**Canadian Multiculturalism:**

**Steps Towards Representative Bureaucracy**

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**INTRODUCTION**

*“Canadians understand that diversity is our strength. We know that Canada has succeeded—culturally, politically, economically—because of our diversity, not in spite of it.”*

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, London, UK (November 26, 2015)

Since the 1960s, Canada and other western industrialized countries experienced low fertility rates and an ageing population and workforce (McDonald and Kippen 2001). Canada strategically used immigration to address these issues by sustaining population growth and fostering national competitiveness. From 1885, Canada has discouraged or prohibited non-white and non-European immigration under its “White Canada” policy. By 1962, Canada officially repealed its White Canada immigration policy resulting in Asia and the Middle East becoming the principle source of immigrants (see Taylor, 1991). Shifting immigration patterns from Europe to Asia and the Middle East also saw Canada’s visible minority population increased from 16.2% in 2006 to 22.3% in 2016 over a ten-year period (Statistics Canada 2017). Canada now maintains one of the world’s most diverse demographic profiles. In 2011, Canada’s foreign-born population represented 20.6% of the total population, compared with 19.8% in 2006, and it is expected to climb to 30% by 2036 (Statistics Canada 2011, 2017). Among the Group of Eight (G8) countries, Canada’s demographic profile reflected the highest proportion of foreign-born population (20.6%), surpassing that of the United Kingdom (11.5% in 2010), the United States (12.9% in 2010) and Germany (13.0% in 2010). Only Australia (26.8% in 2010) has a higher proportion of the foreign-born population.

As populism, along with anti-immigrant sentiments, have taken root and gain prominence in many Western democracies (e.g., the “alt right” movement in the US, Brexit in the UK, the rise of far right leaders in France and the Netherlands), Canada remains the only country where its attitudes towards immigrants are positive (Taylor, 2018). An aging workforce and the shortage of skills have necessitated Canada to welcome more immigrants (Hughes, 2019). Various industrial sectors now rely on foreign-trained professionals (see Hoag 2008) and they are viewed to be essential for Canada’s economic growth (Cohen 2012). In this regard, Canada is a beacon of tolerance, which sets it apart from other Western democracies in the current political climate. As a result, Canada makes for an interesting case study and offers lessons for other immigrant receiving countries.

The increasing ethnocultural diversity poses serious challenges for national integration as the rapid movement of peoples, cultures, and the resulting ethno-plurality has shifted Canada from a single national culture to multiple fluid national identities (Ray, 2005). Canada’s diversity makes this difficult as it has transformed into a multicultural country with the indigenous peoples (Indians, Inuit and Metis), a linguistic minority (the Québécois as French-speaking sub-national minority), and diverse racial and ethnic minorities through immigration. In 2016, 19.4% of Canadians reported speaking more than one language at home, compared to 17.5% in 2011 (Statistics Canada 2017). Similarly, seven out of 10 people speak a mother tongue that was not English or French – Canada’s official languages – at home. Immigration has also contributed to the growth in religious diversity in Canada. In 1991, 82.8% of the population believed in a form of Christianity – Catholic, Protestant, Christian Orthodox, and Christian – compared to 67.3% in 2011 with the rise of non-Christian beliefs (Statistics Canada 2016, 2017).

As a result, Canada adopted multiculturalism as a political philosophy to meet the resulting demographic plurality. Canada is the first country in the world to adopt a multicultural policy to encourage minorities to retain their respective cultural heritages rather than to assimilate into a homogenous culture (Metz, Ng, Hoobler, Cornelius, Hoobler, & Nkomo, 2016. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) passed by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, to not privilege English-Canadians or French-Canadians, accounts for the needs of an increasing ethnocultural diversity brought about through immigration. It aims to minimize barriers related to race, ethnicity, and cultural or religious backgrounds in order to encourage successful integration of immigrants into society and take an active part in Canada’s social, cultural, economic and political life (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012). In this regard, the Canadian government reaffirms multiculturalism as a fundamental value of Canada and ensures that all activities are reflective of Canadian diversity (see Canada Heritage 2019).

