Racialized Media Coverage in Canadian Politics

"News is the first rough draft of history."

- Philip Graham, newspaper publisher

Does race influence the media's selection, interpretation, and shaping of stories? This chapter answers that question through a systematic comparison of the news coverage of white and visible minority candidates in Canadian politics. It is a comprehensive assessment of the form that candidates' coverage takes, including the amount, prominence, tone, visuals, and presence of quotations, as well as its focus, including attention to candidates' socio-demographics, perceived viability, and policy interests. I find that visible minority candidates' coverage is more negative, less prominent, more filtered, and more likely to include a photograph (a subtle way of cuing candidate race) than is the case for white candidates. Not only does the form of candidates' coverage vary by race, but so too does its focus, with visible minority candidates' coverage more likely to highlight their socio-demographic characteristics and less likely to portray them as interested in policy issues that "matter." While viability coverage does not, overall, vary by candidate race, visible minority candidates do need to first prove themselves as incumbents or potential electoral winners. These findings underscore not only the ways that race matters, but also the subtle ways in which the coverage of Canadian politics is racially differentiated. Although factors outside the media's purview doubtless influence these patterns, it is not possible to simply write them off as a product of candidate self-presentation, a point taken up in Chapter 4.

My conclusions are drawn from an analysis of 980 stories that appeared in eighteen of the country's largest English-language print dailies during the 2008 federal election. The sample includes the country's largest circulating
papers; Canada’s “paper of record,” the Globe and Mail; regional representation through several dailies; and stories written by some of the country’s top political reporters. Given the complexities of studying racialization and the potential for implicit meanings to be lost in translation, French- and foreign-language papers have been excluded from this study, a feature that some may find limiting. Sean Hier and Daniel Lett (2013) argue, for example, that by focusing on a narrow swath of media outlets or a single news medium, analysts risk overstating the extent to which news coverage is racially biased. Concerns about sampling and generalizability should not be brushed off, but there is good reason to believe that the racialized patterns that I uncover here would be found in other media. In an analysis of the English- and French-language reporting on Hérouxville’s Code of Life—a 2007 document aimed at immigrants that outlined the behaviour expected of citizens and stipulated, for example, that women should not be stoned—similar patterns of coverage emerged irrespective of the language of the news story (Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes 2014). Other analyses suggest that the portrayal of immigrants and minorities may be more hardened, and arguably problematic, in French-language media given anxieties over minority accommodation and the status of francophones in Quebec (Bouchard and Taylor 2008; Potvin 2012; Potvin 2014).

In the ethnic press, while there is a stronger emphasis on political integration and information than is the case in mainstream media, one study of news coverage during the 2008 federal election found that attention to minority issues and Korean Canadian candidates was higher in the Korean-language press than in the mainstream media (Yu and Ahadi 2010; see also Lindgren 2014). In other words, racialization occurs even in the ethnic media. Moreover, examinations of the portrayal of female politicians in social media suggest that if anything this medium lends itself to more sexist and gendered coverage than its mainstream alternatives; this would probably be the case were we to look at racialized coverage (Anderson 2011; Heldman, Oliver, and Conroy 2009). These studies suggest that norms of coverage—particularly as they relate to race and gender—are surprisingly consistent across media.

A study’s conclusions are bounded by the confines of its research design, which includes case selection, sampling strategy, and method, and the research presented here is no exception. However, the ubiquity of racialized media coverage, irrespective of outlet, medium, or language, is not simply
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This is why analysts outside Canada also find racialized coverage when they examine the media's coverage of minorities (Bleich, Bloemraad, and de Graauw 2015). While encouraging researchers to look at other forms and types of media, we can nonetheless assume with some certainty that the racialization identified in this analysis of English-language print news coverage is not unique to this context.

The print media were selected for study because newspapers are where local candidates are most likely to receive coverage. Television coverage tends to focus more on the national campaign and the leaders' tours, with much less attention given to local candidates, so a focus on broadcast news would probably result in a media sample without sufficient coverage of the local candidates who are at the centre of this study. Second, the less restrictive space constraints of the print media allow for a more extensive treatment of individual politicians. Print journalists thus have more latitude to frame their subjects, build narratives, and prime citizens with information about their elected representatives. Third, although readership is declining, newspapers remain an important source of information about politics (O'Neill 2009). Many digital platforms have print origins or serve as aggregators of coverage from a broad swath of sources including newspapers. In addition, newspapers continue to play an important investigative function. Print reporters have broken some of the biggest political news stories in recent history, including the misallocation of funds through the federal government's sponsorship program, evidence of drug use by then Toronto mayor Rob Ford, and fraudulent “robocalls” during the 2011 federal elections. In short, the print media remain a relevant and important source for political information. They also offer an efficient way to study news coverage because they provide more of it for any given story, candidate, or event.

To capture candidate-centred election coverage, I chose a sample of thirty-four visible minority and thirty-four white candidates who ran in ridings outside Quebec to become the focus of the media study. Establishing the race of candidates can be somewhat problematic, and there is no registry of visible minority candidates. The collection of race-based data also raises important normative questions, which Robert Entman and Andrew Rojecki note in their study of racialized news coverage. They point out that “since racial distinctions are heavily cultural if not arbitrary, we must acknowledge that even in writing about and especially coding media texts in terms
of race and attributes like skin color, we face the danger of perpetuating the very distinctions we want to overcome.” They go on to say, however, “We are writing about how people come to classify themselves and others into categories called ‘race,’ not about what race people ‘really’ are” (Entman and Rojecki 2000, 242n10). In identifying the processes of racialization and representation, this study follows their lead and understands race as a socially constructed but not reified category.

To establish the racial backgrounds of candidates, I relied on published biographies, media accounts, and photographs. Although there are some ambiguous cases, the results are in line with those obtained by Jerome Black (2008a, 2011) and Karen Bird (2008b) who have also studied the presence of visible minorities in Canadian politics. The candidate sample was stratified so it would include individuals who had won and lost in ridings with varying levels of diversity. Within these categories, the sampling was random, and there is variation with respect to candidate gender, incumbency, and electoral outcome. While there is variation along party lines, the sample includes only those who ran for the Conservative, Liberal, and New Democratic parties and who were thus most likely to receive media coverage. Unlike a simple random sample, which may have resulted in too few visible minority candidates to even permit an analysis, this stratified strategy ensured sufficient variation along the main categories of interest (see also Schwartz 2011). The characteristics of candidates included in the analysis are shown in Table 1.

Using the names of these candidates and the dates of the campaign period (September 7 to October 14, 2008) as the search parameters, full-text articles were retrieved from Canadian Newsstand and Eureka. All news stories were included, with the exception of letters to the editor or simple lists of riding candidates. This search returned a total of 980 stories. The largest number of stories (11.6 percent) appeared in the Toronto Star, which in part reflects the fact that many of the candidates included in the sample ran in Toronto ridings; 9.8 percent of the stories came from the Globe and Mail, 9.6 percent from the Vancouver Province, 8.9 percent from the Calgary Herald, 7.8 percent from the Ottawa Citizen, 7.3 percent from the Vancouver Sun, and 6.8 percent from the Edmonton Journal. Coverage patterns did not vary significantly among outlets, suggesting that racial mediation is more than an organizational or ideological phenomenon.

The stories were analyzed by three coders who were trained using a comprehensive coding scheme with forty-seven variables that probed various aspects of candidate coverage, article tone, framing, and candidate
TABLE 1

Candidate characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Visible minority</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minority population in riding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.1%-49.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 15%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbents</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-incumbents</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election outcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defeated</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

characteristics. Many of the variables asked coders to code for “mentions” of a particular phenomenon. A “mention” was defined as “a direct reference to or evidence of the item in question,” and coders were instructed to code only what was contained in the article itself. To improve reliability, coders were asked not to infer from the articles nor to code on the basis of
information that they might already possess (i.e., their own personal knowledge of the candidates). Coders received approximately twenty-five hours of training using articles from outside the study sample.\(^5\) During this pilot coding phase, intercoder reliability was checked, and coders worked independently once an acceptable level had been reached.\(^6\) After training was completed, my own involvement in the substantive aspects of the coding was limited, which helps to minimize the influence of researcher bias.

Each coder coded approximately 455 randomly assigned articles. In each coder's set were approximately 260 unique articles, in addition to 195 articles that were the same for all three coders; this set of common articles composed 20 percent of the total article sample and was used to check reliability.\(^7\) Once reliability was checked, the common articles were incorporated into the main data set; if the coders disagreed on these common articles, a majority rule was imposed to determine which code would be included in the main data set. The use of three coders in this fashion is an acceptable means for measuring reliability (Krippendorff 2004; Neuendorf 2002), while ensuring coders have a manageable number of units to code.\(^8\)

On the basis of this analysis, we can draw reliable and valid conclusions about the coverage of white and visible minority candidates during the 2008 Canadian election.\(^9\) Here, the analysis I provide is largely quantitative, although quotations from a number of media stories are used to illustrate candidates' coverage.\(^10\) A more discursive and qualitative approach is taken when examining the coverage of visible minority women in politics (Chapter 3). In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss both the form and focus of coverage with a particular interest in how candidates' socio-demographics, viability and policy interests are reported on. In essence, I am testing whether candidate race has any significant impact on the ways in which those candidates are portrayed in the media. I begin with the quantity of candidate coverage.

Quantity of Candidate Coverage

Although visible minorities were at one time almost completely absent from political news coverage – owing in part to their near invisibility in the political arena itself – that is changing. Indeed, there is only a small difference between the amount of coverage received by the white candidates in the story sample and that received by the visible minority candidates; specifically, white candidates are mentioned in 53.7 percent of stories, while visible minority candidates are mentioned in 46.3 percent. Stories average just over
674 words in length, and candidate race does not correlate in any way with average story length. With respect to the type of news coverage that candidates receive, the bulk of the stories in the sample (83.2 percent) are news articles, while 14.9 percent are columns and just 1.9 percent are editorials. White candidates are mentioned more frequently than visible minority candidates in all three categories, with the largest difference occurring in the editorial category, where 57.9 percent of editorials mention white candidates compared to 42.1 percent for visible minority candidates. Given that editorials are where newspapers typically offer their endorsements of particular candidates, this finding provides some clues about how candidate race may affect the type of coverage they receive, a hypothesis that is tested throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Prominence and Placement of Coverage
Even if candidates receive roughly equivalent amounts of coverage irrespective of their race, there may still be differences in the prominence of their coverage because most stories mention more than one candidate. A story could be mostly about a particular candidate with another candidate mentioned fleetingly. For this reason, coders noted whether or not the candidate was the main subject of the article. To qualify as being “mostly” about the candidate, the story had to devote more attention to that candidate than it did to other candidates or subjects; if it did, the coder would code “yes.” Examples of articles that led coders to code “no” were riding profiles that devoted relatively equal attention to all the candidates, stories about candidate debates that outlined in roughly equal proportions how each candidate performed, and stories that were largely about a candidate outside of the study sample but that quoted or mentioned one of the sampled candidates. There are no statistically significant differences on this measure. That is, whether the candidate is white or visible minority, upwards of 90 percent of stories do not focus mostly on him or her.

