

2015 Election — Visible Minority Members of Parliament: Close to Parity

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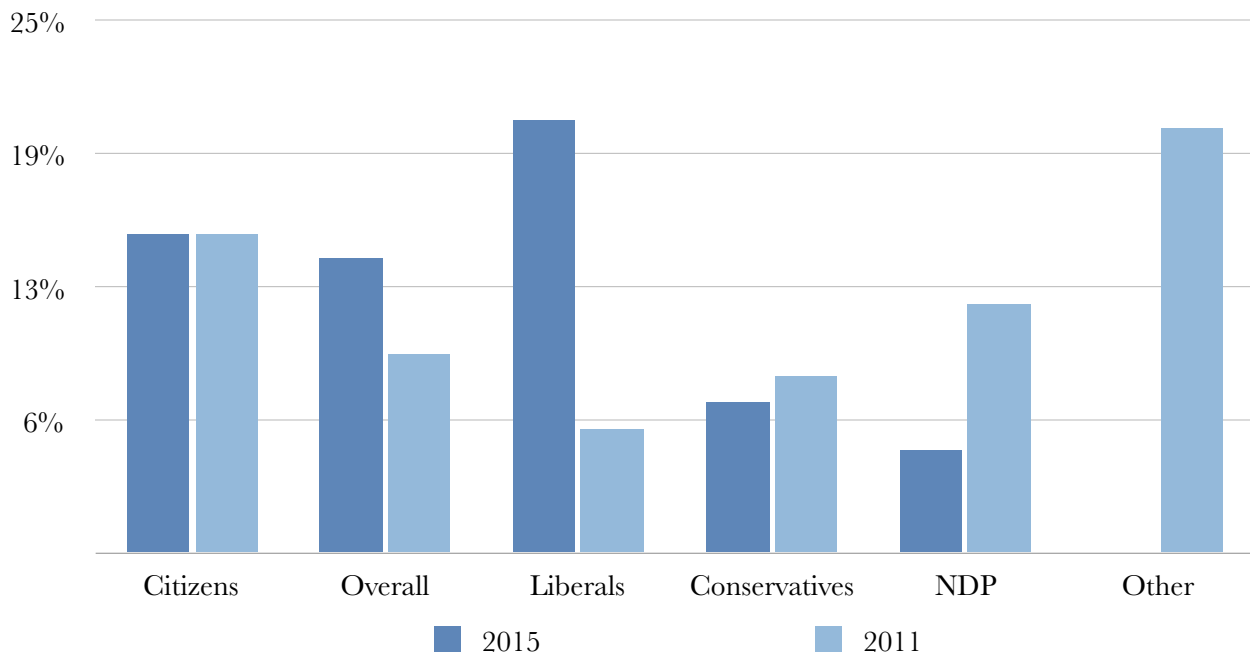
In contrast to the 2011 election, where 9.4 percent of all MPs were visible minorities, 2015 representation is aligned to the number of visible minority citizens (14 percent compared to 15 percent). Moreover, the success of the Liberal Party in decisively winning the visible minority vote suggests that the Conservative Party's extensive outreach to immigrant and visible minority communities had limited impact in stemming losses, and that concerns over the impact of changes to citizenship and immigration may have played a part.

Moreover, the percentage of visible minorities elected was identical to the percentage of visible minority candidates, which also had increased to 14 percent from 10 percent in the elections of 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2011 (see [Visible Minority Candidates – 2015 Election – Background Note](#) for details). The Liberal party had the most visible minority candidates (16 percent) with the Conservative party and the NDP had slight under-representation (13 percent)

