The Political and Civic Participation of Canadian Women

by

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Political and civic participation are fundamental to a well-functioning democracy. Elections offer an opportunity for transmitting political preferences and selecting political representatives. Interest groups offer an indirect opportunity for indirectly influencing political decision-making. Social movements go further in shaping both the political agenda and in altering issue salience among the wider public. Political consumerism – both the boycotting and buycotting of products – offers consumers a mechanism for employing purchasing power as a form of political power. And increasingly the importance of civic participation is being recognized for its indirect role in supporting key democratic structures and practices. In response to Putnam's arguments regarding the role of non-political organizations, networks and beliefs in determining the health of democracy, research has focussed on a range of civic factors.

What is obvious, however, is that citizens are not equally engaged in the range of civic and political activities available to them. The theoretical framework of the importance of motivation, resources and opportunity is instrumental in identifying a range of factors that influence participatory decisions. People engage because they want to, because they can, and because opportunities for participation are made available to them. It all seems relatively straightforward and simple.

Yet the study of citizen participation has been criticized for focussing too narrowly on demographic profile and organizational context as predictors of participation. As pointed out by Goss (2003), the 'civic voluntarism model' developed by Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995), accounts for less than half of the total variance in participation. Goss furthers the study of political participation by focussing on the interaction between issues and individuals; that is on the degree to which emotion and cognition help spur citizens to engage in politics (or not). More recently, a wave of studies has employed frameworks common in the study of psychology for investigating how personality shapes political participation (Mondak et al. 2010, Mondak and Halperin 2008, Gerber et al. 2011). In short, focussing beyond how income and education spur political activity has resuscitated the study of political participation.

In line with Goss (2203), the goal in this paper is to move beyond explaining participation by a narrow focus on sociodemographic profile. And like Mondak et al. and others (2010), a look to personality for insight on why people engage in political is influencing political behaviour provides some purchase. Unlike existing studies, however, this one looks exclusively on how personality shapes *women's* participatory decision-making.

The gender gap framework dominates examinations of women's political behaviour. As summarized by Harell (2009), aggregate-level differences in women and men's political participation reveal a paradox. Evidence suggests that women and men focus on different issues and that they rank their importance differently. Significant gender gaps in resources, networks and participation continue to exist despite the range of gains made by women over the past several decades. Yet gender gaps in political participation do not align with these gaps in anticipated ways; for instance, women in the UK have been found to be more involved than men in individual political acts such as boycotting a product while being somewhat less likely to participate in collective acts such as joining a political party (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley 2004). Moreover in many countries women are more likely to turnout at elections than men in spite

significant resource gaps that would predict their relative absence at the polls. This paradox helps to explain the continued focus on the gender gap in examinations of women's political behaviour.

As persuasively argued by Gidengil (2007), however, the gender gap approach carries with it a number of potential pitfalls including categorical thinking, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, normative comparisons, and a focus on women's shifts to the neglect of men's. As she notes, "there has not been sufficient recognition in much of the work on the gender gap that the differences among women typically exceed the differences between women and men" (821). Her call is to pay more attention to the intersections of race, class and gender and, in particular, for quantitative work in this area to focus more on women. My own research (2001), and that of Harell (2009) and others indicates that women's participatory calculus very often varies from that employed by men, even in the absence of gender gaps in activity.

In light of existing research, the goals in this paper are simple yet complicated: first, to expand the range of explanatory factors, and their interconnections, examined to model political participation; second, to examine a range of political activities beyond election turnout; and third, to ask "what are the key factors that shape women's participatory decisions" instead of "why aren't women more like men when it comes to political participation?"

Modelling the Key Determinants of Women's Political Behaviour

Existing research into political behaviour has identified a number of the primary determinants for activity, with a focus on resources, attitudes and institutional determinants dominating among models (Dalton and Klingeman 2007). While age and education consistently rank among the most powerful explanatory factors (Dalton 2006, Gidengil et al. 2004), recent work in political behaviour has begun to push the boundaries of examinations by examining a wider range of potential explanatory factors much in the same way that gender scholars have been pushing the field since they first began examining the connection between gender and political behaviour (Norris 2007).

This paper focuses on three factors that might be of particular importance for understanding women's political participation: ethnic minority, Aboriginal and immigrant status; personality factors; and motherhood. Quite simply, there are strong arguments, outlined below, to be made for why each is likely to play part in shaping women's willingness and desire to participate in politics.

Ethnic Minority, Aboriginal and Immigrant Status

Given the number of potential challenges they face, immigrant and ethnic minority women display unique patterns of participation with politics. As summarized in O'Neill, Gidengil and Young (2012), three explanatory approaches have focussed on the participatory citizenship of immigrants and ethnic minorities. The first suggests that cultural and socialization processes lie behind any deviations in participatory practices of these groups from the practices of majority groups. The larger the distance between the pre-migration and post-migration political cultures, the larger the potential to see deviation in the political activities between immigrants and non-

immigrants. Similarly, any norms and practices within ethnic communities that deviate from those found in the majority population and that shape participatory decisions are likely to result in participatory gaps between the two. Given the importance of cultural norms for gender socialization, one can expect that these are likely to play a key part in explaining variation in women's desire to engage in politics.

