

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Heterogeneity in Immigrants' Municipal Engagement and Participation in Calgary

by

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Abstract

Canadian political science has a long history of studying elections at the provincial and federal levels, but there is a gap in studying municipal elections. Additionally, Canadian political science has some interest in studying immigrant participation in provincial and federal elections, but more research on immigrant involvement in municipal elections is required. The limited research on immigrant voting behaviour also combines immigrant communities into homogeneous groups for research purposes, which does not allow for a nuanced understanding of immigrant communities. Canadian political science, therefore, needs more research regarding immigrant participation in municipal government, engagement in local elections, and the differences among immigrant communities.

My research addresses these gaps in three ways. First, I explore the differences between immigrant and non-immigrant groups in Calgary to establish potential differences in their levels of interest and attention to municipal politics. I then address the differences among immigrant communities when it comes to their engagement with municipal governments and their participation in local elections. I then turn to potential policy implications that could help immigrant communities engage with local government and elections. My research finds that while there are similarities between immigrant communities, there are also significant differences. These differences are important because they can shape how immigrant communities see municipal politics or their desires to participate. My research finds that scholars need to think simultaneously *less* and *more* about immigrants in Calgary's municipal elections. Scholars need to think *less* about immigrants and immigration in the sense that what matters most is the duration, or the amount of time spent in a city, not their immigration status. However, scholars also need to think *more* about immigrants, as there were substantial differences among

immigrant communities regarding interest, knowledge, and policy preferences. My thesis helps to build on the current literature by suggesting how Canadian political science could expand research into municipal politics and immigrant voting behaviour in a way that helps demonstrate the similarities and differences among Calgary's diverse communities. While the thesis discusses several aspects of municipal government and participation, my research emphasizes the heterogeneity of immigrant communities' participation in municipal elections.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Voting in a free and fair election is fundamental for a strong democracy. For many Canadians, voting in an election is their main source of political involvement and expression. Some believe that casting a ballot is every citizen's civic duty, while others may be disinterested in the whole affair. Regardless of an individual's interest level in politics or government, every citizen should feel encouraged and comfortable voting in an election. This has led some Canadian political scientists to ask the question, who votes in an election? For the most part, Canadian political scientists have often framed this question by only studying provincial and federal elections as their case studies. Municipal elections have rarely been the preferred area of analysis for researchers studying elections, a trend that continues today. Moreover, Canadian political scientists have often considered immigrant communities as homogeneous groups when studying elections. Academics tend to control for 'immigrant status' in their research without necessarily considering the diversity of immigrant communities. This lack of heterogeneity is problematic because of potential differences in turnout and participation rates across immigrant groups. These possible differences have important implications for local government, as differences in participation and turnout rates across groups may produce failures of representation (Wallace et al., 2023). It is, therefore, the goal of this thesis to try to get a better understanding of how immigrant communities participate in municipal elections and engage with local government.

This thesis will explore three main components of immigrant participation in municipal elections. The first is whether there is any difference between immigrant and non-immigrant voters in Calgary's municipal elections. This first component aims to get a baseline understanding of immigrant and non-immigrant participation in municipal elections, which few

academic studies have done thus far. Comparing immigrant and non-immigrant communities also helps to show what is potentially missed when immigrant communities are treated as a homogeneous group.

Second, my thesis will explore whether immigrant communities differ when it comes to engagement with municipal government and participation in local elections. This component aims to show that not all immigrant communities are the same regarding their interest or knowledge in municipal government or elections and that research should consider the diverse backgrounds that immigrants have when studying what motivates them to participate. This section aims not to suggest that some immigrant communities are inherently ‘better’ than others because they participate more, but rather to highlight any differences among the communities to pinpoint where more research and support could help to increase participation and engagement.

Lastly, I will look at some services and policy options that could help different immigrant communities engage with local government and participate in municipal elections. This component looks at the information immigrant communities want about municipal government and elections and how information is distributed. While different immigrant communities might have other preferences, this section can help those invested in municipal politics by highlighting areas where immigrant communities need more help or services in understanding municipal government or municipal elections. The recommendations in this section might help not only different immigrant communities better understand the roles and responsibilities of local government officials but Calgary’s general population as well.

Research & Thesis Background

My thesis journey has been unlike most MA students. In June 2022, I was fortunate enough to be asked to join a four-month internship with the City of Calgary and Elections

Calgary in a research project about increasing engagement and participation in municipal elections among recent immigrants in Calgary. This internship was a joint partnership between MITACS, Elections Calgary, and the University of Calgary. As a part of the Equity Action and Resourcing Plan approved by the City of Calgary Council in 2021, Elections Calgary was a successful recipient of an Equity in Service Delivery Fund grant. The fund's goal is to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) focused approaches to service designs and deliveries provided by the City. Of the \$950,000 available from the fund, \$120,000 was put aside for improving voting processes for Calgary's diverse population. The goal of the research project was to develop recommendations based on high-quality local evidence to mitigate barriers and inform effective voting program design in Calgary for the 2025 general municipal election and for all subsequent municipal elections. My central role in this program was to be the research assistant for the Election Calgary team lead. My role included writing literature reviews, helping to formulate and edit focus group and survey questions, and communicating and distributing information packages and surveys to various partners. From this research on immigrant communities, I was able to use the data collected for my research in this thesis. While the subject matter is similar, the Elections Calgary project mainly focused on barriers for immigrant Calgarians. My thesis concentrates primarily on levels of interest and engagement between immigrant and non-immigrant communities in Calgary and also within different immigrant communities. While the path I followed to complete my thesis was not traditional, the real-world experience I obtained from my internship was incredible. The experience allowed me to blend my academic pursuits as an MA student with hands-on experience with Elections Calgary's fantastic team.

Thesis Outline

My thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter aims to give the reader a better understanding of the thesis's subject matter and an overview of how this research came to be. As noted above, this thesis project differs from what most MA students will have encountered due to the partnership and research collaboration with Elections Calgary and MITACS.

The second chapter is the literature review. This chapter first looks at the two units of analysis that scholars mainly use when studying voting behaviour and patterns at the municipal level: micro-level factors and macro-level factors, or a combination of the two. After reviewing what each unit of analysis focuses on as core to understanding voter turnout, the literature review will look at specific micro-level and macro-level scholarship to better understand each approach. The literature review will then highlight some of the significant gaps in the current research and how this thesis looks to fill these gaps. One of the fundamental objectives of this chapter will be to highlight that many scholars who look at immigrant voting patterns and behaviours tend to treat all immigrant communities as a single group. Only a few studies focus on the heterogeneity of immigrants, which is what this thesis looks to further. The chapter will note that, while many immigrants will face similar obstacles (getting citizenship, learning about municipal elections, etc.), there are other obstacles that only certain immigrant groups might face (language barriers, size of immigrant's community in their new city, or previous history of voting or not voting in their home countries). Finally, the chapter will transition into how the research in the three data chapters addresses the shortcomings of the current literature.

In chapter three, the first empirical chapter, I explore the differences between immigrant and non-immigrant Calgarians. The first half of this chapter groups all immigrant communities to see how immigrant Calgarians compare to Calgary-born citizens regarding interest and attention to municipal politics. In the second half of the chapter, I separate the immigrant communities

into sub-groups to see if there are differences among the communities. Chapter three will be the only empirical chapter that relies on the Canadian Municipal Election Study (CMES) instead of the data collected with Elections Calgary. The reason is that the CMES collected data from immigrant and non-immigrant Calgarians, while the Elections Calgary data solely focused on immigrant Calgarians.

Chapter four takes a closer look at the heterogeneity of immigrant communities in Calgary. This chapter will start by looking at the interest and knowledge levels of immigrant Calgarians but at a more granular level than with the CMES data. The chapter will then move towards looking at voting behaviour. This chapter will compare voting patterns of immigrant Calgarian at all three levels of government in Canada to see if there are differences and how municipal elections are ranked among the voting preferences. This chapter will also focus on how immigrants have voted before moving to Canada and their future voting ambitions at the local level. Chapter four will then examine some motivations behind voting in Calgary's municipal elections and some of the perceptions about local government. In the final section of chapter four, I discuss the two overarching conclusions from this chapter: 1) immigrant Calgarians typically trend similarly in most situations, but 2) there are, at times, significant gaps or differences among different immigrant communities.

In chapter five, I look at what the findings from the Elections Calgary data could mean for policy implications for Calgary's future municipal elections. Moreover, this chapter addresses the gap left in Canadian political science regarding 'get-out-the-vote' tactics that are relatively common at the federal and provincial levels but rarely discussed at the municipal level. This chapter explores some self-reported solutions that could help immigrant communities in Calgary better understand municipal government more generally and Calgary's municipal election

specifically. It should be noted, however, that these responses are respondents' perceptions about what could increase engagement and participation in municipal elections, not necessarily what will increase turnout. This chapter will look at areas of municipal government that immigrant Calgarians want to learn more about and what kind of information they want to have. Chapter five will address how academics and others invested in local government can debate services that could improve municipal government education or help immigrant Calgarians when heading to polling stations during a local election.

Finally, chapter six is the concluding chapter. This chapter will address all of the findings from this thesis and what they mean in the context of Calgary's municipal government and elections. The chapter will go over what future research could look into and how these findings could help both political scientists and policy analysts in their efforts to improve local government for immigrant communities in Calgary.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Canadian political science has a long tradition of studying voting behaviours at the federal and provincial levels. There is, however, less research regarding municipal elections in Canada. Moreover, while some research addresses immigrant voting behaviour at the federal and provincial levels, more research is needed to know about their involvement at the municipal level. Less is known about how different immigrant communities engage with local government. This chapter explores the relevant literature on voting patterns and behaviours in local elections, trends in municipal voting, and immigrant participation in local government. While most of the literature will come from Canada, the limited research on these topics means that other countries are included. Similarly, while this study mainly focuses on immigrant participation at the municipal level, much of the voting literature focuses on the provincial/state or federal level.

The literature review chapter has five sections. The first section will look at the two main units of analysis that political scientists use when studying voting behaviour and patterns. The second section will focus on the literature on immigrant voting behaviours generally (including at the federal and provincial levels) and what literature is available at the municipal level. Section three will discuss the current practice in the literature to group immigrants into a single variable, thus masking potential differences. This section will discuss the benefits of looking at immigrant communities with a heterogeneous lens and moving away from grouping all newcomers into a homogeneous group. In section four, I look at how Canadian political science has traditionally used the heterogeneity of immigrant communities to explain Canadian political culture and regionalism. This section argues that heterogeneity has been used in other fields of Canadian political science to examine diverse backgrounds that shape how immigrants participate in politics and should, therefore, be used in election studies. Finally, the last section

will discuss the current state of the literature on immigrant participation in municipal elections and how this thesis will try to help move the literature forward.

Voting Behaviour and Participation

There are many different ways that political science can try to understand who votes and how to increase voter turnout. Political scientists tend to use the two main units of analysis: micro-level analysis, macro-level analysis, or a combination of the two. While most political science scholars agree that both macro and micro levels of analysis need to be factored in to understand voting behaviours and patterns fully, there are some variables that scholars might tend to focus on more than others (Moser, 2017). Micro-level scholars focus on individual factors to understand voting behaviour or voter turnout. Micro-level scholars study influences such as political interest, socioeconomic factors (education, income, housing), and demographics (race, ethnicity, immigration). Micro-level scholars also examine how rational choice, social capital, and social networks contribute to an individual's likelihood of voting. Macro-level scholars take a more extensive, more institutional approach. Macro-level scholars tend to study the different types of electoral systems or designs, the jurisdictions of different institutions or elected officials, or the competitiveness of an election.

Smets and Ham (2013) address the foundations of micro-level turnout by using a meta-analysis of 90 empirical studies of individual-level voter turnout at the national level. The goal of this research was to identify factors that are consistently linked to individual-level turnout. While the study is focused on national-level turnout, it illustrates some of the significant factors that micro-level scholars focus on and could also play an essential role in all voting levels. Smets and Ham (2013) looked at a plethora of individual-level variables in their resource model: education, age, gender, race, income, marital status, residential mobility, region, occupational status, home

ownership, citizenship, occupational type, socioeconomic status/class, residential local, children, contextual race, and generation. For this thesis, I will focus on the results of race and citizenship. Smets and Ham (2013) found that race and citizenship had non-significant effects when understanding individual voting behaviour. The authors also found that, when controlling for various ethnic and racial groups, these variables did not change the results. These results are interesting at the national level, but further research needs to examine how these individual factors are shaped locally.

Two strong advocates for the micro-level approach to voter turnout are Blais and Daoust (2020), who argue that voting is inherently an individual choice. The authors argue that, while macro-level factors are not meaningless, political interest, a sense of civic duty, and election-specific judgements (caring about the election outcome and ease of voting) are the most critical factors. These beliefs are heavily influenced by an individual citizen's motivation to vote, which is at the heart of their argument. Blais and Daoust (2020) argue that levels of political interest and the feeling that voting is or is not a duty strongly correlate with the decision to vote in any given election. Blais and Daoust (2020) state that those interested in politics and believe that voting is a duty are more motivated to vote. These predispositions and beliefs are both strong and stable over time, so individuals are more likely to continue to vote in future elections. The authors also state that caring about an election's outcome is a relatively strong indicator that someone will vote but is less strong than political interest and duty (Blais & Daoust, 2020). In terms of the ease of voting, Blais and Daoust (2020) argue that "... for the great majority of people, the cost of voting [in terms of time and access to education] is small" and that it "...boils down to whether the person is sufficiently motivated to take a bit of time to cast a vote" (pg. 70).

To demonstrate the importance of the individual and family-household dynamic, Blais and Daoust (2020) turn to a study by Edward Fieldhouse and David Cutts (2012). The study shows that the inclination to vote increases if other household members strongly tend to vote, regardless of political interest or sense of duty. Although the authors note that there is limited data on the relationship between the household unit and the underlying motives to vote, voting as a household unit could help alleviate some hesitation when casting a ballot. This is important in immigrant households where some family members might have few English language skills.

Other studies have also highlighted the importance of homeownership and its impact on voter turnout. Smets and Ham (2013) have also noted that, among many other factors, homeownership and residential mobility play an important role when it comes to predicting voter turnout. Smets and Ham's (2013) meta-analysis of individual-level research on voter turnout showed that homeownership and residential mobility influenced turnout. The authors found that higher residential mobility levels lead to lower turnout. Conversely, homeownership increases turnout (Smets & Ham, 2013). Smets and Ham's (2013) results are similar to McGregor and Spicer's (2016) study, which examined the 'Homevoter Hypothesis,' which was coined by William Fischel in 2001. The hypothesis, in brief, argues that concerns for property values influence the attitudes and behaviours of homeowners towards municipal politics, owning that local government has the most impact on property values. Using this framework in Canada, the authors found that the Homevoter Hypothesis is congruent with the behaviour and attitudes of Canadian voters (McGregor & Spicer, 2016). The authors found that homeownership leads to an increase in voter turnout in municipal elections, changes attitudes on public policy, and increases opposition to municipal amalgamations.

In another study that had findings similar to Blais and Daoust's (2020), Bergan et al. (2005) examined why voter turnout increased dramatically in the 2004 US presidential election. The authors investigate how grassroots mobilization and election-specific factors contributed to the election turnout. Bergan et al. (2005) found that the main reason the 2004 election had an increased turnout was primarily due to the importance of the election to many Americans. While the grassroots mobilization strategy by the political parties was not meaningless, Bergan et al. (2005) argued that it was only partially responsible for the voter increase. Although this study was from a presidential election in the US, it highlights the arguments that Blais and Daoust (2020) discuss, in that voters can be sensitive to the perceived importance of an election.

Another pair of micro-level scholars, Bevelander and Pendakur (2009), examined the differences between Canadian-born and immigrant citizens' voter participation rates. The authors used the 2002 Equality Security Community (ESC) survey to understand voter participation in federal and provincial elections. The authors hypothesize that the strongest indicator to determine whether someone will vote is their sociodemographic and social capital attributes, not their racialized attributes. The authors found that age, education, and civic engagement are the most likely attributes determining the likelihood of someone voting. These results hold both at the federal and provincial levels. While this is not direct evidence for municipal-level voting, it does highlight that voting patterns can shift with sociodemographic characteristics outside of immigrant status.

Green and Gerber (2015), micro-level scholars, looked at the many 'get-out-the-vote' (GOTV) tactics used in American elections. Their main goal was to analyze the costs and benefits of these voter mobilization techniques. Their quantitative study looks at local, state, and national elections. The author's main argument is that many GOTV tactics look beneficial in

theory, but in a cost-benefit analysis, they are inefficient. The authors argue that informal conversations between canvassers and target voters were the most effective tactic. (Green & Gerber, 2015). The authors argue that a few of the best methods to increase voter turnout included door-to-door canvassing and informal conversations over the phone. The authors also suggest that election-day festivals could increase voter turnout. Green and Gerber (2015) emphasize the social context of voting, in which pressure comes from peers and when individuals are reminded that voting is a civic duty.

Macro-level scholars focus on how institutional and contextual factors can shape voting behaviour. Breux et al. (2017) research looked to address what factors have influenced local electoral participation in Canadian cities since 2004. The three hypotheses that Breux et al. (2017) examine are 1) the sociospatial context within which local elections take place (the size of the municipality, population density, and the variation in population), 2) the institutional design of local elections and representation, and 3) the competitiveness of local elections. One of the main findings in this article is the importance of electoral competitiveness to levels of turnout in local elections (Breux et al., 2017). The authors also found that incumbency is important in influencing voter turnout, mainly due to the nonpartisan nature of most municipal elections in Canada. However, the closeness of an election needs to be backed up by other studies.

Gerber (2017) seems to disagree with the findings of Breux et al. (2017) in that he argues that we do not know enough to determine how voters perceive the closeness of an election. Gerber (2017) suggests little is known about how an average voter perceives a close election or gauges if an election is close. Using field experiments in the 2010 and 2014 gubernatorial elections, Gerber (2017) suggests that his findings show that the decision to vote is unaffected by beliefs about the election's closeness. Gerber (2017) also argues that there is only a slight

relationship between poll information regarding the competitiveness of an election and the actual voter turnout. This argument suggests that the average voter does not gauge an election on how close it is. As mentioned above, this study looked at gubernatorial elections in the US.

Gubernatorial, or elections for the state governor, are at higher levels of government than local elections, generating more news and media attention. The evidence from Gerber (2017) would suggest that if gubernatorial elections cannot generate enough perception about the closeness of an election, it might be difficult for the average citizen to gauge the level of closeness of a local election, as there tends to be even less coverage at the municipal level.

Caren (2007), another macro-level scholar, looks to study variation in voter turnout in American city municipal elections. The author notes that many American cities, mainly due to Progressive Era reforms, have reformed municipal elections to be nonpartisan. This was done mainly in an attempt to depoliticize local politics. Caren (2007) argues that the literature has often linked the depoliticization of municipal government as the reason there has been a decrease in voter turnout. Caren (2007) finds that demographic factors are only weakly correlated with turnout, while institutional and campaign factors, such as closeness of the race and the city's electoral and governance structures, explain much more of the variation in voter turnout. Caren (2007) goes on to find that cities with partisan primaries have higher rates of voting, as well as those cities that do not have a city manager. Goldsmith and Holzner (2015) also found that immigrants were less likely to vote in cities with manager forms of government than in cities with elected mayors in American cities.

Hajnal and Lewis (2003), macro-level scholars, researched California cities to examine how institutional remedies could help increase voter turnout in mayoral and city council elections. The authors found that the timing of elections is crucial for voter turnout. Hajnal and

Lewis (2003) suggest that moving municipal elections to coincide with national or state-level elections would significantly impact voter turnout. Another institutional factor influencing voter turnout in municipal elections was the delivery of services. Cities offering more services offered by their own staff (instead of hiring contractors) tended to have larger voter turnout. Hajnal and Lewis (2003) found that for each additional service offered by city staff (fire, police, library, sewerage, and garbage, etc.), there is approximately 1% higher turnout. This is significant because it demonstrates that the public is receptive to public spending on services that are essential to the city. While public reception to services provided by the City will be discussed in greater length in the policy chapter, it is worth noting that the findings of Hajnal and Lewis (2003) are similar to the findings of this thesis.

Cancela and Geys (2016) undertook a meta-analysis of national and subnational elections to better explain voter turnout at the macro-level. Cancela and Geys (2016) expanded the original meta-analysis that Geys had published in 2006 (83 studies total) and added 102 more articles to bring the total to 185 studies in the meta-analysis. Cancela and Geys (2016) also considered that since different processes might be at play at different levels of government, they looked at a larger sample size to examine the determinants of voter turnout in national and subnational elections. The meta-analysis finds some differences between national and subnational elections and voting behaviours. Cancela and Geys (2016) found that campaign expenditures, election closeness, and registration requirements have more explanatory power in national elections than in subnational elections. On the other hand, Cancela and Geys (2016) also found that population size and composition, concurrent elections, and the electoral system play a more important role in explaining turnout in subnational elections over national elections.

One of the six hypotheses that I want to focus on from Cancela and Geys (2016) was their prediction that: "population concentration, stability, and homogeneity have more explanatory power in subnational compared to national elections" (pg. 268.). The authors found that this hypothesis was only partially confirmed. The meta-analysis found that the proportion of minorities influences subnational elections more than national elections. Moreover, Cancela and Geys (2016) argue that these findings support the idea that attachment to the local community may be more critical in subnational elections than national ones. For this thesis, Cancela and Geys' argument highlights two themes. The first is that 'minorities' impact subnational elections, including municipal elections, which highlights the importance of more research on their participation. Secondly, the authors again look at minorities as a homogeneous group. Looking at 'minorities' with a more heterogeneous lens might uncover a more precise finding than having such a diverse community grouped together.