In addition, “representative bureaucracy” -- providing minority representation in government and the public service -- is crucial to manage Canada’s changing demography through legitimizing demographic governments and creating a more responsive public service that meets the representative needs of a diverse population (Turgeon and Gagnon 2013). A representative government is also an important indicator of a country’s social justice, fairness, political stability, and trust (Bloemraad et al. 2008). Policy instruments such as the Official Languages Act (1969) and the Employment Equity Act (1986) (also referred to as the Legislated Employment Equity Program or LEEP) were put in place to ensure that Canada’s public service is representative of a diverse Canadian population (Agocs 2012). The Official Languages Act has remodelled the Canadian federal civil service as a bilingual (English/French) institution through designating official bilingual geographic regions and civil service positions. LEEP has encouraged the federal public service and federally regulated Canadian employers to increase the representation of diverse groups (including Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and women) in their workforces. Racialized individuals (including non-White immigrants) are referred to as “visible minorities” in Canada. For consistency with government reporting[[1]](#footnote-1), we will use visible minorities in this chapter.

The effectiveness of LEEP has been questioned as the impact on representative bureaucracy is not clear. Persons with disabilities, Aboriginals, and women continue to be under-represented when compared to their availability rates in the workforce (EEA Annual Report 2018). Only Aboriginal Canadians exceed their representation in the public sector compared to their availability rate in the workforce; however, they are relegated to the lowest levels of government (Agocs, 2012). Visible minorities are also found to be less motivated to join the public service as compared to majority groups (Ng and Gossett, 2013; Ng and Sears, 2015). The negative perception of government jobs due to financial considerations (e.g., income), career reasons (advancement, status, power, and prestige), or personal fulfillment are contributing factors (Clark and Postel-Vinay 2009; Ng and Sears 2015; Ng and McGinnis Johnson, in press). Overall, as a public policy instrument, LEEP has helped raise the representation of visible minorities in public service (see Table 1.0).

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how Canada achieves representative bureaucracy through the use of LEEP as a multicultural policy instrument. In the first section of this chapter, we provide a brief discussion of representative democracy, its importance and relevance, and public service attraction among visible minorities in Canada. Next, we look at Canadian multiculturalism as a national integration policy. We follow this by examining LEEP as a means to achieving representative bureaucracy for visible minorities as they are influenced by Canadian immigration. We also examine government reports and national labour surveys to examine the progress of representative bureaucracy for visible minorities. We conclude with a discussion on the future outlook for representative bureaucracy in Canada.

**REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY AND CANADA**

Coined by Kingsley (1944), representative bureaucracy is understood as a bureaucracy that is representative of the population, including disadvantaged and minority groups (Groeneveld and Van de Walle 2010). This is worthwhile, as theory understands the demographic makeup of a country’s public sector influences administrative decision making and policy outcomes. Specifically, public servants are believed to share, and therefore act on, values with those who share the same social demographic background as themselves (Meier and Morton, 2015). Representative democracy thus functions through two avenues: active and passive representation (Sowa and Selden 2003). Passive representation refers to the symbolic impact that the representation of a populations’ demographic diversity has on bureaucratic trust. Active representation refers to instances where public servants make decisions based on values and beliefs which reflect shared social demographic characteristics with minority groups (Selden et al.1998). In unison, both mechanisms result in a bureaucracy that is more responsive to the diverse needs and preferences of the public, therefore contributing to the performance and legitimacy of governments (Turgeon and Gagnon 2013; also see Selden et al. 1998). This in turn positively impacts a country’s overall social justice, fairness, and political stability (Boemraad et al. 2008). Representative bureaucracy has received increasing attention in research and practice to improve public service performance and a means to equity (see Gagnon et al. 2006; Turgeon and Gagnon 2013).

Despite the importance of representative bureaucracy on diversity and representative public policy, little is written on Canadian representative bureaucracy. Much of the existing literature has focused on the linguistic representation of ethnic and linguistic minorities and its impact on national unity. This line of inquiry has focused on French-speaking Canadians who were underrepresented in the federal public service (Turgeon and Gagnon 2013; see also Kernaghan 1978; Rich 1975; Wilson and Mullins 1978). Nevertheless, the scope of Canadian representative bureaucracy has broadened to encompass visible minorities. Bouchard and Carroll (2002) argue visible minorities benefit when they have a stronger presence in government (e.g., advocating for changes in immigration admissions). Likewise, Ogmundson (2005) finds the presence of women in government leads to greater concern for women issues such as equal job opportunities, child support, and domestic abuse. Timpson (2006) also reports how the Government of Nunavut, a Canadian territory, monitors the makeup of its public service to ensure the preservation of its indigenous culture, language, and composition.

