

Unequal Votes:
The Malapportionment of Canadian Minorities

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ABSTRACT: Using information from current federal electoral riding profiles, this paper examines the effects of urban malapportionment on the political representation of Canada's visible minority population. The results support the conclusion that visible minority populations, especially lower-income minority populations, are negatively affected by current redistricting and redistribution policies. Specifically, policies designed to bolster rural representation have the secondary effect of diluting urban and ergo visible minority representation.

The political representation of Canada's visible minority population is an issue of growing concern. In recent years, an increasing amount of attention – both political and academic – has been devoted to exploring new ways to expand the representative nature

of Canadian democracy. At the heart of such inquiries is a desire to diversify Canadian politics, by incorporating new voices into the political process and creating less homogenous representative assemblies. As a result, scholars and policy-makers have considered a number of ways to eliminate the electoral barriers that currently deter the participation of non-traditional political actors. Such strategies range from the adoption of affirmative measures during the candidate selection process to comprehensive electoral reform (e.g., Tanguay and Bittle 2005; Law Commission of Canada 2003; Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, *Reforming Electoral Democracy: What Canadians Told Us* 1991, 42-52; Megyery 1991). However, glaringly absent from the conversation thus far is an analysis of Canada's electoral redistribution and redistricting policies. Yet there is reason to believe that current measures adversely affect the representation of ethnic communities. Canada has developed a unique approach to redistricting and redistribution, one that counteracts the notion of 'one person, one vote' by providing 'effective representation' to group interests. The resulting tradeoff between individual and group representation, coupled with Canada's geographic and demographic landscape, presents a representational dilemma – by affording overrepresentation to some collective groups, others become relatively underrepresented. Unfortunately, such paradoxes often result in measures that systematically lower the representational levels of non-traditional political actors, namely that of visible minority constituents. Of particular concern are institutional mechanisms that amplify rural representation while diluting urban representation. Such outcomes are troubling in terms of visible minority vote shares because malapportioned urban ridings contain large percentages of Canada's minority population.

This paper will analyze current redistricting and redistribution policies within a broader multiculturalist framework. The first section of the paper will examine the extent to which minority representation has influenced recent boundary delineations and redistributions. Next, there will be an empirical examination of the visible minority vote share in federal ridings across Canada. The results lend support to the argument that visible minority communities, especially lower-income minority communities, are disproportionately affected by the dilution of urban political representation. Finally, the empirical findings will be placed within the current discussion of ethnic political representation and strategies for future mobilization will be suggested.

The Canadian Dilemma

Canada's geographical magnitude and demographic composition present a unique challenge in terms of representative democracy. The Canadian political system must cope with vast regional differences, ranging from declining and sparsely populated areas of the country to heavily industrialized and highly populous urban centers. Canadian redistricting and redistribution formulas were developed as a response to this challenge. While these policies are ostensibly designed to respect voter parity (the notion that every vote should carry the same weight), there are in fact several mechanisms to ensure regional and group representation. Within the Canadian context, the traditional use of such measures has been to bolster rural representation by ensuring that population alone does not determine the allocation of seats at the federal level. For example, the senatorial clause of 1915 requires that the number of seats given to a province be no less than the number of Senate seats from that province (s. 51A *Constitution Act*). In addition, the

grandfather clause of 1985 requires that the number of House seats allocated to each province not be less than the number of House seats that province had in the 33rd Parliament, thereby setting a base level of representation for areas with declining populations (s. 51 *Constitution Act*).

Essentially, such measures override the principle of voter parity by lowering the electoral quota (the population of a province divided by its total number of federal seats) in rural areas. Such measures result in a tradeoff between regional and individual representation, which at times can be quite drastic. For instance, an MP from British Columbia represents, on average, 108,548 constituents, while an MP from PEI represents an average of 33,824 constituents (Elections Canada 2002, 22). The lower levels of representation in urban centers are of particular concern to visible minority constituents, given that nearly 85% of Canada’s visible minority population lives in urban ridings, whereas only 40% of the nation’s non-visible minority population resides in urban districts.¹ Table 1 lists all provincial quotas, in ascending order, and the number of additional seats each province receives through the use of special clauses, or non-population based considerations.

