organizations, we expect to see 1) changes in the relationship between population share and minority candidate presence, and 2) a reduction in the proportion of minority candidates.

2.2 Minority Candidates in Toronto

Municipal elections in Canada have been relatively neglected compared to Federal and provincial-level contests, with scholars decrying that municipal elections are "the poor cousins in the study of elections and voting behaviour," (Cutler & Matthews, 2005, p. 359). Given the dearth of studies, Toronto (as Canada's most ethnically diverse city) has received the most attention. Siemiatycki and Saloojee (2002), for example, attribute a lack of Visible Minority political participation in Toronto to the relatively small number of elected municipal positions. They claim, moreover, that minorities who win elections do so by shifting their focus to city-wide issues, rather than serving as "representatives" of their ethnic group. Similarly, in her analysis of the 2014 Toronto mayoral campaign featuring the candidacy of Olivia Chow, Maiolino (2018) found that Chow did not necessarily campaign as a minority. The study highlighted Chow's "inconsistent alignment", with electors identifying her as Visible Minority, while she used campaign strategies that sought to "broaden" her appeal. Maiolino's study sought to validate prior findings that found Chow's broadening strategy was ineffective because she continued to benefit from significant ethnic affinity voting (Bird et al., 2016).

The Toronto-specific findings that Visible Minority candidates tend to de-emphasize their ethnic identity raises the possibility that co-ethnic affinity may not have been seen as a significant factor for minority candidates. That is, if such potential nominees do not overtly rely on co-ethnics for electoral, financial, and/or political support, then constituency-level population share would be less relevant. Moreover, co-ethnic cultural participation among new immigrants and second-generation Ontarians declines over time (Laxer, 2013), so identity-based campaigns may be less effective among older groups. It is possible, of course, that visible minority candidates could run "dual" campaigns that appeal simultaneously to their co-ethnics and to members of out-groups.

Ethnic minority candidates in the US have often used such "deracialization" strategies, for example, even as ethnicity remains a highly salient feature of elections (Juenke & Sampaio, 2010). If minority aspirants disregard co-ethnic affinity in their candidacy decisions, we would expect to see a weaker relationship with population share.

3. Toronto

The City of Toronto is the largest municipality in Canada, with a 2016 Census population of over 2.7 million. More than half of its population are immigrants or non-permanent residents, and over half are Visible Minorities.[2] For our analyses we exclude Toronto's small Indigenous population, so candidates and population shares are thus defined exclusively as either White or Visible Minority. As shown in Table 2, this makes Toronto diverse in both absolute terms and in comparison with Ontario and Canada as a whole.

	Toronto municipal boundaries	*Ontario outside Toronto*	*Ontario entire province*	*Canada*
Total Population	2,731,571	10,716,923	13,448,494	34,460,065
Immigrants/Non-Permanent Residents	50.5%	25.0%	30.6%	23.4%
Visible Minorities	51.5%	23.7%	29.3%	22.3%
Indigenous Population	1.3%	3.3%	2.83%	4.9%

Table 2: Population Diversity in Toronto, Ontario, and Canada

Ontario established the city's current boundaries in the City of Toronto Act (1997) (effective January 1, 1998) which amalgamated the municipalities of "old" Toronto, York, East York, North York, Scarborough, and Etobicoke into a single municipal entity. Municipal Toronto resembles the traditional structure of West European cities more closely than American ones (Musterd et al., 1997; Van Kempen & Murie, 2009), with a largely White, densely-populated,

[2] Visible Minority is a classification established by Statistics Canada and is defined as: "South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, Visible Minority, n.i.e. ('n.i.e.' means 'not included elsewhere'), [and] Multiple Visible Minorities" (Statistics Canada, 2017, p. 3).

relatively liberal core and an outer "suburban" ring that is largely minority and relatively conservative (see Figure 1). The province revised the act in 2005, strengthening the new municipal government's powers and giving the city's council the power to, among other things, set their ward boundaries. Nonetheless, like all municipal governments in Canada, Toronto remains subject to provincial regulations (under Section 92 of the Canadian Constitution) on the timing, administration, financing, and reporting of elections. As a practical matter, the Ontario government has final say regarding the size, scope, and structure of the City of Toronto's municipal government.

--Figure 1 here –

Toronto has several elected bodies overseeing various municipal responsibilities. The City Council operates under a council-manager system and consists of a directly elected mayor, who serves as a "first-among-equals", and councillors elected from geographically-defined wards. The Council is tasked with managing day-to-day civic affairs such as city planning, operation of parks, and the maintenance of local roads. Four publicly funded school boards manage the daily operations of the city's primary and secondary educational institutions. These are divided along linguistic and religious lines, with English-language residents served by the non-denominational Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board while Francophone residents are served by the non-denominational *Conseil scolaire Viamonde* [Viamonde School Board], as well as the *Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir* [MonAvenir Catholic School Board]. Each school board is elected in a similar fashion to members of council from constituencies composed of two or more council wards.

