Incumbency is a significant predictor of candidate success in municipal elections. Indeed, 97.3% of incumbent councillors who contested the 2014 Toronto election were re-elected. Nonetheless, other voting shortcuts may be relevant in low information settings such as ward races, and especially in situations where there is no incumbent. In this paper we test the effect of incumbency, gender and racial affinity in ward elections using data from the Toronto Election Study, a large-N survey of voters conducted around the time of the 2014 Toronto Municipal Election. Results reveal the absence of gender effects at the ward level, regardless of the presence of an incumbent, but that a racial affinity is a factor in wards without incumbents.

Samantha Jackson  
*McMaster University*

Michael McGregor  
*Bishop’s University*

Aaron Moore  
*The University of Winnipeg*

Karen Bird  
*McMaster University*

Laura Stephenson  
*The University of Western Ontario*

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Since the publication of The American Voter in 1960, researchers have devoted a great deal of time and energy to studying the effects of party identification. Indeed, no model of vote choice of Canadian federal or provincial elections is complete unless partisanship is considered (See Blais et al., 2002, Gidengil et al., 2012). One important effect of partisanship is that it acts as an informational shortcut, or heuristic, for voters. Even without knowing a great deal about the specifics of a particular election, party cues can allow voters to make “informed yet efficient” issue appraisals and vote choices (Mondak 1993, p. 167). Party cues, however, are not always available to voters. Most municipal elections in Canada are, in fact, non-partisan in nature. Absent parties as an informational shortcut, what cues do voters use to assess candidates’ electoral suitability? Research suggests that voters understand incumbency to indicate candidate experience and competence, and thus use incumbency to guide their voting decision (Kushner et al., 1997; Krebs, 1998; Schaffner, Streb & Wright, 2001; Goodyear-Grant & Croskill, 2011; Trounstine, 2011).

So what do voters do when they lack either partisan or incumbency cues? Do they seek out other types of shortcuts? More specifically, do they fall back on gender and racial heuristics when making their vote choice? This paper examines these questions in the context of ward-level contests in the 2014 Toronto municipal election. These contests were non-partisan in nature, and there was variation on the presence of incumbents (7 of 44 wards had no incumbent contesting the election). As the importance of heuristics is known to be particularly significant in low-information contests such as ward elections (Schaffner & Streb, 2002) these races provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate if, and to what extent voters use gender and racial affinity as shortcuts, and whether these effects are moderated by the presence of an incumbent candidate.

This study considers a series of questions. First, were gender and visible minority status employed as shortcut by voters in ward-level contests in the 2014 Toronto Municipal Election? Did voters use these sociodemographic characteristics as cues when making their vote decisions? Second, are the effects of these variables moderated by the presence of an incumbent, or by the sociodemographic characteristics of an incumbent? Finally, does incumbency dampen reliance upon using gender and visible minority status as a cue, or do these cues become more powerful when an incumbent is a woman or visible minority, as opposed to a white man?

We consider these questions using data from the Toronto Election Study (TES), a large-N survey of Torontonians conducted around the time of the 2014 Toronto Municipal Election. To our knowledge, this is the first dataset in Canada to have individual-level data on council vote choices. Such individual-level data are necessary to allow for proper consideration of race and gender voting effects, allowing us to avoid problems of ecological inference that may be associated with aggregate-level data. While similar issues have been explored at the aggregate level, comparing a ward’s demographic composition to the characteristics of its winning councillor, this paper is the first to analyze voter sociodemographic preferences in the context of a Canadian municipal election using individual-level data.
**VOTER SHORTCUTS IN LOW-INFORMATION ELECTIONS**

Toronto has a very high rate of incumbency among city councillors. Over the past four elections (2003, 2006, 2010, 2014), 92.9% of incumbents that ran for re-election won. Incumbents were particularly successful in the 2014 Toronto Municipal Election, which saw 36 of 37 incumbent councillors victorious. This pattern of incumbent success holds regardless of the race or gender of the incumbent. Among Toronto’s 44 city councillors, all five visible minority councillors ran for re-election in 2014, and all 5 won. Among the 13 women councillors who ran for re-election in 2014, all 13 were re-elected.

