

Racial Mediation and Political News Coverage (in Canada)

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Operationalizing race

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- “We can develop critique and understanding with the simultaneous knowledge that sorting people into ‘races’ is neither scientifically real nor morally desirable” (Entman and Rojecki 2000, p. 242)
- Visible minority: individuals, excluding Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour
 - e.g., Chinese, South Asian, Black, Korean, Arab

Erin Tolley



Media and the Coverage of Race
in Canadian Politics

*Framed: Media and the
Coverage of Race in Canadian
Politics* (UBC Press, 2016)

Research questions

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- How do the media portray electoral candidates in Canadian politics?
- Does candidate race affect coverage?

Political news coverage is not *racist* but it is *racialized*.
The coverage of racial minority candidates is qualitatively different than that of white candidates

But isn't "it 2015"?

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Opinion: Finally, an inclusive federal cabinet that looks like Canada



JANET BAGNALL, SPECIAL TO MONTREAL GAZETTE

[More from Janet Bagnall, Special to Montreal Gazette](#)



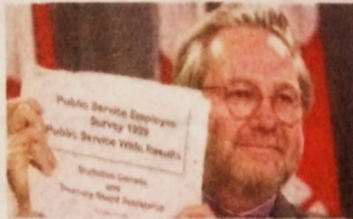
Diversity highlighted in PM's Senate choices

Members won't join caucus as Trudeau aims to build a less partisan chamber

JOANNA SMITH
OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA—An indigenous judge, an athlete, an educator and even a provincial New Democrat cabinet minister are among the seven Canadians that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has asked to join the Senate.

“(They) will help advance the important objective to transform the Senate into a less partisan and more independent institution that can perform its fundamental roles in the legislative process more effectively — including the representation of regional and minority interests — by removing the element of partisanship and ensuring that the interests of Canadians are placed before polit-



V. Peter Harder, Ontario

Harder spent 29 years in the federal public service, including as a deputy minister in priority departments such as foreign affairs, justice, public safety and the treasury board. He also served as the Sherpa to three G8 Summits, is an expert on Canada-China relations and is active in his community. Harder also headed up the Trudeau government's transition team.



Frances Lankin, Ontario

A former Ontario cabinet minister in the NDP government of Bob Rae, Lankin also spent more than a decade as the CEO of United Way Toronto. She has served on the Security Intelligence Review Committee and is currently chair of the National NewsMedia Council, on the board for Hydro One and chairs the social responsibility committee for the OLG.



Ratna Omidvar, Ontario

Born in Iran, Omidvar is the chair of Lifeline Syria, which has been helping to co-ordinate refugee sponsorship efforts in the GTA. She is founding executive director and adjunct professor of the Global Diversity and Migration Exchange at the Ted Rogers School of Management, at Ryerson University, a director of the Centre for Mental Health and Addiction and was executive director and president of Maytree from 1998 to 2014.

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Paul McLeod @pdmcleod · Feb 23

Full list of MPs who did not vote is at the bottom of the story.

Hardy Weinberg @Hardywein

@pdmcleod @K_elly_B how did the Sikhs & Jewish MPs vote? BDS is hardly a "Muslim" movement.



Paul McLeod @pdmcleod · Feb 23

Safe to assume the Conservatives who missed the vote did so for logistical reasons (and a fair few Liberals also).

Moebius Stripper @moebius_strip

Among the 57 absences/abstentions, the one that surprises me the most is Jason Kenney. [twitter.com/pdmcleod/statu...](https://twitter.com/pdmcleod/status...)



