Youth Voluntarism and Political Engagement in Canada

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The increasing number of young Canadians who are abstaining from voting in federal elections

and who are rejecting political parties as the most effective vehicles for social change underscores the tenuous bonds between younger generations and the institutions of democratic governance. This youthful retreat from the public sphere is not restricted to the "formal" arena of party and electoral politics. Between 1997 and 2000, four per cent fewer youths engaged in volunteer work in their communities (Hall, McKeown and Roberts, 2001). The graying of civic Canada has been a source of concern in government and academic circles, inspiring numerous studies aimed at identifying the underlying causes of trends that erode the vibrancy of democracy and community life. They have also raised perennial questions of interest to political philosophers, empirical researchers and policy analysts; what are the obligations attached to democratic citizenship, what level of public participation is sufficient to sustain democracy, and what role should civil society (interest groups, social movements and voluntary associations) play in promoting participation in democratic politics?

This paper will situate the problem of youth disengagement from political activities within the context of a broader debate about voluntarism. Insight into this subject will be gained through a statistical analysis of data from the recent Elections Canada Survey of Voters and Non-Voters, that examines the volunteering and political activities of Canadians. The principal question that will be addressed is whether voluntarism is the panacea for the alarming decline in the political engagement of 18-29-year-olds, or whether it reinforces the perception that solutions to societal problems lie within the realm of civil society and outside the state.

Several political and social theorists argue that a thriving civil society, of which voluntary associations are a part, contributes to the quality and strength of democracy and communities. The presence of strong associational networks is argued to overcome individualism by encouraging people to recognize they are best served by contributing to the collective good (de Tocqueville, 1969). Voluntary associations can check state activities (Barber, 1984), foster values and attitudes such as public-spiritedness, solidarity, and cooperation (Putnam, 1993), and promote desirable, individual and community-level civic outcomes. These include higher rates of participation in politics and trust in government (Putnam, 1993; Togeby, 1999; Fennema and Tillie, 1999), economic prosperity, improved social welfare, safer neighbourhoods, lower rates of tax evasion (Putnam, 2000), effective government performance (1993) and interpersonal trust (Young, 2002). All these benefits are attributed to voluntary organizations and other civil society institutions because they increase the stock of social capital, or the "connections between individuals and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness" that a society possesses (Putnam, 2000: 19; Fukuyama, 1995).

Others remain skeptical about the public benefits of voluntarism, arguing that it may run counter to the goals of the commonwealth by encouraging a "privatized and individualized" response to human and social problems, in accordance with a conservative view of society (Lisman, 1998: 16). Ehrenberg opines that the social capital research agenda is inflicted with a narrow sense of public purpose and is inherently anti-political because of its reliance on civil society, rather than the state, to "revive communities, train effective citizens, build habits of respect and cooperation..." (Fried, 2002). de Tocqueville's disciple, Putnam, acknowledges that exclusionary varieties of social capital can have illiberal effects (2000: 351-63).

The empirical evidence on the salutary effects of voluntarism is hardly conclusive. Van Deth's analysis of Western European countries in 1990 and 1998 found that interest in politics and opinions about its personal and overall saliency were only weakly related to membership in social movement and political organizations, with membership in social welfare organizations (church-related groups and welfare organizations) linked to a *decline* in the perceived saliency of politics (2000). Brehm and Rahn, using American data, argue that greater civic engagement is associated with less confidence in government (1997). Similarly, Young's analysis of civil society in Alberta found little evidence of a direct and positive relationship between civic engagement and trust in government and confidence in political institutions (2002).

The contested links between voluntarism and political engagement should interest those concerned by the marginalization of Canadian youths from not only formal politics, but from the informal political activities that take place outside party and electoral politics. Youths born after 1970 are less likely than older Canadians to vote in federal elections (Blais et al., 2002; Pammett and LeDuc, 2003), to run for federal office (Docherty, 2002), to express more interest in politics and to take part in informal modes of action such as attending meetings or writing letters to newspapers (Pammett and LeDuc, 2003). An analysis of survey data on Canadian political parties reveals that they are also grappling with the challenge of demographic renewal, as just five percent of their members are younger than 30 (Young and Cross, 2002).

Given the Liberal government's recognition that the voluntary sector, consisting of 175,000 charities, non-profits and grassroots organizations, constitutes a third pillar in society behind government and business (Phillips, 2001), it is surprising that we know relatively little about the potential of voluntarism to revitalize youth political engagement.

One explanation for the relative dearth of Canadian research on this subject might lie in the contentious nature of the relationship between unpaid service and political engagement. In the United States, civilian service programs have been embraced by both communitarian conservatives and welfare state liberals who emphasize civic virtue, citizenship and community service as duties. They have also been opposed by classical liberals who prioritize individual rights and constitutional protections, and who are doubtful about its capacity to address societal problems such as the waning presence of American youths in formal and informal political activities.

This paper departs from the premise that an exploration of the potential for voluntarism to sustain or undermine youth political participation is overdue, especially in light of the fact that several Canadian provinces stipulate volunteer service as a pre-requisite for high school graduation.

Voluntarism

Before proceeding, it is necessary to distinguish voluntarism from other forms of public sphere

involvement. Voluntarism is conceived as behaviour, performed through associations or individually, that is "unpaid, generally not done for strictly political purposes". It can vary according to whether it addresses social problems or specifically serves the interests of family and friends. Volunteering is also one of four categories of social capital, alongside membership in voluntary associations (which overlaps with volunteering), institutional and generalized social trust, and civic participation (Wuthnow, 2002: 63).

Putnam and Goss have formulated a typology of different forms of social capital, distinguishing between "formal" and "informal", "inward" and "outward", "bonding" and "bridging", and "thick" and "thin" varieties (2002). Formal social capital refers to joining organizations such as parents' groups or labor unions that are "...formally organized with recognized officers, membership requirements, dues and regular meetings..." (10). Informal networks include family dinners or spontaneous pickup games of basketball. Inward social capital promotes the material, social or political interests of an association's membership, while outward social capital strives to provide public goods. Examples of the former include chambers of commerce, labor organizations, and credit unions set up by new immigrants. Charitable groups such as the Red Cross and environmental movements are examples of the latter (11). A third dimension distinguishes between bonding and bridging social capital (11-2). The former brings together people who share common socio-demographic characteristics (including ethnicity), whereas bridging social capital refers to networks whose participants are drawn from dissimilar backgrounds. The thick-thin dichotomy differentiates between tight-knit groups of acquaintances who frequently spend time with each other and very casual connections with strangers (10).

Mowing the lawn for an elderly neighbour, coaching a children's sports team, protecting the environment, or canvassing for charities are examples of activities that build social capital. The civic benefits accruing to communities with a vibrant associational life extend to higher levels of electoral turnout, political interest and trust (Togeby; Fennema and Tillie; van Heelsum, 2002; Pammett and LeDuc, 2003). In Canada, ethnic and faith-based community groups have played an integral role in mobilizing immigrants to vote, to run for office and to lobby governments (Lapp, 1999; Jedwab, 2002; Siemiatycki and Saloojee, 2002). One study of immigrants aged between 15 and 34 years found that memberships in voluntary organizations were positively associated with their participation in formal political activities such as voting in federal, provincial and local elections and expressions of interest in current affairs. Conversely, young newcomers who had not joined a voluntary organization, but who had given their time to other individuals or groups, did not report higher levels of political engagement. This suggests that voluntarism's civic potential is contingent on whether unpaid service is performed on an individual basis or through a group affiliation (Tossutti, 2003).

