

Is no news *bad news?*

Creating a local news poverty index for Canadian communities

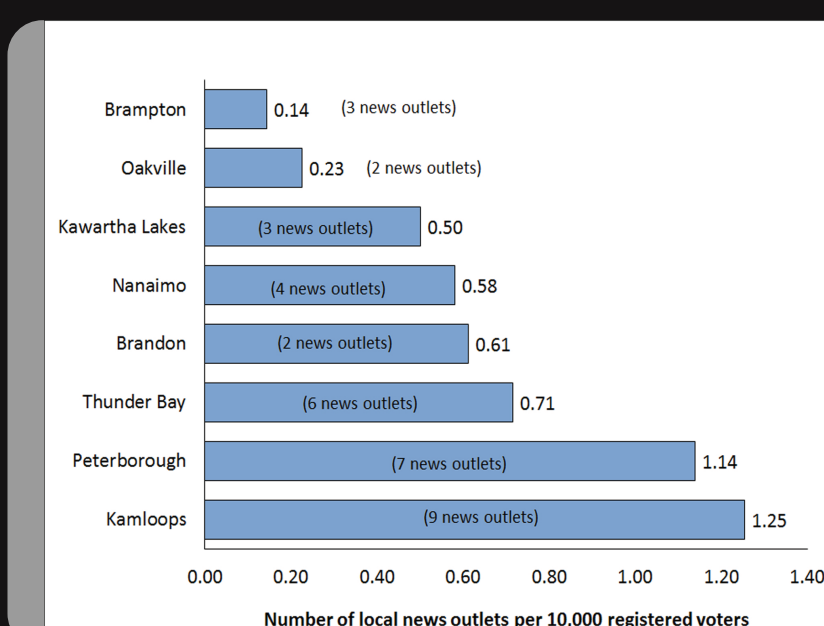
April Lindgren | School of Journalism, Ryerson University
Jaigris Hodson | Interdisciplinary Studies, Royal Roads University

Residents of Canada's major cities can turn to multiple sources for local news, but people who live in smaller cities, suburban municipalities and rural areas typically have fewer options, and in recent years their choices have become even more limited.

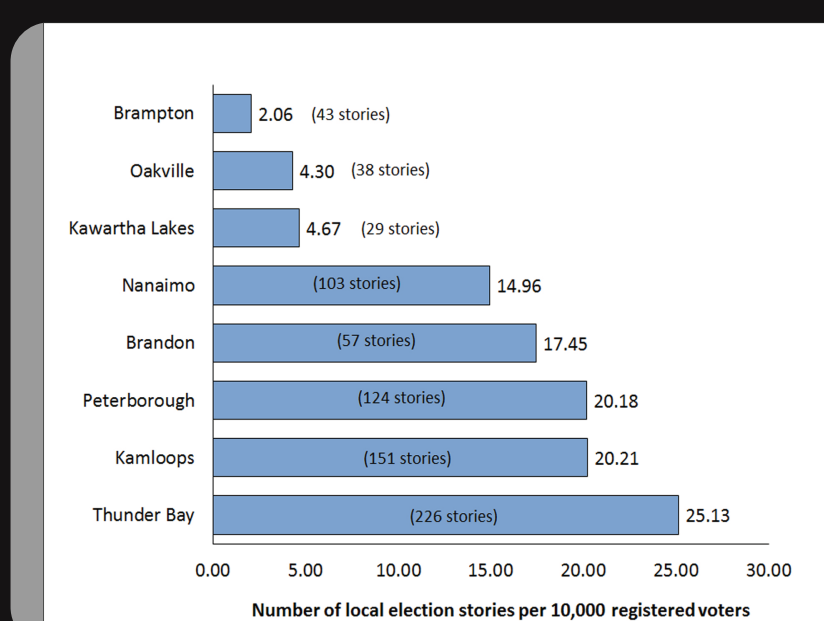
The News Poverty Index will be used to:

- identify communities that are relatively “local news affluent” and others with limited access to reliable information
- investigate why some places are better served than others
- explore solutions to local news poverty

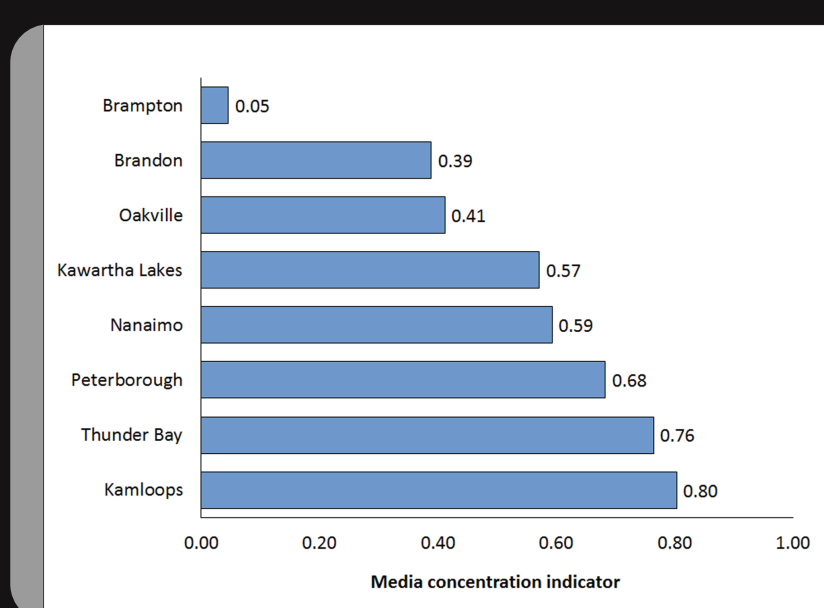
Creating a local news poverty index



There are significant differences in the number of local news sources in the different communities.