Immigrants & Municipal Elections

Although there are many theories of voting behaviour and patterns, we can see that much of the existing literature focuses on federal or provincial/state politics, with less attention placed on local elections (Trounstine, 2008; Kushner & Siegel, 2006). Despite evidence suggesting that research in the field is growing, Canadian political science still needs to learn more about immigrant voting behaviours in local elections (Bilodeau, 2014; Bird, 2010; Lucas & McGregor, 2021; Wallace et al., 2023). The evidence is mixed when it comes to voting patterns and behaviours of immigrant populations in Canada. At the federal and provincial level, there is some evidence to suggest that there is little difference between immigrant-citizens and Canadian-born-citizens rates of participation and that, in general, newcomers and minorities are significantly engaged in Canadian politics (Black, 2011; Tossutti, 2005). Bevelander and Pendakur (2009)

argue that when socioeconomic and social capital attributes have been considered, there are few differences between immigrant and non-immigrant citizens. Others, however, note that immigrants need to overcome barriers that Canadian-born citizens do not face while voting. The literature suggests that the 'immigrant vote' is sought after, at least in the federal and provincial levels (Tolley, 2017). This is due to Canada's party and electoral systems, but this phenomenon needs to be clarified at the municipal level, where voting is largely nonpartisan and lacks political parties in most local elections (Lucas & McGregor, 2021).

The little evidence that we have on immigrant voting behaviour at the municipal level is also mixed. Some have argued that citizens born outside of Canada are more likely to vote in municipal elections, whereas others have found evidence to suggest the opposite (Kushner & Siegel, 2006; Wallace et al., 2023). Evidence also suggests significant differences among immigrant communities, with some groups participating at higher rates than others (Lapp, 1999). This finding could be for several reasons, owing to individual or context-specific calculations of an immigrant or immigrant community. Theories that are prevalent in the literature to explain voting in municipal elections range from the competitiveness of the election to the interest of the electorate and homeownership. (Breux et al., 2017; Oliver et al., 2012).

Wallace et al. (2023) have one of the most comprehensive studies of immigrant status on voting behaviour at the municipal level. The authors looked to understand why Mississauga, Ontario, has had historically low levels of voter turnout in its municipal elections. Wallace et al. (2023) used a mixed methods approach to explain the voter turnout gap between immigrant and Canadian-born citizens. Wallace et al. (2023) found that immigrants have lower participation rates at a statistically significant level. Their qualitative findings suggest that immigrants may feel less rooted in their new city, particularly if they are recent immigrants and that other factors

(finding a house, job, schooling, etc.) were more important than learning about municipal politics. It was highlighted in Wallace et al. (2023) that a lack of education on municipal politics and access to information are key reasons why immigrants did not participate in elections.

A study from Finland examined how mental health and integration influenced voting in municipal elections among their Foreign-Born Population (FBP). Seppänen et al. (2021) used survey data to look at: self-reported municipal voter turnout, language skills, reasons for migration to Finland, psychological strains, and sense of belonging to better understand FBP's voting experience at the municipal election. The authors found that voter turnout among FBP was highest among those who at least had intermediate local language skills, who moved because of family/studies/refugee status versus those who moved for work, had no psychological strain, and had a sense of belonging to the locals (Seppänen et al., 2021). The authors concluded that lacking a sense of belonging and psychological stress are major strains of voting turnout and might demotivate participation. The authors also noted that more attention needs to be paid to studying FBP in municipal elections and how to enhance participation across all groups. Seppänen et al. (2021) also emphasized that attention must be paid to providing clear and sufficient information regarding municipal elections and candidates, particularly in several languages. While this study was not from Canada specifically, the later chapters of this thesis will address some of the significant themes from Seppänen et al.'s work, particularly the sense of belonging, translation services, and information about municipal government, elections, and candidates running for local office.

Bridging the Gap: Homogeneity or Heterogeneity among immigrants?

A notable oversight in much of the literature looking at immigrant voting behaviours is that scholars focus on only a very simple binary variable: immigrants and non-immigrants. This approach does not allow us to see immigrant communities' differences in voting behaviours and participation. Of course, there will be similarities among immigrant communities. For example, when immigrants arrive in a new country, many have the necessities as their top priority (housing, food, jobs, etc.). This is particularly true when newcomers are in the 'pre-arrival' and 'settlement and adaption' stages of their immigration journey (Tolley & Young, 2011). Tolley and Young (2011) state that it is only until the 'integration' stage of the immigration process that most new Canadians are fully active participants in Canadian life and institutions. For many, civic engagement and politics, particularly municipal issues, are a low priority. A gap here is also notable for those in the public policy field. Though this will be discussed in greater detail in the policy chapter, there is a disconnect for many immigrants between the settlement and integration stages, a time when immigrants can learn more about municipal government and politics. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, survey data from our research shows that many newcomers would like more information about municipal government before becoming citizens.

However, this does not mean that all immigrants' experience is the same. Immigrants from other democratic countries like those in Western Europe, Australia, or the United States might feel more comfortable with voting in elections than immigrants who might come from countries that do not have the right to vote. Some immigrants come from countries with very different ideas about who gets to participate in politics or even the same experience voting in an election. Within the literature, several reasons can appear explaining why immigrants do not vote in local elections: they are not entitled to vote, they are not motivated to vote, or they are not told

to vote (Ruedin, 2021). This is similar to the evidence in our research in that immigrants from all backgrounds seemed interested in politics and government at all levels, but this did not translate into being engaged or informed about government roles.

Bilodeau (2014) examines levels of support for democracy and non-democratic alternatives amongst immigrants arriving from partially and non-democratic countries in Canada. The goal is to evaluate whether immigrants who have been socialized under authoritarian rule accept democracy as a governance model. Data was drawn from the 2000-2006 Canadian component of the World Values Survey (WVS), the New Immigrant Surveys (NIS), and interviews conducted in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. Bilodeau (2014) concludes that most immigrants believe democracy is good and the best governance model. However, Bilodeau (2014) also finds that relative to the rest of the population, larger proportions of immigrants from partially and non-democratic countries express support for alternatives to democracy. Bilodeau (2014) suggests this could be due to earlier socialization in partial/non-democratic states. Immigrants from partly and non-democratic countries exhibited strong support and desire for democracy, giving it the 'main game in town' verdict, but Bilodeau (2014) shows that for many, it is not the only game in town. For Bilodeau (2014), this is partially explained by political socialization, but only weakly.

This is interesting when paired with Henderson's (2005) research on immigrants voting at the federal level. Henderson (2005) found that immigrants' voting decisions and behaviours differ from Canadian-born voters in that they are more likely to vote for the Liberal Party of Canada. Henderson (2005) argues that the best explanation for the different voting behaviour is that immigrants are more pro-liberal values, not necessarily pro-Liberal Party. This, however, is being challenged by recent evidence. Lucas et al. (2023) have argued that when looking at spatial

voting (ideological or policy similarities between the voter and candidate they intend to vote for), immigrants were slightly less likely to cast a 'correct vote'. This finding could occur for several reasons. One reason Lucas et al. (2023) put forward is that this could reflect the informational challenges among immigrant community members for whom English is not a first language. Lucas et al. (2023) also noted the presence of ethnic affinity voting, which some candidates said was necessary for success in their races.

While Bilodeau (2014) and Henderson (2005) have interesting insights, they highlight the problem we see in the literature. Both authors homogenize immigrant populations with little clarification on which communities they are speaking about. Although Bilodeau (2014) does differentiate immigrant communities by stating some are arriving from democratic, partially democratic, or non-democratic countries, there is still a grouping together of immigrant communities. This generalizing could leave some nuanced details in voting behaviour, patterns, and culture to be explored.

Why is this research necessary? Hajnal and Trounstein (2005) examined how voter turnout can lead to imbalances of representation amongst marginalized groups in American cities. Hajnal and Trounstein (2005) argue that lower voter turnout amongst certain marginalized groups can lead to biased outcomes in American democracy, particularly at the local level. The authors focused on city elections, where they found that lower turnout leads to substantial reductions in the representation of certain minority groups (Latinos and Asian Americans) on the city councils and in the mayor's office. Hajnal and Trounstein (2005) argued that this is detrimental to democracy in that those individuals who do not vote will be overlooked, and their concerns will be ignored. Hajnal and Trounstein (2005) argue that this could lead to biased and unfair policies representing only a small privileged few.

Another significant insight from this research is that the authors stressed the importance of not limiting the study of voter turnout to only national elections. Hajnal and Trounstein (2005) warn against this due to the difference and severity of uneven voter participation at the city and national levels. Though Hajnal and Trounstein's research is dated, the general message and findings hold today. Marginalized groups who do not vote could be underrepresented in political institutions, particularly in local elections, where they seem to vote less than Canadian-born citizens (Wallace et al., 2023).

There is, however, some precedent to the idea that immigrant communities are not homogeneous groups and see the democratic processes differently. In 2016, Otilia Chareka researched the dilemmas and challenges of the democratic participation of immigrants in small Atlantic Canadian communities. Chareka (2016) noted that in the category of interest in democratic civic participation, there was a significant difference between ethnic groups concerning their answers. However, Chareka (2016) found no significant differences in democratic participation. While this research focused on participation at the federal level, it highlighted another theme from my research, which will be looked at later, that interest only sometimes translates into participation. The upcoming policy chapter will address the paradox of high interest but mixed levels of participation.

One study that looked at a specific immigrant community was Laxer, Reitz, and Simon (2020). The authors looked at the civic incorporation of the Muslim community in France and Canada and wanted to test levels of participation. Laxer et al. (2020) looked at three interrelated political and civic incorporation dimensions: acquiring citizenship, voting, and association memberships. Looking at the voting data, Laxer et al. (2020) found that for both federal and municipal level voting, immigrants who were Muslim and non-European were less likely to vote

than those who were born in Canada/France or those who were non-Muslim Europeans. The trend was even stronger when comparing the federal and municipal elections in Canada, as even fewer non-Europeans and Muslims voted in municipal elections than Canadian-born citizens or European immigrants (Laxer et al., 2020). The difference in voting patterns between these groups is interesting when paired with the data found when looking at whether or not immigrants decide to get citizenship in France or Canada. Muslims in Canada have a positive relationship with citizenship and a negative relationship with citizenship in France (Laxer et al., 2020). This suggests that while citizenship is desired, it does not translate into voting at the federal or municipal level.

Another author who has added some degree of heterogeneity to their research is Randy Besco. In Besco's 2019 book *Identities and Interests: Race, Ethnicity, and Affinity Voting*, the author looks to gain a deeper understanding of the voting behaviours of visible minority voters from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Besco (2019) studies affinity voting in Canada, which is the positive impact of sharing a candidate's ethnic background on a voter's likelihood of supporting the candidate (Blanchard, 2022). Besco (2019) finds that "...all else being equal, racialized voters are more likely to support candidates of different racialized ethnicities than a white candidate, greatly increasing the potential size of racialized coalitions and broadening the influence of affinity effects" (Besco, 2019, p. 154). While the study mainly focused on federal elections, as the questions were geared toward representatives going to parliament, the author found that "...in this study, candidate ethnicity had similar effects for candidates who were independent or affiliated with a party, suggesting that co-ethnic affinity voting will apply not only to municipal or other nonpartisan elections but also to provincial and federal elections" (Besco, 2019, p. 154). While the study does not necessarily focus on immigrants but instead on

ethnicity and race, these results suggest that ethnic or racialized backgrounds are important factors to study when looking at voting behaviour in all Canadian elections.

Heterogeneity in Canadian Political Science

Despite paying little attention to immigrant participation at municipal levels or focusing on heterogeneity among immigrants, Canadian political science has a long history of examining how immigrants have shaped political culture and behaviours. Besides its First Nation peoples, Canada is a nation of immigrants, and many have tried to describe how this immigration has shaped Canada's regions, culture, and institutions. While many of the following authors might have crude measurements for examining how immigration has shaped Canadian political culture, the goal of looking back to this literature is to showcase how Canadian political science does have a tradition of looking at immigrants as heterogeneous groups.

An example of this long history of examining the differences among immigrants to Canada is André Siegfried. Siegfried's book *The Race Question in Canada* explains the difference between French and English Canadians and how the two 'races' have shaped Canada. The four parts of Siegfried's book look at the 'psychological formation of the two races,' the political life in Canada, the balance of races and civilizations in Canada, and Canada's external relations. Focusing on the psychological formation and political life, Siegfried attempts to demonstrate that there are stark differences between the French and the English that need to be examined to better understand how these immigrant communities shape Canada. While Siegfried's argument that the French and the English are two different races might be overstated, the book demonstrates that political thinkers have previously looked at how immigrant communities affect political culture and behaviour, which seems to be overlooked in the present literature looking at immigrant involvement in elections.

Siegfried goes on to argue that the long rivalry between the French and the English is ending with the latter being the victor. For Siegfried, the new threat to Canada is the intrusion of American civilization. The 'danger,' as Siegfried describes it, comes from Americans slowly changing Canada's composition by making it more American and cosmopolitan, which could threaten the individuality of Canada. This again highlights that Siegfried is trying to express that there are differences among immigrants and that it is worth examining the differences to see how they will affect Canada's political culture. While it is not the goal of this literature review to go into detail about the validity or strength of Siegfried's argument, his book does show that Canadian political science has historically looked at immigrants as heterogeneous groups that are different in their political culture and behaviours.

Another Canadian political scientist who studied immigration's effect on Canada's political culture was Gad Horowitz. In his 1966 article *Conservatism, Liberalism, and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation*, Horowitz explains why socialism is more robust in Canada than in America. Horowitz uses Louis Hartz's approach (see *The Liberal Tradition in America & The Founding of New Societies*) to examine how socialism is strong in Canada compared to America but weaker than in Europe. As described by the author, "[t]he Hartzian approach is to study the new societies founded by Europeans (the United States, English Canada, French Canada, Latin America, Dutch South Africa, Australia) as "fragments" thrown off from Europe" (Horowitz, 1966, pg. 143). This again highlights that Canadian political science does have a deep-rooted history of looking not only at immigration generally but heterogeneity among immigrant communities as a way of explaining political culture in Canada.

An example of how Horowitz utilized the heterogeneity of immigrants in Canada and America is by comparing socialism in the two countries. For Horowitz, socialism in Canada is

British and non-Marxist, while in America, socialism is German and Marxist. Moreover, Horowitz argues that "[t]he socialism of the United States...is predominantly Marxist and doctrinaire because it is European. The socialism of English Canada...is predominantly Protestant, labourist, and Fabian because it is British" (Horowitz, 1966, pg. 160). This not only demonstrates that Horowitz believes that the heterogeneity of immigrants plays an important role in determining political culture in Canada and America, but he also highlights another theme found throughout this thesis. Horowitz finds that, even though immigrants might trend in similar ways, for example, there might be 'socialism' in immigrant communities (i.e. in Britain or in Germany), there is a range of differences even among immigrant communities (those who are more socialist or those who are more Marxist).

Finally, Nelson Wiseman is the third example of Canadian political science using immigrant heterogeneity to study how immigration has shaped Canada. In his 2007 book *In Search of Canadian Political Culture*, Wiseman first looks to understand and discuss Canadian political culture and then apply that understanding to regional and provincial differences. While Wiseman draws on empirical evidence from survey data, he relies heavily on a large-scale historical approach when discussing political culture in Canada (Drummond, 2008). This broader historical perspective resembles the work of both Hartz and Gad Horowitz.

An example of how Wiseman uses the same Hartzian argument as Horowitz is when Wiseman discusses the differences between Alberta's and British Columbia's political culture. For Wiseman, "British immigrants were the most important group in the political making of BC. In Alberta, after initial Ontarian dominance, Americans played a more pivotal role than in any other province" (Wiseman, 2007, pg. 253). Wiseman again uses the heterogeneity of immigrants to describe how different regions in Canada have been shaped and why there is a diverse political

culture. Wiseman takes his argument further by examining how American immigrants, compared to other immigrant communities, influenced Calgary's political culture and industry. Wiseman notes that between 1955 and 1970, nine of the fifteen presidents of Calgary's Petroleum Club were American immigrants and that no other province had Americans so prominent as their captains of industry. This example again shows that Wiseman would agree with this thesis, in that looking at immigrant groups as heterogeneous is essential, as looking at immigrants as homogeneous groups masks significant differences among immigrants.

Siegfried, Hartz, Horowitz, and Wiseman, among many other scholars, have used immigration and heterogeneity to explain Canadian political culture. Arguments whether or not these perceptions are accurate can be debated. Still, the authors demonstrate that looking at heterogeneity can be used in Canadian political science to better understand how immigrants shaped political culture in Canada. The authors also show that immigrants with different political beliefs could affect the political culture of Canada and that it is worth studying immigrants as a heterogeneous group to find the nuances between other communities. While the arguments from the authors' above do not directly tie in with immigrant voting behaviours in municipal elections, these authors show that Canadian political science has a deep-rooted history of looking at immigrants as heterogeneous, and scholars should try to distinguish between communities instead of grouping diverse backgrounds together.

State of Current Literature & Moving Beyond

The sections above have shown that there is a gap in Canadian political science when it comes to understanding voting behaviours of immigrants in municipal elections. One of the major reasons for this is the lack of data on municipal elections in general. Canadian political science has mainly focused on federal and provincial elections at expense of municipal elections.

Traditional media, including local news, have also turned their attention away from municipal elections, thus leaving local elections less visible. There are a few reasons as to why Canadian political scientists have traditionally given municipal elections less attention. The first reason could be that there is less interest in local elections since it is often thought that local government affects people less (Lucas and McGregor, 2021). Another reason why Canadian political scientists could have focused on federal and provincial politics is because there is so much variation between municipal governments and elections that it is difficult to generalize across cities (Lucas and McGregor, 2021).

While municipal elections have not traditionally gotten the attention that federal or provincial elections have had, there are reasons to be optimistic. In the past decade, research in municipal election voting behavior has grown, with the scholarship mainly looking at candidates and elector studies (Lucas and McGregor, 2021). It is within this growing literature that my thesis looks to contribute, particularly in the field of election studies. The sections above have highlighted how, even when attention is paid to immigrant voters at the municipal level, they are often categorized as homogeneous groups. This could mask potentially important differences among immigrant communities which could affect the way they participate with local government and in municipal elections. Canadian political science has traditionally looked at immigration as a way of explaining Canadian culture, but these scholars all highlighted the importance that not every immigrant has the same life experiences, which could shape their political behaviour. The goal of looking at immigrant participation with a lens of heterogeneity, therefore, is not to show that one community is better, but rather find practical solutions that might help communities connect and participate with their local government. Using the lens of heterogeneity also helps political scientists better understand who votes and who does not vote.

Moreover, not only does the current literature not distinguish between immigrant communities, but there is also very little in the way of researching what immigrant communities want from their local governments. Almost none of the literature above addressed ways to help immigrant communities when it comes to understanding municipal elections or learning more about the candidates. As mentioned above, almost all of the GOTV literature has focused on national elections, which means the findings from those studies will not necessarily increase voter turnout at municipal elections. This potential difference in GOTV tactics from the federal to the municipal level is due to the differences in the size and scope of local elections and the different electoral systems. While not knowing about a local government's electoral system or having difficulty distinguishing between candidates might not be only an issue immigrants face (i.e. those born in any particular city might have the same questions about local government and candidates), immigrants are uniquely disadvantaged due to potential language barriers or might not have the same political experience. This is why it is important to understand the backgrounds of immigrants from various communities to understand what could best help them participate in local government and elections. The following chapters in my thesis looks to address these gaps by first looking at the differences between immigrants and non-immigrants, but also among immigrant communities to get a better understanding of the heterogeneity of Calgary's immigrant community. My thesis will then go on to show some of the policy preferences of immigrant communities that could help those invested in local government to better serve these communities when it comes to learning about municipal government generally and municipal elections specifically.

Theoretical Expectations

This section will review some of the findings that this thesis expects to see based on trends in the literature. While the theories in the literature are not always specifically related to municipal elections, there are reasonable expectations that similar trends could occur. Similarly, research into immigrant voting behaviour at the municipal level is limited, so while there might be fewer theories explaining this situation, I expect to see at least some level of similarity with the current literature.

Based on the arguments made by Blais and Daoust (2020), I expect to see that those who have higher levels of political interest at the municipal level, have a high sense of civic duty, care about the outcomes of the municipal election, and have voted in previous municipal elections will be more likely to vote in upcoming local elections. Moreover, following the findings from Seppänen et al. (2021), I expect that immigrant communities with a higher sense of belonging or who have lived in Calgary for an extended amount of time will be more interested in municipal politics and pay more attention to local government.

Similar to the findings and arguments made by Bilodeau (2014), I expect that support for municipal elections will be high among most immigrant communities, but there might be differing levels of support. Differing levels of support or trust in municipal elections could be shaped by different experiences of voting in home countries or by the type of political regime in which the individual has been socialized. Moreover, the levels of interest in and attention to municipal politics between immigrants and non-immigrants will be noteworthy, as there are often debates about this in the literature. Based on the work of Smet and Ham (2013), we can see that race and citizenship/immigrant status might not have an important role in determining

interest and attention. On the other hand, work from Wallace et al. (2023) might suggest less attention to and interest in municipal elections among immigrant communities.