Service learning - a form of experiential education combining volunteer work with an academic course - has been touted as a means to help students master educational concepts, to address the underfunding of needed social and environmental services, and to prepare youths for what Benjamin Barber has described as the responsibilities of living in a democratic society - becoming informed about political issues, voting, participation in governance and developing a sense of responsibility to one's community and nation. In the United States, both Republican and

Democratic administrations have provided financial incentives for schools to develop or expand these programs. The learning component of service learning courses require that students reflect upon their volunteer experience through journal keeping, discussion, reading and term papers (Gray et al., 1999). Service learning programs have been used by schools and colleges for more than 30 years and can range from one-time to long-term commitments involving little or no training (i.e. serving meals in a homeless shelter) to skilled work such as providing legal advice.

While traditional political foes have embraced course-based voluntarism has a means of reinvigorating youth civic engagement, it is not clear whether this strategy has succeeded. Discrepancies in the results of different studies have been attributed to the quality of research designs, to variations in the measurement of civic responsibility, and to differences in program participants (Perry and Thomson, 2004).

Some studies on participation in high school and college-level community service programs have found little evidence that it promotes a higher incidence of voting, contacting elected officials and involvement in community affairs (Perry and Katula, 2001; Independent Sector, 1997). Others have detected small, but significant, positive effects on a number of outcomes for undergraduates including the development of values and attitudes related to citizenship and social justice (Gray et al.). Another study of middle and high schools in ten states found that service learning can strengthen civic attitudes and promote volunteer activity (Lisman: 32-3). In 1997, RAND conducted a survey of college students at 28 schools involving 724 service-learning students and 597 comparison group students. It found that service learning was not associated with two measures of civic outcomes - expected and current involvement in politics - but was associated with the expectation of participation in future volunteer work or community service (Gray et al.:42-3).

Studies of the impact of civic service programs on a reported sense of civic responsibility (conceptualized in some studies as the extent to which service enhanced an understanding of community issues and problems, commitment to civic duty and/or a willingness to participate in advocacy or political processes) have usually produced positive, rather than null findings. Interestingly, a study of the Youth Corps found that African-American men who had participated in the Youth Corps were more likely to have voted in the last election and to report a greater sense of personal and social responsibility than randomly-assigned members of a control group. This recalls the Canadian study on immigrant youth and suggests that voluntarism may be an avenue through which minorities and newcomers can become more involved in public sphere activities.

While it is uncertain how associational involvements might influence youth participation in informal political activities, the visible presence of younger Canadians in many new social movement organizations suggests the relationship should be positive, as civil society institutions employ informal tactics of persuasion such as petitions, protests, rallies, boycotts, letter-writing campaigns and joining Internet discussion groups, in their attempts to influence public policy.

What is clear is that while many young Canadians volunteereed their time on an individual basis to help other individuals (13-50 percent), comparatively few (4-10 per cent) 15-34-year-olds joined service clubs, civic/community organizations, work-based, and environmental associations

(Tossutti). Whether volunteer work was performed individually or on behalf of associations, the 15-34-year-old cohort was generally less likely to be involved than older Canadians (Tossutti). These findings are in keeping with other studies identifying a positive correlation between age and measures of engagement in voluntary, civic or professional associations (Putnam, 2000; Young)

When individuals join associations, the life cycle also conditions their selected form of involvement. Sports clubs attract youths, child-related activities such as parent-teacher meetings and church involvements peak in the prime parenting years of the twenties and thirties, and membership in civic organizations and professional societies is highest among people in their forties and fifties (Putnam, 2000: 249).

Youth Participation in Formal and Informal Political Activities

Empirical studies of youth engagement and interest in formal political activities such as elections and political parties, and in informal activities outside party and electoral politics, are not encouraging. In the United States, the biggest declines in civic engagement between the 1970s and 1990s were noted in the 18-29-year-old cohort.

For some time, analysts have observed that young Canadians vote at a lower rate than older citizens (Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte, 2000; 2002). Blais et al.'s analyses of non-voting behaviour in nine federal elections between 1968 and 2000 found that the 7 point drop in the average turnout for the six elections held before 1990 and the three held afterwards could largely be explained by generational effects. Specifically, turnout was 2 or 3 points lower among baby-boomers born between 1945 and 1959 than it was among pre-baby boomers, 10 points lower among Gen X'ers born in the 1960s and another 10 points lower among those born since 1970. Generational replacement also explained the overall turnout declines; with the electorate composed of lower proportions of pre-baby boomers and increasing numbers of post-baby boomers, the trends are expected to continue (Blais et al., 2001).

In their examination of turnout in the 2000 election, Pammett and LeDuc found that just 22.4 per cent of 18-20 year-olds and 27.5 per cent of 21-24-year-olds voted in the 2000 election, compared to 80 percent for those over the age of 58 (2003). They also confirmed that age was the most important factor explaining overall abstentionism in the last 3 federal elections. Interest in politics and elections, discussions about politics with family and friends, and a sense that voting in elections is important (civic duty), constituted the second most important set of interrelated attitudes predicting turnout in 1993 and 1997, and the third most important set in 2000. A sense of civic duty and perceptions that one's vote would influence national and local results placed second in importance in 2000 and fourth in 1993 and 1997. Other variables that were positively associated with turnout included higher income, non-immigrant status, a lack of geographic mobility and administrative factors such as having one's name on the voters' list and being contacted by a party or candidate (Pammett and LeDuc).

Their brief examination of the civic outcomes associated with participation in voluntary organizations found that members of voluntary associations were more likely than non-members to have voted in the 2000 election (2003). This raises the possibility that voluntarism *may* also be associated with youth voting and other measures of formal and informal political engagement.

When non-voting Canadian youths were asked why they did not cast a ballot in 2000, they were more likely than older Canadians to cite a lack of interest and personal/administrative factors. These personal/administrative factors include work commitments, absence from the riding on election day, a lack of knowledge about where or when to vote and registration problems. Just under 60 per cent of 18-29-year-olds indicated their lack of interest in the election was a very or fairly important reason why they did not vote, compared to 49.6 per cent of Canadians aged 30 and over. In her study of generational differences in political behaviour, O'Neill found that young people showed an increased tendency toward apathy, as they were less likely to pay attention to politics and political news than older Canadians, and more likely to find politics uninteresting (2001). Blais et al. drew similar conclusions when they compared the average ratings of interest in politics expressed by respondents born before and after the Second World War. They found that Canadians born before the war rated politics 6.2 out of a maximum 10 points, and those born afterwards gave it a rating of 4.4 (2002: 52). This disinterest is the cause or result of the fact that Canadians born in the 1960s and 1970s are more poorly informed about politics than older generations. Rates of civic literacy - or the knowledge to be effective citizens - are lower in Canada than in other western democracies (Milner, 2002).

As mentioned, personal/administrative factors also accounted for low youth turnout rates in 2000. While 38.1 percent of the younger cohort said their work commitments constituted very or fairly important reasons why they did not vote, only 29 per cent of the respondents aged 30 and over cited the same reason (Pammett and LeDuc). Problems with the list of electors may also be responsible as over 31 per cent of non-voting 18-20-year-olds reported their names were not on the list, compared to 14.3 percent of voters in this age cohort. Similarly, just under 15 per cent of 18-20-year-old non-voters experienced problems with the list, compared to 9.1 per cent of their voting cohorts. Overall, the proportion of 18-20-year-old respondents whose names were not on the list (29.4 percent) far exceeded the rates in other age cohorts (Pammett and LeDuc).