Incumbency clearly matters in Toronto ward elections. Work by Kushner, Siegel & Stanwick (1997) helps to explain this, suggesting that incumbents in Ontario have a significant structural advantage over other candidates. Incumbents have greater access to campaign funds, and greater media exposure, for instance. These findings are consistent with a small but growing literature on the incumbency advantage among municipalities in the US (see for instance Hajnal, Lewis & Louch 2002; Krebs 1998; Schaffner, Streb & Wright 2001; and Trounstine 2011).

In addition to the structural advantages afforded to incumbents, there is growing consensus among researchers that the incumbency advantage at the municipal level is the product of voters’ using incumbency as a heuristic or cue in a low information setting (Krebs 1998; Schaffner, Streb & Wright, 2001; Trounstine 2011), particularly in elections where party cues are unavailable (Hajnal, Lewis & Louch, 2002). Cues, including partisanship, incumbency, and sociodemographic characteristics, are means of voters “economiz[ing] by making political judgments according to knowledge they already have about politics and the world”, and often include stereotypes (political and social) that help voters to make decisions about candidates in low-information settings (McDermott, 1998 p. 897; see also Rahn, 1993; Matson & Fine, 2006; Anderson et al., 2011). While voter cues are posited as most salient in low-information elections, the use of heuristics is seen amongst both sophisticated and lower-information voters (Cutler, 2002). Informed voters who draw upon policy criteria to make their decisions vis-à-vis party leaders in federal elections do not “transcend” the sociodemographic heuristic shortcut but rather, combined both forms of information to reach a voting decision (Cutler, 2002).

Like incumbency, sociodemographic information is a readily available cue for voters. The brief media attention afforded to ward candidates still often indicates candidates’ gender and ethnic background; photos signal information to voters, even without any written content. Similarly, with no preparation or research prior to voting, voters can still assess candidates’ gender and often their visible minority status by name at the voting booth (McDermott, 1998; Matson & Fine, 2006). Such demographic information is more readily available than political information, and voters may predictably ‘fall back’ on these more explicit cues in low-information settings. From there, voters “extrapolate stereotypical information from candidate demographics and then use this information to make a voting decision” (McDermott, 1998 p. 898).

Gender and racial cues act in two related ways. First, voters may use sociodemographic stereotyping to infer candidates’ policy positions (Gidengil et al., 2003; Burrell, 2008; Paul & Smith, 2008). Candidate characteristics are commonly associated with stereotypes on policy stances and political leanings, indicating that candidates’ gender and race impact voters’ behaviour through stereotyping by acting as
informational shortcuts in low-information races. For example, both women and visible
minorities are perceived as more left-leaning as well as more competent on issues of
social policy (Goodyear-Grant & Croskill, 2011; McDermott, 1998). These candidates
are more likely to be chosen by more liberal voters, as well as persons prioritizing
minority rights and the rights of the poor (McDemott, 1998). Similarly, voters may use
stereotypes to assess candidate suitability for different levels of office. Bias surrounding
women’s suitability for ‘top office’ positions such as mayor may lead voters to
disproportionately choose female candidates for ward leadership, which are seen as less
prestigious and less powerful (Crowder-Meyer et al., 2015; Smith & Son, 2014).

Second, more linear self-interest motivations may also be at play. Candidates’
sociodemographic characteristics can signal to same group voters that candidates share
similar life experiences and thus, have a better understanding of gendered or minority
issues and increased likelihood to act on these issues (Kymlicka, 1993; Barreto, 2007;
Goodyear-Grant & Croskill, 2011). Shared identity voting amongst visible minority
voters might similarly be triggered by shared heritage, cultural values, language and
experiences of discrimination, as well as minority candidates’ propensity to target their
campaigning to minority voters, “reinforcing the bond” (Barreto, 2007 p. 426; see also
Leighly, 2001; Tate, 1991). Positive group stereotypes amongst co-ethnic voters may also
lead to in-group bias or favouritism, though less is known about this effect (Besco, 2015).
With these forms of voter cuing in mind, the salience of gender and racial affinity effects
at the individual level in Canadian municipal elections remain understudied, particularly
outside of an experimental context.

