

# **Community Narcissism in Urban Life: Ethnic, Urban Communities and Political Participation in Toronto**

Emma Planinc

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Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka have recently stated: "in much of the world . . . there is a widespread perception that multiculturalism has failed" (Banting and Kymlicka, 2010: 43). Though the Council of Europe claimed in 2008 that multiculturalism has led to growing levels of marginalization, Canadian political theorists (Banting and Kymlicka, along with Richard Johnston and Stuart Soroka) are wary of a comparison between Canada and Europe when evaluating the successes or failures of multicultural policies, and claim that there is no evidence for Canada's multicultural make-up having negative effects. Rather, they argue that there is contrary evidence suggesting that Canada's heterogeneous definition "promotes integration and citizenship" (Banting and Kymlicka, 2010: 62) and is representative of "the social realities and potential of the modern world" (Soroka et al., 2007: 25). Urban theorists Larry S. Bourne and Jim Simmons have shown, however, that it is only in Canada's major urban areas that populations are growing and becoming more heterogeneous, while other areas and cities of Canada remain socially homogeneous with declining populations (Bourne and Simmons, 2003: 29). Canada's metropolitan areas<sup>i</sup> are, in fact, home to 90 percent of our immigrant population, and 96 percent of the nation's visible minorities (MPI, 2011). If we are to examine the successes or failures of multiculturalism, it is apparent that it must be done through examining our urban populations.

Of Toronto specifically, Jeffrey Reitz writes: "since 2000, Toronto alone has accepted between 80,000 and 125,000 new immigrants each year, making it one of the most immigrant-intensive large cities in the world" (Reitz, 2011: 3). There are over 140 languages and dialects spoken in Toronto, and just over 30 percent of the residents of the City of Toronto speak a language other than English or French at home. In 2006<sup>ii</sup>, half of all immigrants to the City of Toronto had lived in Canada for less than 15 years (City of Toronto, toronto.ca, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012). Kristen R. Good has done significant and comprehensive research on Toronto's multicultural population and its effect on citizenship: in *Municipalities and Multiculturalism*, she "documents and explains the processes underlying municipalities' role in the development of Canada's multicultural policy" (Good, 2009: 5). She emphasizes the critical role of municipalities in both shaping and responding to Canada's ethnocultural diversity, and asserts that despite the "clear trends in the spatial distribution of Canada's immigrants, the ways in which immigration has affected municipal governance has received little attention" (Good, 2009: 11). Canadian cities "are playing a new and largely unacknowledged role in immigrant settlement and integration" (Good, 2009: 277).

Stemming from Good's assertion that this field of inquiry demands more attention from politicians and policy makers, my aim in this paper is to suggest that it also demands the attention of Canadian political theorists. Kymlicka and Banting's optimism regarding the success of Canadian multiculturalism must be examined at the urban level, and with this examination a new slew of problems and concerns arise concerning the relationship of Canada's new and diverse members to the Canadian state at large. The intensity of immigrant settlement in Canada's urban centres means, as Good asserts, that municipalities play a strong role in their integration and inclusion; it also means that they are the sites in which challenges to inclusion and multicultural successes will be most evident. In this paper I aim to shed attention on the relationship of immigrant's settlement patterns in the City of Toronto to voter participation (in the most recent federal, provincial and municipal elections). In my preliminary study, I have identified a pattern that suggests a negative relationship between heavily concentrated ethnic communities in the City of Toronto and voter turnout in elections; that is, in the wards or federal

electoral districts with the heaviest concentration of a single ethnic origin, there is across all three of the most recent elections consistently a lower percentage of voter turnout than in Toronto's other wards or districts. These wards also contain the highest percentages of first generation immigrants, which means that with time it is possible that subsequent generations will become more integrated and interested in Canadian political participation. My suggestion is that we should be concerned that this will not be the case. The settlement patterns of immigrants in Toronto is now concentrated in the suburbs, and the combination of this sprawl from the city's core and the desire to live with those with whom one shares ethnic and cultural familiarity may continue to deter citizens from concerning themselves with Canadian politics. My thesis as a political theorist is that attachment to that with which one is familiar, and a lack of, or indifference to, exposure to difference, is both deleterious to political concern and exacerbated by geographic sprawl. Though Canada's multicultural population may be thriving economically, or feeling content and settled in its settlements, it is not, and may continue its apathy toward, integrating with the broader political sphere.

What I believe is happening in Toronto's ethnic enclaves is 'community narcissism.' Sociologist Richard Sennett contrasts narcissism, the desire to see oneself reflected in those around you, with the public domain proper, or the *res publica*, which "stands in general for those bonds of association and mutual commitments which exist between people who are not joined together by ties of family or intimate association; it is the bond of a crowd, of a 'people,' of a polity, rather than the bonds of family or friends" (Sennett, 1974: 4). Fostering a public or political attitude is uniquely achieved in the urban environment precisely because the city, in its density and size, is a community of strangers. Community in the modern world has, however, "become both emotional withdrawal from society and a territorial barricade within the city. The warfare between psyche and society has acquired a real geographical focus . . . This new geography is communal versus urban; the territory of warm feeling versus the territory of impersonal blankness" (Sennett, 1974: 301). Ethnic enclaves and community narcissism could, thus, be detrimental to the political multitude, or the polity, and the capacity of persons to see themselves as public citizens rather than personal inhabitants.

This study is preliminary, and requires many more investigations of a quantitative nature to substantiate this hypothesis in detail; nevertheless, in approaching the issues facing our multicultural populations from a broader theoretical perspective, we are able to contemplate and consider the goals and implications of our dialogues about integration, cohesion and successes or failures. What is it for a multicultural population to be successful? Is it contentment or a robust conception of and participation in citizenship? If it is the latter, as I believe it should be, then the demographic and ethnic concentrations in the City of Toronto need to be examined in further detail in order that we may initiate discussions of how the city is to be the beginning, for many of our new members, of an active public and political life.

### **Settlement Patterns and Ethnoburbs**

The settlement patterns of immigrants in Toronto have changed substantially in the last fifty to sixty years. Prior to the 1970s, immigrant groups who arrived tended to settle in the inner city, where they formed ethnic neighbourhoods, and over time they moved to the suburbs in a resettlement, leaving the ethnic neighbourhoods in the downtown core commercially intact. The current pattern of settlement is much different: immigrants now bypass "inner city reception areas in favour of first residence in the suburbs" (Murdie, 2003; see also Murdie and Teixeira,

2004; Qadeer, 2003). This has led to what Li (1998) coined as "ethnoburbs": culturally homogeneous ethnic clusters in the outskirts of the major city.