It is also important to consider the role that civic duty plays in accounting for turnout, since non-voters are less likely than voters to feel it is essential to vote (Blais, 2000; Pammett and LeDuc). Young people have a weaker sense of civic duty than older citizens, with only 27.6 per cent of 18-20 year-olds, 22 per cent of 21-24-year-olds, and 28.8 per cent of 25-29 year olds feeling it is essential to vote, compared to just under half of 48-57-year-olds (Pammett and LeDuc).

Political parties have played key roles in mobilizing the vote during elections (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). The Pammett/LeDuc study confirms the importance of contact by parties of local candidates during elections as a significant predictor of turnout for a sample of Canadian voters in the 2000 election (2003). Studies showing that Canadians born after 1970 were less likely to be contacted by parties than older Canadians may help explain declining youth turnout (Blais et al., 2002: 57; Pammett and LeDuc).

Finally, there is the possibility that young people may be voting less because they perceive a lack of competitiveness among political parties or are more cynical about government and politics. However, separate studies of the 2000 election both concluded that perceptions about the competitiveness of electoral races had no significant effects on the decision to cast a ballot, with one showing that the younger generation was *less* likely than older Canadians to perceive a lack of competition (Blais et al., 2002; Pammett and LeDuc). Meanwhile, older Canadians were more likely than younger citizens to express negative feelings about politics (Pammett and LeDuc).

The exploding membership base of environmental organizations and the presence of youths at anti-globalization protests would seem to suggest that younger generations are rejecting formal politics and replacing it with informal and unconventional political action. However, there is little hard evidence to support this view. Putnam found that twenty-somethings in the United States were less inclined to protest, demonstrate and sign petitions, than people their age in the 1960s (2000:165, 252). Likewise, the participation of 18-29-year-old Canadians in informal political activities exceeded that of older Canadians on just two measures of activism - attending demonstrations (22.4 per cent) and joining politically-related Internet discussion groups (7.7 per cent). With the exception of signing a petition (70 per cent) fewer than one in five members of this age cohort participated in more intense political activities such as letter-writing (17.2 per cent), joining a boycott (11.2%) or attending meetings and rallies (19.1 per cent). If there is a crisis of youth participation in formal politics, then the same might be said of the informal political arena (data not shown). Consequently, it is important to examine whether voluntarism might play a role in stimulating this form of engagement in public life.

Hypotheses

Previous research leads us to expect that youths will be less engaged than older Canadians in voluntary organizations. Although the relationship between voluntarism and political engagement is contentious, more studies suggest that the performance of unpaid service or membership in voluntary organizations has positive effects on voting, interest in or awareness of social issues, and attitudes that are conducive to voting such as civic duty. Thus, it is expected that young members of voluntary organizations will be more likely to engage in both formal and informal political activities

than non-joiners, even after controlling for other socio-demographic and attitudinal factors that are known to influence political participation. Finally, we hypothesize that the qualitative differences between different forms of associational involvements will have different political outcomes, and that some associational memberships that are tied to the life cycle will hold greater appeal for youths than others.

Methodology

Since Canadians are increasingly prone to stay in school longer, to live at home with their parents, to delay the start of their careers, and to postpone marriage and child-rearing, it is fair to say that the academic consensus on who can be categorized as young is eroding. Demographers, sociologists and political scientists have categorized individuals as young as pre-teens and as old as adults in their mid-30s, as "young". This paper considers Canadians aged between 18 and 29 years to constitute the youth demographic.

The hypotheses relating to the youth cohort will be tested through a statistical analysis of the Survey of Voters and Non-voters commissioned by Elections Canada. The survey questionnaire was particularly suited for the issues broached in this paper because it features items on the informal and formal political participation and volunteering activities of Canadians. This national, telephone survey of respondents who were eligible to vote at the time of the 2000 federal election was conducted between April and May of 2002. Its sampling design generated large and equal-sized samples of voters and non-voters, permitting a more reliable and detailed analysis of the underlying causes of abstentionism. The final sample of 5,637 cases is expected to provide results accurate to within +/- 1.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (Decima Research Inc., 2002). Since oversampling was conducted in less populous provinces, all data in the subsequent analyses have been weighted back to actual population proportions.

The survey's operationalization of the voluntarism construct was restricted to seven different types of organizations encompassing the inward/outward and bridging/bonding dichotomies of social capital. While voluntarism is given a fuller treatment in Statistics Canada's National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, the Elections Canada survey has the advantage of measuring both formal and informal modes of political participation. Although the items do not constitute a comprehensive list of voluntary organizations, they do feature some of the most common types including: trade union/professional associations; religious/church-based organizations; charitable organizations/service clubs; neighbourhood associations; sports/hobby/leisure clubs; artistic/musical/cultural clubs and environmental/human rights organizations. It should be noted that the response categories to these questions measured active, passive and non-membership. Since this analysis focuses on a sub-sample of respondents, the active and passive categories of participation were combined so as to maximize the number of responses available for analysis. This decision can also be justified on the grounds that even passive membership - joining the organization without being a particularly active member - requires some degree of action and psychological attachment to civic goals.

Formal political engagement, the first dependent concept, refers to involvement in electoral and party politics, and was operationalized by five behavioural and two attitudinal items: turnout in the 2000 federal election; intended turnout in the next election; political party/association membership; expressions of interest in politics and elections; the frequency of discussions about politics with family and/or friends; and perceptions about the importance of voting (civic duty). The behavioural items are common measures of political engagement. The civic duty item was selected because it was an important predictor of past turnout for the overall sample in the Non-Voters survey. Although the inclusion of an item measuring intent to vote in the next federal election might be criticized on the grounds that affirmative responses would be easy to give since no actual effort is required, it has been used in U.S.-based studies as an indicator of the respondent's willingness to become involved in the future.

The second dependent concept, informal political participation, was operationalized as having engaged in one or more of the following activites in the past or distant past. These activities include: signing petitions, boycotts, demonstrations, rallies or meetings, writing letters to newspapers and calling talk shows.

After comparing the associational membership rates of youths and Canadians aged 30 years and over, measures of association and significance tests will be analyzed to determine whether and which forms of organizational memberships were associated with higher levels of youth involvement in formal and informal political activities.

An assessment of voluntarism's political consequences would not be complete without controlling for the effects of other socio-demographic factors known to influence higher rates of participation in public sphere activities. In addition to the factors identified in this paper,[i] these include: upper socio-economic status (Verba et al. 1971; Nevitte, Blais, Gidengil and Nadeau, 2000: Appendix D; Blais, 2000; Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte, 2002: 51); higher education (Almond and Verba, 1965: 134; Verba and Nie 1972: 126; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Olsen, 1982: Putnam, 2000: 67, 185-6; Young, 2002: 118; Uslaner and Brown, 2002); small town or rural residency (Young: 118; Putnam: 138), marriage (Putnam, 2000: 278) and the presence of children in the household (Putnam: 278; Young: 118). The influence of gender will also be explored as early studies finding that women participated in politics less often than males were later disputed by Welch, who found that women participated as much as men after controlling for structural and situational factors (1977: 726).

In order to isolate the effects of voluntarism, independent of other factors, logistic regression models were fitted to five indicators of formal political involvement: turnout in the 2000 election, intended turnout in the next federal election, party membership, expressions of interest in the election (very/somewhat interested), and perceptions about the importance of voting (essential or very important). The latter two dependent variables were chosen due to their importance to predicting turnout in the overall sample.