In Toronto, the lack of parties, large number of wards, and long list of competing
candidates may make it difficult for voters to acquire the information necessary to make
informed decisions in ward races. As a result, Toronto voters may too be relying on
incumbency as well as sociodemographics as heuristics when voting. If this is the case,
we would expect the presence of an incumbent in a ward election to suppress the effect of
gender and racial voting, as existing studies suggest that incumbency is the best predictor
of vote decisions (Hajnal, Lewis, and Louch, 2002; Krebs, 1998, Schaffner, Streb, and
Wright 2001, and Trounstine, 2011). Turning to wards with no incumbent running, the
gender and racial status of a candidate should matter more to voters overall, than in wards
where there is an incumbent in the race. In such wards, gender and racial affinity effects
might be particularly acute.

**Gender, Race, and Affinity**

The longstanding belief among political scientists that municipal elections are
more welcoming to minority candidates (Vickers, 1978; Blais & Gidengil, 1991; Gavan-
Koop & Smith, 2008) underscores the importance of understanding how voters use
sociodemographic cues in this context. Identifying affinity affects, or a lack thereof, is an
important evidence-based contribution to the literature examining barriers to women and
visible minorities’ equitable representation; if visible minority and female voters are
voting for minority and female candidates in higher proportions, why are white men so
disproportionately overrepresented on Toronto city council?

Analyses of Canadian voter affinities in municipal elections are limited primarily
to aggregate-level studies (Gavan-Koop & Smith, 2008; Goodyear-Grant, 2010;
Goodyear-Grant & Croskill, 2011; Black & Erickson, 2000; Siemiatycki, 2011, 2014), which suffer from ecological concerns. At the individual level, several scholars have utilized experimental survey designs (Tolley & Goodyear-Grant, 2014; Bird, 2015; Besco, 2015), though such studies are of uncertain external validity. Across all studied contexts and methods, however, once controlling for incumbency and partisanship, there exists little by way of evidence to suggest strongly that women vote for women in greater numbers than do male voters.

Goodyear-Grant & Croskill (2011) find the only factor that may encourage shared group voting is the presence of progressive attitudes towards women’s political representation, though the strength of even this conditioning effect was limited. Even amongst ‘flexible’ voters (those unencumbered by partisan affiliation), shared gender was not found to influence voting. To the contrary, male voters were found to vote for women in greater numbers than female voters (see also Goodyear-Grant, 2010), “conflicting with the assumption that women voters are a natural constituency for women candidates” (p. 225; see also Dolan, 2004).

With regards to shared racial identity voting, research is similarly limited, though the findings are somewhat stronger (see Tolley & Goodyear-Grant, 2015; Besco, 2015; Bird, 2015; Landa, 1995). However like gender, racial affinity effects have been only tested using aggregate-level or experimental methodologies. In an individual-level experimental study examining both gender and racial affinity effects, Tolley and Goodyear-Grant (2015) find relatively stronger support for racial affinities than for gender. Racial affinity’s strength relative to that of gender affinity is notable. While an in-depth unpacking of mechanisms mediating these effects is not within the scope of this paper, the role of ‘group consciousness’ must be noted. Shared experiences, from culture to discrimination (Barreto, 2007), that delineate in versus out-group members may reinforce consciousness of group identity and foster mobilization to counter inequality. This consciousness may also supersede the effects of other, less salient identities such as gender (Tolley & Goodyear-Grant, 2014; Philpot & Walton, 2007). Women’s hesitancy to identify ‘as a women’ or align oneself with feminist motives or leaders (Modleski, 2014) may not condition women to vote exclusively for men, but may account in part for looser group ties and the absence of gender affinity and purposive same-gender voting.

