

Different States, Different
Groups, Different Routes:
*Comparing Pathways to Parliament for
Immigrants and Visible Minorities*

Karen Bird

Department of Political Science

McMaster University



Overview:

- ⊕ The problem of comparing
 - ⊞ Which groups? Which countries? Which representative bodies?
- ⊕ What can others learn from Canada? What can Canada learn from others?
- ⊕ Citizenship regimes
- ⊕ Local civil society landscapes
- ⊕ Electoral and political system factors
- ⊕ The spectrum of minority representation



The Problem of Comparing

- ✿ Can we compare different types of ethnic minorities?
 - ❏ Kymlicka (1995, 2007): “targeted” approach
 - ❏ Horowitz (1985): careful delimitation of the class of cases, or risk unmanagable analytical complexity
 - ❏ Broader scope of comparison?
 - Work at the “messy, eclectic centre” of theoretically informed empirical political analysis (Kohli et al., 1996)
 - Comparative politics that cares about complicated cases: historic sequences and configurations of factors that explain varieties of minority representation in public life



The Problem of Comparing

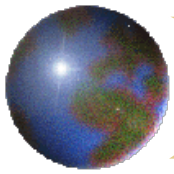
✦ Ambitious agenda

- ✦ **Immigrants:** country of origin (TCNs, EU citizens) foreigners/naturalized/migrant background
- ✦ **Historic co-ethnics:** nationals of neighbouring countries, whose ancestors lived in the “mother country” for ages
- ✦ **Historic ethnic minorities (non-territorial):** Tatar, Roma, Irish Travellers, urban Aboriginals, Jewish, African Americans
- ✦ **Historic ethnic minorities (territorial):** Flemish, Catalan, Quebecois, Aboriginals
- ✦ **Recidivist minorities:** conflict-prone states



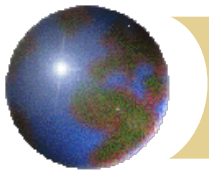
The Problem of Comparing

- ❖ Wide differences in discourses and mechanisms for minority political integration
 - ❖ Co-ethnic reintegration: *logic of the motherland*
 - natural members returning to the polity: Germany, Greece, Poland
 - ❖ Territorially concentrated “recognized” minorities: *logic of state cohesion*
 - Belgium, Denmark, France, Canada
 - ❖ Special mechanisms for historically marginalized ethnic minorities: *politics of presence*
 - New Zealand (Maori), Nova Scotia (Acadians & Blacks)