Based on the arguments made by Wallace et al. (2023), I expect to find in my thesis that immigrant communities have a lower understanding of municipal government when compared to the provincial and federal governments. Moreover, I also expect that a lack of information or education on municipal politics will be a key reason immigrant communities do not participate in local elections or have less interest. Moreover, work by Lewis (2003) suggests that immigrants might be more receptive to the services offered by the city, which could increase interest in municipal government and potentially increase voter turnout at the local level.

Similar to the findings in Green and Gerber (2015), I expect to see that GOTV tactics that emphasize informal conversations or ways to learn about municipal elections and those running for office will be among the most popular among most immigrant communities. I expect that self-reported ways of increasing voter turnout in municipal elections will highlight the need to see more from candidates and have easier access to compare them. Moreover, I expect to see that pressure from peers and family to vote is among the highest reasons individuals choose to vote.

Chapter Three: Comparison of Interest in and Attention to Calgary's Municipal Politics

In the previous chapter, I outlined important gaps in Canadian political scientists' research on municipal voting behaviour among immigrants. This chapter will build on those arguments, demonstrating that researchers miss important differences within the immigrant community when only focusing on immigrants as a homogeneous group. Studying which communities are less interested in Calgary's municipal politics is important because it allows us to identify nuances among Calgary's diverse demographics and can help get a better understanding of political attitudes and behaviours at the local level. This chapter has three main sections. The first section describes my data and methods for this chapter, as well as the reasoning behind using the Canadian Municipal Election Study. The second section will focus on three regression tables, specifically on the topics of interest in and attention to municipal politics in Calgary. The second section will also demonstrate the importance of heterogeneity within the immigrant community in Calgary. Finally, the third section will discuss the results of the tables and explain how upcoming chapters will address gaps founds.

Data and Methods

To better understand the differences between immigrants' and non-immigrants interest in and attention to municipal politics in Calgary, this chapter will use data collected by the Canadian Municipal Election Study (CMES). The CMES is a large-scale dataset that includes survey responses from voters and non-voters in several large cities in Canada (McGregor et al., 2021). CMES data was collected by Forum Research using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) and had quotas for age, gender, and education. The CMES is helpful for scholars who study municipal politics for several reasons. First, the CMES is the first study to focus exclusively on

municipal politics (McGregor et al., 2021). This is important because municipal politics and government differ from elections and government at the provincial or federal level. This means that we must rely on something other than generalizations from those levels of government to the local level. In Calgary, for example, the absence of political parties makes municipal politics different than provincial or federal politics. While recent studies suggest that individuals still vote ideologically in municipal politics (Lucas et al., 2023), Calgarians cannot make a quick shortcut to political parties as their ideological barometer in local elections. These factors show the need for a dedicated study of municipal politics in Canada's largest cities.

The CMES is also one of the best resources for accessing information on local elections and politics. The CMES consists of two-wave survey data collected before and after each election allowing academics to research Canadians' motivations, attitudes, and behaviours in local elections that would otherwise not be available (McGregor et al., 2021). The CMES dataset also benefits this thesis because it contains survey questions, allowing researchers to differentiate between immigrants and non-immigrants. The CMES dataset, therefore, will help establish if there is a difference between immigrants and non-immigrants in Calgary regarding interest in and attention to municipal politics. While the racial categorization in the CMES is not as granular as other studies, the data does help showcase the diversity of Calgary's population.

Finally, the CMES dataset is helpful for this thesis because it collected a wealth of data on Calgary's most recent municipal election in 2021. For this chapter, I will focus on CMES data from Calgary that was collected in September 2021 during the pre-election wave. The total number of respondents for the September 2021 pre-election wave was 2,102. While the CMES dataset is not my own creation, I will carry out an original analysis of the data that has previously not been researched. As highlighted in the sections below and the upcoming chapters, using the

CMES dataset not only helps highlight the difference between immigrants and non-immigrants in Calgary but also demonstrates why more attention and detail must be paid when racialized or immigrant communities are studied in municipal politics.

Dependent and Independent Variables

<u>Dependent Variables</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Interest Levels	Exploring/comparing levels of interest
Attention Levels	Exploring/comparing levels of attention

Chapter Three: List of Dependent Variables

My dependent variables in this chapter are *interest* in and *attention* to municipal politics. Levels of interest in Calgary's municipal politics were determined using a slider. Respondents could select anywhere between 0-10, 0 meaning that they had no interest in Calgary's municipal politics, and 10 indicating that they were highly interested. It should be noted, however, that interest alone does not indicate whether an individual will vote in a municipal election or is interested in all elements of municipal politics and government. For example, some might be interested in elections and city council, while others might only care about property taxes and zoning policies. This measurement aims to help gauge the feelings and attitudes towards municipal politics that immigrants and non-immigrants had at that particular time to see if there was a substantive difference.

Measuring the levels of attention to municipal politics in Calgary also used a thermometer slider. Respondents used a scale of 0-10, with 0 indicating that they did not pay any attention to Calgary's municipal politics and 10 meaning that they paid lots of attention. Attention is used to help supplement interest because it is conceivable that some individuals might not be interested in municipal politics. However, individuals might still pay attention to municipal politics for several reasons. For example, it is reasonable that someone might not pay

attention to municipal politics or city council but pay attention to updates on housing or public transit. The purpose of attention as a measure, therefore, is to ensure that this thesis captures more than just individuals interested in municipal politics.

My main independent variables are: *immigrant status* (whether you are born in Canada or outside of Canada), *racial identity* (the racial category you most identify with), and *duration* (how long you have lived in Calgary). Immigrant status is binary coded, with non-immigrants being 0 and immigrant status being 1. Racial identity is also binary coded, with those who do not identify as a racialized individual as 0 and racialized individuals as 1. Duration was determined by an open-answer question asking respondents how long, in years, they have lived in Calgary. See the appendix below for the complete list of all the questions from the CMES used.

The last analysis section of this chapter will focus on how specific racialized communities differ in their levels of interest in municipal politics. For this chapter, the categories that will be used to demonstrate Calgary's immigrant community are: Arab, Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Latin American, South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.), Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.), West Asian (Iranian, Afghan, etc.). While not a perfect reflection of all communities, these eleven categories help to demonstrate the diversity of communities in Calgary. My analysis compares racialized categories with those who chose to self-identify as white. Those who do not identify as a visible minority make up 58.6% of the population in Calgary (City of Calgary, 2022), which means that comparing visible minorities with non-visible minorities helps to contrast the smaller visible minority communities with the larger majority of Calgary's population. All models in this chapter use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression because my dependent variables range from 0-10 and can reasonably be treated as continuous. The goal is to demonstrate a novel

analysis of the interplay between immigrant and non-immigrant Calgarians and among immigrant communities and their interest levels in municipal politics.

Analysis: Interest in Municipal Politics

Table 1: Correlates of Interest in Municipal Politics

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Model A</u>		<u>Model B</u>		<u>Model C</u>		<u>Model D</u>	
	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>
<u>Immigrant</u>	-0.35**	0.16	-0.02	0.18	0.10	0.16	0.20	.17
<u>Racialized</u>			-0.64***	0.16			-0.23	0.16
<u>Duration</u>					0.04***	0.003	0.04***	0.003
<u>Constant</u>	6.73	0.07	6.83	0.07	5.51	0.12	5.56	0.13
<u>N</u>	2,084		2,084		1,989		1,989	

* $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$

Table 1 summarizes the results of four regression models, each looking at the correlates of interest in municipal politics. Model A provides the most straightforward possible summary of the bivariate relationship between immigrant status and interest in municipal politics. The negative and statistically significant relationship indicates that immigrants in Calgary are, on average, less interested than non-immigrants in municipal politics. These findings are similar to those found in Wallace et al. (2023) in that immigrants in Mississauga were also less likely to be interested in municipal politics than non-immigrants. While this simple regression is interesting, the following models give a more nuanced understanding of the general immigrant experience within municipal politics in Calgary.

In Model B, I add racial identity to the model. This is an important addition because those who identify as someone from a racialized background might have different lived experiences than someone who does not identify as racialized. When race is added to the model, the relationship between immigrant status and interest in municipal politics is no longer statistically significant, and the relationship between racialized status and interest in municipal politics is statistically significant and negative. When comparing Model A and Model B, the data suggests that immigrants are not more or less interested than non-immigrants once we have accounted for

their racial identity. Model B clearly indicates why there needs to be a more nuanced study of immigrants, race, and voting in municipal elections.

Model C considers how long an individual respondent has been living in Calgary. When we compare Calgarians who have been in the city for similar amounts of time, there is no significant difference between immigrants and non-immigrants regarding levels of municipal interest. This highlights an interesting intervening variable: the amount of time an immigrant has been in Calgary could help increase their overall interest in municipal elections. This information also suggests that it is more likely to be recent arrivals, not necessarily recent immigrants, who are less interested in municipal politics. This makes sense, given that new arrivals do not have the same established roots in the city and might have less social or political knowledge than someone who has lived in Calgary for a longer time.

Finally, Model D combines all three independent variables. Similar to the results in Model C, neither immigrant status nor racialized status is statistically significant when the amount of time spent in Calgary is equivalent. Duration is, however, statistically significant. This suggests that a relevant consideration for why immigrants are less interested in municipal politics is that they have been in Calgary for less time. These results are similar to Wallace et al. (2023) in that their qualitative results suggest that recent immigrants may feel less rooted in their new city and that other factors (finding a job, education, etc.) were more important than learning about municipal politics. As noted in the literature review, Tolley and Young (2011) also argue that it takes until the 'integration' stage of the immigration process, when most new Canadians are fully active participants in Canadian life and institutions. Tolley and Young's (2011) comments hold at the local level as well, as participating in municipal elections might not be as intuitive as in federal or provincial elections. There tends to be less media coverage and less

candidate information than at other levels of government, which means that individual voters need to spend more time researching candidates.

Analysis: Attention to Municipal Politics

Table 2: Correlates of Attention in Municipal Politics

<u>Attention</u>	<u>Model A</u>		<u>Model B</u>		<u>Model C</u>		<u>Model D</u>	
	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>
<u>Immigrant</u>	-0.30*	0.15	0.17	0.23	0.17	0.16	0.27	.17
<u>Racialized</u>			-0.66***	0.16			-0.21	0.16
<u>Duration</u>					0.04***	0.003	0.04***	0.003
<u>Constant</u>	6.54	0.07	6.64	0.07	5.34	0.12	5.39	0.13
<u>N</u>	2,095		2,095		1,997		1,997	

* p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01

We now replicate the same analysis using attention as our dependent variable. Table 2 summarizes the results of four different regression models, each looking at the correlates of attention to municipal politics before Calgary's 2021 municipal election. When analyzing the relationship between immigrant status and attention to municipal politics, we see that, on average, immigrants pay less attention than non-immigrants. These results are similar to Model A in Table 1; however, the results are only statistically significant at p<0.10. Although this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, one of the reasons why immigrants may not pay attention to municipal politics at the same rate as Calgary-born citizens could be that they pay more attention to provincial or federal politics. We could also see this relationship because municipal politics can be more challenging to see and hear about relative to provincial or federal politics (Wallace et al., 2023). Finally, newer immigrants might not have the time to focus on municipal politics when they are busy ensuring the basics are covered (Tolley & Young, 2011).

Model B summarizes the results of a regression analysis in which the dependent variable is still attention to municipal politics, but the two independent variables are immigrant status and racial identity. Model B finds that when racialized identity and immigrant status are taken into consideration, immigrant status no longer has a statistically significant relationship with attention

to municipal politics. Moreover, Model B also finds that the racialized variable has a strong negative relationship when it comes to attention to municipal politics in Calgary. Similar to Model B in Table 1, this suggests that there is something specific about those that identify as racialized and a lack of attention to municipal politics. However, it is difficult to pinpoint what causes this discrepancy. As mentioned above, this relationship is not because any one racial identity causes an individual to pay less attention to municipal politics. Data on why this relationship occurs is limited, especially at the local level. These findings again highlights the need for a more nuanced study of immigrant voting behaviour and racialized identity in municipal elections.

Similar to Table 1, Model C considers how long an individual respondent has lived in Calgary. Model C shows that the relationships are no longer statistically significant with duration in the model. Like the regression above, this means that when we compare Calgarians who have been in the city for similar amounts of time, there is no difference between their levels of attention. This highlights the ongoing theme that those who have been in Calgary longer pay more attention to municipal politics and are more interested than those who have just arrived in the city. This again follows Tolley and Young's (2011) finding that immigrants need more time before being involved in political customs.

Finally, Model D examines immigrant status, racial identity, and duration. We again see that duration makes immigrant status and racialized identity no longer statistically significant when added to the model. This highlights the importance of duration in increasing interest in and attention to municipal politics among recent arrivals who have been in the city for similar amounts of time. The following section will look at racialized and immigrant communities in greater detail to see if there is evidence to suggest heterogeneity among these communities.

Analysis: Heterogeneity of Immigrant Communities

The results above suggest that immigrants are similar to non-immigrants in their interest in and attention to municipal politics once we account for their time spent in Calgary. This phenomenon does make sense. New arrivals might not have the same social or cultural connection to a city. New immigrants, for example, might not have the same levels of homeownership as those who have lived in the city for longer or are established, thus not paying attention to municipal politics (McGregor & Spicer, 2016). Other reasonable explanations could be that newer immigrants might be more interested in federal or provincial politics due to their jurisdiction on immigration, health, and education. The above section, however, only looks at immigrants as a homogeneous group. This next section aims to pinpoint differences within the immigrant community. Looking into specific immigrant circumstances is important because not all immigrant backgrounds are the same, and many might have had different experiences before moving to Calgary. For example, Bevelander and Hutcheson's (2021) research in Sweden found that foreign-born voters are generally less likely to vote than their Swedish-born counterparts. Moreover, the authors also found that this effect varies by region after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic factors. While this study was outside of Canada, it shows that heterogeneity is important when studying diverse immigrant communities.

Table 3: Correlates of Interest in Municipal Politics Among Racialized & Immigrant Communities

<u>Interest</u>	<u>All Respondents</u>		<u>All Respondents</u>		<u>Immigrant Respondents</u>		<u>Immigrant Respondents</u>	
	<u>Model A</u>		<u>Model B</u>		<u>Model C</u>		<u>Model D</u>	
	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>
<u>Arab</u>	-1.23*	0.70	0.01	0.74	-0.73	1.15	-0.08	1.12
<u>Black</u>	-0.10	0.37	0.34	0.36	0.07	0.50	0.53	0.51
<u>Chinese</u>	-1.09***	0.26	-0.78***	0.26	-1.11**	0.46	-0.68	0.45
<u>Filipino</u>	-0.33	0.44	0.08	0.46	-0.64	0.54	-0.17	0.60
<u>Japanese</u>	-1.67**	0.85	-2.11***	0.84	-3.27*	1.97	-2.83	1.90
<u>Korean</u>	-0.64	0.78	0.25	0.89	-0.70	1.20	0.37	1.56
<u>Latin American</u>	0.04	0.48	0.66	0.48	-0.02	0.61	0.47	0.61
<u>South Asian</u>	-0.20	0.29	0.35	0.29	-0.28	0.39	0.34	0.40
<u>Southeast Asian</u>	-2.26***	0.57	-1.81***	0.58	-2.11**	0.95	-0.69	1.04
<u>West Asian</u>	-1.28	1.05	-1.04	0.1	-3.37***	1.26	-2.74**	1.22
<u>Other</u>	0.67**	0.34	0.49	0.32	-1.14	0.79	-0.96	0.77
<u>Duration</u>			0.04***	0.003			0.05***	0.10
<u>Constant</u>	6.79	0.07	5.6	0.12	6.77	0.23	5.47	0.34
N	2,102		2,000		389		365	

* p<0.1 ** p<0.05 *** p<0.01

Table 3 summarizes the results of this group-level analysis. The first two columns provide results for all respondents, and the second two columns restrict the analysis to immigrant respondents. Each coefficient summarizes the average difference in interest between the relevant group (e.g. Arab respondents) and white respondents. The goal of this table is to highlight the differences among racialized communities but also to see how immigrants within those racialized communities compare to white respondents.

Model A in Table 3 explores the relationship between racialized communities and their interest levels in municipal politics in Calgary. Model A demonstrates that there are considerable differences among racialized communities in Calgary. Arab, Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian communities all have a negative relationship when it comes to interest in municipal politics. This negative relationship is statistically significant, although the relationship is p<0.10 for the Arab community. Interestingly, those who chose “Other” as their racial category have a positive relationship to interest in municipal politics that is statistically significant. This suggests that those who picked ‘Other’ have similar, if not higher, levels of interest in municipal politics

compared to white respondents. Black, Filipino, Korean, South Asians, and West Asians had negative relationships with interest in municipal politics, but their results were statistically insignificant. Similarly, Latin Americans had a slightly positive relationship with levels of interest, but the results were also insignificant. These results provide preliminary support for my argument: we need to dig more deeply into the racialized and immigrant communities in Calgary to understand engagement in municipal politics.

Model B adds duration to the regression analysis. Model B is interesting because, unlike the two tables above, some statistically significant results from Model A stay the same or even get stronger. While Arab and “Other” communities lost their statistical strength when duration is considered, Chinese and Southeast Asian communities continue to have a statistically significant negative relationship with interest levels in municipal politics. Moreover, the Japanese community sees the negative relationship strengthen when duration is considered. These results are important because they show that, when compared to white Calgarians who have lived in the city for the same amount of time, some racialized communities do, in fact, have lower levels of interest in municipal government. In other words, some racialized communities appear to have lower levels of interest even after we account for their duration of residence in Calgary.

Model C shifts focus to immigrant communities and their levels of interest in Calgary’s municipal politics. The coefficients show that most racialized immigrant communities have lower levels of interest in municipal politics when compared to white immigrants. The Black community was the only immigrant community group with higher levels of interest in municipal politics. However, their results were statistically insignificant. Moreover, the Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asian, and West Asian communities all have statistically significant negative relationships when it comes to interest levels in local elections. These results are similar to those

in Model A, highlighting the need to look at racialized or immigrant communities as heterogeneous rather than a homogeneous group.

An interesting common factor to each of the four communities that have a statistically negative relationship to interest in municipal elections is that they are communities from Asia. While this should not be interpreted as all Asians have less interest in municipal politics, it is notable that Asian communities are some of the largest immigrant groups in Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population). This regression suggests that more research on these four communities is necessary to increase their interest in municipal politics. This might be helpful for academic researchers who want to get a more nuanced understanding of voting behaviours or for looking at community outreach opportunities.

Finally, Model D looks at the relationship between immigrant communities, duration, and levels of interest in municipal elections. Similar to the results above, we see that duration takes away most of the strength immigrant communities have on their negative relationship with interest in municipal politics. The Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian communities continue to have a negative relationship with levels of interest, however the results are no longer statistically significant. Interestingly, we do still see that West Asians are still statistically less likely to be interested in municipal politics, however duration does weaken the relationship. These results seem puzzling when compared to the results of Models A and B. There are three reasonable explanations as to why we see the negative relationship hold among racialized communities but not hold for immigrant communities.

The first and most likely reason could be due to the small sample sizes of Model C and Model D. Model C and Model D have 1,713 fewer respondents than Models A and B. Responses for immigrants in the Arab, Japanese, Korean, Southeast Asian, and West Asian immigrant

communities are all under 10 respondents, making any generalization difficult. This again highlights the importance of further research on voting behaviours and attitudes of immigrants in municipal politics. Models A and B show differences among racial communities, however we currently need more research and data to explain why there is a gap.

Another possible explanation is that immigrants could have a higher sense of duty to vote than those born in Canada. As noted in the literature review, Kushner and Siegel (2006) found in their municipal election study that voting turnout was higher for non-Canadian-born voters than for Canadian-born voters. Kushner and Siegel (2006) went as far as to say that "...it appears that non-Canadian-born electors take their democratic responsibilities at the local level more seriously than Canadian-born voters (pg. 273)." While it is difficult to suggest the same results with the current CMES data, Kushner and Siegel's work does highlight the need to take a closer look into immigrant communities participating in local elections.

Finally, a third possible explanation could be that immigrants who took the survey overreported their levels of interest in municipal politics. This social desirability effect is possible because immigrant communities might not want to be seen as not participating in local politics. At the same time, those who were born in Calgary might not feel that same level of social desirability effect. As noted in the work of Rinken et al. (2021), traditional survey methods rely on the assumption that respondents report information accurately. When faced with topics of importance, Rinken et al. (2021) note that respondents might edit their responses to manage their image or make themselves look like they are following cultural norms. Rinken et al. (2021) argue that surveys overestimate well-considered behaviours like voting.

The likely explanation for why the results are not the same as the first two models is that there is insufficient statistical power due to the small sample sizes. The two other explanations

are possible, but we cannot use the CMES to adjudicate among these explanations because there is not enough data. The lack of data highlights the need to further our research on voting in municipal elections, particularly regarding new arrivals to the city and their relationship with local government. These results are important because they can affect how academics think about how we interact with our diverse immigrant communities. Looking back at Hajnal and Trounstein (2005), they examined how voter turnout can lead to imbalances of representation amongst marginalized groups in American cities. Based on the data above, specific communities do not have the same levels of interest when they are new to Calgary, which means they could be at risk of not voting at the same levels as other immigrants or non-immigrants.