Nonetheless, it is still possible that stories that mention visible minority candidates are less prominently placed in the newspaper than stories that mention white candidates (Chaudhary 1980). To assess this, the placement of coverage was divided into two categories: coverage that appears on the front page of the paper (i.e., A1) versus coverage that appears on all other pages of the paper. The bulk of candidate coverage (90.5 percent) appears in the inside pages of the paper, and just 9.5 percent appears on the front page. However, the vast majority (66.7 percent) of front-page stories are
about white candidates, while just 33.3 percent are about visible minority candidates. As shown in Table 2, if you are a visible minority candidate, you can expect about 6.8 percent of your stories to end up on the front page, compared to 11.8 percent if you are a white candidate, a statistically significant difference. This suggests that while candidates receive roughly the same amount of coverage, the placement of white candidates’ coverage is more prominent than that of visible minority candidates. Of course, this prominence may not be the result of any “hidden agenda” on the part of the media, but simply a reflection of the fact that many key political players, including cabinet ministers, incumbents, and long-serving MPs, are not visible minorities. As one journalist noted in an interview with me, “We certainly are not equal opportunity coverers, as in we’re not paid to change the playing field to a level one, when it isn’t.”

Does that explanation hold water? Is the more prominent coverage accorded to white candidates a function of them occupying more prominent political positions? While the white candidates in the sample held slightly more high-profile positions at the time of the election, the differences are not dramatic. For example, three of the candidates were cabinet ministers, one of whom was a visible minority. Sixteen other candidates had previously sat in cabinet; half were visible minorities and half were white. Of the thirty-eight incumbents in the sample, twenty were white and eighteen were visible minorities, although before the election, the white incumbents had held office for an average of 10.6 years, compared to 6.8 years for visible minority incumbents. Nonetheless, differences in the prominence of candidates’ coverage appear somewhat more marked than differences in their “objective” prominence.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prominence of coverage, by candidate race</th>
<th>Front-page stories</th>
<th>Inside-page stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White candidate</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minority candidate</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All candidate</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: chi-square = 6.976; p < .01; df = 1; phi = 0.084.
When cabinet ministers are removed from the sample, white candidates’ coverage is still more likely to appear on the front page than visible minority candidates’ coverage, although the gap narrows slightly. Among non-ministers, 64.4 percent of front-page stories are about white candidates, compared to 35.6 percent for visible minorities. White non-ministers can expect 12.4 percent of their stories to land on the front page, while 6.9 percent of stories about visible minority non-ministers will get top billing. When incumbents are removed from the sample, the gap widens somewhat, with white non-incumbents garnering 76.3 percent of front-page stories, compared to 23.7 percent for visible minority non-incumbents. White non-incumbents will see their stories on page one 13.8 percent of the time, compared to 7.4 percent for visible minority non-incumbents. In other words, while white candidates’ more prominent coverage could, to some degree, be attributed to their comparative political prominence, something else is driving the difference.

As a result of this coverage gap, when Canadians skim the newspaper, the front pages are unlikely to show examples of visible minorities in politics. This has the potential to reinforce the notion that visible minorities are political outsiders, less viable, and less central to the political process. Moreover, if the coverage that appears on the front page is positive, white candidates benefit doubly because they not only appear in the most visible section of the paper, but are also shown in a positive light.

Tone of Coverage
Coders determined the tone of each candidate’s coverage by assessing whether the portrayal of any sampled candidate in a given story was mostly positive, mostly negative, or neutral. Neutral coverage was assumed to be the default; positive and negative tones were coded only if such coverage was readily apparent. As one might expect, the vast majority of candidate coverage (89.1 percent) is neutral. Nonetheless, as Table 3 shows, when coverage is negative, it is most likely to affect visible minority candidates. Meanwhile, when coverage is positive, it is most likely to be directed at white candidates. White candidates are 1.75 times more likely to be covered positively than are visible minority candidates. This racial differentiation is notable given that the bar for assessing non-neutral coverage was quite high. Consequently there is little nuance; visible minority candidates’ negative coverage is unambiguous.
TABLE 3

Tone of coverage, by candidate race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Mostly negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Mostly positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White candidate</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minority candidate</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All candidate</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: chi-square = 8.134; p < .05; df = 2; Cramer's V = 0.091.

Often, negative stories report on criticisms candidates have faced. For example, in its report on a Surrey riding, one article notes:

A campaign to get more ethnic signs has uncovered a surprising trend ... Liberal MP Sukh Dhaliwal and Conservative candidate Sandeep Pandher have been criticized in the Indo-Canadian community for not having bilingual signs featuring Punjabi script ... The only Newton-North Delta candidate of the three big parties to include the script known as Gurmukhi on her signs is the NDP's Teresa Townsley, a non-Punjabi. (Vancouver Province 2008, A14)

Another draws attention to accusations that Conservative candidate Alice Wong is a member of the Canadian Alliance for Social Justice and Family Values Association, “an extreme fundamentalist organization,” that has opposed legal protections for hate crimes and hate speech directed at gays and lesbians (Mercer 2008, A8). Some negative stories simply offer a prediction of the candidate’s defeat, typically via a quotation from an opposing camp (e.g., Bermingham 2008). There are also stories that provide a negative account of several candidates in one fell swoop. For example, when Conservative candidate Lee Richardson made some comments about immigrants and crime that led the Liberals and NDP to call for his resignation, a story notes, “The Conservatives shot back with a statement accusing the Liberals of hypocrisy and questioning whether Liberal candidates Hedy Fry, Garth Turner and Keith Martin would be dropped for quoted statements linking immigrants and crime” (Proudfoot 2008, A5).

In a number of stories in which candidates are reported on negatively, the reporter can deny culpability because the negative remarks come from
an outside source. Generally, if asked, most campaigns would foretell the demise of their opponents, and quite a few would happily cast doubt on another party's campaign. That said, it is reporters who decide which leads to pursue, whom to ask, and what quotations to include. That visible minority candidates are more often the subject of negative coverage is telling. Although media reports, by and large, offer a neutral take on political events, when they stray from neutrality and provide a critical perspective, that lens is more often focused on visible minorities than on their white counterparts.

Filtering Candidates through Quotes and Paraphrases
As the preceding discussion makes clear, stories are not told only through the voices of reporters. Quotations and paraphrases allow journalists to inject the voices of others into the account. But to what extent are candidates shown speaking for themselves as opposed to being the subject of others' commentary? This question stems from research that suggests lower-status speakers, such as women and visible minorities, are less likely to be quoted; as a result, their coverage tends to be more filtered (Gidengil and Everitt 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Van Dijik 1991). That is, these candidates' stories are told about them rather than by them. To examine this question, coders looked for instances of quotations from candidates and about candidates, as well as for paraphrased statements about a candidate's position, background, or interests.13

With respect to quotations about candidates, visible minority candidates are just as likely as white candidates to be "talked about" by others; such quotes can be found in about 9 percent of all stories. An analysis of quotations from candidates and paraphrases about their positions, however, suggests that visible minority candidates are less likely to be quoted than white candidates. Specifically, 22.7 percent of all stories include a quote from a white candidate while 14.6 percent of stories include a quote from a visible minority candidate. As is shown in Table 4, 42.2 percent of white candidates' stories include a quotation from them, compared to 31.5 percent of visible minority candidates' stories. White candidates are thus more likely to have their positions and ideas communicated directly using their own words, which leaves less room for journalistic interpretation. As Davis (1985) suggests, the relative absence of filtering also gives the speaker more authority and legitimacy.

Table 4 also shows that white candidates' stories more often paraphrase one or more of their policy positions than is the case for visible minority
candidates. This means that even when white candidates are not being directly quoted, their substantive interests are highlighted in paraphrases more frequently than is the case for visible minority candidates. Of course, the difference in policy paraphrases could be driven by the presence of cabinet ministers in the sample, given that these are the politicians most likely to speak to policy issues and, perhaps more to the point, two of the three cabinet members in the sample were white. To test this hypothesis, I excluded the cabinet ministers from the sample and reran the analysis. Although this narrows the gap somewhat, white non-ministers are still more likely than visible minority non-ministers to receive policy paraphrases. Specifically, 55.6 percent of non-ministerial policy paraphrases are dedicated to white candidates, compared to 44.4 percent for visible minorities, a statistically significant difference. In short, white candidates can expect to be quoted more frequently than their visible minority counterparts and, irrespective of ministerial status, are more likely to have their substantive issues and interests covered. Why are visible minority candidates less likely to be quoted than white candidates? In the first place, it may simply be a matter of journalistic convenience, with reporters tending to go to familiar sources when seeking quotations (Zilber and Niven 2000). It could also be a result of assumptions about status (Van Dijk 1991) or, as one journalist suggested to me, perceptions of candidate “quoteability.” In this reporter’s view, visible minority candidates may not be directly quoted as often because of issues related to their language proficiency, whether real or perceived. Visible minority candidates with whom I spoke also suggested that reporters often seem surprised when a minority turns out to be well-spoken; one staffer mentioned that visible
minorities are sometimes even explicitly described as "articulate" in their coverage, as though this is newsworthy. For example, a profile about Olivia Chow contains no fewer than five references to her communication skills: “she speaks in brief bursts, rather than expansive paragraphs”; “off teleprompter, she is less impressive”; “[Layton] was the orator, she was the organizer”; “struggled to learn English”; and “whether she has the rhetorical passion to cut through the verbal sparring and connect with voters outside her left-of-centre base is another question. If she is to make history as the first Chinese-born mayor of Canada’s largest city, being a ‘doer’ may not be enough” (Martin 2014, M1). These descriptions are indicative of some of the assumptions that underscore journalists’ decisions about a story’s content and the voice that is given to their subjects.

Communicating Race through Photographs

Content goes beyond words, and visuals are an important aspect of media portrayal. Indeed, 15 percent of candidates’ stories include their photograph. Some of these are simply headshots, while others show the candidate on the campaign trail. The presence of photos is important because images allow journalists to communicate information about candidates without saying a word. Rather than stating outright that a candidate is not white and thus opening themselves up to accusations of racism or bias, journalists can convey this information through a simple photograph. Race can thus be conveyed implicitly and under the cover of objectivity. Past research (Caliendo and McIlwain 2006) shows that photographs of visible minority candidates appear more frequently than photographs of white candidates, and my analysis confirms this conclusion: 18.3 percent of stories mentioning visible minorities include a photo of the visible minority candidate, while only 12.2 percent of white candidates’ stories similarly depict them photographically, a difference that is statistically significant.

This finding bears reflection for several reasons. First, whether a story includes a photograph is a conscious decision. If such decisions were purely objective, visible minority and white candidates would appear in photographs at exactly the same rate. Instead, the media choose to include photos of visible minority candidates more frequently than photos of white candidates. In my interviews with journalists, I asked why visible minority candidates may appear in photographs more often. One reporter suggested that newspapers are always trying to show diversity on their pages and, because
the majority of politicians are white, editors jump at any opportunity to show a visible minority. In this reporter's view, there is not "any kind of nefarious agenda here." This opinion was seconded by another reporter who noted that because most photographs in the newspaper are "headshots of white men," when there is a chance to include photos that are more representative of Canada's diversity, "they're keen" to do so.

This explanation seems plausible, but somewhat surprisingly, I do not also find a gender difference in candidate photographs. Like visible minorities, women are underrepresented in politics, and if there is a diversity and inclusion agenda at work, presumably editors would be equally motivated to include photos of female politicians whenever they could. This is not evident in my sample. Perhaps, however, critiques of gendered media coverage have permeated newsrooms to the extent that when editors select story visuals, they are conscious of not overrepresenting female politicians, a consciousness that has not yet manifested itself when thinking about how to cover other marginalized groups. It is also possible that political parties are driving the presence of visible minorities in photographs because, as another journalist noted, at media events involving leaders and "so-called star candidates, ... party spin doctors always make sure that they're surrounded by groups that include visible minorities and women." Again, however, we should then also expect to see gender differences in candidate photographs, which is not the case.