Table 1

Province	Electoral Quota	Additional Seats
<i>National Quotient</i>	<i>107,220</i>	
Prince Edward Island	33,824	3
Saskatchewan	69,924	5
New Brunswick	72,950	3
Newfoundland and Labrador	73,276	2
Manitoba	79,970	4
Nova Scotia	82,546	3
Quebec	96,500	7
Alberta	106,243	0
Ontario	107,642	0
British Columbia	108,548	0

Source: Elections Canada. Representation in the House of Commons of Canada.
http://www.elections.ca/scripts/fedrep/federal_e/fed_prlmnt_e.htm

Not only is there a bias in the redistribution process that aids rural provinces, there is also a bias in the redistricting process that appears to favor rural ridings over urban ridings within a province. In accordance with the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act (EBRA), individual riding populations may vary up to plus or minus 25% of the provincial quotient, and in extraordinary circumstances this 25% limit may even be exceeded (s. 15 (2)). EBRA lists a number of reasons that justify population deviations, including the need to respect a community of interest or a community of

¹ These figures were calculated using the Statistics Canada definition of “urban”. As such, ridings with at least a population of 1,000 and no fewer than 400 persons per square kilometer were classified as urban.

identity, historical patterns, and the need to keep ridings within a manageable geographic size (*Ibid*). The Supreme Court of Canada has also addressed the issue, asserting that deviations from strict voter parity are necessary to provide 'effective representation' to certain groups (*The Attorney General for Saskatchewan v. Roger Carter (1991)*). It is also worth noting that the *Carter* ruling specifically listed minority representation as a justification for population variance.

The 25% and beyond guideline permits a considerable amount of intra-provincial variation. In Ontario, for example, riding populations range from 60,572 in Kenora (43.7% below the provincial quotient) to 122,192 in Mississauga-Cooksville (13.5% above the provincial quotient) (Report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario 2003, 25-27). In a comparative perspective, such high variation levels are extremely abnormal. For example, in Australia, which like Canada is a geographically large country with concentrated areas of population, the cut off for variations in federal House ridings is set at 10% (Toronto Staff Report 2002, 12). Similarly, in the United States, which firmly enforces the concept of 'one person, one vote', the courts have struck down redistricting plans with population variations as little as 3.1% (see *Kirkpatrick v. Preisler (1969)*).

The inevitable tension between regional and individual representation is also aggravated in the Canadian context by the fact that the House of Commons is the only effective federal legislative chamber. In other pluralist democracies, such as the United States and Australia, such conflicts are partly dealt with through federal systems that have lower chambers upholding representation by population and upper chambers designed for regional and provincial representation. Thus, such systems respect voter parity while the threat of tyranny of the majority is checked by upper houses. However, because the Canadian Senate is effectively a powerless institution, the House of Commons must simultaneously respond to both of these representational demands, which are inherently conflicting.

While the notion of effective representation has predominately been used to afford additional rural representation, the concept can apply to a myriad of group interests. In fact, post-*Carter*, a growing number of minority communities have successfully made claims for special consideration in the redistricting process. Such developments are most readily demonstrated by successful mobilization efforts in several francophone communities. For example, in a PEI provincial riding, deviations from voter parity were justified in order to better represent a compact Acadian community, which the courts officially recognized as a community of interest (Smith 2002, 16-17). Similarly, at the federal level, commissioners in Nova Scotia purposely designed electoral districts to magnify the representation of Acadian communities, once by lowering the electoral quota in a district and in another instance by adjusting boundaries to better account for residential patterns (Courtney 2001, 175).