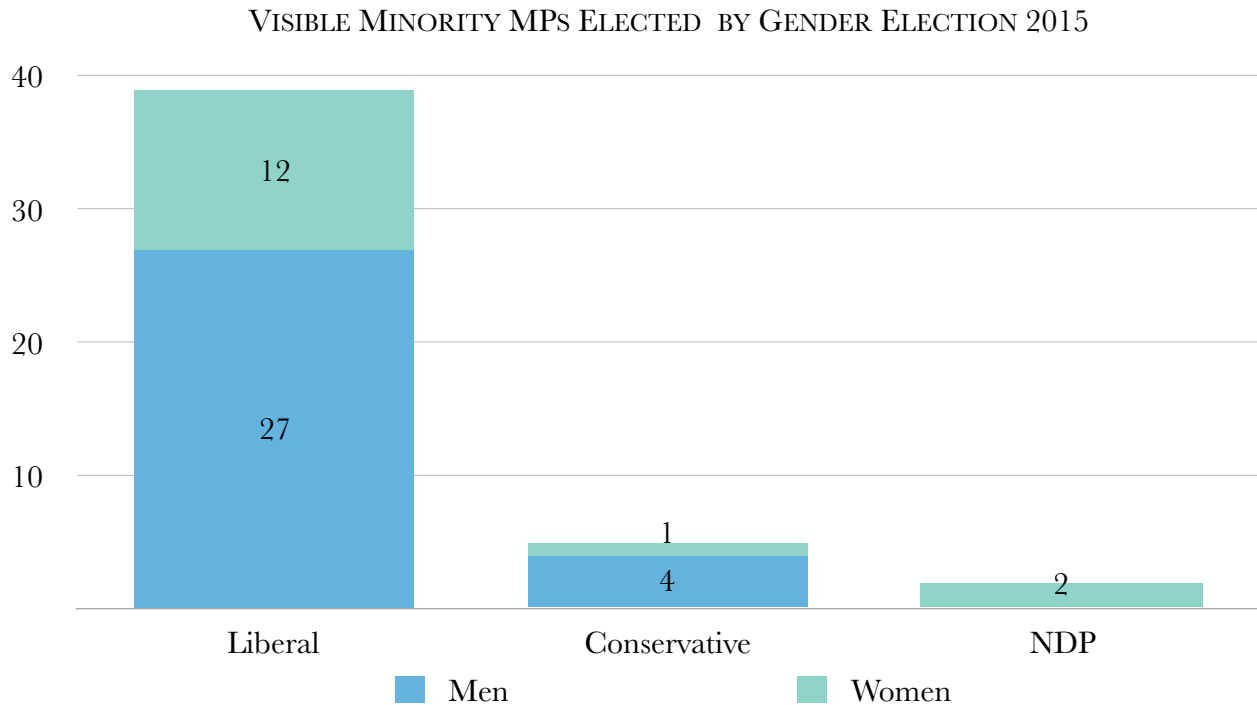
For comparison, the number of women and Aboriginal MPs only slightly increased in 2015. Analysis by [Equal Voice](#) shows the number of elected rose from 25 percent in 2011 to 26 percent today (88 women). Representation of Aboriginal peoples also increased to 10 seats (3 percent) from 7.

To assess visible minority representation I have used candidate names, photos and biographies to identify visible minority candidates. Although not as exact as identifying women candidates (e.g., subjectivity in analyzing photos), it nevertheless provides a reasonably accurate indication of how well Canadian political party candidates represent the population of visible minorities who are also Canadian citizens (15 percent). I was not able to break this down by those who are first generation immigrants and those who were born in Canada (second generation).

FEDERAL VISIBLE MINORITY MP - 2015 AND 2011 ELECTIONS



The chart above contrasts the 2015 visible minority representation with the 2011 election results. Not surprisingly, the Liberals, given their overall strong election result, will have the caucus with the largest number of visible minority MPs: 39 or 21.2 percent, significantly above the percentage of visible minority citizens (and Liberal candidates). Conversely, given their poor results, both the Conservatives and the NDP elected less than half of their visible minority candidates.



Looking at 2015 results only, the chart above provides the comparative numbers for each party in the 46 ridings that elected visible minority MPs, minority, broken down by gender. As others have noted, given that the overall number of visible minority MPs is comparable to the number of visible minority candidates (14 percent), visible minority candidates ran in ridings where they can be elected,

While 23 of these 46 MPs come from ridings where 50 percent are visible minority, 15 come from ridings between 20 to 50 percent visible minority. Surprisingly, eight come from ridings with less than 20 percent visible minority, and four of those with less than five percent. In other words, visible minorities were even elected in ridings where over 80 percent are non-visible minorities.

Visible minority MPs are 67 percent men, 33 percent women, higher than the percentage of all women MPs (26 percent).

Liberal visible minority candidates won 39 seats (85 percent), the Conservatives five (11 percent), the NDP 2 (4 percent).

Table 1 lists the ridings, their percentage of visible minorities, and the MPs elected.