A second reason to consider the use of photographs in candidate stories is that information about candidates' race (in addition to characteristics such as gender, age, and even religion if, for example, the candidate wears a turban or head scarf) is communicated by a photograph implicitly rather than explicitly. In one experimental study (Unkelbach, Forgas, and Denson 2008), research participants played a computer game in which they shot at different people carrying guns, coffee mugs, or pop bottles. Some of the targets were wearing turbans or head scarves, while others were bare-headed. Participants were told to shoot only at those who were armed. To simulate the kind of quick decision making that occurs in the real world, the game was timed and points were awarded. Noting a clear "turban effect," the study's authors found that participants were much more likely to shoot those wearing religious head coverings, regardless of whether the target was armed or male or female, and irrespective of the participant's stated egalitarianism. This tendency is indicative of both our implicit stereotypes and the strong
and persuasive power of visual cues. In the electoral arena, such cues are important because while verbal appeals can activate voters’ equality norms and thus reduce the effectiveness of racial priming, subtle visual cues can make race salient while simultaneously concealing the racial intent of the appeal (Mendelberg 2001). In other words, showing that a candidate is a visible minority may engage voters’ racial considerations more effectively than simply saying that the candidate is not white. As a result, the inclusion of a candidate’s photograph is not a neutral choice nor is it without consequence. The upshot can be effective and insidious.

Reasoning that there are some factors that render candidates more “photo-worthy” and that these may be correlated with race, I looked at a few other possible explanations. First, I found that non-incumbents are more likely to be depicted in photographs than incumbents (18.4 percent versus 13.3 percent, a difference that is statistically significant). This may be because journalists assume that a photograph of a (known) incumbent is not needed. A photograph is one means of acquainting voters with challengers whom they might not recognize. Disaggregating these results by candidate race, I found that visible minority non-incumbents’ stories are more likely to include a photograph than white non-incumbents’ stories (24.8 percent versus 14.8 percent, a difference that is statistically significant). This further suggests that assumptions about a candidate’s recognizability may underpin, at least in part, visible minorities’ photographic coverage.

I next looked at gender. Given what we know about gendered mediation, I expected to see women depicted more frequently in photos than men. However, as noted above, there is no statistically significant difference. That is, male candidates are just as likely to be shown in photographs as female candidates. There may be a few reasons for this. First, underscoring a point made above, critiques from academics and political observers may have made journalists more conscious of the way in which female politicians are portrayed, and the media have thus sought to avoid the kind of gendered portrayals that we have seen in the past. Second, although I do not find quantitative differences in the photograph coverage of male and female candidates, there may be qualitative differences. The photographs of female candidates may be more sexualized or less flattering. They may be depicted in more passive positions or alone, rather than surrounded by supporters. Although these are important questions, one limitation of this data set is that the databases from which the stories were drawn do not include actual
photographs, but rather a photo notation and the caption. As a result, we are not able to judge gendered (or racialized) differences in the depiction of candidates in photographs.

Nonetheless, perhaps the most persuasive explanation for the opposing findings on race and gender differentiation in candidate photos is that while gender can be easily communicated without a photograph – often just through the candidate's name or the use of a pronoun – race is more complicated. Although voters may recognize some names as Chinese, South Asian, or non-European, this is not always the case, nor is there any pronoun to signify "non-white." A photograph, however, offers a way of clearly communicating information about candidate race without drawing explicit attention to it. Photographs may substitute or supplement framing centring on candidates' socio-demographics.

Socio-demographic Framing

A focus on candidates' demographic characteristics is one of the most basic ways in which racialized coverage can manifest itself. Candidates' socio-demographic coverage was examined using seven variables. The first five relate to a candidate's personal characteristics: mentions of a candidate's race (either white or visible minority), birthplace (either Canadian- or foreign-born), religion (either Judeo-Christian or non-Judeo-Christian, such as Sikh, Muslim, or Hindu), language (either English/French or other), and the birthplace of a candidate's parents (either Canadian- or foreign-born). Two additional variables relate to the characteristics of a candidate's riding or supporters: mentions of the demographic composition of a constituency or of a candidate's supporters (either minority or "mainstream").

Mentions of candidate religion, language, and parents' birthplace turned out to be relatively rare (each occurred in twelve articles or fewer). Possibly, attributes such as candidate birthplace or race are taken as "stand-ins" or proxies for characteristics such as religion or language, which therefore need not be discussed. Alternatively, journalists may feel uncomfortable discussing candidates' religion, or it may be more difficult for them to determine a candidate's religion or parents' place of birth. Regardless of the reason, coverage of these attributes is uncommon, and these results are not discussed in detail. Instead, I focus on mentions of candidate race and birthplace, as well as mentions of riding composition and community support.

Some socio-demographic framing is quite explicit. Take, for example, the description of Conservative candidate Tim Uppal as "the bearded, turbaned
Sikh [who] was still in his 20s when he challenged then Liberal cabinet minister David Kilgour” (Henton 2008, A4). A more recent profile of the MP notes, “Mr. Uppal is nothing if not distinctive in the Commons ... In a body full of white, middle-aged males, Mr. Uppal is that young man (he sports a remarkably bushy beard) wearing the vibrant Tory blue turban” (Taber 2011). The same story describes Mr. Uppal as a former DJ for a “multilingual radio station” who spun “mostly hip-hop Punjabi mix music.” Note that the article does not describe Mr. Uppal simply as a DJ or a broadcaster, but rather draws marked attention to the “ethnic” nature of his former profession. Another article offsets a Sikh candidate’s diversity with a reference to his Canadianness: “Although he wears a turban, 32-year-old Jagmeet Singh, the New Democratic Party candidate, points out he’s very much a modern Canadian as he was born and educated here” (Crawford 2011, U8). Meanwhile, a story about Liberal incumbent Omar Alghabra does not explicitly refer to his race, instead saying, “Born in Saudi Arabia to Syrian parents, Alghabra came to Toronto alone as a teenager to find opportunity in Canada” (Wilkes 2008, M8). This story also includes a photo of Alghabra.

References to candidates’ support in particular communities are another way of cuing a candidate’s background, which is the implied reason for the connection between the candidate and an ethnocultural community. One example of this kind of coverage can be found in an article about Liberal candidate Raymond Simard, who ran in Saint Boniface. The story quotes a commentator who notes that “Mr. Simard is very strong in the francophone community” (Coutts 2008, A6). Alternatively, the journalist may draw attention to the socio-demographic composition of the candidate’s riding either as a means of distinguishing the candidate from his or her voters or as a way of highlighting their similarities. Take, for example, an article by Doug Ward on six electoral races in British Columbia. Reporting on the riding of Richmond, Ward (2008, A5) notes, “Conservative leader Harper probably won some support in the riding’s huge Chinese Canadian community with his party’s apology for the Chinese head tax,” while in Burnaby-Douglas, Ward suggests, “Leung’s social conservatism could win him votes in the riding’s growing Asian community.” Other articles mention a riding’s “diversity” or “growing immigrant population” as a means of describing the voters who live there.

In short, there are a variety of ways to draw attention to socio-demographics. So how frequent are these mentions? I found that 14.4
percent of all stories include at least one socio-demographic variable. The most common type of socio-demographic mention is a reference to the composition of the candidate's riding, found in 8.1 percent of all stories. References to a candidate's race appear in 3.2 percent of stories, while references to a candidate's place of birth can be found in 2 percent of stories. The least common type of socio-demographic mention (apart from references to religion, language and parents' birthplace) are discussions of a candidate's support for particular communities, which occur in 1.1 percent of candidate stories. As Figure 1 illustrates, however, the distribution of socio-demographic mentions varies greatly by candidate race.

Tellingly, all mentions of candidate race are made in relation to visible minority candidates. In terms of magnitude, 6.8 percent of stories about visible minority candidates make some reference to their race, while no stories about white candidates do so. The majority of coverage of candidate birthplace (80 percent) is also in reference to visible minority candidates; these mentions appear in 3.5 percent of stories about visible minority candidates. When visible minority candidates' birthplace is mentioned, it is
nearly always foreign; only one article mentions a visible minority candidate’s Canadian birthplace. In only four cases is the birthplace of white candidates mentioned (generally to signal whether the candidate was born in the riding).

Similarly, references to the demographic composition of a candidate’s riding are firmly targeted at visible minority candidates, with two-thirds of these mentions appearing in articles about visible minority candidates. Taken together, 10.6 percent of articles about visible minority candidates mention the demographic composition of their ridings, compared to only 5.9 percent of articles about white candidates. Among visible minority candidates, nearly all mentions of riding composition (96 percent) emphasize minority socio-demographics, including the proportion of immigrants, ethnocultural minorities, and citizens of non-Judeo-Christian faiths. Meanwhile, 75 percent of mentions of white candidates’ riding composition refer to minority socio-demographics; many of these are situated within a context of “ethnic targeting” (e.g., Martin 2008b; Moloney 2008; Ward and Lai 2008). In other words, when riding composition is covered, the focus is almost always the community’s non-white/non-mainstream makeup, no matter the race of the candidate. White candidates’ socio-demographic backgrounds are apparently not newsworthy, nor are the demographics of ridings with predominantly white voters. This just underscores the extent to which whiteness is viewed as natural and neutral, while minority statuses are deemed different and thus merit coverage. Such an assumption leads to coverage that is racially differentiated.

Another way of cueing race is to refer to the communities from which candidates are drawing most of their support. References to candidates’ clout in particular communities are relatively rare (only about 1 percent of any candidate’s coverage), and there is no statistically significant correlation with candidate race. However, most mentions of community support (72.7 percent) pertain to support from minority communities and, of these, 87.5 percent are made in reference to visible minority candidates, while the remainder (12.5 percent) refer to white candidates’ support from minority communities. This difference is statistically significant, meaning that when there are mentions of community support, these generally refer to minority communities, which tend to be linked to visible minority candidates.

If these socio-demographic variables are combined – that is, all variables related to candidates’ socio-demographic characteristics, riding composition,
and community support – 3.2 percent of white candidate stories refer to majority or mainstream characteristics. By contrast, 15.6 percent of stories about visible minority candidates mention minority characteristics. This suggests that when socio-demographic framing is employed, it is firmly targeted at visible minority candidates.

It is also significant that discussions of riding composition tend to reinforce visible minority candidates' minority status, while the coverage of white candidates emphasizes their ability to appeal to voters unlike themselves. This tendency echoes the sentiment expressed by Ron Leech, the Alberta Wildrose candidate mentioned in Chapter 1, who asserted that minority candidates represent minorities while white candidates can represent everyone. Coverage characterizing candidates as cultural bridge-builders is almost exclusively confined to white candidates; visible minority candidates are more commonly portrayed as co-ethnic capitalizers who win primarily because of support from their “own” communities. In reference to a particularly heated nomination battle, Scott Young (2008, A13) observes, “Ethnic communities wield significant political power. Residents of Fleetwood-Port Kells will remember the 2004 federal election, when busloads of immigrant South Asian Tory members descended on the party nomination to vote for Nina Grewal.” Young goes on to say that nominations are “easily exploited by non-citizens ... Immigrants in that riding made a sham of our electoral system.”

This framing is cause for concern not only because it applies a different standard to white and visible minority candidates, but also because the notion that visible minority candidates win primarily on the basis of a co-ethnic voting block is empirically dubious. There is only one riding in Canada where a single visible minority group forms a majority: Richmond, in British Columbia, where voters of Chinese descent make up 50.3 percent of the population. In six other ridings, a single visible minority group makes up one-third of the population. This means that in order to win, visible minority candidates, just like their white counterparts, must bring together diverse coalitions of voters, a shared imperative that is rarely depicted in news coverage. In addition, very little is made of the fact that other, much larger, voting blocks exist. For example, during the 2008 election, Catholic voters formed a majority in 93 (30 percent) of the country’s 308 electoral ridings, including 37 where they represented 90 percent or more of the population. Protestant voters, meanwhile, formed a majority in 45 ridings
(14.6 percent). These sizable voting blocks are given far less media attention, and little is made of the fact that white candidates may play on their “natural” constituencies to garner an electoral win.