Logistic regression was selected as the most appropriate analytical technique because of the binary nature of some of the dependent variables.[ii] With binary outcomes, estimates derived from conventional logistic regression are preferable to Ordinary Least Squares techniques, which tend to

produce inefficient parameters and biassed standard errors (Long, 1997: 38-53). This is because linear probability models do not account for differential effects on probability as values of the independent variable change. When outcomes are binary ('0'=event does not occur; '1'=event occurs), values of the independent variables will likely have 'diminishing returns' effects as the predicted probability of the event approaches '0' or '1'. In contrast, maximum likelihood estimates have the properties of consistency, normality and efficiency as the sample size increases.

An index comprised of the six measures of informal political activism[iii] was created and designated as the dependent variable in an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model to isolate the effects of voluntarism on this form of political action. OLS regression is an appropriate multivariate technique for the analysis of interval-level data.

Voluntarism and its Links with Formal and Informal Political Engagement

The Youth Participation Deficit in the Voluntary Sector

Although 18-29 year-olds were less involved than older Canadians in five of seven types of voluntary organizations, the correlations between age and involvement were weak, and in two cases, statistically insignificant (Table 1). Certain activities such as sports/leisure/hobby clubs and artistic/musical/cultural clubs drew more young members than older Canadians. Youths also found religious-based associations and sports group/hobby/leisure clubs more appealing than voting or joining parties. Trade union/professional associations, charitable organization/service clubs, neighbourhood associations and artistic/musical/cultural clubs also attracted more youths than political parties (Table 1). The relative appeal of sports/leisure/hobby groups and religious associations for Canadian youths is in keeping with American evidence on life cycle effects.

Interest in Politics and Elections

The importance of examining what stimulates youth interest in politics is underscored by the fact that 59.2 percent of 18-29-year-olds in the Non-Voters Survey cited a lack of interest as the main reason why they did not vote, compared to 49.6 per cent of those aged 30 and over (data not shown). Another interest-related item, 'didn't care about the issues' also ranked highly among all age groups, with 36.6 per cent of the younger cohort mentioning this as the main reason for abstentionism (data not shown). In short, young non-voters were more likely than older Canadians to cite a lack of interest, along with personal/administrative reasons, for not voting.

An examination of the links between associational memberships and higher levels of interest in politics revealed that, with one exception, youth members of the various voluntary organizations were more engaged than non-joiners (Table 2). It is also important to note that these differences were only statistically significant in religious-based and artistic/musical/cultural associations.

While youth voluntarism is occasionally associated with higher levels of interest in politics, it bears no direct relationship with interest in the 2000 election (Table 2). In four of seven examples, association members were more interested than non-members, but the differences were statistically insignificant. Furthermore, young members of charitable organizations, neighbourhood associations

and environmental/human rights groups actually expressed *less* interest in the election, although these differences were also insignificant. These findings might be explained by the fact that young members of neighbourhood associations may view local politics as more relevant to their lives. Youths involved in environmental/human rights organizations may not view electoral politics as the best means to advance their causes, especially when most parties winning significant representation in the House of Commons do not emphasize these issues in their manifestoes.

Another indicator of interest in politics is the propensity to discuss this subject with family and friends (Table 2). Young members of charitable organizations, neighbourhood associations and environmental/human rights associations were significantly more likely than non-members to report doing this often or sometimes. Since the latter two forms of associations appear to be more directly concerned with public policy, it is not surprising that membership would be more closely associated with an increased propensity to discuss political issues. The link between charitable organization memberships and political discussions is less intuitive, and not easily explained by the available data. It does raise the intriguing possibility that seemingly apolitical organizations can stimulate greater awareness of social issues, a finding that has been noted elsewhere.

In sum, the capacity of voluntary organizational memberships to stimulate youth interest in politics or the 2000 election is modest and contingent on the form of voluntarism. As shown here, different organizational memberships are associated with different forms of expresion of interest. Young members of religious-based and artistic/musical/cultural groups expressed significantly higher levels of interest in politics, while the propensity to discuss politics was noted for members of three different organizations. Equally important is the absence of a direct relationship between interest in elections and involvement in other forms of civic affairs.

Past and Intended Turnout Patterns

Pammett and LeDuc's report proposes that facilitating the registration of new and mobile voters such as youth and introducing internet voting could offer some practical solutions to declining turnout. This section asks whether voluntarism can lead to more electoral participation. An analysis of self-reported turnout in the 2000 election suggests the answer is no. The only organizational membership that proved to be positively associated with youth turnout rates was the trade union/professional category (Table 3). In all other instances, young members were no more likely to cast a ballot than non-members. The fact that trade union/professional members were more likely to have voted than other members of associational groups might be explained by the links which the trade union movement shares with one of Canada's parliamentary parties, and by the fact that members of "inward" professional and union organizations may see elections as a direct way to advance their material interests. It is also reasonable to argue that members of neighbourhood, charitable and artistic/musical/cultural clubs do not view federal elections as the most effective vehicles for accomplishing their goals.

On their own, these findings suggest that the prospects for most forms of voluntarism to instill a greater sense of civic duty are dim. However, without knowing the sequence of whether the respondents joined these organizations before or after the election, it is impossible to know the

specific role they played in mobilizing the vote. Upon examination of the professed intention to vote in the next election, we detect many more, albeit weak relationships between vote intentions and associational memberships. Young members of five different organizations (religious-based, sports group/leisure/hobby, charitable, neighbourhood, artistic/musical/cultural) were significantly more likely to say they were 'very or somewhat likely' to vote in the next election than non-joiners. Acknowledging that the question measures intended behaviour and that people tend to over-report actual behaviour, the responses do suggest that a strong majority of youth members of these organizations are at least considering voting, and have not yet rejected it outright as a useful exercise in self-expression (Table 3).

Civic Duty

The Pammett/LeDuc study identified a sense of civic duty as the second-most important factor predicting turnout in the 1993 and 1997 elections and the third-most important factor in 2000. Since this paper later shows that civic duty was the most important factor in predicting youth turnout in 2000, it is important to examine whether youths who belong to associations are more likely than non-joiners to agree with these sentiments. On this count, the data in Table 3 show that the potential for voluntarism to instill a sense that it is "essential or very important to vote" is disappointing. In no case were members of the seven varieties of associations significantly more likely than non-members to indicate that it was "essential/very important" to vote. This is because two-thirds of members and non-members alike subscribe to these beliefs (data not shown). It is also important to note that while members were no more likely than non-members to feel this sense of civic duty, there was no evidence that voluntarism led to a rejection of the civic duty concept.

Party Membership

As organizations that are responsible for aggregating societal interests, recruiting elected representatives, developing policies, and forming the government and opposition, political parties are the cornerstones of Canadian democracy. Biographies and interview evidence inform us that many career politicians first honed their political and community networking skills in the voluntary sector (Lapp; Jedwab). What is unclear is whether the links between parties and volunteer organizations also apply to the youth cohort.

What becomes apparent is that volunteer organizations can be fertile recruiting grounds for more youthful party members (Table 4). Members of all seven types of associations were significantly more likely to be party members than youths who were not involved in volunteer organizations. Between 12 and 28 per cent of young associational members were also members of political parties, exceeding the national average of 5 per cent. It is also noteworthy that the correlations between organizational and party memberships were moderate to moderately-strong. These findings are noteworthy for reasons beyond the fact that they show that voluntarism is linked to one aspect of youth engagement in formal politics. Recalling the importance of a lack of interest in politics and elections as prime reasons why young people did not vote in 2000, 18-29-year-old party members were much more likely than non-party members in their age cohort to express significantly higher levels of interest in politics (60.5 percent versus 43.8 percent) and in the 2000 election (48.6% versus 35%) (data not shown). Although the relationships between party membership and the two indicators of interest were weak (CV=.08 and .07, respectively), they

suggest that youth voluntarism might indirectly stimulate higher levels of political interest, and eventually, turnout, through political party membership.