4. The 2018 Toronto Election

The 2018 election took place following an expansion of its city council from 44 to 47 after Toronto's 2014 municipal election, and then a controversial reduction in seats from 47 to 25 just prior to the 2018 contest. Both of these changes required a re-alignment of ward and school district boundaries that altered the size and composition of these constituencies.

Prior to the 2018 election, the City of Toronto established a boundary commission to complete an assessment of the city's 26-year-old electoral districts before the 2018 municipal election. The commission recommended adding three members, bringing the size of Toronto city council to 47. Despite a sustained push by right-leaning councillors to adopt a smaller council, Toronto City Council voted 28 to 13 in favour of the proposed 47-ward model in November 2016 (Pagliaro, 2016).

Following provincial requirements, the city set the nomination period for May 1 to June 27. In a surprise action on June 26, however, then Premier-designate Doug Ford announced that the province would impose the previously rejected 25-ward model on the city through Bill 5 (the Better Local Government Act). (See Figure 1). This consolidation forced the city's elected school boards to adjust their district boundaries as well. A legal battle ensued over the summer of 2018 including the finding by a Superior Court that Bill 5 violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms:

> The enactment of provincial legislation radically changing the number and size of a city's electoral districts in the middle of the city's election is without parallel in Canadian history. ("City of Toronto et al v. Ontario (Attorney General), 2018 ONSC 5151," 2018, p. 3)

The Ford government subsequently announced plans to bring forward new legislation employing the Notwithstanding Clause, a section of the Canadian Constitution that allows a provincial government to over-ride certain Constitutional rights for a limited period of time. Use of the

Notwithstanding Clause is extremely rare in Canada outside the province of Quebec and the Ford government's employing it would have marked the first of such instances in Ontario's history.[3] Ford's plan to invoke the Clause was abandoned, however, after the Ontario Court of Appeals issued a stay of the Superior Court's ruling and allowed the use of the 25-ward plan for the municipal election.

The election was ultimately held on October 27, 2018 to elect one mayor, 25 members of council, 22 trustees to the Toronto District School Board, 12 trustees to the Toronto Catholic District School Board, 3 trustees to the *Conseil scolaire Viamonde*, and 2 trustees to the *Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir*.

5. Data and Methodology

We obtained candidate data from public information sources and drew on the Census to develop demographic profiles of wards. To assess the effect of the ward changes on the candidate pools, we coded candidates in several ways, including by gender and Visible Minority status. As control variables, we also recorded their incumbency status, prior candidacy, and office sought in 2014. Data on political orientation and candidate's opinion of the ward boundary changes come from an original survey conducted during the campaign period.

[3] The Notwithstanding Clause was used frequently by the *Parti québécois* government in Quebec from 1982 to 1985 to protest the adoption of the Canadian Constitution 1982. The Clause had been used only three other times in Canadian history; once in relation to a land use planning bill in Yukon, once to protect back-to-work legislation in Saskatchewan, and once to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman in Alberta (Brosseau & Roy, 2018).

5.1 Sources of Data

We obtained public information on candidates from two principle sources. First, we reviewed videos from campaign and candidate fora, candidate websites and social media accounts, directly prior to and following the election. News media, particularly Toronto's major daily newspapers (the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, and *National Post*), community newspapers, and media serving Visible Minority, immigrant, and queer communities, were also examined.

Second, we took 2016 Census data from the City of Toronto's Open Data catalogue, which includes detailed demographic information on each ward in both the 25- and 47-ward models.[4] As the school board wards either match city wards or are created by merging multiple city wards, demographic information for the 22 districts of the Toronto School Board and 12 districts of the Catholic School Board were calculated from the council ward data.

To confirm and supplement publicly available information, we also conducted an original, web-based survey of candidates. Invitations were sent to all candidates with available email addresses (280 of 497 total), and the survey had an over-all response rate of just over 40% (113 of 280). It included items on the candidate's identity and background and asked their opinion on the ward boundary change in both a structured and open-ended question. The analysis of candidate reactions below is drawn from this open-ended question. Municipal elections in Ontario are officially non-partisan so candidates do not have formal party identifications. As a proxy for political orientation, we asked if they supported any federal or provincial party.[5]

[4] The Open Data Catalogue is available at https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/open-data/open-data-catalogue/. The Research and Information Office of Toronto's City Planning Division also kindly provided several special tabulations of certain data.

[5] In one case, a respondent indicated different Federal- and provincial-level parties. They were coded with the left-most party marked (NDP). One other respondent marked every major party and was excluded from the data.

