

# NEWS BRIEF



BUREAU OF  
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RESEARCH

BETTER GOVERNMENT THROUGH RESEARCH

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## SUBMISSION TO THE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD HEARING ON WARD BOUNDARIES FOR THE CITY OF TORONTO

In News Brief #112, the Bureau outlined three basic criteria for analyzing the four proposed ward plans for the City of Toronto presented to Council in April, 1969. Two of these, that of a compact, contiguous shape and an equal population in each ward, have been discussed at length in the preceding News Brief. Analysis at that time indicated that, unlike the proposed block-ward plan, the three strip-ward plans (including the City Clerk's plan approved by Council) contravened the criterion of compactness, particularly for the area in the City core. Moreover, while all the plans deviated somewhat from the criterion of equal ward population, the strip-ward plans indicated an average of twice as many deviations in excess of 2% of the optimum ward population as did the block plan. In light of Council's decision in favour of the strip-ward design over the block-ward plan, the third criterion, a "sense of community" or common base of interest among ward residents, lends itself to further analysis.

The purpose of a ward system is to provide representation on Council from various areas of the City. The necessity of ensuring that representatives are elected from different areas is predicated on the assumption that: (a) geographical divisions of the city may be made to correspond to the several communities of interest within the City, and (b) these communities of interest should be reflected in the make-up of Council.

In an effort to determine the extent to which: (a) a common base of interest exists within wards of the strip design (used exclusively in the City core) and (b) representatives of the various communities are elected to Council, the four major existing strip wards, 2, 3, 4, and 5, have been analyzed.<sup>1</sup> Ward 3 extends from the lakefront to the City limits well above Eglinton Avenue. The other three stretch from the lakefront to St. Clair Avenue or just beyond. All four wards were divided at Bloor Street (coinciding both with census tract divisions of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the fact that Bloor Street is the main east-west axis of the City) creating a north and south section in each ward. A 40% sample of the total number of polling stations in the ward, split evenly between the north and south sections, was taken. A study was then made of both the pattern of voter turnout (how significant to an election victory are the votes from either section) and the socio-economic profile (indicating the extent of a common interest base) of the section.

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<sup>1</sup>Socio-economic data were taken from the 1961 Census of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics (the most recent available), voting data have been drawn from the Clerk's Returns of the 1966 municipal election.

Results indicate (see Table I and II) a direct relationship between the socio-economic strata (SES) and patterns of voter turnout--the higher the SES, the greater the voter turnout and vice versa. The significance of the relationship is illustrated in Table III. In each case, the section with the highest SES (and, therefore, greatest degree of voter participation) was responsible for producing a majority percentage of votes necessary to an election victory for each of the winning candidates. In Ward 2, where the SES divergence between the north and south is greatest, 70.17% of the votes cast for the front running candidate came from the north. This was more than double the number of votes received from the south and paralleled the fact that the average salary per family head, average median value of owner-occupied dwellings, and average rent of tenant-occupied dwellings were in each case twice as great in the north than the south. (See Table I.) In Ward 5, on the other hand, SES differential is minor. Average annual salary per family head differed by less than \$173; average median value of owner-occupied dwellings by less than \$870; and the average rent of tenant-occupied dwellings was the same in both sections. In this case, election victory was owed far more equally to both sections since the north, though still providing the majority percentage, was responsible for only 53.39% while votes cast in the south constituted 46.61%.

Using the votes cast for the winning candidates as a base indication of the extent to which the preferences of the north and south communities of interest are reflected in Council make-up, the fact of a strip design per se appears to be unimportant. Instead, the significant influence on ward representation is the degree to which the residents of the ward as a whole possess a sense of community as illustrated in the socio-economic profile of the ward. Beginning with Ward 5, where the sense of community throughout the ward is strongest, and tracing voting patterns through Wards 4, 3, and 2 in that order, the result is a decreasing sense of community in the ward coupled with a subsequent decrease in the importance of votes cast (and, therefore, voting preferences) in the south, or economically disadvantaged, sections. The effective result, then, is that of a gerrymander<sup>2</sup> where the voting preferences of the south sections are increasingly overpowered by those of the north. Utilization of a ward system that relied upon a sense of community in each ward to determine its boundaries would minimize the gerrymander and provide a more equitable reflection on Council of the voting preferences of these communities of interest.