Turning to the 33 ridings where visible minorities comprise more than 50 percent of the population (which we will call visible *majority* ridings), the following characteristics emerge:

- Both two-thirds of candidates (68) and two-thirds of elected MPs (23) are visible minority;
- 48 percent are visible minority men, 21 percent visible minority women;
- The Liberals took all but three of these ridings (two went Conservative, one NDP);
- The popular vote for these 33 ridings shows stronger support for Liberals among visible *majority* ridings (52.3 percent) compared to overall results (39.5 percent). Riding-by-riding, the winning Liberal candidate won over 50 percent of the vote, a majority not just a plurality;
- In contrast, the popular vote for the Conservatives in these ridings is virtually identical (31.6 percent) to their overall results (31.9 percent). It would appear their base vote is the same among visible minorities as the general population.
- The NDP did less well in these ridings (15.9 percent) compared to their overall results (19.7 percent);
- Out of the 9 ridings where Chinese Canadians formed the dominant group, 3 Chinese Canadians were elected. In contrast, out of the 14 ridings where South Asians formed the dominant group, 8 were elected, mainly Sikh Canadians; and,
- 10 non-visible minority MPs were elected in these ridings.

Table 2 provides the demographics of these ridings, along with the names of elected MPs and their share of the popular vote.

Implications

In many ways, this is a remarkable achievement, achieving close to parity in parliamentary representation of visible minorities. No other comparable country is as representative of its population.

Visible minority MPs, as all MPs, will be expected to play not only on the issues of interest to their constituents but also on broader policy issues and debates. And hopefully, the incoming government will provide greater latitude for all MPs for debates and discussion, rather than the excessive reliance on centralized talking points under the Conservative government.

They can be expected also to play on foreign policy and diaspora issues of interest to their community, much as other ethnic communities such as Ukrainian Canadians and Canadian Jews continue to do.

Secondly, with 39 visible minority MPs in the incoming Liberal government, we will need to see how many are appointed to cabinet and to which positions, and how this is balanced against other cabinet representation issues like regional representation (PM Trudeau has already committed to gender parity). The Conservative government relegated visible minorities to junior

positions (multiculturalism, sport, seniors) and it remains to be seen whether Liberal Prime Minister Trudeau will appoint a visible minority member to a more senior position.

Thirdly, the Conservative party needs to reflect on the effectiveness of the extensive outreach of Minister Kenney and others to new Canadian communities. Being 20 percent behind the Liberals in many of these ridings means that 'being there' is not enough. While some of this shift reflects the general trend in urban Canada, it also likely reflects changes to citizenship and immigration policy which impact on these communities (e.g., more difficult family reunification and citizenship). And overplaying the niqab and related issues in such an obvious wedge politics manner can hardly have helped.

One thing is clear. Visible minorities are an intrinsic part of electoral and political strategies. No party can afford to ignore them, given their size and political weight. And one of the election's lessons is that the divisiveness of wedge politics is not a winning strategy among visible minority and other voters. Hopefully, that will be an enduring lesson, sparing Canadians of whatever origin, of such approaches in the future, and strengthening overall integration.

TABLE 1: VISIBLE MINORITY MPs ELECTION IN THE 2015 ELECTION

	Riding	% VisMin	Party	Elected MP
ON	Scarborough North	90.1%	LPC	Shaun Chen
ON	Brampton East	87.6%	LPC	Raj Grewal
BC	Vancouver South	79.2%	LPC	Harjit Sajjan
ON	Scarborough–Agincourt	79.0%	LPC	Arnold Chan
ON	Markham–Unionville	78.8%	CPC	Bob Saroya
ON	Mississauga–Malton	75.2%	LPC	Navdeep Bains
BC	Surrey–Newton	72.2%	LPC	Sukh Dhaliwal
ON	Brampton West	71.2%	LPC	Kamal Khera
BC	Richmond Centre	70.3%	CPC	Alice Wong
ON	Scarborough–Rouge Park	70.2%	LPC	Gary Anandasangaree
ON	Mississauga Centre	67.0%	LPC	Omar Alghabra
ON	Don Valley North	67.0%	LPC	Gang Tan
ON	Scarborough Centre	64.4%	LPC	Salma Zahid
ON	Brampton North	61.4%	LPC	Ruby Sahota
ON	Willowdale	60.3%	LPC	Ali Ehsassi
BC	Surrey Centre	60.1%	LPC	Randeep Singh Sarai
AB	Calgary Skyview	59.6%	LPC	Darshan Kang
ON	Brampton South	59.5%	LPC	Sonia Sidhu
ON	Mississauga–Erin Mills	59.5%	LPC	Iqra Khalid
ON	Don Valley East	55.9%	LPC	Yasmin Ratansi
ON	Richmond Hill	54.9%	LPC	Majid Jowhari
ON	York South–Weston	54.3%	LPC	Ahmed Hussen
ON	Brampton Centre	53.7%	LPC	Rameshwer Sangha
ON	Mississauga–Streetsville	47.7%	LPC	Gagan Sikand
AB	Calgary Forest Lawn	47.6%	CPC	Deepak Obhrai

