And I Don't Do Dishes Either!: Disengagement from Civic and Personal Duty

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Introduction

Voting in free and fair elections is the cornerstone of democratic governance. Yet, there has recently been a significant and substantial decline in voter turnout in many democracies. Most notable is the sharp decline in voting among the youngest generation of electors. While youth have displayed lower levels of voting for many years, two factors differentiate current trends from earlier periods. Voting turnout has declined sharply among this group throughout the 1990s and into the early 21st century, and levels of voter turnout are remaining much lower as the younger generation ages. If electoral turnout among today's youth remains at substantially lower levels, there is a risk of a growing disengagement from politics and public affairs, and a growing "democratic deficit".

In previous analyses, Blais and his colleagues (Blais et al., 2002; Gidengil et al., 2004a; Gidengil et al., 2004b) posed the question of whether today's youth are not participating because they are "turned off" (i.e., disenchanted with the political system) or simply "tuned out" (i.e., disinterested and disengaged). Their analyses suggested the latter, that young voters today are simply not interested in parties and elections. Furthermore, they hinted at a possible explanation, suggesting that a "diminished sense of duty to vote" appears to characterize today's youth, and this in turn may be a function of being raised during a period of "declining deference" (Gidengil et al., 2004b, pp. 112-13; on declining deference, see Nevitte, 1996). This study pursues these ideas more fully, using data from the 2004 Canadian Election Study.

This paper begins by illustrating the decline in participation in recent Canadian elections. It is shown that political participation has declined sharply since 1988, although evidence from the most recent election suggests a modest recovery. The analysis then establishes the lower levels of voting among younger electors; although estimates of the rate of turnout among youth vary, it is clear that by any measure, young people are substantially less likely to vote than their older counterparts. The analysis continues by examining six possible explanations of lower rates of voting, including factors based on family-centred socialization, a more general disengagement from civic affairs, the impact of political resources, the mobilizational effects of political parties, young people's sense of affect toward the political system and a generalized sense of hopelessness, and a declining sense of civic duty and social obligation. As the title of the paper suggests, our analysis leads us to conclude that a declining sense of civic duty may be at the heart of youth disengagement.

Inequalities in Voter Turnout

Youth, of course, are not the only group in society that has displayed historically lower levels of political engagement. The same is true in many contexts for members of visible and ethnic minorities, citizens with lower than average economic resources, linguistic minorities, aboriginal peoples, and in some contexts, women.

There has been considerable research into the factors that account for lower levels of participation of identifiable groups. Studies have highlighted factors such as the lower knowledge of the political and electoral system and hence the increased costs of voting (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980), lower levels of efficacy (Avey, 1989), fewer candidates that reflect the characteristics of such electors (Black, 2002; Franklin, 2004), and insufficient or biased processes within political parties in nominating a more inclusive slate of candidates (Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party

Financing, 1991). Thus, when considering groups that on the whole participate less in electoral politics, the root causes of lower participation rest mainly in the character of social segmentation, and in the nature of the party system. During the recent period in which voter turnout has declined in society as a whole and among youth in particular, most analysts also point to broad changes in society, including such things as greater mobility (Texiera, 1987), the impact of television on the younger generation (Putnam, 2000), or broader value change that discounts the importance of engagement in one's community (Putnam, 2000). To the extent that declining turnout is a function of such social factors, reversing the current trends may prove very difficult.

A common feature of advanced democracies is the tendency on the part of governments, political parties, and election authorities to view with alarm the decline in voter turnout. Election administration authorities have for many years been the instrument to ensure that elections are conducted in a manner that is perceived as fair, and which lends legitimacy to the outcome. More recently, however, election administration authorities have begun to take on an expanded role, and to view themselves as responsible for increasing voter turnout in elections, and particularly to do so for those groups who either historically have lower levels of turnout, or for whom turnout has declined recently.

The project of which this study is a part has two purposes. The first is to identify the groups of citizens in a number of advanced democracies, including Canada, that historically have lower rates of voting and other forms of political participation, and to measure the degree to which their participation continues to lag behind the national average. In conducting this preliminary analysis, we shall attempt to account for lower levels of political and electoral engagement among each of these groups. It is hypothesized that the factors that account for lower participation among one group, such as youth, may differ from the factors that account for lower participation among others, such as the poor or homeless. Therefore, it is important to identify the root causes of lower levels of engagement for each of the social groups under examination. The second part of the project examines the role that electoral administrative authorities (such as Elections Canada) and electoral practices (such as, for example, a Single-Member Plurality Electoral System, or the use of a Continuous Voter Register) play in ameliorating or exacerbating differences in electoral engagement among groups. The objective is to develop a better understanding of the impact of alternative electoral administrative practices on the character of political representation. This study focuses on the first of these purposes, placing a particular emphasis on the declining electoral participation of youth in Canada.

Measures and Methods

This paper relies mainly on secondary analysis of data conducted through the Canadian Election Study to examine the impact of age of voting and on a number of determinants of voting. Most of the empirical analysis is based on the 2004 Canadian Election Study, conducted by Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, Patrick Fournier and Joanna Everitt. In addition, supplementary analyses were conducted for some sections of the paper using data from previous surveys within the Canadian Election Study series, and from aggregate voter turnout reports by Elections Canada and the Federal Electoral Commission in the United States. In addition, we have also reproduced a table from a study published by Pammett and LeDuc (2003), which was

conducted with funding from Elections Canada. Neither the principal investigators, nor the funders of the previous studies, are responsible for analyses or interpretations presented in this study.

We use aggregate election reports from the federal agencies to map aggregate changes in voter turnout in Canada and the United States from the 1860s to the present. A demonstration of the effect of age on voter turnout in the contemporary Canadian context is conducted by presenting results from Pammett and Leduc (2003) and from Blais et al. (2002), using data from a survey of approximately 5500 Canadians in 2002 and from the 2000 Canadian Election Study, respectively. We also demonstrate the effect of age on expected voter turnout using data from the 2004 Canadian Election Study.

There is no standard treatment of the age variable in empirical analyses in Canadian political science. Our approach, which seeks to maximize observable cohort effects, is inductive, and drew age group demarcations in such a way as to maximize the voter turnout differences among age groups. The result was the identification of 5 age categories – 18 to 25 years, 26 to 33, 34 to 45, 46 to 65 and 66 years and older. Although the resulting age categories are quite unequal in range and in the number of cases per group, this categorization enables us to examine more closely the changes occurring during early and mid-adulthood, which are groups in which we were particularly interested.

Once the age and voter turnout relationship is established, the analysis turns to a number of factors that may be correlated with age, and that could help explain the effect of age on turnout. We label these factors family-centred socialization, political interest and attentiveness, engagement in group activities, political knowledge, party mobilization, political efficacy, satisfaction with personal and societal economic performance, satisfaction with democracy, and sense of civic duty and obligation. The specific operationalization of each of these measures is described and presented in the following analysis.

