

Working Paper Series on  
Electoral Participation and Outreach Practices

# The Electoral Participation of Ethnocultural Communities

Livianna Tossutti



## **Working Paper Series on Electoral Participation and Outreach Practices**

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*The Electoral Participation of Aboriginal People*  
by Kiera L. Ladner and Michael McCrossan

*The Electoral Participation of Ethnocultural Communities*  
by Livianna Tossutti

*The Electoral Participation of Persons with Special Needs*  
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## Foreword

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We consider democracy to be the best form of government because it is the only one that recognizes and protects the intrinsic value and equality of each individual. Participating in elections is the essential starting point of any democratic system.

The *Canada Elections Act* provides the Chief Electoral Officer with the authority to implement public education and information programs to make the electoral process better known to the public, particularly to those persons and groups most likely to experience difficulties in exercising their democratic rights. These programs are collectively known as *outreach*.

Elections Canada has developed numerous outreach initiatives to assist electors in exercising their democratic rights. Four target groups – youth, Aboriginal electors, ethnocultural communities and electors with special needs – were identified on the basis of research showing that these groups tend to vote less than the mainstream Canadian population and may experience difficulties in participating in the electoral process.

Elections Canada commissioned four concept papers to refine its outreach strategy and initiatives. The papers studying the participation of youth, Aboriginal electors and electors with special needs were prepared, respectively, by Paul Howe (University of New Brunswick), Kiera L. Ladner (University of Manitoba) and Michael McCrossan (Carleton University), and Michael J. Prince (University of Victoria).

This paper by Livianna Tossutti, Associate Professor, Brock University, examines the electoral participation of ethnocultural communities in Canada. The study analyzes recent voter participation literature and focuses particularly on newcomers and ethnocultural communities. As well, it reviews “best practices” in elector outreach in various jurisdictions – in Canada and abroad – and applicable lessons learned. The study identifies areas for further research and makes recommendations for outreach to these communities.

Elections Canada is pleased to publish this study, and I wish to thank Professor Tossutti for her excellent work and her collaboration with us. The observations and conclusions are those of the author.

I trust that you will find this research study informative and that it will enrich public debate about measures to increase voter participation in federal elections.



Marc Mayrand  
Chief Electoral Officer





## Executive Summary

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Immigrants and ethnocultural minorities are likely to constitute increasingly larger segments of the electorate in the 21st century, and thus, their importance to maintaining Canadian democracy cannot be underestimated. Ethnocultural and birth-country variations in voter registration and turnout have been observed in several Western democracies. Most of these studies have shown that naturalized citizens vote at lower rates than the native-born and that eligible voters from some non-European cultural groups are less likely to vote than members of the majority cultural group. This study examines whether Canada's foreign-born and non-European voters also experienced the same participation disadvantage in the 2000 and 2004 federal elections.

These questions are salient in light of the deteriorating economic performance and labour market conditions for Canadian-born visible minorities and for recent arrivals, many of whom have emigrated from regions outside North America and Europe. Given the well-documented relationship between socio-economic achievements and electoral participation, the socio-economic context facing recent immigrants and their offspring has the potential to deter their full participation in democratic life.

This study confirmed that while immigrant status is not a barrier to electoral participation, newcomer status is associated with lower rates of turnout. New arrivals who emigrated to Canada since 1991, and who were eligible to vote, were significantly less likely to cast a ballot in 2000, regardless of their personal characteristics, resources, integration into family and religious networks, levels of social trust and attachment to Canada. Among all immigrants, factors associated with a lower turnout were a brief period of residence, youth, lower income, a high school education, single marital status, a weaker attachment to Canada and a higher level of trust in one's family members.

These findings lead to specific recommendations to reach two groups that are at risk of becoming marginalized from voting: newcomers, particularly if they are young and/or come from disadvantaged backgrounds; and members of non-European ethnocultural communities who report the lowest turnout rates, regardless of where they are born. These recommendations are based on promising initiatives in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, British Columbia and Toronto.

There was substantial variation in the extent to which these jurisdictions took steps to inform foreign-born and minority voters about elections. The approaches were generally conditioned by their citizenship models and the size of their immigrant populations. Substantial intra-national variation in outreach approaches was also noted. Canada is a world leader in voter education, although it needs to refine its current program to respond to changing demographic realities.

This study makes several recommendations to address research gaps, including revising the sampling strategy of the Canadian Election Study, adopting more qualitative and quantitative research techniques to probe the community-based and contextual factors influencing turnout in these communities and constructing a comparative international and pan-Canadian database of turnout for members of these population subgroups to facilitate program evaluation.

## Introduction

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Ethnocultural and birthplace-based variations in voter registration and turnout have been observed in several Western democracies. Most of these studies have shown that naturalized citizens vote at lower rates than the native-born and that eligible voters from some non-European cultural groups are less likely to exercise the franchise than members of the majority cultural group (U.S. Census Bureau 2004; Electoral Commission October 2005; Togeby 1999). This study<sup>1</sup> examines whether Canada's foreign-born and non-European voters experienced the same participation disadvantage in the 2000 and 2004 federal elections.

These questions are salient in light of the deteriorating economic performance and higher levels of unemployment and poverty rates reported by immigrants who have arrived since the 1970s, even though many have higher education than previous immigrant cohorts (Ornstein 2000; Ruddick 2003; Kazemipur and Halli 2003; Picot 2004; Hum and Simpson 2004). Canadian-born visible minorities, many of whom are the children of immigrants, also tend to earn less than Canadian-born whites (Li 1998; Pendakur and Pendakur 2002). Given the well-documented relationship between socio-economic achievements and voting, the socio-economic context facing recent immigrants has the potential to deter their full participation in democratic life.

The ethnocultural composition of recent arrivals has changed dramatically since immigrant selection criteria were altered in 1967. Before 1961, between 2 and 14 percent of all immigrants living in Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal were visible minorities. Between 1991 and 2001, this figure rose to between 67.8 and 82.8 percent (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2002). A majority of recent arrivals to these three largest metropolitan areas do not speak either official language at home; in comparison, fewer than 1 in 10 newcomers arriving before 1961 did not speak either official language (Grant and Sweetman 2004, 8).

After reviewing the literature on the political participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities in Canada and abroad, this study analyzes the data from Statistics Canada's 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) to explore the relationship between turnout in the 2000 federal election, immigrant status and the ethnocultural, national and religious origins of voting-age citizens. This study also draws on results from the 2004 Canadian Election Study (CES) to investigate whether selected diversity markers are associated with turnout. The study then situates Elections Canada's outreach initiatives in immigrant and ethnocultural communities in the context of similar programs mounted by 13 sub-national jurisdictions and 11 countries with large or growing minority communities. This methodology lays the foundation for an evaluation of best practices and recommendations for outreach initiatives and policy-oriented research in Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Elections Canada in preparing this study as well as the editorial advice of its staff who reviewed a previous draft. Amanda Coffie and Sanne Kaas-Mason of Brock University provided research assistance, and analysts at the Toronto Region – Statistics Canada Research Data Centre vetted the EDS output before disclosure. The analysis of turnout in the 2000 federal election is based on the EDS. Access to the survey was made possible through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Standard Research Grant awarded in 2003. The opinions expressed in this study do not represent the views of Statistics Canada.



# 1. Review of the Literature

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This review of the literature<sup>2</sup> encompasses studies of political and civic engagement in Canada's immigrant and ethnocultural minority communities as well as those in a number of international jurisdictions.

## 1.1 Canadian Research

Studies of political and civic engagement in Canada's immigrant and ethnocultural minority communities have identified key themes related to the following areas:

- **Settlement and integration patterns** – Affected by timing of arrival, interaction with people outside the ethnic community, linguistic integration, generational status and intensity of ethnic identities.
- **Individual resources** – Affected by politicization in the country of origin, ethnic media consumption and organizational involvement.
- **Individual socio-demographic attributes** – Affected by age, race, ethnicity, education and socio-economic status.
- **Community-level factors** – Affected by elite mobilization and general orientation toward the value of political participation.

Comparisons between the turnout rates of immigrants and the Canadian-born, and between citizens of non-European and European heritage, have been structured around two broad arguments. Assimilationist and integrationist theorists propose that as immigrants spend more time in a new setting, their political behaviour converges with that of the majority group.<sup>3</sup> This follows a period of adjustment, during which new arrivals are preoccupied with learning a new language, finding employment and housing, and establishing new social networks.

A second school of thought contends that community orientation toward politics, and the mobilization efforts of political actors and voluntary associations in the community account for variations in turnout, political interest or knowledge between Canadian-born and foreign-born Canadians, and among Canadian citizens from different cultural communities, regardless of how long they have lived in this country.

Most research adopts the voting rates of the Canadian-born, or Canadians of British or French heritage, as the benchmarks against which to evaluate the participation of immigrants and minorities. Some of these studies have used broad ethnocultural categories with little cultural meaning, probably because few surveys before the EDS drew representative samples of minority groups. These approaches have been criticized for portraying these minorities as abnormal in

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<sup>2</sup> Much of the literature exists in electronic form. Since the publication of this paper, some URLs may have changed.

<sup>3</sup> *Assimilation* is the process by which the characteristics of members of immigrant groups and host societies become more similar to one another (Brown and Bean 2006).

relation to majorities and the native-born and for treating heterogeneous cultural communities as homogeneous blocs (Abu-Laban 2002, 278).

Generalizing results from older studies of minority communities has been hampered by small sample sizes, limited geographical coverage and over-reports of voting behaviour (Quo 1971; Wood 1981). Nevertheless, these results show the integrationist and community-based perspectives on the electoral participation of minorities. Quo's study of the Chinese in Lethbridge, Alberta, anticipated that their participation rates would eventually match those of the Japanese once they had spent more time in the area (1971). Wood attributed the strong turnout reported by Vancouver's East Indians in the 1979 federal and provincial elections to the size of the East Indian community, the interaction of community members with non-East Indians and the mobilization efforts of political elites (1981, 198).

An analysis of national survey data found evidence of ethnocultural and birthplace-based variations in turnout; Canadian-born British and the foreign-born, non-British voted at significantly lower rates than Canadian-born French in the 1974 federal election (Black 1982). A later comparison of the turnout rates of British, North European, South European, East European and West Indian immigrants to Canadian-born British respondents in the Toronto area in 1983 found that only the West Indians had voted at significantly lower rates than the benchmark group in the previous federal and provincial elections. These differences held even after controlling for socio-economic status, age, political attitudes and organizational involvement (Black 1991). Possible explanations for the participation equality enjoyed by most immigrants were attributed to elite mobilization and an enhanced political consciousness based on perceived discrimination and ethnic sentiments (149).

