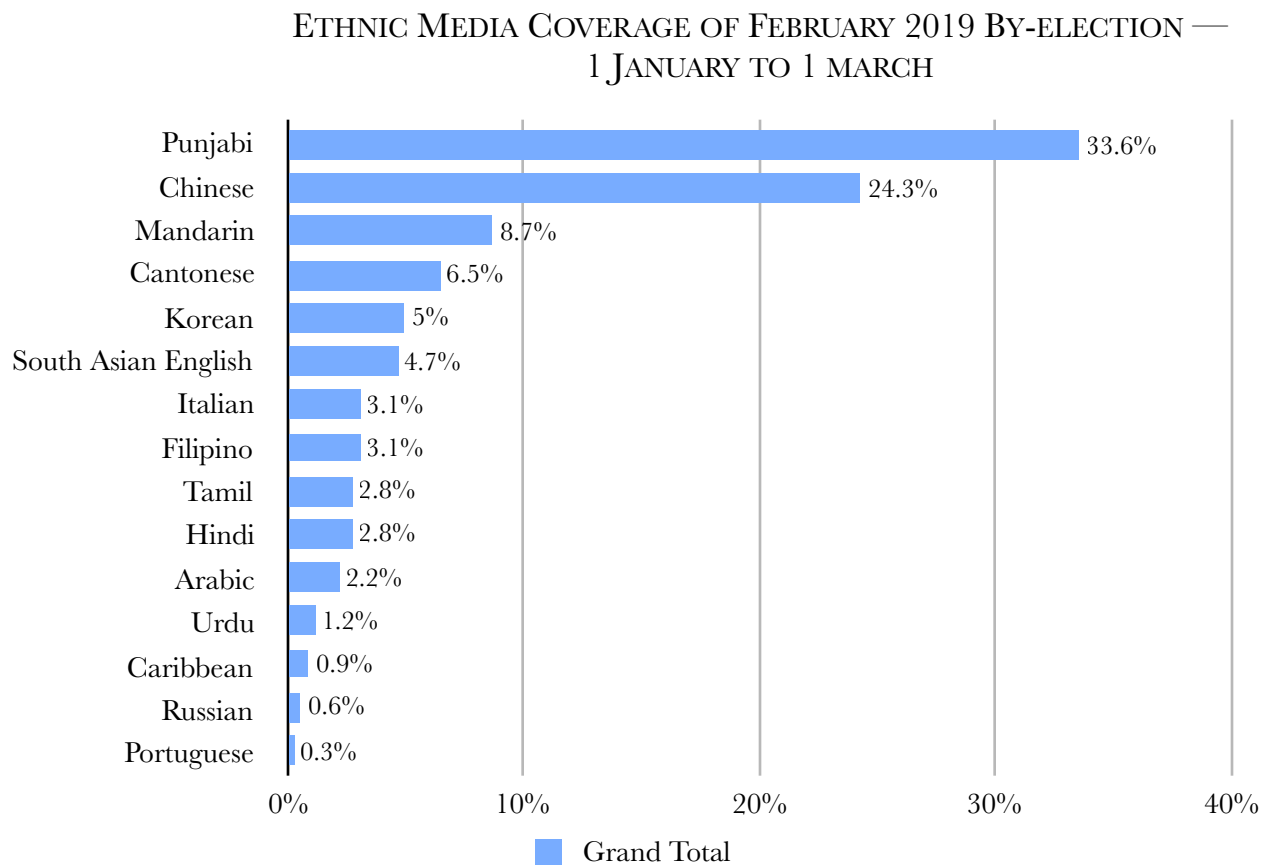


Ethnic Media Coverage of the 25 February by-elections

The February 2019 by-elections provided a test linking demographic and socioeconomic data with ethnic media coverage for the October general election for DiversityVotes.ca. The three ridings — Burnaby South (BC), Outremont (QC) and York Simcoe (ON) provided a range from visible minority majority to relative few visible minorities.

321 articles were reviewed, with the language breakdown in the following chart with coverage largely split between Indo-Canadian media (predominantly Punjabi but also South Asian English, Hindi and Urdu at 42.4 percent) and Chinese Canadian media (Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese: 39.6 percent):



Observations

1. Overall Canadian demographics: As one would expect, the larger visible minority groups have a larger and more active media with the capacity for more extensive coverage.
2. Riding demographics matter: The small number of visible minorities in York Simcoe meant no substantive coverage of the riding political dynamics. In contrast, Burnaby South,

as a visible minority majority riding, had the most coverage. Even Outremont, with close to 30 percent visible minorities, had relatively little coverage.

3. Candidate profile matters: Extensive Burnaby South coverage reflected the high national profile of NDP leader Jagmeet Singh both with respect to the overall NDP prospects as well as his Canadian Sikh identity. Punjabi media coverage was thus extensive.
4. Candidate strengths and weaknesses: The crass identity politics of former Liberal candidate Karen Wang was extensively covered although the more subtle identity politics of her replacement, Chinese Canadian Richard Lee was not remarked upon. While NDP candidate Singh was able to get his platform message out, he was dogged somewhat by various controversies regarding his media comments on Canadians detained in China and confusion over the NDP's position on the political situation in Venezuela. The appeal of People's Party of Canada to social conservatives in Burnaby South was noted.
5. National issues: The ongoing story of the US extradition request of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou and Chinese retaliation and detention of Canadians along with the SNC Lavalin political scandal over judicial interference were covered, along with the risks to Singh's leadership and the NDP should he lose.
6. Commentary limited: Most articles are news items. In contrast to the "punditocracy" in mainstream media, commentary takes the form more of analysis than opinion pieces, with some notable exceptions in the Chinese Canadian and Indo-Canadian media.
7. Particularities: The talk show culture appears limited to Indo-Canadian media.

Insights for the October general election

1. Coverage will focus on the ridings with the largest number of visible minorities and immigrants (visible minorities are the majority in 41 ridings, and form over 20 percent of voters in an additional 93 ridings). However, given significant pockets in another 95 ridings (five to 20 percent), ethnic media coverage will have a broader impact.
2. However, as visible minority candidates will continue to dominate party candidate selection in visible minority majority ridings, national and local coverage will further focus on these battleground ridings in the 905 and BC's lower mainland.
3. Ethnic media monitoring improves the accountability of political parties and candidates in terms of their messaging, whether inclusive or exclusive, whether narrow or broad, as the example of former Liberal candidate Wang illustrates.
4. Both national and local issues will be covered in the larger language group ethnic media.