Recent studies find visible minorities are less attracted to public service. A study by Ng and Sears (2015) supports these findings. They examine differences in Canadian LEEP designated groups and LGBT populations and their attraction to the public sector. They also explore the work values which predict public service attraction and whether demographics differed in those work values. Based on a survey of graduating Canadian post-secondary students, they found that women, Aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities report higher levels of public service attraction than visible minorities. Specifically, visible minority group members report a preference for private-sector careers and espouse two key work values that predict private sector attraction: (1) working for an employer that is a leader in the field and (2) opportunities for advancement. Although visible minorities report key work values associated with the public sector (e.g., job security, employment benefits, and a commitment to social responsibility and diversity), recent immigrants who are visible minorities also express socioeconomic mobility (e.g., advancement opportunities) as a career priority. This resulting desire may take precedence over traditional values (e.g., policy setting, social justice, service to the public) that predict public service attraction.

In another study, Ng and Gossett (2013) examine the fit between Millennials (i.e., those born between 1980-1995) and public service attraction. They found Millennials prioritize balancing personal life with career, pursuing further education, and contributing to society as their top career goals, making public service a good career match. However, Millennials who identify as visible minorities prefer the private sector over public service. The authors suggest a perceived discrimination by visible minorities to be a contributing factor. This reflects statistics showing visible minorities are underrepresented in federal government hires and overall employment. In comparison, other underrepresented minority groups designated (i.e., women, people with disabilities, Aboriginal peoples, and sexual minorities) expressed greater interests in public service employment than their majority counterparts (i.e., able-bodied, non-Aboriginals, heterosexuals, Whites, males). Taken together, these findings suggest visible minorities’ disfavour of public service careers. In the next section, we will examine how Canada has used multiculturalism as a national integration tool to manage an increasingly diverse demographic profile and a means towards representative bureaucracy.

**CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM AND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY**

Like other western democracies relying on immigration as a strategy for national competitiveness (e.g. Australia and Canada; see Colic-Peisker 2011), the resulting increases in visible minorities have raised issues for national integration policies. Research on countries with large immigrant populations has examined how the influx of immigrants affected national identity. Specifically, immigration is viewed by some to threaten the solidarity of nation-states and have negatively impacted ideas of citizenship and national identity since immigrants do not share the same values and beliefs of their adopted countries (see Luedtke 2005; Ng and Bloemraad 2015). This fear is pervasive, as respondents in the European Union viewed immigration as more important concern than terrorism, pensions, taxation, education, housing, the environment, public transport, defence and foreign affairs (Eurobarometer 2018, cf. Strupczeski & Echikson, 2018).

Despite this, Canada’s use of multiculturalism as a national integration policy has strengthened citizenship and national identity amidst the growing demographic diversity. Berry’s (1997, 1998) typology of immigrant acculturation describes the interaction between dominant groups of a host country and incoming immigrant minorities. Countries using an *assimilationist* approach to manage immigration, like the United States and France, expect immigrant minorities to abandon their (cultural) identities in favour of a host country’s culture. In this way, national identity and citizenship are understood as homogenous, while ethnic diversity in culture and language are viewed as threats to national identity (Stratton and Ang, 1994). Newcomers maintaining attachments to home cultures in these countries are likely to experience discrimination (Reitz 1998) and they suffer socioeconomic penalties as they are less likely to acquire the social capital necessary for advancement (Negy et al. 2009). In contrast, an *integrationist* approach to immigrant acculturation, as practiced in Canada and Australia, understands the host country to be open and tolerant to immigrant minorities. In Canada, newcomers are explicitly encouraged to integrate into society and take part in the country’s social, cultural, economic, and political lives while maintaining their own cultures (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012). The difference in approach is seen in naturalization rates, with 85.6% foreign-born individuals reporting Canadian citizenship in 2011 compared to 43.7% in the United States (Statistics Canada 2011). It is important for minority newcomers to attain citizenship as it is both a key indicator and mechanism to further political participation abd socioeconomic mobility (Rajendran et al. 2019). As an indicator, newcomer minorities are more likely to attain citizenship if they are active participants in civic life, such as membership in local associations suggesting embeddedness in the adopted country (Bloemraad 2006). As a mechanism, citizenship is a prerequisite to participate in parliamentary elections (see Hooghe 2014). Canadian national identity is, therefore, an inclusive force as diversity and inclusivity are normative cultural dimensions of Canada (see Theiss-Morse 2009). Immigrants to Canada feel safe, secure and confident, with newcomer populations expressing increased psychological and sociocultural adaptation compared to immigrants to France (Sabatier and Berry 2008).