Instead, white candidates appear as cultural ambassadors, a trope typified by the coverage of Jason Kenney, then the minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism. In one profile of Kenney, the Toronto Star notes, “The MP for Calgary Southeast has become a fixture at dragon boat races, Ukrainian folk dances, Macedonian dinners and Diwali celebrations. He pops up everywhere, tweeting as he goes and earning the nickname (courtesy of erstwhile colleague Rahim Jaffer) ‘the minister for curry in a hurry’ ... It’s been a slog, he says, riding by riding, samosa by cheese perogy by pot sticker dumpling” (Diebel 2011a; for a similar profile in the Globe and Mail, see Jimenez 2008). References to food and dance (“saris, samosas and steel bands”) are the stock in trade of stories on minorities in politics, and the “curry in a hurry” moniker is repeated in a number of stories about Kenney. Of course, reporters are quick to point out that it was not them, but one of the minister’s colleagues (and a visible minority one at that) who bestowed the nickname; this provides them with a justification for unproblematically using it. My analysis did not uncover the use of equivalent monikers for politicians who focus their attention on business executives, industry professionals, or the corporate elite. Indeed, it is rare to find the courting of “mainstream” voters presented in terms that mirror the “wooing” of minority voters, who are often presented as passive and easily persuaded.

Stories written outside of the 2008 campaign only underscore the pervasiveness of this framing. For example, in an article about a 2011 campaign stop by Stephen Harper in Brampton–Springdale, the reporter notes, “Every time the Conservative leader emphasized a point, bearded men in turbans clapped and droned in unison” (Grewal 2011, GT2; emphasis added). This imagery is echoed in a column about “Liberal ethno-politics,” which describes one-time leadership candidate Gerard Kennedy as someone who had “been staked out early by ethno-politicians as an empty vessel into which they could pour their parochial agendas” (Kay 2007, A20). The columnist goes on to liken “ethnic” party members to cattle: “The Montreal Liberal convention was a close-fought thing, and the mass migration of hundreds of well-herded delegates along ethnic lines was likely the deciding factor.” Reporting on a 2004 Liberal nomination contest in Don Valley East, a riding with a large visible minority population, James Cowan (2004, A10)
maintains, “These demographics dictated not only the issues discussed by the candidates, but also the machinations taking place in the backrooms. There were allegations that the South Asian community stacked the membership list with illegitimate forms. There were cheat sheets to help first-generation immigrants understand the complex balloting process.” Allegations of illegitimacy and cheating are portrayed as though they are a natural consequence of the involvement of immigrants and minorities in politics.

Reflecting on Harinder Takhar’s 2013 Ontario Liberal leadership bid, one columnist writes that the candidate’s “almost exclusive reliance on South Asian support makes a mockery of multiculturalism (ghettoizing himself rather than broadening his base with multi-ethnic outreach)” (Cohn 2013, A6). Again, there is the suggestion that an “ethnic” politician is playing the “race card” by encouraging South Asian Canadians to support his campaign. Another columnist notes, however, that Takhar is simply “a savvy guy who has cleverly worked within ... [the] leadership-selection process.”

Takhar does not deny that he has pulled most of his support from a small number of immigrant communities. But that doesn’t entirely set him apart from the rest of the leadership field. “Charles Sousa went to his community and got votes,” Mr. Takhar said in an interview, referring to the fifth-place candidate’s focus on fellow Portuguese-Canadians. “He’s not being targeted because he’s not the same colour I am.”

The column goes on to say that the campaign’s two front-runners, Kathleen Wynne and Sandra Pupatello, have also “disproportionately drawn support from relatively narrow demographics” even though they have tried to appear more broad-based in their appeals (Radwanski 2013, A9). They faced little backlash as a result of these tactics.

These portrayals are indicative of a distinction – raised in the literature on social capital – between bridgers and bonders (Putnam 2000). Cultural bridgers are those who build and retain diverse social networks made up of individuals from a range of socioeconomic and ethnocultural backgrounds, while cultural bonders are those who generally have ties only with people from backgrounds similar to their own. In political news coverage of community support, white candidates are framed as cultural bridgers who
appeal to a diverse group of voters – often people unlike themselves – while visible minority candidates are framed as cultural bonders who mostly appeal to people like themselves.

While explicit mentions of candidates' support among members of specific ethnocultural groups is relatively rare (occurring in just 1.1 percent of all articles), these references most commonly highlight the connection between a visible minority candidate and a minority ethnocultural community. Mentions of visible minority candidates’ support within minority communities occur twice as often as mentions of white candidates’ support within majority communities; that is, 1.5 percent of visible minority candidates’ stories include a mention of support from minority communities, while 0.6 percent of white candidates’ stories include a mention of support from majority communities, a difference that is statistically significant. In other words, visible minority candidates are more likely than white candidates to be positioned as candidates who succeed on the basis of their ties to their “own” communities.

The characterization of visible minority candidates as cultural bonders is illustrated in a story about Newton-North Delta, a riding in British Columbia’s lower mainland:

This is another true three-way race, with incumbent Liberal Sukh Dhaliwal under threat from Conservative candidate Sandeep Pandher and New Democrat Teresa Townsley ... The NDP finished second [in 2006] and has high hopes for Townsley, a nurse who is vice-chairwoman of the Delta board of education. The Tories hope that having a Sikh candidate this time will cut into Dhaliwal’s support in the riding’s Indo-Canadian community. (Ward 2008, A5)

Here, it is assumed that the “Indo-Canadian community” will naturally support either Dhaliwal or Pandher – both of South Asian descent – although the reporter carefully positions this as the party’s opinion, not his own. What is problematic is the fact that discussions of co-ethnic voting allegiances rarely appear in articles about white candidates who receive significant support from white voters (Tolley and Goodyear-Grant 2014). There is thus a disparity in portrayal.

A similar “ethnic” narrative is employed in a story about Conservative candidate Devinder Shory. Shory, of Indian heritage, ran against Roger
Richard, an independent candidate with Anglo-European origins. Richard's campaign manager, Perry Cavanagh, claims that "Shory won his party's nomination with non-citizen teenage voters and through other sketchy techniques," inflammatory language that does not appear in quotation marks, suggesting these are the words of the reporter and not a direct quote. The story goes on to say that "Shory refused to comment on Cavanagh's remark, or on any aspect of the Richard campaign. Flipping back and forth between Punjabi and English in his rally speech, the 50 year old lawyer avoided mention of any of his rivals" (Markusoff 2008, A6). The references to "non-citizen teenage voters," "sketchy techniques," and Shory's use of Punjabi in his rally speech are framing that positions visible minorities as parochial candidates who win unfairly or because of their minority ties.

Among the stories examined for this study, not a single one mentions any visible minority candidate's support from majority (i.e., white) communities. Overall, however, journalists appear more comfortable implying a candidate's support from particular communities by drawing attention to the characteristics of the riding in which the candidate is running, rather than through an explicit mention. Again, white candidates' coverage is more likely than that of visible minority candidates to show them "reaching" into racially different ridings. Among white candidates, 4.6 percent of their articles mention the minority dimensions of their constituencies. A white candidate running in a riding with a large visible minority population is quoted as saying, "It is important to fight for immigrants" (Keung 2008, M7), while a story about Liberal candidate Andrew Kania, who is white, notes, "About one third of the riding's 170,000 residents are South Asian, and many are involved in Mr. Kania's campaign. Mr. Kania, who was chair of John Manley's Liberal leadership bid, has courted Sikh supporters, attending their weddings and birthday parties, and getting to know them through the area's gurdwara, the largest in Canada" (Jimenez 2008, A13). By contrast, an article about Liberal Omar Alghabra says, "Alghabra, born in Saudi Arabia to Syrian parents, has built a solid support base among new Canadians" (Wilkes 2008, U11). Meanwhile, a story about a South Asian candidate points out that she "may not have the political experience of her opponent but she's a household name nonetheless among the riding's large South Asian population. The 32-year-old is former host of Bollywood Boulevard" (Ferenc 2008, M7). In other words, the white candidates may not look like their prospective constituents, but they "fight for them," "court them," and "get to know them,"
while the visible minority candidates largely represent those like themselves: in these cases, South Asians and new Canadians.

Although it is relatively common for stories about white candidates to mention the minority demographics of their ridings, just two articles mention the majority dimensions of a visible minority candidate’s riding. Meanwhile, 10.6 percent of visible minority candidates’ stories mention the minority dimensions of their ridings. This reinforces the notion that, unlike white candidates, visible minorities are not cultural bridgers. Of course, this difference is partly a function of the ridings in which particular candidates run. Visible minority candidates are most likely to run in ridings with significant visible minority populations. In addition, white candidates are more likely to run in ridings with significant minority populations than visible minorities are to run in ridings with significant white populations. Even so, if journalists really are just pointing out the newsworthiness of a candidate who comes from a different socio-demographic background from that of his or her constituents, we should expect to see a roughly equal number of mentions in the coverage of visible minority candidates who ran in ridings with large white populations as we do when white candidates run in ridings with large visible minority populations. Is that the case? In the candidate sample, ten visible minorities ran in ridings with large white populations, compared to sixteen white candidates who ran in ridings with significant visible minority populations. However, mentions of riding composition are not at all equitable. White candidates receive coverage as cultural bridgers in visible minority ridings, but visible minority candidates receive almost no such coverage in white ridings.

On a number of fronts, it is therefore evident that reporting on candidate socio-demographics is racially differentiated. Coverage is more likely to mention the race and birthplace of visible minority candidates than those of white candidates. Discussions of riding composition and community support tend to pigeonhole visible minority candidates as narrow and inward-looking, while white candidates are portrayed as cross-culturally appealing. This kind of coverage may cue voters to see particular candidates as unlike them and thus less capable of representing their interests, which may dampen visible minorities’ electoral prospects and political recruitment. These effects would only be exacerbated by coverage that positions visible minority candidates as less electorally competitive, the question to which I turn next.
Political Viability Framing

To assess the framing of candidates' political viability, coders looked at reporting on three criteria: a candidate's insider status, quality, and novelty. These three components capture key elements of a candidate's experience, qualifications, and atypicality in the political arena. To assess insider coverage, coders looked for stories that mentioned whether candidates are incumbents, have held previous electoral office, have been involved with their party for some time, have support from party elites, or are superior political strategists. Most insider coverage employed simple descriptors like “the sitting MP” or adjectives like “veteran” and “long-serving,” which were relatively straightforward to code. Coding the coverage of candidate quality proved to be more difficult because of its relative subjectivity; as a result, a somewhat narrow definition of “quality” was eventually adopted. Specifically, “quality” was taken to mean a candidate's high profile or prominence, service to the community, being established in the community, or garnering respect. Quality candidates may be described as having long roots in the community, as stars, or as sought-after; they may also be portrayed as having been recruited to run. Coders looked for such words and phrases as “admired,” “touted,” “esteemed,” “a heavyweight,” “highly sought,” “influential,” “outstanding,” “popular,” “having a strong network,” “well-known,” “high-status,” “renowned,” “well-respected,” “successful,” and “a strong candidate.” Finally, novelty coverage included mentions of a candidate being the first to accomplish something or as having a distinctive occupational status or personal accomplishments. In general, if the candidate was portrayed as being the first, top, or one of a few to have done something, the coverage was coded as novel.