The second focus on resource disadvantages for understanding participatory differences. Immigrants and visible minorities are likely on average to enjoy lower levels of socio-economic status (Hum and Simpson 2004), a finding that applies equally to Aboriginals, and these gaps in income, education and occupational prestige will translate directly into differences in political activity. These gaps in resources are heightened for women in these groups (Statistics Canada 2012).

The third set of explanations focuses on social capital. Involvement with ethnic organizations and associations is argued to provide the ties and networks that encourage political activity (McAdam et al. 2001), an argument reinforced by examination of women's participation itself (Harell 2009, O'Neill 2006, O'Neill, Gidengil and Young 2012).

One additional point to make regarding the political integration of immigrants to Canada: most gaps in activity are likely to close as time spent in Canada increases (see a review of findings in Black 2011). This will vary with type of activity, however, as immigrants participate in some activities at higher levels than native-born Canadians (Anderson and Black 2009) and will also vary by gender (Gidengil and Stolle 2009).

There is an absolute paucity of research on the political participation patterns of Aboriginal women in Canada. That which does exist is focused almost exclusively on the gender gap in turnout (see for example Harell and Panagos 2010, Harell, Panagos and Matthews 2011). The almost exclusive focus on election turnout leads to the expectation that Aboriginal women participate less in politics than other Canadian women, a finding explained by resource disadvantages as well as a conscious turning away from Canadian democratic politics for Aboriginal institutions and/or the politics of resistance (Harell, Panagos and Matthews 2011). There are two limitations to these examinations: first, election turnout is merely one of the many alternatives available for political participation, and second, the determinants of turnout are not the same as the determinants of other forms of participation. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly for this examination, Aboriginal women face not only gender inequality but also struggle with colonialism, and the intersection between the two (Harell and Panagos 2010). As noted by Harell and Panagos (2010: 7), "For scholars such as Annette Jaimes, the gendered dimensions of colonialism explain why Aboriginal women put themselves 'at the very center of the fray' in Aboriginal struggles for national liberation (1992:331)." There is, then, sufficient reason to believe that Aboriginal women are as, if not more, politically engaged as other Canadian women if we extend the lens beyond electoral politics given their heightened politicization.

Personality

An important new line of inquiry in investigations of political behaviour and opinions is found in the focus on personality (Mondak et al., 2010). This is an important line of inquiry because first, the role of personality has been neglected in examinations of political behaviour, and second, examinations of personality effects are offering consistent evidence of the latter's role in shaping behaviour and attitudes. The dominant line of inquiry adopts the Big Five trait dimensions, openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability, borrowed from psychological investigations (see the work of Golberg 1990, 1992 and McCrae & Costa 2008).

When applied to examinations of political behaviour, three of the traits offer explanatory insight: openness to experience, conscientiousness and extroversion. Briefly, openness to experience captures "increased creativity, curiosity, imagination and non-conformity, self-efficacy, and high risk health behaviours" (Mondak and Halperin, 2008: 342). One of the key links through which it influences political behaviour is in the expansion of resources specific to behaviour (i.e. political information). Another is by reinforcing a belief that one can navigate the complexities of the political system (i.e. internal efficacy). Conscientiousness, the second trait, taps into one's attention to responsibility, and individuals scoring high on this trait "are viewed as dutiful, organized and reliable" (343). When examined for its direct impact on political participation, the trait is often associated with decreased participation because conscientiousness focuses time and resources towards prioritized activities and politics rarely ranks above job and family. The final trait, extroversion, "applies to those who are more sociable, lively and active" when compared with introversion which refers to those with a tendency "towards withdrawal, passivity and shyness" (344). When examined for its role in shaping proclivity towards engaging in political activities, especially those that involve a social dimension, extroversion is found to have a significant positive boost to behaviour. The importance of personality traits on political behaviour and attitudes is often dependent of situational factors. Identifying the range of interactions and situations relevant for personality traits represents one of the challenges of examinations in the area.

Personality is not, however, gender-neutral; society prescribes appropriate personality traits according to gender. Women, for example, have been found to be more likely than men to want to avoid conflict, a predisposition with clear implications for political behaviour (Ulbig & Funk, 1999).

Motherhood

The importance of parental status for political activity has been identified in research. One can anticipate that the relevance of parenthood for participation is gendered, given the degree to which socialization and various processes are distinguished by gender. And indeed much research evidence bears this out (see O'Neill and Gidengil, 2012 for a review of the literature).