5.2 Impact on Candidates

The change from 47 to 25 wards meant that there was no time for the "normal" nomination period under the new system. Consequently, candidates who had registered to run under the 47-ward model were given extensions to refile their nomination in the newly created constituencies. This extension also allowed previously unregistered candidates to nominate themselves in the newly constituted wards. As shown in Table 3, about three-quarters of the original candidates re-registered, slightly more than 20% dropped out, and the remainder ran in different races. About 15% of the final candidate pool registered after the new deadline.[6]

Candidate Action	*Number*	*Percentage*
Re-registered	387	76%
Dropped out	113	22%
Previously registered; changed office	9	2%
Original total	*509*	
New registrations	70	15%
Final total	*466*	

Table 3: Effect of Ward Reduction on Candidate Registration

The change not only potentially changed the composition of the candidate pool, but also permitted candidates to select a new constituency.[7] Thus consolidation shuffled both wards and candidates.

While the last-minute change was disruptive, it produced a natural experiment to test the effect of constituency composition on candidate identity. In the following analyses, we compare the candidates and districts under the 47-ward system to the ones under the 25-ward system with nearly all other factors identical. Candidates would have made the decision to run for office under

[6] All of the regression analyses were also performed with the candidate action variable in the models. The results (not reported) are essentially the same of those that we present.

[7] The Ontario Municipal Elections Act (1996), which establishes candidate nominations and voter qualifications, maintains that candidate need not be a resident of the ward in which they contest election. Candidates are only required to be a Canadian citizen over the age of 18 who owns property, is a tenant, or is the spouse of an owner or tenant of property in the municipality in which they seek election (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2017). While residing in the ward is an implicit norm for candidates, it is not a requirement and non-resident candidates are not uncommon.

the first system without knowledge of the upcoming change and would then – in principle -- make a separate decision to run (or not) under the new system. While the barrier to entry for previously registered candidates would be lower than for newly registered ones, the incentives to stand for office would be similar in these two groups.

Insofar as constituency composition affects candidates, particularly with regard to Visible Minority residents, we would expect to see differences between the 47- and 25-ward pools. All other things being equal, the geographic segregation of Whites and Visible Minorities in Toronto means that fewer of the larger, post-consolidation wards would have high population shares of Visible Minorities. Such larger, relatively Whiter districts would present a more challenging opportunity structure for Visible Minority aspirants. As shown by Table 4, however, there is no significant difference (confirmed by two sample t-tests) in the proportion of Visible Minority candidates under the two systems.

Group	*47 Ward*	*25 Ward*
Visible Minority	42.9%	42.0%
South Asian	12.4%	10.9%
Chinese	3.66%	3.9%
Black	10.4%	10.9%

Table 4: Candidate Diversity Before and After Ward Reduction (All Offices)

Our analysis below tests for more subtle differences and controls for a variety of factors that potentially affect candidate pool composition. Before discussing our quantitative analysis, however, we examine the survey responses to assess the expectations of the candidates with regard to the boundary changes.

6. Candidate Reaction to the Boundary Changes

The "supply" of potential candidates depends in part on their perceptions of the constituency in question, particularly in the absence of political parties and other organizations

that typically recruit or discourage candidates. In this section, we assess candidates' responses to ward consolidation.

As part of an original survey of candidates in the 2018 Ontario municipal elections, we asked respondents in Toronto their opinion of ward consolidation. Candidate's responses were from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" on a five-point scale (1 for most supportive and 5 for most opposed). As a group, respondents had a marginally negative overall evaluation of the change, with a mean value of 3.57 (see Table 5). A multivariate regression (not shown) indicates that identity did not have a significant impact on support for Bill 5, but partisan affiliation did.

	n	Mean Support for Bill 5
All Respondents	**86**	3.57
Women	**34**	3.82
Visible Minorities	**25**	3.77
Queer Respondents	**4**	4.50
Conservative and/or PC	**8**	2.63
Fed. and/or Prov. Liberal	**11**	3.82**
Fed. and/or Prov. NDP	**9**	4.22**
Fed. and/or Prov. Green	**3**	2.83
Non-Partisan	**51**	3.62**

Table 5: Survey Responses to Ward Consolidation (Bill 5) by Identity and Partisan Affiliation (1 = most supportive; 5 = least supportive). ** $p < 0.05$ compared to Conservatives.

Respondents affiliated with either the federal and/or provincial centre-right Conservative parties were significantly more supportive of the change (at $p < 0.05$) than non-partisans or those associated with the centrist Liberals or social-democratic NDP. This suggests that candidates' positions on consolidation were driven largely by their view of Premier Doug Ford.

Nonetheless, respondents typically discussed consolidation in non-partisan terms. Efficiency was the most common justification for the change among respondents with a positive evaluation, echoing the sentiments expressed by Ford during the provincial election campaign (Rushowy, 2018). A Catholic School Trustee candidate, for example, commented, "I agree with

decreasing the number of wards because Toronto Council is failing miserably in efficiency and functionality." While efficiency is ostensibly a politically neutral justification, a Public School Trustee candidate referred to "gridlock" due to "strong special interest groups and historic voting patterns on issues," a situation they felt would be solved by a smaller council. Such phrases may be coded references to ethnic groups – indicating hostility to minority empowerment – but this was not evident in most responses.