Paul McLeod @pdmcleod · Feb 23

In total, 43 Liberal MPs skipped the vote to condemn BDS. [#cdnpoli](#)



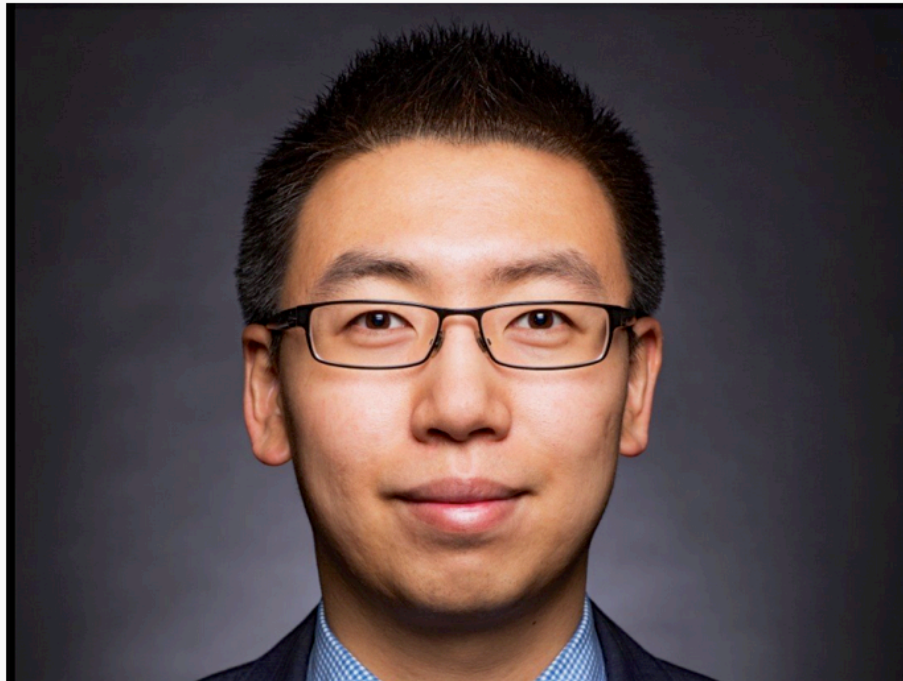
The Gargoyle - Former Poilievre aide nominated as Conservative candidate in Nepean



GLEN MCGREGOR, OTTAWA CITIZEN

[More from Glen McGregor, Ottawa Citizen](#)

Published on: June 29, 2015 | Last Updated: June 29, 2015 4:48 PM EDT



Andy Wang, a former aide to Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre, has been selected as the Conservative candidate in the new federal riding of Nepean. [ANDYWANG.CA](#)



SHARE

Ethnic politics helped elect a former aide to Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre as the party's candidate in the new riding of Nepean, a losing contender for the nomination alleged Monday.



ADJUST

[Andy Wang](#) was selected as the Conservative candidate at a nomination meeting Sunday night, defeating consultant and author Bob Plamondon.

Wang worked for five years in Poilievre's constituency office and Parliament Hill office. He

From the *Ottawa Citizen*:

“Ethnic politics helped elect a former aide to Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre”

“When Nav and Omar organize, it’s ethnic politics. When I organize, I’m just a good organizer. When Omar or Nav express concerns about anti-terrorism measures or foreign policy, it’s because of their ancestry or religion. When I question it . . . I’m debating hard choices.”

-- Mark Holland, Member of Parliament

Minorities in the media

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- Invisibility
 - ▣ Little difference in amount of coverage
- Selective visibility
 - ▣ Few minority “experts” (Cukier et al. 2010, Informed Opinions 2016)
 - ▣ Athletes, entertainers, criminals (Fleras 2011)
 - ▣ Narrow range of occupations (Baumann & Ho 2014)



Racialized news coverage

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- Race first

- (McIlwain & Caliendo 2011; Terkildsen & Damore 1999; Jeffries 2002; Major & Coleman 2008; Carstarphen 2009)

- Unconventional outsiders

- (Zilber & Niven 2000; Jiwani 2006)

- Parochial policy interests

- (Entman 1993, Schaffner & Gadson 2004; Gilens 1996, 2003)

- Implicit appeals

- (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino et al. 2002)

Theoretical priors

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- Media as a gatekeeper
 - ▣ Media a primary link between citizens and politicians
- Institutionalized news norms and judgment
 - ▣ Novelty, timeliness, conflict, credibility, relevance
- Framing and heuristics
 - ▣ Influences how people evaluate actors and issues
- Gendered mediation
 - ▣ Gender influences how candidates are covered
- New / modern racism
 - ▣ Prejudices now more subtle, nuanced