The constraints that accompany caring for young children have implications for one's ability to participate in political activities. The time constraint hypothesis and the social isolation hypothesis focus on these constraints. The time constraint hypothesis (Almond and Verba 1963; McGlen 1980; Voorpostel and Hilde 2012) identifies the demands on one's time accompanying the role of primary caregiver for children, and indeed, research identifies that these demands are

greatest when the children are very young (pre-school age). The social isolation hypothesis, on the other hand, argues that time spent at home with young children limits a primary caregiver's ability to undertake activities outside of the home, activities that are likely to offer the networks and social connections that lead to political activities (Lynn and Flora 1974).

Alternative explanations for the relevance of motherhood for political participation look to gender role socialization and, in particular, to societal expectations regarding women's responsibilities as mothers, for their explanatory power (Lynn and Flora 1974, Togeby 1991). Linked to these arguments are those focussed on the shift in issue salience accompanying parenthood, and especially motherhood (Nomaguchi and Milke 2003). The link between mothers and political participation focussed on educational issues has been explained in this manner (Burns et al. 2001, Schlozman et al. 1995).

There is a line of argument, however, that downplays the importance of the direct role of parenthood on political participation. Any link between parenthood and participation is argued to stem from the indirect role of education, income and employment, each of these intimately connected to parental status (Burns et al. 2001, Schlozman et al. 1995).

Expectations

A review of this literature offers the following set of expectations:

H_1: Immigrant women, and especially the recently arrived in Canada, Aboriginal women and women from ethnic minorities will exhibit political participation patterns that deviate from native-born women and women from majority ethnic groups.

H_2: The participation gaps identified in H_1 and H_2 are likely to be partially explained by differences in education, income and occupational status between immigrant, visible minority, Aboriginal and other Canadian women.

H_3: Women who display conscientiousness will be less likely to participate in politics, unless they believe that political activities are a civic duty.

H_4: Women who identify themselves as open to experiences are more likely to participate politically, a finding likely due to increases in political knowledge and increased internal political efficacy.

H_5: Extroversion is likely to exert a positive impact on participation in activities that have a community and/or social element.

H_6: Women with pre-school and school age children in the home will be less likely to participate in political activities given the time demands and/or social isolation that accompanies caring for very young children and/or due to their educational and occupational differences from other women.

H_7: Mothers who adopt a traditional gender role ideology will be less engaged in political activities.

Data and Measures

Two surveys provide the data for the analysis: the 2007 Women's Political Participation Survey (WPPS) and the 2010 Quebec Women's Political Participation Survey (QWPPS).[1] Each was a telephone survey conducted by women interviewers, using English and French versions of the same questionnaire, on randomly selected samples of women. The 1,264 WPPS interviews took place between July 18 and October 2 with women 18 years of age and older in the nine largely English speaking provinces; these averaged 18 minutes in length and the overall response rate was 59 percent. The 1,201 QWPPS interviews took place between June 2 and July 3 with women 18 years and older in the province of Quebec; these interviews averaged approximately 23 minutes in length and the response rate was 34 percent. The two samples have been merged and weighted to reflect national population figures for a combined sample of 2,500 women.

Measures of Political and Civic Activities

Research as clearly shown that political activities are not equal given the variation in explanations that lie behind decisions to participate in them. As such, political activities are examined separately to allow for this variation to be identified. The survey asked about a range of political activities beyond those associated with electoral politics. All of the variables for political activity have been recoded to 1 for having engaged in the activity, and 0 otherwise.

Respondents were asked if they voted in the last federal election (2006 for the WPPS, and 2008 for the QWPPS. Additional questions asked if they had ever taken out a membership in a political party; and if they had ever been a member of an interest group working for change on a particular social or political issue. Respondents were also asked if, in the last twelve months, they had boycotted a product for political, ethical or environmental reasons; and specifically chosen to purchase a product for political, ethical or environmental reasons (i.e. buycotted). Those reporting that they had engaged in the political activity were coded 1; all others were coded 0.

Additional questions asked if, in the past year, the respondent had signed a petition, taken part in a demonstration, and worked with others to bring about some kind of change in their neighbourhood or local school. Those responding that they had were coded as 1 and all others 0.The final variable taps into civic participation more broadly by asking

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respondents if they had volunteered their time for a group or organization other than a political party in the past year. Responded who responded that they had engaged in a given activity were coded 1; all others were coded 0.

Measures for Explanatory Variables

The first measure is age, as the level of political participation in various activities has been found to vary, although not always in a similar direction, across age groups (Dalton 2006). To capture the impact of age of behaviour, two dummy variables, one for respondents less than 35 years of age, and a second for those 55 years of age and over, were created.

Ethnicity and immigration status are captured by a set of variables. Ethnicity is broken down into two main ethnic groups: majority and minority. The survey asks respondents to identify up to four ethnic or cultural groups to which their ancestors belongs (mirroring the strategy adopted in the Census). Respondents who indicated one non-European ancestral group were coded as members of a minority ethnic group (9.1 percent).[2] An Aboriginal dummy variable was coded 1 for respondents identifying Aboriginal ancestry in one of these four groups (5.3 percent). All remaining women were coded as 0 (85.5 percent). Immigration status was captured by combining two variables: the first asked respondents in what country they were born, and a second filter question asking those born outside of Canada the year in which they immigrated. From these, two dummy variables were created; one for recent immigrants, having arrived within 15 years or less (6.1 percent), and more established immigrants (11 percent).