	Riding	% VisMin	Party	Elected MP
BC	Vancouver East	44.8%	NDP	Jenny Kwan
AB	Edmonton Mill Woods	42.4%	LPC	Amarjeet Sohi
QC	Bourassa	40.2%	LPC	Emmanuel Dubourg
AB	Edmonton Manning	33.9%	CPC	Ziad Abouttaif
BC	Vancouver Centre	33.8%	LPC	Hedy Fry
QC	Dorval–Lachine–LaSalle*	30.3%	LPC	Anju Dhillon
QC	Honoré Mercier	28.1%	LPC	Pablo Rodriguez
ON	Nepean	27.8%	LPC	Chandra Arya
ON	Parkdale–High Park	25.6%	LPC	Arif Virani
QC	Vimy	24.5%	LPC	Eva Nassif
BC	Mission–Matsqui–Fraser Canyon	22.9%	LPC	Jati Sidhu
QC	Laval des Iles	20.7%	LPC	Faycal El Khoury
ON	Waterloo	20.2%	LPC	Bardish Chagger
ON	Whitby	19.2%	LPC	Celina Caesar Chavannes
ON	Kitchener South–Hespele	17.3%	LPC	Marwan Tabbara
ON	Kitchener Centre	14.6%	LPC	Raj Saini
QC	Hull–Aylmer	14.6%	LPC	Greg Fergus
QC	Thérèse De Blainville*	4.4%	LPC	Ramez Ayoub
ON	Wellington–Halton Hills	3.8%	CPC	Michael Chong
ON	Peterborough–Kawartha*	3.3%	LPC	Maryam Monsef
QC	Salaberry–Suroît	1.1%	NDP	Anne Minh Thu Quach

TABLE 2: 2015 RIDINGS WITH MORE THAN 50 PERCENT VISIBLE MINORITIES AND THEIR MPs

Riding	Top 2 Visible Minorities	Religious Minorities >5%	Elected MP	% Vote
Greater than 70% Visible Minority	Highlight indicates dominant community twice as large as next Visible Minority (no threshold) or Religious Minority (20 percent threshold)			
ON Scarborough North	Chinese (44%) South Asian (25%)	Hindu (15%) Muslim (7%) Buddhist (7%)	Shaun Chen (Lib)	49.4%
ON Brampton East	South Asian (60%) Black (13%)	Sikh (34%) Hindu (20%) Muslim (8%)	Raj Grewal (Lib)	52.9%
ON Markham-Thornhill	Chinese (35%) South Asian (31%)	Hindu (17%) Muslim (10%) Buddhist (6%)	John McCallum (Lib)	56.4%
BC Vancouver South	Chinese (40%) South Asian (18%)	Sikh (12%) Buddhist (7%)	Harjit Sajjan (Lib)	50.5%
ON Scarborough-Agincourt	Chinese (46%) South Asian (15%)	Hindu (8%) Muslim (7%) Buddhist (6%)	Arnold Chan (Lib)	53.1%
ON Markham-Unionville	Chinese (57%) South Asian (11%)	Buddhist (5%) Hindu (5%) Muslim (5%)	Bob Saroya (CPC)	50.5%
ON Mississauga-Malton	South Asian (38%) Black (10%)	Muslim (13%) Hindu (13%) Sikh (12%)	Navdeep Bains (Lib)	60.4%
ON Etobicoke North	South Asian (30%) Black (21%)	Hindu (15%) Muslim (14%) Sikh (9%)	Kirsty Duncan (Lib)	63.2%
BC Surrey-Newton	South Asian (59%) Filipino (3.9%)	Sikh (44%) Muslim (7%) Hindu (6%)	Sukh Dhaliwal (Lib)	57.2%