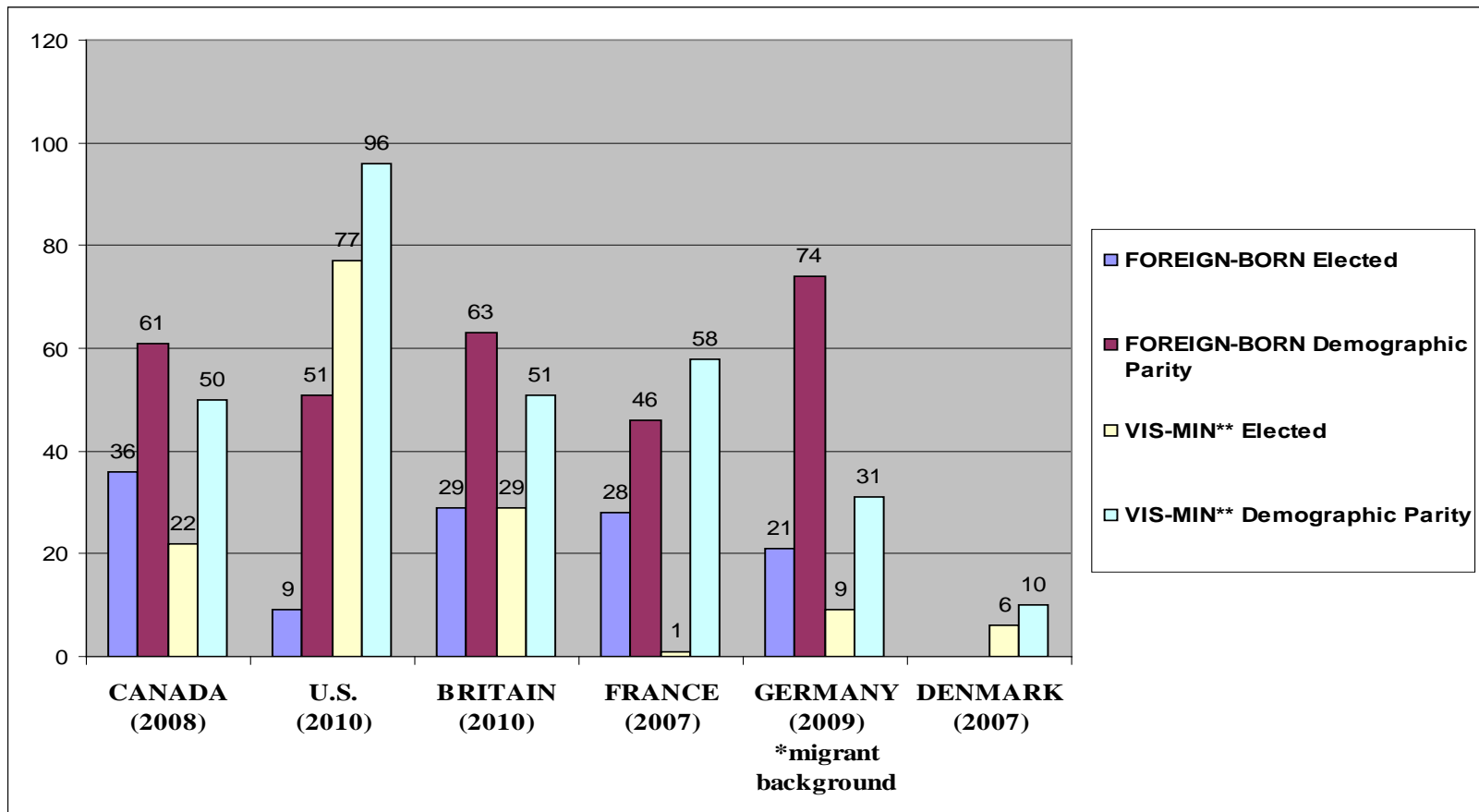


The Problem of Comparing

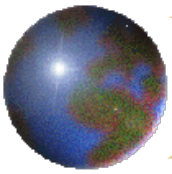
- ✦ **Non-historic ethnic groups** – immigrants, racialized minorities
- ✦ Less likely to enjoy special mechanisms for participation and representation
- ✦ Rather, depends on:
 - ✦ Immigration and citizenship regime...
 - ✦ General electoral and political system...
 - ✦ Local civil society landscape and political linkages...
- ✦ Only surface similarities to women's repⁿ