In their comparison of the political involvement of immigrants and the Canadian-born, Chui, Curtis and Lambert analyzed patterns of campaign work, contacting politicians, voting, membership in political organizations, exposure to political stimuli, interest in the 1984 election and general political interest. For the voting and election-interest measures, they found no significant differences between immigrants and Canadian-born respondents; this further supports the assimilationist thesis. They also found that political involvement tended to peak in the second generation and decline in subsequent generations (1991, 375–96).

Lapp's exploration of the community mobilization thesis reflects the second perspective on the electoral participation of minorities. Using enumeration data on turnout in five ethnic communities in Montréal in the 1993 federal and 1994 provincial and municipal elections, Lapp found that voter participation was higher than that of the general population in the Greek community, lower in the Chinese and Jewish communities and not significantly different in the Portuguese and Italian communities. These variations occurred regardless of the length of time spent in Canada (1999). When accounting for the results, ethnic leaders pointed to community-level differences in orientation toward elections. Greek community leaders cited "habit, a taste for voting and duty" as the main reasons for relatively high voter participation, while Chinese leaders suggested that electoral participation "was not a significant part of the community's political culture" (1999, 35).

The role of community elites in mobilizing electoral participation during the 2004 federal election was discussed in a recent article on the publication by the Canadian Islamic Congress of the legislative voting records of members of Parliament on issues of interest to the Muslim community (Hamdani, Bhatti and Munawar 2005, 28).

The increasingly heterogeneous composition of the electorate is shifting the focus of research to questions of race and religion, although timing of arrival continues to be a key variable. An analysis of the 1997 CES found that recent immigrants and non-Christians were less likely to vote (Nevitte et al. 2000, 161). In the 2000 CES, recent arrivals also reported lower turnout rates, although these differences became insignificant once levels of political interest, information, party attachment and party contacts during the campaign were held constant (Blais et al. 2002; Gidengil et al. 2004).

Statistics Canada's analysis of the EDS concluded that immigrant turnout rates were associated with the amount of time spent in Canada. Although immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1981 and 2001 voted less frequently than the Canadian-born, the turnout gap disappeared after 20 years of residence (Statistics Canada 2003). This author's preliminary analysis of the EDS revealed that immigrant status alone was not a barrier to participating in the 2000 federal election; that visible minorities, regardless of where they were born, generally voted at lower rates than non-visible Canadians; and that differences in the turnout rates of members of visible minority communities were at least partly conditioned by their birthplace and age (Tossutti 2005).

Analyses of aggregate quantitative data and qualitative interviews have also provided interesting insights into the contextual or community-based factors associated with voting in minority communities. For example, a recent ecological analysis found that turnout in the 2004 election was lower than average in ridings with higher concentrations of non-official language groups and where Cantonese, Italian and Portuguese speakers were more prevalent (Jedwab 2005).

In 2005, Elections BC's community liaison officers submitted reports of their activities and interpretations of the impediments to voting that face minorities or new citizens. The Chinese community liaison officer identified several barriers to higher rates of voting in that community, including a communication barrier (many Chinese organizations were unaware of Elections BC, or they thought that it was a political organization and did not want to get involved); language difficulties, particularly for new citizens; and a misunderstanding about the electoral process. The officer further suggested that new citizens were not interested in voting because most were still working hard just to survive, they were not aware of their democratic rights or the electoral process, and they had a traditional perspective that voting is a political activity to be avoided (Elections BC 2005).

The Indo-Canadian community liaison officer observed that language barriers discouraged electoral participation in this community. People did not understand the process, electoral system, differences between federal and provincial elections, or the importance of voting. They also had the erroneous impression that Elections BC was a partisan office (Gill 2005).

## 1.2 International Research

International migration has led to the expansion of culturally diverse communities in “settler states” and countries that have historically regarded themselves as immigrant-sending countries. The following overview shows that community-based variations in turnout are not unique to Canada and that assimilative processes alone have not eliminated turnout differences for certain groups.

In the United States, naturalized citizens who emigrated before 1980 participated at or above the national rate in the 2000 presidential election. The lower participation rates of more recent arrivals were partly attributed to their younger age profile. Ethnic-based differences were also noted: Canadians, Cubans and Central Americans reported the highest levels of voter participation in the 60–65 percent range, compared with 39–42 percent of naturalized citizens from China and the Middle East (Clark 2003, 179–82).

Assimilationist arguments have traditionally been used to account for turnout differences based on the racial or national origins of eligible voters. Research has shown that as immigrants and ethnic minorities improve their levels of education and occupation, establish deeper community ties and develop more interest in domestic affairs, they participate in politics at the same rates as members of the majority group (Verba and Nie 1972). However, Ramakrishnan and Espenshade have argued that differences in participation rates across generational groups in different ethnocultural communities cast doubt on linear assimilationist accounts of political integration (2000).

In the United Kingdom, voting registration rates vary among members of ethnic-minority groups and the white population as well as among members of black and minority-ethnic (BME) communities (Electoral Commission October 2005; November 2005). Members of BME communities were three times as likely to be unregistered as whites. As in the U.S., there were inter-ethnic variations in registration and turnout rates. Black Africans, Chinese and members of “other”/mixed-race groups were less likely to be registered than blacks of Caribbean heritage and Asians (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis). The registration rates of the last two groups were similar to those of the white population (Electoral Commission September 2005, 13, 33). Registration probability was also found to be conditioned by nationality, length of residence and religion (33–39). In addition, higher rates of non-registration were observed in areas with large ethnic-minority communities, high population density, unemployment and income deprivation (38–39).

Richards and Marshall have attributed the relatively high incidence of non-registration and abstention in BME communities to the younger age profile of the population and to higher-than-average social and economic deprivation. They identify concerns about anonymity, fears of harassment, language barriers and alienation from the political system as additional deterrents to voter registration (2003, 4). The lower turnout rates observed in some BME communities are attributed to attitudinal factors such as alienation (the view that it makes no difference who wins), apathy, skepticism about the efficacy of voting, a sense that politics is unrepresentative of BME communities and the inconvenience of voting (4–8).



After the 2005 general election in the U.K., the electoral participation of whites was estimated at 62 percent and that of ethnic minorities at 47 percent (Electoral Commission October 2005, 28). Analyses showed that 18- to 24-year-olds and BME voters had been less likely to vote than registered voters as a whole (36–38). A post-election study involving 1,220 face-to-face interviews with people from six main cultural groups confirmed that turnout was lower among the main black groups than among groups of South Asian origin; abstention was highest among BMEs 34 years and under (38–39).<sup>4</sup>

The analysts argued that this abstention was not driven by skepticism about the value of voting and that members of ethnic minorities were more positive about the efficacy of voting than the general British population. In fact, those born outside the U.K. were likely to agree that voting made a difference. Among BME Britons, the personal satisfaction they derived from voting was a stronger motivator than a sense of duty or obligation to the community (Electoral Commission October 2005, 39).

Maxwell's analysis of black voter participation in Britain and France challenges assumptions that participation equality will be achieved if cultural minorities acquire socio-economic resources and develop dense social networks (e.g. employment status, marital status, residential status, social identification, mobilization by political actors). He has observed increased alienation among blacks in both countries, particularly among those who are more acculturated, come from higher-class backgrounds and have better education. He attributes this alienation to three factors: experiences with increased racial discrimination; the frustrated ambitions of second-generation blacks who see South Asians and Maghrebians<sup>5</sup> in Britain and France, respectively, start from more disadvantaged positions and achieve faster upward socio-economic mobility; and the fact that blacks of Caribbean heritage in Europe have fewer cultural resources with which they can organize and protect themselves from discrimination (2005).

In northern European states where foreign nationals have the right to vote in local elections, immigrant electoral participation is higher in Denmark than in Sweden, Norway or the Netherlands. Togeby found these results surprising given that Sweden has devoted the most effort to informing immigrants about elections in their own languages (1999, 656). Research in both Denmark and Sweden shows that immigrant participation is considerably lower than the national average and has been declining since the first local elections in which the immigrants were eligible to vote (655–56).

Regarding the Danish experience, Togeby attributed differences in participation among ethnic groups partly to period of residence, but assimilationist explanations did not account for most of the variation. She suggested that the relatively low turnout rates observed for all groups from Southeast and East Asia were a result of cultural values and norms that discourage participation in representative democracy (1999, 674). And she attributed the relatively high voter turnout of Turks in certain Danish cities to high immigrant density in one's neighbourhood and to membership in ethnic associations; both factors contributed to the group's collective

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<sup>4</sup> The estimates of ethnic-minority participation were Bangladeshi (76 percent); Pakistani (70 percent); Indian (67 percent); black African (61 percent) and black Caribbean (45 percent).

<sup>5</sup> Inhabitants of the Maghreb, the region of Africa north of the Sahara Desert and west of the Nile. The area is generally considered to include Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and sometimes Mauritania.

mobilization. Togeby also suggested that the proportional electoral system, the possibility of casting personal votes and special rules for seat allocation provided the political structure conducive to collective mobilization (681).

The role of immigrant collective mobilization has also been examined in the Netherlands. Amsterdam's Turkish population has reported higher rates of local electoral participation, interest in local news and politics, and trust in local, non-ethnic institutions than other ethnic groups, and these factors have been attributed to that community's larger network of interlocking ethnic associations (Fennema and Tillie, 1999). Large and dense networks of Turkish migrant organizations in six Dutch cities corresponded with higher turnout and local council representation in comparison with other minority communities with smaller networks of ethnic associations (van Heelsum, 2002).

## 2. Methodology

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The methodology used in this study is twofold. First, it uses data from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Study (EDS) to compare the turnout rates of foreign-born and Canadian-born citizens eligible to vote in the most recent federal, provincial and municipal elections. It then reviews domestic (national and sub-national) and international outreach initiatives in the areas of accessibility to the franchise, voter registration, voter education and election-day provisions.

The EDS is a post-censal, national survey of 41,666 citizens, landed immigrants and temporary residents that was conducted between April and August 2002. It used a two-phase stratified sampling design to target persons aged 15 years and older in two main groups: those reporting a Canadian, British or French ethnic origin and those belonging to non-Canadian, non-British or non-French ethnic groups. The sample distribution was established at one third for the first group and two thirds for the second, ensuring that persons with non-Canadian, non-British and non-French backgrounds would be well represented. The final weight assigned by Statistics Canada to each respondent underwent numerous adjustments to ensure a representative sample. The EDS used the bootstrap method to estimate variance (Statistics Canada 2002).

This study first compares the turnout rates of Canada's immigrant and native-born citizens and considers the potential compounding effects of age and racial background on their electoral participation in the 2000 federal election and in the last provincial and municipal elections that were held before the EDS was undertaken. The study also examines the relationship between turnout and the ethnic ancestry, nationality and religious denomination of eligible voters in 2000.