Informal Political Involvement

An assessment of the civic potential of voluntarism is not complete unless the informal dimension of political involvement is examined. Young members of charitable/service club, sports/leisure/hobby and environmental/human rights associations were significantly more engaged than non-members in five of the six informal activities (Table 5). Members of neighbourhood, trade union/professional associations and artistic/musical/cultural groups were significantly more engaged in three activities, while members of religious-based organizations were no more prone to engage in unconventional political action than non-members (Table 5).

The association between membership in groups such as charitable and sporting organizations that are not primarily concerned with politics, and informal political activism, is less intuitive than the connection between involvement in environmental/human rights organizations and the increased likelihood of their members signing petitions, joining boycotts, demonstrating, attending meetings or rallies, or writing letters. Nevertheless, this testitifes to the capacity of volunteer organizations to serve as places where the political skills of persuasion and group mobilization are learned, regardless of whether they are employed to press for the construction of new sports facilities, to advocate on behalf of the disadvantaged, or to promote conservation. It is also interesting that young members of religious-based associations were less inclined to participate in more unconventional forms of political activism than members of other types of organizations. This suggests that some associational involvements are associated with more conservative forms of political action.

Evidence from The Multivariate Analyses

Numerous socio-demographic and attitudinal factors account for variations in rates of political participation. These factors - education, income, age, marital status, the presence of children in the household, birthplace, the language one first learns at home, the length of time spent in a community, a sense of civic duty, interest in politics or the election, discussing politics with one's family and friends in the present or while growing up, administrative barriers (such as not having one's name on the voters' list), contact by political parties, and perceptions that one's vote can make a difference - will be included in most of the models. In the instances where it does not make sense to include some of these variables in the equation (i.e. including administrative barriers to voting to predict party membership), they will be excluded.

Interest in Elections

Since a lack of interest in the 2000 election was cited by youths as the main reason why they did not vote, we felt it important to examine why some youths expressed 'very or somewhat' high levels of interest in the election and others did not. The results illustrated that membership in a sports/hobby/leisure group was associated with higher levels of interest in the election, while memberships in charitable/service and environmental/human rights organizations were negatively associated with interest (Table 7, Model 2). That involvement in charitable/service and environmental/human rights organizations should be associated with lower levels of interest in the election might be explained by the fact that these groups are largely concerned with non-partisan

issues that do not figure prominently in campaigns. That membership in a sports/hobby/leisure group can serve as a catalyst for greater interest in the campaign is not easily explained and merits further investigation.

These three factors remained significant even after most controls were applied, with the exception of the two most important predictor variables - expression of 'very or somewhat high levels' of interest in politics and a feeling that it was 'essential or very important to vote'. The inclusion of three voluntary organization membership items in the model speaks to the importance of understanding how different varieties of voluntarism can have important and different civic outcomes for youths.

Civic Duty

Although a strong majority of Canadians think voting is essential or very important, youths are less inclined to feel this way. Since it will be demonstrated that a sense that the voting act is valuable for its own sake is the most important predictor of youth turnout (Table 6, Model 1), it is crucial to understand the factors which induce young Canadians to reject an instrumentalist approach to voting. What we found is that just one form of voluntarism - belonging to an artistic/musical/cultural club - was positively and significantly associated with a heightened sense of civic duty (data not shown). The potential for these types of organizations to cultivate a sense of civic duty in the young is intriguing. The failure of other organizations - particularly those with more obvious political causes at the heart of their missions - to do the same is equally interesting. Might neighbourhood associations focus the attention of homeowning youths on their private aspirations? Could membership in environmental and human rights organizations contribute to a sense that the voting act is futile, given the success achieved by these new social movement organizations outside the electoral arena? Without follow-up interviews with members, these possibilities remain speculative.

Not surprisingly, higher levels of education and interest in the election, 4 years or more of residency in the neighbourhood, and a feeling that one's vote would make a difference in the district were positively associated with a feeling that voting is essential or important. Residency in a large city was also associated with these sentiments, a finding which challenges conventional wisdom about the link between residency in smaller centres and political engagement.

Past and Intended Self-Reported Turnout

The clearest evidence that more active youth volunteers would not necessarily translate into higher youth turnout is supported by the fact that none of the associational memberships were related to turnout in 2000 (Table 6, Model 1). Instead, a sense of civic duty, personal contact by parties or local candidates during the election, higher levels of education and interest in the election, and inclusion on the voters list were significant predictors of turnout.

When asked about their intention to vote in the next federal election, youth members of sport/leisure/hobby clubs and artistic/musical/cultural clubs were significantly more likely to indicate that they would or that it would be 'very likely' that they would cast a ballot, than members of other organizations (Table 6, Model 2). Environmental/human rights organization members,

indicated they would probably not vote in the next election. This is the second instance where youths committed to these causes expressed lower levels of psychological or behavioural engagement in formal politics, suggesting they view this arena as irrelevant to the achievement of their goals. The political science literature provides few clues as to why membership in sports/leisure/hobby and artistic/musical/cultural clubs demonstrates the greatest potential to mobilize youths in the formal political arena, either in terms of instilling a greater sense of civic duty, higher levels of interest in the 2000 election, or a professed willingness to vote in the next election. This points to the need to incorporate an interdisciplinary perspective into future studies of youth political participation.

Additional factors associated with the increased likelihood of voting in the next election include higher levels of interest in politics, a sense that one' vote made a difference in the electoral district, birth in Canada, fewer children in the household, residency outside Quebec, and French-language speakers.

Party Membership

Although Canadian political parties are graying, the model suggests that they consider religious-based and sports/leisure/hobby clubs as potential recruiting grounds for more youthful members (Table 7, Model 1). That religious organizations should be closely tied to youth party membership is intriguing, and recalls the historic role which various faith-based organizations have played in exhorting their followers to support particular public policies or parties. This underscores the persistence of ties between religion and politics in Canada.

The absence of a relationship between involvements in more overtly political organizations such as neighbourhood associations and political parties might be explained by the local scale of the issues which concern these groups. In short, these youths likely do not view their local party associations as effective ways to address concerns about neighbourhood safety, planning and development, and property taxes. Meanwhile, youths belonging to environmental and/or human rights organizations were not significantly drawn to parties, which might be explained by perceptions that new social movement groups are better-placed to press for post-materialist causes than traditional political parties that must accommodate diverse and competing interests under their umbrellas.

It is fascinating to note that personal contacts with party or local candidates worked against the inclination to join a political party. Personal contacts with partisan figures might mobilize the vote (Table 6, Model 1), but not long-term commitments to political organizations. Other socio-demographic variables that significantly predicted the likelihood of youth membership in a political party were gender, the presence of children in the household and province of residency. Male respondents, respondents with more children under the age of 18 who might perceive they have a greater stake in the ideological composition of future governments than youths with fewer family responsibilties, and residents of Quebec, were more likely to join parties than youths outside those categories.