Murdie and Teixeira (2004) mention many of the ethnic groups who settled and formed neighbourhoods prior to the 1970s. These are neighbourhoods with which the residents of Toronto are now very familiar: the downtown Chinatown now at Dundas and Spadina, Greektown on the Danforth, Little Italy on College St. and Corso Italia on St. Clair West, Little Portugal on Dundas and College toward the West end, and the Jewish neighbourhoods formerly at lower Bathurst and Spadina, now at Yonge and Bathurst, and remaining in Forest Hill. These concentrated ethnic groups helped to revitalize areas of the downtown core, improving real estate and economic prosperity. They also helped to contribute to the 'cosmopolitan' nature of downtown Toronto, in opening culturally unique restaurants and shops (Murdie, 2003). When they became more prosperous, members of these groups moved to suburban Toronto, establishing secondary residential ethnic communities.

The current "ethnoburb" trend is one in which new immigrants bypass the primary stage of settling in the downtown core, and instead settle in the suburbs of Toronto directly. Qadeer (2003) writes: "suburban ethnic enclaves are not transplants of the city's old neighbourhoods. The immigrants who start as professionals, business entrepreneurs, or investors buy homes in areas where their compatriots have settled, creating ethnoburbs. Sikhs in Malton, Chinese and South Asians in Markham and Mississauga, Caribbeans and Somalis in North Etobicoke, Italians in Woodbridge, Jews in North York, are examples of such concentrations" (2). The less well off also settle in these areas occupied by those with whom they share an ethnic origin, turning to members of their community for information or guidance concerning the purchase of a residence, or for the purpose of renting a place of residence from those who have acquired ownership of property. The population may turn over regularly, but the ethnic character and networks of the neighbourhood persist (Qadeer, 2003: 5).

That ethnic enclaves<sup>iii</sup>, or ethnoburbs, exist in Toronto (and in other major cities) is not, however, a matter of contention. The divide in the scholarship is over the success or failure of ethnic enclaves in integrating immigrants into Canada. Qadeer claims that the ethnic enclave is sometimes a case of voluntary segregation from the broader community which may serve useful purposes (Qadeer, 2003: 1). The usefulness of the ethnic enclave for building "bonding" social capital (in-group interaction and trust) has been the subject of much recent literature: Mata and Pendakur (2010) write, for example, that in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, "bonding activities are, for many minorities, essential mechanisms of social and economic survival . . . . Minority members (immigrant or not) are developing networks with family and friends that provide them with various forms of cultural capital, a sense of well-being, and economic security" (37). Ethnic enclaves help new immigrants to gain employment, residences, information about local opportunities, networks and organizations, and they contain an internal infrastructure and support system for both established and incoming residents (Hyman et al., 2011; Reitz, 2011; Qadeer and Kumar, 2006; Wood and Gilbert, 2005; Li, 2004).

The ambiguity over the roles and benefits of ethnic enclaves "is reflected in the celebration of the food, music and crafts of Chinese malls, India Bazaars and Italian markets, and the simultaneous characterization of corresponding neighbourhoods as places that breed segregation and social exclusion" (Qadeer and Kumar, 2006: 1). Further, because it is often the case that people choose to live in the enclaves for the sake of the "bonding" benefits described above, enclaves are negatively characterized as sites of isolation by choice, or by the preference of their inhabitants to ethnic attachments rather than Canadian identity or participation. This

association of isolation by choice with enclaves is further exacerbated by the recent ethnoburb settlement trend, in which ethnic groups live both further away from the downtown core and in a characteristically more sprawled environment. Though ethnic enclaves may improve and strengthen “bonding” social capital (within group interaction), it may prevent “bridging” social capital (interaction that reaches outside the group) (Mata and Pendakur, 2010: 7).

### **Social cohesion and Canadian multiculturalism**

Jeffrey Reitz claims in *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion* (2009) that he can find evidence of both positive and negative relations between ethnic attachment and social integration into Canadian society. Employing data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey (of 41,000 Canadians in 2002), Reitz claims that his findings show there is “support both for multiculturalism and its critics” (Reitz, 2009a: 2): “the relation between ethnic attachments and an individual’s social integration into Canadian society is mixed. One cannot say simply that the relation is positive, implying that ethnic attachments and social integration always go together, or that the relation is negative, implying that when ethnic attachments are maintained, social integration is delayed or obstructed” (Reitz, 2009a: 36). There are consistent positive relations between ethnic involvement and a) a sense of belonging in Canada, and b) overall life satisfaction; and clear negative relations of a) the emergence of a ‘Canadian’ identity, and b) the acquisition of Canadian citizenship. In sum, Reitz writes: “ethnic attachments are positively related to well-being within a possibly circumscribed community context, but negatively related to at least some other attachments to the broader society” (Reitz, 2009a: 40). Reitz’s findings seem to reinforce the view that bonding social capital is achieved in ethnic communities, while bridging social capital may be slower to build.

Reitz focuses on the “sense of belonging” expressed by those who participated in the survey. He claims that the sense of belonging is in fact stronger for those who attach “greater importance to their ancestry and to the culture and customs of their minority community” (Reitz, 2009b: 158). Similarly, those who attach more importance to their ethnic background report greater overall life satisfaction (Reitz, 2009b: 158). Confronting the current debate over the degree to which immigrants should assimilate to their new country’s traditions, Reitz argues that multiculturalism does not really concern whether or not one *should* assimilate: it concerns “‘cultural freedom’ and the option for individuals to make cultural decisions for themselves” (Reitz, 2009b: 162). Because the policy of multiculturalism does not itself demand assimilation, it is, perhaps, enough to proclaim it a success if our citizens and inhabitants experience belonging and a happy, or satisfying, life. The Canadian philosophy of multiculturalism “assumes that the attachments of individuals to society are equally rooted in positive attachments to one’s own group heritage and equality within major institutions” (Reitz, 2009a: 18). Reitz quotes Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s announcement of the multiculturalism policy to the House of Commons in 1971: “National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on the confidence in one’s own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions [House of Commons 1971:8545]” (Reitz, 2009a: 18-19). Will Kymlicka (2010), citing his agreement with Harrell (2009) and Kazemipur (2009), claims that Canada’s multicultural policy, in establishing multicultural “norms” has helped to normalize diversity (Kymlicka, 2010: 263): “the fact that Canada has officially defined itself as a multicultural nation means that immigrants are a constituent part of the nation that citizens feel pride in,” and national identity is linked to solidarity with immigrants and appreciation of ethnic diversity (263). “Sense of belonging” is

therefore linked primarily to the freedom to embrace one's own ethnic identity, and our national identity is founded on tolerance of diversity and multiculturalism.