Racial mediation

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- News judgment about story angle, quotes or other elements may be influenced by racial assumptions
- Politics are covered in ways that reflect dominant cultural norms, ideologies, and the assumption of “whiteness” as standard
- Racialized coverage versus racist coverage
 - Racialized coverage is more subtle; may be unintentional, neutral or even positive
 - But includes racial cues, considerations and narratives
 - Often results in coverage that you wouldn't see if the subject of the story was white

Media study data and methods

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- Content analysis of candidates' coverage
 - ▣ Sample of 68 candidates (including 34 racial minorities)
 - ▣ 2008 federal election, writ period
 - ▣ All candidate stories in 18 English-language dailies (n = 980 stories)
- Detailed codebook, 25+ hours of coder training
- Three independent coders
 - ▣ High reliability (average K = 0.87)
 - ▣ Comparison to automated method (Tolley 2015)

Key variables

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- Bibliographic details
 - ▣ Article title, date, paper, number of words, news or opinion piece, page number, photo, etc.
- Form and focus of coverage
 - ▣ Prominence
 - ▣ Tone
 - ▣ Filtering
 - ▣ Framing
- Candidate data
 - ▣ Gender, race, party, elected or defeated, incumbent, percentage racial minority in riding

Prominence of coverage

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	Front-page stories	Inside-page stories
Racial minority candidate	6.8%	93.2%
White candidate	11.8%	88.2%
<i>All candidates</i>	9.5%	90.5%
p < 0.01		

Of all the front-page candidate stories in the sample (n=93), 66.7% are about white candidates

Tone of coverage

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	Mostly negative	Neutral	Mostly positive
Racial minority candidate	7.5%	88.8%	3.7%
White candidate	4.2%	89.4%	6.5%
<i>All candidates</i>	5.7%	89.1%	5.2
p < 0.05			

White candidates are 1.75 times more likely to be coverage positively than are racial minority candidates.

Candidate frames

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- Socio-demographic frame
- Policy issues frame
- Viability frame



Socio-demographic coverage

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- Proportion of stories mentioning candidate race, birthplace, riding composition, community support

	Race*	Birthplace*	Riding composition*	Community support
Racial minority candidate stories	6.8%	3.5%	10.6%	1.5%
White candidate stories	0%	0.8%	5.9%	0.8%
All candidate stories	3.2%	2.0%	8.1%	1.1%
*p < 0.05				

The turbaned Sikh

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“Tim Uppal spent five years spinning discs – mostly hip-hop Punjabi mix music – as the host of a show on a multilingual radio station in his hometown . . . 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 . . . Mr. Uppal is a first-born son and a first-generation Canadian. His parents are from rural Punjab.”

The Bollywood princess

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“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.”

The “sketchy” Asian

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“The country’s first Japanese-Canadian MP has done some good things at CIDA. Unfortunately, her legacy for most Canadians will be a photograph of her in sunglasses, cigarette dangling from her lips, that makes her look like the driver of the getaway car.”



Policy issue coverage

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- Frequency of policy mentions not related to candidate race
- Racial minorities more likely to be linked to crime issues
 - ▣ But not more likely to be linked to immigration, multiculturalism or social welfare issues
 - ▣ Note the “Kenney effect” however
- Racial minorities less likely to be linked to high-valence issues like economy and environment
- Findings don’t correspond with racial minorities’ statement of their *actual* policy interests

Minority candidates must prove viability

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	All viability mentions (% of stories)	Insider mentions (% of stories)	Quality mentions (% of stories)
Racial minority incumbents	87.0	86.8	5.7
White incumbents	84.5	82.6	6.6
Racial minority challengers	7.4***	5.0***	2.5
White challengers	31.0***	27.1***	7.6
***p < 0.01			