More rarely, the concept of effective representation has been used to advocate for stronger representation in visible minority communities. In one prominent example, a Nova Scotian provincial riding was granted a lower electoral quota in an effort to amplify the representation of Black communities (Smith 2002, 17-18). The political impact of the riding, which now contains a critical mass of minority constituents, was realized when it elected the first Black representative to the House of Assembly (*Ibid*). Canada's aboriginal population has also begun to see the effects of affirmative districting. Federal

boundary commissioners in New Brunswick, for example, used the notion of effective representation when they proposed that the province's First Nations population be centralized in one riding, regardless of location (Report of the Federal Boundaries Commission for New Brunswick 2003, 14). A non-contiguous aboriginal district would have been a first in Canada, although similar developments were seriously investigated after a Lortie Commission recommendation proposed a similar design (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, *Reforming Electoral Democracy: Final Report*, 298-300). However, First Nations and non-aboriginal representatives criticized the New Brunswick Commission's proposal at public hearings and community consultation sessions, and the recommendations were eventually withdrawn (Report of the Federal Boundaries Commission for New Brunswick 2003, 14). Although the New Brunswick proposal was dropped, other provinces, Saskatchewan for example, have created districts with large aboriginal populations in hopes of increasing the community's formal political representation (Courtney 2001, 175).

While such examples show that electoral designers are beginning to give greater thought to the representation of aboriginal and visible minority populations, such examples are still the exception and not the norm. Arguably, the slow recognition of the political cohesiveness of these groups, contrasted against the long accepted political interests of rural communities, is evidence of a representational double standard. Within the field of democratic theory, there are two competing understandings of the role of representation within pluralist societies. At one end of the spectrum are the descriptive theorists who argue that governing assemblies should be microcosms of the population at large. At the heart of descriptive theory is a belief that, "representatives are in their own persons and lives some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent" (Mansbridge 1999, 629). According to this view, the representational function of legislators goes beyond governing on behalf of constituents and actually encompasses a symbolic role.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who challenge the very idea of segmental representation in politics. Of importance here is the classic Burkean concept of representation, which contends that "representatives should not serve local interests but the nation" (Phillips 1991, 64). According to the Burkean notion of representation, elected officials should be above petty societal divisions and always put the interest of the country at large first. In line with this logic, the representational function of legislators is limited to a governing capacity. In addition, because legislators should always seek a greater good, individual descriptive characteristics should not factor into the governing process and are therefore irrelevant.

What is interesting within the Canadian context is that there is evidence of both of these contrasting views. For example, the belief that rural constituents have a cohesive political agenda that cannot be adequately represented by legislators from different geographical areas is essentially a nascent version of identity politics. However, while the concept of effective representation for rural communities is firmly ingrained into the predominant political institutions, the recognition of other group interests are somehow still viewed as aberrant departures from a Burkean status quo.

A Comparative Look at Minority Districting Measures

While the consideration of minority communities in the redistricting process is a relatively new phenomenon in Canada, many other nations with single-member district (SMD) electoral systems have already embraced districting as a means to provide representation to minority communities. In the United States, for example, the effects of redistribution on racial communities received national attention in the 1960s after American legislatures blatantly malapportioned districts with large minority populations. As a result, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments were passed. Such laws now require the close monitoring of any redistricting plan that affects areas with substantial minority populations and may even necessitate approval from the Department of Justice. Such laws also helped provide the legal framework for the implementation of affirmative gerrymandering. In the 1990s, American legislatures began creating a number of majority-minority and supermajority-minority districts, meaning districts with a critical mass or even an absolute majority of minority constituents. However, in order to manufacture such results, legislatures had to create tortuous and highly contrived district lines. One of the most extreme applications of racial districting was addressed in the Supreme Court case of *Shaw v. Reno* (1993). This was a case out of North Carolina, in which a bizarrely shaped minority district was challenged. The district essentially followed the interstate throughout North Carolina, periodically branching out to encompass minority communities along the way.

Such group-conscious districting has received a wide range of political and academic attention, the results of which are mixed at best (see Arden, Wayne, and Handley 1997; Cox and Katz 1999; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999). Minority districts have been criticized from those on the political right, who argued that such measures are undemocratic, as well as those on the political left, who argue that such measures actually harm the substantive representation of African Americans. The Supreme Court eventually intervened and curtailed such practices by asserting that minority representation cannot be the predominant issue in determining district boundaries (see *Reno v. Shaw* 1993; *Miller v. Johnson* 1995; *Bush v. Vera* 1996; *Shaw v. Hunt* 1996).² While the political viability of such measures have certainly been called into question, it is clear that the numerous minority districts created in the 1990s had a drastic effect on descriptive representational levels – the US Congress gained more minority representatives after the implementation of minority districts in the 1992 redistricting than in any other prior election (Banducci et al. 2004, 535).