### **Voting, Citizenship and the City**

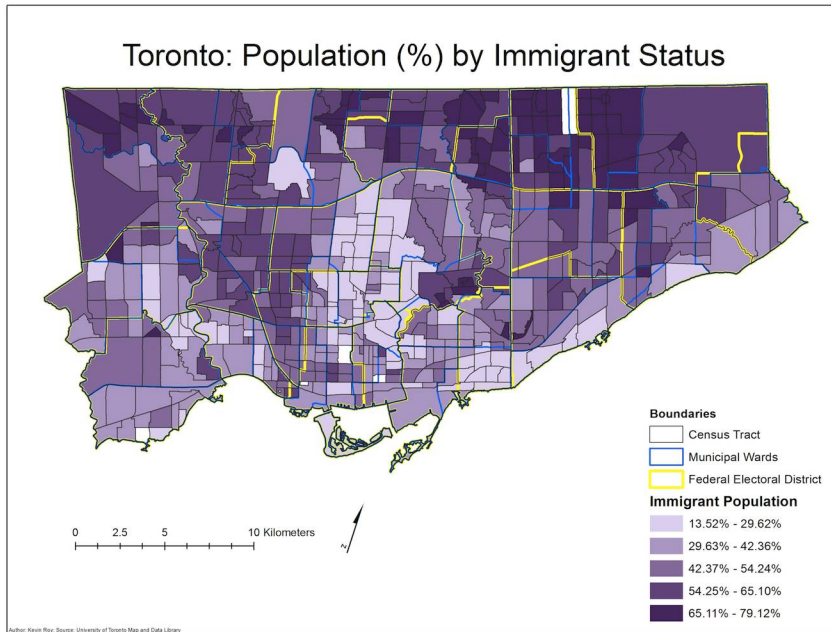
Though he advocates the positive aspects of ethnic attachments, Reitz's goal in *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion* is to remind us that there are arguments to both sides of the debate over the success of multiculturalism: we cannot ignore the fact that there are observed "negative effects of ethnic attachments, for example in slowing the development of a 'Canadian' identity, and participation in politics as reflected in voting" (Reitz, 2009b: 170). The purpose of the remainder of this paper is to examine the latter negative effect in the City of Toronto. Ultimately, the goal of my inquiry is to question the association of the "sense of belonging" with the success of multiculturalism if that belonging is not connected to political participation and involvement. What enclaves foster, I will argue, is a community so supportive of belonging and living well according to ancestral customs and cultures, that it may soften the desire or initiative to become involved in the broader political community. This is not to say that ethnic attachments must be dropped *in order to* identify with the broader Canadian political public (it is not the case that assimilation is a necessary condition of political engagement); rather, it *appears to be* the case that the presence of a high concentration of a single ethnic origin in a municipal ward correlates with lower voter participation.

The cause for potential concern is that what I call "community narcissism" (the concern for what is personally familiar) may continue to be correlated with a disinterest in, or disengagement from, the broader political sphere. This, too, may continue to be reinforced by the suburbanization of these communities, which, I believe, serves to reify the preference for what is similar over what is diverse in being more significantly spread and sprawled from other communities and spaces and forms of association. Though the sense of belonging in enclaved communities is strong, the belonging is that of the individual as a member of a community; what political engagement requires is that one feels belonging as a citizen to a diverse, broader public. In the concluding thoughts of this paper, I will suggest that the issues brought to light by this investigation demand that we think more thoroughly as Canadians about what it means for our multicultural nation (that is, our multicultural cities) to be successful. If it is the case that we consider a strong sense of citizenship to be a marker of successful integration and belonging, then what is it that we consider to be the constituent parts of being a citizen? It is, of course, firstly a legal designation, but is it secondly an active or participatory role in the diverse, broader community? If it is the latter, as I claimed it ought to be in the introduction, then the city in its diversity and density is the optimal place to foster this active, political citizenship, but only if that diversity and density is experienced and absorbed.

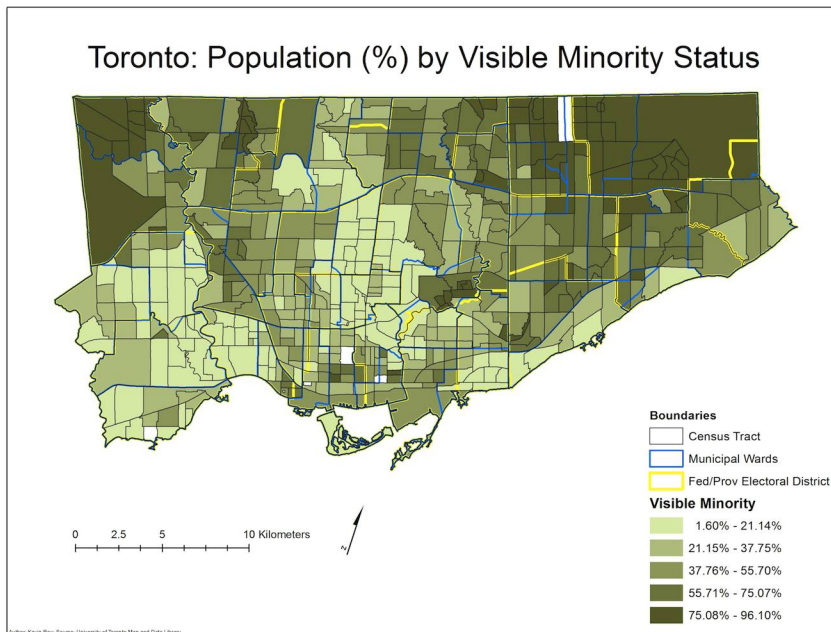
### **The City of Toronto: Enclaves and Elections**

The maps below, generated with GIS (Geographic Information System) software (ESRI ArcMap 10)<sup>iv</sup>, illustrate what appears to be a negative correlation between a) immigrant status, visible minority status and a non-English or French mother tongue [Figures I-III] and b) consistently lower voter turnout (of eligible citizens) in the last three elections (Ontario Provincial: 2011, Federal: 2011, Toronto Municipal: 2010) [Figures IV-VI]<sup>v</sup>. There are many variables that could contribute to this correlation [Figures VII-IX], but I am hypothesizing that the concentration of a single ethnic origin of 10,000+ members within a municipal ward is of particular significance to low levels of political participation [Figures X, XI].