Personality traits are captured by three variables: extroversion, openness to experience and conscientiousness. Extroversion is measured by a question asking women to identify how well the statement "You feel comfortable speaking in front of a group" described them. The coding includes four responses ranging from 1, for those who responded very well (30.2 percent), to 0, for those who suggested not well at all (18.5 percent).

Openness to experience was captured by how well they believed the statement "Tradition is very important to you." The coding includes four responses ranging from 1, for those who responded not well at all (3.6 percent), to 0, for those who suggested very well (46.5 percent). It was suggested that openness to experience shaped political participation by working through political knowledge and internal efficacy. Summing responses to four knowledge questions created a measure for the first,[3] with each correct response scored as 1 and 0 otherwise; the resulting variable was then recoded to range from 0 to 1. The variable capturing self-reported political efficacy used the survey question asking respondents "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like

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[2] This strategy likely errs most often in identifying majority women as part of the minority ethnic group; one result in that differences between minority and majority groups might be larger than those suggested by the data. The small percentage of women in the minority ethnic group eliminates the possibility of examining ethnic background in any greater detail.

[3] The knowledge questions asked respondents to correctly name the prime minister, the leader of the federal NDP, their province's premier, and the governor general.

you cannot really understand what is going on." Data were coded 1 = strongly disagree to 0=strongly agree.

Conscientiousness was captured by responses to the statement "You believe in following the rules even when no one is looking." Responses ranged from those who said the statement described them very well (58.1 percent – coded as 1) to those who said not well at all (2.8 percent – coded as 0).[4] In order to assess the interaction between conscientiousness and feeling a sense of duty towards politics, an interaction term was created by multiplying the conscientiousness variable with a second variable coded as 1 for respondents who selected the statement "It is the moral duty of every citizen to vote in an election" – coded as 1 – over the alternative "When no candidate is worth voting for, the logical choice is not to vote at all" – coded as 0.

Two dummy variables were created to capture women's parental status. Respondents to the survey were asked if they had any children and if they resided in their home. Those who said yes where asked to provide their children's ages. From this two dummy variables were created: one for those with only preschool age children in the home (12 percent) and another for those with older children only (31.5 percent). A majority of women in the sample, 56.6 percent, reported no children in the home.

An additional variable was created to capture gender role socialization by combining two surveys questions: the first asking whether society would be better off if parents stayed home with their children, and a second filter question asking those who agreed to the first agreed whether they believed it should be the mother or the father who stayed home. All those who responded that it should be the mother were coded 1 on the traditional gender role socialization dummy variable (25.1 percent of the sample).

A range of additional variables was included as controls. Age is measured by two dummy variables. The first captures respondents who are under 35 years of age (23.9 percent) and the second for those 55 years of age and over (34.6 percent). The reference category is women between 35 and 54 years of age (41.5 percent). Education is measured by dummy variables. The first variable captures respondents who completed High School or less (33.5 percent) and the second those having completed an undergraduate degree or higher (28.1 percent). The reference category is for those having completed some college and/or university, or having earned a college diploma (38.4 percent). Employment status is also measured by two dummy variables: one for women who are employed in a professional occupation (21.0 percent) and those employed in a non-professional occupation (41.1 percent).[5] The reference category includes those women who are retired, unemployed, homemakers, students and who reported their status as disabled (37.9 percent).

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[4] Note that the survey questions employed here to capture personality traits are distinct from the bi-polar, or semantic-differential, scales most often employed in psychological surveys (see Mondak et al. 2010).

[5] Income is left out of the models for two reasons. A significant percentage of respondents failed to provide a response to the household income and personal income questions (17.8 percent). More importantly, perhaps, the inclusion of education and a measure for a professional or other

One additional control, for religiosity, was included in the analyses, as it has been found to play a role shaping women's political participation given the social networks offered by religious organizations, the direct opportunities many of them provide for activity and the motivation for action through the values and beliefs embodied in much religious doctrine (see O'Neill 2006, 2009).

Results

Our first hypothesis suggests that levels of political participation will vary across women. It is anticipated that immigrant women, Aboriginal women and women from a minority ethnic ancestry will exhibit lower levels of polity activity that other Canadian women. As shown in Table 1, the findings support this conclusion although with some very important exceptions. The finding that immigrant women (columns 2 and 3) are less likely to participate in politics is one limited almost exclusively to those who have been in the country less than 15 years, and then only for four of the nine activities included in this analysis: voting in the last federal election, signing a petition, volunteering, and grassroots engagement. It isn't immediately clear if there is a pattern to these findings, as the activities are not, for instance, consistently resource intensive.