The viability frame is often somewhat mundane, providing a “just the facts” account of a candidate's electoral experience. Some stories do, however, offset candidates' viability coverage with mentions of other evaluative criteria, such as this column by the Globe and Mail's Jeffrey Simpson:

Liberal MP Hedy Fry has never in Ottawa fulfilled the lofty expectations she brought in 1993, her first of five consecutive electoral victories. No matter. In Vancouver Centre, she's been unbeatable. Every election, she is deemed to be in trouble, only to confound the skeptics ... This time, though, she's running in the teeth of ill winds from the national campaign. And she's got two experienced politicians against her ... If things look generally bleak for the
Liberals in BC, luck just might hand [the NDP] a seat they did not expect to win. (Simpson 2008, A21)

Here, the columnist notes that while Fry is a five-time electoral winner, she has her critics and has never really met expectations. Moreover, she is running against tough opponents and for a party whose popularity in British Columbia is waning. Thus, while her electoral history positions her as a viable candidate, it may be diminished by other factors, which the columnist is quick to mention. This is probably an attempt to achieve balance; nevertheless, because the article does mention Fry’s long tenure in politics, even if alongside other factors, it would be coded as viability framing.

Another type of viability framing, quite common among visible minority candidates, positions them as “model minorities” or “immigrant success stories.” This is typified in a story about Sikh candidates that appeared in the Globe and Mail:

More than two dozen Indo-Canadian candidates are running for next month’s federal election, contesting ridings from Halifax to Vancouver ... a phenomenal success story for this ethnic community. Most are Sikhs, by far the most savvy campaigners and aggressive political organizers of any visible minority group in Canada ... Many factors account for the electoral success of Sikh Canadians. They are relatively affluent, speak English, and come from the world’s most populous democracy, India. (Jimenez 2008, A13)

A National Post editorial about Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla, which appeared during the 2004 federal election, further exemplifies this, mixing sociodemographic mentions with coverage of the candidate’s viability:

She’s a girl from Winnipeg who bears both the brightness and the burden of being one of Prime Minister Paul Martin’s star candidates. Ruby Dhalla seems to have all that a prime minister would want in a candidate – she’s bright, young, active in Sikh and Liberal circles and brings health care experience as a chiropractor. Oh, and she’s also a model and star of Bollywood movies.

Referring to the thirty-something Dhalla as a “girl” juvenilizes her and subtly calls her qualifications into question. Moreover, although the candidate is a
practising chiropractor, the editorial's headline downplays her professional occupation and instead underscores the more titillating aspects of her résumé, blaring “Sikh Actor Is a Model Liberal Candidate Who Offers Health Care expertise, too” (National Post 2004, A8).

Mentions of a candidate's viability are quite common, with this kind of coverage appearing in almost two-thirds of all stories in the sample (64.4 percent of stories include an insider or quality mention or both). Mentions of candidate quality are much less frequent than mentions of candidates' insider status, however. There is a reference to candidate quality in just 6.4 percent of stories, compared to 62.6 percent of stories in which a candidate's insider status is mentioned. It is possible that journalists are reluctant to comment on candidates' subjective qualifications for office, choosing instead to highlight more objective criteria such as their previous electoral experience and connections to the party. Moreover, the relative frequency of insider mentions is probably a reflection of which candidates are most likely to receive media coverage, namely incumbents and those who are well-known in political circles.

The bigger question, of course, is whether there are racially differentiated patterns in viability framing. When the frequency of insider and quality coverage is examined by candidate race, there is no statistically significant difference. Regardless of race, about two-thirds of coverage mentions a candidate's viability. In the aggregate, then, candidate race does not exert an influence on the coverage of political viability. This finding diverges somewhat from my expectation that visible minority candidates would be portrayed more frequently as politically inexperienced outsiders than their white counterparts, and runs counter to findings by Jeremy Zilber and David Niven (2000). Why might that be?

One problem with looking at aggregate patterns of coverage – the approach taken here – is that it can obscure differences between candidates. We know that the media are more likely to cover those candidates who are well-known and, because coverage is a necessary prerequisite for inclusion in this study, the sample is thus biased towards the most politically viable. Because coders only looked for positive viability framing and did not code for mentions of outsider status or a lack of quality, we will have missed coverage that positions candidates less favourably. That is, the types of candidates who are least likely to receive positive viability coverage – the non-incumbents and lesser-known candidates – are also the least likely to receive any coverage at all. In other words, the sampling strategy is, by
design, picking up those visible minority candidates who have made inroads in the electoral arena and are thus portrayed quite positively. As a result, the results could overstate the similarity between white and visible minority candidates’ viability coverage. This explanation is bolstered by the finding that incumbency improves viability coverage, particularly for visible minority candidates, a pattern that is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 clearly shows that white challengers (i.e., non-incumbents) receive significantly more viability coverage than visible minority challengers. The most dramatic difference pertains to candidates’ insider coverage, with 27.1 percent of white challengers’ coverage mentioning their insider ties, compared with just 5.0 percent for visible minority challengers. White challengers also receive slightly more quality coverage than visible minority incumbents (7.6 percent of all white candidate stories, compared to 2.5 percent of all visible minority candidate stories). In other words, white challengers receive significantly more insider and quality coverage than visible minority challengers, but incumbency closes that gap. Among incumbents, we see little difference in viability framing, regardless of candidate race.

Two important observations can be made. First, incumbent visible minority candidates seem to be accorded more viability coverage than white candidates. Second, visible minority candidates’ viability coverage suffers considerably when they are not incumbents, in which case they are much less likely than white candidates to be portrayed as political insiders. This suggests that once visible minorities have, in effect, proven themselves, they are just as likely as white candidates to receive positive viability coverage. When they are not “known commodities,” however, visible minority candidates appear not to be given the benefit of the doubt. To put it plainly, if you

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<th>Quality mentions (% of stories)</th>
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a chi-square = 404.1; p < .001; df = 1; Cramer’s V = 0.642.
b Results do not achieve conventionally accepted levels of statistical significance.
want to be portrayed as a qualified insider, being an incumbent does matter, but it matters most for visible minority candidates. This point is underscored in Chapter 4, which presents an index that measures candidates’ electoral prospects using incumbency, electoral outcome, and party competitiveness as the indicators. On this basis, I assess candidates’ actual viability – a measure of self-presentation – against their media portrayals. Again, according to this yardstick, white challengers receive more positive viability coverage than their visible minority counterparts, but incumbency washes away the difference, a finding that confirms the patterns identified in Table 5.

Part of this may have to do with expectations of candidates’ political success. Given that visible minorities are less common in Canadian politics, the framing of their viability may reflect the subtle assumption that they are less likely to win than their more typical white counterparts. The findings on novelty coverage are indicative of this assumption, in that all novelty mentions appear in stories about visible minority candidates, although these stories represent less than 1 percent of their total coverage. Nonetheless, because these mentions set visible minority candidates apart as atypical and uncommon, their effects are potentially powerful. This type of coverage is illustrated in a story about Rahim Jaffer: “Jaffer has been [Edmonton–Strathcona’s] member of Parliament through four consecutive elections. He has been a star: In 1997, when he was first elected at age 25, his Muslim heritage set him apart from typical Reformers of the day” (Audette 2008, A4). Such coverage, while favourable in that it positions Jaffer as a “star,” also characterizes him as a novelty, a Muslim different from “typical” Reform Party members.

Novelty coverage, in a sense, offers a mixed blessing for candidates. In some cases, candidates who would not otherwise attract much notice become the subject of stories – often lengthy features – that provide exposure and potential name recognition. One has to ask whether this is desirable exposure, however. Do candidates benefit when they are framed as atypical? This query is not definitively resolved here, but certainly we should not simply assume that any news is good news, particularly when it sets visible minorities apart from their white counterparts or implies that their minority status is relevant to their political persona. This kind of coverage not only positions visible minority candidates as atypical, but also draws a link – often inappropriately – between their socio-demographics and their political experience or agenda. This point is reinforced when we examine the policy issues to which candidates are most frequently connected.
Policy Issue Framing
To assess policy issue coverage, coders looked for references to the candidate's interest in, support for, or involvement in various aspects of public policy. These included instances of candidates speaking out on issues, mentions of their role as a cabinet minister or party critic for a particular portfolio, or mentions of their membership on a standing committee of the House. In a number of cases, the candidate was quoted in relation to a riding-specific issue or spoke in support of a plank of the party's platform. Coders looked specifically for policy mentions related to crime, social welfare, and immigration and multiculturalism—the so-called minority issues—as well as for mentions of other policy areas, which I reservedly refer to as “mainstream” policy issues. Examples include the economy, natural resources, and health care; a full list can be found in the appendix.

Much has been said about the absence of policy discourse in Canadian elections (Bastedo, Chu, and Hilderman 2012), but policy mentions are in fact fairly common in candidates' coverage, with 39.7 percent of all articles connecting candidates to at least one policy issue. There is no statistically significant pattern in terms of the propensity of coverage to link particular types of candidates to policy issues: 41.4 percent of all stories about white candidates include a policy mention, compared to 37.7 percent for visible minority candidates. As is shown in Table 6, however, there is some racial differentiation in terms of the types of policy issues to which white and visible minority candidates are connected.

For example, visible minority candidates are more likely than white candidates to be connected to crime issues, a finding that is consistent with past research (Entman and Rojecki 2000; Fleras 2011; Henry and Tator 2002). Specifically, 12.3 percent of stories about visible minority candidates link them to crime policy issues, compared to 7.4 percent of stories about white candidates. An example of this linkage can be found in the reporting on a story involving Lee Richardson, a white Conservative candidate who ran in a Calgary riding with a large immigrant population and made comments that drew attention to the portrayal of minorities in crime stories. In an interview with a community newspaper, which was later reported by the national news media, Richardson linked immigration and crime: “Particularly in big cities, we've got people that have grown up in a different culture ... They don't have the same background in terms of the stable communities we had 20, 30 years ago in our cities ... and [they] don't have the same respect
### Table 6

Policy mentions in candidate coverage, by story and candidate race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Stories (%)</th>
<th>Stories (%)</th>
<th>Stories (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White (n = 526)</td>
<td>Visible minority (n = 454)</td>
<td>All (n = 980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>77 (14.6***</td>
<td>36 (7.9***</td>
<td>113 (11.5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>39 (7.4***</td>
<td>56 (12.3***</td>
<td>95 (9.7***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>45 (8.6**</td>
<td>24 (5.3**</td>
<td>69 (7.0**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration and multiculturalism</td>
<td>31 (5.9</td>
<td>35 (7.7</td>
<td>66 (6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families and seniors</td>
<td>32 (6.1</td>
<td>24 (5.3</td>
<td>56 (5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>24 (4.6</td>
<td>16 (3.5</td>
<td>40 (4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>18 (3.4</td>
<td>21 (4.6</td>
<td>39 (4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities and infrastructure</td>
<td>19 (3.6</td>
<td>15 (3.3</td>
<td>34 (3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>18 (3.4</td>
<td>10 (2.2</td>
<td>28 (2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social welfare</td>
<td>17 (3.2</td>
<td>9 (2.0</td>
<td>26 (2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign affairs</td>
<td>11 (2.1</td>
<td>14 (3.1</td>
<td>25 (2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and labour</td>
<td>13 (2.5</td>
<td>8 (1.8</td>
<td>21 (2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence and security</td>
<td>10 (1.9</td>
<td>8 (1.8</td>
<td>18 (1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>11 (2.1</td>
<td>7 (1.5</td>
<td>18 (1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining</td>
<td>8 (1.5</td>
<td>9 (2.0</td>
<td>17 (1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, electricity, hydro, gas</td>
<td>11 (2.1</td>
<td>6 (1.3</td>
<td>17 (1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and industry</td>
<td>8 (1.5</td>
<td>6 (1.3</td>
<td>14 (1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay and lesbian rights</td>
<td>2 (0.4**</td>
<td>12 (2.6**</td>
<td>14 (1.4**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental relations</td>
<td>5 (1.0</td>
<td>3 (0.7</td>
<td>8 (0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal issues</td>
<td>1 (0.2*</td>
<td>5 (1.1*</td>
<td>6 (0.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic reform</td>
<td>0 (0.0</td>
<td>2 (0.4</td>
<td>2 (0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12 (2.3</td>
<td>6 (1.3</td>
<td>18 (1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories with at least one issue mention</td>
<td>218 (41.4%</td>
<td>171 (37.7%</td>
<td>389 (39.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Some stories included mentions of more than one policy issue. Statistically significant at * p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

1 These results include stories about Jason Kenney, who is white, and was then the minister of citizenship, immigration, and multiculturalism. When Kenney's stories are removed from the sample, there is a statistically significant relationship between candidate race and stories on immigration and multiculturalism issues.
for authority or people’s person or property.” He added, “Talk to the police. Look at who’s committing these crimes. They’re not the kid that grew up next door.” Richardson’s two main opponents were both immigrants, including one who is a visible minority. They roundly criticized the remarks, and Richardson later apologized. He said that his views are based on what he hears from his constituents and admitted that “what their comments are based on is probably anecdotal – what they read in the newspapers” (quoted in Klaszus 2008). It is notable that Richardson says explicitly that his information comes not from crime statistics or research, but from what he hears, which depends heavily on what his constituents read in the news. News coverage matters.