Although the American experience with affirmative districting has received the most attention, other nations have applied similar tactics. In the United Kingdom, for example, electoral quotas have been routinely lowered in an effort to provide better representation to Scottish ridings (Norris 2004, 228).³ Similarly, in New Zealand persons of Maori descent are given the option of enrolling in a separate electorate. The special Maori ridings overlap with the general electorate, so two districts cover every location. Persons of Maori heritage are then able to enlist in their local Maori electorate, or they

² Such rulings have not completely eliminated the practice of minority-based districting. Rather, they have limited the concept's scope of application. Current court rulings have established the, somewhat ambiguous, guideline that race cannot be the predominant factor in redistricting measures.

³ Although such practices were common in the UK, they are no longer practiced. After devolution and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, there was less of a perceived need for such measures.

may opt to vote in the general electorate. Arguably, the original intent of the Maori ridings was not to provide better representation to New Zealand's aboriginal population. Rather, the ridings were historically malapportioned and the system seemed nothing more than a perfunctory mechanism to "pacify and assimilate Maori" (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004, 536). In other words, Maori districts served to accelerate the assimilation process by incorporating aboriginals into the predominant political system and then underrepresented their interests within that institution. Such deficiencies have since been addressed and today the number of Maori electorates varies based on enrollment.

The above examples help contextualize the Canadian experience, or relative lack thereof, with minority districting. On some level, the lack of attention this issue has received in Canada may be understood as a paradox of multiculturalism. As the examples demonstrated, advocates of minority representation in other nations became vigilant in the redistricting process because of blatant past abuses in the system. Through this process, tactics that were originally designed to protect majority rule evolved into mechanisms that bolster minority representation. The Canadian experience, on the other hand, appears to be more accurately characterized as a case of selective blind liberalism, applying protective measures to rural constituents but not other collective groups. However, the perceived lack of need to monitor the situation, combined with rapidly changing demographics, may permit representational biases that are hard to reconcile with Canada's professed commitment to diversity.

While Canada does not have an extensive background of considering minority representation in the redistricting process, its recent experiences with the topic have already raised several intriguing questions. For example, it is puzzling that some Canadian minority communities support the use of affirmative districting, some oppose it, and others have yet to address the issue. What little research exists on this question suggests that urban visible minority communities have been less likely to mobilize around redistricting and redistribution issues than have rural and national minority groups, but the reasons for these differences are not yet clear. Courtney (2001) speculates that urban minority groups have several advantages over rural minorities, which make boundary changes for the former less critical (225-229). According to Courtney, one such advantage is the fact that ethnic voters are densely concentrated in urban centers, thereby providing a critical mass for minority representation (227). Courtney also asserts that political parties have more effectively courted urban minorities, and that rural minority communities have a longer history of discrimination and exclusion from the Canadian political process (227-229). In other words, urban minorities have had an easier time accessing formal political institutions and therefore have not perceived a need to address issues of redistribution and redistricting. However, these speculations are inconsistent with studies suggesting that visible minorities in urban centers, such as Toronto, are vastly underrepresented at all political levels (Siemiatycki and Saloojee 2003), and that some large minority groups – Chinese Canadians for example – have done very poorly in terms of formal political representation (Barber 2004; Wong 2004). Furthermore, if there is a rural bias, then the lack of urban minority mobilization around redistricting and redistribution issues is all the more surprising.

Linking Urban and Visible Minority Representation

While urban minority communities have essentially been silent on this matter, other groups have voiced concerns over the representational implications of current redistricting and redistribution policies. In the last round of federal redistricting, the City of Toronto flipped the concept of effective representation around by advocating for the recognition of 'effective representation for urban Canadians' (Toronto Staff Report 2002). The City argued that urban under-representation is problematic for three reasons, one of which focused on how ethnic and racial minority communities are disproportionately affected by the current policies (*Ibid*, 9). In their analysis, the City noted that while in 1961 only 3.1% of the City's population belonged to a visible minority group, by 2001 this number jumped to over 50% (*Ibid*).