When we compare the political participation of women from ethnic minorities to other women (column 5), a similar pattern emerges. These women are less likely to have voted in the last federal election, to have ever been a member of a political party or interest group, or to have buycotted products for political, environmental of ethical reasons in the past 12 months. And here too, no discernible pattern emerges in these differences. But not all of the gaps are negative: these women exhibit a higher level of participation in a local or neighbourhood activity designed to bring about some kind of change than other women.

Aboriginal women, on the other hand, exhibit a pattern of political activity that provides little evidence that they are disengaged from political activity. As in previous research, the data suggest that Aboriginal women are less likely to have voted in the previous federal election. In four of the remaining eight activities captured by the survey, however, they reveal a *higher* level of activity than women of European ancestry. These include being a member of an interest group, signing a petition, participating in a demonstration, and participating in a local or grassroots activity designed to bring about change. The pattern to these findings is suggestive that while Aboriginal women are less likely to participate in Canadian electoral democracy, they are nevertheless more likely to participate in processes and institutions designed to influence and pressure governments to act.

Our second hypothesis suggested that controlling for education, income and occupational status differences would attenuate any participation gaps between these groups of women. Columns 6 through 9 report the results of the direct effects of immigration status,

occupation will adequately capture the importance of socio-economic status given the high correlation between these and income, without having to worry about the effects of high multicollinearity between the variables.

aboriginal status and ethnicity on women's participation only while controlling for education and occupation, two of the explanations offered for the lower participation levels among these groups. And the findings are instructive: in only one instance (Aboriginal women – voting federally) is the gap reduced, and then only slightly. In the vast majority of cases, the gaps actually increase in size or become statistically significant. There is, then, little support for the second hypothesis.

The next three hypotheses relate to expectations regarding the introduction of personality traits into the examination of women's political participation. Table 2 reports on the results of these tests. Hypothesis 3 anticipated that women who exhibit the trait of conscientiousness would be less likely to participate in political activities because their sense of duty would be directed towards non-political activities. The results reported in column 2 of the table offer mixed results for this hypothesis. The more willing a women is to describe herself as someone who follows the rules even when no one is looking, the more likely she is to vote, volunteer and participate in grassroots activities to bring about change, findings that are counter to expectations. When the lens shifts to boycotts and demonstrations, however, the relationships are as anticipated: conscientious women are less willing to engage in these activities.

The literature suggested that the impact of conscientiousness on political activity would be dependent on one's sense of civic duty; the stronger the importance attached to citizen responsibilities, the more likely that the trait would push individuals to engage politically. Columns 5 and 6 report the results of a test of this hypothesis. As anticipated, once the importance assigned to civic duty is controlled in the model, the impact of conscientiousness becomes negative for all five of the activities for which it is statistically significant. Moreover, the impact of the interaction between civic duty and conscientiousness – significant for 6 of the 9 activities – is positive. When civic activity is deemed important, conscientious women get involved in a number of political activities.

The fourth hypothesis posited that women who were open to experiences would be more likely to participate politically. And the results in column 3 offer some support for this expected pattern. Women who report that 'tradition' isn't particularly important to them are more likely to vote, be a member of an interest group, and to boycott and buycott products. They are no different than other women, however, in their participation patterns for party membership, signing a petition, participating in a demonstration, volunteering and grassroots involvement.

One explanation offered for how openness to experience links to participation focussed on its connection to higher levels of political information; another suggested that it was linked to internal political efficacy, that is, a belief in one's ability to understand the political system. These were tested and the results offered in column 7 of Table 2. As shown, the coefficients for openness to experience for interest group membership, boycotting and buycotting are reduced once controls for political information and internal efficacy are introduced into the model. As anticipated, this element of one's personality establishes an increased opportunity for political learning and the development of self-confidence that then encourage political action.

Hypothesis 5 suggested that extroverted women would be more likely to participate in political activities that involved a social dimension than introverted women. As shown in column 4 of

table 2, however, the impact of this trait on political activity is strong on all of the activities in the survey. The measure of extroversion employed here – feeling comfortable speaking in front of a group – appears to have tapped a particularly important dimension of women's personality that is strongly linked to their willingness to engage politically. For every activity included here, the less shy and introverted a woman is, the more likely she is to engage by a significant margin.

The next three hypotheses that are tested relate to women's roles as mothers (Table 3). The first, hypothesis 6, suggests that women with children in the home are less likely to engage in politics given the time demands and social isolation that accompany caring for children. When tested, however, the findings do not support such a conclusion. Although women with pre-school children in the home (column 2) are less likely to be a member of an interest group, less likely to have taken part in a demonstration in the past five years and less likely to volunteer, they are more likely to have participated in a grassroots activity to bring about change in the neighbourhood or local school – a likely time-consuming political activity – and as likely to vote, have joined a party, signed a petition and boycotted/buycotted products. Women with older children in the home are only distinguishable from women without children in the home by their increased levels of volunteering, grassroots involvement and petition signing. The conclusion must be that motherhood does not significantly inhibit women's ability to engage in most political activities, even the most time demanding.

