"Partisanship, Political Interest, and Federal Elections on Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland"

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## Introduction

In recent years Canadians have heard warnings from academics, editorial writers and politicians about an alarming decline in voter turnout. Low turnout, it is said, leads to unequal influence for certain groups within society and reduces the government's moral authority to govern. A decline in voter participation is also related to the overall health of our political community. If citizens are not voting, the critics contend, they are probably less engaged in other forms of civic participation and community life. There has also been widespread agreement among theorists ranging from Aristotle to Rousseau, Tocqueville, and Mill, that one of the foremost benefits of participation is that of education. Voting, in this sense, is an essential part of human development that fosters political efficacy, interest, and knowledge. Political participation is both a means and an end in itself.

Warnings about low turnout have intensified in Canada since 2000 when only 64 percent of eligible voters participated in the federal election. A basic Canadian politics textbook invariably explains how turnout has declined by 14-points over the past four elections since 1988. But we are not always reminded that the decline has been less consistent and less precipitous in certain parts of Canada. Neither are we informed about the significant gap between provinces in electoral participation. The fact is that people in some provinces are more likely to vote than people in others. This is most obvious for Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. In 2004 the gap between these provinces reached 22 percent when 71 percent of Prince Edward Islanders voted compared to only 49 percent of Newfoundlanders.

What makes Newfoundland more prone to low turnout than Prince Edward Island? To address the research question, this essay begins by examining the three major explanations for why people vote: resources, mobilization, and instrumental mobilization. Based on these approaches, I adduce three hypotheses to explain the turnout gap between these provinces. The first is that Prince Edward Islanders vote more than Newfoundlanders because of their extensive and intense connections with national political parties. The second is that campaign contact is more common on Prince Edward Island and those people who are contacted are more likely to vote. The third is that on Prince Edward Island higher participation rates are the consequence of higher levels of political interest and information.

In order to test these hypotheses this paper uses pooled data from the Canadian Election Studies. The evidence presented here suggests that party identification, political interest, and political information do provide a partial explanation for the turnout gap. I argue that the differences in voting behaviour in these provinces may be a function of their unique experiences with Canadian federalism. The presence of cooperation between parties at the national and sub-national level on Prince Edward Island could explain why party identification, in particular, is a strong determinant of voting. However, little evidence is found to support the hypothesis that campaign contact is important in explaining differential turnout rates. The final section of the paper discusses the implications of these findings for the literature on turnout and uses simulations to predict how much these factors affect the probability of voting.

## Perspectives on Voter Turnout

What makes a person more or less likely to participate in an election? Franklin (2002) suggests that explanations of variations in turnout fall into three basic groups: resources, mobilization, and instrumental mobilization. Resources are the combination of socio-economic status (income and education) and free time to participate that draw people to the democratic process. Mobilization is a consciousness that can be inculcated in people by recruitment networks such as political parties, unions, religious organizations or environmental groups. Lastly, theories of instrumental mobilization underscore motivational factors such as political interest, awareness, and issues that foster a desire in people to collectively affect public policy.

Theories that stress the importance of individual-level *resources* to explain electoral participation are well documented in traditional political participation literature (Verba and Nie, 1972; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). In particular, the well-known 1972 "SES model," introduced by Verba and Nie, stands out for demonstrating a relationship between an individual's social and economic status and political participation. Their analysis suggests that income and education are the principal predictors of voting and non-voting. What also emerges from their study is that these democratic resources appear to be highly related with each other. Not surprisingly, people with the most money generally achieve the highest levels of education and vice versa. This spiral effect further reinforces their main proposition that high socio-economic status significantly increases the likelihood of casting a ballot in an election.

The second group of theories proposed to explain turnout focuses on the role of groups and organizations, especially political parties (Campbell et al., 1960; Verba et al., 1978; Nagel, 1987; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Gray and Caul, 2000). Franklin (2002: 152) describes *mobilization* as a "heightened awareness" of one's role in the democratic process that can be instilled in people through the operations of recruitment networks. Accordingly, casting a ballot on election day is viewed as the end result of "get out and vote" pressures from political parties, social networks, family, trade unions, and the news media. Turnout is, thus, related to factors such as religious participation, party attachments, union membership, campaign contact, and media exposure. The most significant critique of this hypothesis is that prima facie membership cannot tell us what these organizations do or how often unions, parties, and religious groups mobilize their constituents and encourage electoral participation. This is a serious measurement limitation facing any explanation of voter turnout based on mobilization.