Diverging from American research (Gilens 1996, 2003), visible minorities are no more likely to appear in stories about social welfare than are their white counterparts, at least not in a political context. On immigration and multiculturalism issues, there is also no statistically significant relationship between these mentions and candidate race, which again was somewhat counter to my expectations. However, this is probably because the sample of white candidates includes Jason Kenney, then the minister of citizenship, immigration, and multiculturalism. Given his portfolio, a large number of his stories connected him to immigration and multiculturalism issues. Indeed, 28 percent of all such mentions were in stories about Kenney. To assess the magnitude of the “Kenney effect,” I removed him from the sample. Without Kenney, there was a statistically significant relationship between candidate race and mentions of immigration and multiculturalism issues. Specifically, such mentions appear in 7.7 percent of visible minority candidates’ stories, compared to 2.8 percent of white candidates’ stories. Given this, the initial finding that visible minorities are no more likely than white candidates to appear in stories about immigration and multiculturalism issues should appear with a caveat that this may be the case only when the minister responsible for these issues is a media-savvy white candidate.

We can draw a few conclusions from these data. First, the link between race and so-called minority issues, which is prevalent in the American research, appears only partially applicable in Canada. On matters of social welfare, the lack of racial variation could be a result of Canadians’ comparatively more positive orientation towards social welfare issues, which could depress negative associations between visible minorities and perceptions of dependency. On immigration and multiculturalism issues, there is the “Kenney effect,” but also the fact that the sampling strategy targeted white
candidates who ran in highly diverse ridings. These are constituencies where immigration and multiculturalism issues are presumably salient, and candidates – regardless of race – may be more likely to discuss them. On crime issues, visible minority candidates are more likely than white candidates to appear in such stories and, in the 2008 election, at least a portion of this discussion revolved around an incident in which a (white) candidate argued that rising crime rates are the result of increased immigration. This suggests that, as in the United States, crime is a racialized policy issue in Canada.

Mainstream policy mentions, meanwhile, appear in 35.7 percent of white candidates’ coverage, compared to 28.4 percent of visible minority candidates’ coverage, a difference that is statistically significant. Put another way, 59.3 percent of mainstream policy mentions are connected to white candidates, while 40.7 percent are connected to visible minority candidates. Table 6 shows which mainstream issues candidates are most likely to be connected with.

Clearly, when visible minorities do receive policy issue coverage, it is less likely to relate to mainstream issues than is the case for white candidates. Not only that, but visible minorities are much less likely to appear in stories about the economy and the environment, which were among the key issues in the 2008 election campaign (Gidengil et al. 2012). For example, whereas 68.1 percent of economic policy mentions were in reference to white candidates, just 31.9 percent were in reference to visible minority candidates. The relative absence of visible minorities from economic policy discussions is important given how centrally the economy figures in electoral campaigns, and particularly in 2008, which was the height of a global recession and an election in which the Conservatives’ Economic Action Plan was a key policy plank (Gidengil et al. 2012; see also Soroka 2002). The findings suggest that visible minority candidates largely do not figure in coverage about an election’s “quintessential valence issue” (Gidengil et al. 2012, 13).

The tendency for visible minority candidates to appear less often in stories about the “issues that matter” may leave voters with the impression that these candidates are not tuned into the key policy issues, that they have a narrow focus, or that they will be less able to respond to voter concerns. The problem is compounded if that coverage reinforces voters’ stereotypes about candidates’ capabilities. For example, Monica Schneider and Angela Bos’s (2011) analysis of politician stereotypes in the United States suggests that
black politicians are seen as less capable of handling policy related to taxes, the economy, education, and the military.

Of course, we must look at the coverage of candidates’ policy interests in tandem with their stated policy priorities; if visible minority candidates are less interested in economic issues, then such coverage is not a function of mediation but merely a reflection of reality. This task is taken up in Chapter 4, where I look at candidate self-presentation. I turn first, however, to other factors that may contribute to differences in candidate coverage, beginning with gender effects.

Gender Effects

Socio-demographic Coverage
Research presented in Chapter 1 shows that female candidates typically receive more socio-demographic coverage than their male counterparts, and the results presented earlier in this chapter suggest that the same may be true of visible minorities. By inference, then, visible minority women might be expected to receive the most socio-demographic coverage. To assess this, I split socio-demographic coverage into two types: personal and political. This split draws on literature about the public-private divide, which situates men in the public realm of politics and decision making, and women in the private domain of home and family (Elshtain 1993; Pateman 1988). Personal socio-demographic coverage includes mentions of a candidate’s race, birthplace, religion, language, and birthplace of parents, while political socio-demographic coverage includes mentions of the candidate’s riding composition or community support. Arguably, the latter are more politically salient.

Somewhat surprisingly, it is male candidates who receive more personal socio-demographic coverage; specifically, 6.8 percent of stories about male candidates include at least one personal socio-demographic mention, compared to 2.8 percent of stories about female candidates, a statistically significant difference. In contrast to the literature on gendered mediation, we thus find more focus on the personal features of male candidates than female candidates. Moreover, political socio-demographic coverage shows no statistically significant gender differences, suggesting that female candidates are no less likely to receive coverage of these politically salient characteristics. Male candidates are no more likely to be cast as political operatives than their female counterparts, at least not on the dimensions included in this study.
To see if there are any racialized gender differences in socio-demographic coverage, I looked specifically at stories about visible minority candidates. There are no statistically significant gender differences in visible minority candidates’ personal or political socio-demographic coverage. That is, visible minority women – possessors of two minority statuses – are not more often the subject of racialized socio-demographic coverage. There is no “multiplier” effect (Fleras 2011). This may be because for women candidates, gender is viewed as the key socio-demographic variable, and thus socio-demographic mentions focus on this factor, rather than on racial characteristics, although that is purely speculative. An alternative explanation is that aggregate statistical analysis does not tell the whole story. Indeed, as is shown in Chapter 3, a more qualitative and discursive reading of visible minority women’s media coverage provides a compelling account of the intersecting roles played by race and gender.

**Political Viability Coverage**

Do these racialized and gendered intersections play out in the coverage of candidates’ viability? Based on existing research, we might expect female candidates to receive less viability coverage than male candidates, and visible minority women to receive the least. Looking first at gender, male candidates indeed come out on top: 68.5 percent of male candidates’ stories include at least one viability mention, compared to 57.2 percent of stories about female candidates, a difference that is statistically significant. Men are more likely to be portrayed as political insiders than are women (67.3 percent of male candidates’ stories, compared to 54.4 percent for female candidates), while women are more likely to be portrayed as novelties (1.1 percent of female candidates’ stories, compared to none for male candidates). That said, there is no statistically significant gender difference in quality mentions. This could be because the media are hesitant to impose specific evaluations of candidate quality, as noted above, given the subjective nature of such assessments; by contrast, mentions of a candidate’s insider status or novelty can be justified as ostensibly factual given a candidate’s limited electoral experience or recruitment from outside politics. Bolstering this conjecture are the data on policy mentions, where we see that male candidates receive the most policy issue coverage, a finding that I discuss in greater detail below. Again, however, unlike subjective assessments of quality, linking a candidate to a particular policy issue appears neutral, which makes the narrative safer and thus potentially more appealing to journalists.
When race is added to the equation, the relationship changes somewhat, with visible minority women getting a boost in viability coverage. As we might expect, white men still receive the most viability coverage (73.7 percent of their stories include at least one such mention), but they are followed closely by visible minority women (71.0 percent). Visible minority men are next, with 63.5 percent of their stories including at least one viability mention, while white women receive the least viability coverage (just 48.6 percent of their stories include a viability mention). To the extent that there is a race-gender multiplier effect, then, it appears to advantage visible minority women. In light of Black's (2008b) observation that “double minority” candidates have to be more qualified than other candidates in order to succeed politically, the viability coverage that visible minority women receive may in fact be a reflection of reality. This possibility is explored more fully in Chapter 4, where I compare candidates’ “objective” viability to their resulting viability coverage. I find that while aggregate coverage of visible minority women’s viability roughly approximates their actual viability, the least viable visible minority women can expect to receive much less positive viability coverage than similarly situated visible minority men or any white candidate. This suggests not only that mediation is occurring but, moreover, that race matters to candidate coverage.

Such a conclusion is also apparent when we look at racialized and gendered differences in the coverage of candidates’ novelty. Indeed, visible minority women are the only candidates to receive novelty coverage. Although such mentions occur in just a small proportion (2.9 percent) of all stories about visible minority women, the relationship is statistically significant. Moreover, as is discussed further in Chapter 3, visible minority women’s atypicality is presented in distinctly racialized and gendered ways, highlighting their exoticism, appearance in Bollywood films, or standing on Maxim’s list of the “world’s hottest politicians” (e.g., Martin 2008b).

Policy Issue Coverage
A final way in which racialized and gendered differences may manifest themselves is through candidates’ policy issue coverage. On the one hand, gendered mediation theory suggests that female candidates’ coverage will emphasize their interest in so-called women’s issues, while my theorization of racial mediation suggests that visible minority candidates will be more closely connected to so-called minority issues, such as immigration, crime, and social welfare. As was noted earlier in this chapter, this latter hypothesis
was not fully supported, although I did find that visible minority candidates' coverage was less likely to discuss the most electorally salient policy issues such as the economy or the environment. Overall, male candidates receive the most policy issue coverage: 43.3 percent of their stories contain such mentions, compared to 33.6 percent for female candidates, a difference that is statistically significant. This suggests that male candidates figure more prominently in policy discussions.

With respect to the mainstream policy areas to which male and female candidates are most often connected, statistically significant differences exist only on issues related to natural resources (e.g., agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining) as well as the economy. Natural resource policy issues appear in only a small number of stories (2.3 percent of male candidate stories and 0.8 percent of female candidate stories), but when they do appear, 82.4 percent of mentions are connected to male candidates compared to 17.6 percent for female candidates. Economic issues appear in a much larger proportion of stories (13.9 percent of male candidate stories and 7.5 percent of female candidate stories) but, again, a large majority of these mentions (76.4 percent) are in stories about male candidates. This finding is in line with past research, which suggests that "harder" policy areas are stereotyped as "masculine" (Dolan 2005; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Schneider 2009). This stereotyping provides a partial explanation for why more men hold portfolios in these policy areas, although certainly men may also simply be more interested in or qualified to speak to these issues. Stereotyping may also lead the media to contact male candidates to comment on stories about "masculine" policy issues, a situation that is augmented by the tendency of media sources in general to be male, even in stories about so-called women's issues (Farhi 2012). For all these reasons, we might have expected to find a connection between male candidates and more "masculine" policy coverage.