Since electoral turnout is a dichotomous dependent variable, binary logistic regression (Long 1997) is used to consider whether timing of arrival in Canada, racial origins and ethnic ancestry were significantly related to the likelihood of an immigrant casting a ballot in the 2000 federal election, net of other predisposing factors. The socio-demographic controls that were included in the model of immigrant turnout were age, gender, education, language, personal income, place of residence, marital status and number of children in the household (Black 1982, 1991; Lapp 1999; Hall, McKeown and Roberts 2001; Blais et al. 2001, 2002; Pammett and LeDuc 2003; Statistics Canada 2003; Tossutti 2003, 2005; Gidengil et al. 2004).

Because of the reciprocal relationship between interpersonal trust and civic engagement (Brehm and Rahn 1997), the model also considers how life satisfaction and generalized trust in people, family members, neighbours and people at work or school influence turnout. Given that family and religious networks play a central role in the migration process (Boyd 1989), the political socialization of younger generations (Coleman 1990) and the mobilization of turnout (Miller and Wattenberg 1984; Wuthnow 2003), this study also considers variables measuring religiosity, religious behaviour and contact with family members.

Perceived discrimination influences naturalization and voting rates (Bloemraad 2003), and visible minorities have reported that they are more likely to face discrimination than non-visible Canadians (Statistics Canada 2003); thus, the model used in this study also controls for perceptions about discrimination. Finally, the model includes a variable measuring attachment to Canada since it is plausible that a stronger attachment might increase interest in national elections. See Appendix 1 for summary information about the model, variables and reference group categories.

Since the EDS was not solely designed to measure political participation, it did not include other variables associated with turnout such as interest in politics and elections, a sense of civic duty or perceptions about and contact with parties and candidates (Pammett and LeDuc 2003). For this reason, this study also draws on the Canadian Election Study (CES) of 2004 to explore whether, all else being equal, place of birth and ethnicity influenced turnout.

The statistical controls used in the analysis of the CES include standard socio-demographic variables; variables measuring political interest, political efficacy, civic attitudes and behaviour; and evaluations of, and contact with, politicians and parties. However, since the CES sampling strategy was not designed to produce large and representative samples of ethnocultural minorities and newcomers, the results are presented as a supplement to the EDS. For detailed information about the 2004 turnout model, variables and reference group categories, see appendices 2 and 3.

As mentioned above, this study also reviews Canadian and international outreach initiatives in the areas of accessibility to the franchise, voter registration, voter education and election-day provisions. The international jurisdictions reviewed are those with relatively large or growing immigrant or minority populations: Canada, the U.S. (California, Florida and New York), Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Italy. This information is summarized in tables 8 and 9 and is based on interviews and correspondence, official documents such as electoral statutes and electoral agency and government Web sites, electronic databases, service user logs and program evaluation reports.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The URLs for these Web sites, as well as a list of interviews and personal correspondence, are provided in the Sources.

### 3. Electoral Participation

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As is common with survey data, the Ethnic Diversity Study (EDS) results over-report electoral participation. Initially, there seemed to be no significant difference in the turnout rates of immigrant and Canadian-born citizens in the most recent federal, provincial and municipal elections before the 2002 survey was undertaken (see Table 1).

However, a closer examination of the relationship between voting and the intersection of immigrant status and ethnic markers found that eligible voters from Chinese, South Asian and black backgrounds voted at lower rates in the previous federal, provincial and municipal elections compared to non-visible voters (primarily of European origin)<sup>7</sup> from the same birthplace group. Among Canadian-born voters, blacks reported the lowest rate of federal turnout. Among eligible voters born abroad, the Chinese voted at a lower rate than South Asian, black and non-visible Canadians (see Table 2).

Since the lower rates of turnout reported by visible minorities have been attributed to the youthful composition of the country's visible-minority population (Gidengil et al. 2004, 109), this study further subdivided the EDS respondents into two age groups: 20- to 29-year-olds who had been eligible to vote in 2000 and eligible voters aged 30 years and over. Still, race and birthplace-based variations in federal turnout persisted: of all the respondents, Canadian-born blacks, in addition to Chinese and non-visible immigrants under the age of 30, reported the lowest turnout rates in the 2000 federal election (see Table 3).

Canadian-born Chinese and blacks between the ages of 20 and 29 voted at rates 7 to 12 points lower than young Canadian-born individuals from primarily European backgrounds. Among younger foreign-born voters, South Asians voted at rates almost 15 points higher than non-visible respondents, who in turn voted at rates 8 points higher than the Chinese.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, young, non-visible and Chinese immigrants voted at significantly lower rates than their Canadian-born age cohorts from the same cultural communities (see Table 3).

Among Canadians aged 30 and over, Canadian-born blacks reported voting at rates 33 points lower than Canadian-born Chinese and non-visible voters. Older, foreign-born Chinese voted at rates approximately 11 to 16 points lower than black and non-visible immigrants. Immigrant status was positively and significantly associated with higher federal turnout for older black and non-visible voters. In contrast, older Chinese immigrants were significantly less likely to vote than their Canadian-born age cohorts from the same cultural group (see Table 3).

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian employment equity legislation does not designate Aboriginal people as visible minorities. Therefore, the non-visible category in tables 1 to 3 includes 810 respondents reporting Aboriginal ancestry or identity. When these respondents were excluded from the analyses in tables 1 to 3, the results were very similar. In Table 3, for example, turnout increased marginally only for older Canadian-born individuals; younger, non-visible immigrants; younger, Canadian-born Chinese; and Canadian-born blacks from both age groups. The exclusion of these respondents did not alter the results of the significance tests.

<sup>8</sup> Because of the small sample numbers of young, foreign-born black voters, Statistics Canada regards the estimate of their turnout as "poor." This has been indicated in Table 3.

The turnout differences shown in Table 3 between Canadian-born voters from primarily European and non-European backgrounds point to a weakness in the assimilationist perspective. Younger Chinese reported relatively lower rates of voting in all types of elections; this result supports arguments about the existence of community-level differences in electoral participation (Lapp 1999). Nevertheless, the similar federal turnout rates reported by older, Canadian-born Chinese and non-visible respondents suggest that early socialization in this country and the passage of time can mitigate cultural predispositions (if they exist) against voting in the Chinese community.

Ethnocultural and race markers were eliminated from the selection criteria for independent immigrants by the end of the 1960s, and since then, the Canadian electorate has become increasingly diverse.<sup>9</sup> When examining the potential links between population replacement and turnout, this study found that the ethnocultural origins of eligible voters were significantly related to turnout. Close to 30 points separated those reporting the lowest (Vietnamese) and highest (French Canadian) participation rates in the 2000 federal election (see Table 4).

Although higher levels of turnout were usually associated with a community's length of time in Canada, members of some long-established communities did not benefit from a "head start." Although Chinese and Japanese immigration to Canada occurred before World War One, turnout rates in these communities were not as high as those in European communities established during the same period. One explanation for the lower turnout rates reported by Canadians of East Asian ancestry might be discriminatory state policies and negative public reactions against these initial settlers (Li 1998). Non-historical explanations for lower turnout in East Asian communities may stem from the fact that substantial immigration from that part of the world has occurred relatively recently, language barriers or negative attitudes about politics in one's homeland (Elections BC 2005b).

The relationship between turnout and world birth region was similar to that observed in the 2004 American presidential election (U.S. Census Bureau 2004). Canadian citizens born in the U.S. and Europe were more likely to vote than citizens born in other regions of the world: Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Bermuda, the Middle East and Asia (Table 5). One hypothesis to explain this merits testing in future studies: that immigrants from parts of the world where many regimes are authoritarian, switch between democracy and dictatorship, or are engaged in violent civil conflicts could have acquired negative attitudes about partisanship.

Emigration from so-called non-traditional source countries has also contributed to the growth of Canada's non-Christian population. The relationship between turnout and religious denomination tends to correspond with the ethnocultural and birthplace patterns. Individuals from the Judeo-Christian religious traditions voted at higher rates than Canadians from religions based in South Asia, and Hindus and Sikhs voted at higher rates than non-affiliated respondents, Muslims and Buddhists (see Table 6).

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<sup>9</sup> Tables 4 to 7 exclude the 810 respondents indicating Aboriginal ancestry or identity.

The results are consistent with the literature that speaks to the positive relationship between religious affiliation and voting that has been observed in the U.S. (Miller and Wattenberg 1984; Wuthnow 2003). A full account of religious-based perspectives on the value of electoral participation is beyond the scope of this study.

After controlling for other potential socio-demographic and attitudinal factors related to voting,<sup>10</sup> it was observed that diversity markers such as language, race and ethnic background were not significantly associated with the turnout of immigrants in 2000. However, immigrants who arrived in Canada before 1991 were significantly more likely than newcomers to vote in the 2000 federal election regardless of their personal attributes, socio-economic status, cultural background,<sup>11</sup> religious attitudes and behaviour, level of interpersonal trust in different societal groups and attachment to Canada (see Table 7).

A common explanation for the lower turnout rates of newcomers who are eligible to vote is the long period of time that is required to fulfill basic survival needs when adapting to a new country. Other possible impediments to voting by new citizens were identified in the reports of Elections BC community liaison officers. Finally, the turnout differences among immigrant cohorts may be attributed to the specific and challenging socio-economic context that newcomers have faced since the 1990s. Whether these differences persist or fade over time is a question that can be answered only through the longitudinal tracking of this cohort.

Immigrants who were young, single and earning a personal income of less than \$50,000 were also less likely to vote than older, wealthier immigrants who were married or involved in common-law relationships.

When all else was equal, post-secondary education exerted no significant effect on immigrant turnout. On the other hand, individuals with a high school education were significantly less likely to vote than those with less formal education. One reason why post-secondary education may not be exerting its expected effect is that higher-turnout respondents, such as those aged 65 years and over, are also likely to report lower levels of formal education (Fournier, Butlin and Giles 1999, 132–36). Furthermore, young people with a post-secondary education have been known to vote at higher rates than those with a high school education (Gidengil et al. 2004). These realities may be combining to depress the potential for a high school education alone to improve turnout.

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<sup>10</sup> Since religious affiliation was highly inter-correlated with other independent variables, it was necessary to drop this item from the model.

<sup>11</sup> Ethnic affiliations were recoded into five broad cultural groups to achieve a more parsimonious model, albeit at the expense of losing detailed information about intra-group differences. Although the non-European coefficient is statistically insignificant, this likely reflects the heterogeneity of the category.