Candidate race influences media's coverage of viability

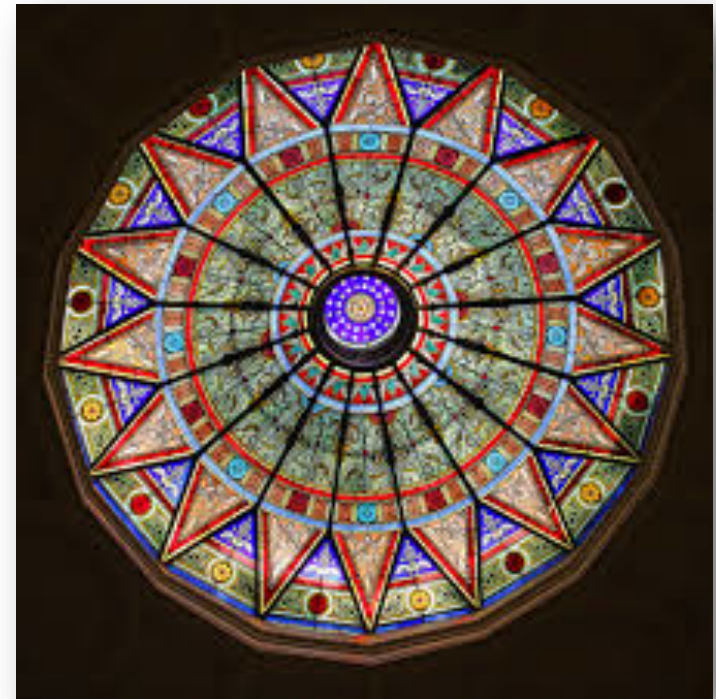
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Candidate viability		No insider or quality mentions (% stories)	Insider <u>or</u> quality mention (% stories)	Insider <u>and</u> quality mention (% stories)
Least viable	All candidates	71	26	3
	Racial minority	94	6	0
	White	52	42	6
Most viable	All candidates	12	83	6
	Racial minority	14	80	6
	White	10	85	5

Stained glass ceiling

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- ❑ What about intersectionality?
- ❑ Coverage of 23 racial minority women MPs
 - ❑ Qualitative approach
 - ❑ 300+ stories
 - ❑ Globe & Mail, National Post, and Toronto Star
 - ❑ 1993 – 2013
- ❑ Evidence of racial and gendered mediation



Exotic foreigners

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- Vivian Barbot
 - “smoky captivating voice”
- Ruby Dhalla
 - “young drop-dead gorgeous Indo-Canadian woman,” “like something out of a Bollywood movie”
- Hedy Fry
 - “flamboyant,” “wiggled her hips”
- Rathika Sitsabaiesan
 - “Why don’t you wear a sari”



Famous firsts

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- **1993**: “There is something to being the first of this or the first of [that] elected, it’s something of note and provides a good role model. But I don’t think your ethnic origin should be the first thing talked about”
- **2005**: “One of the few black women to win a seat”



Jean Augustine
“First black woman MP”

Bad immigrants and model minorities

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- “Angry,” “pissed off,” “loose cannon”
- “Prone to intemperate remarks”
- “Complaining, “protesting”

- “Unlike her predecessor Hedy Fry, who saw bigotry everywhere, Augustine does not think overt discrimination is common.”

'Cross-burning' furor hits Liberal

DANIEL LEBLANC AND ROBERT MATAS

OTTAWA and VANCOUVER — DANIEL LEBLANC AND ROBERT MATAS V
Published Friday, Mar. 23, 2001 12:00AM EST
Last updated Saturday, Mar. 21, 2009 9:45AM EDT



Mistakes

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- “On Parliament Hill, if a minority makes a misstep, it becomes a huge story, and their picture is on the front page . . . But if the same misstep was made by another person of the same education and same everything but was white, it would not be a front page story”
-- White candidate
- “The media make it a story because the person is a minority. Chinese or Japanese or Filipino or African, it’s a huge story: ‘Look at these people acting up again. They’ve made another mistake. They put their foot in it’”
-- Racial minority Senator

Minimized credentials

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- List of cabinet ministers: “Gerry Byrne, Atlantic Development; Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State for Children and Youth; Paul Devillers, Amateur Sport; and Jean Augustine, junior minister for multiculturalism and status of women”
- Ms. Dhalla versus Dr. Dhalla
- “Community activist”

Diversity in newsrooms

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- About 5% of newsroom reporters and editors have racial minority backgrounds
- Institutional norms influence reporting even among journalists with racial minority backgrounds
- Diversity training uncommon for journalists
 - 57% of journalism schools don't have a single course on diversity and reporting
 - Only 2 programs have mandatory courses
- Unclear guidelines about “relevance” of race

Canadian Press Stylebook

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- “Identify a person by race, colour, national origin or immigration status only when it is truly pertinent”
- “Race is pertinent in reporting an accomplishment unusual in a particular race: for example, if a Canadian of Chinese origin is named to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame”
 - ▣ What is a *racially unusual accomplishment*?
 - ▣ Why a section on sexism, but no section on racism?