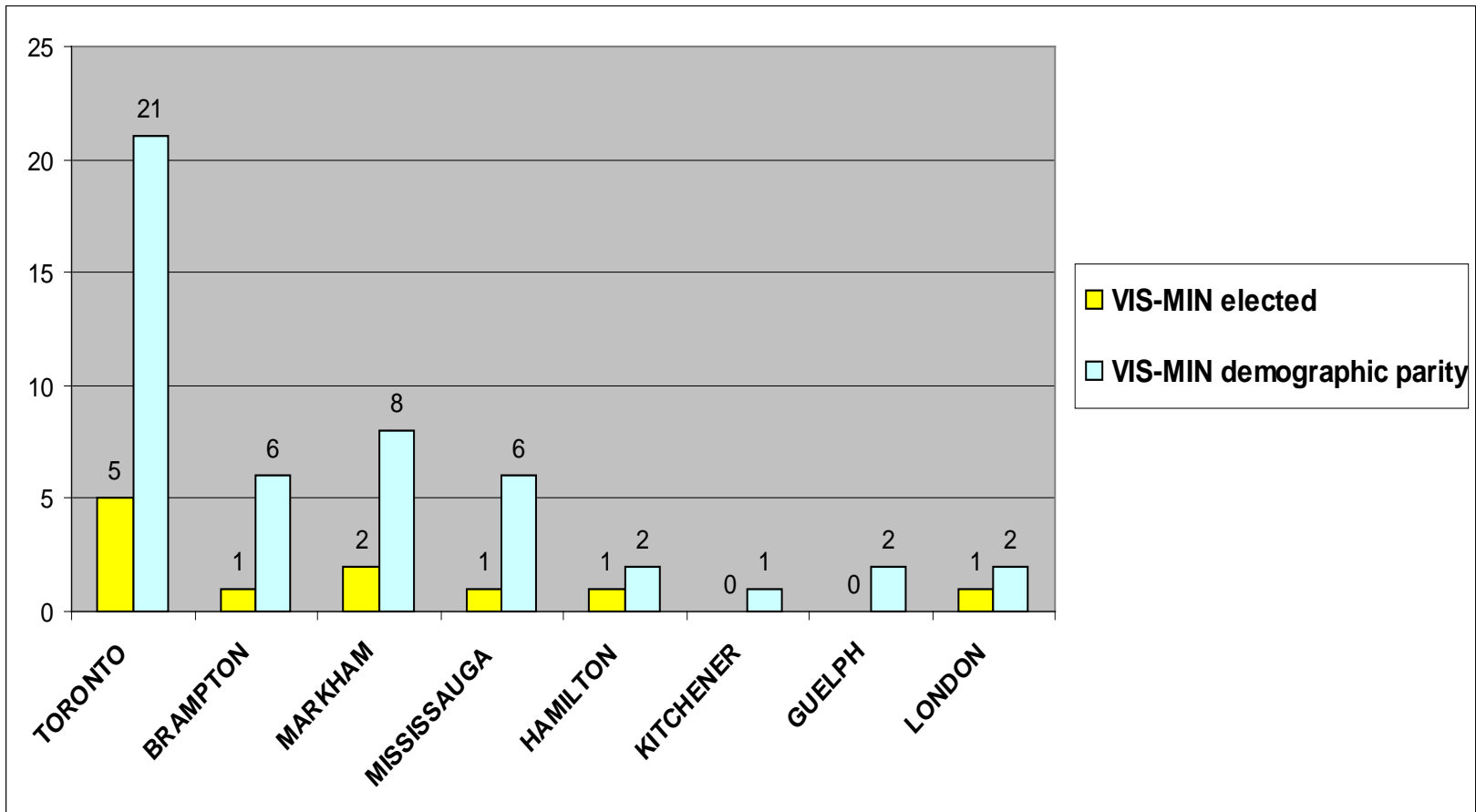
Immigrants and Visible Minorities: Actual Representation vs. Demographic Parity in National Parliaments (Lower House)

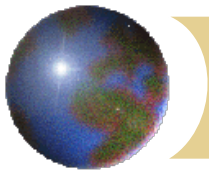


**VIS-MIN excludes Aboriginal or special designated seats for over-seas territories



Visible Minorities: Actual Representation vs. Demographic Parity in Ontario City Councils





Citizenship Regime

✚ Immigration regime

- ✚ Post-colonial, guest-worker, co-ethnic, settler-state
- ✚ Migration streams and language proficiency
- ✚ Maturity (2nd, 3rd + generation)

✚ Access to citizenship

- ✚ Years residence, dual citizenship, citizenship tests...