What is perhaps more surprising is that no statistically significant gender differences exist in the coverage of such so-called women's issues as health, education, and families. The literature on gendered mediation leads us to believe that these are the issues in which female candidates should figure the most prominently, but this appears not to be the case. On each of these three issues – health, education, and families – there are a few reasons that we may not find significant gender differentiation. First, because I was not explicitly interested in gendered coverage, coders did not look specifically for mentions of "women's" issues. Rather, they looked for mentions of
broad policy areas, and I am using health, education, and families and seniors as a proxy for women's issues. Although the "families and seniors" category did include mentions of child care, abortion, and other women-centric policy areas, the fact that women's issues were not a separate and distinct category might conceal some of the mentions of gendered policy areas.

Second, within the specific areas I looked at, some issues were connected to one or two prominent candidate spokespeople, and their sociodemographic characteristics could affect the extent to which issues appear to be gendered. For example, nearly one-third of the coverage on health issues was connected to Ujjal Dosanjh. Although Dosanjh was not at the time the Liberal Party health critic, he had been the minister of health when the Liberals lost power in 2006 and had served as the premier of British Columbia before entering federal politics. Given his knowledge of the policy file and the fact that health care falls under provincial jurisdiction, he may have a special interest in health care or be viewed by reporters as a natural spokesperson on such issues. Physicians Keith Martin and Benson Lau – both male – also received some coverage on health policy, although interestingly neither Hedy Fry, a physician, nor Ruby Dhalla, a chiropractor, had coverage that connected them to these issues. That said, if I remove all the medical doctors from the sample, 60.9 percent of health policy mentions are connected to women, compared to the 39.1 percent that are connected to men, and the difference is statistically significant. This suggests that when occupational credentials are removed from the equation, health remains a gendered policy issue.

In contrast to health, my candidate sample contained no "natural" spokespeople for either education or families and seniors issues. No candidates had been minister for these portfolios, nor are there parliamentary committees that directly touch on these issues. Thus, there was no clear affinity between any of the candidates and these two policy areas, nor was either a clear campaign priority. Coverage of both areas is rather generic, with male and female candidates speaking about each in roughly equal proportions. When candidates do make reference to these policy areas, it is often simply to signal their importance, perhaps because the federal government does not have explicit jurisdiction over either. In the sample, thirteen candidates (seven men and six women) refer to education policy; coverage is evenly split among these candidates, with none really standing out as the dominant contributor. Coverage on issues related to families and seniors is also fairly broad, with 32 candidates referring to these policy areas. The
largest contributors to the discussion were Jason Kenney and Olivia Chow, who respectively garnered 10.7 percent and 7.1 percent of coverage in this area. This coverage is largely a result of debate around changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that would limit the ability of Canadians to sponsor parents and grandparents through family reunification provisions. This issue was coded as related both to immigration and multiculturalism, as well as to families and seniors. Other candidates mention families and seniors issues much more generically, with coverage spread evenly among them.

When the coverage of so-called minority policy issues is considered in the aggregate, there are similarly no statistically significant gender differences. Overall, male and female candidates are about as likely to be connected to these issues. Nonetheless, some gendered differences exist in the coverage of crime and social welfare issues. Specifically, male candidates are more likely than female candidates to appear in coverage related to crime issues, with 12.3 percent of their coverage focusing on this area, compared to 5.3 percent for female candidates. Put another way, 80 percent of all crime mentions are linked to male candidates. Partly, this might reflect the fact that fully 70 percent of the Conservative candidates in the sample are male. This is important because male candidates are stereotyped as most capable of dealing with crime policy (Schneider 2009), and the Conservatives also ran on a "tough on crime" platform. Thus the high proportion of male Conservatives may be driving the association between crime policy mentions and male candidates.

In contrast, female candidates are significantly more likely than male candidates to appear in stories about social welfare, which includes issues related to social assistance, social housing, homelessness, poverty, and pensions, with 4.2 percent of their coverage focusing on this area, compared to 1.8 percent for male candidates. When issues related to social welfare are raised, 57.7 percent of the time, they are linked to a female candidate. The characteristics of the sampled candidates do not offer any clear explanations for this association. For example, given that the NDP is more likely to stress issues related to welfare, poverty, and homelessness, a large number of female NDP candidates in the sample could have driven the results. However, only one-quarter of the NDP candidates in the sample are women, so there is no notable overrepresentation. In addition, at the time of the election, the minister of human resources and skills development – the government portfolio most closely related to social welfare issues – was a man and not
included in my sample, so this is not the driver either. I conclude, then, that some policy issues remain gendered. Although there are no significant gender differences on traditional women's issues like health, education, and families and seniors, women are still more associated with social welfare than are men, and this arguably falls under the "caring" rubric. In contrast, men are more likely to be associated with the rough and tumble world of crime policy.

There are thus gendered and racialized differences in policy issue coverage, which raises a second question about intersectionality. Looking only at visible minority candidates, there are no statistically significant gender differences in the overall amount of policy mentions (38 percent of male visible minority candidate stories include at least one policy mention, compared to 37 percent for female visible minority candidates). Among white candidates, however, statistically significant differences exist with respect to the frequency of policy issue coverage; specifically, 28.1 percent of white male candidates' stories include a policy mention compared to 13.3 percent of white female candidates' stories. This finding suggests that where there is gender differentiation in overall policy mentions, it is being driven by white candidates, with white male candidates more likely to be covered talking about policy issues than their female counterparts. Policy, in other words, may be a man's game, but only among white candidates. Does this hold when we drill down and look not just at the amount of policy coverage that candidates receive, but more specifically at its type? Here, much starker gender differences emerge among visible minority candidates.

In particular, visible minority men are more likely than visible minority women to be connected to crime policy, while visible minority women figure more prominently than their male counterparts in the coverage of social welfare and immigration and multiculturalism policy issues. Specifically, 14.6 percent of visible minority men's coverage touches on crime policy issues, compared to 7.2 percent of visible minority women's coverage. With respect to social welfare issues, visible minority women receive two-thirds of this coverage, with 4.3 percent of their stories touching on this policy area, compared to 0.9 percent for male visible minority candidates. Immigration and multiculturalism issues feature in 10.9 percent of visible minority women's coverage, compared to 6.3 percent for visible minority male candidates. Visible minority men are also more likely to be connected to natural resource policy issues (2.8 percent of their coverage) than their female counterparts (no coverage). Finally, male visible minority candidates
are more likely than their female counterparts to be connected to health policy issues, with 4.0 percent of the former's coverage highlighting this area, compared to 0.7 percent of the latter's, although this difference was largely driven by the prominence of Ujjal Dosanjh – a visible minority man – in the coverage of health policy issues. There are no statistically significant gender differences among visible minority candidates in any of the other mainstream policy issues. Thus, to the extent that there are gender differences in policy issue coverage among visible minority candidates, it is in a few policy areas – namely crime, natural resources, social welfare, and health – and in only the last are the differences somewhat inconsistent with what the literature on gendered mediation would have us believe.

In sum, the coverage of policy issues is gendered, and the intersection of gender and race augments the effects in some cases. Overall, male candidates are more likely to be associated with “masculine” policy issues like the economy, natural resources, and crime. While there are no statistically significant gender differences in the coverage of issues related to health, education, and families, women candidates are more likely to be connected to social welfare issues, which arguably fall within the “caring” domain. As the earlier discussion on policy issues suggests, race does influence the extent to which candidates are connected to policy in general, and to particular issues specifically. Gender appears to multiply these effects in a few cases, including in the coverage of crime, social welfare, natural resources, and health.

Constituency Effects
Apart from candidates’ personal characteristics, the diversity of the constituencies in which they run may also affect coverage. One compelling suggestion is that to the extent that racialized coverage exists, it is a function of a riding's diversity and not the result of a focus on the candidate’s race or difference. For example, greater discussion of minority policy issues might be expected among candidates – both white and visible minority – who run in ethnoculturally diverse ridings, given that these issues are presumably of some interest to those constituents. Meanwhile, socio-demographic coverage may vary with riding diversity, although it is difficult to predict in which direction. On the one hand, newspapers in a less diverse riding might find a visible minority candidate’s socio-demographic background different and newsworthy, while on the other hand, to avoid charges of racism, they may avoid such discussion altogether. Conversely, the media in highly diverse ridings may draw attention to candidates’ racial backgrounds because race is
probably quite salient to voters who are themselves visible minorities. That said, because many of the candidates in highly diverse ridings are from minority backgrounds, drawing attention to socio-demographics is perhaps not newsworthy.

To test these propositions, I examined candidates’ coverage by riding diversity. As was shown in Table 1, there are thirty-four visible minority candidates in the candidate sample. Of these, seventeen ran in constituencies with visible minority populations that exceeded 50 percent (highly diverse ridings), seven ran in constituencies with visible minority populations between 15.1 percent and 49.9 percent (moderately diverse ridings), and ten ran in constituencies with visible minority populations of 15 percent or lower (homogeneous ridings). The distribution of the thirty-four white candidates is roughly the same, with sixteen having run in highly diverse ridings, eight in moderately diverse ridings, and ten in homogeneous ridings.

For both white and visible minority candidates, there is a statistically significant relationship between mentions of their riding’s demographic composition and the diversity of the riding. In particular, candidates who run in highly diverse ridings are most likely to receive coverage that mentions the demographic composition of their constituency; this seems intuitive. Among white candidates, 64.5 percent of all mentions of riding composition are directed towards candidates who ran in highly diverse ridings. By comparison, 79.2 percent of mentions of riding composition are directed at visible minorities who ran in highly diverse ridings. This tells us that in the highly diverse ridings that are most likely to pique the media’s interest in riding composition, news coverage will focus more on visible minority candidates than on their white counterparts – even though many white candidates run in these highly diverse ridings. In other words, coverage is racially differentiated, and the driver is the candidate’s race.

The pattern holds when we look at socio-demographic coverage by candidate race and riding diversity. Visible minority candidates – especially those who run in highly diverse ridings – are much more likely to receive coverage of their race, religion, language, and birthplace than other candidates. Visible minorities who run in highly diverse ridings receive about twice as much coverage of their socio-demographic backgrounds (13.8 percent of all their coverage) as do visible minorities who run in moderately diverse and homogeneous ridings, where such mentions make up 7.0 percent and 7.6 percent of those candidates’ coverage, respectively. I do not find this pattern in the coverage of white candidates who run in highly diverse
ridings. That is, the media do not disproportionately discuss the socio-demographic backgrounds of white candidates who run in diverse ridings, even though these candidates are racially distinct from their voters, a feature that might merit coverage. This silence suggests that whiteness is viewed as neutral or non-newsworthy. Again, the driver behind visible minority candidates' socio-demographic coverage is their race, not the diversity of their ridings.

Moreover, among white candidates, there is no statistically significant relationship between riding diversity and mentions of community support. White candidates' coverage is about as likely (or, really, unlikely) to mention community support, regardless of the diversity of the riding. Among visible minority candidates, however, there is a statistically significant relationship: the coverage of visible minorities running in highly diverse ridings is much more likely to mention support from particular communities – minority communities, specifically – than if the candidate runs in a less diverse riding. That is, 85.7 percent of mentions of visible minority candidates' support from particular communities occur in ridings with visible minority populations that exceed 50 percent. Much of this coverage implies that visible minority candidates running in such ridings will benefit from the support of their "co-ethnics." In other words, while the discussion of objective facts like riding composition is evenly spread among white and visible minority candidates, it is the latter – and particularly those visible minorities who run in highly diverse ridings – who receive coverage about their propensity to garner the support of (minority) communities.