Informal Politics

The relationship between youth voluntarism and various indicators of formal political engagement is sporadic and contingent on the type of involvement. The same cannot be said for its relationship with informal political activism. Three of the seven associational activities examined - hobby/sports/leisure, charitable/service, and artistic/musical memberships - were associated with higher index scores of informal political activism (Table 8). It is clear that membership in these organizations was not associated with a withdrawal from public life, with demonstrations, letter-writing and petition-signing the most popular forms of political action. Meanwhile, young members of neighborhood associations were less likely to engage in informal activism. In the absence of additional information about these individuals, it is plausible to posit that they are young homeowners, and that these responsibilities may exert more conservative effects on their political behaviour.

Among the other factors associated with informal political activism were levels of education and interest in politics, being Canadian-born, and reporting a mother tongue other than English or French. One may attribute the preference of young immigrants to forego high intensity, informal modes of political participation to the possibility they do not feel sufficiently comfortable or established to participate in controversial actions in a new country. Language does not appear to be a barrier as youths reporting non-Official Language mother tongues had higher index scores than youths whose first language learned was English and/or French.

The Potential of Voluntarism

This study set out to test competing hypotheses about how voluntarism shapes civic outcomes for young Canadians. It found little evidence to suggest that voluntarism encourages withdrawal from formal and informal political activities, or a 'privatised' response to social problems. The one caveat to this statement lies in the fact that members of environmental/human rights organizations professed lower levels of interest in the 2000 election and indicated that it was unlikely they would cast a ballot in the next election. Given that environmental issues have never figured prominently in Canadian election campaigns, it is logical that members of these groups would feel their energies are best channelled through other avenues of political mobilization.

The lack of evidence showing that voluntarism generally depresses youth political participation does not imply an unqualified endorsement of its potential to reinvigorate civic engagement amongst members of this cohort. It is clear that the impact of voluntarism on civic outcomes is contingent on the form of unpaid service and the type of political activity under examination. This is not to discount the strong potential of several forms of voluntarism to stimulate higher rates of youth participation in political parties and informal political activism, even after controlling for other factors. Although no relationship between voluntarism and reported turnout in the last election was apparent, members of the sport/leisure/hobby and artistic/musical/cultural clubs indicated they were more likely to turn out to vote in the next election. Given the crucial nature that interest in a particular election and a sense of civic duty have in predicting turnout, it is noteworthy that involvement in a sport/leisure/hobby and artistic/musical/cultural clubs were positively associated with at least one of these attitudes.

It would be premature to tout voluntarism as the most effective solution to reversing relatively low rates of youth participation in formal and informal political activities. Affiliations with trade/professional, religious-based and environmental/human rights groups were not related to higher scores on the informal activism index and with most indicators of formal political engagement. Although charitable/organization and neighbourhood associational involvements were not generally associated with most indicators of formal engagement, the former affilations were positively associated with informal activism.

Sometimes there are surprises which are not easily explained by the literature in the discipline. Membership in artistic/cultural/musical groups is associated with a heightened sense of civic duty, while sports/leisure/hobby group involvements exhibit a capacity to mobilize formal and informal political participation as no other form of unpaid service. These findings speak to the importance of understanding the qualitative differences between different types of involvements and the very different political outcomes that can result. They also underline the need to understand more about the specific activities of these organizations through alternate research strategies that can provide more detail and context than large-scale survey data.

What the data allow us to conclude is that some forms of voluntarism exhibit a modest to strong potential to stimulate more participation or interest in formal and informal political activities amongst Canadian youths, while others have no or negative effects. Since this is no small achievement given the many other factors influencing human behaviour, policymakers should not overlook that potential when formulating strategies to renew civic Canada.

Table 1 - Associational Memberships by Age (%)

Associations/Clubs	**18-29 years**	**30 years and up**	**CV**
Trade Union/Professional	**25 (146)**	**36.5 (531)**	**.11*** **
Church/Religious-based	**35.6 (208)**	**47.1 (687)**	**.10*** **
Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	**45.8 (268)**	**40.9 (595)**	**.04***
Charitable Organization/Service Club	**23.4 (136)**	**33.2 (482)**	**.09** **
Neighbourhood Association	**17.6 (103)**	**24.3 (353)**	**.07*** **
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	21.9 (128)	19.9 (291)	0.02
Environmental/Human Rights	11.6 (68)	12.8 (187)	0.01

*p≤.05; **p≤.01; ***p≤.001

Table 2 - Associational Memberships and Political Interest, 18-29-year-olds (column %)

Interest in Politics (Very/Somewhat)	**Members**	**Non-Members**	**CV**
Trade Union/Professional	48.6 (71)	43.4 (190)	0.04
Church/Religious-based	**51.4 (107)**	**41.1 (155)**	**.09***
Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	44.8 (120)	44.9 (142)	0.02
Charitable Organization/Service Club	47.1 (64)	44.3 (197)	0.02
Neighbourhood Association	46.6 (48)	44.4 (214)	0.01
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	**53.9 (69)**	**42.5 (194)**	**.09***
Environmental/Human Rights	51.5 (35)	44 (227)	0.04
Interest in Election (Very/Somewhat)			
Trade Union/Professional	38.1 (56)	34.9 (152)	0.02
Church/Religious-based	39.6 (82)	33.6 (126)	0.06

Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	37.3 (100)	34.6 (109)	0.02
Charitable Organization/Service Club	33.3 (45)	36.9 (163)	0.03
Neighbourhood Association	30.1 (31)	37 (177)	0.05
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	39.4 (50)	34.9 (159)	0.03
Environmental/Human Rights	27.9 (19)	37 (190)	0.06
Discuss Politics with Family/Friends (Often/Sometimes)			
Trade Union/Professional	71.9 (105)	65.8 (287)	0.05
Church/Religious-based	69.6 (144)	66.1 (250)	0.03
Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	69 (185)	65.9 (209)	0.03
Charitable Organization/Service Club	**76.3 (103)**	**64.9 (289)**	**.10****
Neighbourhood Association	**76.9 (80)**	**65.3 (314)**	**.09***
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	70.3 (90)	66.4 (303)	0.03
Environmental/Human Rights	**79.4 (54)**	**65.8 (339)**	**.09***

*p≤.05; **p≤.01

Table 3 - Associational Membership Status and Electoral Activities, 18-29-yr.-olds (column %)

Voted in 2000 Election	**Members**	**Non-Members**	**Phi**
Trade Union/Professional	**27.4 (40)**	**19.2 (106)**	**-.087***
Church/Religious-based	24 (50)	19.9 (75)	-0.05
Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	24.5 (66)	18.9 (60)	-0.07
Charitable Organization/Service Club	22. (31)	21.3 (95)	-0.02
Neighbourhood Association	20.4 (21)	21.6 (104)	0.01
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	21.3 (27)	21.4 (98)	0
Environmental/Human Rights	25 (17)	20.7 (107)	-0.03
Very/Somewhat Likely to Vote in Next Election			**CV**
Trade Union/Professional	76 (111)	74.7 (322)	0.01
Church/Religious-based	**80.3 (167)**	**72.2 (267)**	**.09***

Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	**79 (211)**	**71.5 (223)**	**.08***
Charitable Organization/Service Club	80 (18)	74.3 (326)	0.05
Neighbourhood Association	**83.5 (86)**	**73.1 (347)**	**.09***
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	**85 (108)**	**72.3 (326)**	**.12****
Environmental/Human Rights	76.5 (52)	74.9 (381)	0.12
Voting Essential/Very Important			**CV**
Trade Union/Professional	65.1 (95)	64.6 (279)	0.01
Church/Religious-based	67.8 (139)	63.2 (237)	0.04
Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	66.7 (176)	63.2 (199)	0.03
Charitable Organization/Service Club	69.4 (93)	63.9 (282)	0.04
Neighbourhood Association	65 (65)	64.8 (311)	0
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	70.1 (89)	63.4 (287)	0.05
Environmental/Human Rights	67.2 (45)	64.3 (329)	0.01