Rational choice theory provides another way of thinking about the mobilization explanation. As is well known, Downs (1957) has suggested that information for political decision-making may be conceptualized as a "cost" to the voter. Rational citizens could be expected to vote if the costs associated with doing so are less than the person's perceived benefit and their calculated probability of casting the decisive ballot (Blais, 2000). For our purposes, campaign contact such as leafleting and canvassing activities can be understood to reduce the costs associated with information gathering. If there is widespread accessibility to low-cost information about a given election the consequence should be higher turnout. Thus, campaign contact may be conceptualized as an alternative measurement strategy for the mobilization approach to turnout. As such, contact with political parties prior to an election may decrease the cost of voting by providing people with low-priced information about the election.

But what about the nature of the relationship between the mobilizing agent and the electorate they contact? Are some people more predisposed to receiving and assimilating political information than others? The key variable of the mobilization model suggests that the answer is yes. Party identification was defined by the Michigan University group (1960: 121) as

an "individual's affective orientation to an important group-object in his [*sic*] environment." Identification with a political party, in their analysis, was shown to be long-term, highly stable, and to strengthen over time. It is, in other words, a durable psychological attachment with a political party. As Fiorina (1992: 248) later explained, identification provides a voter with a "perceptual screen" which serves as a cue-giving device for political judgments and evaluations. Stated differently, psychological faithfulness to a party is an information shortcut (cue-giving device) that facilitates political participation.

A third, and increasingly prominent, explanation of voter turnout is what Franklin terms *instrumental mobilization.* There are two main predictors of participation that underscore this perspective: motivations and institutions. The former component focuses on cognitive orientations such as political interest, information, and issue involvement in addition to resource and agency variables (Verba et al., 1995). The latter stresses maco-level variables such as the type of electoral system, compulsory voting and electoral salience are substantial cross-national determinants of voter turnout (Powell, 1982; Jackman, 1986; van der Eijk, et al., 1996). In terms of the cognitive approach, Verba et al. argue that turnout should be conceptualized differently than other forms of participation such as volunteer campaign work, protesting, or community work (Verba, et al*.,* 1995: 358). The difference, they suggest, is the effect of resources. That is to say, the relationship between education and voting disappears when controls for political engagement are introduced. In the same way, they find that family income, job level, and civic skills have no significant impact on the act of voting. But they do have an effect on what Verba et al. refer to as "time-based" participation acts such as volunteering or protesting. Therefore, their "civic voluntarism" model of voting is chiefly defined by the variables of political engagement and, to a lesser extent, religious attendance and issue engagement. The two main central components of engagement are political interest and information, predictors that makes sense intuitively. People who are more interested and know about politics and the campaign should be more likely to vote in the election.

While the Verba et al. approach provides one example of the instrumental mobilization model, a second approach that falls into this category focuses on institutions (Powell. 1982; Jackman, 1986; van der Eijk, et al., 1996). Above all, this body of literature aims to explain the effects of participation at the macro-level in a similar vein to the participation literature stressing societal modernization (Blais and Carty, 1990; Moon, 1991; Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998). As Franklin demonstrates, macro-level variables such as the type of electoral system, compulsory voting and electoral salience are substantial cross-national determinants of voter turnout (Franklin, 2002: 164). However powerful these predictors may be, it must be recognized that they are beyond the scope of this analysis. We are primarily concerned with the meso-level determinants (mobilizing agencies) and the micro-level determinants (resources and political engagement) of turnout that can explain variation within a single institutional structure. This essay neither refutes nor cooberates the hypothesis that Canada's single member plurality (SMP) electoral system depresses electoral participation. Even if we could positively connect the pattern of declining participation with the faults of the SMP model, the fact still remains that the decline has been much more precipitous in some areas than in others. That is the central research concern of this paper. The following section introduces the case study and discusses how far our meso and micro-perspectives on turnout might travel in explaining the variation. Why do people in certain provinces tend to turn out in greater number than in others?