The next two hypotheses reflect arguments suggesting that the gaps are due to gender role socialization and/or differences in the occupational and education makeup of mothers and women without children. When controls for education, occupation and traditional gender role beliefs are introduced into the model, however, the coefficients remain relatively unchanged. Their ability to 'explain' participation gaps between mothers with children in the home and others is debatable.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper adopted the goal of moving away from the gender gap in examinations of political participation as a strategy for advancing our understanding of women's participatory calculus. Additionally it expanded the range of political activities and set of potential determinants in an effort to cast of a wider and theoretically more successful explanatory net. Three specific determinants were advanced for their likely importance: immigration, ethnicity and aboriginal status; personality traits; and parental status. And in large measure the findings bear out their importance for research on women's participation, although expectations are not always born out.

Table 4 provides the results for the full models for all political activities. These findings reinforce the importance of the three sets of determinants for explaining variation in women's political participation. Second, they reveal that resource (e.g. education and occupation) differences across women do little to mitigate the range of participation differences that exist across the women that are the focus of this examination. Third, differences in political engagement levels (e.g. efficacy and knowledge), while strong in their causal links with participation, are similarly relatively weak in explaining gaps. Third, the same is true of the importance of gender role beliefs; these are strong in exerting a negative impact on participation,

yet are of little value in explaining a range of gaps. A comprehensive set determinants must be analyzed to shed light on women's political activity.

As anticipated, women who have recently immigrated to Canada are less politically integrated across a range of activities than other women. Importantly, resource deficiency explanations – at least as captured by the measures employed herein – do not provide much help in understanding these gaps. Cultural and socialization differences, as well as social capital explanations, were not tested as possible causal connections due to survey questionnaire limitations; as a result, they remain important possibilities for shedding additional light on these findings in future research. Similarly, women who are part of a minority ethnic group – often referred to as members of a visible minority – as less likely to be politically integrated across a range of activities, with one expectation, and controls for educational and occupational do not attenuate their size. As shown elsewhere, the intersection of ethnic and immigrant status sets up a particularly large hurdle for many women to overcome (O'Neill, Gidengil and Young 2012).

The examination of Aboriginal women's political activity, in and of itself, suggests the importance of looking beyond electoral participation to capture the complete picture of women's political participation. Although less likely to turnout for Canadian elections than other women, Aboriginal women are actually more engaged in a number of alternative political activities than other Canadian women. The pattern suggests that this is likely linked to the politics of resistance, particularly in light of their much greater likelihood of having participated in a demonstration in the past five years. A more definitive statement on this will have to await further research, however, with survey questions designed specifically to address this possibility.

An examination of personality as a potential determinant of behaviour, the first such examination addressed exclusively to women's participation underscores the importance of further research along these lines. Extroversion, conscientiousness and to a lesser extent, openness to experience, correlate strongly with a range of political activities. And the importance of these results for helping to understand the paradox of the gender gap in participation must be underlined. When combined with a sense of civic duty, a conscientious personality will push women towards political activity. Given that close to half of the women in the sample (48.6 percent) display both a sense of civic duty (at least towards voter turnout) and the highest score for conscientiousness, the disconnect between women's socio-economic resources and participation patterns might be explained by a more detailed examination of this personality trait. Similarly, extroversion was a consistent spur for engaging across all the political activities that were included in the analysis and yet less than a third of women describe themselves strongly in these terms.

And finally, parental status offers some additional insight into women's participatory decisions. Not only does its effect vary according to the ages of children in the home but also its direction varies according to the type of activity undertaken. For some activities being a mother decreases the likelihood of participation (e.g. demonstrations); for others, it provides a participatory boost (e.g. grassroots activities). Combined, these findings for the three sets of variables underscore the complexity of understanding women's political participation.

In short, Canadian women engage in a wide range of political activities. And a wide array of factors, often dependent on situation and context, helps us to understand – although not fully

explain – why some women do and other do not participate in politics. Moving away from the gender gap framework in analyses such as these underscores this complexity and variation and helps to avoid focussing too closely on how the "average" Canadian woman engages in politics.

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Table 1: Direct Effects of Immigrant Status, Aboriginal Status and Ethnicity on Women's Political Participation