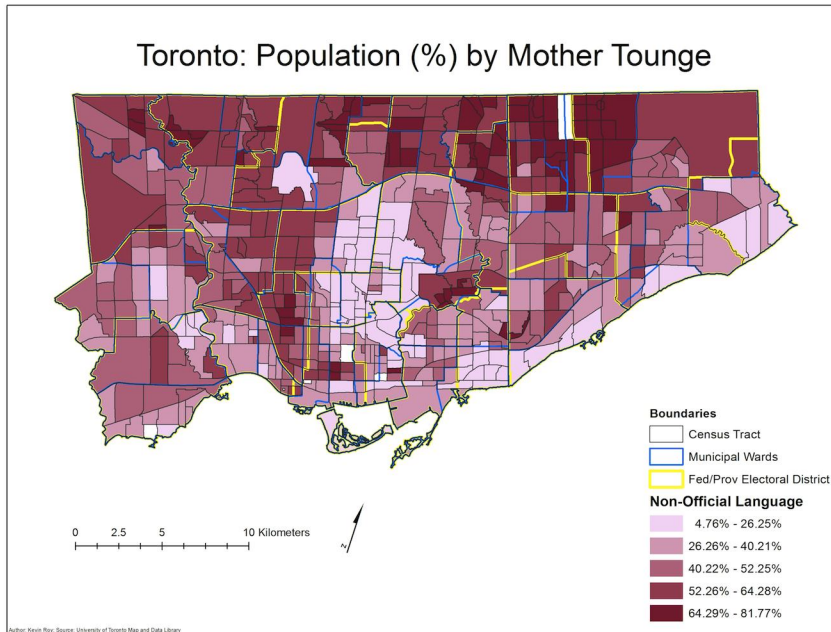
**Figure I**



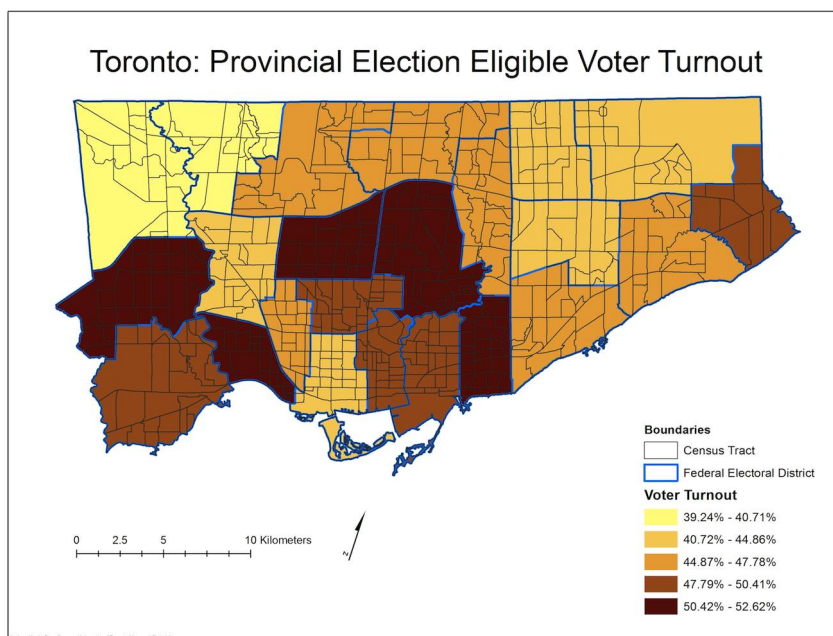
**Figure II**



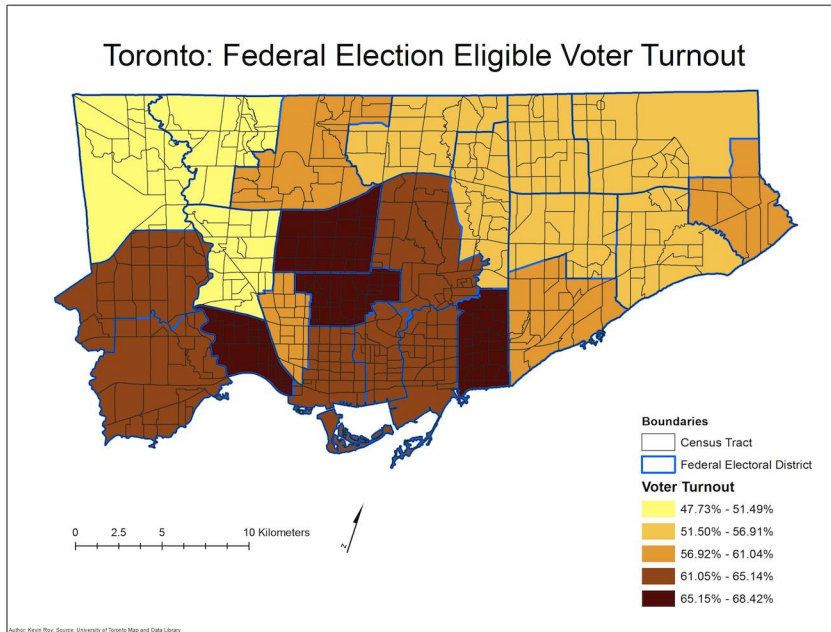
**Figure III**



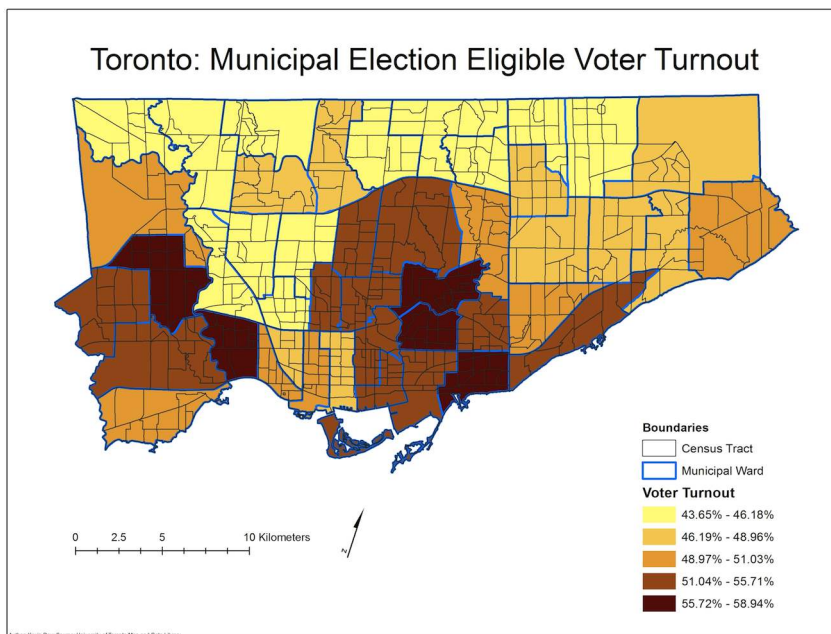
**Figure IV<sup>vi</sup>: Ontario Provincial Election 2011**