To this end, we consider two research questions. First, were gender and visible minority status significant factors in individual-level voting in the 2014 Toronto Municipal Election? Second, were the effects of these sociodemographic heuristics moderated by the presence of an incumbent, or by the sociodemographic characteristics of the incumbent? In addition to testing the relative effects of incumbency, gender, and race, we assess whether incumbency became more powerful when it overlapped with sociodemographic cues.

We have no expectations regarding the existence of either gender or racial affinity at the ward level in Toronto, nor do we have reason to believe that the gender or race of an incumbent will or will not influence the effect of gender or racial affinity. However, given how powerful an influence incumbency has on voter preference in a nonpartisan, low-information setting, we would expect the presence of an incumbent running in a ward to moderate any gender or racial affinity effect, if there is one.
DATA AND METHODOLOGY

We rely here on several sources of data. Information on incumbency and candidate voting share was compiled using the Toronto City Clerk’s official election results for the Toronto 2014 municipal election (Toronto City Clerk, 2014). Two research assistants were trained to code all registered candidates for visible minority status and gender. Codes were checked twice to ensure inter-coder reliability, and all ties were broken by a third researcher. Candidates’ gender and visible minority status were established using publicly available photographs, names, and biographical descriptions from candidates’ websites, news articles, and news media’s candidate profiles. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has lauded this method for its transparency (OHRC, 2010).

Our individual level data on voters comes from the Toronto Election Study, a two-wave internet survey of Torontonians that was conducted around the time of the Oct. 27 election. The TES includes a variety of questions about attitudes and behaviour, similar to those contained in many national or provincial election studies. We believe this is the first dataset in Canada to have individual level data on ward-level vote choices, and thus the first dataset that allows for a thorough consideration of voting behaviour at the ward level. Of relevance to our study, the TES includes data on the gender and visible minority status of voters, as well as information on which ward respondents live in and how respondents voted in ward elections.

We therefore have information on the gender and “race” (i.e., visible minority status) of respondents and the candidates whom they voted for, and have created gender and race dummy variables for respondents themselves (our key independent variables), as well as for the candidates they voted for (our dependent variables). Also available is information on the gender and race of each ward incumbent. These measures can be combined to test for the presence of gender and racial effects, and to consider whether these effects are moderated by the presence and type of incumbent.

Our analysis proceeds in two stages. First, we describe the overall performance of female and visible minority ward candidates in the 2014 Toronto election by comparing the share of candidates who fall into each category to their vote share and council seat share. The second segment of our analysis addresses our research question: did gender

1 The ‘visible minority’ label applied here, for both candidates and voters, is a construction of the Canadian state, first introduced in the context of the federal Employment Equity Act of 1986 and subsequently adopted as a departmental standard by Statistics Canada for the purposes of consolidating relevant data on socio-demographic diversity. Officially, the term refers to non-white, non-Aboriginal persons and consists mainly of individuals of Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese and Korean identity. Note that we drop the very small number of Aboriginal respondents from our analysis, as this group differs qualitatively from visible minority and white voters.

2 As a quality control measure, the TES included a question to ensure that respondents were answering questions seriously (respondents were reimbursed for their participation in the TES). The 3.1% of respondents who ‘failed’ this question are excluded from our analysis.

3 While we operationalize race here as dichotomous, as is consistent with the existing literature, we recognize that great variation may exist within the two racial categories. The racial minority group is made up of individuals from a vast array of cultures, and affinity towards other racial minorities might conceivably differ according to sub-categories. Similarly, the ‘white’ group consists of many different backgrounds, and groups of individuals within these groups might have different affinities towards themselves or others (i.e. Northern versus Southern European, Italian versus British, etc.).
and racial affinity effects exist, and were these effects moderated by the presence of an incumbent candidate? This analysis consists of two sets of logistic regression models - one for gender and another for race. For each of these factors we run models with gender (visible minority) status only, another with incumbency variables added, and still another where we interact the sociodemographic variable with the incumbency variables. To test for differences in effects across different types of incumbents, we include incumbent variable for both female (visible minority) and male (non-visible minority). Note that, for all models, we include a control for the share of candidates in each ward who were female (visible minorities), under the assumption that, ceteris paribus, the more women/visible minority candidates contesting a race, the more votes these types of candidates will receive. Note also that we have omitted wards where there was no candidate variation with respect to gender or visible minority status (i.e. if all candidates were white men, voters do not have the option to vote for a women or visible minority).  