While, on the surface, this coverage may be viewed as positive in that it conveys the impression that the candidate has support among voters, it is also problematic because it reinforces the impression that visible minority candidates run to represent those like them and win because of support from "their own." This is the kind of parochial portrayal that Jeremy Zilber and David Niven (2000) found in their examination of media coverage of black members of Congress. Such coverage leaves voters with the impression that visible minority candidates are inward-looking and cannot play the cultural bridging role that white candidates do. Moreover, it suggests that racial explanations, not objective qualifications, can account for visible minorities' success. Visible minorities are portrayed as winning because of what they are and who they know, not the skills and qualifications they bring to the table. This narrative is echoed in the coverage of party efforts to appeal to minority voters, to which I turn next.
Party Effects
During the 2008 election, increased attention was paid to so-called ethnic targeting strategies, which observers suggested the Conservative Party, in particular, was employing (Flanagan 2011). Ethnic targeting involves the identification of residentially concentrated pockets of voters who are perceived to be like-minded – often from the same ethnic group – and who can be mobilized through messaging that appeals to their priorities and values; such messages often include policy announcements related to immigration or multiculturalism. Sometimes, but not always, a candidate from the same ethnic group will be selected to run in the riding. The strategy can be successful because it matches candidates and their messaging to the perceived preferences of voters.

Given what has been said about the Conservatives’ use of ethnic targeting, we might expect party affiliation to affect socio-demographic coverage, but, surprisingly, with the exception of mentions of riding composition, partisanship and coverage appear to be unrelated. Among Liberal candidates, 10.4 percent of stories include a mention of the riding’s demographic composition, compared to 7.3 percent for Conservative candidates and 4.1 percent for NDP candidates, a difference that is statistically significant. Of those stories mentioning a riding’s demographic composition, the vast majority (87.8 percent) pertain to minority demographic mentions. That is, the article suggests that the riding has high proportions of visible minorities, immigrants, or other minority groups. Of these minority demographic mentions, 52.8 percent pertain to Liberal candidates, while 38.9 percent are in relation to Conservative candidates and 8.3 percent are directed at NDP candidates. In other words, Liberal candidates’ coverage is somewhat more likely to mention that the riding has a significant minority population, in spite of the attention given to the Conservatives’ ethnic targeting strategy.

This finding probably relates to the types of candidates who were fielded by each party. Although the Conservatives are increasingly running high-profile candidates in the so-called ethnic battlegrounds – the ridings in which the media would be most likely to make mention of minority demographics – this phenomenon is relatively recent. In 2008, even though the party had begun to implement a more concerted ethnic targeting strategy, the Conservative candidates in diverse ridings were still lower-profile than the Liberal candidates, who were often long-time incumbents and thus more likely to secure media coverage. The bulk of these high-profile Liberal candidates are also white, a finding that is bolstered when I look at mentions of
candidate race, birthplace, and community support by political party. Here, I find no statistically significant differences, suggesting that the media are commenting on the riding’s makeup, which is diverse and therefore newsworthy, while the backgrounds of the relevant candidates – mostly white – are thought not to be. That said, because the 2011 election saw increased use of ethnic targeting strategies with more high-profile Conservative candidates running in ridings with large minority populations, we may expect to find a stronger relationship between political party and socio-demographic coverage in that context.

Because ethnic targeting strategies typically include a policy component, we might also expect to see a relationship between political party and policy issue coverage. Given the Liberal Party’s historical reputation as the “party of immigrants,” I wondered if Liberal candidates would be more strongly connected to immigration and multiculturalism policy issues than candidates from the other two parties, or if the Conservative Party had succeeded in carving out a portion of this policy space. In fact, there are no statistically significant differences, meaning that all candidates, regardless of party, are about as likely to receive coverage on immigration and multiculturalism policy issues (see also Black and Hicks 2008). Although this contradicts conventional wisdom about the Liberal Party’s stranglehold on immigrant and ethnic voters, it is consistent with the narrative of the 2008 election, which increasingly positioned the Conservatives as the new party of immigrants and minorities (Marwah, Triadafilopoulos, and White 2013; Tolley 2013).

It also bears repeating that the candidate sample included the minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism – a white Conservative candidate – and a large proportion of the Conservatives’ immigration and multiculturalism issue mentions were directly connected to Jason Kenney. Research on additional elections could be instructive, especially since it really seems to matter which candidates occupy key positions in their parties. For example, were the minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism a visible minority, the results presented here might be quite different. For the time being, however, we can conclude that the traditional narrative of Liberals as the protector and promoter of immigrants and minorities may no longer hold.

Canadian Politics in Black and White
What should be made of the broad swath of data presented in this chapter? The results show that while the media provide balanced or race-neutral
reporting in the majority of stories, the coverage of candidates in Canadian politics is race-differentiated in a number of ways. First, the coverage of visible minority candidates is more racialized than the coverage of white candidates. The socio-demographic characteristics of visible minority candidates are mentioned more frequently than those of their white counterparts, and visible minority candidates are more likely to appear in accompanying photographs, a pattern that provides readers with additional clues about their racial backgrounds. This focus on candidates’ ethnocultural characteristics may cue negative associations for voters or induce them to think of visible minorities simply in terms of their demography rather than their skills and qualifications for office.

Second, there are very few aggregate differences in the coverage of white and visible minority candidates’ political viability. Contrary to some of the previous research in the field, this study does not find that visible minorities are less likely than their white counterparts to be portrayed as insiders or candidates of high quality. However, a deeper look reveals that positive viability coverage generally accrues to visible minority candidates only when they are known commodities with at least one electoral win under their belts. This finding suggests that visible minority candidates need to prove themselves before receiving positive viability coverage, a point that I take up further in Chapter 4.

Third, visible minority candidates are more likely to be portrayed as novelties, a tendency noted in Chapter 1 and one that contributes to narratives about visible minorities being atypical, unusual, or unexpected in the political arena. As a consequence, voters may be left with the impression that visible minority candidates do not really belong in politics.

Fourth, visible minority candidates are less frequently positioned in stories about the most electorally salient issues. Although visible minorities do not necessarily appear more frequently in stories about so-called minority issues, they are less likely to appear in stories about high-valence policy issues. During the 2008 electoral campaign, these were the economy and the environment, a function of the impending global recession as well as the Liberal Party’s focus on the “Green Shift.” Removing visible minority candidates from discussions about the most salient policy issues further distances them from the political arena.

Fifth, not only is the focus of visible minority candidates’ coverage different from that of their white counterparts, so too is its form. Although there are no real racial differences in the amount of coverage that candidates
receive, when visible minorities do appear in the media, they can expect their coverage to be less prominent and more negative than that of their white counterparts. They are also less likely to be quoted directly, meaning that they have fewer opportunities than white candidates to appeal to voters through their own words; this may be a result of judgments about visible minority candidates’ quoteability and communication skills, a point to which I return in Chapter 4.

Finally, it appears that candidate race – not the characteristics of the ridings in which candidates run – is driving the racialized coverage to which this chapter points. Yes, racialized coverage is higher, in general, in ridings with large visible minority populations, but it is highest when a visible minority candidate is running in such a riding. In other words, the media’s focus on race is not just due to incidental geographic characteristics, but rather is influenced by assumptions about the candidates running in those ridings. Even in highly diverse ridings, coverage of white candidates is not nearly as racialized as that of visible minority candidates. This suggests news judgment is based not only on the objective characteristics of the riding but also on subjective assumptions about the relevance of candidate race.

Of course, one reaction to these findings is that even if racialized coverage does exist, it represents only a portion of all candidates’ coverage. Skeptics will point out, for example, that socio-demographic coverage occurs in “just 14.4%” of all candidate stories so, to the extent that the media focus on racial aspects of a candidate’s background, it is in less than one-fifth of stories. The bulk of reporting is on other, non-racial characteristics. Be that as it may, this critique ignores that the amount of space devoted to any one subject is very limited. This point comes out plainly when we examine the coverage devoted to individual policy issues, shown in Table 6. Even the most prominent electoral issue – the economy – appeared in just 11.1 percent of candidates’ stories, meaning that the most significant policy area is discussed in fewer stories than candidates’ ethnocultural backgrounds. In this context, the amount of attention devoted to candidates’ socio-demographic characteristics is actually quite significant.

Moreover, frames do not need to be ubiquitous in order to have an impact. As Karrin Anderson (2011) points out in her study of the “pornification” of women’s political news coverage, part of the resonance of such framing is, first, that it is present and, second, that it is palatable. In other words, a frame is not important because of its prominence or frequency, but rather because of the extent to which it fits with conventional understandings of
politics and social relationships. This is the case with racialized framing in that it is neither the most common frame nor even that remarkable. But the coverage of visible minority candidates picks up on themes and narratives that fit with our understandings of race, multiculturalism, diversity, and politics. These include the assumption of whiteness as standard, tropes about “deserving immigrants” and “benevolent Canadians,” and judgments about what it takes to succeed in Canadian politics. Racialized framing is likely to have an impact precisely because it is so ordinary, so everyday.

Consider, as well, that the standards adopted for the identification of racialized coverage were rather high in that they required explicit mentions; coders were not to read into the data. This requirement may mean that the resulting estimates of racialized coverage are in fact conservative. Critics may further suggest that if racialized coverage is so subtle even trained coders do not uniformly detect it then it is likely to also be missed by members of the public. Such a critique positions “conscious recognition” as the appropriate test of impact, which ignores existing research showing that implicit appeals are in fact more influential than explicit appeals because they do not activate egalitarian impulses that might counter the racial message (Mendelberg 2001). Moreover, psychologists have found that citizens are more sensitive to implicit negative stimuli than implicit positive stimuli, again suggesting that messages may affect us in ways that we do not realize, particularly when the appeal is negative (Nasrallah, Carmel, and Lavie 2009). As a result, the fact that racialization may be hidden or even go unnoticed is not a sufficient test of impact.

We need to ask questions about the fairness of coverage, its consistency, and the ways in which media portrayals are differentiated by candidate race. That socio-demographics are mentioned in much smaller proportion of white candidates’ stories is significant because it suggests that a different standard of newsworthiness is being applied when a candidate is a visible minority. Moreover, that visible minority candidates’ stories are routinely more negative, less prominent, more filtered, and less likely to cover the most salient electoral issues suggests that candidates are covered differently depending on the colour of their skin. In a competitive electoral environment, even small differences can matter, and we should not turn a blind eye to these.

That these differences may systematically disadvantage visible minority candidates is a cause for concern. Indeed, racialized coverage is not evenly distributed nor in any way random. Mentions of candidate race appear
only in stories about visible minority candidates, 80 percent of references
to candidate birthplace appear in stories about visible minority candi-
dates, and, while rare, all novelty coverage is confined to visible minority
women. In other words, racialized coverage disproportionately affects vis-
ible minority candidates more than white candidates.

Beyond arguments of fairness and electoral consequences, racialized
coverage has an impact on the lives of real people. As is discussed in Chap-
ter 4, a number of visible minority candidates believe they are held to a
higher standard and are treated differently in the electoral arena because of
their race. In a democracy, that alone is cause for concern. Yes, we should
applaud the print media for reporting that is fair and even – a finding that is
relatively unsurprising in a country with a highly trained and professional
news corps – but we cannot be complacent about the presence of racialized
coverage. Although racial framing can be subtle, this chapter and those that
follow provide persuasive and consistent evidence that racial imbalance
exists in news coverage and disproportionately affects visible minority
candidates.