Changes in Voter Turnout: Decline or Cycle?

There is some debate as to whether recent trends in voter turnout are symptomatic of a longer-term decline, or simply part of a continued "cycle" of electoral engagement. In the American context, McDonald and Popkin (2001) suggest that – in comparing the turnout levels of the 1950s and 1960s with those of earlier decades – the so-called "golden age" of turnout is actually a statistical and historical anomaly. Comparing current levels of voter turnout to those of earlier generations may be problematic in this regard. Furthermore, if low turnout is a periodic occurrence, some argue the rate may well recover "naturally", as it had following similar downturns in the 1890s, 1920s and 1940s. (See Figure 1.) One might point to the recent rise in turnout in the US – from 49 percent in 1996 to 55 percent in 2004 – as evidence of such a recovery. If a 6 percentage point increase can occur within a span of eight years, the argument holds, American voter turnout has the potential to reach the 60 percent plateau by the end of the decade.

(Figure 1 about here)

While this argument carries some merit in relation to turnout in the United States, its applicability to Canada is less convincing. As illustrated in Figure 1, if Canada had experienced a "golden age" in voter turnout, it would have lasted over three decades, from 1957 to 1988; during this period, turnout ranged from 71 to 79 percent. Second, the most recent decline in Canadian voter turnout is distinctive in terms of its duration and

magnitude. Whereas voter participation has ebbed in the past, never before the 1988 to 2004 period had turnout declined in four consecutive elections, and in no other 16 year interval had turnout declined at a rate of roughly one percentage point per year. Moreover, while recent recoveries in the United States have elevated turnout to 1992 levels (55 percent), it is too early to determine whether the increase in Canadian turnout in 2006 is the beginning of a longer-term trend. In short, the downturn in electoral participation among Canadians from 1988 to 2004 remains distinctive in historical terms.

Furthermore, some analysts argue that non-voting is a natural element of all healthy democracies. While determining a 'safe level' of voter participation is a delicate task, they claim that contentment breeds complacency in an electorate, and that some level of apathy among voters should be both expected and welcomed in this regard (Almond and Verba, 1963; Mueller, 1999). Low voter turnout, for some analysts, is the sign of a satisfied public. For the majority of non-voters, it is argued, politics and government are tiresome, and better left to professionals (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002).

Youth Non-voting

Whereas there may be some debate, as the foregoing suggests, about the significance and meaning of a generalized decline in political engagement, there is little disagreement that lower levels of political engagement among a segment of the population will have a distorting effect on the representational process, and will produce less effective representation for the group of disengaged citizens. Perhaps what is most striking about the recent decline in voter turnout in Canadian federal elections is the finding that the decline owes almost exclusively to the growing disengagement of youth. The exact amount of "undervoting" of youth is not clear, as estimates differ among a number of studies. Table 1 attempts to capture these differences in estimates by comparing across four models in the four panels.

(Table 1 about here)

The first two estimates are from a comprehensive study of non-voting conducted by Pammett and LeDuc (2003) with the assistance of Elections Canada. In this study, over 5500 Canadians were interviewed about their voting patterns, and in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents who admitted to not voting. The data in Panel 1 present the raw or unadjusted data on turnout among age segments of the electorate. The authors found, for example, that whereas 94% of respondents over 67 years of age reported having voted, the proportion dropped to less than half of the youngest group of electors, aged 18 to 20 years. Furthermore, the data suggest a fairly steep increase in voter turnout as electors progress through their twenties and thirties, with a more gradual increase from middle age (38-47 years) until post-retirement age.

However, as with virtually all reports of voter turnout in survey data, the sample from the Pammett and LeDuc survey significantly over-report voting turnout. Whereas slightly more than 60 percent of voters turned out at the election of 2000 (the election under examination in this study), fully 80 percent of respondents reported having voted. Thus, Pammett and LeDuc conclude that the voter turnout estimates for each of the age groups overestimates the likelihood of voting. Consequently, they developed a weighting factor to maintain the size of the respondents who reported not voting, but discount (i.e., negatively weight) the scores of those who reported having voted, while forcing the data as a whole to reflect the aggregate turnout percentage (i.e., 61.3 percent turnout). This

weighting procedure produced the estimates of voter turnout among the age groups as reported in Panel 2. This method produces the result that suggests barely more than one in five (22.4%) of eligible voters in Canada between the ages of 18 and 20 years actually turnout out to vote in 2000. Even among the group aged 25 to 29 years, a time at which historically many youth are purchasing homes and starting families, fewer than two in five eligible voters turnout out at the polls. Among voters 58 years and above, the average vote turnout rates was 80 percent or higher. Overall, the age-related gap in voter turnout was fully 60.9 percentage points, a stark and dramatic effect of age on turnout.

In the analysis of non-voting by the 2000 Canadian Election Study team, data on voter turnout in 2000 are presented as variations on the proportion of pre-baby boomers who did not vote in 1988 (Blais et al., 2002, p.48). For example, Blais et al. note that the proportion of non-voters among pre-baby boomers in 2000 was only 2 percentage points higher than the voter turnout among that group of voters in 1988. Thus, in short, there was no appreciable decline in voter turnout among this group. Even among the baby boom generation, there was only a 5 percentage point increase in non-voting in 2000 compared to the reference point of pre-baby boomers in 1988. Among Generation X respondents, the non-voters were 15 percentage points higher than the reference group, and among the post-generation X group (those aged 18 to 30 in 2000), non-voting is fully 32 percentage points higher than the reference group. A difference of 32 percentage points between these groups is indicative of an age effect similar in magnitude to that estimated in the raw data by Pammett and LeDuc.

Data from the 2004 Canadian Election Study reveal similar trends. In Panel 4 of Table 1, the results are presented in terms of an elector's likelihood to vote in the election. Asked about their intention during the campaign, approximately two-thirds of electors (67.7%) reported that they were certain to vote, 22.2 percent indicated they were likely to vote, and 10.1 percent indicated they were unlikely to vote. The differences across the age categories are not inconsistent with the finding of both Pammett and LeDuc and of Blais et al. Using this estimate of voting, approximately two in five respondents (41.7%) aged 18 through 25 indicated they were certain to vote compared to four in five respondents (80.3%) 66 years and older. A gamma score of -.33 indicates, as expected, a very strong negative impact of age on expected voting turnout.

Self-reported reasons for non-voting

The reasons younger electors self-identify as the sources of non-voting provide an introduction to the root causes of low turnout. The results are presented in Table 2, although we would caution at the outset that the data are not directly comparable. Panel A is based on analysis presented by Pammett and LeDuc (2003), in which people were interviewed in 2002 about their voting behaviour in the 2000 federal election. Pammett and LeDuc used a large sample, and were asking respondents to report on behaviour that had already occurred, although in this instance it had occurred two years previously. The data presented in Panel B of Table 2, in contrast, are based on responses from the 2004 campaign period component of the Canadian Election Study. Therefore, respondents are reporting on reasons for why they expect that they will not vote on Election Day. As one obvious difference, it is much less likely that a person would cite a personal reason for not voting such as they were ill or busy that day when it is a future oriented activity than when it has already occurred.