Discussion

In this chapter, I analyzed the relationship between interest in and attention to municipal politics with four main independent variables: immigrant status, racial identity, duration, and immigrant sub-community. Based on the three tables above, this chapter has two main findings. The first finding is that the most robust relationship is duration for most of the models. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrated that immigrant and racial status were statistically insignificant when duration was considered. The second critical finding is that there is heterogeneity among racialized groups and potentially among immigrant communities. Table 3 showed that there was substantial heterogeneity among racialized communities in Calgary and that there were speculative findings that immigrant communities also have some differences among themselves.

These two findings suggest that when scholars research immigrants and political engagement, we need to think about immigrant status simultaneously less and more. Scholars need to think *less* about immigrants and immigration in the sense that what matters most is duration. How long an individual has lived in Calgary, not necessarily about the country or

province they have moved from, is the most powerful intervening variable regarding levels of interest in Calgary's municipal politics. The data above shows that how long someone has been in Calgary is more important than whether they came from any given country. However, scholars must also think *more* about immigrants. Table 3 demonstrated that there were differences among racialized and immigrant communities when it came to interest in municipal politics. Scholars must therefore dig more into immigrant groups to identify low-interest communities and better understand their political motivations in Calgary's local government.

As noted above, the sample size was one of the main weaknesses of the CMES data when looking at the immigrant communities. This was evident when we explored heterogeneity within immigrant communities, as the sample size was relatively small. Richer data would allow a more nuanced assessment of Calgary's diverse immigrant population. Thus, in the next chapter, I turn to a dataset that will enable a more in-depth analysis. The following chapter will explore the interest and knowledge of immigrants in Calgary in local government, their perceived voting behaviours in municipal elections, and some insights into how different immigrant communities view municipal politics.

Chapter Four: Heterogeneity in Calgary's Immigrant Communities

In the previous chapter, I provided speculative evidence of heterogeneity among new arrivals in Calgary regarding levels of interest in and attention to local government using the CMES dataset. In this chapter, I turn to novel research that allows for a more in-depth analysis of immigrant Calgarians' experience in municipal politics: Elections Calgary's Voting Equity Research Project Dataset. Using this survey data, I will show that immigrant Calgarians have a high degree of heterogeneity and that grouping immigrant communities as a singular entity can mask significant differences among the diverse groups. The first few sections of this chapter will focus on the methods used to collect the survey data and the reliability of the dataset. The following sections will examine self-reported levels of interest/knowledge, voting behaviours, and perceptions about voting in Calgary's municipal elections among immigrant communities. The final section will discuss the impacts of the findings in this chapter and how they further the discussion on immigrant participation in municipal elections more broadly.

Data and Methods

I will rely on two surveys in this chapter: the Elections Calgary's "closed-link" survey and "open-link" survey, combining to make the Elections Calgary's Voting Equity Research Project dataset. Both surveys required participants to be born outside of Canada and for survey respondents to be at least 18 years old. Both surveys also allowed noncitizens to participate, as the City of Calgary's research team wanted to capture the thoughts and opinions of those working towards citizenship (i.e., those who are permanent residents looking to take the Canadian citizenship test in the next five years). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, my role as the research assistant for Elections Calgary included writing and rewriting draft survey

questions and then cutting down the questions to a suitable number for the questionnaire. My role also included working collaboratively with the Elections Calgary research team and external partners to complete the survey questions. While the core questions and layout of both surveys were identical, there were a few differences between the closed-link and the open-link survey.

The closed-link survey was distributed with a unique link that could only be accessed once by each individual. It had 40 questions, and 340 people took the survey between November 16th, 2022, and December 3rd, 2022. The average length of the survey was 17 minutes. The closed-link survey was conducted and distributed to an internal contact list provided by Leger Research, an external partner to Elections Calgary's research team.

The Elections Calgary's research team advertised and distributed the open-link survey to Calgary's immigrant population more generally. The survey was sent to community organizations, recreational centres, social media platforms, and public libraries across Calgary. The Elections Calgary team held several information booths at four Calgary Public Library locations (Central Library, Saddletowne Library, Forest Lawn Library and the Village Square Library) and handed out pamphlets with QR codes to the survey. iPads were also brought if an individual wanted to take the survey in person. The total number of participants in the open-link survey was 207, and the average time to take the survey was 25 minutes. A key benefit of the open-link survey was that it was translated into 13 of the most commonly spoken languages in Calgary. 40 of the questions were identical to the closed-link survey. Additional questions were added for the City's use, such as marketing and future research projects.

Reliability of Data

This section will discuss the reliability of the data collected. As noted above, the sample used for the closed-link panel was from an internal list from Leger Research. Participants were

recruited based on several parameters (aged 18 years or older and not born in Canada). This was the same criteria for the open-link survey but was distributed openly to all of Calgary’s immigrant community by Elections Calgary’s research team. Because the core questions were identical, Leger Research combined both surveys into one dataset. The tables below are the aggregate number of both the closed and open-link surveys.

I used the 2021 Census Public Use Microdata Files to calculate the percentages found in the “Calgary Immigrants” sections of the tables below. The Microdata files provides data on individual characteristics of the Canadian population by taking a 2.7% sample of anonymous responses from the 2021 Census questionnaire. It should be noted, however, that the Microdata files use data that is from the Calgary Census Metro Area (CMA). While this means that the numbers are not exactly based on the of City of Calgary, the over 39,000 observations in the dataset gives my thesis the most accurate statistics available for immigrant Calgarians. Comparing the breakdowns in my survey to these microdata results provides us with a good picture of the representativeness of the survey data relative to Calgary’s immigrant population.

Immigrant Background	Calgary Immigrants	Sample	Difference	N
African	.12	.09	-.03	48
American (USA)	.03	.02	-.01	13
Central/South American	.08	.08	-	54
Asian	.61	.48	-.13	262
European	.16	.28	+.12	154

Table 1: Comparison of census Calgary data (2021) and Ethnic Background (D9) from sample data.

Table 1 is a comparison of different ethnic or regional backgrounds. The first two columns show the percentage of African, American, Central/South American, Asian, and European communities in Calgary’s population as of 2021 and then the percentage from the dataset. The following columns indicate the percentage difference between Calgary’s population

and the sample. Finally, the last column shows the total number of survey respondents. The sample data has a slight underrepresentation of those who identify as African or American. The sample was the same for those from Central or South America, however we cannot tell the differences among countries within them. Our sample has an underrepresentation of those who identify as Asian and an overrepresentation of those who identify as European. In the questionnaire, participants could identify as “Canadian/French Canadian,” but I have excluded them from the data for this research on immigrant Calgarians. For similar reasons, those identified as “Indigenous/First Nation/Metis/Inuit” were also excluded from the data. Those who identified as “Other,” “Don’t Know,” or “Prefer not to Answer” were also removed.

Income	Calgary Immigrants	Sample	Difference	N
Less than \$30,000	.25	.10	-.15	50
\$30,000-\$44,999	.13	.11	-.02	53
\$45,000-\$59,999	.10	.14	+.04	69
\$60,000-\$74,999	.08	.10	+.02	46
\$75,000-\$89,999	.05	.14	+.09	66
\$90,000-\$104,999	.04	.11	+.07	53
\$105,000-\$119,999	.02	.06	+.04	30
\$120,000-\$134,999	.03	.04	+.01	18
\$135,000-\$144,999	.01	.06	+.05	29
\$150,000-\$174,999	.02	.05	+.03	25
\$175,000-\$199,999	.07	.04	-.03	19
\$200,000-\$224,999	.07	.01	-.06	6
\$225,000-\$249,999	.04	.02	-.02	8
\$250,000+	.24	.03	-0.21	12

Table 2: Comparison of Total Annual Household Income Before Taxes & Deductions (2020).

Table 2 compares the annual household income before taxes and deductions. The table shows an underrepresentation of both the lowest and highest income categories in Elections

Calgary's sample. There is an underrepresentation of immigrant Calgarians whose household income is less than \$30,000-\$44,999 and an underrepresentation of immigrant Calgarians whose household income is \$175,000 and over. This is particularly true of immigrant Calgarian households who make \$250,000 and above, a significant underrepresentation of the sample. The Elections Calgary sample overrepresents immigrant Calgarians who make between \$45,000-\$174,999. The main and most obvious explanation for the discrepancy is that the survey caught more individuals with middle household income than the lowest or highest earners.

Comparing immigrant Calgarians and the Calgarian population more generally, data from Stats Canada found that, while immigrants admitted to Canada in 2018 had a higher median wage than previous immigrants admitted the last year, immigrants' median wages were still 17.8% lower than the 2019 median wage of the total Canadian population (Stats Canada, 2021). Studies from the City of Calgary also came to similar findings. Looking at 'employment income' in 2010, the median income for Calgary immigrants was \$38,187. This was \$3,809 less than the median employment income for Calgarians overall (City of Calgary, 2011). The study also found that "[w]hen split by the individual's highest certificate, diploma or degree, the biggest difference between the employment income of immigrants and the general Calgary population was between those with a university certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above" (City of Calgary, 2011, pg. 17). In 2010, the median employment income of immigrants with a university certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above was \$49,940. For the general Calgary population, the median employment earnings with the same credentials was \$60,130, a difference of over \$10,000. On the other side of the spectrum, immigrants with no certificates had an income almost \$3,000 higher than the general Calgary population with no certificate (City of Calgary, 2011).

Level of Education	Calgary Immigrants	Sample	Difference	N
No Degree	.40	.36	-.04	193
Degree	.60	.64	+.04	349

Table 3: Comparison of Highest Levels of Education Obtained (2022).

Table 3 compares the highest levels of education obtained by an individual. For this table, I created two categories: no degree and degree. Looking at our first categories, we can see that the Elections Calgary sample has a slight underrepresentation regarding the percentage of individuals with no degree. On the other hand, there is a slight overrepresentation of those with a university degree or higher.

Interestingly, when comparing immigrant Calgarians with Calgary's general population, evidence suggests that immigrant Calgarians have, on average, higher levels of education. The City of Calgary, using Census Canada data, found that "[t]he percent of recent immigrants who held a bachelor's degree or higher was around 46 percent in 2016 and in 2021 in Calgary CMA, 10 percent higher than the rate for the overall population" (City of Calgary, 2022). This 2022 data suggests that immigrant Calgarians do, in fact, have higher levels of education than the general population, which is shown in the sample from the City of Calgary surveys. Moreover, Yu's (2022) research into income among skilled immigrants from the Chinese Mainland in Canada found that high-education-low-income exist among recent immigrants from various ethnic groups in Canada. An executive summary from research done by Citizenship and Immigration Canada in 2010 also found that immigrants have higher education levels than Canadian-born citizens. The executive summary noted that nearly two-thirds of working-age (25-64 years) immigrants in 2010 had either postsecondary, diploma, or degree 6 percentage points higher than Canadian-born citizens of the same age (Xue and Xu, 2012).

Sex	Calgary Immigrants	Sample	Difference	N
Male	.48	.52	+.04	279
Female	.52	.48	-.04	259

Table 4: Comparison of Sex (2022).

Table 4 is a comparison of self-identified sex. On both questionnaires, participants could select from five options: male, female, prefer to self-describe (with a text box given), don't know, and prefer not to answer. 98% of the participants chose either male or female as their sex, which was 537/547 of the total number. 8 of the respondents chose 'don't know' or 'prefer not to answer.' The 2 participants that decided to self-describe did not give valid answers. For this reason, I have decided to only look at men and women whenever there are gender considerations in this thesis. The table above shows that the sample is slightly different than the immigrant data from the Microdata. Males are slightly overrepresented, while females are slightly underrepresented in the Elections Calgary dataset.

Age	Calgary Immigrants	Sample	Difference	N
18-19 years	.03	.02	-.01	11
20-24 years	.08	.02	-.06	13
25-34 years	.18	.16	-.02	90
35-44 years	.21	.26	+.05	140
45-54 years	.18	.18	-	100
55-64 years	.16	.13	-.03	69
65-74 years	.11	.14	+.03	79
75+ years	.06	.08	+.02	45

Table 5: Age of Survey Respondents

Finally, Table 5 compares the ages of the immigrant community in Calgary and the sample collected. There is a slight underrepresentation of ages 18-34 and between 55-64. The sample has an overrepresentation of those between 35-44 and 65-75+. The sample collected and immigrant age from the census was the same for those between the ages of 45-54.

Overall, the sample data collected is broadly representative of middle-class immigrants. The data from the Microdata files helps give my thesis the most accurate information to compare sample sizes from the closed and open-link surveys. While the control and sample sizes are not

the same geographically (CMA and the City of Calgary), the sample is similar to the overall representation of immigrant Calgarians. Considering that my sample has slightly more middle-class (and European) immigrants than there are in the broader population, these comparisons suggest that we can cautiously generalize my survey results to Calgary's immigrant community.

Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables	Explanation
Interest Levels	Exploring and comparing levels of interest
Self-Reported Knowledge Levels	Exploring and comparing levels of attention
Voted in Home Country	Examining prior voting history
Voted in Municipal, Provincial or Federal Election	Examining voting history in Canada
Voting in Calgary's 2025 Municipal Election	Understanding future voting considerations
Motivation for Voting	Exploring immigrant's motivation to vote
Perceptions Around Municipal Elections	Understanding perceptions of municipal elections

Chapter Four: List of Dependent Variables

This section describes the dependent variables used in this chapter and explains their relevance to understanding immigrant communities' participation in municipal elections. Like Chapter Three, the first two dependent variables examine immigrants' interests and self-reported knowledge levels. These two dependent variables will help compare and contrast any potential differences among immigrant communities, which can be masked when only looking at immigrants and non-immigrants as the independent variables.

The following three dependent variables aim to understand the path of voting for immigrants coming to Calgary. The first dependent variable, which looks at voting in an immigrant's home country, helps better understand voting behaviour before immigration. The following dependent variable (Voted in Municipal, Provincial, or Federal elections) looks to understand the voting behaviour of immigrants better when they are eligible to vote in Canada. Thirdly, the dependent variable looking at voting in Calgary's 2025 municipal election looks to understand voting intention among immigrant communities for future elections in Calgary.

The last two dependent variables in this chapter aim to better understand why immigrant communities participate in municipal elections and their perceptions of them. The motivation for voting dependent variable helps to understand what incentivizes immigrants to participate in municipal elections. The dependent variable that looks at perceptions around municipal elections is framed negatively to see if specific immigrant communities agree more than others about stereotypes or misconceptions regarding Calgary's municipal government or elections.

Interest & Knowledge

This section will take an in-depth look at the interest and knowledge levels of immigrant communities in Calgary. For both interest and knowledge, I will look at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government. While this is similar to the analysis done in the previous chapter, this comparison aims to highlight any further heterogeneity found between immigrant communities with more data than available from the CMES and offer a cross-level perspective. The analysis will start by looking at descriptive statistics for each level, and then I will discuss the results after.

Interest & Knowledge Among Immigrant Communities in Calgary

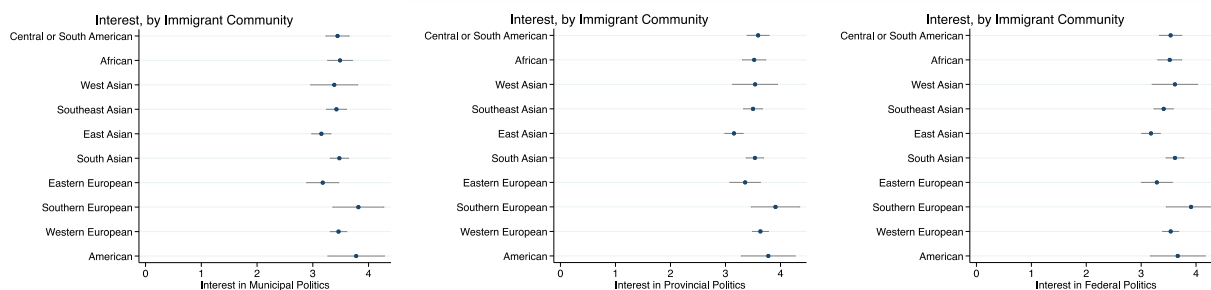


Figure 1: Interest in Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Government by Immigrant Community (Mean Estimate)

Figure 1 first summarizes the average level of reported interest in municipal government among immigrants in Calgary, organized by the respondents' places of birth. Circles in the figure are mean estimates, and whiskers are 95% confidence intervals. On a scale of 0-4 (0 meaning no

interest at all and 4 indicating very interested), the mean value of reported interest in municipal government is 3.40. This suggests a reasonably high level of self-reported interest in Calgary's municipal politics among immigrant communities. When we take a closer look at immigrant communities in Calgary, however, we see that interest levels do vary. Figure 1 shows that survey respondents from America and Southern Europe had higher mean values, indicating that individuals from those communities tend to be more interested in Calgary's municipal government. Survey respondents from Western Europe, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central/South America all had mean scores similar to the overall average. Finally, we see that survey respondents from Eastern Europe, West Asia, and East Asia were significantly below the mean score, which suggests that survey respondents from those communities have less interest in Calgary's municipal government than the average. These results are similar to those found in the last chapter in that there is a pattern of heterogeneity among immigrant communities and different levels of interest in municipal elections. These results also highlight the need to avoid considering immigrant communities as homogeneous groups.

The following figure looks at reported interest levels in provincial politics. The mean value for interest in provincial politics is 3.49, higher than the mean for interest in municipal politics. This suggests that survey respondents were, on average, more interested in provincial politics than municipal politics. Similar to the results above, American, Western European, and Southern European communities all have a noticeably higher mean score, suggesting that those communities are very interested in provincial politics. Southeast Asian, South Asian, West Asian, African, and Central/South American communities also had higher mean scores than the average. The two groups below the average mean score were Eastern European and East Asian,

suggesting that they have lower levels of interest in provincial government when compared to the other immigrant communities.

The third figure demonstrates the mean values for interest in the Canadian federal government. The mean score of interest in federal politics is 3.48. This suggests that interest in the federal government is higher among immigrant communities when compared to municipal politics but is similar to levels of interest in the provincial government. Immigrant communities that had higher or similar averages to the mean were American, Western European, Southern European, South Asian, West Asian, African, and Central/South American communities. Again, Eastern Europeans and East Asians are below average in their mean scores. Interestingly, Southeast Asian respondents are slightly below the mean regarding interest in federal politics, which was not seen in municipal or provincial politics interest levels. This helps to demonstrate not just the diversity among immigrant communities but also suggests differences even within one community and their interest levels in the three branches of government.

Overall, there are two major takeaways from Figure 1. The first major takeaway is that there are differences among immigrant communities regarding levels of interest in government. However, these differences do not only hold for the municipal level. In all three levels of government, we see that communities are above, below, and par with the mean interest score. While this difference is seen within all levels of government, we see that municipal politics does have the lowest levels of interest. The federal and provincial levels of interest are almost identical, however interest in municipal government is considerably lower.

The second conclusion is that some communities are consistently higher or lower regarding their overall interest in government. American, Western European, and Southern European respondents consistently had higher levels of interest regardless of government

jurisdiction. On the other side, Eastern Europeans and East Asians were consistently below average when it came to interest in government. Although the reasons these trends exist cannot be explained from these three tables alone, this highlights the importance of looking at immigrant communities as heterogeneous groups and the need to continue researching immigrant voting behaviours in elections.

Perceived Levels of Knowledge Among Immigrant Communities in Calgary

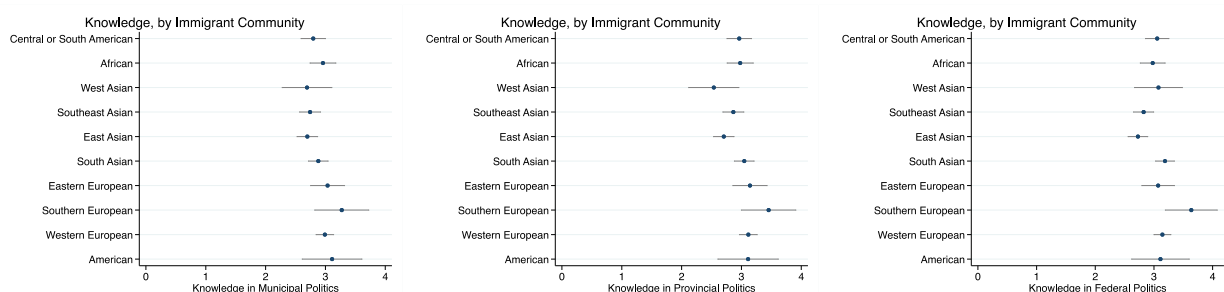


Figure 2: Levels of Perceived Knowledge in Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Government (Mean Estimates)

The first graph in Figure 2 summarizes the self-reported knowledge levels among immigrant communities in Calgary's municipal government. The mean score was 2.87. It is interesting to compare the mean interest in municipal politics score with the mean knowledge score. Interest levels are much higher than the perceived levels of knowledge of municipal politics in Calgary. Americans, Western Europeans, Southern Europeans, Eastern Europeans, South Asians and African communities all have higher mean scores than the average. East Asian, Southeast Asian, West Asian/Middle Eastern, and Central/South Americans all have lower mean scores than the average. These numbers are important because they show that not all immigrant communities are the same in their perceived knowledge of municipal elections and their understanding of how local government operates. One interesting example is the Eastern European community. Figure 1 indicated that Eastern European survey respondents were consistently below the average regarding interest in all levels of government. However, Eastern

European respondents are above average in self-reported knowledge. On the other side, Southeast Asians have a higher level of interest in municipal politics but a lower score regarding perceived levels of knowledge. This finding is important because it highlights that the relationship between interest and knowledge is not always unidirectional. This suggests that just because an individual is knowledgeable about government, it does not mean they will necessarily be interested in government, and vice versa.