✚ Voting rights

- ✚ 17 of 29 EU states allow TCNs to participate in local elections, with some conditions

✚ Evolution of citizenship regime → swift, substantial increase of foreigners who have become electors



Citizenship Regime

⊕ Multiculturalism *vs.* assimilation

- ❖ Bloemraad (2006): “structured mobilization”
 - strong community infrastructure, co-ethnic support, recognition of legitimate political standing
- ❖ Stronger support for vis.min. candidates among all voters
 - but no voter bias against vis.min. in France (Brouard & Tiberj, 2010)
- ❖ Then why such low representation at Ontario municipal level, while so high in cities in Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway...?

⊕ M/C cannot account for patterns of minority representation across / within countries



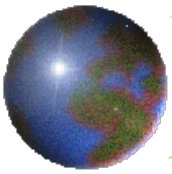
Local Civil Society Landscape

- ✦ **Spatial concentration** within certain cities and national electoral districts
- ✦ But, enclaves may be accompanied by:
 - ❖ socio-economic marginalization → low human capital resources for political participation (Siemiatycki: Toronto; Masclet: France)
 - ❖ strong network of ethnic associations → social capital (Fennema & Tillie: Amsterdam)
 - ❖ vibrant ethnic media → increased political knowledge (Howe: Canada vs. Britain)
 - ❖ low language proficiency → lower turnout (Jacobs et al: Brussels; Koopmans: Amsterdam)