(Table 2 about here)

The data on reported reasons for not voting are quite inconsistent across the two studies. For example, the Pammett and LeDuc study demonstrates a weak and non-linear relationship between age and each of the three major categories – lack of interest, negativity toward the candidates, parties or issues, and personal and/or administrative reasons. In general, younger respondents were somewhat more likely to indicate that they didn't vote due to a lack of interest, although the 55 to 64 year age group was more similar to the younger than the older groups. With respect to being "turned off" by negativity, again the data are non-linear, and the younger and older groups are quite similar in likelihood of citing this reason. In contrast, data from the 2004 Canadian Election Study show a much greater likelihood for younger respondents to cite lack of interest (tuned out) and older respondents being more likely to cite a negativity response (turned off). Overall, these inconsistencies make any conclusions based on these data tentative. Some of the data are suggestive that lack of interest is an important factor accounting for lower turnout among youth. Further corroboration is required before this explanation can be accepted.

Family-centred socialization

One of the prime mechanisms for teaching future generations about the political world and about their role in it is through the family-centred socialization process. Furthermore, much has been written lately about changes to the family structure, with much larger numbers of children being reared in one-parent and blended family environments. Hence, the family as a social unit appears to have undergone substantial change over the past several generations. Do changes in family structure produce changes in social processes, such as politically-relevant family-centred socialization? Data from the Canadian Election Study do not allow us to test this empirically. However, an indirect estimate is made possible by focusing on the degree to which people in different age groups report engaging in political discussions in the home. Although this is an incomplete measure of family-centred socialization for the development of political values and beliefs, it is suggestive of whether this line of enquiry should be pursued more fully.

(Table 3 about here)

The data provide some limited support for the hypothesis that changes in family-centred socialization are leading to the substantial changes in voter turnout. For example, there is a very weak and non-linear trend in the effect of age on respondents reporting they "never" engaged in political discussions in the home. Among the youngest age group, 15.2 percent reported never having done so, compared to 12.8 percent in the oldest age group. At the other end of the spectrum, the older groups were more likely to report that they sometimes or often engaged in political discussions in the home. For example, approximately 64% of those 66 years and older, and a similar percentage (65.3%) of those aged 46 to 65, reported engaging in political discussions sometimes or often in the home. In contrast, 54 percent of those aged 18 to 25, and 57 percent of those aged 26 to 33, reported the same behaviour. Thus, overall, the data suggest that younger people, by a factor of about seven to 10 percentage points, are less likely to engage in political discussions in the home. However, when one recalls the difference in electoral turnout by most estimates was 30 percent to 60 percent higher for the oldest group, it would appear that family-centred socialization explains only a small portion of the overall variation.

For the full story on the factors leading to lower participation among youth, it is necessary to look elsewhere.

Political Interest and Attentiveness

Political interest and political attentiveness have long been strong determinants of voter turnout in Canada (Clarke et al., 1979; Johnston et al., 1992; Blais et al., 2002). In short, people who are more interested in politics and the election, and who follow election coverage more closely in the media, are more likely to vote. Using a variety of measures and indicators, the data in Table 4 illustrate that age is a very strong predictor of political interest and attentiveness. For example, whereas 33.2 percent of the youngest age group have a high interest in the election, almost twice that proportion (62.6 percent) of the oldest age group has a similar interest. Findings are similar with regard to political interest, in general, with twice as many of the oldest group compared to the youngest group (50.9 percent versus 25.3 percent, respectively) reporting high levels of interest in politics.

(Table 4 about here)

As one would expect, those who have a higher interest in the election and in politics in general are more likely to follow it closely in the media. Again, the data support this argument by illustrating that age also is strongly related to media attentiveness. The relationship holds for attentiveness to political coverage on television, radio and in newspapers, with television demonstrating the strongest connection with age. Thus, the data suggest that the strong connection between age and voter turnout is very likely a function of the lower levels of interest and attentiveness to politics. This finding raises the question of why today's youth are so much less interested in politics and elections than their older counterparts, an issue to which we shall return.

Participation in Group Activities

Putnam (2000) has argued that social connections among members of modern societies are becoming less numerous and weaker, and that the weakening of social bonds leads to less overall engagement in community life. As a natural corollary, less engagement in community life generally will be reflected is less engagement in electoral affairs in particular. It is possible that young people have been particularly susceptible to this decline in group activities, and through this, have developed lower levels of overall civic engagement. This hypothesis is tested in Table 6.

(Table 6 about here)

The data do not support the hypothesis that younger people are less involved in community affairs generally, and in social groups in particular. Instead, they reveal distinct patterns of group memberships across different types of groups. For example, some groups, like religious groups, draw disproportionately from older participants whereas other groups, like sports associations draw more participants from younger age groups. Business and professional associations draw disproportionately from people in the middle age categories. Other groups, like ethnic associations, draw fairly evenly across the age categories. The net result is that, when one examines the number of group memberships as a whole, age has only a very modest effect, with the youngest age group and the oldest age group being slightly less likely to engage in group activities. Thus, there is little evidence that group memberships can explain the variation in participation among people of different age groups.

Resources

Political illiteracy figures prominently in most models of non-voting behaviour, with political knowledge as a necessary resource for engaging in the political process (Milner, 2002). In this vein, many non-voters cite the high costs of obtaining the information necessary to form an intelligent judgment between issues, candidates or parties as a reason for staying away from the polls (see Table 2). Indeed, some remain hesitant to vote at all for fear of making a poor decision, and out of reluctance to spend the time and energy necessary to acquire enough information to become well-informed. These factors persist, despite increasing levels of formal education and rise of mass media in recent decades, including the advent of cable news television and the Internet. In short, while the contemporary electorate has high rates of education, and the quantity of political information, and most citizens' access to it, have increased substantially over time, Canadians continue to demonstrate strikingly low levels of political knowledge.

The data in Table 7 bring these factors into sharp relief, demonstrating the extent to which the political illiteracy of Canadian youth exceeds that of older generations. When asked to name a series of Canadian politicians, the average Canadian could identify three of six prominent figures.[1] This proportion decreases to a 1.7 out of 6.0 among Canadians under the age of 25. Similar trends underlie Canadians' knowledge of the major policy positions of each national party.[2] Whereas the typical Canadian correctly associated a policy with the appropriate party 2.3 times out of 6, on average, Canadian youth scored a full point lower (1.3) on this knowledge assessment. Overall, this places youth at the low end of a grim knowledge spectrum, with Canadians aged 18 to 25 roughly half as politically-literate as their parents (46 to 65) and grandparents (66 and over). As illustrated in Panel B, a solid majority of Canadian youth (54.5 percent) demonstrate a "very low" level of political knowledge, compared to a majority of people 46 and over who scored "high" to "very high" on the same measure.[3] These figures suggest that, if the general Canadian population lacks sufficient knowledge to engage effectively in the formal political process, the youngest generation is least well-equipped in this regard. In searching for possible explanations, or at least covariates of non-voting, the factor of political knowledge emerges as an important factor.