The next figure summarizes levels of perceived knowledge in the provincial government. The mean score was 2.96. This suggests that immigrant respondents are more comfortable in their perceived understanding of provincial politics than municipal politics. The results show that American, Western European, Southern European, Eastern European, and South Asian are above average. African and Central/South American are similar to the overall mean. East Asian, Southeast Asian, and West Asian/Middle Eastern respondents are below the mean. It should also be noted that the perceived levels of knowledge for the provincial government are higher than that for the municipal government. This is similar to findings in the literature, which suggest that there is often less attention to municipal politics in the news or that finding information about local elections and candidates can be more difficult (Wallace et al., 2023). Again, we see that most Asian communities have a lower level of perceived knowledge than communities from Europe or America.

The third figure summarizes the descriptive statistics for self-reported knowledge about the Canadian federal government. The first notable number is that the overall self-reported mean is higher for the federal government than for the municipal or provincial government. The mean score was 3.01. This makes sense, given that immigrants need to know more about the federal government to pass their citizenship test than they do about the other two levels of government.

Similar to the results above, Americans, Western Europeans, and Southern Europeans all have high levels of self-reported knowledge of the federal government. South Asian community also has a high self-reported knowledge of the federal government. West Asian/Middle Eastern and Central/South American respondents were similar to the mean. African, East Asian, and Southeast Asian were all below the mean.

The three figures above provide two notable conclusions. The first is that immigrant communities, on average, have less self-reported interest in and knowledge of municipal politics when compared to the other two levels of government. As noted above, this makes sense, given that learning about the federal government is required for citizenship and that provincial politics is often more visible than municipal politics. Despite being the lowest in reported knowledge, there was a range of self-reported understanding among immigrants in local government. The second interesting finding is that levels of knowledge and interest do not necessarily move in the same direction. One could hypothesize that with more interest, there will be more knowledge, or more knowledge would lead to more interest, however this does not seem to be the case from the tables above. Examples such as comparing Eastern European's levels of interests to their levels of self-reported knowledge does show that the two variables do not always go the same way. Finally, it is notable that American and European immigrants are consistently higher in their levels of understanding of all local governments. This could be explained by the fact that American and European immigrants might be more familiar with Canada's system of government. Looking at self-perceived knowledge again highlights the importance of heterogeneity when researching immigrant communities. If, for example, a different study had looked at this data but only categorized the findings as 'immigrants' and 'non-immigrants,' they would have missed the nuanced differences between the immigrant communities. It is beneficial,

therefore, for future studies looking at participation in any election to factor in the heterogeneity of immigrant communities.

Voting Behaviour Among Immigrant Calgarians

The following figures below highlight four potential phases of voting for immigrant communities. Figure 3 will first look at the voting behaviour of immigrant respondents before moving to Canada. This table includes all levels of voting, not just at the municipal level. Figure 4 will then look at how immigrant communities have voted in Canada at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government. Looking toward the future, Figure 5 addresses the likelihood of immigrants voting in Calgary's 2025 municipal election. Finally, Figure 6 wraps up this section by looking at the motivations behind why immigrant communities' vote.

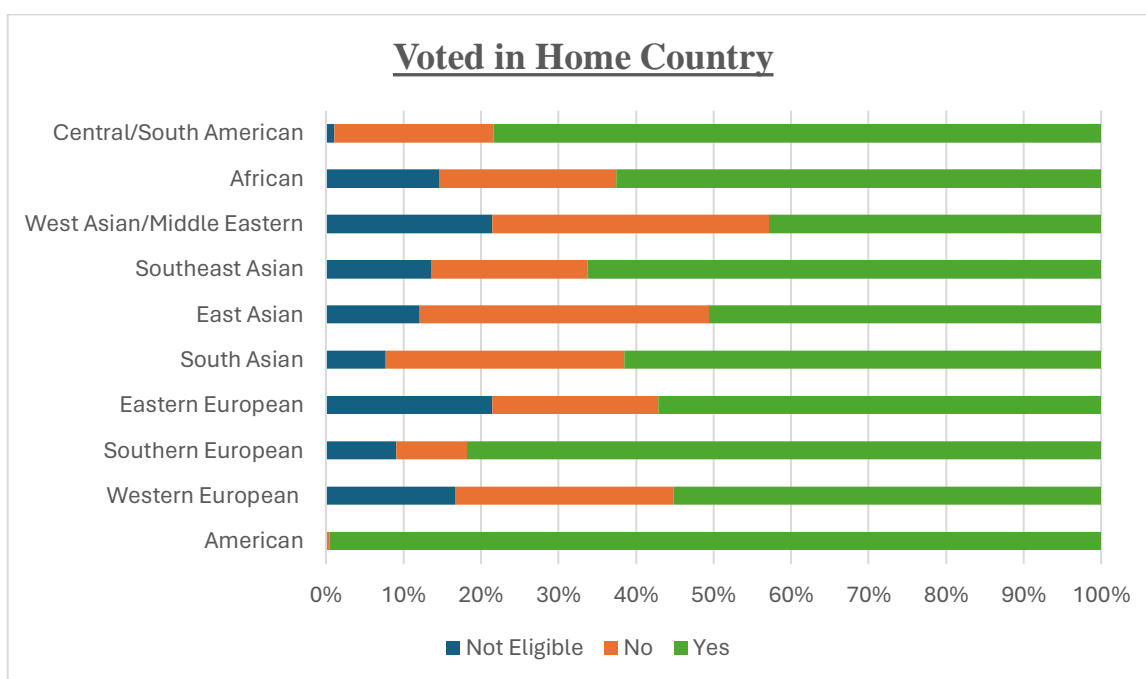


Figure 3: Voting Behaviour Prior to Moving to Canada

Figure 3 looks at the voting behaviours of immigrant communities before arriving in Calgary. This figure looks at all voting prior to moving, regardless of the level of government. This figure aims to see if different immigrant communities have higher or lower levels of voting

experience before moving. For example, Goldsmith and Holzner's (2015) research found that previous democratic experience is one of the most powerful predictors of immigrant voting in a municipal election in American cities. This figure is also interesting because there are often debates in the literature about whether immigrants from certain parts of the world or under different government regimes will vote at different rates once they arrive in Canada (see Bilodeau, 2014). From the table above, we can see that respondents from almost all immigrant communities voted in an election before moving to Calgary. The only community with less than 50% of respondents saying they had voted in a prior election was West Asian/Middle Eastern, coming in at 43%. There are numerous reasons why this number could be below 50%, but one of the main reasons is that there is a high “not eligible” category.

Figure 3 also demonstrates that, for the most part, immigrant communities are voting in elections before moving to Calgary. Excluding the one exception, every immigrant community has at least 50% or higher levels of voting before moving to Calgary. While these numbers are self-reported and research has shown that respondents overestimate their involvement in turnout, this does give more assurance to one of the findings from the previous chapter. Chapter 3 suggested that recent arrivals are less interested in municipal politics, but the difference in interest goes away over time. Figure 3 helps to give this claim more support in that immigrant communities, for the most part, were interested and participated in some elections in their home countries, which could lead them to be involved in Calgary’s municipal elections once they have become more established in their new city.

	Model A	
<u>Vote Intention</u>	<u>Coef</u>	<u>SE</u>
<u>Voted in Home</u>	.62**	.29
<u>Country</u>		
<u>Constant</u>	1.56	.22
<u>N</u>	463	

* $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.01$

Stemming from the results in Figure 3, an interesting question arises: How does voting in an immigrant's home country affect the likelihood of voting in future municipal elections in Calgary? This question is noteworthy because it examines whether prior voting history can influence future voting behaviours in a new city. The regression analysis results are positive and statistically significant, indicating that immigrants who have voted in their home countries are more likely to vote in future municipal elections in Calgary. While the results group immigrant communities into a homogeneous group, it highlights that prior voting history can increase the likelihood that immigrants will vote in future local elections. Political scientists can debate whether immigrants who vote in their home countries are more motivated to vote in their new cities than those who choose not to vote or if they do it out of habit (Plutzer, 2002; Blais & Daoust, 2020), but the results indicate that voting prior to moving helps to increase the likelihood that immigrants will vote again.

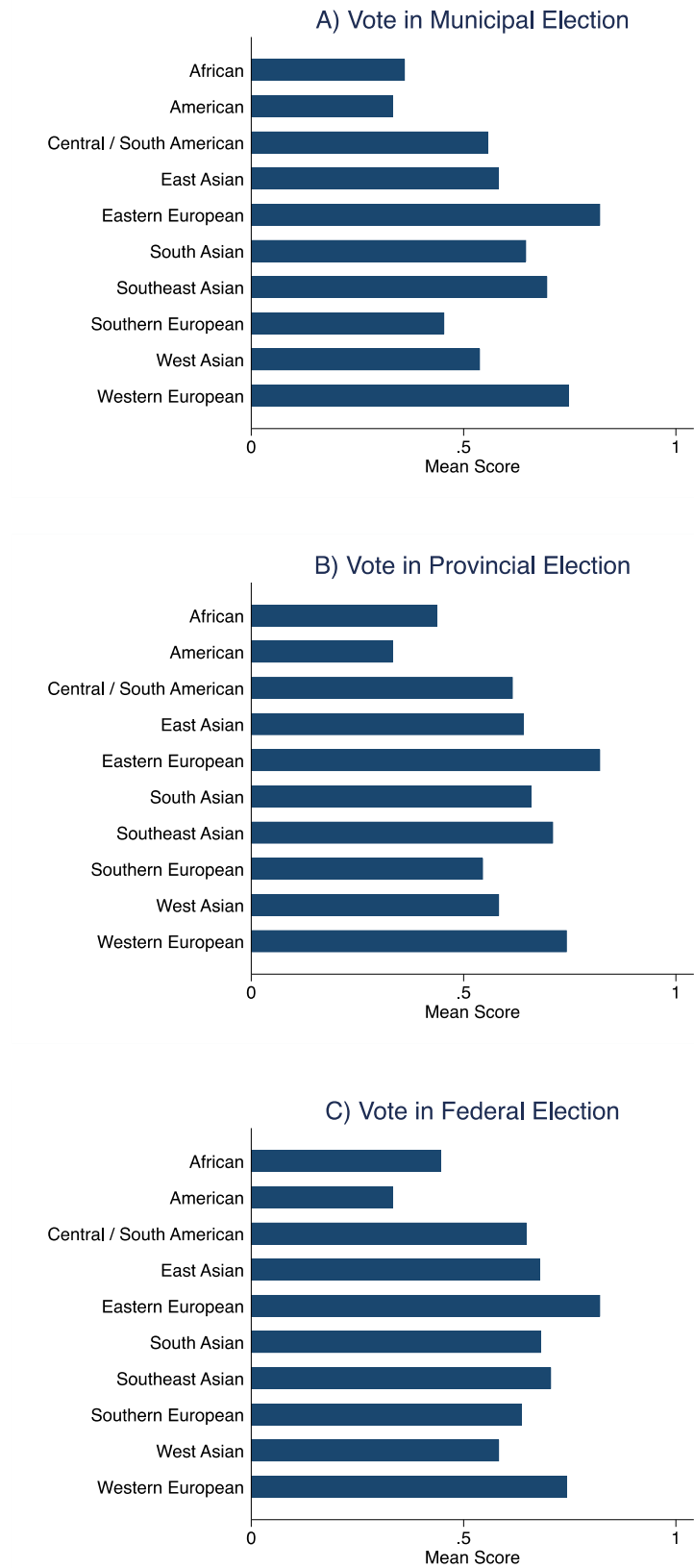


Figure 4: Turnout at Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Elections (Mean Values)

Figure 4 looks at the voting behaviour of immigrant Calgarians in municipal, provincial, and federal elections. The goal of these graphs is to compare the voting behaviours of immigrant communities to see if there is a gap between municipal elections and provincial and federal elections. This graph looks at the mean score for each election, with 0 meaning “did not vote” and 1 meaning “did vote.” Based on this coding, if the blue line is longer, more respondents in that community indicated that they did vote in that specific election.

Figure 4A looks at the voting behaviour of immigrant Calgarians in municipal elections. From the graph, we can see that there are some differences among the immigrant communities. Eastern European, Western European, and Southeast Asian communities are among the highest communities to indicate that they have voted in a municipal election. On the other hand, American, African, and Southern Europeans have among the lowest mean scores, indicating that more respondents answered no to voting in a municipal election. This data again highlights the differences among communities and their levels of participation in local elections.

Figure 4B looks at voting among immigrant communities at the provincial level. Similar to the trends found in the municipal elections, we see differences among the communities. American, African, and Southern Europeans remain among the lowest, while Eastern European, Western European, and Southeast Asians are among the highest. When comparing this with municipal elections, though, we can see an overall increase in the numbers that said they voted in a provincial election. Evidence from the figures above indicates this trend is happening because immigrant communities are typically more interested in provincial elections and have higher self-reported knowledge than municipal elections. Figure 4B, however, continues the theme of immigrant communities trending in the same direction but having noticeable differences among the groups.

Finally, Figure 4C looks at immigrant participation in federal elections. Again, we see the theme of immigrant communities moving in the same direction but having noticeable differences within the communities. Overall, more individuals have voted in a federal election than in a provincial or municipal election. Similar to data on the provincial elections, this is likely due to more interest and self-reported knowledge in the federal government than compared to municipal government. Eastern and Western Europeans have the highest mean scores, while Americans, Africans, and West Asians are among the lowest.

Figure 4 shows considerable differences regarding participating in the three levels of government. The general trend is that immigrant communities are less likely to participate in municipal elections and more likely to participate in provincial and federal elections. There are, however, differences among immigrant communities. We saw that Eastern Europeans and Western Europeans, for example, were more likely to vote at all levels of government than other communities. On the other hand, we also saw that American and African communities were less likely to participate in all levels. These nuanced results would have been lost if immigrants were only looked at as a homogeneous group, which shows the need to examine participation in elections through the lens of heterogeneity.

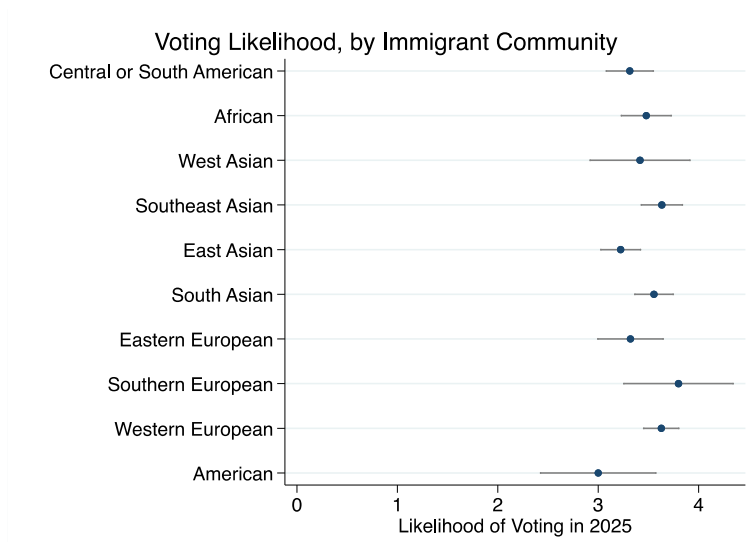


Figure 5: Likelihood of Voting in Calgary’s 2025 Municipal Election (Mean Values)

Figure 5 examines the likelihood of voting in the 2025 Calgary municipal election among immigrant communities. Survey respondents were given a thermometer scale ranging from 0, “not at all likely,” to 4, “very likely” to vote. The mean score for all respondents was 3.45, which indicates that the average respondent was between “somewhat likely” and “very likely” to vote. While this mean score is positive, suggesting that most individuals are at least reportedly interested in voting in the next municipal election, we see that there are some differences between the groups. American respondents had the overall lowest mean score, indicating that respondents were less likely to vote in the next municipal election, however this could be from their low overall survey numbers. Most other communities hover around that 3.45 mean score, with East Asian and Eastern European communities slightly below. Southern European respondents were above the average. Figure 9 highlights a continuing theme: while immigrant communities generally trend similarly, nuanced differences exist among them. This figure helps demonstrate the heterogeneity found among immigrant communities when it comes to participating, or thinking about participating, in Calgary’s municipal elections.

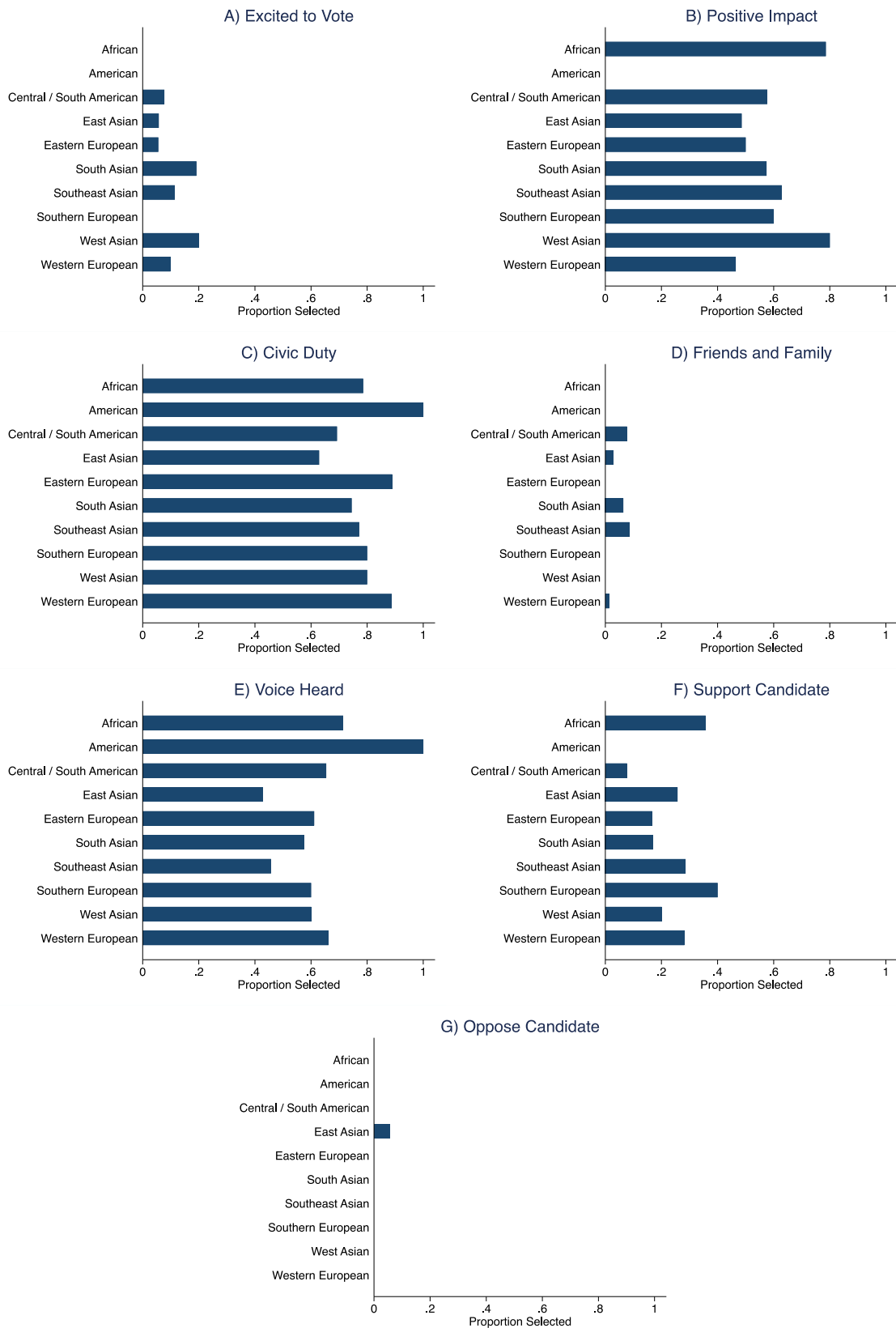


Figure 6: Motivation Behind Voting in Calgary’s 2021 Municipal Election

Figure 6 looks at some of the motivations behind voting for immigrant communities in Calgary's municipal election. Survey respondents were first asked if they had voted in Calgary's 2021 municipal election, and if they answered yes, they were then asked to select the main reasons why they chose to participate. Survey respondents could select up to three of the chosen answers or select 'other' and indicate their own reasons why they voted. Based on the graphs above, three main motivations stood out: 1) belief that voting is a responsibility/civic duty, 2) having your voice heard, and 3) wanting to make a positive impact.

The belief that voting is a civic duty or a responsibility was among the most selected answers to why immigrant respondents voted in the 2021 municipal election. All communities selected this answer, however, there are differences to the degree to which this answer was chosen. Americans, Western Europeans, and Eastern Europeans were among the communities that selected this answer the most, with over 80% of respondents selecting this as one of their top choices. On the other hand, we see that East Asian respondents did select this answer, but just over 60% chose this as one of their top three. This highlights the ongoing theme that, while there are general trends among immigrants, there is noticeable heterogeneity regarding voting behaviours among immigrant communities.