**Figure V: Canadian Federal Election 2011**

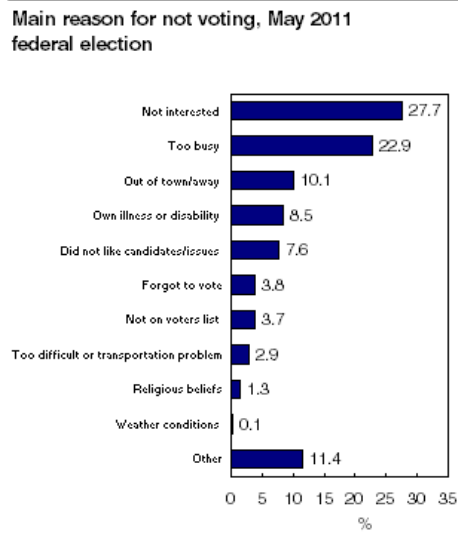


**Figure VI: Toronto Municipal Election 2010**



## Potential Variables Affecting Voting Patterns

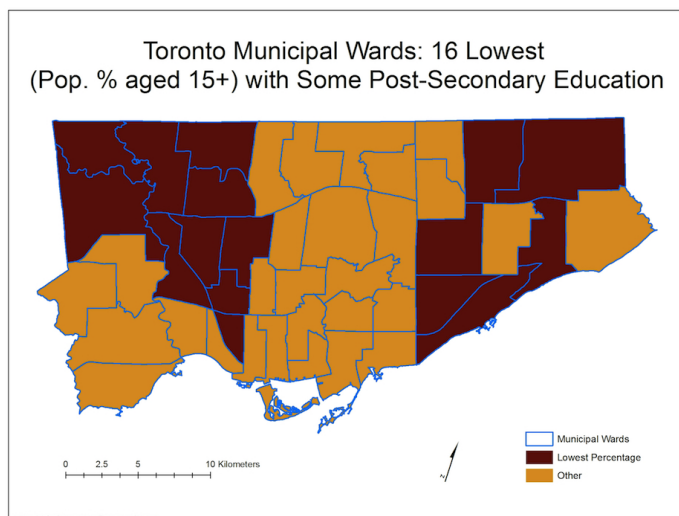
**Figure VII**



Potential variables that could affect voting patterns include generational immigrant status (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>+) - and related to this is the comprehension of English or French - educational levels, access to polling stations, age and single status. Sharanjit Uppal and Sébastien Larochelle-Côté's "Factors Associated with Voting", published for Statistics Canada's *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, looks at reasons for not voting specified by those who completed the May 2011 Labour Force Survey. Using questions answered about factors associated with not voting in the 2011 Federal Election, Uppal and Larochelle-Côté relate lower voter turnout to recent immigrants (51% as opposed to 66% for more established immigrants), lower education levels (60% with high school education or less, 78% with university degree), age (those under 45 were less

likely to vote), and single status (singles, especially those with children, were less likely to vote). The July 5<sup>th</sup> Daily report (following the May 2011 LFS) concerning reasons for not voting, (Figure VII), makes it evident that there is a negligible relationship between not voting and distance from or accessibility of polling stations.

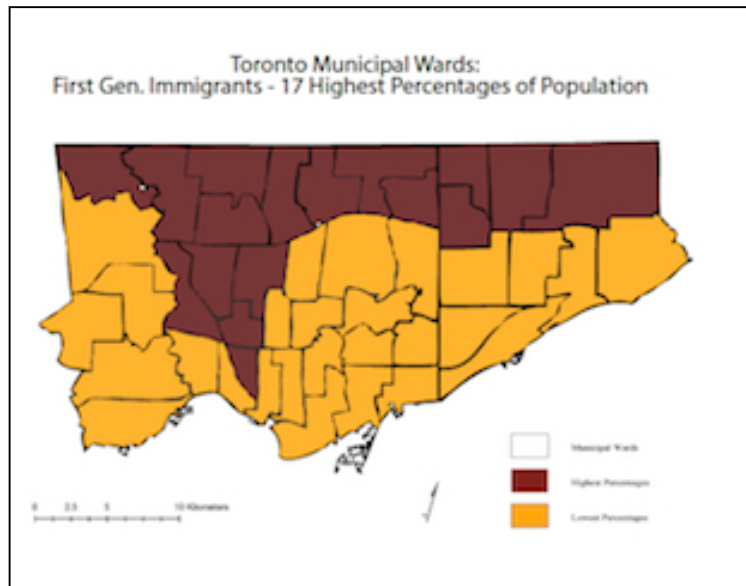
**Figure VIII**



Though educational levels seem to be a determining factor, Figure VIII shows the 16 wards with the lowest percentage of the population with some post secondary education. There is a large portion of the wards with the lowest voter turnout that do not correspond to the wards with the lowest post-secondary educational levels, and so this led me to look for another more consistent relationship.

The first- generational status of immigrants is highly related to lower voter turnout in the City of Toronto (Figure IX). What I am choosing to focus on in this study is a particular feature of a majority of the wards with the highest percentages of first generation immigrants: the high concentrations of a single ethnic origin (Figure X).

**Figure IX: First Generation Immigrants**

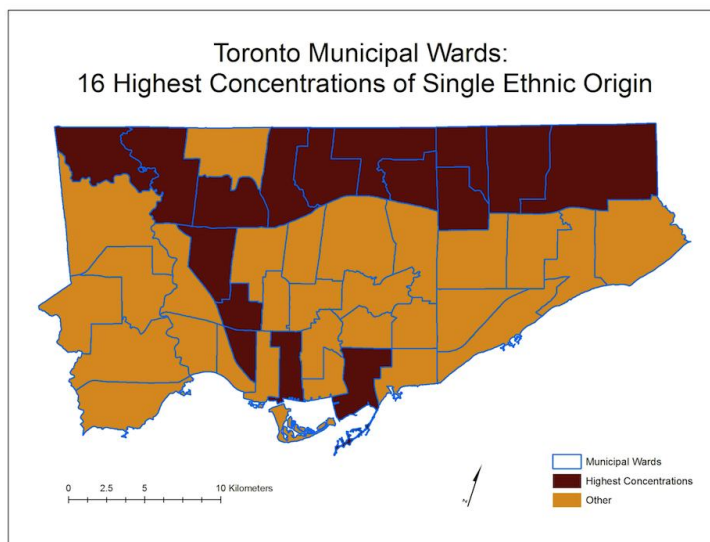


The variable related to low voter turnout that would most affect the voting patterns of first generation immigrants is the insufficient comprehension of either English or French. Without political information or exposure, it is clear that new citizens would not be informed enough to actively participate. Paul Howe (2007) has claimed that even if first generation immigrants are at first less likely to participate politically, they are nevertheless “eager to learn more and become fully integrated into the Canadian polity” (623).

Linguistic fluency is a desideratum that should continue to be supported

so that accessibility of political debates and information is equally shared among Canadian citizens. Though Howe is optimistic about the eventual engagement of our recent arrivals, he does cite the retention and use of native languages as a potential barrier to political integration; specifically, he claims that the high availability of “high quality media sources in their native tongue” may cause newcomers to maintain a preference for the media (and politics) of their homeland (636).