*p≤.05; **p≤.01

Table 4 - Association Members who belong to Political Parties, 18-29-year-olds (column %)

Associations/Clubs	**Members**	**Non-Members**	**Phi**
Trade Union/Professional	**13.7 (20)**	**3.9 (17)**	**.17*****
Church/Religious-based	**12.5 (26)**	**2.9 (11)**	**.18*****
Sports Group/Hobby/Leisure	**11.9 (32)**	**1.6 (5)**	**.21*****
Charitable Organization/Service Club	**16.2 (22)**	**3.4 (5)**	**.22*****
Neighbourhood Association	**19.4 (20)**	**3.7 (18)**	**.24*****
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Club	**13.4 (17)**	**4.4 (20)**	**.15*****
Environmental/Human Rights	**27.9 (19)**	**3.7 (19)**	**.31*****

***p≤.001

Table 5 - Associational Memberships and Informal Political Engagement (have done in past/distant past), 18-29-year-olds (row %)

Associations /Clubs	Petition	Boycott	Demon-stration	Letter	Talk Show	Meeting/ Rally
TradeUnion/ Professional						
Member	76 (111)	**17.5 (25)**	**32.2 (47)**	20.5 (30)	10.3 (15)	**28.1 (41)**
Non-Member	68.9 (297)	**9.2 (40)****	**19.1(83)*****	16.2 (70)	6.9 (30)	**15.9(69)*****
Religious-Based						
Member	71 (147)	11.2 (23)	19.2 (40)	19.7 (41)	7.2 (15)	23.1 (48)
Non-Member	69.7 (262)	11.3 (42)	24.1 (90)	15.8 (59)	8 (30)	16.6 (62)
Sports/Hobby/ Leisure						
Member	**80.3 (216)**	13.3 (35)	**26.7 (71)**	**22.9 (61)**	**12.7 (34)**	**26.4 (70)**
Non-Member	**61.7(193)*****	9.8 (31)	**18.7 (59)***	**12.4(39)*****	**3.5 (11)*****	**13. (41)*****
Charitable/ Service						
Member	77 (104)	**16.5 (22)**	**39.7 (54)**	**28.7 (39)**	**18.5 (25)**	**36.8 (50)**

Non-Member	68.8 (304)	**9.7 (43)***	**17.2(76)*****	**13.8(61)*****	**4.3 (19)*****	**13.9 (61)*****
Neighbourhood						
Member	**78.6 (81)**	9.9 (10)	27.2 (28)	**26.2 (27)**	11.7 (12)	**30.1 (31)**
Non-Member	**68.4 (327)***	11.5 (55)	21.3 (108)	**15.3(73)****	6.9 (33)	**16.6 (79)*****
Artistic/ Musical/ Cultural						
Member	74.2 (95)	15 (19)	**35.9 (46)**	**29.7 (38)**	8.6 (11)	**34.4 (44)**
Non-Member	69.2 (314)	10.2 (46)	**18.7(85)*****	**13.7(62)*****	7.5 (34)	**14.8 (67)*****
Environmental Human Rights						
Member	**85.3 (58)**	**22.1 (15)**	**36.8 (25)**	**27.9 (19)**	7.4 (5)	**29.4 (20)**
Non-Member	**68.2(349)****	**9.8 (50)****	**20.7(106)****	**15.6(80)****	7.8 (40)	**17.8 (91)***

Source: Survey of Voters and Non-voters
*p≤.05; **p≤.01; *** p≤.001

Table 6 - Impact of Voluntarism on Turnout and Likelihood of Voting, logistic regression estimates

Model 1 - Turnout in 2000 Model 2 - Very/Somewhat Likely to Vote	**Model 1**				**Model 2**			
	B	**S.E.**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**B**	**S.E.**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**
Very/Smwt. int'd in politics	-0.26	0.47	0.58	0.77	**1.97**	**0.707**	**0.01**	7.21
Very/Smwt. int'd in election	**1.91**	**0.46**	**0**	**6.79**	-0.18	0.492	0.7	0.82
Name on Voters' List	**1.9**	**0.66**	**0**	**6.73**	0.19	0.544	0.72	1.21
Vote Made a Difference in My Electoral District	0.71	0.48	0.13	2.04	**2.09**	**0.698**	**0**	8.11
Chance My Vote Mattered in the Country	-0.35	0.51	0.49	0.7	-0.22	0.693	0.73	0.79
Personal Contact By Local Candidates/Parties	**1.27**	**0.62**	**0.04**	**3.58**	-0.12	0.522	0.81	0.88
Contact By Parties	-0.44	0.28	0.28	0.64	-0.33	0.532	0.53	0.71
Voting Essential/Very Import.	**2.78**	**0.65**	**0**	**16.26**	0.58	0.427	0.17	1.79
Trade/Professional Assoc.	-0.25	0.44	0.57	0.77	0.15	0.514	0.76	1.16
Church/Religious Assoc.	-.1.00	0.44	0.82	0.9	0.49	0.466	0.29	1.63
Sport/Hobby/Leisure Club	0.09	0.4	0.81	1.09	**0.9**	**0.452**	**0.04**	**2.47**
Charitable/Service Org.	-0.58	0.51	0.25	0.55	-0.85	0.627	0.17	0.42

Neighbourhood Assoc.	0.59	0.58	0.31	1.81	0.78	0.748	0.29	2.19
Artistic/Musical/Cultural	-0.89	0.48	0.07	0.41	**1.85**	**0.737**	**0.01**	**6.38**
Environmental/Human Rights	0.25	0.57	0.66	1.28	**-1.66**	**0.793**	**0.03**	**0.19**
Discussed Politics with Family While Growing Up (often/sometimes)	0.09	0.4	0.81	1.09	0.67	0.461	0.14	1.97
Seldom/Never Discusses Politics with Family/Friends	-1	0.6	0.1	0.36	-0.18	0.492	0.7	0.82
Male	-0.3	0.4	0.45	0.73	0.3	0.439	0.48	1.36
French	0.85	0.94	0.36	2.34	**3.22**	**1.302**	**0.01**	**25.12**
Official Language mother tongue	-0.34	0.97	0.73	0.71	-22.79	7142.97	0.99	0
Born in Canada	1.36	0.84	0.1	3.9	**2.82**	**1.146**	**0.01**	**16.82**
Some/Completed University	**2.05**	**0.64**	**0**	**7.82**	0.19	0.508	0.69	1.22
Hhld. Income $45,000+	0.76	0.43	0.08	2.15	0.18	0.439	0.67	1.2
Married/Common-law	0.58	0.43	0.18	1.79	-0.21	0.452	0.63	0.8
# Children < 18 years in Hhld.	0.19	0.268	0.47	1.21	**-0.54**	**0.236**	**0.02**	**0.57**
Quebec Residency	-0.76	0.95	0.42	0.46	**-2.88**	**1.251**	**0.02**	**0.05**
Residency in Large City	-0.1	0.42	0.89	0.94	-0.22	0.477	0.63	0.79
4 years + in Neighbourhood	0.52	0.44	0.23	1.68	0.5	0.45	0.26	1.65
Constant	-10.1	2	0	0	18.65	7142.97	0.99	1.27e+08
2 LL	211.90				184.15			
Overall % Correctly Classified	77				82.5			
Cox and Snell R Square	.382				.348			
N=	221				221			