	Riding	Top 2 Visible Minorities	Religious Minorities >5%	Elected MP	% Vote
ON	Humber River-Black Creek	Black (22%) South Asian (16%)	Muslim (11%) Hindu (8%) Buddhist (6%)	Judy Sgro (Lib)	68.5%
ON	Brampton West	South Asian (34%) Black (21%)	Sikh (13%) Hindu (12%) Muslim (7%)	Kamalpreet Khera (Lib)	56.8%
BC	Vancouver Kingsway	Chinese (38%) Filipino (13%)	Buddhist (10%)	Don Davies (NDP)	48.2%
BC	Steveston-Richmond East	Chinese (43%) South Asian (11%)	Buddhist (6%) Sikh (6%)	Joe Peschisolido (Lib)	47.1%
BC	Richmond Centre	Chinese (51%) Filipino (6%)	Buddhist (7%)	Alice Wong (CPC)	44.8%
ON	Scarborough-Rouge Park	South Asian (31%) Black (14%)	Hindu (19%) Muslim (9%)	Gary Anandasangaree (Lib)	61.4%
50-70% Visible Minority					
ON	Scarborough-Guildwood	South Asian (32%) Black (14%)	Hindu (16%) Muslim (15%)	John McKay (Lib)	61.4%
ON	Don Valley North	Chinese (32%) South Asian (10%)	Muslim (11%)	Gang Tan (Lib)	52.6%
ON	Mississauga Centre	South Asian (26%) Chinese (12%)	Muslim (17%) Hindu (9%)	Omar Algebra (Lib)	56.4%
ON	Scarborough Centre	South Asian (25%) Filipino (11%)	Hindu (13%) Muslim (12%)	Salma Zahid (Lib)	53.5%
BC	Burnaby South	Chinese (34%) South Asian (8%)	Buddhist (5%)	Adam Pankratz (Lib)	36.5%
BC	Fleetwood-Port Kells	South Asian (27%) Chinese (11%)	Sikh (20%)	Ken Hardie (Lib)	48.0%
ON	Brampton North	South Asian (37%) Black (11%)	Sikh (20%) Hindu (11%) Muslim (6%)	Ruby Sahota (Lib)	49.5%
ON	Willowdale	Chinese (23%) Korean (10%)	Muslim (12%) Jewish (7%)	Ali Ehsassi (Lib)	54.7%

Riding		Top 2 Visible Minorities	Religious Minorities >5%	Elected MP	% Vote
BC	Surrey Centre	South Asian (33%) Filipino (8%)	Sikh (24%)	Randeep Singh Sarai (Lib)	47.5%
AB	Calgary Skyview	South Asian (31%) Filipino (8%)	Sikh (16%) Muslim (14%)	Darshan Kang (Lib)	49.0%
ON	Brampton South	South Asian (36%) Black (12%)	Sikh (19%) Hindu (10%) Muslim (6%)	Sonia Sidhu (Lib)	53.3%
ON	Mississauga-Erin Mills	South Asian (24%) Chinese (10 %)	Muslim (16%) Hindu (6%)	Iqra Khalid (Lib)	50.6%
ON	Don Valley East	South Asian (16%) Black (9%)	Muslim (19%)	Yasmin Rattans (Lib)	59.2%
ON	Richmond Hill	Chinese (28%) South Asian (7%)	Muslim (11%) Jewish (5%)	Majid Jowhari (Lib)	47.7%
ON	York South-Weston	Black (21%) Latin American (9%)	Muslim (8%)	Ahmed Hussien (Lib)	48.2%
ON	Brampton Centre	South Asian (26%) Black (12 %)	Hindu (10%) Muslim (9%) Sikh (8%)	Rameshwer Sangha (Lib)	50.1%
ON	Scarborough Southwest	South Asian (18%) Black (10%)	Muslim (12%) Hindu (7%)	Bill Blair (Lib)	53.9%
QC	Saint-Laurent	Arab (15%) Chinese (8%)	Muslim (17%) Jewish (7%)	Stéphane Dion (Lib)	63.3%