**Figure X: Concentrations of Single Ethnic Origin (Toronto): 10,000+**



When addressing the presence and patterns of ethnic enclaves, however, Howe’s optimism about the eventual integration of recent immigrants into Canadian political engagement is problematized. Preference for the customs, language and culture of the homeland is a salient feature of ethnic enclaves; it is, in fact, the reason that newcomers to Canada cite for their choice to reside in particular areas of the City

**Figure XI: Wards and Concentrations**

Ward #	Ward Name	Population	Ethnic Origin (declared single)	Number
41	Scarborough-Rouge River	67,325	Chinese	37,780
39	Scarborough-Agincourt	54,545	Chinese	28,705
24	Willowdale	58,805	Chinese	20,750
23	Willowdale	79,435	Chinese	17,875
40	Scarborough-Agincourt	61,140	Chinese	17,440
33	Don Valley East	57,350	Chinese	16,030
1	Etobicoke North	59,830	East Indian	15,580
17	Davenport	50,830	Portuguese	14,255
42	Scarborough-Rouge River	74,075	East Indian	12,745
18	Davenport	45,620	Portuguese	12,225
9	York Centre	44,920	Italian	12,220
30	Toronto-Danforth	51,235	Chinese	11,610
29	Trinity-Spadina	59,545	Chinese	10,980
12	York South-Weston	53,755	Italian	10,830
10	York Centre	61,580	Jewish	10,680
7	York West	49,165	Italian	10,090



*Note: the anomalies of the pattern between the high concentration of a single ethnic origin and lower voter turnout (Wards 8 and 30) will be discussed in the conclusion of the paper: Areas for Further Investigation.*

of Toronto. According to Sandeep Kumar and Bonica Leung's case study (2005) of a predominantly Chinese street in Scarborough (around Wards 24 or 39 in Figure XI - the exact identity of the street is undisclosed for the sake of the anonymity of the residents), the residents chose to live in the area on a voluntary basis, consistently citing a number of factors as contributing to their choice of settlement: the need for bigger lots and larger floor space; desire to live close to ethnic services; the wish to savour familiar products; and the desire to live close to services in which they could communicate in their native language (Cantonese or Mandarin) over English. The residents said that they preferred to shop at businesses that offered familiar brands, cultural products and services, and so wished to be close to Pacific Mall, Market Village, and Dragon Centre (commercial centres in which most of the business is conducted in Cantonese or Mandarin). Similarly, Murdie writes that in an interview-based study of 12,000 immigrants who had arrived to Canada in the previous 6 months (the 2001-02 *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada*), it was reported that "87 percent of respondents settled in places where they had relatives and/or friends, [and] also that the most important reason for choosing a particular city [was] the presence of family, friends, and other people of the same ethnicity who can provide economic, social, and cultural support [Statistics Canada 2005]" (Murdie, 2008: 3-4).

Given the reasons cited in Kumar and Leung's study (2005) and Murdie's report (2008), and given Paul Howe's (2007) assertion that the immigrant's preference for the media and language of their homeland seems as though it may deter political engagement, it is necessary to

examine the concentrations of single ethnic origin in Toronto and their apparent relationship to lower voter turnout. This requires, of course, extensive quantitative and interview-based investigations; however, as a preliminary theoretical engagement with this relationship, I am hypothesizing that the “community narcissism” (the desire of residents to be near, and see themselves reflected in, those like themselves) of Toronto’s growing settlements is and may continue to be deleterious to broader political engagement.

### **Community Narcissism and the Public Realm**

My theoretical analysis of ethnic enclaves in the City of Toronto, and its relation to political participation, is inspired by urban theorist and sociologist Richard Sennett. What I believe is happening in Toronto’s ethnic enclaves is “community narcissism”. To unpack this concept I will first have to describe the main thrust of Sennett’s argument in *The Fall of Public Man* (1974). Sennett claims that the public domain proper, the *res publica*, “stands in general for those bonds of association and mutual commitments which exist between people who are not joined together by ties of family or intimate association; it is the bond of a crowd, of a ‘people,’ of a polity, rather than the bonds of family or friends” (Sennett, 1974: 4). The modern obsession with personal associations and with personal identity formation “leads us to believe community is an act of mutual self-disclosure and to undervalue the community relation of strangers, particularly those which occur in cities” (Sennett, 1974: 4).

Ethnic communities, among other types of communities which form according to common interest, or shared identity, are for Sennett destructive to the public realm at large: while “modern community seems to be about fraternity in a dead, hostile world; it is in fact all too often an experience of fratricide” (Sennett, 1974: 296). While Sennett’s words are both eloquent and perhaps harsh, they are nevertheless highly relevant to the debates about enclaves in Toronto. While fraternity amongst those who are similar is helpful for acclimatizing newcomers to Canada (making them feel at home, as if they belong), it is nevertheless the case that these fraternities have a potentially negative result: the disunion from those who are *not* like oneself - a fratricide of the public realm. Community, Sennett writes, “has become both emotional withdrawal from society and a territorial barricade within the city. The warfare between psyche and society has acquired a real geographical focus . . . This new geography is communal versus urban; the territory of warm feeling versus the territory of impersonal blankness” (Sennett, 1974: 301).

Why, then, is this narcissistic? Sennett claims that the connection with others through an identity, or a shared personality, makes one resistant to receiving any diversity outside of oneself in a broader public; that is, “it becomes a logical view of ‘reality’ to interpret social realities as meaningful when they mirror imagery of the self . . . Narcissism is now mobilized in social relations by a culture deprived of belief in the public and ruled by intimate feeling as a measure of the meaning of reality. When issues like class, ethnicity and the exercise of power fail to conform to this measure, when they fail to be a mirror, they cease to arouse passion or concern” (Sennett, 1974: 326).

It is not, however, Sennett’s claim that the solution is to create a pluralism of mirrors so that each community’s interests may be accounted for. Rather, Sennett implores us to reinstate what he calls urban civility, or a civilized existence, “in which people are comfortable with a diversity of experience, and indeed find nourishment in it . . . The city ought to be . . . the forum in which it becomes meaningful to join with other persons without the compulsion to know them as persons” (Sennett, 1974: 340). Civility is “treating others as though they were strangers and

forging a social bond upon that social distance. The city is that human settlement in which strangers are most likely to meet. The public geography of a city is civility institutionalized” (Sennett, 1974; 264).

Though Sennett’s argument is a diagnosis of the psychological condition of all modern men, it is particularly relevant to our debates over multiculturalism, ethnic enclaves, citizenship and identity. Though the city should be the most viable place for diversity and difference to be experienced, especially given that Canada’s metropolitan areas are home to 90 percent of our immigrant population, it is the case that community narcissism is being reified in the form of enclaved communities with particular cultural concerns and preferences. Though these preferences provide security, belonging, and high qualities of life to Canada’s newcomers, it may be the case that they also serve, as Sennett claims, as territorial barriers to a broader public and political engagement.