The high tolerance of inter-group differences maintained by multiculturalism as an integration policy is reflected in the federal government’s recruitment approach which began with the *Official Languages Act* (1969). Canada is the product of two founding nations of England and France; however, the passing of the Civic Service Act (1918) resulted in a reduction in the use of French and a corresponding decrease of French representation in Canada’s bureaucracy (Turgeon and Gagnon 2013, 40). Between 1917 to 1945, the representation of French Canadians in bureaucratic positions decreased from 21.6% to 12.5%. Tensions between English and French Canada rapidly grew as Franco-Canadians were frustrated by the lack of representation and the provision French services from the federal government. Governmental institutions, even those within Quebec as Canada’ only dominant French speaking province, were under the management of English speakers, giving Franco-Canadians the impression of a colonial territory (B and B Commission 1965, 109). Anglo-Canadians were dismissive since French Canada was considered a linguistic minority, with only 12.4% of the Canadian population speaking French in 1941 compared with 32.0% in 1901 (Statistics Canada 2018). As such, efforts to increase the representation of French linguistic diversity was viewed by English Canada as inequitable challenges to merit. However, by the 1960s national unity was under threat as support for Quebec independence increased, and the debate shifted from merit to national disintegration and identity. Under the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau formally recognized the equal status in Canada of English and French through the *Official Languages Act* (1969) in Parliament, the Government of Canada, and all federal institutions.

The *Official Languages Act* (1969) declared official bilingualism in Canada and remodelled the Canadian civil service as a bilingual institution. Specifically, the Act formally acknowledged the equal status of French and English linguistic diversity in Canada and members of either linguistic group are given equal employment opportunities in federal institutions and the freedom to work in their preferred language. A series of notable changes in Canada’s federal institutions subsequently occurred. The position of Commissioner of Official Languages was created responsible for maintaining the principles of the Act (Turgeon and Gagnon 2013, 41; see also Fortier 1994). The Official Languages in the Public Service (1973) resolution was introduced to increase French language use in the public service through recruitment and French language training. Most notably, the resolution made bilingualism an official criterion for all public service positions for employment in the federal public service. In this way, French language proficiency is considered a virtue and meritorious rather than a form of quota to increase representation. As a result of these changes, the number of public service positions designated as bilingual has grown from 25% in 1978 to over 42.9% in 2018 (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2019). The result is increased Francophone representation which has continued to the present day. In 2014, Franco-Canadians occupied 58.6% of bilingual positions compared to 41.4% Anglo-Canadians in the federal public service (Public Service Commission of Canada 2015). In 2015, Franco-Canadians comprised of 23.2% of the Canadian population (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2016). Of those, 26.5% participated in federal institutions and 31.2% in core public administration. Franco-Canadians are also better represented in supervisory positions. In 2018, 76% of institutions and 86% of small institutions were supervised in the official languages of their choice, regardless of whether supervisors were located in bilingual or unilingual designated regions in the country (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2019).

Canada’s demographic profile has diversified beyond its Anglo-Franco roots, moving the Canadian government to become the first country to adopt a Multicultural Policy in 1971. The Multiculturalism Policy, which was enacted into legislation in 1988 as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1986), provides a formal understanding of and direction to the diversity that accounted for immigrant growth, ethnocultural diversity, as well as other minority groups. The Act, the first of its kind by a nation-state, is both a political philosophy and a public policy instrument used by the federal government to manage Canada’s growing demographic plurality. As a political philosophy, Canadian multiculturalism formally accords recognition and positive accommodation to diverse cultural and religious groups (Kymlicka 1995). This has set the tone for how immigrant resultant diversity is viewed by providing feelings of security and self-confidence and making Canadians more open to and accepting of diverse cultures (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012). Of the 23 countries surveyed in 2011, Canadians were the second-most likely to agree immigration has a positive impact on their country, only residents in India were rated higher (Hiebert 2016). Consequently, the Canadian government is accountable for ensuring activities are sensitive and responsible for diversity. As a result, multiculturalism is also a public policy instrument and means to inclusion in guiding policy setting (Bloemraad 2007). For instance, the Act outlines that all federal institutions shall:

“…ensure that Canadians of all origins have equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in those institutions… [to] promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for all diversity of the members of Canadian society…[and]…collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada” (Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1998, 4).