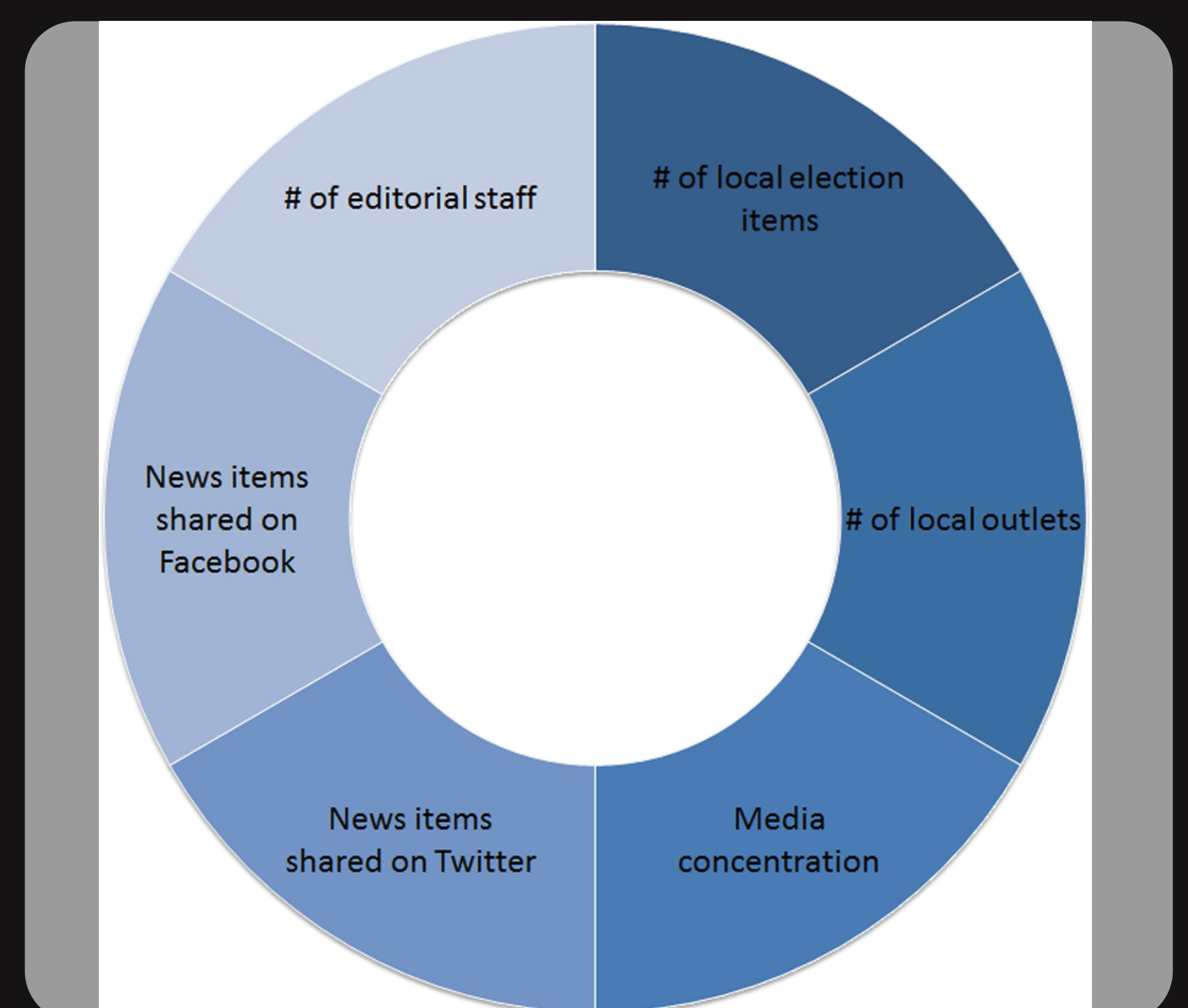


There are significant differences in the number of stories about the local race for MP.



The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index, which measures the extent to which any news outlet dominates local news coverage, points to a significant lack of diversity of news sources in some communities compared to others.

Data we gathered on local news coverage of the local campaigns for MP during the 2015 federal election illustrate how the index could be created.



Constructing a local news poverty index: Potential inputs

How it would work: A Tale of Two Cities

The index, consisting of a single number, would convey Brampton's news poverty relative to Kamloops.

Brampton*

- Media concentration indicator: 0.05
- 43 local election-related news stories
2.06 stories per 10,000 registered voters
- 3 media outlets:
Brampton Guardian: 42 stories
Bramptonist.ca: 1 story
4Corners Brampton: 0 stories

Kamloops*

- Media concentration indicator: 0.80
- 151 local, election-related news stories
20.21 stories per 10,000 registered voters
- 9 media outlets:
Kamloops This Week: 43 stories
NewsKamloops: 36 stories
CFJC TV: 26 stories
Other: 46 stories