Attitudes also played a role in determining the likelihood of voting. There was striking and consistent evidence that respondents who placed more trust in their families were *less* likely to cast a vote; this finding supports arguments that attachments to family networks can contribute to reducing participation in broader public life (Ginsborg 1995). Respondents who professed a strong attachment to Canada were also significantly more likely to vote than those who expressed a weak attachment (see Table 7).

The analysis of turnout in the 2004 federal election focused on the impact of immigrant status and ethnocultural background,<sup>12</sup> controlling for other predisposing socio-demographic, attitudinal and behavioural factors. Neither immigrant status nor non-European cultural background was significantly associated with turnout (see Appendix 2). When all else was equal, only First Nations<sup>13</sup> were significantly less likely to vote than people belonging to the ethnic reference group comprised of Canadians, Americans, Australians and New Zealanders.

Overall, the findings from both the EDS and the Canadian Election Study (CES) show that neither immigrant status nor non-European background is associated with participation disadvantage. However, newcomers and members of certain non-European groups are at risk of becoming marginalized from exercising their right to vote.

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<sup>12</sup> Finer distinctions across heterogeneous world birth regions were not drawn because the initial sample numbers from Central and South America and the Caribbean ( $n = 29$ ), and from the Middle East, Africa and Asia ( $n = 79$ ), were small. For both world regions, adding subsequent blocs of control variables reduced the number of cases available for reliable analysis. Since this study has shown that substantial variations in turnout are reported by members of different non-Christian religious traditions, and since the CES is not designed to produce a representative sample of these groups, no religious affiliation item was included in the model.

<sup>13</sup> Caution should be exercised in interpreting these results; the final regression included just seven Aboriginal cases.



## 4. Electoral Outreach

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Given that new Canadians and members of certain non-European groups are at risk of becoming marginalized from participating in elections, it is useful to look at what outreach initiatives are being undertaken in Canada and abroad. This section considers electoral outreach from the perspectives of right to vote, voter registration and voter education.

### 4.1 Right to Vote

In Canada and abroad, eligibility to vote in national elections is usually determined by citizenship and minimum residency requirements (see tables 8 and 9). Minority and immigrant access to the national franchise is most easily acquired in New Zealand, the U.K. and, to a lesser extent, Australia, where citizenship is not a prerequisite. In New Zealand, permanent residents who have lived in the country for one year or more can vote in national elections. In Australia, individuals who were British subjects on an Australian Commonwealth electoral roll on January 25, 1984, are also eligible to vote. Citizens of the Commonwealth and the Irish Republic who reside in the U.K. can vote in parliamentary and local elections there.

As Table 9 shows, citizens in Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden are not required to meet minimum residency requirements to vote in national elections. However, to vote in sub-national elections in Canada, citizens must have lived in the jurisdiction for a minimum period of time ranging from one day to six months (see Table 8). Toronto and Montréal have no minimum residency requirements for individuals who own property or occupy a business establishment there. In order to vote in a municipal election in Vancouver, one must have lived in B.C. for at least six months, and in Vancouver for at least 30 days, before the day one registers to vote.

In Europe, the continental integration movement and the leadership of political elites in selected countries have extended local voting rights for non-nationals. The Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty) granted every citizen residing in a member state of which he or she is not a national the right to vote and stand as a candidate at municipal elections and elections to the European Parliament (Waldruch 2003).

In Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, immigrants have the right to vote in local elections, providing they have lived in the country for between three and five years (Government of Belgium March 3, 2006; Kongsted April 4, 2006; Young May 2, 2006; Pade May 5, 2006; Electoral Council 2005).<sup>14</sup> The extension of the local franchise to non-citizens in the Scandinavian countries is attributed to the leadership of their political elites rather than to pressure from immigrant groups (Togeby 1999).

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<sup>14</sup> In 1963, Ireland granted the right to vote in municipal elections to foreign residents, including nationals of non-European countries. Others followed: Sweden (1975), Denmark (1981), Norway (1982), the Netherlands (1985) and Belgium (2006). See <http://assembly.coe.int/documents/workingdocs/doc00/EDOC8916.htm>.

Of these four countries, the Netherlands has adopted the most restrictive approach to its naturalization laws and, thus, immigrant and minority access to the national franchise. To acquire Dutch nationality through naturalization, immigrants must first acquire a residence permit. Individuals who need authorization of residence of more than three months must take the civic integration examination to demonstrate their knowledge of the Dutch language and Dutch society. Dutch authorities may require that applicants for naturalization change their names if they do not have a surname or first name, if the surname is the same as the first name or if the name is difficult for Dutch people to pronounce or write in Dutch.

Public resistance to extending local voting rights to non-European Union (EU) nationals has been strongest in Italy, France and Germany. In France, these individuals do not have the right to vote locally, although foreign residents can stand for election and vote for other bodies, including school boards. In Germany, non-EU citizens can elect representatives to the foreigners advisory councils, which support local politics. Although Italy ratified the Council of Europe's 1992 Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, it opted out of the chapter that calls for the granting of electoral rights for foreigners in local authority elections (Miele May 16, 2006). Some Italian communes have established the post of the *consigliere aggiunto*, who is directly elected by immigrants to represent their interests on the local council but who does not have voting rights.

## **4.2 Voter Registration**

Compiling and maintaining voters lists varies according to the amount of government involvement and the level of authority responsible for these duties. Since no systematic comparative study has ever been undertaken of the impact of different registration methods on the electoral participation of immigrants and ethnocultural minorities, it is difficult to evaluate which method is most effective in reaching the target groups.

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden have permanent, continuously updated voters lists. The responsibility for them is vested with national authorities in Canada and Oceania. In Europe, local authorities are responsible for collecting voter information that is used to prepare the electoral rolls. Eligible voters in jurisdictions that use permanent lists must still take the initiative to inform authorities about changes to their status. (An exception is Canada, where updates are carried out regularly.)

In Canada, door-to-door enumerations were held up to and including the 1997 general election; this method of compiling voters lists was then replaced with the permanent National Register of Electors. Since the Register was first used in the 2000 federal election, citizens are responsible for ensuring that their names are on the list. While the effects of this shift on immigrant and minorities are unknown, some have argued that permanent lists contribute to participation inequality because the procedures make it more difficult for groups such as younger and disadvantaged citizens to participate (Black 2003). The continuously updated permanent list is supplemented by targeted enumerations in new housing developments and in areas where there is high voter mobility or a higher concentration of young people (Elections Canada 2006).

Seven Canadian provinces continue to sponsor enumerations. Alberta and B.C. supplement these methods with a permanent list that is updated regularly from data sources that include individual electors, federal departments and agencies, and provincial government data files (see Table 8). Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador do not conduct enumerations, and they are the only provinces that rely solely on continuously updated voters lists (Green February 15, 2006).

Vancouver and Montréal rely on the permanent voters lists of B.C. and Quebec, respectively, to maintain the currency of their voters lists. Toronto compiles its voters list based on assessment roll information provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). MPAC, whose operations support six or seven languages, mails an occupancy questionnaire to collect the names of tenants in apartment buildings with seven or more units (Andrews February 16, 2006).

By contrast, voters in the U.S. assume most of the responsibility for ensuring that they are registered to vote. Despite the introduction of Motor Voter programs in 1993, whereby those obtaining or renewing their driver's licences have their information added to state voters lists, it is estimated that only 78 percent of eligible American citizens were registered for the 2000 presidential election (Courtney 2004, 80). France, Italy and Germany do not update their electoral rolls continually, so the onus is on the voters to inform authorities about changes to their status.

### **4.3 Voter Education: Canada in an International Context**

The most extensive outreach efforts in the area of voter education were found in the so-called settlement countries (Australia, New Zealand, Canada), whose foreign-born populations range between 19 and 23 percent (Dumont and Lemaître 2005), or in countries whose citizenship policies are based on imperial and/or multicultural (the U.K.) or multicultural (Canada, Australia, Sweden) principles (Castles and Miller 1993).

The U.S. could also be characterized as active, even though its foreign-born population constitutes a relatively small proportion of the total population and its citizenship policies are primarily founded on republican principles, in which the metropolitan culture (that of the mother country) is dominant (Castles and Miller 1993). Contrast this to multicultural citizenship models, where cultural identities are plural or hyphenated.

The U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.K., Sweden and Denmark provide multilingual information in non-national languages about registration and voting (see Table 9). Most European countries do not mount special initiatives, arguably because traditional immigrant-sending countries resist multicultural models of citizenship and immigrant integration.

The U.S. is the only jurisdiction that has adopted federal laws to guarantee that registration and election materials, including ballots, will be provided in non-national languages. Instances of state non-compliance with the *Voting Rights Act* (VRA) led to the passage of the *Help America Vote Act* in 2002, which requires states to explain how they will conform to federal requirements.

Section 203 and paragraph 4(f) of the 1975 amendment to the VRA apply only to those groups that have faced barriers in the political process – American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Spanish-language and Asian citizens. These sections apply to jurisdictions where the number of citizens of voting age in a single language group is higher than 10,000; or more than 5 percent of all voting citizens; or, on an Indian reservation, over 5 percent of all reservation residents; and the illiteracy rate of the group is higher than the national average (United States Department of Justice – Civil Rights Division n.d.; Brehm February 7, 2006).

Canada's approach to encouraging the electoral participation of immigrants and cultural minorities has relied on communications and bridge-building strategies rather than legislation. During the 2006 federal election, Elections Canada's communications initiatives consisted of a *Voter Information Guide* published in 26 languages,<sup>15</sup> an advertising campaign placed in 95 minority-language newspapers and 33 ethnocultural newspapers, a television campaign with voice-overs of regular ads in 12 additional languages, radio ads broadcast in 23 languages and print ads published in 25 languages (Elections Canada 2006, 75–82).

Canada was one of just two countries that used multilingual call centres to reach voters with a limited working knowledge of the official languages (English and French). Voters calling Elections Canada's Voice Response System (VRS) could request to speak to a call centre agent for information about the election – in one of 100 languages. Use of the VRS increased overall by 39 percent between the 2000 and 2004 elections (Elections Canada 2004). In the 2006 election, VRS telephone inquiries declined 7.4 percent; this reflected an increase in the use of self-service features on the Elections Canada Web site (Elections Canada 2006, 76).

Canada, the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, B.C. and the City of Vancouver are among the few jurisdictions that have hired ethnocultural community liaison officers (see tables 8 and 9). Up to the 2006 election, Canada's ethnocultural community relations officers were hired in districts where at least 10 percent of the population had its origins in China, India and the Philippines. In electoral districts that did not meet these criteria, returning officers (ROs) were expected to propose what should be done to reach voters in the target communities.