One such program highlighted in the Act is the Legislated Employment Equity Program (LEEP) which has become the primary means used by the federal government to foster representative bureaucracy in the public service for four identified underrepresented groups: women, Aboriginals, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities. Prior to the *Official Languages Act* (1969), the federal government and the public sector were considered elite institutions consisting largely of highly educated white Anglo-Canadian men (Olsen 1980). Candidates were selected based on merit which emphasized credentialism and professional specialization. Based on social considerations at the time, women, visible minorities, Aboriginals, and persons with disabilities faced systemic barriers to participate in the public service. Women faced inadequate education and/or training, lower labour force commitment, an absence of adequate childcare, and discrimination in human resource activities, like hiring or promotions (Calzavara 1985, 530). Aboriginals similarly faced low access to education, cultural discrimination, financial obligation and the concentration of Aboriginals in low-level industries (Sharzer 1985). Unlike women and Aboriginals, inadequate data and information on the barriers to entry limited employment opportunities for visible minorities (Public Service Commission of Canada 2011). It was only in 1977 where a report identified architectural barriers, lack of technical supports and transportations as issues facing visible minorities. Social attitudes and assumptions of low ability were also found as barriers (Rioux 1985, 611).

Vestiges of the “White Canada” policy contributed to visible minorities not openly accepted into the federal public service. The “White Canada” policy was racially discriminatory and culturally assimilationist accepting only immigrants from Britain, the USA, and northern Europe (Banting and Kymlicka 2010; Ghosh 2018). The Chinese Immigration Act (1885) placed a head tax on Chinese immigrants to limit the number of incoming Chinese immigrants after the completion of the trans-Canada railway. The Continuous Journey Regulation (1908) restricted immigration from those who did not directly arrive from their home country, a practice applied to vessels from India. It was only during the industrial boom in the 1950s and 1960s where a need for labour saw the end of ethnocentric foreign policies and a change towards nation-building via immigration. These changes reflected international trends at the time, where former colonies in Asia and Africa petitioned the United Nations to remove racially discriminatory immigration policies (Dib 2006). Even then, visible minorities experienced non-recognition of qualifications, inflated or artificial education requirements and inadequate training, among others. (Abella 1984, 47-48). Naturalized immigrants from racial minority backgrounds did not fare better as they experienced systemic discrimination in employment and promotion decisions despite being equally qualified.

To address the systemic barriers experienced by these populations and through the framework provided by the Multiculturalism Act (1986), the Employment Equity Act (EEA) (1986) or Legislated Employment Equity Program (LEEP) uses a compliance approach to minimize systemic discrimination experienced by the four target groups. In 1986, the Employment Equity Act (EEA) was instituted requiring the federal public service and all medium to large employers in Canada to report on employment equity targets through mandatory annual reports (Agocs 2012). Federally regulated companies with 100 employees or more are required to report annually the representation of designated minority groups. At the same time, the federal government is also responsible for the Federal Contractors Program (FCP). External federal contractors with 100 employees or more and sell goods or services to the federal government valued at $200,000 or more are similarly required to apply LEEP in order to bid on contracts. Although federal contractors are still under the same compliance reviews as federally regulated companies, they are not required to submit annual reports (Agocs 2012, 260).

In 1995, amendments to the EEA expanded the scope to include the federal public service, commissions and agencies. This includes the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), The Canadian Armed Forces, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). Under the 1995 revised LEEP, numerical targets are provided based on factors that consider under-representation, growth of qualified persons and expected growth and turnover of the workforce (Turgeon and Gagnon 2013, 44). Furthermore, employers are expected to develop employment equity plans which specify measures to eliminate employment barriers and numerical goals for the hiring and promotion of people in the identified at-risk groups. Importantly, the LEEP continues to espouse merit as a core principle (Turgeon and Gagnon, 2013) and avoids being understood as a hiring quota. Employment decisions, like hiring and promotion, are still based on experience and qualifications as outlined in Canada’s Civil Service Act (1908). In this way, similar to the Official Languages Act (1969) and Franco-Canada, being a visible minority is considered a component of merit (PSAC 2018). The following section reviews the progress on EEA/LEEP as a policy instrument to achieve representative bureaucracy for visible minorities in the Canadian public service.