The next two highest answers chosen were 'wanting your voice heard' and 'wanting to make a positive impact.' Again, we see the theme that, while these are the next highest answers selected, there are considerable differences among the communities. Graph E shows that Americans and Africans were among the communities that voted the most because they wanted to have their voices heard. Conversely, East Asians and Southeast Asians were less likely to select this answer. Similar results can be seen in Graph B, which looks at voting because it makes a positive impact. West Asian, African, and Southeast Asian are among the highest

communities who wanted to vote to make a positive difference, but not a single American chose this as their top reason. These two figures again highlight the theme that, while there might be general trends among immigrants, looking at specific communities can show stark differences in voting behaviours and their reasoning behind casting a ballot.

The three lowest reasons for voting were 4) being excited to vote, 5) voting because of friends or family, and 6) voting against a candidate. All three categories had low results, but there was evidence of heterogeneity, particularly in Graph A. South Asians, West Asians, and Southeast Asians were among the highest to select that they were excited to vote, however under 30% of respondents chose this as their top three answers. ‘Voting because friends,’ ‘family were voting,’ or ‘voting against a particular candidate’ were the lowest reasons selected, but there was some indication of heterogeneity in these results as well. There was a total of 5 “other” responses, but all responses could be categorized as ‘voting against a specific candidate’ (i.e. “Ensure Gondek would not win” or “to vote against lying candidates”).

Perceptions about Local Government in Calgary

The following section examines common perceptions about voting in municipal elections. The five perceptions that will be looked at in this section are: 1) I don’t believe that elections are fair/can be manipulated; 2) I don’t think one vote makes an impact in an election; 3) It is not my role or job to be interested in politics; 4) I don’t know enough about municipal government; 5) I don’t really care who gets elected in municipal elections. While respondents could choose between, strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree and prefer not to answer, I have collapsed those categories to either disagree or agree with prefer not to answer dropped from consideration. For Figure 7, 0 was coded as “disagree” and 1 was coded as “agree”. The figures below show that the closer the blue line is to a mean score of 1, the

more respondents 'agreed' with the negatively framed statement. Conversely, a mean score closer to 0 shows respondents 'disagreed' with the statement. Figure 7 will demonstrate that, while there are general trends among immigrant communities' perceptions about voting in municipal elections, there is also heterogeneity among the different groups.

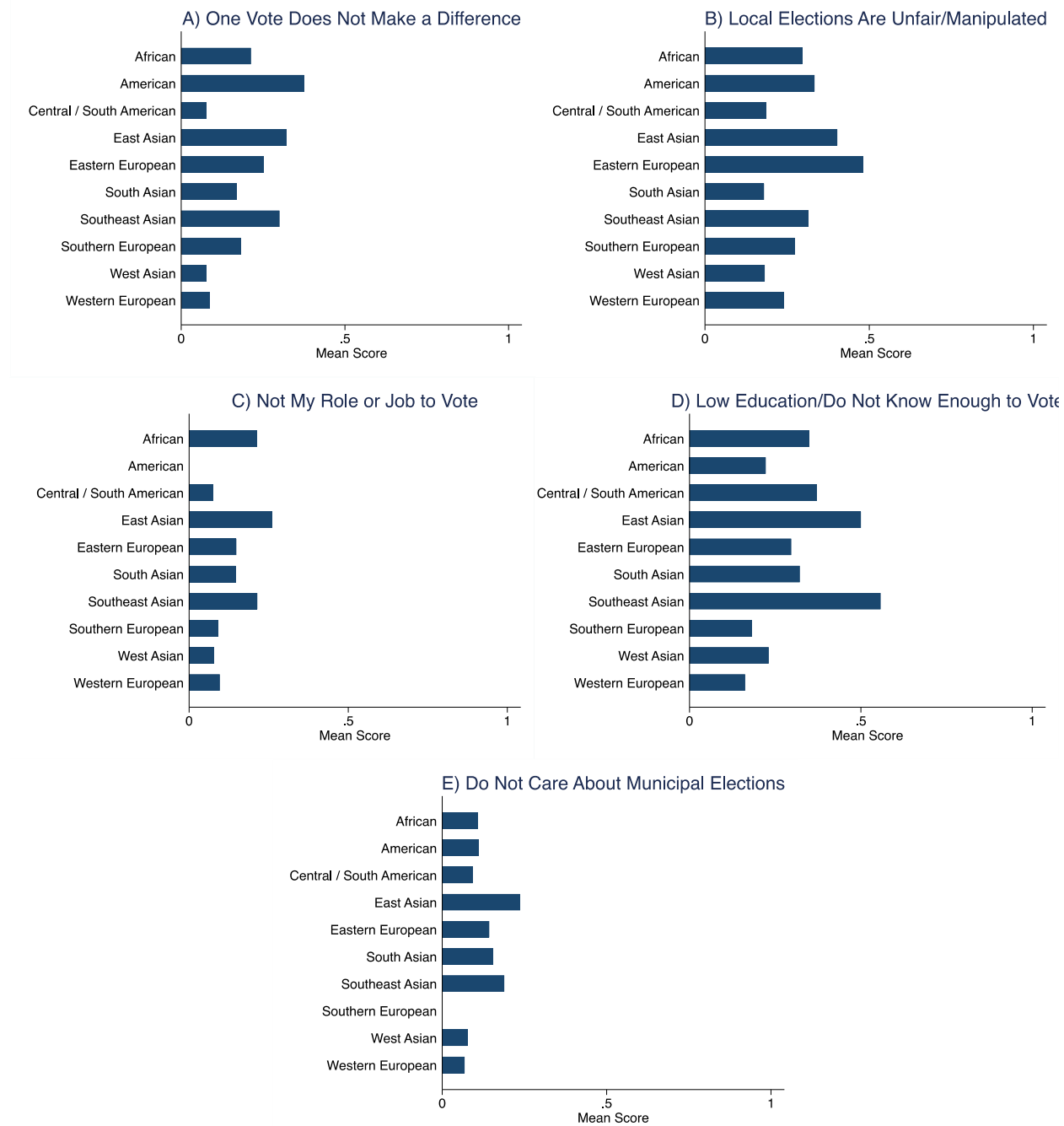


Figure 7: Perception Regarding Voting in Calgary's Municipal Election (Mean Estimates)

The first perception that Figure 7 addresses is the notion that ‘one vote does not make a difference’ in Calgary’s municipal election. While most immigrant communities disagreed with the statement, we can see heterogeneity among the groups. For example, respondents from America, East Asia, and Southeast Asia all had higher mean scores than the rest of the immigrant communities. This suggests that respondents from those communities are more likely to agree that one vote does not make a difference in municipal elections. Conversely, respondents from Central/South America, Western Europe, and West Asia are closer to the mean score of 0, indicating that they disagreed with the statement. The first graph, therefore, shows the continuing theme of broad trends among immigrant respondents and heterogeneity within the categories.

Figure 7B looks at the negative perception that local elections are ‘unfair’ or can be manipulated. Similar to the first graph, the general trend is that most immigrant respondents disagreed with the statement, but there are differences among the categories. Eastern European and East Asian respondents have mean scores higher, indicating that, on average, more respondents from those communities agreed with the statement. Respondents from American, African, and Southeast Asians also had higher levels of agreement. South Asian, West Asian, and Western Europeans were among the communities with mean scores closer to 0, indicating that, on average, more respondents from their background disagreed with the statement. This graph continues the theme of immigrant communities having similar directions in their overall trends but having differences among themselves.

The next graph looks at the perception that it is not the respondents’ ‘role’ or ‘job’ to vote in a municipal election. Compared to the other graphs in Figure 7, the responses for all communities were closer to disagree. Africans, East Asians, and Southeast Asians have higher mean scores overall. This again shows differences within the immigrant community, but the

degree of those differences is less noticeable than with other graphs in this figure. However, the general trend for this graph is that most respondents disagreed with the perception that it was not their role or job to vote in a municipal election.

Figure 7C addresses the perception that someone does not have enough education regarding municipal politics or government to participate in an election. This graph is notable because we see the highest mean score out of any other graph, meaning that many respondents agree they do not know enough about municipal politics or government to vote. This finding is particularly true when we look at Southeast Asians and East Asians, which have a distinctively high mean score. These results are similar to the findings in the above section in that self-reported levels of knowledge are lowest in municipal politics when compared to the provincial or federal governments. This graph helps demonstrate the urgent need for academics to find a way to ensure immigrant communities have easier access to accurate information about local government. This graph again highlights the importance of heterogeneity, as Western and Southern European respondents indicated that they disagreed with the perception that they did not know enough about municipal politics to vote, while many Asian communities respondents agreed with the statement.

Finally, the last graph examines the perception that the respondent does not care about municipal elections. Similar to graph 7B, we see variation among the immigrant community, but the overall trend is that most respondents disagreed with the statement. East Asians and Southeast Asians had a higher overall mean score, but the degree of difference was not as noticeable as with other graphs. This figure helps to demonstrate that, while immigrant Calgarians might vote at lower rates in municipal elections (see Figure 4), there is still a high level of 'care' for local elections.

Overall, Figure 7 highlights the need to look at immigrant communities with a lens of heterogeneity. While the general trend is that most immigrant respondents, regardless of background, disagreed with the negative perceptions about Calgary's municipal elections, there are, at times, stark differences among the immigrant communities. This was particularly true regarding the perceptions about not having enough education to vote or that one vote does not make a difference. These graphs help to demonstrate that perceptions about voting changes from one community to another and that classifying immigrants as a homogeneous group will mask those nuanced differences.

Conclusion and Discussion

The sections above built on the previous chapter's findings that there are differences among immigrant communities in Calgary regarding voting behaviour. Two main conclusions can be reached based on the evidence found in this chapter. The first conclusion is that respondents from different immigrant communities tend to trend in similar directions when asked the same question. This was demonstrated first by looking at reported levels of interest in municipal elections. This section showed that immigrant communities are generally more interested in provincial and federal politics than municipal politics. This trend continued when the next section looked at self-reported levels of knowledge. We saw that immigrant communities had higher self-reported knowledge of provincial and federal politics than at the municipal level. This trend continued into the section of the chapter which looked at voting behaviour. Evidence from the survey data found that immigrant communities were more likely to vote at the provincial or federal level than at the municipal. When immigrant respondents were asked what motivates them to vote in municipal elections, we again saw that there were general trends that most respondents answered.

The second conclusion is that while there are general trends among immigrant communities, there are also significant differences. This can be seen in immigrant communities' different levels of self-reported interest and knowledge. Significant differences within the immigrant community could also be noticed when asked about their motivation for voting. While civic duty, having your voice heard, and wanting to make a positive impact were generally high among all respondents, there were major differences among the groups and which response they selected. Looking at perceptions regarding voting in Calgary's municipal elections also had similar results. We saw general trends, with most of the communities disagreeing with the negative statements, but again, there was lots of variation within the immigrant communities, particularly when it came to not knowing enough about municipal elections to vote.

The findings in this chapter are also significant because they can highlight specific communities that may have lower levels of engagement in municipal government and participation in local elections. An interesting case study from this chapter is the West Asian/Middle Eastern and the East Asian communities. Both communities had low levels of interest in and knowledge about all levels of government in Canada. These two communities also indicated low levels of voting in their home countries. Finally, West Asian/Middle Eastern and East Asian respondents more often agreed with the negatively framed statements about municipal government and elections.

All three of these findings suggest that there is something particular about the West Asian/Middle Eastern and the East Asian communities in Calgary that leads them to not engage or participate with the government. There can be several reasons why we see these results, such as a lack of interest or care, distrust of political institutions, or lack of time to participate. Whatever the reason, this granular level of understanding about a community would not be

possible if political science continues to treat immigrant communities as homogeneous groups. Treating immigrant communities as heterogeneous allows researchers to pinpoint communities like those mentioned above to see where potential help, education, or dialogue might be required.

This chapter's findings help to advance the discussions about immigrant participation in municipal elections in two significant ways. First, this chapter highlights the relative absence of attention to immigrants and heterogeneity in municipal politics and elections studies. The novel Elections Calgary research and dataset used in this chapter allowed me to take a more granular and in-depth look at immigrant Calgarians not found in any other study of municipal elections. This original dataset allowed me to find notable variances regarding interest, knowledge, and motivation among immigrant respondents participating in Calgary's municipal elections.

The second way this chapter has helped to advance the current discussion regarding immigrant participation in municipal politics is by demonstrating why these communities should not be categorized as either 'immigrants' or 'non-immigrants' in future research. While the findings in this chapter illustrate that there can be general trends among immigrant communities, there are also noticeable differences across these groups. Again, the Elections Calgary dataset enables this research to showcase the distinctions other studies miss by grouping all immigrant communities. The following chapter will further demonstrate how there are differences among immigrant communities when it comes to their policy preferences.

Chapter Five: Policy Implications

The two previous chapters have demonstrated a significant gap in Canadian political science literature when researching immigrant participation in municipal elections. Evidence from the last two chapters shows that Calgary's diverse immigrant communities are not the same regarding interest, knowledge, and participation in local government. This suggests that political scientists must refrain from treating immigrant communities as homogeneous groups and take the heterogeneity of these communities more seriously when studying local politics or elections.

Another area where Canadian political science has limited literature is researching what immigrants want to know about municipal elections, the best way to learn about these topics, and what informational tools or services academics or those invested in municipal elections can give communities. As stated in the literature review, there has been some 'get-out-the-vote' (GOTV) literature published in American political science, however, these tend to focus on state and federal elections (for example, Green & Gerber, 2015; Blais & Daoust, 2020.). Other research has pinpointed 'solutions' to increase voter turnout in municipal elections, but they are mostly unattainable without significant changes to legislation or political institutions (Holbrook et al., 2014). Therefore, this chapter's goal is to use Election Calgary's Voting Equity Research Project's dataset and look at what practical information and services immigrant Calgarians are interested in knowing and receiving from the City.

This chapter will have three main sections. The first section will look at the 'learning and information gathering' services that could help immigrant Calgarians better understand municipal government and municipal elections based on their perceptions about what would be helpful. This section will start by looking at when immigrant Calgarians think it is the best time to learn about municipal government and elections. The first section will then move into topics

that immigrants are interested in learning about municipal government and some information that could help new arrivals learn about local government and elections. The second section will focus on services that could help increase interest and knowledge about municipal government and elections. This section will start by looking at services that would increase interest in voting in municipal elections among all immigrant respondents and then will focus on services that could increase the likelihood of non-voters participating in the next municipal election. The chapter will then look at services that could help voters better understand municipal candidates and how local elections could be improved overall. Finally, the last section will discuss the findings of the chapter and some of the policy implications for Calgary’s municipal government.

Dependent Variables

Dependent Variables	Explanation
Learning About Municipal Elections	Comparing when to learn about municipal elections
Information Regarding Municipal Government	Information that immigrants will find helpful
Services to Help Learn about Local Government	Comparing services to help immigrant communities
Services to Help Voter Turnout	Services to help increase voter turnout generally
Services to Help Non-Voters	Services to help non-voters vote in the future
Understanding Candidates	Ways to help immigrants compare candidates

Chapter Five: List of Dependent Variables

This section will describe the dependent variables used in chapter five and how they relate to understanding immigrant communities’ participation in municipal elections. The first three dependent variables examine ways to help immigrant communities learn about municipal government and elections. The “Learning About Municipal Elections” variable and “Information Regarding Municipal Government” variables help to highlight when immigrants think it is ideal to start learning about municipal government and elections. This variable helps signal to academics and those invested in municipal elections when they should target immigrant communities to learn about local elections. The dependent variable that looks at municipal government information helps showcase what topics immigrant communities are interested in

learning about generally. Thirdly, the “Services to Help Learn about Local Government” variable narrows down how immigrants want to learn about municipal government and elections.

The following two dependent variables examine ways to increase voter turnout in Calgary’s municipal elections. The first variable looks at ways to increase voter turnout among immigrant communities more generally. This variable focuses on the top four results from the Elections Calgary Voting Equity dataset. The second variable concentrates on services that could help non-voters vote in the next municipal election. Therefore, the goal of both of these dependent variables is to find ways to increase participation in Calgary’s future elections.

Lastly, the final dependent variable examines ways to help immigrant communities understand those running for local government. As noted in the literature review, not knowing who is running for office or having an easy way to compare candidates has been cited as one reason immigrants might not participate in municipal elections in other Canadian cities (Wallace et al., 2023). Therefore, this dependent variable aims to examine what immigrant Calgarians need to better understand who is running and how to compare them.

Learning and Information about Calgary's Municipal Government

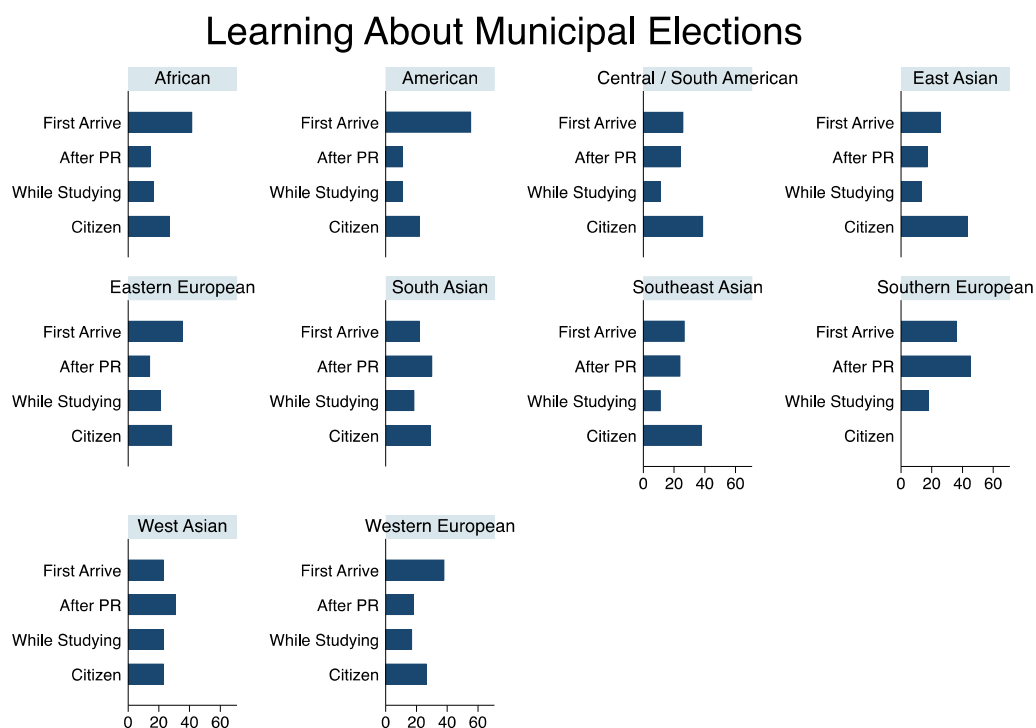


Figure 1: Best Time to Learn About Calgary's Municipal Election

Figure 1 summarizes the responses to the question: as an immigrant, when do you believe is the best time to learn about your municipal government and how elections work? Respondents were given four response options to the question: 1) when I first arrived, 2) After getting my PR (Permanent Resident), 3) while studying for my citizenship exam, and 4) after becoming a citizen and being eligible to vote. Based on the results above, we can see significant differences among immigrants and when they think it would be best to learn about municipal elections. Many African, American, Eastern European, and Western European respondents selected that learning about municipal elections should occur as soon as they arrive in Calgary. In contrast, many Central/South American, East Asian, and Southeast Asian respondents believed that learning about municipal elections should occur only after getting citizenship. Many Southern

European and West Asian respondents were somewhere in between, selecting that after getting their PR was the best time to learn about municipal government and elections.

The mixed results above show that there are different opinions among immigrant respondents when it comes to the best time to learn about municipal politics. Our limited data on immigrant voting behaviours suggests that newcomers tend to wait before learning or participating in political institutions (Tolley & Young, 2011), however these findings are about federal elections. Tolley and Young (2011) argued that when immigrants are new to the country, many prioritize their necessities during their ‘pre-arrival’ and ‘adaption’ stages. Tolley and Young (2011) state that it takes until immigrants’ integration stage until they are participating in Canadian institutions.

These results do not necessarily hold true at the municipal level or when heterogeneity among immigrant communities is considered. Several immigrant respondents thought learning about municipal elections should happen as soon as they arrived. One clear solution, therefore, to help with learning about municipal elections is ensuring that immigrant communities have easy access to accurate information about municipal elections at all times. This could come in many forms, such as partnerships with public libraries to ensure online information is available.