The City of Toronto's efforts were not without reward. During public hearings held for the last federal boundary readjustment, the City raised the issue of urban malapportionment by suggesting that riding populations should not vary more than 5% from the set provincial quotient (Elections Canada: *Ontario's Commission Report*). While the Commission found such small variation levels unviable, the City was successful in persuading the Commission to change some proposed districting plans for the Greater Toronto Area. Perhaps the City's greatest success was in the Scarborough region. The Commission's original plans for this area deviated greatly from the provincial quotient and would have resulted in severely malapportioned ridings. However, at the City's suggestion, it was decided that Toronto federal districts did not necessarily have to correspond with municipal boundaries (*Ibid*). With this in mind, the Commission was able to redraw the Scarborough ridings, which are now all within 8% of the provincial quotient (*Ibid*).

Empirical Analysis

While it has been suggested that there is a rural bias, which disproportionately dilutes the visible minority vote share at the federal level, such a relationship has never been empirically verified. To test for such effects, three regressions were run, all with riding population as the dependent variable. The regression series begins with a simple bivariate regression looking at the relationship between the percent of visible minorities in a district and riding population. This simplistic model is then built on in the second regression by adding measures accounting for socioeconomic status, urban status, and the interaction between these variables. Finally, the results of the third regression look at the interaction effect between income and visible minority status. By building the regression up in this manner, we are able to analyze the same reapportionment formula from a variety of perspectives. The current reapportionment formula in Canada is a rigid device that structures representation in a zero-sum manner, with some groups gaining representation at the expense of others. This regression series was designed in an add-on fashion to provide statistical snapshots from a variety of perspectives, thereby exposing the representational effects on different groups.

The results from the regression series are displayed in Table 2. As previously stated, the first regression was a simple bivariate model, with district population as the dependent variable and the percent of visible minorities in the riding population as the

independent variable.⁴ The regression included information for all provincial federal ridings.⁵ The results are displayed in the first two columns of Table 2. The output, which is significant beyond the 99% level, reveals a positive correlation between the percent of visible minorities in a riding and the population size of a district. According to the results, a one-percentage point increase in the visible minority share of a district population is associated with an increase of approximately 440 constituents.

A couple of notes regarding the dataset and analysis are in order. First, because the independent variable is measuring the number of visible minorities in a district relative to the entire district population, the results demonstrate that visible minorities comprise a larger share of districts in more populous ridings. Or, conversely, that non-minorities comprise a smaller share of districts in more populous ridings. Thus, the results do lend support to the argument that visible minorities are disproportionately affected by the dilution of urban political representation. Next, the R-value of .434 is a fairly strong result. Thus, in terms of reapportionment formulas in Canada, racial demographics and representational levels appear to co-vary quite frequently. Finally, some may question if total population is the most appropriate dependent variable. Other measures, such as eligible or registered voters, might provide a more accurate picture of vote dilution. There is, after all, no guarantee that differences between total population figures and eligible voters will not vary between ridings. Some have even argued that such differences should be considered in the boundary readjustment process (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, *Reforming Electoral Democracy: What Canadians Told Us* 1991, 55). However, current redistricting and redistribution policies rely on total population figures, thus this measure seemed most appropriate for the analysis.

Table 2
Riding Populations by Race and Socio-Economic Status

Variable	Coefficients	Variable	Coefficient	Variable	Coefficient
% of Visible Minorities in Riding Populations	439.5** (52.5)	Average Household Income	.626** (.09)	% of Visible Minorities in Riding Population	1,092.4** (227.4)
Constant	92,689.8** (1,065.4)	Urban Status	30,935** (7,059.1)	Average Household Income	.575** (.08)
R	.434	Urban status * Average Household	-.382** (.12)	Percent of Visible Minorities *	-.013** (.004)

⁴ The data was collected from Statistics Canada's electoral riding profiles for the 2003 Representation Order, which reflects information from the 2001 Census. Therefore, information regarding minority status and income were collected via a self-reporting process. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

⁵ Note that the dataset does not include the three federal ridings designated to the territories. This is because the territories do not abide by the same reapportionment formula as the rest of the provinces. The territories are essentially allotted a single federal district that covers the entire territory; therefore commissioners have no actual control over riding population in the territories. This omission lowered the N from 308 to 305.