**PROGRESS IN CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY**

**Data Analysis**

The success of employment equity in Canada in achieving proportionate representation for visible minorities is determined through representation in the public service relative to their availability rates in the labour market[[2]](#footnote-2).. This measure reflects the utilization rate or employment of visible minorities in the workforce. Our focal aim is to examine the effectiveness of LEEP as an instrument aimed at increasing Canadian representative bureaucracy using data from the EEA annual reports from 1987 to 2017. Data from 1987 was selected as the benchmark year (inception reporting) given that employment equity was officially implemented in 1986, allowing for a first full year of reporting. Data from 2017 (2018 reporting year) reflects the most current reporting available from Labour Canada. There was no data on labour market availability rate from Statistics Canada between 1987 and 1991. Data collected from 1996 onward reflected a revised EEA (1995) which mandated data collection. Trends beginning from 1987 to 2000 are not available as separate data was not collected until 2001 for the public sector. Furthermore, data collected from 1996 onwards reflected an EEA that is strengthened by empowering the Canadian Human Rights Commission to conduct on-site compliance reviews and the creation of the Employment Equity Tribunal to issue ‘court-enforceable’ orders (Agocs 2002; Jain and Lawler 2004). Table 1 shows the representation of visible minorities in the public relative to their availability rate in the labour market. Table 2 shows the representation of visible minorities in the public service vis-à-vis private sector. In Figure 1, we graph the representation of visible minorities in both the public and private sectors, with their availability rates in the labour market to show trends and gaps in the representation of visible minorities in public service.

**Representation of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Publicv Service**

Figure 1 shows that, between 2001 and the most recent reporting year, the representation of visible minorities in the Canadian public service are consistently below their labour market availability rates and also below that of the private sector.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Despite this trend, the representation gaps in the public service and labour market have decreased over time (see Table 1). In 2001, the representation gap between visible minorities and their labour market availability rate was 6.5% and it has narrowed to 2.7% by 2017. Between 2001 and 2004, the gaps were 6.5%, 5.8%, 5.2% and 4.8% respectively. Although there was a spike in between the years of 2008 and 2013, the gaps decreased again between 2014 and 2017 from 4.6%, 4.0%, 3.3% and 2.7% respectively. The spike in difference between the years of 2008 to 2013 was substantial. The gaps increased from 3.8% in 2007 to 6.1% in 2008, but decreased thereafter until another spike in 2012-2013 from 3.2% in 2012 to 5.2 in 2013. This can potentially be explained by the electoral win of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper between the years of 2006 to 2015, who openly held negative opinions towards LEEP (Thompson, 2013).

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Conversely, Table 2 shows that the representation gap between the public service and private sector which increased over time. In 2001, the representation gap of visible minorities in public service representation (6.1%) and private sector (11.7%) was 5.6%. Comparatively in 2017, the gap increased to 7.7%. This widening trend has increased consistently over time. Between 2001 to 2007, the gaps were 5.6%, 5.4%, 5.3%, 6.0%, and 6.3%. Between 2006 and 2007, the gap spiked to 7.1%. This gap grew steadily to the most recent reporting year for 2018.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

The representation gaps for visible minorities in the public service and private sector relative to their labour market availability reversed over time. Figure 1 shows that between 1993 to 2002, both visible minority representation in the public service and in the private sector were below visible minority labour market availability; however, from 2003 onwards the representation of visible minorities in the private sector exceeded their labour market availability rates (see Table 3). This trend continues to increase steadily with visible minority representation moving from 0.1% higher than the labour market availability in 2003 to being 5.0% higher in 2017.

[INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

**Improving the Outcomes for Visible Minorities**

A review of three decades (1987-2017) finds employment equity to be effective in improving the representative outcomes of visible minorities into the Canadian public service. Despite this trend, the representation of visible minorities in the public service consistently falls below both the labour market availability and their private sector counterparts. Furthermore, the gap between representation in the public service and the private sector widens over time. This coincides with research showing visible minorities are more attracted to private sector employment over public service (Ng and Gossett, 2013; Ng and Sears, 2015). Nevertheless, the representation rates of visible minorities in the public service tracks the rising rates of their availability rates in the labour market. Thus, despite consistently reporting below labour market availability rates, the representation gap for visible minorities in public service has decreased over time. This suggests that representation of visible minorities in the Canadian public service continue to increase as they join the labour market. This also coincides with the most recent reporting which finds the number of visible minorities in the public service has increased the most out of all four EEA designated groups between the years of 2014-2017 (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2019).