	Model 1				Model 2 – With controls for education and occupation			
	Recent Immigrant	Established Immigrant	Aboriginal	Minority Ethnic Ancestry	New Immigrant	Established Immigrant	Aboriginal	Minority Ethnic Ancestry
Voted Federally (N=2326)	-1.60*** (0.24)	-0.32 (0.20)	-0.74*** (0.20)	-0.74*** (0.21)	-1.88*** (0.26)	-0.51* (0.20)	-0.63** (0.21)	-0.76*** (0.21)
Party Member N=2407)	0.03 (0.38)	0.00 (0.19)	-0.54 (0.33)	-0.86* (0.34)				-0.91** (0.35)
Interest Group Member (N=2403)	-0.71 (0.50)	0.28 (0.20)	0.66** (0.23)	-1.14** (0.39)	-0.99* (0.51)		0.91*** (0.25)	-1.31*** (0.40)
Boycott (N=2391)	0.01 (0.24)	0.16 (0.16)	0.25 (0.20)	-0.26 (0.21)			0.38† (0.20)	
Buycott (N=2387)	-0.05 (0.21)	-0.12 (0.15)	0.20 (0.18)	-0.46** (0.19)		-0.30† (0.15)	0.32†*** (0.19)	-0.48** (0.19)
Petition (N=2373)	-0.85*** (0.27)	0.29† (0.15)	0.72*** (0.18)	-0.32 (0.20)	-0.92*** (0.27)		0.81*** (0.19)	-0.34† (0.20)
Demonstration (N=2405)	-0.53 (0.38)	0.13 (0.24)	1.21*** (0.22)	0.14 (0.29)			1.35*** (0.22)	
Volunteer (N=2405)	-0.48* (0.21)	0.03 (0.14)	-0.26 (0.18)	0.28 (0.18)	-0.68** (0.22)			
Grassroots (N=2402)	-0.87*** (0.21)	-0.17 (0.15)	0.43* (0.19)	0.51** (0.18)	-0.96*** (0.22)	-0.31* (0.15)	0.51** (0.19)	0.51** (0.18)

Source: 2007 WPPS and 2010 QWPPS. Each row represents two separate models, with the first entry in each row the dependent variable. The first model (1) includes a control for age; the second model (2) adds additional controls for education and occupation (only significant effects are reported for ease of comparison). Entries are binomial logistic regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). Reference categories are non-immigrant and European ancestry.
*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$, † $p<.10$.

Table 2: Direct Effects of Personality on Women's Political Participation						Model 3 – with controls for political knowledge and internal efficacy
		Model 1			Model 2 – With controls for interaction of conscientiousness and belief in civic duty	
	Conscien-tiousness	Openness to Experience	Extroversion	Conscien-tiousness	Civic Duty & Conscientiousness Interaction	Openness to Experience
Voted Federally (N=2274)	0.56*	0.36†	0.59***	-0.96***	1.21***	
	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.15)	(0.27)	(0.15)	
Party Member (N=2350)	0.08	0.00	0.93***		0.63*	
	(0.27)	(0.24)	(0.18)		(0.25)	
Interest Group Member (N=2347)	-0.44†	0.92***	1.66***	-1.01**	0.60*	0.76**
	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.36)	(0.26)	(0.24)
Boycott (N=2334)	-0.41*	0.68***	0.95***	-0.48†		0.54**
	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.14)	(0.25)		(0.19)
Buycott (N=2331)	0.16	0.66***	1.02***	-0.48†		0.51**
	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.12)	(0.25)		(0.18)
Petition (N=2317)	-0.09	0.09	0.72***			
	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.13)			
Demonstration (N=2348)	-0.77**	0.20	1.34***	-1.23***	0.48†	
	(0.28)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.38)	(0.27)	
Volunteer (N=2348)	0.57**	-0.12	0.80***		0.29*	
	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.12)		(0.13)	
Grassroots (N=2345)	0.57**	-0.21	0.80***		0.43**	
	(0.19)	(0.17)	(0.12)		(0.14)	

Source: 2007 WPPS and 2010 QWPPS. Each row represents two separate models, with the first entry in each row the dependent variable. The first model (1) includes a control for age; the second model (2) adds an additional control for the interaction between civic duty and conscientiousness; the third model (3) adds controls for the political knowledge and internal efficacy. Entries are binomial logistic regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses).
*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$, † $p<.10$.

Table 3: Direct Effects of Motherhood on Women's Political Participation

	Model 1		Model 2 – With controls for education, occupation and traditional gender role beliefs.	
	Preschool children at home	Older than preschool children at home	Preschool children at home	Older than preschool children at home
Voted Federally (N=2332)	-0.19 (0.15)	0.05 (0.14)		
Party Member (N=2412)	-0.41 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.15)	-0.49† (0.29)	
Interest Group Member (N=2408)	-0.51† (0.26)	-0.10 (0.15)	-0.66* (0.27)	
Boycott (N=2396)	-0.19 (0.16)	-0.08 (0.12)		
Buycott (N=2392)	-0.06 (0.14)	0.16 (0.10)		
Petition (N=2378)	0.20 (0.15)	0.31** (0.11)		0.30** (0.11)
Demonstration (N=2410)	-0.64* (0.25)	-0.15 (0.17)	-0.71** (0.25)	
Volunteer (N=2410)	-0.29* (0.14)	0.20* (0.10)	-0.35* (0.15)	0.19† (0.11)
Grassroots (N=2407	0.37** (0.14)	0.54*** (0.10)	0.33* (0.14)	0.53*** (0.11)

Source: 2007 WPPS and 2010 QWPPS. Each row represents two separate models, with the first entry in each row the dependent variable. The first model (1) includes a control for age; the second model adds additional controls for education, occupation and traditional gender role beliefs. Entries are binomial logistic regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). Reference category is women without children in the home.