(Table 7 about here)

Mobilization

There are several sources underlying the relative lack of knowledge among Canadian youth. As discussed previously, youth exhibit low levels of political interest, and low attention to politics through the media, each of which contributes to a lack of exposure to political information. Whereas each of these factors relates to a lack of willingness among youth to take the responsibility of engagement upon themselves., it is

[1] As part of the Canadian Election Study, respondents were asked to identify the following Canadian politicians: the leaders of the three national parties, the respondent's provincial Premier, the federal Minister of Finance, and "the female cabinet minister who ran against Paul Martin for the leadership of the Liberal Party".

[2] Questions asked respondents to associate the following policy positions with the appropriate federal party: the abolishment of the gun registry, the removal of federal sales tax on family essentials, the commitment of $250 million to combat the spread of AIDS in developing countries, the commitment of $4 billion to reduce medical wait times, the introduction of an estates tax on properties over $1 million, and the commitment of $2 billion toward social housing.

[3] Knowledge categories in Table 7b were calculated from the overall knowledge scores (out of 12), such that scores of 0 to 2 indicated "very low" knowledge; 3 to 5, "low"; 6 to 8, "high"; 9 to 12, "very high".

also important to consider a different factor – mobilization – which shifts a responsibility away from youth, toward political parties, their candidates, leaders, and strategists.

As illustrated in Panel A of Table 8, parties and their agents make a substantial effort to engage Canadians in the electoral process. In fact, their level of contact with the electorate in 2004 was substantially higher than at any point during the last two decades. According to results from the 1984 and 1988 Canadian Election Studies, respectively, only 45.5 and 46.1 percent of Canadians reported being phoned or contacted in person by a party or candidate (not shown). This proportion held steady through the 1993 and 2000 federal elections, with 45.4 and 42.1 percent of Canadians reporting such contact.[4] As such, by approaching over two-thirds of voters (68.0 percent) either in person or by telephone, parties in 2004 had elevated their presence in the electorate to levels not seen since the 1970s.[5] Nonetheless, while the quantity of party contact increased in 2004, the *quality* of interaction between politicians and prospective voters remains very much in doubt.

(Table 8 about here)

First, much of the increase in party contact can be attributed to the increased use of telephone campaigning. While new technologies may enable parties to contact many more homes than before, the intensity of this contact with the electorate is questionable. Second, and more pertinent to the current analysis, parties are making less frequent contact with the country's youngest generation compared to other age groups. While parties or candidates in the 2004 election reached over three in four Canadians over the age of 26, only 61.9 percent of those under 25 received the same attention. The age gap widens when excluding contact by pamphlets and direct-mail; only 44.9 percent of youth were contacted in person or by phone by a political party, compared with two-thirds of those aged 26 to 45, and three-quarters of those over 46 years of age.[6] Overall, a significantly larger proportion of youth (73.1 percent) experienced little to no contact from parties or candidates compared to older Canadians (approximately 50 percent among respondents 46 years and older) (see Table 8, Panel B).

It is certainly true that disinterest, inattention and lack of knowledge have contributed to low voter turnout among youth. Yet, as suggested above, the approach of the country's leaders has also had an impact on youth disengagement. As Crenson and Ginsberg suggest in the American context, "When citizens were essential to governance, political leaders were compelled to mobilize them. It was the only way to govern." But when public distaste with government evolved into relative indifference, "it was easy to dispense with citizen voters, as well. Contemporary leaders can pursue their goals by means that do not require them to take the risks inherent in old-fashioned democratic mobilization" (Crenson & Ginsberg, 2002: 52).

Several analysts have perceived this trend, noting how a shift away from the traditional "grassroots" style of campaigning has served to depress the overall level of voter participation (see: Conway, 2001;). As former American Presidential Nominee

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[4] Unfortunately, no such question was posed of 1997 Canadian Election Study respondents.

[5] Question wording in Canadian Election Studies from the 1970s make it difficult to ascertain precise levels of contact by phone or in-person prior to 1984. Similar trends in party contact have been uncovered by American scholars using the National Election Study. See: Conway, 2001; Goldstein, 2003.

[6] No post-election question was posed regarding party contact by email. A campaign-period survey question revealed that a party or candidate had contacted only 2.6 percent of respondents during the campaign (up to that point).

Michael Dukakis laments, the recent transition away from traditional campaign activity has meant weaker partisan ties, less political education and more alienation. For most political parties, he writes, "the recipe these days goes something like this: target supporters only; never go after 'unlikelies'; devote maximum time and concentration of resources to a minimum" (Dukakis, 2001: 4-8). Indeed, it is not the case that politicians have stopped stimulating the electorate altogether – they are merely being more selective in terms of who they target. (Conway, 2001: 31-32).

In this regard, because of their lack of a voting record, or their mobility and its attendant difficulties, youths are often ignored by today's party strategists. Despite the fact that political campaigns have never been as well funded and politicians have never had as many technological tools at their disposal with which to engage the public, many of the problems associated with low turnout may be attributed to either the actions or inaction of political actors, themselves. While contacting more voters in terms of sheer numbers, the quality and inclusiveness of campaigning over the past four decades has changed. In particular, if results from the 2004 Canadian Election Study are any indication, parties appear to lack the motivation for, or means of, tapping into the youth vote.

Affection / Experience

Considering their level of disengagement, one might expect Canadian youth to exhibit above-average levels of inefficacy, cynicism, and pessimism when it comes to political affairs. According to common conceptions, those citizens that feel they can make little difference, those that feel the system is beyond their reach and beyond repair, and those that feel hopeless about their own futures and the government's ability to improve them, are least likely to venture to the polls on Election Day. While these factors may influence non-voting rates in other contexts, with other groups, our analysis suggests they play little role in explaining low youth turnout in Canada. What is more, where differences do emerge between age groups, they often run counter to expectations.

Granted, results from our analysis do provide some confirmation of conventional wisdom. As depicted in Table 9, youth are the most likely of any age group to believe that "those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people." Moreover, an above-average proportion of youth feel that they have little say in government, and that "so many people vote that my vote hardly counts for anything." This said, the correlation between 'age' and 'efficacy' is very weak, particularly in comparison to the relationships already discussed. Youth may not be the most confident group of Canadians when it comes to influencing government, but they are by no means the least efficacious, and their levels of cynicism do not exceed those of other generations.