Since that election, Elections Canada has modified its criteria for hiring ethnocultural community relations officers by increasing accessibility in any electoral district with more than 20 percent of the population reporting ancestry from non-charter groups – that is, backgrounds other than British, French and Aboriginal.

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<sup>15</sup> The guide was made available on its Web site and mailed to ethnocultural associations. During the 2004 election, ethnocultural associations ordered 76,000 copies, and community relations officers and ROs requested more than 100,000 additional copies. In 2005, community relations officers received the guide on CD for quick reproduction and distribution.

For the 2004 federal election, 59 ethnocultural community relations officers were hired in 48 electoral districts; in 2006, 64 were hired in 53 districts (Elections Canada 2004; 2006, 82). Their specific duties involved establishing contacts in the community, placing posters in key locations, attending drop-ins or meetings in places of worship, giving presentations, distributing election materials to second-language institutions and monitoring the ethnic media. ROs have indicated that the Community Relations Officer Program has been effective from an outreach perspective. Canada, the U.K. and Sweden are also the only jurisdictions to support project-based initiatives through strategic partnerships with community organizations.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) translates its election products into 15 to 23 languages, depending on the topic (Williamson February 12, 2006). The majority of these materials appear on its Web site. The AEC has developed videos for community presentations in Arabic and Vietnamese, and it is currently developing versions in Mandarin and Cantonese. Williamson says the AEC is also trying to encourage community groups to visit the electoral education centres located across the country.

Like Canada, the AEC has established a multilingual call centre and telephone interpreter service for voters with an insufficient command of English. Not surprisingly, usage peaks at election time. During October 2004, when the last federal election was in progress, 1,105 calls were directed to interpreters in at least 16 languages. Interpretation services in Cantonese, Mandarin and Vietnamese were requested most frequently. Between July 2004 and the end of June 2005, 4,108 out of 8,984 requests for information to the call centre were directed to multilingual interpreters (Australian Electoral Commission, 2006).

For the 2005 election in New Zealand, the Chief Electoral Office produced a brochure in 13 languages outlining basic information about how to vote. This brochure, available for download from the Office's Web site, includes a translated insert about the operation of the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system (Stoks February 9, 2006). New Zealand also distributed brochures to community groups, libraries, migrant services, relevant government agencies and citizens' advice bureaus. Its five regional liaison officers distributed this information at a community level, paying special attention to people of Maori descent, who comprise the largest non-European ethnic group in the country.

In the U.K., many of the Electoral Commission's leaflets and forms are available in other languages. The Electoral Commission runs advertising campaigns to raise awareness in people with low levels of literacy and for whom English is a second language. Its Outreach team also tries to reach young members of the BME population. In the run-up to the May 2006 local elections in the West Midlands, a three-week campaign encouraged young ethnic minorities to see the importance of registration. Radio ads and posters were crafted to emphasize the right to vote as a symbol of belonging and empowerment, and a mobile campaign vehicle playing music and media clips accompanied street teams promoting registration (Howse February 6, 2006; February 21, 2006).

Three years ago, the U.K. established a New Initiatives Fund to support research and outreach projects proposed by voluntary and community organizations. Examples of funded projects are the New Citizens Voice project and an initiative to encourage the participation of South Asian women in decision-making processes.

Sweden, whose foreign-born population stands at approximately 12 percent, has devoted more effort to outreach in immigrant and minority communities than all other European countries save the U.K. The Election Authority sponsors an English-language Web site, publishes printed election materials in 14 languages and distributes Web-based information in 17 languages in addition to Swedish. The Election Authority also places advertisements in the ethnic media. It developed an educational film for the September 2006 election, had it translated into several languages and made it available for download from its Web site. The Democracy Project gives grants to educational projects aimed at groups who play less of a role in the development of Swedish society (Lemon April 2006).

In Denmark, the Ministry of the Interior and Health, in co-operation with the Advisory Council of Ethnic Minorities, publishes a Danish-language pamphlet, *Your vote makes a difference*. It is the only source of information for ethnic minorities on voting eligibility, the voting process and the importance of voting, and it includes brief summaries in Arabic, Bosnian, Serbo-Croatian, English, Farsi, Somali, Turkish and Urdu. It is distributed at election time to language centres offering introductory programs for refugees and to municipal ethnic advisory councils, offices and libraries.

In October 2006, Belgium's non-EU citizens voted for the first time in local elections. The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities prepared some model letters in Dutch for cities and municipalities wishing to inform new voters (Verbeek March 1, 2006). The Flemish Minorities Centre (FMC) has developed a specialized, Web-based brochure for social workers, instructors and others who work with non-nationals. The FMC will also rely on the Federation of Ethnic Minorities, adult educational organizations, social workers and institutions that teach Dutch to newcomers to distribute leaflets providing information about registration, voting eligibility and the competences of the local governments. The leaflet is published only in Dutch for financial reasons and because it was felt that it would send the "wrong" signal if it were published in other languages (Santermans March 30, 2006).

Neither Germany nor the Netherlands carries out special voter education initiatives in non-national languages (Young May 2, 2006). In Italy, the Territorial Councils for Immigration have the potential to provide more government involvement in the civic integration of immigrants. These bodies were established in 1999 in all prefectures to analyze and meet the economic and social needs of foreign citizens. However, because of lack of funds and political will, few of them are involved in projects aimed at encouraging the political integration of foreigners (Miele May 16, 2006).

#### 4.4 Voter Education: A Pan-Canadian Survey (Sub-National Elections)

How the Canadian provinces and municipalities inform immigrants and minorities about registration and elections varies considerably. The most culturally heterogeneous jurisdictions – B.C., Toronto, Ontario, Vancouver and Quebec – have produced multilingual information in print, electronic and/or Web media, or special materials designed for new Canadians (see Table 8). Bilingual information has been provided in New Brunswick, Quebec, Manitoba and Montréal. The remaining jurisdictions have developed few or very limited initiatives to reach these groups.

Elections BC has translated registration and voting information into 16 languages. These guides were distributed by community liaison officers and district electoral officers during the last provincial election, and they were available at every voting location. Multilingual information on voting and registration is also available on the Elections BC Web site between elections. A between-event brochure translated into Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi was mailed in 2006 to ethnic associations and citizenship offices (Porayko February 6, 2006).

Elections BC is the only sub-national jurisdiction in Canada that hires ethnocultural community liaison officers. After the 2005 provincial election, the Chinese and Indo-Canadian community liaison officers submitted final reports of their activities, advice on the most effective means of establishing contacts in these communities, qualitative observations about barriers to voting and policy advice for future initiatives (Gill 2005; Elections BC 2005b).

Elections Ontario translates election materials into the 15 most common languages identified in census information on mother tongue and home language. Once the writ is issued, multilingual brochures are posted on its Web site and distributed to retail outlets and interested associations and organizations. Elections Ontario also mounts an advertising campaign in the ethnic media and works with groups providing services to ethnic and new Canadians to make voting accessible. Between elections, it does not provide downloadable multilingual documents on its Web site.

Toronto boasts one of the world's most culturally diverse populations, so it is not surprising that its multilingual outreach efforts are more extensive than those of most provinces. During the 2003 municipal election, it published print and Web-based versions of an election information householder in English and 14 languages spoken at home by at least 3 percent of a ward's population. For the 2006 election, the criterion for publishing the tabloid in home languages other than English was revised to 2 percent of a ward's population (Andrews February 16, 2006). A 2005 bylaw states that notices, forms and other information provided under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* may be prepared in 17 languages in addition to English for the 2006 municipal ballot (City of Toronto 2005).

Toronto, like Canada, B.C. and Vancouver, organizes multilingual telephone support to handle requests for information during an election. Andrews says that during the 2003 election, 190 telephone requests for information were made in 22 languages. Toronto also advertises in the ethnic media and provides electronic presentations to community groups for translation and dissemination. To reach new citizens, it mails information about municipal voting qualifications to citizenship courts (Andrews February 16, 2006).

As with its counterparts at the federal level and in Toronto, the City of Vancouver sets up multilingual telephone lines to support non-English requests for election information. For the 2005 civic vote, Vancouver's hotline supported four languages in addition to English. Although the city's English-language householder directs voters in only five languages to ask for help in translating the pamphlet, B.C.'s Ministry of Community Services Web site features a guide about local government and elections in French, Chinese and Punjabi as well as English. For the 2005 civic election, an outreach program was mounted to encourage voter participation in neighbourhoods and citizens' groups that vote in low numbers. Activities concentrated on the Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese communities, along with First Nations citizens (Constantine 2005).

The Directeur général des élections du Québec, like its counterparts in Ontario and Toronto, enlists the aid of educational and community organizations in reaching voters in its target communities. Its *Voting in Quebec* kit is used by instructors conducting information sessions for new immigrants. These sessions provide information about Quebec's political and electoral system, help these new arrivals exercise their right to vote and motivate them to exercise their citizenship duties (Directeur général des élections du Québec 2005).

Elections Alberta's efforts to reach voters in immigrant and ethnocultural communities consist of translating a one-page information sheet about the enumeration process into the 13 most commonly used languages other than English. The agency also encourages hiring people from ethnocultural communities to conduct enumeration in areas with large concentrations of minorities (McKee-Jeske November 22, 2006).

#### **4.5 Election Day: An International and Canadian Perspective**

Most international jurisdictions outside the U.K. and settler states in the New World provide no special assistance to immigrant or ethnocultural minority voters on election day. Just two countries either legislate the provision of multilingual ballots and voting mechanisms or provide multilingual voting instructions on the ballot itself. Voters in some jurisdictions can enlist the aid of a translator (a friend or poll official) to help them read the ballot, but no jurisdiction guarantees that interpreters will be available at poll locations. Some jurisdictions try to anticipate the linguistic needs of voters who may not be familiar with the national language by encouraging the hiring of multilingual poll officials (see tables 8 and 9).



The American states are the only jurisdictions where there are legal requirements to provide election information, including ballots, in languages other than English in political subdivisions where members of a single language minority constitute more than 5 percent of the citizens of voting age (United States Department of Justice – Civil Rights Division n.d.). Ballots in Sweden include how-to-vote instructions in several languages (Lemon April 2006). Ontario, B.C., Alberta, Toronto, France and Denmark provide multilingual voting instructions in poster or brochure format at the polls. In Ontario, posters using pictographs and describing in plain language how to vote are also placed in polling stations to help voters for whom English is a second language (Elections Ontario September 2003).

No jurisdiction guarantees that interpreters for specific languages will be available at polling stations. However, voters in Canadian national and sub-national elections, in the American jurisdictions and in Australia and New Zealand are permitted to nominate someone to assist them if they cannot read the ballot. It is estimated that it would cost \$15 million to place interpreters in all voting places in Toronto. Because of the cost, an election tabloid is distributed instead to every household in the city. It informs voters that they can bring a friend to the voting location to swear an oath of interpreter but that this individual cannot go behind the voting screen to help the elector vote (Andrews February 16, 2006).