		Income		Average Household Income	
R-Square	.188	Constant	58,654** (5,078.5)	Constant	61,348.1** (4,766.4)
N	305	R	.523	R	.551
		R-Square (Adjusted)	.266	R-Square (Adjusted)	.297
		N	305	N	305

**p<.01, *p<.05; Standard errors in parentheses

Next, a socio-economic element was added to the analysis by examining the relationship between average household income, urban status, and population size across all federal ridings.⁶ An interaction term (urban status * average household income) was also included to test if the effects of income are dependent on location. The results, displayed in the second two columns in Table 2, show that all variables are statistically significant. According to the output, urban ridings have an average of 30,935 more constituents than rural ridings. The results also show that there is a positive correlation between income and district population. Such findings at the federal level are not surprising given that smaller rural riding populations often have lower income levels. The outcome from the interaction term also supports the claim that the positive relationship between income and district population is largely a rural phenomenon, as the slope for income in rural districts is nearly three times the slope for income in urban districts. Thus, while such effects may be regional in nature, the results do show that lower income areas are afforded better representation than higher income districts.

However, when race and socio-economic status are simultaneously considered, a different picture emerges. The final two columns in Table 2 display the results of a multivariate regression that includes an interaction term (percent of visible minorities in a district * average household income). This interaction term will reveal if the representational levels of visible minority constituents is also related to income levels. In recent years urban poverty has been rapidly increasing, and because visible minorities disproportionately live in urban settings, there is reason to believe that urban malapportionment is disproportionately affecting lower-income minority communities.

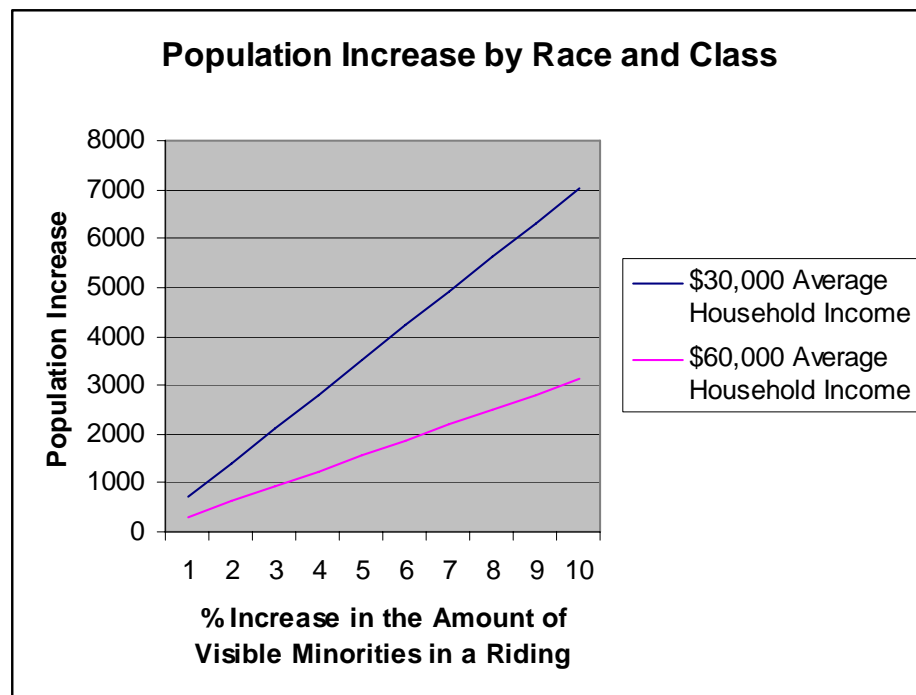
As Table 1 demonstrates, all results are again statistically significant and there is still a positive relationship between the size of a visible minority population and average household income with the dependent variable. The inclusion of the interaction term reveals that the intersection of race and socio-economic status also has a significant impact on political representation. According to the results, visible minority vote shares are more diluted in lower income ridings than in higher income ridings.