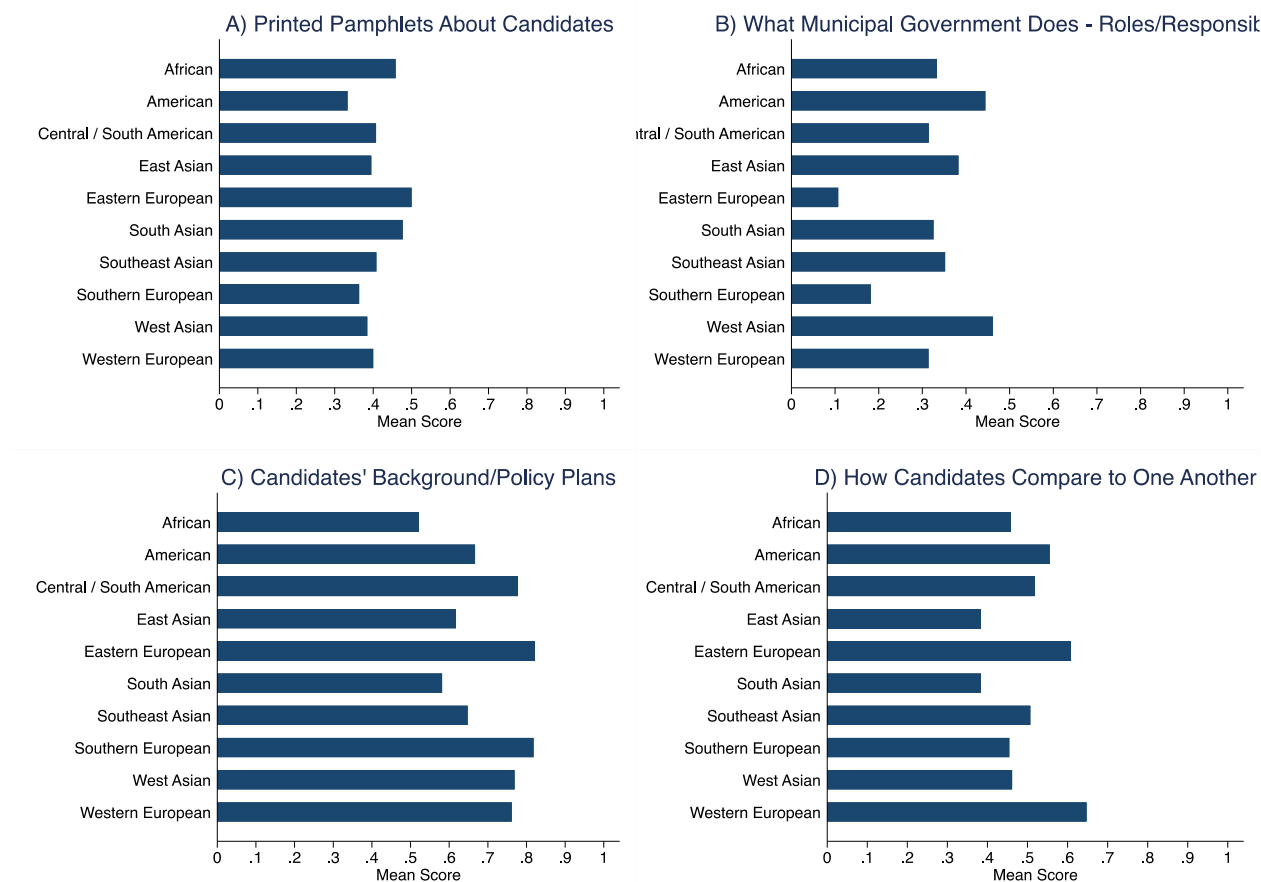


Figure 2: Information Immigrant Calgarian's are Interested in Knowing about Municipal Government and Elections

Figure 2 summarizes the top four results regarding information immigrant Calgarians want to know about municipal government and elections. Respondents could select their top three choices from a list of ten options (see Q22 in the Appendix). Similar to the results of the last two chapters, we see general trends in the data and differences among immigrant communities. When asked what information immigrant Calgarians are interested in knowing, the three most prominently selected answers were: information on candidates' backgrounds and policy plans, 2) how candidates compare to one another, and 3) printed information about candidates. This theme of needing more information about candidates is unsurprising, as municipal elections and candidates are not as prominent or well-known as provincial or federal elections. In Wallace et al. (2023), the authors found that the low-profile nature of local elections

means learning about candidates and politics at the municipal level takes more time and effort. Using focus group data, Wallace et al. (2023) found that all participants talked about some challenges around how and where to find more information about the elections and the candidates. Information about candidates is a top priority for immigrant Calgarians.

The next category of information that immigrant Calgarians want is general knowledge about the municipal government's role and responsibilities. Data from the previous two chapters shows that, on average, immigrant Calgarians have lower self-reported knowledge regarding municipal government than the provincial and federal levels. These results are again similar to Wallace et al.'s (2023) findings in that immigrant focus group participants also reported having a weak understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local officials and that they found it hard to obtain information. Figure 2, therefore, shows that there needs to be more of a concerted effort by candidates, election administrators, academics, and anyone else invested in municipal elections so that easy access to accurate information about candidates and the duties of municipal government is available. For example, evidence from America suggests that election administrators could play a role in increasing voter turnout. Hopkins et al. (2023) found that voter mobilization efforts could be effective when reaching out to potential voters repeatedly throughout the election cycle and providing them with feedback on their prior voting.

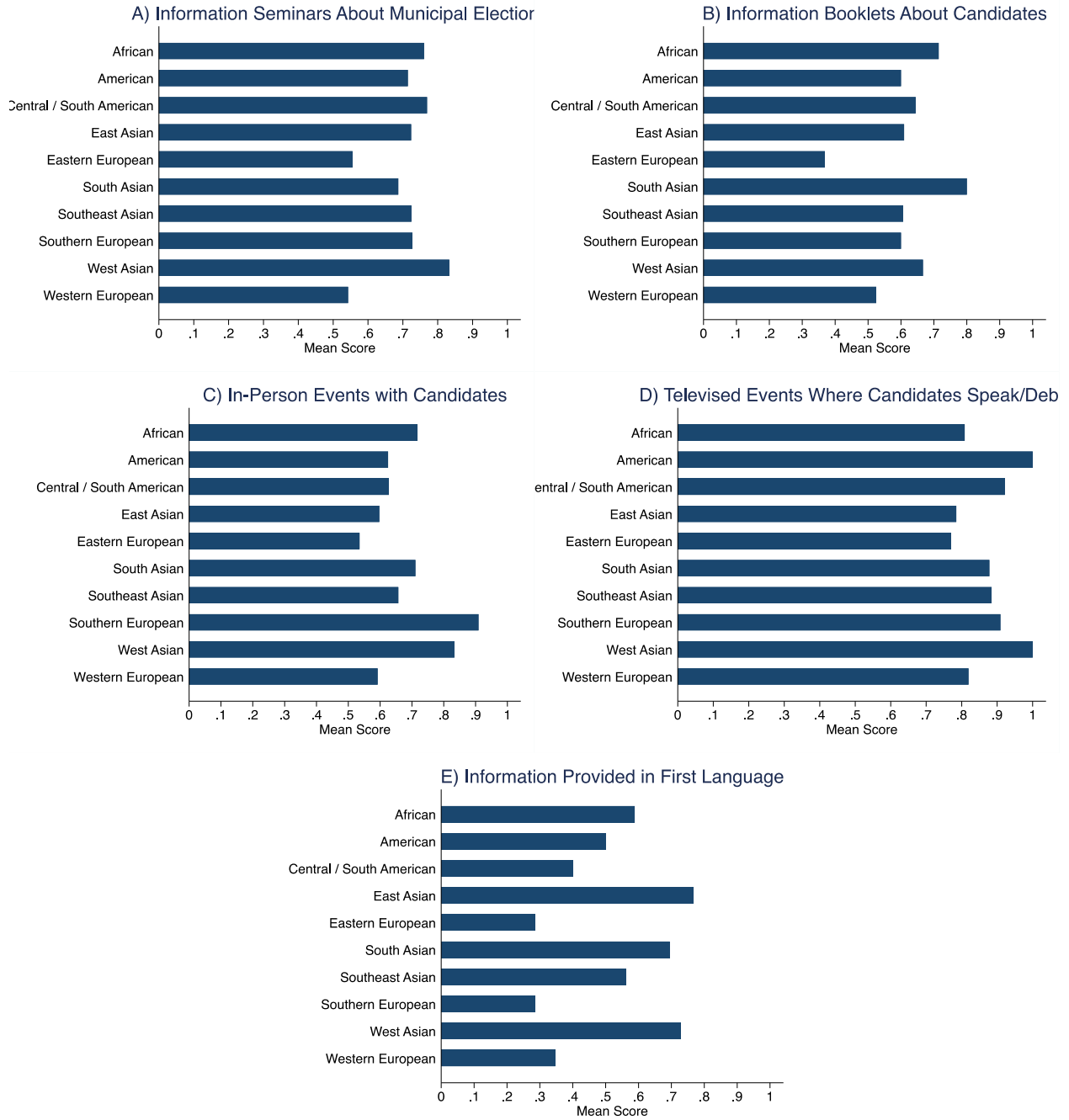


Figure 3: Services to Help Learn About Calgary’s Municipal Government and Elections

Figure 3 looks at potential services to help immigrant Calgaryians learn about municipal government and elections. Immigrant respondents were asked which of the services above they would most likely use/attend/watch to learn more about municipal government, elections, and candidates. Respondents could select either: not at all likely, not very likely, somewhat likely, very likely, or not applicable. For this section, I coded “not at all likely” and “not very likely” as one variable and “somewhat likely” and “very likely” as another variable. Those who selected “not applicable” were dropped. The figure above, therefore, shows the percentage of respondents who answered that they agreed, to some extent, that the services above would help their understanding of municipal government and elections.

We can see from Figure 3 that one of the most overwhelming responses that could help immigrant Calgaryians understand municipal government and elections better is to have televised events where candidates speak, debate, or answer questions. These findings are similar to the data that we saw in Figure 2, in that immigrant Calgaryians want an easier, more direct way to compare and contrast candidates and their policies. Figure 3B (information booklets about candidates) and Figure 3C (in-person events with Candidates) also suggest that immigrant Calgaryians want more opportunities to engage with candidates so that they have a better understanding of their proposed policies and background.

Figure 3A again points to another central theme: immigrant Calgaryians want easy access to general information about municipal elections. Although not specified in the question, information seminars could be online (video format, PowerPoint, etc.) or in person (held at post-secondary institutions or public libraries). These information seminars could help to bridge the gap between self-reported levels of knowledge in municipal government, which was shown to be less than self-reported knowledge in the provincial and federal governments.

One of the more polarized results comes from Figure 3E. This figure looks at the number of respondents who wanted to have information provided in their first language as a service that could help them learn more about Calgary's municipal government and elections. The figure shows a wide range of opinions about whether having this service would be helpful. East Asian, South Asian, and West Asian respondents were among the highest to select that this option would help them understand local government. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Eastern European, Southern European, and Western European respondents were among the lowest to choose this option. This is most likely because European respondents are more familiar with English, thus not needing translation services. Whatever the case, this figure again highlights the importance of looking at immigrants as heterogeneous, as some strategies to help increase knowledge about Calgary's municipal elections could work for some immigrant communities but not others.

Figure 3 also shows that services to help immigrant Calgarians should be more than just a one-size-fits-all solution. Understandably, there will be time and resource constraints, but Figure 3 shows that not all immigrant Calgarians want to learn about municipal government and elections in the same way. Having a few readily available options might help increase knowledge about local government for different immigrant communities.

Service Improvements to Calgary's Municipal Government

The section above mainly focused on what immigrant Calgarians would like to learn about municipal government and elections. Moving forward, the sections below will focus on some of the services that immigrant Calgarians would like to see to help improve their understanding and interactions with municipal government more generally and during municipal elections specifically. The first section will look at what immigrants chose as services that could increase interest in voting in Calgary's municipal elections more generally. The second section

will then turn to immigrant Calgarians who did not vote in the previous election and look at some services that could specifically help non-voters. Drawing on the first section's results that learning about candidates was one of the main struggles for immigrant Calgarians, the third section will look at services that could help increase knowledge about candidates running in Calgary's local elections. Finally, the last section will look at services that could help to improve the voting experience for immigrant Calgarians during municipal elections.

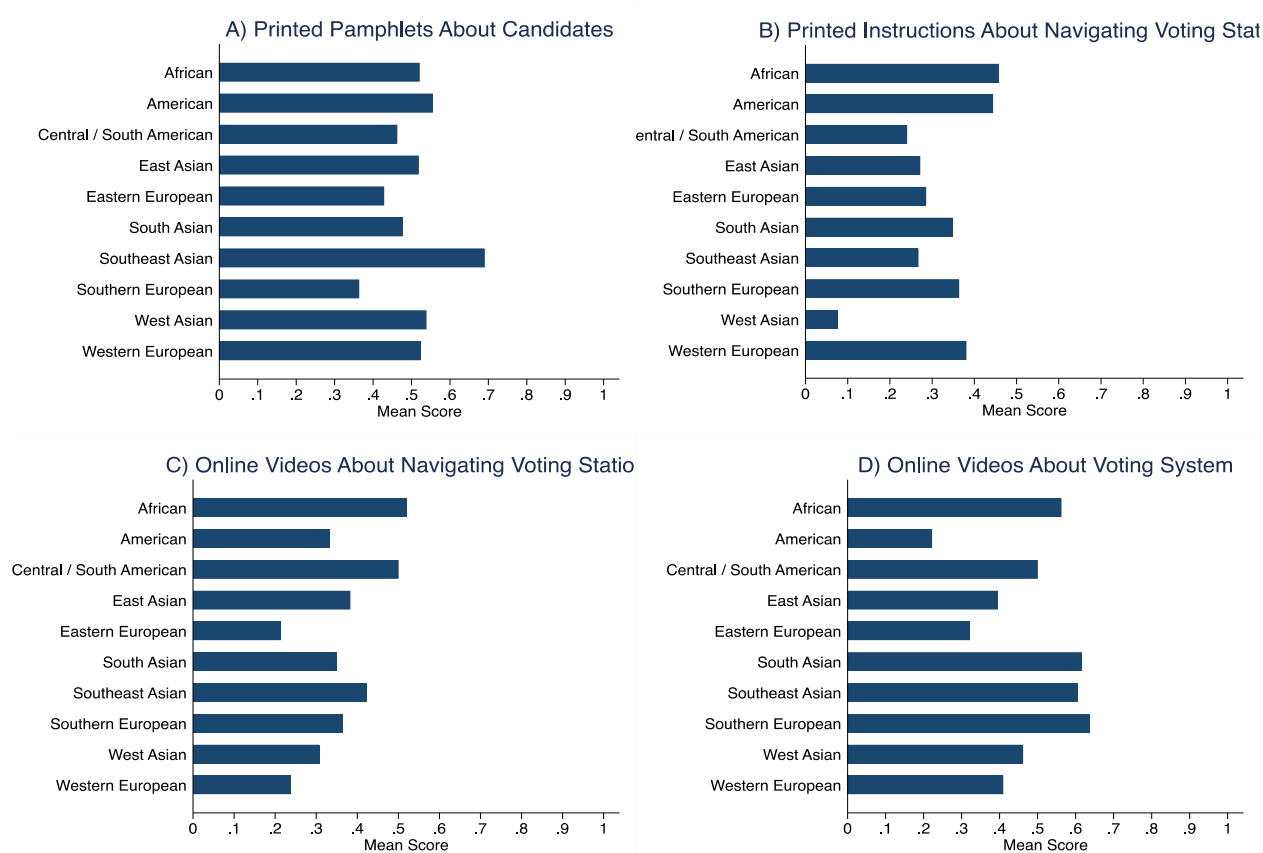


Figure 4: Services That Could Increase Interest in Voting in Calgary's Municipal Election Among Immigrant Calgarians

Figure 4 summarizes the results of services that could increase interest in voting in Calgary's municipal election among immigrant Calgarians. For this figure, all respondents could answer this question regardless of prior experience voting in Calgary's municipal election. Respondents were able to select their top three choices and rank order them. Figure 4A, one of

the highest-selected options overall, again highlights one of the major themes of this chapter. Immigrant communities, for the most part, want more printed information about candidates and an easy way to compare them. This is particularly true among Southeast Asian respondents, who were most likely to select this service. Figures 4B and 4C show that immigrant communities specifically want more information about municipal voting stations. Figures 4B and 4C show evidence that immigrant communities want more information about the voting station, but whether that information is online or printed has mixed results. The overall average is slightly in favour of online videos navigating the voting station, but some communities would prefer to have printed information.

Figure 4D displays interest in knowing more about the voting systems generally in municipal elections. Although the question did not go into specifics, this could mean that immigrant communities are interested in knowing some of the technical details of an election. For example, immigrant Calgarians might want a better understanding of how candidates win their elections (i.e. in Calgary's municipal election, whoever has the most votes wins their ward or gets elected as mayor) or why some municipalities have political parties while others only have individual candidates running. Another example is online videos that show immigrants how their vote is recorded. For example, in Calgary's local election, tabulators are used to count the ballots. At the provincial level, however, Elections Alberta still hand count. Videos showing how tabulators work could help increase trust and understanding. Finally, another example of how online videos could help educate is by demonstrating mail-in ballots. While mail-in ballots have been around for a while, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought more attention to this alternative voting method. Online videos demonstrating how mail-in ballots are requested, sent in, received, and accounted for could again help increase trust and understanding in Calgary's voting systems.

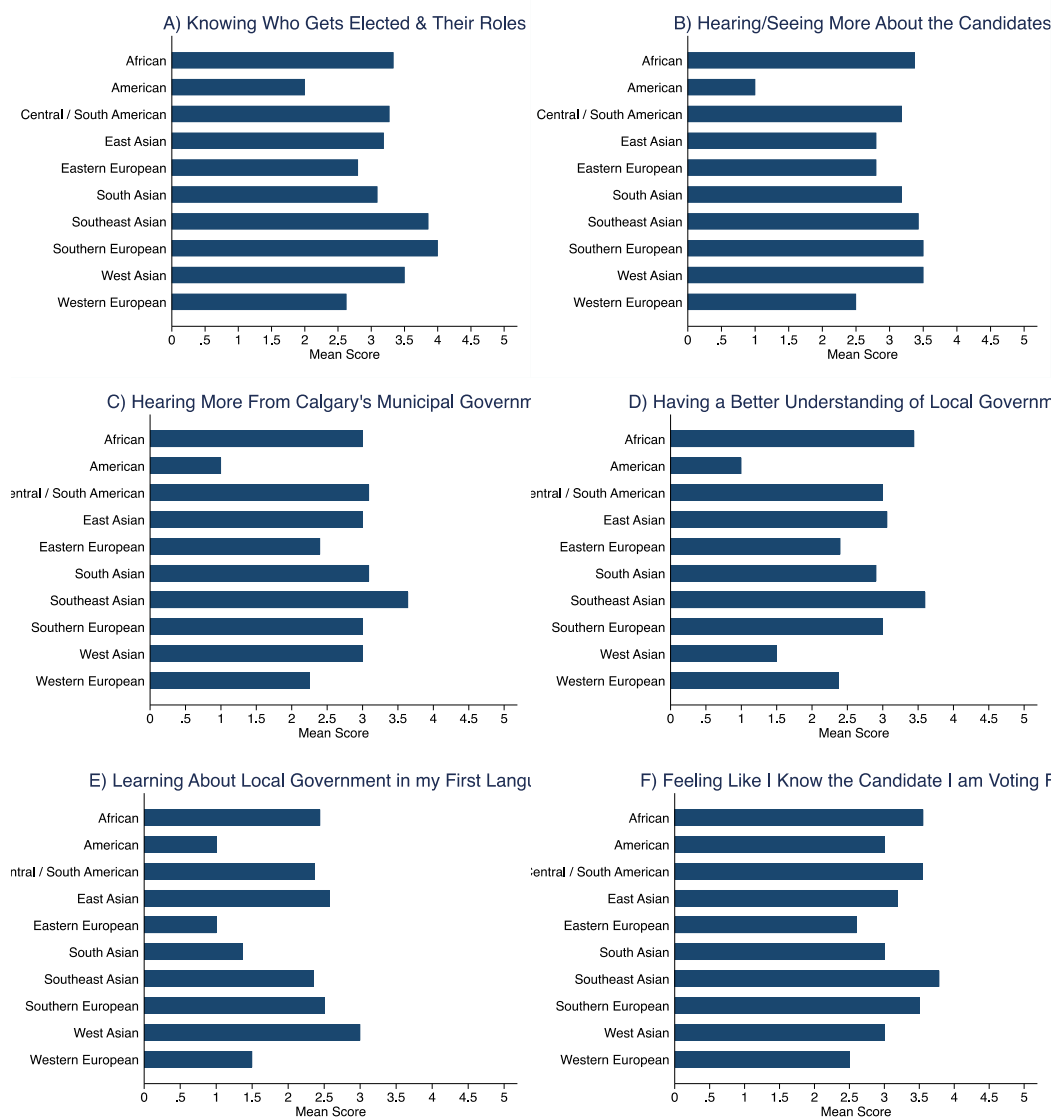


Figure 5: Services that Could Help Non-Voters Participate in Calgary’s Next Municipal Election

Figure 5 highlights the services that could help immigrant respondents who have not participated in Calgary's municipal election. Respondents could choose the level of impact each of the services would have on their likelihood of voting in the next municipal election in Calgary. We again notice that knowing more about the candidates is among the highest options selected. Figures 5B and 5F have an overall high selection rate among most immigrant communities, and both deal with services that include hearing or seeing more from those running for local government offices.

Figures 5A, 5C, and 5D highlight another trend in this chapter. All three figures show a high level of interest in having services that can help immigrant Calgarians who did not vote better understand the roles and responsibilities of local government. Figures 5A and 5D specifically show that, among almost all immigrant respondents, services that can help clarify the roles and responsibilities of local government would help to increase turnout among those who have not voted before. Figure 5C also suggests that non-voters want to hear more about local government and how it affects their daily lives. These are similar results to those found in Wallace et al. (2023), in which the authors found that participants in their focus groups complained about the lack of local media coverage when it came to municipal elections, particularly election campaigns, and indicated that the lack of coverage was detrimental to their understanding of local government and elections.