Canada, Ontario, B.C., Alberta, Vancouver and Toronto encourage hiring multilingual poll officials in districts with higher concentrations of non-official language speakers. Denmark and France encourage this for non-national languages.

New Zealand's community outreach efforts in conducting elections merit special mention. One month before election day, the Chief Electoral Office delivers an EasyVote pack to all voters who were enrolled by writ day. The EasyVote pack includes the following information (Chief Electoral Office (New Zealand) 2005):

- Date of the election.
- Electorate in which the voter is enrolled.
- Advance and election-day voting locations.
- Names of candidates for the electorate vote.
- Names of candidates on the political party lists for that electorate.
- An EasyVote card that the voter will present at the polls.
- Instructions on showing the EasyVote card to poll officials on election day and instructions for voting at a polling place (in English and 14 other languages).
- Brief translations of how an elector's party vote determines the seats won and how the electorate vote can change a party's total share of seats.



## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

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This study has confirmed that while immigrant status is not a barrier to electoral participation, newcomer status is associated with lower rates of turnout. Those who emigrated to Canada since 1991, and who were eligible to vote, were significantly less likely to cast a ballot in 2000, regardless of their personal characteristics, resources, integration into family and religious networks, level of social trust and attachment to Canada. Among all immigrants, newcomer status, youth, lower income, a high school education, single marital status, weaker attachment to Canada and a higher level of trust in one's family members reduced the likelihood of voting.

Only the longitudinal tracking of this newcomer cohort can measure whether its turnout rate converges with those of previous waves of immigrants or whether the socio-economic and political context that it encountered on arrival in Canada has permanently conditioned its attitudes toward voting.

These findings lead to two recommendations for outreach efforts directed at Canada's immigrant population. First, special efforts are needed to reach newcomers, particularly those whose personal characteristics and resources are associated with participation disadvantage. These include young newcomers and newcomers from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The analysis of the Ethnic Diversity Study (EDS) showed that, all else being equal, the language, ethnic background and racial origin of immigrants were not significantly related to turnout patterns. The Canadian Election Study (CES) 2004 also showed that, all else being equal, a voter's ethno-racial background was not related to turnout. However, it should be recalled that the ethnic-background categories in both multivariate models were heterogeneous, and they cannot capture more nuanced patterns within broad cultural groupings.

Furthermore, while the multivariate analyses show that linguistic barriers or visible-minority status on their own, all else being equal, are not impediments to voting, it is equally true that all things are not equal in the real world. The demographic and economic research cited at the outset of this study found that certain visible-minority communities possess fewer educational and income resources than others, or they have a younger age profile.

Thus, the second recommendation is that Elections Canada devote outreach resources to the non-European ethno-racial groups that voted at lower rates than members of European communities. These are, in order of priority, Canadian-born blacks, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Haitians and Lebanese. The electoral participation reported by members of the Portuguese and Spanish communities is also lower than that of most European groups, so Elections Canada may want to refine its multilingual initiatives to reach these voters too.

The extent to which countries attempt to integrate their foreign-born and minority populations varies substantially, and it is generally conditioned by the size of their immigrant populations and their citizenship policies. Efforts range from minimalist approaches to the more extensive programs mounted by the U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Sweden and B.C. Outreach efforts in all jurisdictions, save the U.S., are driven by voluntary action rather than legislation and enforcement. Activist jurisdictions tend to rely on multilingual communications products in print, electronic and Web-based formats, or they use multilingual telephone services to offer assistance to voters unfamiliar with the national language.

The most proactive electoral agencies hire community liaison officers and provide support to community-based projects. While Canada is clearly a world leader in designing outreach strategies for immigrant and ethnocultural communities, the U.K., New Zealand, Australia, B.C., Toronto and Vancouver have adopted practices that merit consideration for implementation in future federal elections.

Elections Canada could adopt specific initiatives to inform new citizens about registration and elections in their mother tongue in addition to the two official languages. For example, it could establish a presence at citizenship ceremonies and English as a Second Language (or, in Quebec, French as a Second Language) institutions. It could also either mail new citizens an introductory letter in their mother tongue and both official languages that outlines the voting process and the importance of voting or mail multilingual voter information cards, as is done in New Zealand.

Because of the increased use of the Web-based Voter Information Service in the most recent election, this study recommends that Elections Canada translate the “Elector Information” section into the same 26 languages in which the *Voter Information Guide* is published.

In light of this study’s findings, Elections Canada should consider hiring community relations officers in electoral districts with high proportions of newcomers, Canadian-born blacks (particularly if they are young) and economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods that are home to relatively large non-European ethno-racial communities that report the lowest turnout rates. As mentioned earlier, Elections Canada has in fact revised its criteria for hiring ethnocultural community relations officers (see section 4.3).

In the U.K., the Electoral Commission’s Outreach team has employed innovative and aggressive strategies to encourage voter registration and turnout in BME communities. The New Initiatives Fund has also sponsored some interesting community-based projects. This study encourages Elections Canada to establish personal contacts with the Electoral Commission to learn more about the internal evaluation of that program.

Elections BC’s community liaison officers have provided informative insights into the unique barriers to voting that are experienced by members of non-European cultural communities. One report contained a very useful suggestion that addressed several policy challenges: the cost of providing translators at polls, low youth turnout and apathy, and community representation by poll officials. As a result, this study endorses the suggestion to recruit multilingual high school students to serve as translators and polling staff in diverse electoral districts.

## 6. Research Gaps

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The subgroups that were the focus of this study will constitute increasingly larger segments of the Canadian electorate in the 21st century; thus, their importance to maintaining democracy cannot be underestimated. To explore whether the variations in turnout reported by specific ethnic communities hold after considering other attitudinal controls that have been linked to turnout in the general population, the sampling strategy of the CES needs to be revised.

Larger, dedicated surveys of minority and immigrant voters will enable a more robust analysis of turnout differences between ethnocultural and religious communities. This can be achieved by oversampling from ethnic minority communities, as was done in the British General Election Study, 1997, or by supplementing the CES with a large number of face-to-face interviews with a minimum number of people from at-risk ethnic groups, as was done after the 2005 British general election.

Analyzing representative cross-sectional survey data over a wide geographical area provides the necessary research base on which to formulate outreach strategies, but new research themes and strategies are needed if policymakers are to further refine their programs. A number of approaches – election diaries, longitudinal surveys to track new arrivals over time and re-convening focus groups to understand attitudes toward politics and voting – can provide deep qualitative insights and/or valuable comparative data for evaluating programs. Canadian researchers have made substantial inroads into identifying the personal characteristics associated with electoral participation, but much more can be done to investigate the impact of contextual and community-based factors.

Researchers in several countries have argued that a voter's immediate socio-spatial or linguistic environment is associated with electoral participation. They also identify the presence of community resources, large or interlocking networks of associations, in addition to a community's receptiveness to political involvement (its political culture), as important determinants of voting in immigrant and minority communities. Quantitative hierarchical linear models, qualitative interviews and network analysis are just a few research strategies that can be used to investigate these themes.

The role of institutions and actors are also important. Community elites, the ethnic media and political parties play important roles in shaping attitudes about the value of voting. Earlier studies have addressed the role of these actors (Simard 1991), and its importance in the more recently established and non-Christian communities should be revisited.

Finally, jurisdictions with relatively liberal citizenship laws, and larger immigrant and minority populations, generally mounted the most extensive outreach efforts, but there were exceptions. Sweden and the Netherlands, for example, have similar proportions of foreign-born populations, but their perspectives on the value of multilingual communications strategies are very different. Even within Canada, there were differences in the outreach efforts of sub-national jurisdictions that cannot be accounted for solely by the size of their immigrant and minority communities.

These international and domestic variations in outreach practices raise the fundamental question of whether there is a correlation between the amount of effort expended and higher rates of turnout in the target communities. It is impossible to draw a direct causal relationship given the many factors that influence turnout. However, access to international or domestic databases containing representative, comparative data on turnout rates in these communities would help address this question.

**Table 1 – Turnout in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections, by Birthplace**

<b>Voted in Last Election</b>	<b>Canadian-Born (%)</b>	<b>Immigrant (%)</b>
Federal	79.3	78.6
Provincial	78.4	75.6***
Municipal	63.9	63.5

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$ .

Source: EDS.

**Table 2 – Turnout in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections, by Birthplace and Race**

<b>Non-Visible</b>	<b>Canadian-Born (%)</b>	<b>Immigrant (%)</b>
Voted in last federal election	79.8	84.7***
Voted in last provincial election	78.9	82.6***
Voted in last municipal election	64.5	71***
<b>Chinese</b>		
Voted in last federal election	64.3	67
Voted in last provincial election	57.3	64*
Voted in last municipal election	41.9	50.5**
<b>South Asian</b>		
Voted in last federal election	61.2	77.1***
Voted in last provincial election	56.1	72***
Voted in last municipal election	41.5	59.3***
<b>Black</b>		
Voted in last federal election	47.2	77.6***
Voted in last provincial election	41.6	68.8***
Voted in last municipal election	32.9	57***

\*  $p \leq .05$ .

\*\*  $p \leq .01$ .

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$ .

Source: EDS.

**Table 3 – Turnout by Birthplace, Race and Age**

	20 to 29 Years (%)		30 and Over (%)	
<b>Non-Visible</b>	<b>Canadian-Born</b>	<b>Foreign-Born</b>	<b>Canadian-Born</b>	<b>Foreign-Born</b>
Federal	63.4	53**	84.9	87.1***
Provincial	60.8	47.5***	84.5	85.2
Municipal	41.6	33.2*	70.7	73.8***
<b>Chinese</b>				
Federal	56.2	44.8*	84.4	71.7***
Provincial	47.6	44.6	79.6	68.4*
Municipal	26.4	27.1	66.5	55.5*
<b>South Asian</b>				
Federal	63.4	67.6	–	–
Provincial	59.2	54.1	75.8	76.7
Municipal	43	46.3	63.3	63
<b>Black</b>				
Federal	51	41.2 <sup>E</sup>	51.5	82.4***
Provincial	49.9	43.4 <sup>E</sup>	41.2 <sup>E</sup>	72.4***
Municipal	–	–	34.9 <sup>E</sup>	61.9***

\*p ≤ .05.

\*\* p ≤ .01.

\*\*\* p ≤ .001.

<sup>E</sup> Estimate; considered “poor” as a result of the small number of cases.