(Table 9 about here)

The same may be said of youth attitudes toward personal finances (Table 10) and the Canadian economy (Table 11). When asked how their personal financial position had changed over the past year, Canadians under the age of 25 were most likely (35.8 percent) to report being "better off". Moreover, of those youth who reported being worse off, only 44.0 percent attributed this decline to policies of the federal government; this compared with over half of all other respondents who experienced a downturn in their personal financial situation. Similar trends emerge when examining the level of 'fiscal optimism' among Canadians of various ages, with 84.4 and 78.9 percent of youth foreseeing a brighter or similar financial future for themselves and the national economy,

respectively. These findings suggest analysts must look beyond pessimism and inefficacy for the reasons underlying low youth turnout.

(Tables 10 and 11 about here)

In fact, this search may lead us away from factors traditionally associated with "democratic satisfaction", in general. As illustrated in Table 12, citizens under the age of 33 – while voting least – tend to be most satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Canada. Of those between 18 and 25 years of age, 64.2 percent reported being "fairly" or "very" satisfied with the way democracy works; this number increases slightly to 65.6 percent among those between 26 and 33 years-old, before declining to just over half of all other, older Canadians.

(Table 12 about here)

The weak and counter-intuitive relationships between age, on the one hand, and efficacy, personal outlook, and democratic satisfaction, on the other, are due largely to high levels of displeasure expressed by people of post-retirement age. With the exception of the question suggesting that MP's are out of touch with their constituents, people of the *oldest* cohort reported having the lowest level of political efficacy; and they were among the most cynical when it came to the federal government's role in their own financial well-being. Interestingly, despite their lack of interest, attention, knowledge and inclusion by political parties, the level of ill-sentiment Canadian youth express toward the political system varies little from that of their elders.This raises a series of intriguing contrasts. While youth tend to be the least engaged in politics, members of the oldest cohort are precisely the opposite. Post-retirement Canadians are the most knowledgeable and most interested, yet the least efficacious and most cynical; and still they turn-out to vote most often. How can this be? As discussed in the following section, a large part of the explanation involves two key factors – *belief in civic duty* and *sense of civic obligation* – both of which feature prominently among the attitudes of older Canadians, while remaining decidedly absent among today's youth.

Duty & Obligation

To an overwhelming majority of Canadians, the act of voting is a civic responsibility. Indeed, that over 90 percent of Canadians view it as "every citizen's duty to vote in federal elections" suggests that the country retains a strong commitment to the franchise (Table 13a). This civic commitment is not evenly distributed among the electorate, however, as Canada's youth remain substantially less likely to feel a sense of duty when it comes to voting. As Table 13a illustrates, over one in five youth disagree with the idea that citizens are duty-bound to cast a ballot; this compares with fewer than one in ten people aged 26 to 45, and fewer than one in twenty Canadians over the age of 46. To be certain, over half of Canada's youth view voting as a civic duty, with 50.9 percent "strongly agreeing", and 28.1 percent "agreeing" somewhat. Still, the strength of this sentiment is considerably lower than that of their elders, suggesting that youth have a unique perspective on the role of citizens in the democratic process.

(Tables 13a and 13b about here)

A similar portrait emerges when examining what we term 'internal civic obligation'. When asked how they would feel if they failed to vote in a federal election, nearly one-third (32.9 percent) of all respondents replied "very guilty", with an additional 41.3 percent indicating a moderate level of guilt (Table 13b). This leaves just over one-quarter of the electorate with little sense of 'internal obligation' to vote – a far larger

number than those who felt a sense of 'external duty' to cast a ballot. In other words, while over nine in ten Canadians may feel voting is "every citizen's duty", fewer than 75 percent would feel guilty if they failed to live up to that obligation. What is more, the distinction between the country's youth and the rest of the population is clear. Over 44.6 percent of Canadians under the age of 25 would feel "no guilt at all" if they stayed home on election day, compared with just one-quarter of all baby-boomers and 16.3 percent of all post-retirees. If young Canadians feel a weaker sense of duty than do their elders, their level of civic obligation is even lower.

These findings suggest very strong, negative, linear relationships between age, and sense of duty (gamma = -.35, $p<.001$) and obligation (gamma = -.26, $p<.001$), and contribute much to our understanding of why young people turn-out less frequently than members of older generations.[7] As discussed earlier, youth do not lack much in the way of efficacy, and are actually less cynical, compared to older, more politically-engaged Canadians. While their levels of interest and knowledge are considerably lower than those of their elders, analysts have lacked a comprehensive explanation as to how and why these factors contributed *directly* to a lower rate of electoral participation. In duty and obligation, this research introduces two additional, key, antecedent variables.

According to our model, without a sufficient sense of duty or obligation, voters of any age are less likely to engage in the political process. Whether involvement concerns taking an active interest in political affairs in general, or obtaining information and tuning into media reports about the campaign, those people who feel less compelled by their own value system to participate in politics are less likely to cast a vote in an election. From the opposite perspective, those Canadians with a deeper belief in voting as a civic duty and a stronger sense of obligation to vote are more likely to derive a solidary benefit from the act of voting, itself. By avoiding a sense of guilt and fulfilling what they perceive as their democratic responsibility, these citizens are able to overcome the classic "paradox of voting", and perceive actual benefit from the voting process – regardless of its outcome.[8]

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[7] These bivariate relationships withstood a wide range of control variable tests, including those involving: number of children, marital status, gender, income, education, party identification, religious denomination, religiosity, ethnicity, community size, province, and region. With regard to the latter two variables, the relationship between age and both duty and obligation was strongest in Western and Atlantic Canada (particularly Alberta), and weakest (although still moderate and significant) in Quebec. The specifying effect in Atlantic Canada lends credence to claims that the "Maritime traditionalism" may be on the decline in generational terms. These findings also suggest that Albertan disengagement from electoral politics could worsen in the coming decades. Finally, this evidence suggest hints the generational divide is weakest in Quebec, whose youth appear to share higher levels of civic duty and obligation than other young Canadians. Moreover, the impact of age on each of the dependent variables was strongest among women, such that young women tended to be the least dutiful, obliged, and engaged when it came to federal politics. This evidence supports that of Thomas and Young (2006). Of all the control variables, gender appears to have the largest specifying effect on the original relationships. While the 'age effect' does impact men, it is substantially weaker.

[8] Stated briefly, the rational choice approach to voting assumes that voters take into account the benefits, as well as the costs, of casting a ballot. Aside from any solidary or emotional utility accrued from the act, the typical voter calculates the benefits of voting by considering the probability that that her vote will be decisive in determining the outcome of the election. In other words, her participation in the election is contingent upon the possibility that her action –or inaction – may result in the victory of one candidate or party over the other. If she is interested enough in the outcome of the election, and feels that her single

In short, by lacking a strong sense of duty and obligation, many of today's youth feel little need or desire to engage in the political process. In contrast to their elders, they perceive little intrinsic value in a trip to the polls, and pay little emotional cost by staying home on election day. Critics may attribute this failure to engage to sheer laziness or apathy, but our research suggests otherwise. At a much deeper level, the voting behaviour of Canadian youth appears grounded in a very different set of democratic values. They do not perceive voting in the same way as their elders.