Source: Survey of Voters and Non-voters

Table 7 - Impact of Voluntarism on Party Membership and Interest in Election, logistic regression estimates

Model 1 - Party Membership Model 2 -Very/Somewhat Interested in Election	**Model 1**				**Model 2**			
	B	**S.E.**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**	**B**	**S.E.**	**Sig.**	**Exp(B)**
Very/Smwt. int'd in politics	-0.1	1.08	0.936	0.91	**2.4**	**0.36**	**0**	**11.03**
Very/Smwt. int'd in election								
Name on Voters' List					0.33	0.41	0.42	1.39
Vote Made a Difference in My Electoral District					-0.22	0.41	0.59	0.8
Chance My Vote Mattered in Country					0.032	0.42	0.94	1.03
Personal Contact By Local Candidates/Parties	**-3.53**	**1.68**	**0.04**	**0.02**	0.23	0.46	0.6	1.26
Contact By Parties	1.77	1.59	0.26	5.88	0.29	0.36	0.41	1.34
Voting Essential/ Very Important	0.24	1.22	0.84	1.27	**1.29**	**0.39**	**0**	**3.65**
Trade/Professional Assoc.	-2.31	1.43	0.1	0.1	0.12	0.4	0.75	1.13
Church/Religious Assoc.	**3.54**	**1.27**	**0**	**34.61**	0.03	0.35	0.92	1.03
Sport/Hobby/Leisure Club	**3.53**	**1.46**	**0.02**	**34.11**	**0.65**	**0.33**	**0.05**	**1.91**
Charitable/Service Org.	0.36	1.18	0.75	1.44	**-0.87**	**0.45**	**0.05**	**0.41**
Neighbourhood Assoc.	2.16	1.39	0.12	8.72	-0.36	0.48	0.46	0.69

Artistic/Musical/Cultural	-2.5	1.84	0.17	0.08	0.15	0.4	0.69	1.17
Environmental/Human Rights Organization	2.12	1.29	0.1	8.36	**-1.08**	**0.53**	**0.04**	**0.33**
Discussed Politics with Family While Growing Up (often/sometimes)	0.67	1.21	0.57	1.96	0.15	0.35	0.67	1.16
Seldom/Never Discusses Politics with Family/Friends	-21.5	2330.2	0.99	0	-0.04	0.46	0.92	0.95
Male	**3.86**	**1.48**	**0**	**47.63**	0.35	0.32	0.28	1.42
French	-1.8	3.06	0.55	0.16	-1.55	0.86	0.07	0.21
Official Language mother tongue	-1.67	2.27	0.46	0.18	-1	0.85	0.23	0.36
Born in Canada	-0.21	1.8	0.9	0.8	0.85	0.79	0.27	2.35
Some/completed university	-1.31	1.3	0.31	0.26	-0.07	0.43	0.87	0.93
Hhld. Income $45,000+	0.81	1.35	0.55	2.24	0.34	0.35	0.33	1.4
Married/Common-law	1.49	1.27	0.24	4.46	-0.07	0.36	0.85	0.93
# children < 18 years in hhld.	**1.4**	**0.68**	**0.04**	**4.06**	0.15	0.18	0.42	1.16
Quebec Residency	**7.06**	**3.34**	**0.04**	**1173.72**	0.25	0.84	0.76	1.28
Residency in Large City	1.51	1.08	0.16	4.55	0.2	0.35	0.56	1.22
4 years+ in Neighbourhood	2.47	1.44	0.09	11.85	0.27	0.35	0.43	1.31
Constant	-11.8	3.73	0	0	-3.34	1.29	0.01	0.03
-2 LL	49.188				279.948			
Cox and Snell R Squared	.247				.36			
Overall % Correctly Classified	92.5				73.2			
N=268					221			

Table 8 - The Impact of Voluntarism on Informal Political Activism (Index Scores), OLS regression estimates

	B	S.E.	Beta	Sig.
Trade/Professional Association	0.2	0.16	0.06	0.22
Church/Religious Association	-0.26	0.14	-0.08	0.06
Sport/Hobby/Leisure Club	**0.65**	**0.14**	**0.22**	**0**
Charitable/Service Organization	**0.49**	**0.17**	**0.14**	**0.01**
Neighbourhood Association	**-0.55**	**0.2**	**-0.14**	**0.01**
Artistic/Musical/Cultural Clubs	**0.57**	**0.17**	**0.16**	**0**
Environmental/Human Rights Organization	0.34	0.22	0.07	0.12
Voting Essential/Very Important	-0.03	0.14	-0.01	0.81
Very/somewhat Interested in Politics	**0.38**	**0.16**	**0.12**	**0.01**
Discussed Politics with Family While Growing Up (often/sometimes)	0.21	0.14	0.07	0.13
Seldom/Never Discusses Politics with Family/Friends	-0.32	0.17	-0.1	0.06
Male	-0.15	0.14	-0.05	0.25
French	-0.05	0.17	-0.01	0.76
Official Language Mother Tongue	**-0.78**	**0.31**	**-0.15**	**0.01**
Born in Canada	**0.74**	**0.29**	**0.14**	**0.01**
Some/Completed University Education	**0.37**	**0.15**	**0.11**	**0.01**

Hhld. Income 45,000+	-0.02	0.14	-0.008	0.88
Married/Common-law	-0.08	0.14	-0.02	0.58
# children < 18 years in hhld.	0.032	0.07	0.02	0.66
Residency in Large City	0.24	0.14	0.07	0.1
4 years+ in Neighbourhood	-0.07	0.14	-0.02	0.59
Constant	1.22	0.46		0.01
N=405				
Adjusted R-squared=.21				

Source: Survey of Voters and Non-voters

Notes

i. It is Pammett and LeDuc's view that it is inadvisable to rely on single indicators of civic duty and political interest as independent predictors of voting because their explanatory value is problematic. They argue that using these variables with others as part of factor scores allows some of the impact of these factors to be demonstrated without dominating the analysis (2003). The author of this paper chose not to use factor scores combining related variables in the multivariate models because an analysis of collinearity diagnostics indicates these are distinct items that do not explain each other. The Variance Inflation Factor and tolerance statistics for items measuring interest in elections and politics, the frequency of discussions of politics with family and friends, the perceived importance of voting, and perceptions about the competitiveness of elections in the country and electoral district, were all within acceptable ranges.

2. Three of the five indicators of formal political engagement were ordinal variables with more than two response categories. These indicators include the perceived importance of voting (essential, very important, not very important, not important at at all); the likelihood of voting in the next election (very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, not at all likely); interest in the 2000 election (very, somewhat, not very, not at all). In their report, Pammet and LeDuc collapse the ordinal categories of the Civic Duty item into two categories for use in an OLS regression model (2003). At this preliminary stage, I adopted the common, but not universally accepted, practise of collapsing ordinal categories into a binary format for ease of use and interpretation. It is reasonable to argue that the three variables can be considered binary choices as the categories

measure finer degrees of likely/unlikely activities, or approving/disapproving attitudes. Subsequent analyses will employ ordinal regression modelling techniques.

3. The six participation items in Table 5 were included in the index after a reliability analysis confirmed they were measuring the same construct. Index scores were computed by assigning one point to an affirmative response to each item and no points to a negative response. Thus, index scores for each respondent ranged from a minimum of '0' to a maximum of '6'. Missing responses were excluded.

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