Notes: Dashes reflect fewer than 10 counts. To protect the confidentiality and privacy of respondents, Statistics Canada prohibits the disclosure of EDS data in these instances.

Source: EDS.

**Table 4 – Federal Turnout by Ethnic Ancestry (First Mentioned)**

<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>Turnout*** (%)</b>
British Isles (includes British, English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, British not indicated elsewhere)	82.6
French	83.2
French Canadian	88.8
Canadian/ien/ienne (includes Canadian regional groups such as Acadians, Newfoundlanders)	77.9
Québécois (includes Quebec regional groups)	83.6
American	86.2
Dutch	81
German	78.7
Polish	74.8
Ukrainian	78.9
Norwegian	78.3
Italian	83.9
Portuguese	72.9
Spanish	72.6
Hungarian	81.4
Russian	76.5
Jewish	77.9
Lebanese	72.4
East Indian	77.6
Pakistani	65.1 <sup>E</sup>
Punjabi	74.6
Chinese	66.9
Japanese	70.8
Vietnamese	59.1
Haitian	71.6
Jamaican	72.2
Filipino	75.1

\*\*\* Chi square 371.86,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>E</sup> Estimate; considered “poor” as a result of small sample size.



**Table 5 – Federal Turnout by World Birth Region**

<b>Region of Birth</b>	<b>Turnout*** (%)</b>
Canada	79.6
United States	80.6
Central and South America, Caribbean and Bermuda	73.4
Europe	86.3
Africa	79
Asia and Middle East	69.5
Oceania, Other North America and Other	83.2 <sup>E</sup>

\*\*\* Chi square 245.47,  $p < .001$ .

**Table 6 – Federal Turnout by Religious Denomination**

<b>Religious Denomination</b>	<b>Turnout*** (%)</b>
No religious affiliation	70.2
Catholic	82.3
Protestant	81.8
Christian Orthodox	78.9
Christian (not included elsewhere)	75.1
Muslim	66.7
Jewish	84.7
Buddhist	64.5
Hindu	78.1
Sikh	78.5

\*\*\* Chi square 514.91,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>E</sup> Estimate; considered “poor.”

**Table 7 – Turnout in 2000 Federal Election**

This table shows unstandardized logistic regression estimates.

<b>Factor (Reference Group)</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>
<b>Age: 20–29 years</b> (30 years and over)	–.90***	0.209	0.40
<b>Sex: Male</b> (Female)	–0.04	0.148	0.96
<b>Education</b> (Less than high school)			
College/university degree	0.12	0.212	1.12
Some college/university	0.04	0.278	1.04
High school	–.44*	0.218	0.64
<b>Personal income</b> (\$50,000 and more)			
Less than \$20,000	–.56**	0.213	0.57
\$20,000–\$49,999	–.48**	0.188	0.62
<b>Language</b> (Other)			
English	–1.02	0.572	0.36
French	–0.38	0.596	0.68
<b>Married/common law</b> (Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed)	.54**	0.174	1.72
<b>Number of children in household</b>	–0.09	0.067	0.92
<b>Rural residency</b> (Urban)	0.28	0.295	1.32
<b>Immigrated before 1991</b> (Immigrated since 1991)	1.09***	0.195	2.98
<b>Race</b> (Other visible minorities)			
Not a visible minority	–0.35	0.333	0.70
Chinese	0.12	0.291	1.13
South Asian	0.44	0.252	1.55
Black	0.18	0.312	1.19
<b>Ethnicity</b> (see Appendix 1 for reference group)			
Charter group	0.25	0.55	1.29
European only and European Mixed	–0.1	0.513	0.91
Non-European only and Non-European Mixed	–0.56	0.464	0.57
<b>Personal importance of religion</b>	0.02	0.072	1.02
<b>Worship at regular services/worship on own</b> (Not at all)			
Worship at regular services once per week/month	–0.05	0.244	0.95
Worship at regular services 1–3 times per year	–0.08	0.23	0.93
Worship on own once per week/month	0.29	0.222	1.34
Worship on own 1–3 times per year	0.00	0.258	1.00
<b>Contact with family in Canada</b> (Not at all)			
Contact with family once per week/month	0.23	0.432	1.26
Contact with family 1–3 times per year	0.34	0.473	1.41
<b>Satisfaction with life</b>	0.06	0.095	1.06
<b>People in general can be trusted</b> (You can't be too careful)	0.28	0.152	1.32
<b>Trust in people in family</b>	–.38*	0.156	0.68
<b>Trust in people in neighbourhood</b>	0.03	0.087	1.03
<b>Trust in people I work or go to school with</b>	0.10	0.092	1.10
<b>No discrimination/unfair treatment in past five years</b> (Yes)	–0.17	0.164	0.85
<b>Territorial attachment to Canada</b> (Weak)			
Strong attachment to Canada	0.97*	0.41	2.64
Medium attachment to Canada	0.63	0.442	1.88
<b>Intercept</b>	1.92	1.14	

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Note: See Appendix 1 for coding and model information.

Source: EDS, weighted.

**Table 8 – Electoral Outreach: Canadian Survey (National and Sub-National Elections)**

	NL	NB	NS	PE	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	Tor	Mo	Va
<b>Right to Vote</b>													
Citizenship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minimum residency requirements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓ <sup>2</sup>
<b>Voter Registration</b>													
Continuously updated register	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enumeration		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
Voter onus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multilingual or bilingual		✓ <sup>1</sup>			✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>		✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓
<b>Voter Education</b>													
Multilingual (Web)		✓ <sup>1</sup>			✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>1</sup>			✓	✓	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>
Multilingual (advertising or traditional media)		✓ <sup>1</sup>			✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓ <sup>1</sup>	✓
Liaison officers										✓			✓
<b>Election Day</b>													
Multilingual ballots													
Multilingual at polls						✓			✓	✓	✓		
Hiring of poll officials						✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Translators/aid at polls permitted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<sup>1</sup> English and French only.

<sup>2</sup> Required in Vancouver and British Columbia.

<sup>3</sup> Available through B.C.'s Ministry of Community Services.

**Table 9 – Electoral Outreach: International Survey (National Elections)**

	C	US	A <sup>1,2</sup>	NZ <sup>2</sup>	UK <sup>2,4</sup>	B <sup>1,2,3,4</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	I <sup>2,4</sup>	G <sup>2,4</sup>	NL <sup>2,3,4</sup>	DK <sup>2,3,4</sup>	S <sup>2,3,4</sup>
<b>Right to Vote</b>												
National citizenship	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Minimum residency requirements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	
<b>Voter Registration</b>												
Continuously updated register	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Enumeration			✓		✓							
Voter onus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information in non-national languages		✓	✓	✓	✓							✓
<b>Voter Education</b>												
Non-national languages (Web)	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓E	✓
Non-national languages (advertising/traditional media)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Liaison officers	✓		✓	✓	✓							
Funds for community pilot projects	✓				✓							✓
<b>Election Day</b>												
Ballots in non-national languages		✓										✓
Non-national languages at polls							✓				✓	
Hiring of poll officials	✓		✓				✓				✓	
Translators/assistance allowed	✓	✓	✓	✓								

Legend: C = Canada; U.S. = California, New York, Florida; A= Australia; NZ = New Zealand; U.K. = United Kingdom; B = Belgium; F = France; I = Italy; G = Germany; NL = the Netherlands; DK = Denmark; S = Sweden.

E = English in addition to national language.

<sup>1</sup> Voting compulsory.

<sup>2</sup> Registration compulsory.

<sup>3</sup> Non-EU citizens can vote in local elections providing they meet residency requirements.

<sup>4</sup> EU citizens can vote in elections to the European Parliament, and in local elections in the member state in which they reside, under the same conditions that apply to nationals of their country of residence.

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## **Interviews and Personal Correspondence**

Janet Andrews, Manager, Elections and Registration Services, City of Toronto

Anne Birthe Pade, Election Consultant, Ministry of the Interior and Health, Denmark

Robert Brehm, Assistant Director of Public Information, New York State Board of Elections

Wayne Green, Chief Electoral Officer, Newfoundland and Labrador

Lisa Howse, Grants and Public Information Officer, Electoral Commission, U.K.

Grete Kongsted, Special Consultant, Ministry of the Interior and Health, Denmark

Kristina Lemon, Election Authority, Sweden

Lorie McKee-Jeske, Director of Election Operations and Communications, Elections Alberta

Raffaele Miele, founder and publisher, *Gli Stranieri* magazine, Italy

Jennifer Porayko, Communications Manager, Elections BC

Mieke Santermans, Flemish Minorities Centre, Belgium

Amy Stoks, Project Support Office, Chief Electoral Office, Ministry of Justice Tahu o te Ture,  
New Zealand

Marian Verbeek, Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, Belgium

Shauna Williamson, Manager, Education Programs for Indigenous People and New Citizens,  
Australian Electoral Commission