It is necessary to pursue further empirical studies to determine the degree to which these communities function as barriers to broader engagement. Firstly, and perhaps even more essentially, we must ask the question of ourselves as Canadians, academics, politicians and citizens: is it no longer the case that the public realm is a matter of concern? If, as Reitz points out, it is not in the purview of our multicultural policy to demand anything over and above the satisfaction of the lives of our citizens, perhaps it is not part of our agenda as a nation to encourage an active and robust public, political realm. This, however, is clearly not the case. There is a great concern in Canada at the moment over the consistently declining voter turnout rates. There is as much concern over the misrepresentation of minority groups in parliament, of insufficiently distributed electoral district boundaries, of the apathy of the young to political concerns, of immigration policies, health policies, matters of international relations, free trade agreements, taxes, educational reforms, and, most recently, tuition hikes. These are all issues that are publicly and politically negotiated, and they affect Canadian citizens and residents as a polity composed of diverse persons and interests, not as an agglomeration of similar identities. The degree to which our political institutions and organizations reflects or represents the people residing in the country depends firstly and foremostly on the desire of the people to be part of the public realm. It is this desire that is at stake in Sennett’s analysis; and it is this same desire that is potentially being softened in our current urban environments and communities.

### **True Multiculturalism?**

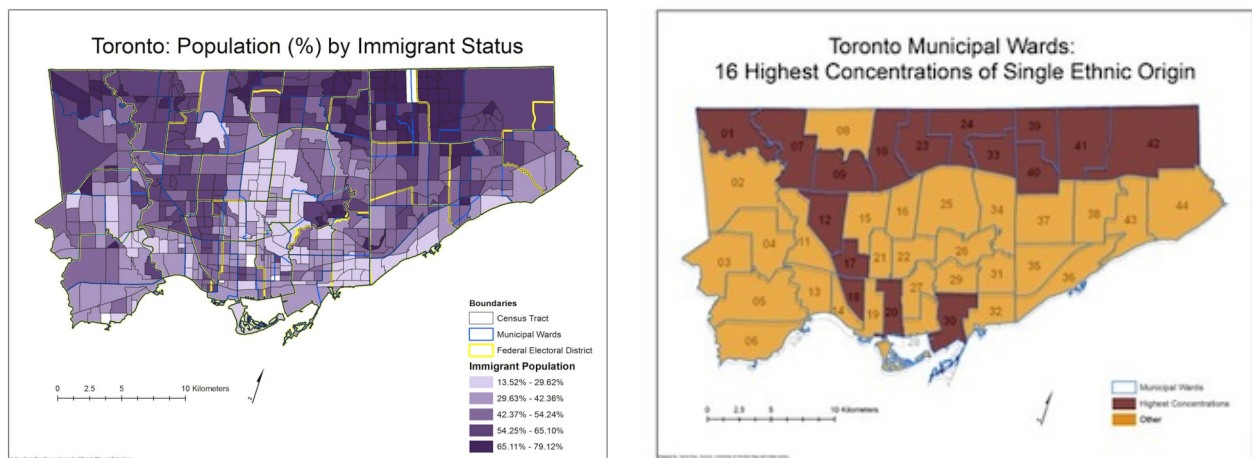
Mohammed Qadeer claims that *true* multicultural communities are “households of diverse ethnic backgrounds living side by side” (Qadeer, 2003: 5). Similarly, Dietland Stolle, Stuart Soroka and Richard Johnston have recently argued that “diversity measured at the level of country, state, city or even census tract might not accurately reflect the *actual* experiences (or perceptions) of heterogeneity in people’s daily lives,” and that it is local-level diversity “without contact that is most problematic” (Stolle et al., 2008: 60; 61). True multiculturalism on these readings is, then, localized contact with ethnic and cultural diversity. The multicultural exposure to difference in transit, at work, and in local, daily interactions is fundamental to the *civility* of which Sennett was speaking. The break from one’s personal affiliations is precisely the effect that should occur in urban populations; one does not need to know the many people of different ethnicities or minorities or backgrounds with which one shares the public domain; one does not even need to have anything in common with them. The civility of encountering them as strangers in fact increases one’s capacity to engage with the public sphere as something of which one is a part, and which is made of strangers and difference; politics is, to loosely borrow Jane

Jacobs's phrase, thus an organized negotiation of the complexity of human experience. The narcissistic life is a simple life in which the world matches your identity; public, or political, life is precisely an engagement with things that do not conform to a uniform perspective.

Patricia Wood and Liette Gilbert (2005) argue that the public realm ““facilitates urbanity, and our experience of the city is mostly of it’ (Sandalack and Nicolai, 2002: 27). This is where ‘different’ communities may express and assert themselves, and be seen and heard” (647). Diversity “is evident in the language and dress of people, the shop signs and window displays, street decorations hanging from lampposts . . . Their storefront engagements with passers-by, their outdoor cafes and terraces, their benches and steps where individuals people-watch or friends stop by to chat, their bus shelters and streetcar stops, their corner playgrounds where families relax in the summer evenings, all render the diversity of these neighbourhoods constantly viable in the most ordinary, mundane way” (687). Though on the whole it is the case that Toronto is heavily multicultural, it is also the case that many areas of the city are primarily uni-cultural, and thus lacking in consistent exposure to these urban sites of diversity. Essential to this experience of publicity and multiculturalism is a walkable geography, mixed-use streets, and easily traversable and varied ethnic boundaries. The new settlement patterns of immigrants into “ethnoburbs” in Toronto increases the potentially problematic narcissism of community: whereas settlement once occurred in the downtown core of Toronto (an easily walkable space, and one filled with public transit alternatives), it is now concentrated in areas of the city which are reliant on automobile transit and lack the convenience of consistently available public transit choices. Though enclaves have been present in Toronto for much more than half a century, they have never before been concentrated in areas which are not amenable to the exchanges and interactions of difference on a regularly casual basis.

## Areas for Further Investigation

### a) Density versus Dispersal



I mentioned in the caption to Figure XI above that I would return to a discussion of the anomalies to the correlative pattern of high concentrations of a single ethnic origin and lower voter turnout. In Ward 30 (Toronto-Danforth), there is a high concentration of a single ethnic origin across the Ward, and it also had fairly high electoral participation. There is not (as you can see in the map of Immigrant Status), however, any particular census tract in the Ward that is itself heavily concentrated. Ward 30's immigrant distribution appears to reinforce the hypothesis that it is only densely concentrated (or

enclaved) communities that are related to lower voter participation, and that a more dispersed settlement pattern allows for greater integration into the public sphere. A detailed analysis of census tract densities and demographics is needed to substantiate this hypothesis across all wards.