Analogous news judgment

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The Reverse Test:

Would I include this information in a story about a white person?

Colour-blind, or just plain blind?

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“White people often go out of their way to say they don’t see colour when they look at me – in those moments, I’m tempted to recommend an optometrist. I know they’re just expressing a desire for equality, but I don’t want to be erased in the process”

-- Toronto writer Desmond Cole

**Sure, but aren't other countries
much more racist than Canada?**

Research gaps

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- ☐ Other media?
- ☐ Other groups?
- ☐ Other time periods?
- ☐ Other levels of government?
- ☐ Other coding methods?
- ☐ Candidate self-presentation?
- ☐ Effects?

Conclusions

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- ❑ Race still matters in Canadian politics
- ❑ Media coverage isn't racist per se, but it is racialized
 - ❑ News judgment is applied differently when the subject of the story is a racial minority
- ❑ Raises questions about
 - ❑ Media's roles in providing information to voters
 - ❑ Inclusiveness of political institutions
 - ❑ Continued salience of race

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Framed: main findings

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- Candidate race affects structure and substance of racial minorities' news coverage
- In comparison to white candidates, racial minority candidates' coverage is:
 - ▣ more focused on socio-demographic characteristics
 - ▣ less often about high-valence policy issues (e.g., the economy)
 - ▣ more negative, less prominent
- Intersectional impacts for racial minority women
- Non-incumbent racial minority candidates particularly disadvantaged

Star overdid 'Somali' references in first report of drug dealers peddling Rob Ford crack video: Public Editor

Members of Toronto's Somali community were understandably distressed by the many mentions of "Somali" drug dealers in the Star's first report of Rob Ford crack video allegations.



 Tweet



0



reddit this!



By: Kathy English Public Editor, Published on Fri May 24 2013

As a member of a Toronto District School Board task force aimed at curbing the dropout rate for Somali students, Abdi Aidid well understands the sting of negative perceptions and the role the media can play in creating those perceptions.

[Aidid, 21, who begins studies at Yale University law school](#) this fall, aims to make a difference in his community. Last week he sent a thoughtful email to the Star to express his concerns about our explosive [May 17 Page 1 story](#) about a cellphone video that appears to show Mayor Rob Ford smoking crack cocaine that is being shopped around Toronto "by a group of Somali men involved in the drug trade."

Aidid and numerous others in his community were distressed greatly by the many references to "Somali" drug dealers in the Star's first report of the Ford crack video. They believe reporting that fact contributes to negative stereotypes and "criminalizes" the entire community.

Editorial: Tragedy in La Loche deserves Trudeau's presence



OTTAWA CITIZEN EDITORIAL BOARD

[More from Ottawa Citizen Editorial Board](#)

Published on: January 25, 2016 | Last Updated: January 25, 2016 7:08 PM EDT



Trudeau, on the First Nations file as others, was positioning himself as the opposite of Harper — accountable and open. He was going to lead from the vanguard. This is why he should be in La Loche now, not just Goodale. There are myriad reasons why getting there would've been complicated. But the kind of guy Trudeau said he was to Canadians would've made it work.

He should be there, spending time with the heartbroken people in a small town with two bars and a liquor store on Main Street, but no hotel and no family restaurant.

Filtering

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	Quote from candidate	Paraphrase about candidate's policy position
Racial minority candidate	31.4%	26.4%
White candidate	42.2%	32.9%
<i>All candidates</i>	37.2%	29.9%
Quotes: $p < 0.01$; paraphrases: $p < 0.05$		