Pamela Young, Electoral Council, the Netherlands

## Web Sites

<b>Canada</b>	
<a href="http://www.elections.ca">www.elections.ca</a>	Elections Canada
<a href="http://www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections">www.elections.gov.nl.ca/elections</a>	Elections Newfoundland and Labrador
<a href="http://www.gnb.ca/elections">www.gnb.ca/elections</a>	Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, New Brunswick
<a href="http://electionsnovascotia.ns.ca">http://electionsnovascotia.ns.ca</a>	Elections Nova Scotia
<a href="http://www.electionspei.ca">www.electionspei.ca</a>	Elections Prince Edward Island
<a href="http://www.electionsquebec.qc.ca">www.electionsquebec.qc.ca</a>	Directeur général des élections du Québec
<a href="http://www.electionsontario.on.ca">www.electionsontario.on.ca</a>	Elections Ontario
<a href="http://www.electionsmanitoba.ca">www.electionsmanitoba.ca</a>	Elections Manitoba
<a href="http://www.elections.sk.ca">www.elections.sk.ca</a>	Elections Saskatchewan
<a href="http://www.electionsalberta.ab.ca">www.electionsalberta.ab.ca</a>	Elections Alberta
<a href="http://www.elections.bc.ca">www.elections.bc.ca</a>	Elections BC
<a href="http://www.ville.montreal.qc.ca">www.ville.montreal.qc.ca</a>	City of Montréal
<a href="http://www.toronto.ca/elections">www.toronto.ca/elections</a>	City of Toronto Elections and Registry Services
<a href="http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca">www.city.vancouver.bc.ca</a>	City of Vancouver
<a href="http://www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca">www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca</a>	Ministry of Community Services, B.C.
<b>International</b>	
<a href="http://www.epicproject.org">www.epicproject.org</a>	ACE Electoral Knowledge Network
<a href="http://www.aec.gov.au/">www.aec.gov.au/</a>	Australian Electoral Commission
<a href="http://www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a>	Elections New Zealand
<a href="http://www.usdoj.gov/">www.usdoj.gov/</a>	United States Department of Justice
<a href="http://election.dos.state.fl.us">election.dos.state.fl.us</a>	Florida Department of State Division of Elections
<a href="http://www.ss.ca.gov">www.ss.ca.gov</a>	California Secretary of State
<a href="http://www.europarl.eu.int">www.europarl.eu.int</a>	European Parliament
<a href="http://assembly.coe.int">http://assembly.coe.int</a>	Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe
<a href="http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk">www.electoralcommission.org.uk</a>	Electoral Commission (U.K.)
<a href="http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/">www.interieur.gouv.fr/</a>	Ministry of the Interior (France)
<a href="http://www.bundestag.de/parlament/">www.bundestag.de/parlament/</a>	National Parliament (Germany)
<a href="http://www.bundeswahlleiter.de">www.bundeswahlleiter.de</a>	Federal Returning Officer (Germany)
<a href="http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de">www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de</a>	Facts about Germany
<a href="http://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl">www.houseofrepresentatives.nl</a>	House of Representatives (Netherlands)
<a href="http://www.ind.nl/nl/index.asp">www.ind.nl/nl/index.asp</a>	Immigration and Naturalization Service (Netherlands)
<a href="http://www.rem.dk">www.rem.dk</a>	Information for Ethnic Minorities (Denmark)
<a href="http://www.im.dk/">www.im.dk/</a>	Ministry of the Interior and Health (Denmark)
<a href="http://www.sweden.gov.se">www.sweden.gov.se</a>	Government and Government Offices of Sweden
<a href="http://www.val.se">www.val.se</a>	Election Authority (Sweden)
<a href="http://www.interno.it">www.interno.it</a>	Ministry of the Interior (Italy)
<a href="http://www.cittadini.rai.it/cittadini">www.cittadini.rai.it/cittadini</a>	Cittadini

## Appendix 1 – Table 7 Model and Coding Information

<b>Summary Information</b>
–2LL 1051340
Cox-Snell Likelihood Ratio: .115
Overall Fit: F = 4.03, p < .001
Weighted N = 1,229,610

Variables	Reference Groups
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	
0	Did not vote in last federal election
1	Voted in last federal election
<b>Independent Variables</b>	
<b>Socio-Demographic Variables</b>	
Age	30 years and over
Sex	Female
Education	Less than high school education
Personal income (annual)	\$50,000 or more
Language	Interview language other than English or French
Marital status	Single/Separated/Divorced/Widowed
Rural residency	Urban residency
Race	Other visible minorities not including Chinese, South Asians and Blacks
Ethnicity	Mixed Non-European and European only or Mixed Non-European, European, British Isles, French and/or Canadian/Canadien only
Year of arrival in Canada	From 1991 onward
<b>Religious and Family Ties</b>	
Worshipped at regular services in previous 12 months	Not at all
Worshipped on own in previous 12 months	Not at all
Personal importance of religion 1–5 scale where 1 = not important through 5 = very important	
Frequency of contact with family members in Canada in previous 12 months	Not at all
Trust people in family 1–5 scale where 1 = can't be trusted at all through 5 = can be trusted a lot	

Variables	Reference Groups
<b>Life Experiences and Social Trust</b>	
Life satisfaction 1–5 scale where 1 = not satisfied through 5 = very satisfied	
People can be trusted	You can't be too careful
Trust people in neighbourhood 1–5 scale where 1 = can't be trusted at all through 5 = can be trusted a lot	
Trust people at work or school 1–5 scale where 1 = can't be trusted at all through 5 = can be trusted a lot	
Experienced discrimination in past five years (based on ethnicity, religion, skin colour, culture, race, language or accent)	Yes
<b>Territorial Attachment</b>	
Attachment to Canada	Weak sense of attachment

## Appendix 2 – Likelihood of Turnout in the 2004 Federal Election

Factors (Reference Groups)	B (s.e)	Odds Ratio
<b>Socio-Demographic</b>		
<b>Region (Atlantic Canada)</b>		
Quebec	.86(1.25)	2.38
Ontario	.07(.75)	1.08
West	.58(.76)	1.79
English language (French language)	-.87(1.18)	0.42
Male (female)	.77(.46)	2.16
18–29 years (30 years and over)	1.14(.77)	3.14
Married/Living with partner (Divorced/Separated/Widowed/Never married)	.89(.47)	2.45
Post-secondary education (High school or less)	.56(.46)	1.76
Working for pay (Not working for pay)	.19(.47)	1.21
Born in Canada (Not born in Canada)	.10(.73)	1.10
<b>Ethnic Origin (Canadian/Australian/New Zealander/American)</b>		
Acadian/Québécois/French Canadian/Francophone	-.89(.90)	0.41
Inuit/Métis/Aboriginal	-3.61(1.30)**	0.03
European, including Jewish/Hebrew	.50(.53)	1.65
Non-European, including Israeli	.68(.94)	1.98
<b>Household Income (\$39,999 or less)</b>		
\$40,000-\$69,999	.80(.61)	2.23
\$70,000 or more	.40(.59)	1.50
<b>Political Interest and Political Efficacy</b>		
Political Interest index	.41(.12)***	1.51
Discussion of politics often/sometimes while growing up (Hardly ever/Never)	.13(.44)	1.14
Political Efficacy index	-1.00(.44)*	0.37
It makes a big difference who is in power	-.25(.22)	0.78
It makes a big difference who people vote for	.45(.20)*	1.58
<b>Attitudes About Political Parties and Politicians</b>		
Party Contact index	.48(.25)	1.62
Thermometer ratings of politicians (0–100 scale)	.00(.01)	1.00
Close to a particular party (No)	.39(.47)	1.48
Liked a local candidate (No)	.35(.46)	1.42
<b>Civic Attitudes and Behaviour</b>		
Voluntary association involvement index	.11(.15)	1.12
Political Action index	-.51(.59)	0.60
Strongly/somewhat agree citizen's duty to vote (Strongly/somewhat disagree)	2.35(.70)***	10.51
Has contacted an MP (No)	.04(.52)	1.04
Has been a party member (No)	-.61(.62)	0.54
Has been a member of an interest group (No)	2.01(.96)*	7.48

Factors (Reference Groups)	B (s.e)	Odds Ratio
Daily newspaper in home when growing up (No)	.06(.49)	1.07
Took civics courses in high school (No)	.46(.49)	1.59
Constant	-2.07(2.23)	

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*\*\* coefficient significant at  $p < .001$ .

Note: Unstandardized logistic regression estimates with standard errors in parentheses.

Source: Canadian Election Study, 2004, weighted. See Appendix 3 for model and variable coding information.



## Appendix 3 – Likelihood of Turnout in the 2004 Federal Election: Model and Coding Information

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Blocs of variables were entered in the following order: socio-demographic, political interest, political efficacy, attitudes about political parties and politicians, and civic attitudes/behaviour. Appendix 2 presents only the final model with all the blocs entered.

<b>Model Log Likelihood and Measures of Fit</b>
–2LL 190.07
Model p value: .000
Percent Correctly Classified: 94.5
Cox and Snell R-Squared = .13
Nagelkerke R-Squared = .38
Model N (weighted) = 675

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Reference Groups</b>
<b>Demographic</b>	
Province	Atlantic Canada
Interview language	French
Gender	Female
Age	30 years and over
Marital status	Divorced/Separated/Widowed/Never married
Education	High school or less
Employment status	Retired/Unemployed/Student/Caring for family/Disabled
Birth country	Not born in Canada
Ethnic group	Canadian/Australian/New Zealand/United States
Household income	\$39,999 or less
<b>Political Interest and Efficacy</b>	
Political Interest index (5-item additive index): How much attention did you pay to news about the election on TV? (pesb1) + Using the radio? (pesb2) + In the newspapers? (pesb3) + How interested were you in the federal election in general? (pesb5) + How interested are you in politics in general? (cpsa6). Coded so that higher index scores indicate higher levels of interest. Scores adjusted to account for missing values. Index Cronbach's Alpha .80	

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Reference Groups</b>
Discussion of politics while growing up	Never
Some people say it makes a big difference who is in power. 1–5 scale where 1 = Makes no difference through 5 = Can make a big difference	
Some people say it makes a big difference who people vote for. 1–5 scale where 1 = Makes no difference through 5 = Can make a big difference	
Political Efficacy index (3-item additive index): mbse5 (Those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people) + mbse11 (People like me don't have any say about what the government does) + mbsg11 (Sometimes politics seems complicated) Coded so that higher index scores indicate higher levels of political efficacy. Scores adjusted to account for missing values. Index Cronbach's Alpha = .40	
<b>Parties and Politicians</b>	
Party Contact index (3-item additive index): During the campaign, were you contacted by a political party in person? (pes_co_a) + by phone? (pes_co_b) + by mail? (pes_co_c) Higher index scores indicate more party contact. Scores adjusted to account for missing values. Index Cronbach's Alpha = .47	
Thermometer ratings of politicians: 0–100 scale where 100 = Really like	
Was there a local candidate you liked?	No
Do you think of yourself as closer to any particular party?	No
<b>Civic Attitudes and Behaviour</b>	
It is every citizen's duty to vote in elections.	Strongly disagree/Disagree
Have you ever contacted an MP?	No
Have you ever been an interest group member?	No
When you were growing up, was there a daily newspaper in your home?	No
When you were in high school, did you take a civics course?	No

Variables	Reference Groups
<p>Political Action index (5-item additive index):</p> <p>Political actions people can take: Petition (mbsj2a) + Boycott (mbsj2b) + Lawful demonstration (mbsj2c) + Illegal strike (msbsj2d) + Occupy a building or factory (mbsj2e). One point was assigned for people who have participated in an activity and no points for those who answered “would never” or “might.”</p> <p>Higher index scores indicate more political activity. Scores adjusted to account for missing values.</p> <p>Index Cronbach’s Alpha = .72</p>	
<p>Voluntary Association Involvement index (11-item index of active involvement):</p> <p>1 point assigned for active involvement in each of the following voluntary associations: mbaj1a (Community service) + mbaj1b (Business association) + mbaj1c (Professional association) + mbaj1d (Environmental group) + mbaj1e (Women’s group) + mbaj1f (Labour union) + mbaj1g (Ethnic association) + mbaj1h (Sports association) + mbaj1i (Religious organization) + mbaj1j (Parents’ group) + mbaj1k (Other).</p> <p>Higher index scores indicate more associational involvement. Scores adjusted to account for missing values.</p> <p>Index Cronbach’s Alpha = .47</p>	