Senate reports and public service self-studies reveal some further trends beyond representative outcomes of visible minorities. Although rates of promotion are higher than representation in the public service and they are leaving at a lower rate, visible minorities continue to be underrepresented in higher-level positions and salary categories and slightly overrepresented in lower salary categories (Standing Senate Committee 2013). Furthermore, visible minorities (along with women and Aboriginal peoples) are more likely to be hired on a term basis and less likely to be recruited into continuous or indeterminate positions.. The perception of overall fairness of staffing process among visible minorities declined to 70% in 2011 from 74% in 2010. At the same time, reported rates of harassment by visible minorities in the public service increased from 19% in 2013 to 22% in 2017. Reported rates of discrimination also increased from 13% in 2013 to 19% in 2019, although these trends might be explained by increased representation in the workplace (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2017).

Nevertheless, the federal government continues to incorporate EEA considerations in resource planning. Visible minorities in the public service are represented by the National Council for Visible Minorities. Training, career development and advancement programs are also provided to support EEA groups to advance. In 2017, of Canada’s 66 core public administration departments, 54 exceeded workforce availability of visible minorities in 2018 compared to 34 in 2017 (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2019). Earning potential of visible minorities has also increased. In 2018, 17.9% of overall employee population earn 100, 000 and over, with 15.3% of those being visible minorities. Civil servants who are visible minorities also tended to be younger than the overall Canadian workforce. This reflects efforts in student recruitment where visible minorities are hired at far greater rates than other target groups. For instance, visible minorities hired through the Federal Student Work Experience Program in 2015 was 19.17% compared to Aboriginals at 2.88% and those with disabilities at 2.02% (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2017).

In 2017, the Public Service Commission undertook the Name-Blind Recruitment Pilot Project to increase representation in the public service. Name-blind recruitment removes candidates’ identifying factors, like age, address, experience, and education, that signals backgrounds (see Newbery 2018). In this way, recruiters can make unbiased and merit-based decisions that give under-represented groups fair consideration. The project used a sample of 2,226 applicants, including 685 visible minorities through 27 external hiring processes across 17 departments between April and October 2017 (see Public Service Commission 2018). Results indicate that there is no net benefit or disadvantage of name-blind recruitment for visible minorities across occupational categories (scientific and professional, administrative and foreign service, technical and administrative support, and operational fields) (see also Evelyn 2018). Yet, name-blind recruitment significantly reduces rates of being screened-in rate for overall number of non-visible minority candidates. Taken together, the project did not find bias in recruitment of visible minorities but finds name-blind recruitment viable in increasing the capacity for representation of EEA groups.

EEA has influenced overall minority representation at the Senate among both the Senate Administration[[3]](#footnote-3) and appointed Senators[[4]](#footnote-4). . A Special Subcommittee on Diversity was created in 2010 to review the Employment Equity Report 2006-2009, examine policies, and consider recruitment and retention to foster representation at the Senate (Senate Report 2012). Recommendations included enforcing EEA compliance, undertaking steps to reduce systemic barriers to representation, ensuring open and clear advertising, recruitment and screening procedures, and conducting thorough and regular review of EEA efforts at the Senate (Senate Report 2018). Efforts have been successful, as a 2016 review of the Senate Administration finds percentages of employees in all four EEA groups to have increased since 2009. Percentages of EEA groups were equal or higher than those in the Public Service, except among Aboriginal peoples. This coincided with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s mandate to increase overall diversity in the government, as Trudeau’s 31 Senate appointments have increased representation visible minorities, as well as women and Aboriginal populations. Griffith (2017) compared the resulting overall diversity of the Senate, the Canadian population and the House of Commons. He found visible minorities in both the Senate at 13.3% and the Commons at 13.9% were close to the overall population at 15.0%. The Senate was closer to gender parity at 40% compared to 50.4% of the overall population and 26.1% in the House of Commons. While Aboriginal representation in the Senate at 5.7% exceeded both the House at 3.0% and the overall population at 4.3%.