We also recognize the role that candidate spending plays in shaping municipal election outcomes, but due to a lack of available data, exclude this variable from our analysis. If reliable data were available, we could include a control similar to the ones we include for share of female/minority candidates; the variable would have values for each ward for the overall share of spending by men/women or by visible minority/non-minorities. To create such a variable, spending info from all candidates is required. According to the City of Toronto, however, dozens of candidates failed to file their spending disclosure statements for the 2014 campaign, and have not received filing extensions (thus excluding themselves from running in future elections). As many of these candidates may never file statements, an appropriate spending control cannot be included here. 

Nevertheless, we argue that the omission of this variable is acceptable. The data on those candidates who did submit spending disclosure statements suggest that there are spending differences on the basis of both gender and visible minority status. But while these differences might affect a candidate’s rate of electoral success or overall vote share, we are not convinced that gender and racial affinity effects would be influenced by these spending differences, or that these two types of effects might be influenced differently. That is, there is no theoretical reason to suspect that women and visible minorities would react differently to candidate spending than men or white voters. Additionally, one of the goals of this study is to determine if incumbency dampens affinity effects. Again, we can think of no reason why differences in candidate spending might influence affinity effects differently in wards with and without incumbents. Accordingly, we suggest that the omission of a spending control is acceptable.

The following wards had no variation in terms of visible minorities: 6, 11, 19, 21, 30, 40, 41, while wards 7, 10, 12, 37, 40, 43 had no variation in gender. Wards 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 20 and 39 had no incumbent. To ensure that our gender and race results are comparable to one another, we limit our analysis to those wards that can be included in both analyses. Note that our substantive findings remain unchanged if we remove this limitation.

Data from the 284 ward candidates who submitted financial statements suggest that the average female candidate spent more than the average male ($21,427.58 vs. $15,188.18) and that visible minorities were outspent by white candidates ($13,580.96 to $17,804.50).

One other control was considered, but excluded from our analysis. Voter sophistication has been shown to shape the strength and direction of voter affinities (Anderson et al. 2011; Bird 2009). However, aside from gender and ethnicity, our theoretical interest here is the effect of ward-level factors (including the
RESULTS

The Success of Women and Visible Minority Candidates in Toronto

Prior to testing for the presence of gender and racial affinity affects, it is worth describing the performance of women and visible minority council candidates in the 2014 Toronto Municipal election. As noted above, both groups are significantly underrepresented in municipal governments across Canada, and the case of Toronto 2014 is no different. Table 1 shows the share of candidates who contested the election who were female or visible minorities, the share of council seats won by each group, and the share of votes received by each group.

Table 1: The Performance of Female and Visible Minority Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Visible Minorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate share</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote Share</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council share</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 reveals very different patterns for female and visible minority candidates. Though far fewer women ran than men, those female candidates who did contest the election seemingly did quite well; the female council and vote shares are both about 50% higher than the candidate share. The opposite is true for visible minorities; they had a higher candidate share than women but received council and vote shares much lower than this share might suggest. In particular, the share of visible minority councillors is less than half the candidate share. Comparing the two groups, therefore, women significantly outperformed visible minorities. Though few members of either group run, women seem to have a better chance of winning than do visible minorities.

Other research corroborates the patterns in Table 1. For example, in her study of 2010 municipal election outcomes in Ontario’s largest 23 cities, Bird (2015) found that women’s share of council seats outstripped their share of candidacies, while the opposite was true for visible minorities. In contests across those cities, women comprised 20 percent of candidates, but made up 28 percent of those elected to council. By comparison, visible minorities comprised 18 percent of candidates, but only 7.6 percent of those elected. The gap remained after controlling for incumbency.