Such results indicate that socio-economic differences within Canadian visible minority communities have a discernable effect on political representation. These trends probably reflect the fact that many inner-city ridings, where large percents of visible

⁶ Average household income is measured in dollars. Urban status represents a dummy variable where all federal districts were assigned a value of 1 if they were urban, and a value of 0 if they were rural. The Statistics Canada definition of urban was used to code the districts. Therefore, districts with at least a population of 1,000 and no less than 400 persons per square kilometer were classified as urban.

minorities reside, also have lower income levels. In fact, in recent decades urban poverty rates have grown at a faster pace than rural poverty rates, and today urban poverty is more pervasive than rural poverty in all but two provinces (*The Daily: Study: Rural-Urban Income Gap*). However, unlike lower income rural ridings, inner-city ridings are not given lower electoral quotas. The resulting correlations between race, income, and representation are quite drastic. For example, in a riding with an average household income of \$30,000, a one-percentage point increase in the amount of visible minorities in the riding is associated with an increase of 702 constituents. In a riding with an average household income of \$60,000, however, a one-percentage point increase in the visible minority share of a population is associated with an increase of only 312 constituents. Graph 1 provides a pictorial demonstration of the relationship.

Graph 1



Conclusion

The analyses demonstrate that visible minorities, especially lower income minorities, are disproportionately affected by current redistricting and redistribution policies. Institutional mechanisms designed to amplify rural representation have the secondary effect of diluting urban representation at the federal level. In recent decades, Canada has experienced a sharp influx of immigrants, many of whom have settled in metropolitan areas. Such changing demographics have caused the traditional urban versus rural divide in Canada to have significant racial implications.

The dilution of urban and visible minority vote shares could have a number of representational effects, which presents fertile areas for future research. It is conceivable that differing electoral quotas could impact the level of constituency services in ridings. In other words, an MP representing a less populous riding might be more efficient at

responding to constituent needs than an MP in a highly populated district. It is also possible that the current rural bias results in a substantive under-representation of urban and visible minority policy matters at the federal level. In its report, the City of Toronto presented evidence that rural policy matters are in fact given higher priority than urban policy matters in the House of Commons (6-7). In addition, the differing sizes of electoral ridings could impact voter participation levels, as comparative studies have demonstrated a negative relationship between district size and voting rates (Norris 2004, 163). In other words, it appears that voters are more likely to participate in smaller ridings, although there is no consensus regarding the exact reasoning for such a relationship. With the recent emergence of new surveys aimed at exploring the political participation and behavior of Canada's minority populations, it is now possible to explore the links between minority status, district size, and political participation.⁷ Finally, as examples from both within and outside Canada have shown, districts that are more sensitive to minority communities could result in the election of more ethnic representatives, thereby aiding in the creation of a parliament that is a true microcosm of the population.

While Canada has just recently begun to consider minority representation in the redistricting process, it is clear that this issue is not going away anytime soon. With the *Carter* ruling still standing, and given the successful mobilization effort of minority communities thus far, it is only reasonable to expect a growing number of organized groups to view redistricting and redistribution measures as a means to increase their formal political representation. Canada has developed a unique approach to such matters, one that counters the principle of 'one person, one vote' with the notion of effective representation. However, thus far, the application of this approach has had the unfortunate effect of systemically disadvantaging certain societal groups.

Representation within the Canadian electoral system is organized in a zero-sum fashion. Within such a setting, formal political representation is analogous to pie – when one group gets a bigger slice, another group must get a smaller piece. Such rigid measures systematically create winners and losers, an effect that is clearly evident in the case at hand. If Canada is going to continue using redistricting and reapportionment formulas as a method of affording segmental representation, which is a likely scenario, then the negative outcomes associated with this system need to be recognized and addressed. It should first be acknowledged that the Burkean representational standard is an illusion, and that group representation is inherent in the current system. Such an acknowledgement would open the door to a truly pluralist process, where a variety of group interests could be recognized in the predominant political institutions. This would also help ensure that some groups are not consistently on the losing end of such arrangements. After all, while it is admittedly beyond the power of a geographically based electoral system to provide representation to all conceivable group interests, the practice of consistently representing some, at the expense of others, only sharpens existing societal cleavages.

⁷ Examples of such surveys include the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Study (EDS) as well as the 2000 World Values Survey and Canadian Election Study, both of which oversampled Canadian minorities.

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