*** $p<.001$, ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$, † $p<.10$

Table 4: Full Models of the Determinants of Women's Political Participation

	Voted Federally	Party Member	Interest Group Member	Boycott	Buycott	Petition	Demon-stration	Volunteer	Grassroots
Under 35 years	-0.50**	-0.92***	-0.76***	-0.39*	-0.07	0.33*	-0.07	-0.01	0.30*
	(0.17)	(0.24)	(0.22)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.20)	(0.13)	(0.13)
55 years and over	1.17***	0.56***	0.17	-0.06	-0.36**	0.21	-0.59**	-0.47***	-0.56***
	(0.21)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.13)	(0.13)
High school or less	-0.41**	0.11	-0.79***	-0.60***	-0.34**	-0.27*	-0.16	-0.65***	-0.38***
	(0.15)	(0.17)	(0.21)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.21)	(0.11)	(0.11)
University Graduate	0.25	0.34*	0.57***	0.33**	0.32**	0.09	-.37*	0.39**	-0.10
	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Professional occupation	-0.02	-0.27	0.07	0.10	0.17	0.17	0.24	0.11	0.56***
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.22)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Other occupation	0.03	-0.31†	-0.30†	0.19	0.04	0.12	0.15	0.07	0.21†
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.18)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.20)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Recent Immigrant	-2.03***	0.02	-0.95†	-0.01	-0.16	-0.91***	-0.69†	-0.83***	-1.05***
	(0.28)	(0.41)	(0.27)	(0.25)	(0.23)	(0.27)	(0.39)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Established Immigrant	-0.21	-0.01	0.08	0.05	-0.25	0.12	-0.04	-0.20	-0.41**
	(0.23)	(.21)	(0.23)	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.27)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Aboriginal	-0.59*	-0.57	0.96***	0.32	0.36†	0.84***	1.37***	-0.20	0.45*
	(0.23)	(0.37)	(0.27)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Minority Ethnic Group	-0.98***	-0.78*	-1.06**	-0.15	-0.40*	-0.27	0.29	0.27	0.47*
	(0.23)	(0.36)	(0.41)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.30)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Conscientiousness	0.53*	0.07	-0.50†	-0.44*	0.13	-0.13	-0.76*	0.53**	0.57**
	(0.26)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.30)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Openness to Experience	0.08	-0.32	0.60*	0.36†	0.35†	-0.03	-0.12	-0.05	-0.11
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.30)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Extraversion	0.35*	0.55**	1.06***	0.48**	0.61***	0.50***	1.01***	0.39**	0.62***
	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.25)	(0.14)	(0.13)
Preschool child at home	-0.20	-0.44	-0.60*	-0.17	-0.02	0.19	-0.70**	-0.37*	0.33*
	(0.19)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.26)	(0.16)	(0.15)
Older children at home	0.12	-0.02	-0.24	-0.09	0.18†	0.29*	-0.32†	0.25*	0.51***
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.12)	(0.11)
Internal efficacy	0.61**	1.01***	0.57**	0.27†	0.21	0.21	0.36	0.17	-0.05
	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.24)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Political Knowledge	2.23***	1.11***	0.60**	0.88***	1.17***	0.56***	0.86***	0.11	-0.07
	(0.22)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(0.17)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.25)	(0.15)	(0.15)
High Religious Attendance	0.52***	-0.04	0.13	-0.09	0.02	0.13	0.08	1.07***	0.39***
	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.17)	(0.11)	(0.10)

Table 5: Continued

	Voted Federally	Party Member	Interest Group Member	Boycott	Buycott	Petition	Demon-stration	Volunteer	Grassroots
Traditional Gender Role	-0.10	-0.40*	-0.70**	-0.58***	-0.60***	-0.48***	-0.36†	-0.46***	-0.16
Belief	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.21)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.21)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Constant	-0.37	-3.03***	-2.55***	-1.42***	-1.30***	-1.51***	-2.96***	-0.43†	-1.13***
	(0.35)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.29)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.43)	(0.26)	(0.26)
N	2234	2307	2304	2292	2288	2275	2305	2305	2302
% Correctly Predicted	84.6	85.7	86.9	74.4	65.8	69.0	90.0	66.7	65.3
Nagelkerke R^2	0.35	0.17	0.21	0.14	0.17	0.09	0.13	0.18	0.16

Source: 2007 WPPS and 2010 QWPPS. Each column offers the results for a separate model, with independent variables listed in the first column. Entries are binomial logistic regression coefficients (standard errors in parentheses). Reference categories are middle age (35 to 54 years), some college and/or university, not working, non-immigrant, European ancestry, no children in the home, low religious attendance and non-traditional gender role beliefs.

Note: ***$p<0.001$, **$p<.01$, *$p<.05$.