The most convincing explanation of this trend parallels Inglehart's (1997) postmaterialism thesis. That is, differing levels of 'democratic security' may have contributed to a different quality of political socialization, and thus the development of different political values, among members of each generation. Rooted most firmly in the attitudes of baby-boomers and their elders, the strong sense of duty and obligation may be attributed to the sociological effects of the Second World War, as a democratic *Zeitgeist* surrounded conflict and its immediate aftermath. In the absence of any comparable threat to their democratic rights, those Canadians born after 1980 may take their democratic security for granted in the way that Generations X and Y have taken confidence in their own material well-being. Considering the fact that Canada's youth have spent their entire lives under the protection of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), many of them may treat their 'right to vote' as a secure entitlement, rather than the privelege perceived by their parents and grandparents.

Does this generational difference indicate a growing laziness among youth, or is it a function of changing norms and expectations in contemporary child-rearing practices? This is a question that requires further empirical study. Our initial speculation is that young Canadians' attitudes toward voting are not isolated to politics alone. As the title of this paper indicates, today's youth are not accustomed to "doing dishes," either. Changing family dynamics appear to have lessened the need for today's youth to contribute to the effective functioning of their homes. Whether through advances in technology or changes in parenting styles, the "duties" and "obligations" of yesterday's children have all but disappeared in many of today's households. In this sense, broad trends in socialization – both inside and outside the home – may be instilling a different set of core values in our youth, teaching them that voting – like doing the dishes – is something that simply 'gets done', without much effort or concern on their part.

Whether rooted in genuine contentment with the political system, or a deeper sense of democratic security, today's youth do not appear motivated to vote in the same way, or by the same factors, as earlier generations. The consequences of this change have serious implications for how the issue of low youth turnout should be addressed. In particular, whether the source of a decline in civic duty is due to changes in family socialization, as we speculate, or due to some other factor, what is clear is that sense of duty does not have the same effect in the younger generations today that it has had in the past. It also suggests that this is a factor that is not easily addressed by a campaign organized by an election authority to increase youth participation in elections. While a voter education campaign focused on the importance of fulfilling one's civic duties and

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vote will make a difference, she will forgo the costs of voting and cast a ballot. In rational terms, however, "the probability of influencing the result of an election is so small that it seems inconceivable that the expected utility gain of voting would be sufficient to outweigh the costs. This familiar story is known as the 'paradox of voting'" (Fisher, 2003).

responsibilities may be effective for older respondents, the effect is likely to be much less effective in encouraging voter turnout among youth. Our initial speculations on the messages that may be more effective in encouraging youth turnout involve a sense of group identity, of equating the vote with the expression of voice, and of making a difference on policy matters. These speculations will be subject to further empirical analysis in subsequent parts of this project.

Figure 1: Voter Turnout, National Elections, Canada & United States, 1867 to 2006

(Sources: All Canadian Data: Elections Canada; US Data: 1868 to 1960: Winders, 1999; 1960 to 2004: The Federal Election Commission)

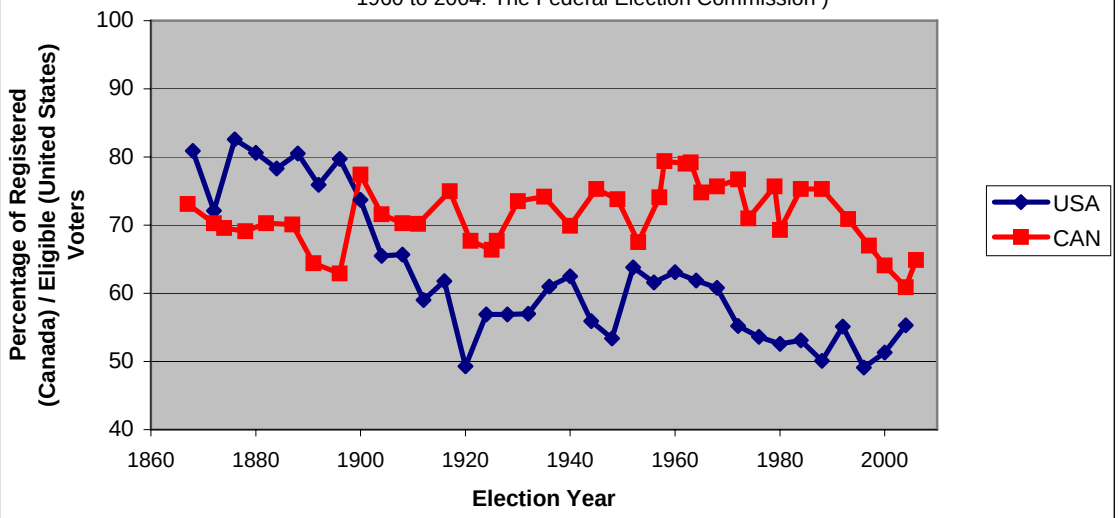

Table 1

Effect of Age on Voter Turnout in Canada: A Comparison of Four Estimates

Panel 1. Estimate 1, Vote in the 2000 Federal Election BY Age

Method, Pammett and LeDuc (2003), raw data

Voted in 2000					**Age**				
	18-20	21-24	25-29	30-37	38-47	48-57	58-67	68+	Total
Yes	47.5	55.0	65.4	78.1	85.4	90.8	92.3	94.0	80.4
No	52.5	45.0	34.6	21.9	14.6	9.2	7.7	6.0	19.6

N= 5527
Source: Pammett and LeDuc (2003), data calculated from raw data in Table 13, p. 20.

Panel 2. Estimate 2, Vote in the 2000 Federal Election BY Age

Method, Pammett and LeDuc (2003), weighted data

Voted in 2000					**Age**				
	18-20	21-24	25-29	30-37	38-47	48-57	58-67	68+	Total
Yes	22.4	27.5	38.2	54.2	66.2	76.4	80.4	83.3	61.3
No	77.6	72.5	61.8	45.8	33.8	23.6	19.6	16.7	38.7

N= 2467
Source: Pammett and LeDuc (2003), data presented in Table 14, p. 20.

Table 1 (continued)

Panel 3. Estimate 3, Non-voting in 2000 Federal Election BY Age Cohort

Method, Blais et al. (2002), Proportion Not Voting in 2000, compared with proportion of pre-baby boomers who did not vote in 1988

Did not vote in 2000	**Age Cohort**			
	Post-Generation X (18-30)	Generation X (31-40)	Baby boom (41-55)	Pre-baby boom (56+)
Did Not Vote	+32	+15	+5	+2

Source: Blais et al. (2002), Data calculated from Figure 3.3, p. 48.