Both supporters and opponents of the change, however, were troubled by its timing, citing confusion among both candidates and voters. A mayoral candidate, otherwise in favour of the reduction (and unaffected by it), remarked, "It is sad to see 47 go to 25 this late when candidates have already begun canvassing." A council candidate favoring the change noted the disruption created by its sudden implementation, saying "I am in support of the idea, however I am not in support of the timing...Now I am forced to completely change my campaign, half way through." Similarly, a candidate opposed to the change noted, "Waiting for the last day [of nominations] was inappropriate and not fair to the candidates running for council." Another opponent used a hockey analogy:

> You don't change the rules in the middle of a game. For voters and for candidates, this action was the equivalent of starting the Stanley Cup playoffs knowing you'd be playing three periods, then told half-way through you'd only have two periods to play. It's just not right.

Support was thus generally framed in terms of efficiency while criticism by supporters focused on how the ward boundary change occurred, not whether it should have. This latter concern was one of, but by no means the only objection raised by opponents of the change.

Those opposed to the change cited an array of concerns, including its effect on the nature of the new constituencies. One council candidate focused on the size of the new wards, "I feel this will make it more difficult for constituents to reach their representatives on service issues or

political issues." Perhaps the most common concern raised, however, was over the ability of candidates from diverse groups to compete in larger wards. A council candidate succinctly stated that with the changes Toronto "...will just have the same male, stale and pale population elected!" Another council candidate expressed similar concerns, stating:

> Beyond the implications for our democracy, the proposed changes make it much more difficult for neighbourhoods like mine - and the one I hope to represent - to have a voice at City Hall. Municipal politics is already extremely skewed in favour of rich property owners, and this change will only further drown out diverse voices in the electoral process.

This latter comment shows, however, that candidates had several dimensions of diversity in mind, including class, not just gender and ethnicity.

Other objections focused on the subordinate relationship municipalities have with the province, although respondents expressed this both as a general principle and with the particular way the change was imposed. A council candidate, frustrated by the rapid imposition of the change, put it bluntly: "It was idiotic. It came in the middle of a campaign. This is Central America 'Banana Republic' stuff." Another opponent summarized their feelings succinctly, stating that the change was, "reckless, cavalier, dismissive, petty and vengeful." More generally, opponents expressed a sense of frustration at the added expense, daunting task of canvassing a larger area, and reorienting campaigns already underway.

The generally negative response shown in our survey was mirrored in general population surveys conducted during the campaign (Coletto, 2018; Yang, 2018). In August 2018, for example, the independent polling firm Forum Research found 52% of Torontonians opposed consolidation. While only 32% of respondents to the Forum poll thought opposition to Bill 5 should be a focus of council, the government's imposition of the changes on the city led 53% of respondents to say

municipalities in Ontario should have "somewhat" or "much more" independent power over their own affairs (Bozzinoff, 2018).

The last-minute consolidation evoked strong opinions from municipal candidates and are likely closely aligned to their views of Premier Doug Ford. Opponents in particular expressed worries that the change would have a negative impact on democratic representation in Toronto. Yet a comparison of the before-and-after candidate pools does not show much change in terms of diversity. In the next section, we analyze in more detail the relationships between the two sets of constituencies and the identity of candidates who ran for office in each.

7. Candidate-Constituency Relationships

Our analysis comes in two parts. First, we develop a set of logistic regression models that estimate the likelihood that a candidate is either Visible Minority or White based on ward demographics and other candidate characteristics. We repeat the analyses with Poisson models that predict the number of Visible Minority or White candidates in each race using ward demographics.

7.1 Logistic Models: Predicting Candidate Identity

To assess the effect of ward consolidation, we include a binary variable that identifies the candidate and district as belonging to the 47- or 25-ward system, with the former used as the baseline. Consequently, the results indicate the effect of the new system compared to the original. The models also include a term for the interaction between the ward system and the population share of Visible Minorities (Model 1) or Whites (Model 2). Based on the interactions in the logistic regression models, we estimated the predicted probabilities, in Figure 2, of the likelihood that a

candidate was Visible Minority or White. The full results of these models are presented in Appendix A. As expected, the population share of both Visible Minorities and Whites in wards has a positive and significant effect on the probability of a candidate being from the in-group under both systems.

Of more interest, however, is the finding that the change in ward systems did not have a significant moderating effect on the influence of group demographics. That is, the percentage of Visible Minorities in a riding did not influence the probability that a candidate was Visible Minority in a different manner pre- and post-consolidation. This is illustrated by the tight overlap in confidence intervals over the entire range in population share in Figure 2. The graph for Whites is the mirror-image of Visible Minorities (because these classifications are exclusive and exhaustive) and simply provides an easy visualisation of that relationship. In particular, the graphs show candidates are more likely to be Visible Minority when a ward population reaches about 60%. In contrast, this threshold is only about 40% for Whites.