One factor that could account for the observed difference in the performances of female and visible minority candidates would be if racial affinity voting was stronger than gender affinity voting. Turnout rates, in combination with potential gender or racial affinity affects could also influence this pattern. Visible minority candidates are known to vote at much lower rates than do white electors (Tossutti 2006), but the differences between women and men, if any, tend to be much smaller (see Clarke et al. 2008; Elections Canada 2011). Indeed, TES data are congruent with the literature. Of survey respondents, 56.1% that identified as visible minorities in our sample reported voting in

presence and type of an incumbent) upon affinity effect. We thus exclude individual-level factors such as sophistication.
the council election, while this value was 70.6% for white respondents.\footnote{These rates are all higher than the official turnout rate of 54.7%. Surveys of this type often overestimate turnout. Reasons for this include selection bias on the part of survey respondents, or respondents feeling societal pressure to report voting when they did not.} The gap in turnout based on gender is much smaller (62.5% for women vs. 67.1% for men). As such, even if gender and racial affinity effects were of equal magnitude, given the different rates of turnout outlined above, gender affinity voting should have much less effect upon election outcomes (if any) than any potential racial affinity voting. We turn now to consider the question of whether gender or racial affinity effects do indeed contribute to the trends observed in Table 1.

\textit{Gender and Racial Affinity Effects}

We begin our analysis of affinity affects and incumbency by presenting Figures 1 and 2, which show the effect of gender and visible minority status upon vote choice, depending upon the presence and type of incumbent. The bars in Figure 1 represent the shares of men and women, respectively, who vote for female candidates. Wards have been broken down into three types: those without an incumbent, those with a male incumbent, and those with a female incumbent.\footnote{Excluded from Figures 1 and 2 are voters in the same wards which are omitted in Tables 2 and 3, due to a lack of variation in terms of either gender or visible minority status of candidates. The wards included here with no incumbent are 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 20, and 39. Wards with visible minority incumbents are 17, 27, 34 and 42, while those with female incumbents are 9, 13, 18, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 35.} By comparing the vote shares received by candidates of different gender across these three types of wards, we can begin to evaluate the presence of a gender affinity effect.\footnote{Note that, in order to maximize the generalizability of our findings, all results discussed here are weighted for age, gender, and education.}

\textbf{Figure 1:  Gender, Incumbency and Vote Choice}

Put plainly, Figure 1 reveals no evidence of a gender affinity effect, regardless of the presence or type of incumbent. Female candidates perform very well in wards with a
female incumbent candidate, but men and women are equally likely to support female candidates in these settings. Even in wards without incumbents, there is no evidence of a gender affinity effect.

We now present Figure 2, which reveals the results of a similar analysis, but this time testing for racial affinity effects.

**Figure 2: Visible minority status, Incumbency and Vote Choice**

In contrast to the gender results, Figure 2 reveals that race has a relationship with whether voters support a minority candidate or not, but only in wards without an incumbent. Indeed, this is the only statistically significant difference in either Figure 1 or 2. Visible minority voters are nearly three times as likely to support a visible minority candidate than are white voters (30.9% vs. 10.8%) when there is no incumbent councilor. Such a finding is compatible with our expectation that affinity effects will be stronger in the absence of an incumbent.

Note that the results in Figures 1 and 2 do not include controls – they are instead based upon simple descriptive data on voters from each type of ward. To properly test for the presence and strength of affinity effects, multivariate analysis is necessary. On this front, we once again begin with gender. Table 2 shows the results of three logistic regression models, with each subsequent model adding additional variables. A vote for a female candidate versus a male candidate is the outcome variable. If a gender affinity effect exists, the ‘female voter’ variable should be positive and statistically significant, and if this effect is moderated by the presence of an incumbent (either male or female, compared to wards with no incumbent), the interaction terms will be significant. As our analysis considers many different wards, all of which have unique contexts, results are clustered by ward.
Table 2: Vote for Female Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2A</th>
<th>Model 2B</th>
<th>Model 2C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female voter</td>
<td>-0.165 (0.190)</td>
<td>0.034 (0.208)</td>
<td>0.128 (0.384)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female incumbent</td>
<td>2.524 (0.400)**</td>
<td>2.588 (0.471)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male incumbent</td>
<td>-0.053 (0.501)</td>
<td>0.010 (0.517)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female X female incumbent</td>
<td>-0.120 (0.512)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female X male incumbent</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.114 (0.513)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Candidate share</td>
<td>6.323 (2.136)**</td>
<td>4.975 (1.565)**</td>
<td>4.975 (1.557)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.277 (0.718)**</td>
<td>-2.966 (0.480)**</td>
<td>-3.019 (0.474)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R-squared</td>
<td>0.1005</td>
<td>0.2980</td>
<td>0.2981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of clusters</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entries report coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses).
*: p < 0.05, **: p < 0.01