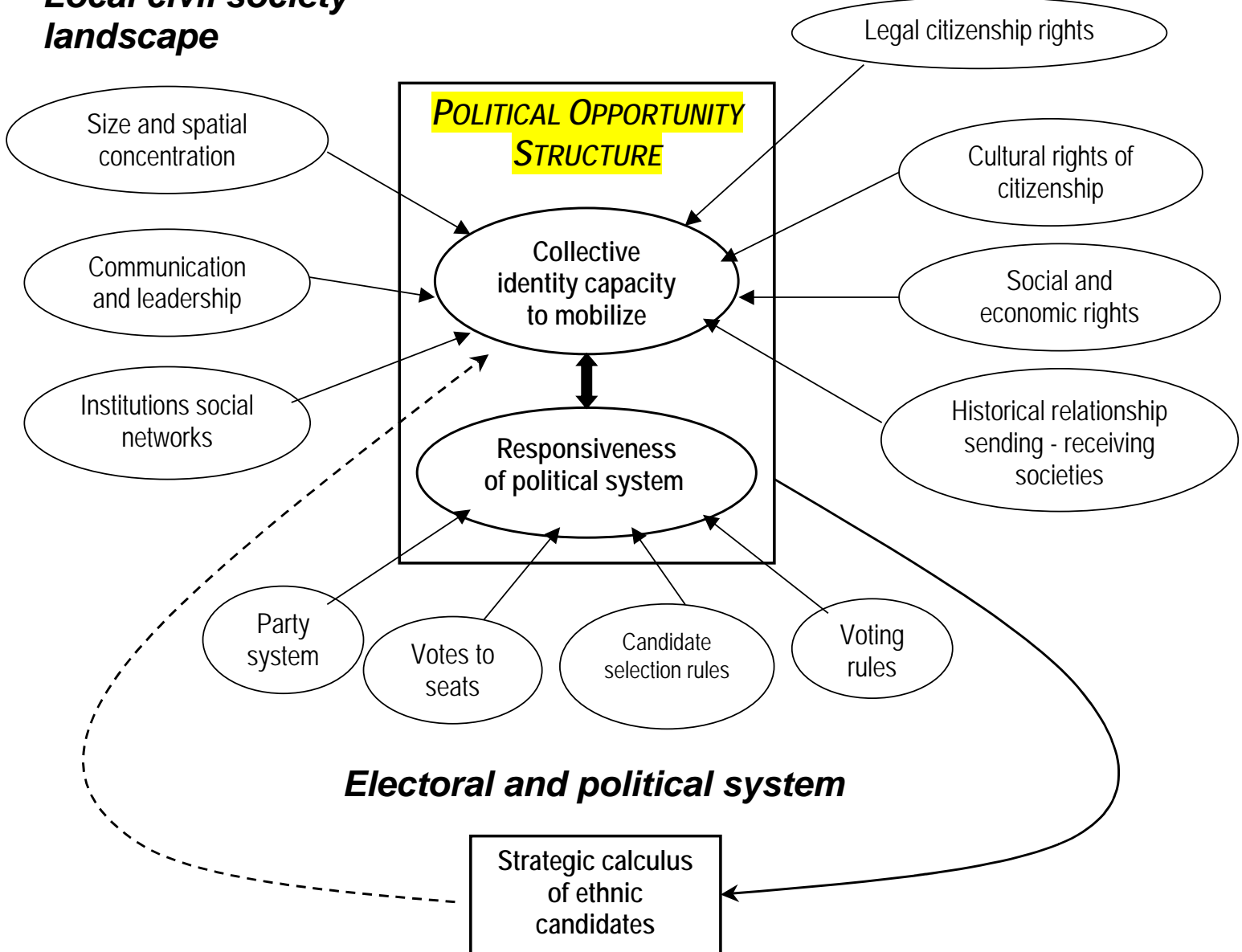
Electoral and Political System

- ⊕ **Political parties** play key role in mobilizing, initiating vertical integration of ethnic civil society
 - ⊗ Openness of membership base
 - ⊗ Decentralized candidate selection
- ⊕ **Anti-immigrant parties**
 - ⊗ Simultaneous pro- and anti-immigrant mobilization
- ⊕ **Voting rules**
 - ⊗ PR with preference voting
 - ⊗ Mandatory voting
- ⊕ **Insulation of government from societal pressures**
 - ⊗ Cumul de mandats, votes to seats formula, incumbency rate



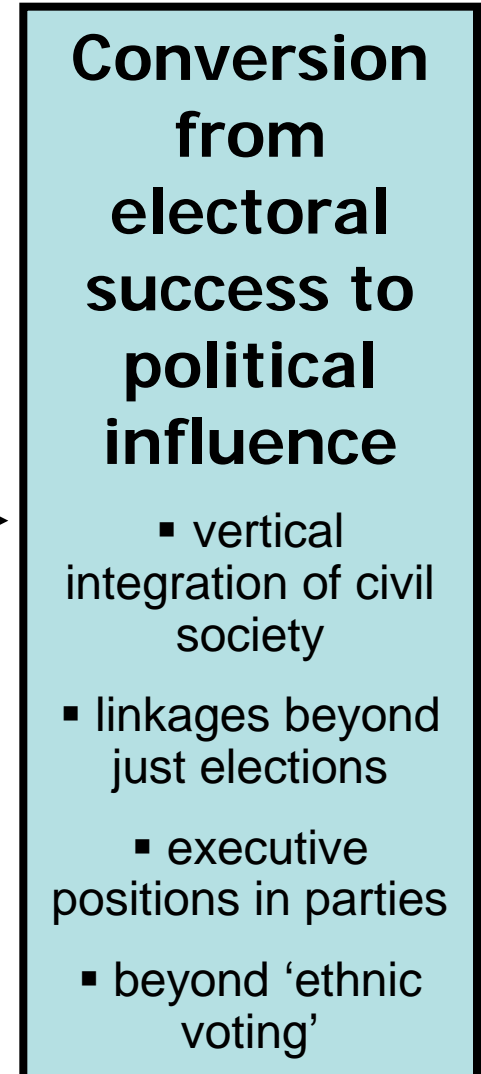
Citizenship regime

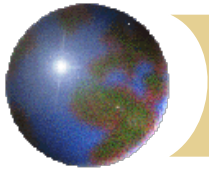
Local civil society landscape





Towards a Mature Representative Relationship...





Thank you!

kbird@mcmaster.ca