In addition, the models adjust for structural, candidate- and ward-level factors by entering them as independent variables in the model. We control for the office sought – Councillor, Public School Board Trustee, Catholic School Board Trustee -- with Councillor as the baseline for comparison. The results demonstrate that candidates were significantly less likely to be Visible Minority, and more likely to be White, in Catholic school races compared to councillor elections.

At the candidate-level, we control for candidate gender and incumbency using binary variables. (A candidate who held any local elected office during the registration period is classified as an incumbent.) Incumbency is shown to have a significant impact in the expected manner on the ethnicity of candidates, making it less likely that a candidate was Visible Minority and more so that they were White.

Finally, the set of ward-level variables assesses the influence of constituency demographics, including population density (a proxy of urban-suburban neighborhoods) and median income. The final set of independent variables are expressed as percentages of population in the district: Housing tenure (percentage of renters), age (percent of population over 65), education (percentage of population holding a bachelor's degree or higher), and the percentage of women residents. The only one of these variables to show a significant impact on the ethnicity of a candidate is the percentage of women in a riding. The greater the proportion of women in a riding, the less likely the chances of the candidates being Visible Minority, vice versa for White candidates.

-- Figure 2 here --

7.2 Poisson Models

We also developed Poisson regressions to estimate the impacts of ward consolidation on the number of Visible Minority and White candidates in a riding using the same set of variables as the logistic models (including the interaction term). The full results of the Poisson models are presented in Appendix B. Figure 3 shows a positive relationship between population share and the predicted number of in-group candidates, but unlike the logistic results, the effects of ward consolidation are different for Visible Minorities and Whites. As with the first set of models, ward consolidation did not have a significant impact on the effect of population share on the number of Visible Minority candidates. At 50% Visible Minority, the model predicts 1.7 Visible Minority candidates per district under the 47-ward and 2.3 under the 25-ward plan, but the difference is not statistically significant.

The results, however, are different for Whites, particularly in wards with about 40-60% population share as shown by the gap between the confidence intervals. Though the interactive term between the proportion of Whites and the ward consolidation is not significant (see Appendix B), demonstrating an overall non-significant moderating effect of consolidation on the relationship between the White population share and the number of White candidates, there is a statistical difference between both ward plans in the middle zone of the population share. The model shows that 50% White districts, for example, are expected to have 2.8 White candidates under the 47-ward design. Under the consolidated plan, however, this number increases significantly to 3.7. Furthermore, while not statistically distinct, the graph shows a large difference between the plans - favouring the 25-ward model - for districts with very large White population shares (i.e., greater than 85%). Both of these patterns show different moderating effects of consolidation on Visible Minority and White candidates.

We also integrated the same ward-level controls as in the logistic models. The results show that the age of residents had a significant and negative impact on the number of candidates for both Visible Minority and White candidates. This may be due to reduced interest in school boards among more elderly residents, although further investigation would be required to confirm that. The proportion of renters and of women in a ward has a negative impact on the number of Visible Minority candidates. The former may be due to decreased economic stability, but the effect of women is difficult to explain. The number of White candidates increases with population density, reflecting the concentration of Whites in Toronto's dense downtown core.

--Figure 3 here--

The increase in the number but not probability of White Candidates per ward after consolidation was initially puzzling, as it means that more Whites were running for fewer available offices. This suggests a reduction in the electoral opportunities – and potential advancement – for Whites but not Visible Minorities. An analysis of the overlap between the old and new wards (see Figure 1) suggests why this is the case: Consolidation tended to combine more majority-White wards, particularly in central Toronto, than majority-minority wards in the outer city. New wards located in the city's periphery where Visible Minorities constitute a majority of the population were typically composed of 1.76 old districts. In majority White communities clustered in Toronto's central core, the new wards consisted, on average, of 1.99 old districts. Hence, each new ward in the central city tended to contain more candidates from the initial plan.

While the reduction in wards in central Toronto relative to outlying areas of the city seems to disadvantage Whites, it is understandable in terms of Premier Doug Ford's political rhetoric, in which he (and his late brother, former Toronto Mayor Rob Ford) railed against the "elites" of downtown Toronto. The suburban-based populism of Ford is predicated on giving "regular folks" power at the expense of progressive urbanites (Benzie & Ferguston, 2018; Dale, 2014; Oved, 2018). Reducing city council representation in inner Toronto is consistent with this strategy.

8. Conclusion

The negative response to ward consolidation, Doug Ford's populist appeals (Ibbitson, 2018; Porter, 2018), and the strong relationship between candidates' ethnic identities and constituency composition in prior studies led us to expect that consolidation would result in a reduction in the number or proportion of minority candidates. The decline would come from

changes to the candidate-constituency relationship or changes to the demographic profile of wards. Our analysis, however, finds no or very limited evidence for these effects. We note, however, that our analysis only concerns the nomination of candidates, not electoral success.

Several factors may explain the relative lack of effect. First, nominations under the 47- and 25-ward designs were not truly independent. A nominee under the original system would have already invested resources in their anticipated campaigns and it was relatively easy to re-file under the new one, as shown by the 75% re-registration figure. The candidate pool in a strictly *de novo* system may have been significantly different, meaning our models may underestimate the effects of the change.