Panel 4. Estimate 4, Non-voting in 2004 Federal Election BY Age

Method, Vote Intention, Campaign survey, 2004 Canadian Election Study

Likelihood of Voting	**Age**					
	18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
Certain	41.7	55.7	64.5	74.1	80.3	67.7
Likely	33.6	31.3	24.3	18.1	15.9	22.2
Unlikely	24.7	13.0	11.3	7.8	3.8	10.1
N	(381)	(483)	(1055)	(1497)	(765)	(4181)

$p<.01$; gamma = -.33
Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study

Table 2

Main Reasons for Not Voting BY Age

Panel A, 2000 Federal Election

(open-ended, multiple response, percentage of respondents)

Reason for Not Voting	**Age**						
	18-24	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**	**Total**
Lack of interest	38.4	41.4	33.4	30.2	37.4	25.4	37.2
Negativity (candidates, parties, issues)	27.3	31.7	45.7	50.3	31.5	27.6	34.4
Personal/administrative (busy, absent, registration issues)	43.0	35.2	28.1	32.0	40.3	54.5	37.3
Other	4.5	2.9	5.1	2.3	3.9	5.5	3.9
N	(347)	(331)	(171)	(109)	(58)	(43)	(1059)

Source: Pammett and LeDuc (2003), abridged version of Table 12.

Panel B. 2004 Federal Election

(Respondents who were Unlikely to Vote or Certain not to Vote)

Reason for Not Voting	**Age**					
	18-25	**26-33**	**33-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
Lack of interest/knowledge	58.4	40.7	29.3	14.7	21.4	32.9
Voting doesn't make a difference	11.2	25.4	34.5	45.0	32.1	30.7
Personal/administrative (busy, absent, registration issues)	15.6	11.9	13.0	15.6	21.4	14.6
Other	14.6	22.0	23.3	24.8	25.0	21.7
N	(89)	(59)	(116)	(109)	(28)	(401)

Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study

Table 3

Political Discussions in the Home BY Age

Frequency	**Age**					
	18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
Never	15.2	11.6	9.6	11.7	12.8	11.7
Hardly ever	30.6	31.5	27.8	23.0	23.0	25.9
Sometimes	36.0	37.6	38.7	35.8	26.2	35.0
Often	18.3	19.3	24.0	29.5	38.0	27.4
N	(389)	(492)	(1068)	(1504)	(714)	(4210)

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p< .01; gamma = ??;

Table 4

The Relationship Between Political Interest/Attentiveness and Age, 2004

Interest/Attentiveness Items		Age					
		18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
a. Interest in the election							
i.	Low	37.0	29.6	24.9	19.7	15.0	22.9
ii.	Moderate	29.8	30.6	30.4	26.3	22.4	27.5
iii.	High	33.2	39.8	44.7	54.0	62.6	49.6
N		(389)	(493)	(1072)	(1518)	(767)	(4239)
p<.01, gamma = .23							
b. Interest in the politics							
i.	Low	42.7	37.9	30.6	21.9	19.2	27.4
ii.	Moderate	32.0	30.6	34.6	33.7	29.8	32.7
iii.	High	25.3	31.4	34.8	44.4	50.9	39.9
N		(391)	(493)	(1072)	(1518)	(764)	(4238)
p<.01, gamma = .23							
c. Follow Politics on Television							
i.	Low	55.8	49.0	44.6	34.3	20.8	38.2
ii.	Moderate	27.1	30.4	31.0	33.6	34.2	32.1
iii.	High	17.1	20.6	24.4	32.1	44.9	29.8
N		(391)	(494)	(1072)	(1523)	(768)	(4248)
p<.01, gamma = .28							
d. Follow Politics on Radio							
i.	Low	69.3	69.6	59.4	57.2	55.9	60.1
ii.	Moderate	21.0	19.1	25.3	24.9	24.2	23.8
iii.	High	9.7	11.4	15.3	18.0	19.9	16.1
N		(391)	(493)	(1073)	(1515)	(765)	(4237)
p<.01, gamma = .13							
e. Follow Politics in Newspapers							
i.	Low	62.7	65.6	58.7	52.4	40.8	54.4
ii.	Moderate	24.0	19.6	20.9	23.7	24.8	22.8
iii.	High	13.3	14.8	20.4	23.9	34.4	22.9
N		(391)	(494)	(1074)	(1522)	(765)	(4246)
p<.01, gamma = .21							

Table 5

Media Attentiveness BY Age

		Age					
		18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
Television		3.3	3.7	4.0	4.8	5.7	4.5
Radio		2.3	2.4	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.0
Newspaper		2.7	2.6	3.1	3.6	4.4	3.4
Internet		1.3	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.8
Overall Media Index		2.4	2.5	2.8	3.1	3.4	2.9
	N =	391	494	1074	1525	784	4268

Source: 2004 CES; scores range from none (0) to a great deal (10).

Table 6

Participation in Group Activities BY Age

Panel A. Participate in type of group (percent indicating yes)

Group type	Age					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
Community service	28.8	32.2	35.9	41.9	39.2	38.2
Business assoc.	7.7	11.2	14.3	14.9	10.3	13.0
Professional assoc.**	8.7	22.4	27.1	26.3	12.5	22.1
Environmental group	11.5	6.6	6.5	9.0	9.7	8.5
Women's group*	10.6	5.9	7.8	9.9	15.0	10.2
Labour union**	7.7	13.8	18.1	17.3	5.6	14.1
Ethnic assoc.	7.7	2.6	2.3	4.4	4.4	3.9
Sports assoc.**	34.6	30.3	32.9	22.9	15.3	25.1
Religious assoc.**	18.3	20.4	23.1	25.2	33.6	25.7
Parent's group**	5.8	17.8	28.6	12.9	6.1	15.2

* p < .05; ** p < .01

Panel B. Number of groups in which respondent participates

Number of groups	Age					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
0	36.9	25.7	21.6	25.2	32.3	26.6
1-2	42.7	48.7	44.5	42.8	43.5	43.9
3-4	17.5	22.4	25.6	25.8	20.9	23.9
5+	2.9	3.3	8.3	6.3	3.3	5.6
N	(103)	(152)	(398)	(656)	(359)	(1668)

p<.05; gamma= -.04

Table 7

Political Knowledge Score BY Age

Panel A.