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<sup>2</sup>Referring to the practice of drawing district lines to insure a voting majority of one group while dissolving the effective votes of another.

TABLE 1

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESIDENTS  
CITY OF TORONTO, WARDS 2 TO 5

| Ward    | Ethnic Background<br>British Isles | Other  | Average Salary<br>per Family Head | Average No. of<br>Persons per<br>Household | Average Median<br>Value of<br>Owner-Occupied<br>Dwelling | Average Contract Rent of<br>Tenant-Occupied<br>Dwelling |
|---------|------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 2 North | 77.07%                             | 22.93% | \$7,055                           | 3.0  | \$31,958   | \$160   |
| 2 South | 57.47                              | 42.53  | 3,045                             | 3.3  | 15,695   | 81  |
| 3 North | 55.48                              | 44.52  | 5,643                             | 2.9  | 28,223   | 125   |
| 3 South | 38.37                              | 61.63  | 3,484                             | 3.4  | 6,394  | 76  |
| 4 North | 39.20                              | 60.80  | 3,877                             | 3.7  | 19,686   | 100   |
| 4 South | 17.93                              | 82.07  | 2,735                             | 5.5  | 15,829   | 84  |
| 5 North | 38.33                              | 61.67  | 3,256                             | 4.2  | 15,790   | 86  |
| 5 South | 30.41                              | 69.59  | 3,093                             | 4.6  | 16,559   | 86  |

Source: 1961 Census Tracts.

TABLE II

PATTERNS OF VOTER PARTICIPATION  
CITY OF TORONTO, WARDS 2 to 5

| Ward | Votes cast<br>In North<br>Sample | No. of<br>Possible<br>Votes | % of Voter<br>Turnout-North<br>Sample | Votes cast<br>In South<br>Sample | No. of<br>Possible<br>Votes | % of Voter<br>Turnout-South<br>Sample | Differ-<br>ential<br>in % |
|------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2    | 7,555                            | 19,082                      | 39.59%                                | 3,822                            | 18,842                      | 20.28%                                | 19.31%                    |
| 3    | 8,001                            | 24,026                      | 33.30                                 | 4,759                            | 22,542                      | 21.11                                 | 12.19                     |
| 4    | 3,403                            | 14,978                      | 22.72                                 | 2,409                            | 14,990                      | 16.07                                 | 6.65                      |
| 5    | 3,957                            | 14,602                      | 27.09                                 | 3,842                            | 15,742                      | 24.40                                 | 2.69                      |

Source: Clerk's Returns, 1966 Election.

TABLE III

EXTENT OF VOTER SUPPORT FOR WARD REPRESENTATIVES  
NORTH AND SOUTH SECTIONS

| Ward | Elected<br>Alderman | Total<br>Votes | No. of Votes<br>Received from<br>North Sample | % of<br>Total | No. of Votes<br>Received from<br>South Sample | % of<br>Total | Differ-<br>ential<br>in % |
|------|---------------------|----------------|---|---------------|---|---------------|---------------------------|
| 2    | A*                  | 2,839          | 1,992   | 70.17%        | 847   | 29.83%        | 40.34%                    |
|      | B*                  | 2,747          | 1,788   | 65.09         | 959   | 34.91         | 30.18                     |
| 3    | A                   | 4,543          | 2,859   | 62.93         | 1,684   | 37.07         | 25.86                     |
|      | B                   | 4,197          | 2,687   | 64.02         | 1,510   | 35.98         | 28.04                     |
| 4    | A                   | 2,053          | 1,298   | 63.22         | 755   | 36.78         | 26.44                     |
|      | B                   | 1,651          | 994   | 60.21         | 657   | 39.79         | 20.42                     |
| 5    | A                   | 2,362          | 1,261   | 53.39         | 1,101   | 46.61         | 6.78                      |
|      | B                   | 1,865          | 1,006   | 53.94         | 859   | 46.06         | 7.88                      |

Source: Clerk's Returns, 1966 Election.

\* A and B have been used to designate the two representatives from each ward.