Second, the wards under the new system followed Federal and provincial electoral district boundaries, which are drawn by independent boundary commissions (Courtney, 2001; Elections Canada, 2019). These commissions take several criteria into account, including the representation of "communities of interest." At a Federal level, at least, the number of districts with substantial proportions of Visible Minorities tracks fairly closely to their proportion in the population (Forest, 2012). While politically conservative councillors preferred the smaller 25-ward system, those boundaries were created in a non-partisan context insulated from overt manipulation that could weaken minority voting power. Like the opponents, advocates of the new design might have perceived it as favouring majority over minority interests, even if it is not true in practice.

Third, the primary target of Premier Doug Ford's populism is defined more by ideology than ethnicity. By reducing the number of wards in central Toronto, consolidation shrunk the representation of its left-leaning population in favour of Ford's more conservative suburban supporters. Consequently, consolidation had the incidental effect of reducing the political opportunities for Whites but not for Visible Minorities.

While the direct and overt effects of ward consolidation on minority representation were limited, there could nonetheless be secondary impacts on representation at the provincial and federal levels. While the proportions of wards with substantial Visible Minority populations in Toronto remained similar, the absolute number declined, meaning that there was likely a reduction in the number of Visible Minorities elected to municipal office. Insofar as service in such positions provides a path to nomination to provincial and federal offices, ward reduction reduced the pool of potential Visible Minority candidates with government experience.