Political Knowledge	**Age Group**					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
Knowledge of Politicians (score out of 6)	1.7	2.5	2.8	3.3	3.4	3.0
Knowledge of Party Policy Positions (score out of 6)	1.3	1.8	2.1	2.6	2.6	2.3
Overall Knowledge (score out of 12)	3.0	4.4	4.9	5.9	5.9	5.2
N	(391)	(494)	(1074)	(1525)	(784)	(4268)

Totals may not sum exactly due to rounding.
Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study

Panel B. ***Age Group***

Political Knowledge	**18-25**	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
very low	54.5	37.4	29.8	17.9	15.4	26.1
low	22.5	26.1	25.7	26.4	27.2	26.0
high	16.4	21.1	27.5	30.6	34.9	28.2
very high	6.6	15.4	17.0	25.1	22.4	19.8
N	(391)	(494)	(1074)	(1525)	(784)	(4268)

Cell figures represent column percentages. Totals may not sum exactly due to rounding.
$p<.001$; gamma = .259
Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study

Table 8
Party Contact BY Age

Panel A.

Party Contact	Age Group 18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
Contacted by mail	50.4	67.1	74.3	74.1	68.1	70.3
Contacted by phone	27.6	37.2	41.4	49.7	50.1	44.4
Contacted in person	17.3	21.7	22.1	26.4	24.6	23.6
Contacted at all	61.9	75.2	81.7	83.2	80.0	79.5
N	(258)	(340)	(775)	(1113)	(577)	(3063)

Cell figures represent percentage of age group contacted.

Panel B.

Party Contact	Age Group 18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
No contact	38.1	24.8	18.3	16.8	20.0	20.5
Little contact	35.0	33.9	38.0	33.5	31.4	34.6
Some contact	20.0	31.9	29.3	32.5	34.0	30.8
Great deal of contact	6.9	9.4	13.5	17.3	14.6	14.1
N	(260)	(351)	(786)	(1133)	(589)	(3119)

Cell figures represent column percentages.
p<.001; gamma = .132
Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study, Post-Election Survey

Table 9
Political Efficacy BY Age

	Age Group 18-25	26-33	34-45	46-65	66+	Total
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on.						
Agree/strongly agree	62.4	57.8	52.1	54.6	62.4	56.4

p<.05; gamma = -.05

People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Agree/strongly agree	42.3	35.6	38.0	38.8	55.2	42.0

p<.05; gamma = -.15

So many people vote that my vote hardly counts for anything.

Agree/strongly agree	27.3	26.3	24.6	23.3	33.0	26.0

p<.01; gamma = .02

All federal parties are basically the same: there isn't really any choice

Agree/strongly agree	33.3	37.6	39.6	35.8	42.4	38.0

p<.01; gamma = -.02

Those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people.

Agree/strongly agree	82.3	77.2	76.1	75.5	78.6	76.8

p>.05; gamma = -.03

I don't think the government cares much what people like me think.

Agree/strongly agree	54.7	59.5	61.0	50.9	66.4	61.3

p<.01; gamma = -.08

Some people say that no matter who people vote for, it won't make any difference to what happens. Others say that who people vote for can make a big difference to what happens.

No difference between the parties (1 or 2 on a 5-point measure)	14.6	11.9	15.2	14.7	20.5	15.9

p>.05; gamma = -0.01

Table 10
Attitudes Towards Personal Finances BY Age

	Age Group					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
Financially, are you better off, worse off, or about the same as a year ago?						
Better off	35.8	31.6	23.8	14.6	6.6	19.4
Same	51.0	49.8	47.9	55.0	68.1	54.7

Worse off	13.1	18.6	28.2	30.4	25.3	26.0
N	(385)	(490)	(1066)	(1508)	(774)	(4226)

p < .01; gamma = .23

Have policies of the federal government made you better off, or haven't they made much difference? (Asked of those who said they're better off)

Better off	8.1	8.6	8.6	9.7	35.6	10.4
No difference	91.9	91.4	91.4	90.3	64.4	89.6
N	(135)	(151)	(245)	(216)	(45)	(792)

p < .01; gamma = -.23

Have policies of the federal government made you worse off, or haven't they made much difference? (Asked of those who said they're worse off)

Worse off	44.0	51.8	55.2	56.8	56.6	55.3
No difference	56.0	48.2	44.8	43.2	43.4	44.7
N	(50)	(85)	(286)	(438)	(173)	(1032)

p > .05; gamma = -.06

Do you think that a year from now, you will be better off financially, worse off or about the same?

Better off	44.3	42.7	31.5	23.1	9.6	27.2
Same	41.1	48.8	52.3	58.0	72.1	56.3
Worse off	14.7	8.5	16.2	18.9	18.3	16.5
N	(375)	(459)	(998)	(1400)	(677)	(3909)

p < .01; gamma = .23

Table 11
Attitudes Towards Canadian Economy BY Age

	Age Group					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
Over the past year, has Canada's economy gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?						
Better	21.2	23.0	22.3	23.1	19.8	22.1

Same	54.4	47.7	47.9	49.9	52.4	50.0
Worse	24.4	29.3	29.8	27.1	27.8	27.9
N	(373)	(461)	(1045)	(1474)	(744)	(4097)

p > .05; gamma = .01

What about the next 12 months? Will Canada's economy get better, get worse or stay about the same?

Better	28.1	23.8	23.6	26.4	30.1	26.2
Same	50.8	53.4	51.2	47.8	47.4	49.5
Worse	15.9	15.9	18.0	15.3	9.7	15.2
Depends	5.1	6.8	7.2	10.5	12.8	9.1
N	(370)	(453)	(1005)	(1416)	(688)	(3932)

p < .01; V = .07

Table 12
Satisfaction with Democracy BY Age

	Age Group					
Satisfaction Level	**18-25**	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
Not at all satisfied	9.1	8.2	13.5	15.7	15.8	13.7
Not very satisfied	26.7	26.2	30.8	30.3	33.0	30.1
Fairly satisfied	54.8	57.2	46.4	44.6	39.1	46.4
Very satisfied	9.4	8.4	9.3	9.4	12.1	9.8
N	(374)	(474)	(1044)	(1487)	(754)	(4133)

_____

$p < .01$; gamma = -.08;

Table 13a
Belief in Civic Duty BY Age

It is every citizen's duty to vote in federal elections.

	Age Group					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
strongly agree	50.9	64.5	75.3	81.2	86.4	75.9
somewhat agree	28.1	26.9	17.2	14.7	10.6	17.2
somewhat disagree	13.0	4.7	4.6	2.6	1.8	4.2
strongly disagree	8.1	3.9	2.8	1.6	1.2	2.7
N	385	490	1061	1513	767	4216

Cell figures represent column percentages.
p<.001; gamma = -.351

Table 13b
Sense of Obligation to Vote BY Age

If you didn't vote in a federal election, would you feel guilty?

	Age Group					
	18-25	**26-33**	**34-45**	**46-65**	**66+**	**Total**
very guilty	15.8	20.6	28.9	36.7	46.6	32.9
somewhat guilty	39.5	44.9	45.3	39.9	37.1	41.3
not guilty at all	44.6	34.5	25.8	23.4	16.3	25.8
N	354	472	1032	1485	754	4097

Cell figures represent column percentages.
p<.001; gamma = -.260
Source: 2004 Canadian Election Study

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