Representation of visible minorities, however, is a continuous effort as gaps exist despite marked improvements at the Senate. The representation of visible minorities in the Senate Administration was below workforce availability in the National Capital Region, was below workforce availability nationally in administrative support, and below both workforce national and National Capital Region workforce availability rates in professional occupations (Senate Report 2018). When considering Aboriginal peoples, there were none in managerial occupational categories, was below national workforce availability in professional occupational categories, and below national workforce availability in skilled crafts and trades worker occupational category. Representation among appointed senators are similarly limited along measures of education and occupation. There are more senators with higher degrees and more senators with an activist background and fewer with a business background (Griffith 2017). In 2016, 8.6% of senators had PhDs compared to 0.9% of the general population and 22.7% of senators had master’s degrees compared to 16.5% of the general population. At the same time, 18.8% of senators had a legal background, 10.9% had an activist background, and 10.9% had a political background compared to 26.7% with a business background. This potentially influences how the Senate responds to legislation and in its role as a chamber for sober second thought as bureaucrats are understood to act consistently with their social demographic background (Meier and Morton 2015). As such, increasing the representation of visible minorities and other minorities requires consistent efforts. This includes regular reviews of the EEA by governmental bodies like the Subcommittee. Recommendations like employment equity training plans for managers and staff at the Senate to encourage recruitment outside the National Capital Region and considerations of name-blind recruitment are worthwhile efforts to increase overall representation.

**CONCLUSION**

Canada has used multiculturalism as a political philosophy and a public policy instrument to manage its increasing demographic diversity and increase representative bureaucracy. Many western democracies have strategically used immigration to address issues of low fertility rates, ageing population and decreased workforces resulting in a continued growth in demographic plurality.. The resulting diversification of societies and multiple fluid national identities pose challenges for national integration policies. In Canada, this is expressed as a move from its Aboriginal, English and French roots towards a pluralistic demography that reflects immigration from Asia and the Middle East. Canada has used multiculturalism as a political philosophy to manage such diversity by according recognition and positive accommodation to cultural minorities and diversities in ethnicity, language, culture and religion (see Kymlicka 1995, 2001). At the same time, multiculturalism as a public policy instrument has been used to attain representative bureaucracy, crucial to legitimize demographically representative governments through creating a responsive public service that reflects the demographic needs of its population at any given time. An example of this is the Official Languages Act (1969) which remodelled the Canadian civil service as a bilingual institution, reflecting the linguistic diversity of Canada’s Anglo-Franco roots.

This chapter examined the way the federal Employment Equity Act (EEA) (1986) (Legislated Employment Equity Program/LEEP) meets Canada’s increasing demographic diversity. The EEA/LEEP required the federal public service and federally regulated Canadian employers to evaluate and report the representation of designated groups in the workforce – visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and women. EEA/LEEP has had a positive impact on representative bureaucracy, however visible minorities are found to be less attracted to public service due to negative perceptions. At the same time, representation continued to be low for all EEA groups when compared to their labour market availabilities in the workforce. Nevertheless, a review of three decades finds EEA/LEEP to be generally effective in improving the representative outcomes of visible minorities. Rates of representation track rates of their availability in the labour market with the difference consistently decreasing over time. Furthermore, recent reporting shows the number of visible minorities have increased the most out of all EEA groups between 2014 to 2017.

**Future of Employment Equity/ Legislated Employment Equity Program in Canada**

Representative bureaucracy is recognized by the federal government as increasingly important considering trends in immigration. It is projected that 30.0% of the Canadian population will be a visible minority in 2031 and 55.2% to 49.7% will either be an immigrant or a child of an immigrant by 2036 (Statistics Canada 2017). Associated challenges are recognized. For instance, efforts are made to increase employment opportunities for members of visible minority youth, enhanced support for language training to consider the linguistic profiles of visible minorities whose first languages are neither English nor French (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2019). At the same time, pilot projects are introduced to analyze the challenges visible minorities and newcomer women face in finding employment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Despite its policy efficacy, EEA/LEEP has generated a lot of controversy. It has been debated by those who understand employment equity as ineffective, violating principles of meritocracy, and causing reverse discrimination and backlash among Canadians (Bakan and Kobayashi 2007; Leck 2002; Ng and Wiesner 2007; also see Lam and Ng 2020 for a review). Nevertheless, it appears to be effective in promoting equity and diversity in Canada’s public sector.

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1. Statistics Canada uses the term “visible minorities” to refer to persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Other key measures, like hiring and termination rates in the public service and representation at senior, middle management and professional positions of visible minorities were only collected for the private sector. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Senate Administration provides procedural, logistical, administrative, and planning support to appointed individual senators. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Under the Trudeau government in 2015, the Senate underwent a reform of the appointment process. A non-partisan review board, the Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments, was created to provide the acting prime ministers recommendations for candidates. Recommendations are guided by non-partisan and merit-based criteria. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)