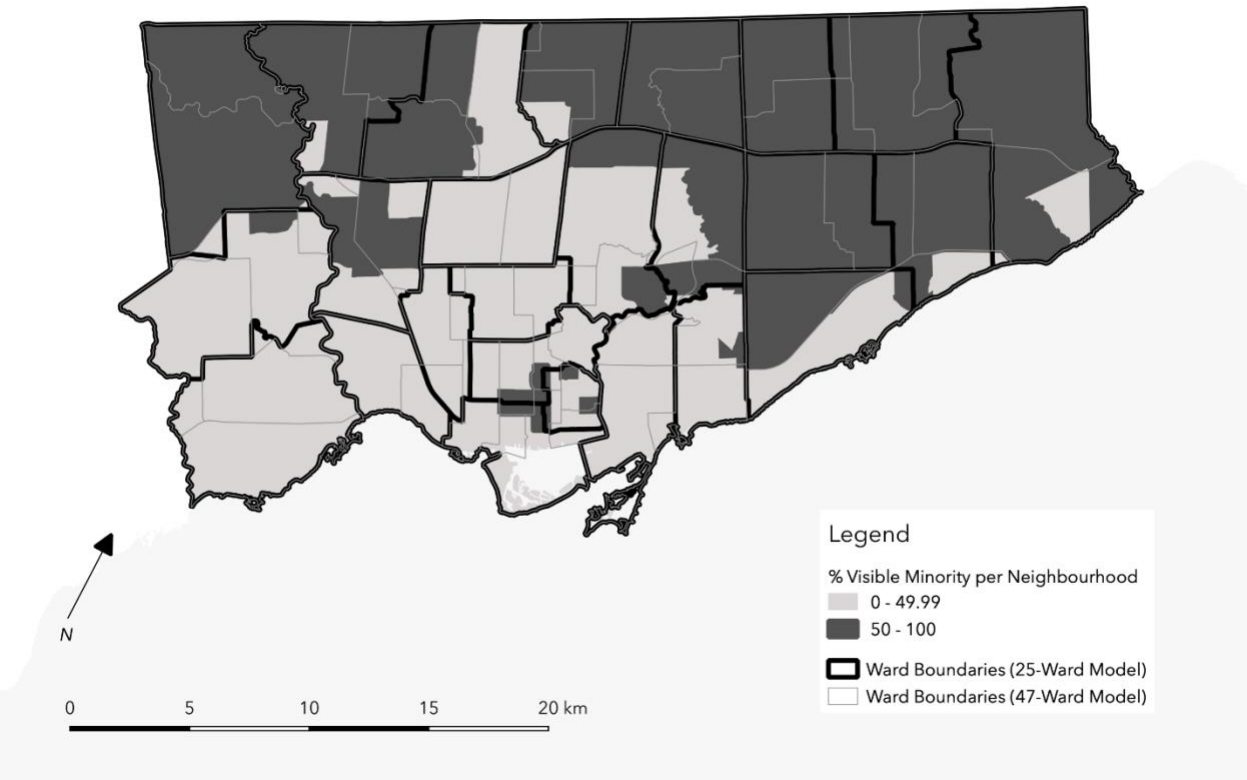
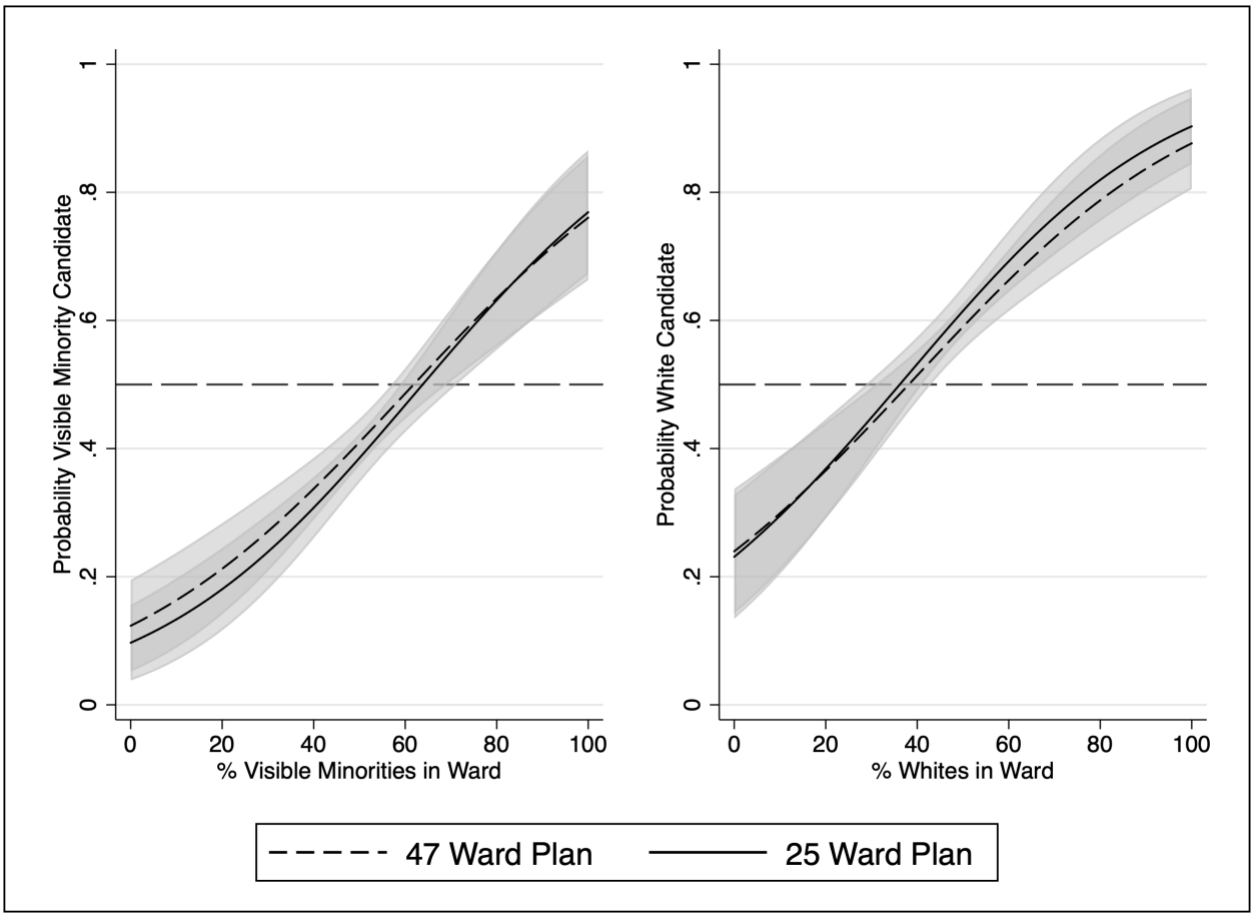
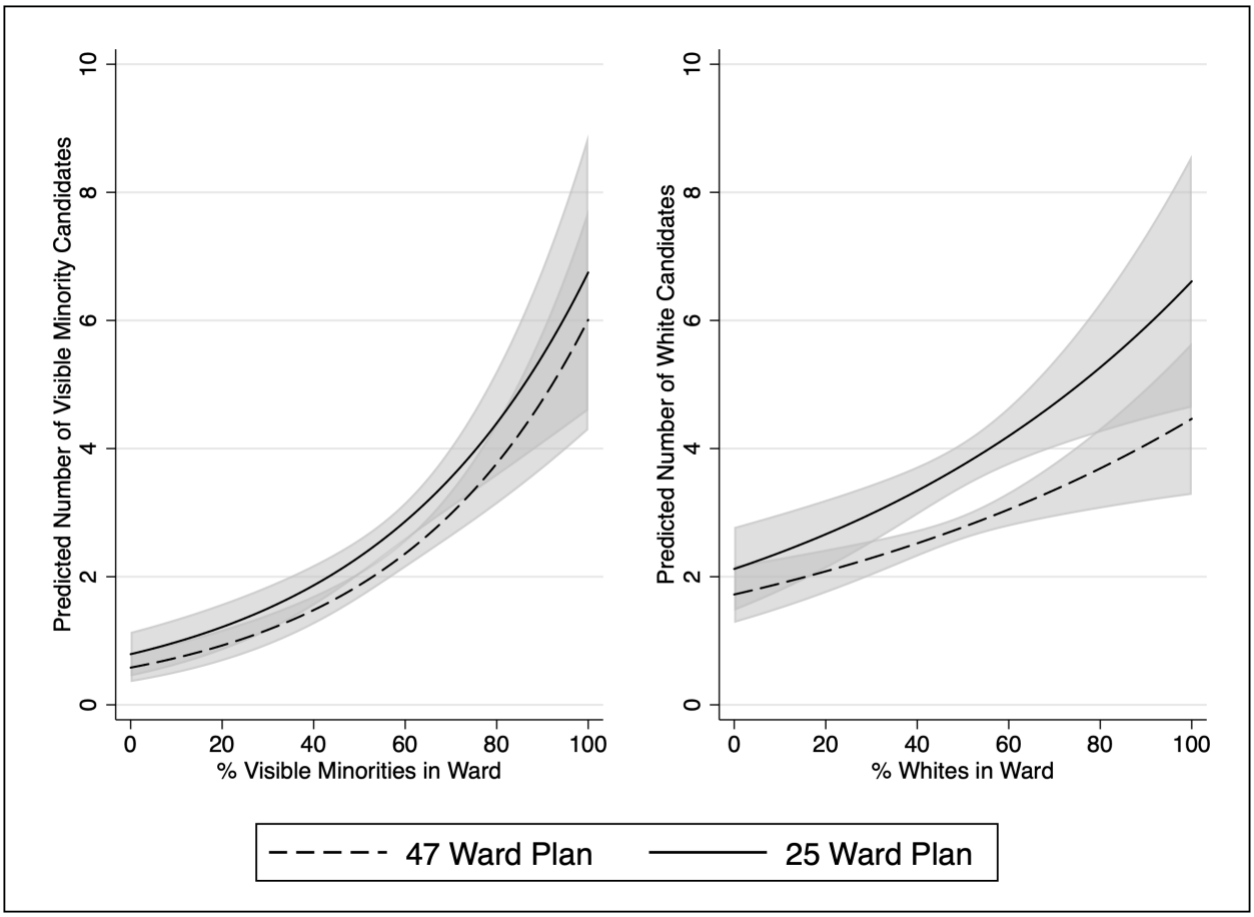