Lastly, Figure 5E looks at how services in immigrants' first languages could help increase voter turnout in the next municipal election. Again, we see a relatively high interest in this service, particularly among those who might not have been exposed to English in their home countries. Immigrant respondents from West Asia, East Asia, and Africa were among the groups that suggested that having services in their first language would help increase their likelihood of

voting in the next municipal election. American, Western European, and Eastern European respondents were among the lowest to select this option, however these communities most likely have higher levels of experience with English even if it is not their first language spoken.

Language and translation services are another example of why immigrant communities should not be considered homogeneous. There are stark differences between those who think translation services could help increase their likelihood of voting in the next election and those who do not think it would help. Grouping all immigrants would mask these potentially helpful services if surveys asked only 'immigrants' what they thought of translation services.



Figure 6: Services to Help Understand and Compare Candidates in Calgary’s Municipal Elections

Finally, Figure 6 shows some services that could help immigrant communities understand and compare candidates in Calgary's municipal elections. We have seen throughout the chapter that a limited understanding of candidates and not having a way to compare them is often the primary source of a lack of understanding of municipal elections. Therefore, the goal of this figure is to help find services that could help immigrant communities better understand those running for local offices. Starting with Figure 6B, we can see that having public debates is considered one of the highest choices among immigrant Calgarians. This is particularly true among American respondents, which had the highest ranking. This makes sense, as American respondents are more likely to be familiar with American-style elections and often have more chances to see candidates' debate in primaries.

Figures 6A, 6C, and 6D all fall under the category of easy access to information about candidates. Figure 6A is broader, suggesting immigrant Calgarians want more general information about candidates. This could be anything from how a candidate runs in a municipal election, what requirements someone needs to run, and some other broad information about local office. Figure 6C is more explicit, suggesting that immigrant Calgarians want information regarding candidates' bios and an easy way to compare candidates. Figure 6C would include anything along the lines of how a candidate would decide if they were elected to City Council or their personal ideology. As mentioned in the literature review, although many claim that municipal government and elections are nonideological, evidence from recent studies suggests that voters still vote among perceived ideological differences (Lucas et al., 2023).

Figure 6D again shows that immigrant voters want an easy way to compare candidates. During the 2022 municipal election in Toronto, their public library created a blueprint of how other municipalities could achieve an easier way to compare candidates. An experimental project

called “Know Your Vote T.O.” was a municipal election-candidate civic learning website developed by the Toronto Public Library. The website created an easy way for those voting in the 2022 Toronto municipal election to compare candidates. The website chose five significant issues facing Toronto (housing, climate action, getting around the city, taxes/spending, and policing/community safety) and got responses from those running for office. This website helped voters easily compare candidates on important policy issues facing Toronto. Something similar for Calgary’s future municipal elections could help voters find information that compares those running for local government in a central location.

Conclusion and Discussion

One of the main goals of this chapter was to highlight a major gap in the current literature on Canada’s municipal elections, which is looking at possible informational tools or services that could help immigrant voters better understand local government and elections. These ‘GOTV-tactics’ have been studied at other levels of government, however there is a noticeable gap when it comes to local election in Canada generally and Calgary specifically. The sections above first looked at some of the educational gaps that immigrant Calgarians have when it comes to local elections and then tried to find practical solutions to those problems by looking at services that could increase voter turnout. The sections above found two major themes throughout the chapter.

The first major theme is that immigrant Calgarians want more information about municipal government and elections. While there might be some information sporadically available, it is clear that almost all immigrant communities are finding it difficult to access information about local government and elections. Less traditional media coverage of municipal government and politics makes hearing or learning about these topics complicated, again highlighting the need for readily available information that immigrant Calgarians can access.

The second major theme throughout the chapter was that immigrant Calgarians want more interaction and information about candidates running for local offices. Survey respondents were clear that having more interaction with candidates and having an easy way to compare them would not only help to increase interest in voting in municipal elections but could also help increase turnout among those who did not vote last time. Again, having a central website or information service that clearly outlines the candidates' platforms could help increase interest in municipal politics. This could also help to reduce the prevalence of voters simply voting for candidates in local elections because they are incumbents, which is an important, but not always sufficient, explanation as to why incumbents are re-elected at high rates at the municipal level (Schaffner et al., 2001; Trounstone, 2013; Lucas et al., 2022).

This chapter has demonstrated that immigrant Calgarians need better and more practical solutions when learning about municipal government, elections, and candidates. This chapter has also shown that there is still heterogeneity among the immigrant community when it comes to dealing with the issues of learning about municipal government and the services that could increase turnout. One of the prominent examples of this throughout the chapter was the use of translation services. It was clear that translation services, such as information provided in respondents' first language, could help to increase voter turnout or help increase education. This, however, was only the case among communities who might not have had much experience with English. This also shows the importance of looking at immigrants more holistically when researching municipal elections, as only looking at immigrants as a homogeneous group could mask some of the important differences in services required.

Conclusion

My thesis aimed to break away from the current literature's approach of studying immigrant communities as homogeneous groups. Moreover, by establishing and justifying a heterogeneous research process, my thesis further demonstrated the importance of analyzing immigrants' participation and engagement at the municipal government level. This more granular approach to studying immigrant communities helps to uncover differences that might otherwise be missed if researchers only look at immigrants and non-immigrants as their variables. The sections below will highlight the main findings of my thesis, how it contributes to the literature, the limitations of my research, recommendations, and future research.

Main Arguments and Findings

The literature review is the catalyst of this thesis. It demonstrated significant gaps in Canadian political science in researching local government and politics, immigrants voting behaviour in Canada, and immigrant participation in municipal elections specifically. The literature review started by looking at the two main units of analysis that most scholars have used to study voting behaviour, namely micro-level and macro-level factors. Micro-level scholars focus on individual-level factors (socioeconomics and demographics), and macro-level scholars focus on large-scale factors (electoral systems and institutions). My research focused more on individual-level factors and, therefore, took more guidance from micro-level scholars.

After looking at the two levels of analysis in the voting behaviour literature, the literature review demonstrated that Canadian political science has, intentionally or unintentionally, homogenized immigrant communities when studying voting behaviours at all levels of government. While newer studies have done better to acknowledge that further research needs to look at immigrant communities as heterogeneous, few studies have taken this approach thus far.

This is particularly true at the municipal level, which already needs more research than provincial or federal elections.

This notion of homogenizing immigrant communities has not always been prominent in other fields of Canadian political science. The literature review argued that Canadian political science has historically examined differences among immigrant communities to understand how different communities have changed the political landscape or political culture. Scholars such as Siegfried, Horowitz, and Wiseman have all examined how immigration to Canada has shaped Canada's political culture and regions. While debates can be had about the robustness of these scholars' arguments, the main point that this thesis takes away from these scholars is that looking at immigrants through a lens of heterogeneity is a fundamentally better practice than collapsing immigrant communities into a single category that could mask important differences.

Chapter three was the first empirical chapter for my thesis, comparing immigrant Calgarians and non-immigrant Calgarians. Although this section does group together all immigrant communities, it was necessary first to understand if there was a difference between immigrants and non-immigrants. This chapter used data from the CMES and mainly focused on interest in and attention to municipal elections in Calgary. There were two significant findings for this chapter. The first major finding was that duration was the most robust relationship. Duration was a stronger indicator than immigrant status or racialized identity, meaning that those who have lived long in Calgary were more likely to be interested in its local government.

The second significant finding from this chapter was that there was heterogeneity among racialized communities in Calgary and that there were speculative findings that immigrant communities also had some differences among them. This prompted my argument that scholars in Canadian political science need to think about immigrant status both less and more. Scholars

need to think less about immigrant status because duration matters more than immigration. However, scholars also need to think more about immigrant communities since there were differences between racialized and immigrant communities regarding interest in municipal elections. These findings helped lay the groundwork for the following chapters and demonstrated that scholars must dig more into immigrant communities to understand their voting behaviours.

Chapter four, which focused on heterogeneity among immigrant communities, found two overarching conclusions. The first conclusion is that, for the most part, there were general trends among all immigrant communities. For example, my thesis found that immigrant communities in Calgary were less likely to be interested in municipal elections than in provincial or federal elections. Similarly, immigrant communities were more likely to vote in provincial or federal elections than municipal elections. Finally, when asked what motivates individuals to engage with or participate in municipal government or elections, immigrant communities again tended to trend similarly. These trends, however, masked some significant differences among immigrant communities when each community was looked at individually.

The second important finding, therefore, was that while there are general trends among immigrant communities, there are significant differences and that these communities must be researched as heterogeneous groups. As noted in the fourth chapter, a clear example of this heterogeneity could be seen in immigrant communities' different levels of self-reported interest and knowledge. When asked about their motivation for voting in municipal elections, these differences could also be seen. Therefore, the main conclusion from this chapter was that while there are general trends among immigrant groups, there are also significant differences across Calgary's immigrant community and that researchers must consider the diversity of these populations to study participation in municipal elections to the full extent.

Finally, chapter five focused on policy implications for improving engagement with municipal government and participation in municipal elections among immigrant communities. One of the clear themes throughout this chapter was that immigrant Calgarians want better information about municipal government and elections. While information might be sporadically available during an election year, it is clear that almost all immigrant communities found it difficult to access information about municipal government and elections.

The second central theme throughout chapter five was the limited knowledge that all immigrant communities had regarding who was running for local elections. Findings suggested that having more interactions with candidates running for local elections and having an easy way to compare platforms could help to increase interest in voting in municipal elections. Moreover, an easier way to compare candidates in Calgary's municipal election could also help increase turnout among those who did not vote in the last local election. Importantly, this chapter also acknowledged that there was still heterogeneity among immigrant communities regarding how to learn about municipal government and what policies or services would benefit each community. Translation services, for example, could help to increase turnout or help increase education for some immigrant communities. However, this service is not necessarily the most helpful for communities with some level of English skills. This example shows that not all services will benefit each community equally but that there are trends that could help increase interest or participation more generally. Public debates, for example, was one of the more widespread choices selected by most immigrant communities as a way to help increase education and interest in municipal elections and an easier way to compare candidates.

Contributions to the Literature

My thesis contributes to the current literature in Canadian political science in three main ways. The first contribution is that it expands the recent research on municipal elections in Canadian political science. As mentioned in the literature review, Canadian political science has historically paid little attention to municipal elections and instead focused on provincial and federal elections. My thesis helps to gain more insight into municipal voting behaviours and why research into municipal elections benefits the discipline. My thesis has also academically contributed to the study of Calgary's municipal government and municipal elections. Limited research has looked at Calgary's municipal government and elections specifically, barring a handful of chapters and articles. McGregor and Lucas (2019) are two of the only scholars who have recently reviewed a local election in Calgary with great detail, albeit their research focused on school board elections.

The second contribution of my thesis is that it helps to expand how Canadian political science thinks about immigrant voting behaviours and patterns. Canadian political science has historically grouped immigrant communities into a single, homogeneous group when researching immigrant behaviour in elections. This is problematic because it can mask significant differences among immigrant communities. My thesis helps demonstrate heterogeneity among immigrants in Calgary and that these differences can have significant impacts when it comes to research and policy considerations. Moreover, my thesis contributes to the literature by highlighting that Canadian political science has looked at immigrant communities as heterogeneous groups in other subfields (i.e. looking at the development of Canadian political culture and regionalism) but does not take that approach when researching voting behaviours. My thesis demonstrates that it is important to acknowledge that immigrant communities might have different experiences that could shape their levels of interaction or participation when voting.

Finally, combining the first two contributions, my thesis contributes to Canadian political science by focusing on how immigrant communities participate in municipal elections. While my thesis mainly focused on how immigrant communities in Calgary engage and participate with local government and elections, this thesis could guide other municipalities to study immigrant populations in their own jurisdictions. Moreover, my thesis demonstrates that municipal elections are unique among immigrant communities when compared to voting in provincial or federal elections. Based on the findings in the thesis, immigrant communities are less interested in municipal elections and have less knowledge about municipal government than the provincial government or federal government. My thesis, therefore, shows that academics need to increase research into municipal elections, and those invested in municipal elections need to help increase access to education about local government to immigrant communities.

Limitations

There are several limitations to my research. The first limitation is that survey data, while valuable, only provides a limited perspective on individuals' experience. Moreover, some of the immigrant communities had small sample sizes. This is particularly true of immigrants from the United States, as only 13 Americans took the survey. Time constraints, unfortunately, did not make it possible to extend the length of the field dates, so future research looking at immigrant Calgarians would ideally have more responses.

Secondly, another limitation of this thesis is generalizability. Due to the nature of the thesis, studying immigrant communities in Calgary, my research findings might not be generalizable to many other municipalities in Canada or cities around the world (Trounstine, 2009). The niche nature of the thesis allows for a robust understanding of immigrants in Calgary but does not allow for the findings to be used more generally. This, however, is a standard

limitation placed on those who study municipal elections (McGregor et al., 2021) and does not mean that studying municipal politics is futile. High variation among municipalities does not mean that municipal politics has no common features or that one study cannot borrow from others. As mentioned above, this thesis was influenced by Wallace et al. (2023), which studied immigrant participation in Mississauga, Canada. The goal, therefore, is not complete replication from city to city but rather a blueprint that can find themes and trends despite high variation.

Finally, a third limitation of this thesis is the lack of qualitative research. While the original Elections Calgary research did include focus groups and in-depth interviews with immigrant Calgarians, my research did not include these sections. My thesis did not include the qualitative sections because I was not directly involved with this part of the research during my time at Elections Calgary and, therefore, chose not to include it. Nonetheless, as Wallace et al. (2023) demonstrate in their study, adding qualitative data can help researchers gain a more holistic understanding of the subject matter. This would have helped my thesis gain more perspective about voting behaviours among immigrant communities and could have helped explain some of the heterogeneity. Therefore, future studies on immigrant voting behaviour in municipal elections should include qualitative methods as part of their research to help gain more insight into the immigrant experience.

Recommendations and Future Research

Due to the unique nature of my thesis, my recommendations fall under two categories: academic recommendations and policy recommendations. Starting with academic recommendations, my thesis has demonstrated that more research into immigrant engagement and participation in municipal government and elections is required. While my thesis helped demonstrate that immigrant participation and engagement are heterogeneous, I could not

thoroughly examine why community differences existed. Therefore, future research could examine how political culture or political socialization in an individual's home country shapes their likelihood of voting in municipal elections. Another avenue for future research could look at how introducing more municipal education during citizenship could influence voting behaviours. Finally, future academic research could build upon this thesis by adding a layer of qualitative research methods. This addition to the thesis would help to get a more rounded perspective of immigrant communities by hearing from them directly, which was limited in my thesis since I only looked at survey responses.

The main policy recommendation that my thesis would point to is an increase in education and access to information regarding municipal government and elections, particularly those running for local elections. It was evident throughout the policy chapter that immigrant communities wanted a better way to compare candidates and better understand each candidate's platforms. While it is not necessarily the job of election administrators to ensure that candidates are more visible in the community, it could be helpful to partner with local libraries or other organizations that can help promote information about candidates. This could be done by operating an online website with all candidate information and platforms or by hosting debates in which candidates can participate. There are clear research implications for this, too, as academics could try to measure or control the impact of debates on a specific ward race. For example, academics could research voter turnout or levels of reported self-knowledge among wards that did have debates and those that did not and compare the two.

Finally, another important area of study that future research should examine is intersectionality among immigrant communities and their voting behaviour. The bulk of my thesis looked at diversity among immigrant communities in terms of their home countries but left

out other intersectional factors. One of the main factors that future research could focus on is the intersection of gender and sex in immigrant voting in municipal elections. While recent research has studied visible minorities and women's ability to contest and win municipal elections (see Spicer et al., 2017), little is still known about the intersection of sex, gender, immigrant status, and voting behaviour in municipal elections. Research examining the intersectionality of sex and gender also requires a larger sample size. The limited sample size for some immigrant communities in this thesis made further inquiries into intersectionality challenging from a statistical perspective.

Appendix

Comparison Chapter:

List of questions used from the Canadian Municipal Election Study. All questions were taken from the September, wave 2, codebook.

S7A: How interested are you in municipal politics

- 0 (not at all interested) – 10 (very interested)
- Don't know

S8A: How much attention do you pay to municipal politics?

- 0 (none) – 10 (a lot)
- Don't know

S56: For how many years have you lived in Calgary?

- ____ {number only}
- Prefer not to say

S59: Were you born in Canada?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say/Don't know

S60: Thinking about your background, do you consider yourself to be:

- White
- South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- Chinese
- Black
- Filipino
- Latin American
- Arab
- Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
- West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
- Korean
- Japanese
- Indigenous
- Other (Open ended box)

Heterogeneity Chapter:

Questions used from Voting Equity Online Survey Questionnaire.

Q1: Overall, how interested are you in the roles, responsibilities, or outcomes of... [Answers: Not at all interested, not very interested, somewhat interested, very interested, prefer not to answer]

- Calgary's municipal government
- Alberta's provincial government
- Canada's federal government
- Government of your home country or city

Q2: Overall, how knowledgeable do you feel about each of the following governments roles and responsibilities? [Answers: Not at all knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, very knowledgeable, prefer not to answer]

- Calgary's municipal government
- Alberta's provincial government
- Canada's federal government
- Government of your home country or city

Q6b: The next municipal election in Calgary is in 2025, how likely or not are you to vote in that election? Answers:

- Not at all likely to vote in the next election
- Not very likely to vote in the next election
- Somewhat likely to vote in the next election
- Very likely to vote in the next election
- Prefer not to answer

Q7: Did you ever vote in an election in your home country or city? Answers:

- Yes
- No
- I was not eligible

Q8: Have you ever voted in the following elections in Canada? [Answers: Yes, No, Not Sure]

- Municipal (city)
- Provincial (province)
- Federal (country)

Q11: You indicated that you voted in the last municipal election. What were the main reasons you voted? SELECT UP TO 3

- I was excited to be eligible to vote
- I wanted to have a positive impact on my city/community
- It's my responsibility/civic duty to vote
- Because my friends/family were voting
- Because my friends/family told me about it

- I wanted to have my voice heard
- I liked a specific candidate
- Vote against a specific candidate
- Other [SPECIFY]

Q17: When it comes to politics, and municipal elections specifically, how much do you agree or disagree with the following? [Answers: Strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree, not sure]

- I don't think one vote makes an impact in an election
- I don't believe that elections are fair/they could be manipulated
- It is not my role or job to be interested in politics
- I don't know enough about municipal government to vote
- I don't really care who gets elected in municipal elections
- I have never been interested in politics
- It would take me too much time to learn enough to vote in an election

Policy Chapter:

Questions used from Voting Equity Online Survey Questionnaire.

Q6c: Which of the following services would increase your interest in voting in the next municipal election in 2025, if any? RANK TOP 3

- People working the voting station who could help translate voting instructions
- Printed information pamphlets about candidates
- Printed information pamphlets about candidates in other languages
- Printed instructions about how to navigate the voting station
- Printed instructions about how to navigate the voting station in other languages
- Online videos about how to navigate the voting station
- Online videos about how the voting system works
- Voting station activities to celebrate voting as a family
- None

Q14c: What do you believe would help you understand the Candidates more? MULTI SELECT

- Information online
- Candidates being involved in the community/attending events
- Candidate coming to my door
- Printed promotional information to your home
- Public debates
- TV appearances or interviews
- Social media posts and videos
- In-person meet and greets
- Candidate guide
- Candidate bios
- Easy way to compare the different candidates
- Candidate information in my language
- Other [SPECIFY-RECORD RESPONSE]

- None of these [ANCHOR – EXCLUSIVE]

Q18: What impact would each of the following have on your likelihood to vote in the next municipal election in Calgary? (Select: No Impact, A bit more likely, somewhat more likely, much more likely, Not sure)

- Hearing more about candidates and seeing them in the news
- Hearing more about Calgary's city government on a regular basis
- Having a better understanding of what municipal government does
- Being able to learn about the election, voting process, and vote in my first language
- Feeling like I know the candidate I am voting for
- Having instructions about the voting process online

Q21: Which of the following would you be most likely to use/attend/watch to learn about municipal government, elections and the candidates (Mayor, Councillors, School Board Trustees)? (Select: Not at all likely, Not very likely, Somewhat likely, Very likely, Not applicable)

- In-person or online information seminar about elections
- Information booklet provided before I become a citizen
- In-person events where I can meet and hear from candidates
- Televised events where candidates speak/debate/answer questions
- Information provided in my first language (other than English)
- Information provided by my community or cultural organization

Q22: What information are you MOST interested in knowing about Calgary's municipal government and elections? RANK TOP 3

- Who gets elected, what their roles are, and what decisions they make
- What municipal government does (responsibilities, services, etc.)
- What Calgary's government does vs. Alberta and Canada's government
- How election results are calculated to show they are fair
- Candidates' backgrounds, what they stand for, and their plans
- How the candidates compare to one another
- How people become candidates in an election
- What impact voting has on my daily life and community
- Why it is important to vote as a citizen
- Where to vote and how the process works/what to expect

Q23: As an immigrant, when do you believe is the **best time** to learn about your municipal government and how elections work?

- When I first arrived
- After getting my PR (Permanent Resident)
- While studying for my citizenship exam
- After becoming a citizen and being eligible to vote

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