Consistent with the findings in Figure 1, multivariate analysis reveals no evidence of a gender affinity effect, regardless of whether an incumbent is present or not. In none of the three models in Table 2 is the female voter variable statistically significant. Not surprisingly, the female candidate share and female incumbent variables are significant – female candidates receive more support when they make up a larger share of the candidate slate and when the incumbent candidate is a woman. Additionally, there is no evidence that gender affinity voting depends upon the type of incumbent. Neither of the interaction terms in Model 2C is significant, suggesting that the effect of gender upon vote choice is no different in wards with incumbents (either male or female) than without.

We next conduct the same analysis as above, but for visible minority status. The setup of Table 3 mirrors that of Table 2, but here voting for a visible minority candidate (or not) is the dependent variable. Again, if a racial affinity effect exists, the ‘visible minority voter’ variable should be significant, and if this effect is moderated by the presence of an incumbent, the interaction terms should be significant.

---

10 Interestingly, the female incumbent variable is significant in Model 2B, but the male incumbent variable is not, suggesting that, after controlling for candidate share, female candidate vote share is boosted when the incumbent is a woman, but male vote share is not boosted when the incumbent is a man.

11 Indeed, the R-squared value increases by a mere 0.0001 from model 2B to 2C, when the interaction terms are added, suggesting that these terms add nothing to our ability to explain why voters select either a male or female candidate.
In contrast to the gender results, Table 3 provides solid evidence of racial affinity voting, but importantly, only when there is no incumbent present. The visible minority voter variable is insignificant in Models 3A and 3B, which do not take into account the possibility that the difference in the voting behaviour of minority and non-minority voters might depend upon the presence of an incumbent.\textsuperscript{12} The variable becomes statistically significant, however, in Model 3C, which includes the interactions between voter minority status and the incumbency variables. Due to the presence of the interactions in this model, the visible minority constituent term is to be interpreted as the effect of being a visible minority, as compared to a non-minority, in wards without an incumbent candidate. The statistically significant result for this term suggests that racial affinity effects are indeed present in such wards.

The interaction terms are also significant, or very nearly significant ($p = 0.052$ for the minority voter $\times$ minority incumbent term),\textsuperscript{13} and in the opposite direction to that of the visible minority constituent term. This suggests that the effect of race upon vote choice is less in wards with either a white or minority incumbent than in those with none; the magnitude of these terms are not statistically different from that of the visible minority term, which, in effect, suggests that the presence of an incumbent cancels out the effect of racial affinity voting. The fact that there are many more wards with incumbents than without helps to explain why the visible minority variable is insignificant in Models 3A and 3B. Failing to distinguish between wards with and without incumbents therefore masks the racial affinity voting which occurs in wards without incumbents.

As with Table 2, we see different magnitudes of effects for the minority incumbent and white incumbent variables in Model 3B. In this instance, results suggest that, after controlling for minority candidate share, minority vote share receives a bigger boost from the presence of an incumbent than white candidate share receives from the presence of a white incumbent. Future research should seek to uncover the causes of this asymmetries.