Figure 1: The Boundaries of the 47- and 25-Ward Systems with the Distribution of Visible Minority Population in Toronto



Confidence intervals are at the 84% level (which corresponds to $p < 0.05$, see MacGregor-Fors and Payton (2013)).

Figure 2: Probability of Candidate's Ethnicity



Confidence intervals are at the 76% level (which corresponds to $p < 0.1$, see MacGregor-Fors and Payton (2013)).

Figure 3: Number of Candidates by Visible Minority Status

Appendix A: Logit Model Results

	Dependent Variables	
Independent Variables	**Model 1: Visible Minority**	**Model 2: White**
25-Ward Plan	-0.28	-0.05
	(0.53)	(0.44)
% Visible Minority	0.03**	
	(0.01)	
% White		0.03**
		(0.01)
25-Ward Plan*% Visible Minority	< 0.01	
	(0.01)	
25-Ward Plan*% White		< 0.01
		(0.01)
Office		
Councillor (baseline)	-	-
Catholic School	-0.80**	0.80**
	(0.27)	(0.27)
Public School	0.16	-0.16
	(0.19)	(0.19)
Woman Candidate	0.07	-0.07
	(0.18)	(0.18)
Incumbency	-1.41**	1.41**
	(0.27)	(0.27)
Population Density	< -0.01	< 0.01
	(< 0.01)	(< 0.01)
Median Income	< -0.01	< 0.01
	(< 0.01)	(< 0.01)
% Renters	-0.02	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age (% over 65)	-0.05	0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)
Education (% degree)	-0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
% Women	-0.21*	0.21*
	(0.10)	(0.10)
Constant	11.62*	-15.01**
	(5.89)	(5.55)
Pseudo R^2	0.17	0.17
N	789	789

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B: Poisson Models by Ward

	Dependent Variables	
Independent Variables	**Model 3: Visible Minority**	**Model 4: White**
25-Ward Plan	0.31	0.21
	(0.38)	(0.28)
% Visible Minority	0.02**	
	(0.01)	
% White		0.01**
		(< 0.01)
25-Ward Plan*% Visible Minority	< -0.01	
	(0.01)	
25-Ward Plan*% White		< 0.01
		(< 0.01)
Population Density	< -0.01	< 0.01*
	(< 0.01)	(< 0.01)
Median Income	< -0.01	< -0.01
	(< 0.01)	(< 0.01)
% Renters	-0.02*	< -0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age (% over 65)	-0.08**	-0.04*
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Education (% degree)	0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)
% Women	-0.13*	0.07
	(0.08)	(0.06)
Constant	9.07**	-2.57
	(4.16)	(2.88)
Pseudo R^2	0.06	0.04
N	140	140

Standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$.

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