## b) Age as a variable

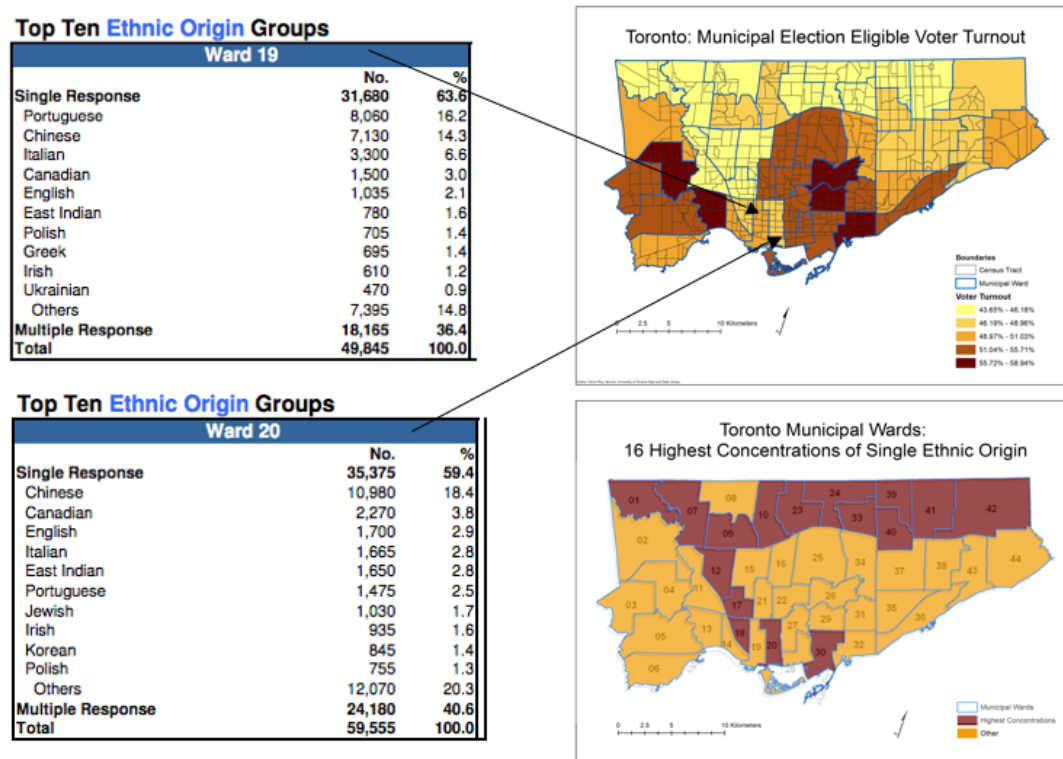
Ward 8, on the other hand, did have low voter turnout, and does have a few census tracts with heavily concentrated immigrant settlement; however, it is not one of the wards with a heavy concentration of a single ethnic origin. This anomaly certainly needs to be investigated further. It is important that Ward 8 is the site of York University, which suggests that the lower voter turnout may in fact be caused by the highly concentrated presence of young adults, who consistently have an even lower voter turnout rate than first generation immigrants.

Related to the further investigation of Ward 8 is a detailed examination of the age demographics of each ward. Sharanjit Uppal and Sébastien Larochelle-Côté write in “Factors Associated with Voting” that even though established immigrants tend to vote more than new immigrants, “their high propensity to vote is mainly related to their age” (2012: 8).

## c) Interviews and neighbourhood studies

Most essentially, more work must be done with the residents of the wards themselves: discussing their motivations for settlement, their daily activities, and their reasons for voting or for deciding not to vote. This is an extensive project, and I would begin in comparing two wards that are side by side: one in which there is a high concentration of a single ethnic origin and a low voter turnout; and the other in which there was a comparatively moderate to high voter turnout and no presence of a high concentration of single ethnic origin. For example, comparing Ward 19 with Ward 20 (Figure XII) could begin to substantiate the hypothesis that those who are in a close ethnic community are less engaged in the broader public sphere than those who reside in a ward in which diversity is more varied (“true” multicultural communities).

Figure XII



## Concluding Thoughts

This inquiry has, I hope, served a dual purpose: firstly, to establish an hypothesis upon which to conduct further empirical research; and secondly, to initiate a theoretical discussion about the value and function of the public political realm, the engagement of its members, and its relationship to how we are to view multiculturalism as a Canadian success. Will Kymlicka has recently emphasized that compared to other countries Canada's immigrants are more likely to participate in the political process; that compared to other countries immigrants are more likely to become citizens; that compared to other Western democracies Canadians are more likely to say that immigration is beneficial, and that immigrants in Canada have a very high level of pride in Canada's freedom and democracy and its multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2010). It is, Kymlicka claims, therefore premature to dismiss multiculturalism solely based on its failures and problems in other countries; we must instead focus on what Kazemipur has called the "Canadian exceptionalism" of multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2010: 263). A closer look at Toronto's multicultural demographic reveals that it may in fact be premature to assess the success of Canada's multiculturalism without first examining the presuppositions of a successful multicultural population. Though compared to other countries Canada's immigrants are more likely to vote, this does not mean that we de facto possess a robust public or political sphere. And although our immigrants are proud of our freedom and multiculturalism, it does not mean that that pride extends beyond personal belonging and quality of life into the active political life of the citizen. If political participation is something that we value, and declining voter turnout is a concern for Canadians, the relationship of community narcissism to the city's quickly growing multicultural populations must be explored and discussed. The belonging of an individual to a community is essential to her well-being and satisfaction; but the belonging of the citizen to the political and public community is integral to the success of our diverse population and the Canadian polity as a whole.

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<sup>i</sup> Census Metropolitan Area: "a very large urban area (known as the urban core) together with adjacent urban and rural areas that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. An MA has an urban core population of at least 100,000, based on the previous census" (Statistics Canada, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/z01/cs0007-eng.htm>, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

<sup>ii</sup> For the duration of this study, all statistics are from Statistics Canada Census data, 2006.

<sup>iii</sup> Kumar and Qadeer supply a useful analysis and definition of enclaves: "Mere living side by side without any community bonds and shared sentiments does not make an ethnic neighbourhood. It is the emergence of formal and informal community institutions and symbols that converts a concentration into an ethnic neighbourhood and eventually an enclave. Formally, a residential enclave is an area where a particular ethnic group numerically dominates, and has spawned corresponding religious, cultural, commercial and linguistic services and institutions. An enclave is a culturally and economically distinct area (Marcuse 2005; Peach 2005; Qadeer 2005)" (Kumar and Qadeer, 2006: 2).

<sup>iv</sup> Statistics compiled by myself; maps authored (excepting figure IX) with ArcGIS by Kevin Roy (Toronto, February, 2012).

<sup>v</sup> Note: Toronto Municipal wards and Provincial/ Federal Electoral districts do not follow identical boundaries.

<sup>vi</sup> Note: for figures IV-VI, percentage distributions for maps are not identical. "Jenks's natural break setting" (ArcGIS) was used for the distribution of percentage in each map for the sake of demonstrating high/low patterns across the three maps.

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