\textsuperscript{12} The visible minority $\times$ minority incumbent term is very close to meeting traditional significance levels, and likely only fails to do so due to the relatively small number of visible minority voters and incumbents.
The results in Tables 2 and 3 are therefore congruent with those from Figures 1 and 2. Though gender affinity voting appears to have been absent at the ward level in the 2014 Toronto municipal election, the finding that racial affinity voting occurs only in the absence of an incumbent is consistent with expectations. In the absence of an incumbency cue, many voters relied upon race as a shortcut. When the incumbency cue is present, however, voters had no need to fall back upon race when making their decision. There is no comparable gender affinity effect, however, as gender does not appear to have an effect on whether voters support a male or female candidate, regardless of the presence of an incumbent.

**Discussion**

There is no denying that women and visible minorities are vastly underrepresented at the municipal level of government in Canada, including on Toronto city council. Relatively few members of either group contest elections, and neither comes close to achieving a level of representation that their populations within the electorate might warrant. While women and visible minorities have this much in common, there are important differences between the nature and mechanisms behind their underrepresentation. Though few female candidates contest elections, those who do run are significantly more successful than are visible minorities. Female council representation and vote share outpace candidate share, while the opposite is true for visible minorities. Such a finding suggests that one way to achieve higher levels of female representation on council is to have more candidates run.

The story for visible minorities, however, is not so straightforward. There are relatively few visible minority incumbent candidates, and in the wards without an incumbent, a racial affinity effect appears to have worked to the disadvantage of minority candidates. Official election results reveal that, in those wards without incumbents, an average of 24.0% of candidates were visible minorities (the average across all wards was 28.9%). This figure points to a fascinating finding—that white voters in such wards were drawn to white candidates (or away from visible minority candidates) at higher levels than the candidate share should suggest, but also that visible minorities were drawn to visible minority candidates (or away from white candidates). In other words, a racial affinity effect appears evident for both groups, rather than just one. That said, the racial affinity effect is greater among white voters than among visible minorities (the distance from 24.0% candidate share to 10.8% vote share among white voters is greater than the difference between 24.0% to 30.9% among visible minorities). Though a more sophisticated analysis of the differences in the strength of racial affinity effects between these groups (and perhaps even within different racial minority groups) is outside of the purview of this paper, the results presented here suggest that racial affinity is present among both white and minority voters.

Toronto Election Study data thus suggest that one factor that helps to account for the relatively poor performance of this group is the presence of racial affinity voting in wards without incumbent candidates. While we find no evidence of gender affinity voting, regardless of the presence or gender of an incumbent, racial affinity voting is a significant factor in ward races that lack an incumbent councillor. In the absence of party and incumbency cues, voters appear to be seeking out alternative shortcuts when making their vote choices. In those wards without incumbents, 10.8% of white voters supported
visible minority candidates, while 30.9% of visible minority candidates did the same. As voter turnout rates are higher among whites than visible minorities, such a pattern works to systematically disadvantage minority candidates.

Accordingly, our findings suggest no easy path to improving minority representation at the municipal level of government. In the absence of an incumbency cue, both white and racialized voters seemingly fall back upon race as a shortcut when making their vote decisions. As visible minorities vote at lower levels than white voters, such a pattern adversely impacts minority candidates. The presence of an incumbent seems to wipe away the effects of race-based voting, but since so few incumbent councillors are visible minorities, and given the extremely high rates of incumbent re-election, the absence of racial affinity voting in such settings does nothing to improve minority representation.

Assuming that racial affinity effects are unlikely to disappear in the near future, the results of this study point to two possible methods of improving minority representation at the municipal level. First, turnout rates among visible minorities need to increase; the presence of racial affinity voting means that minorities must be properly represented at the ballot box in order to be properly represented in council. Such a suggestion is not as far-fetched as it may initially seem; voter mobilization efforts have been shown to improve turnout among visible minorities (McGregor & Anderson 2014). Second, an increase in minority turnout should also be accompanied by the implementation of term limits. Incumbency is an almost insurmountable advantage at the municipal level in Canada, and given the low level of current visible minority representation, it represents a significant barrier to entry for aspiring municipal politicians, including visible minorities. If these conditions are met, even if racial affinity voting effects persist, minority representation can be improved significantly, allowing the composition of governments to more accurately reflect the population that they represent.
Works Cited