## The Puzzle of Participation on Canada's Island Provinces

It is often said that the most basic form of participation in a democratic society is voting. In Canada, the participation rate in federal elections since 1896[1] has fluctuated between 61 and 79 percent, as measured by the percentage of eligible voters, (Irvine, 1976 and Elections Canada publications). The zenith of 79 percent turnout occurred consecutively in three elections between 1958 and 1963. Generally speaking, the normal participation rate between 1945 and 1988 was in the mid-seventy percent range. This degree of stability and the relative strength of Canadian turnout rates compared with the United States and Britain led LeDuc (1984: 410), among others, one prominent scholar to suggest that the trend was likely to continue. More recently, however, electoral participation has declined considerably from 75 percent in 1988 to the eventual nadir of 61 percent in 2004. In fact, there is now very little discrepancy between Canada's turnout rate and that of the United States, especially considering their method of calculation.[2]

One of the less obvious and less studied aspects of participation in Canadian federal elections is the sustained variation in turnout by province. Considering federal elections between 1945 and 2004 the difference in turnout levels across provinces ranges from a minimum of 9 percent to a maximum of 33 percent. Residents in some provinces, and regions for that matter, have been clearly more likely to vote than in others. For instance, in Western Canada, Alberta stands out from the other three provinces with a 70 percent average since 1945 compared with a 77 percent average in Saskatchewan. In central Canada, the margin is less pronounced but Ontario has been two points higher on average than Quebec. Eastern Canada, on the other hand, is the region with the most striking difference between provinces. Average turnout on Prince Edward Island is 81 percent compared with only 62 percent in Newfoundland. That means that the gap between these provinces is not only the widest in the Eastern region but also the widest in the country. For that reason, the most evident case of provincial variation in turnout involves Canada's island provinces.

In the vast majority of federal elections since 1945 Prince Edward Island has registered the highest rate of turnout among the provinces. Of 19 total elections, PEI recorded the highest participation rate 15 times and was second highest on three other occasions. The Canadian average of 73 percent is nine points lower than Prince Edward Island's 81 percent average since 1945. More significantly, the gap between turnout in PEI and the rest of Canada has grown rapidly since 1993. In 2000, with the national turnout rate declining, PEI remained stable and therefore widened its lead on the national average by 13 percent, an increase of 7 points from 1997 and 10 points from 1993. It is just as important to note that PEI is not immune from the general pattern of declining participation in Canada. Since 1980 the province has only exceeded the 80 percent plateau once, compared to the 35 year period after 1945 in which participation rarely fell below 85 percent. Nevertheless, high participation rates in Prince Edward Island are holding steady. Since 1993, in particular, Prince Edward Island has maintained a stable turnout above 70 percent while the Canadian rate has fallen to its lowest point since Confederation.

At the other end of the scale, Newfoundland is clearly the province in which the fewest eligible voters participate in federal elections. Since joining Canada in 1949, Newfoundland has produced an average turnout rate of 62 percent from a total of 18 elections. This is 11 points lower than the Canadian average and 19 points less than Prince Edward Island. Notwithstanding 1958, Newfoundland has recorded the lowest provincial turnout in every federal election in which it has participated. On seven occasions, including the three most recent elections, Newfoundland has been unable to surpass 60 percent. Except for a marginal increase in the

1980s, voter turnout on Newfoundland has been declining since 1958. The other main pattern in turnout is the sustained gap between Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Since 1949 the gap has only been below 10 points twice, while it has exceeded 20 percent eight times. All in all, it is fairly obvious that Prince Edward Islanders are considerably more likely to vote in a federal election than Newfoundlanders.

That is the puzzle. How do we understand the variation in electoral participation between these two provinces? In terms of the approaches already discussed, three explanations should be considered. First, there could be a clear disparity in individual-level resources between the citizens of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Are the residents of PEI simply more privileged by our socio-demographic predictors of turnout such as income, education, age, and free time? Second, the mobilization theories suggest that Newfoundlanders might be less stimulated to vote by recruitment networks than Prince Edward Islanders. How well does union membership, religiosity, campaign contact, and party identification predict turnout in these provinces? Third, the instrumental mobilization model suggests that voters in PEI could have more motivation to vote. Can political interest, political information, or issue engagement resolve the turnout puzzle?

On the surface, the first of our three explanations that relies on resources appears to be the least convincing. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland are two of the most alike provinces in the federation. Both economies remain highly dependent on primary resources such as fishing, farming, forestry, and mining and they are, by most standards, Canada's poorest provinces. Statistics Canada reports that the unemployment rate as of April 2005 in Newfoundland was the highest in the country at 15.6 percent followed by PEI at 11.3 percent (Statistics Canada, 2005). They are both well above the national average of 8 percent and their position relative to the rest of the provinces has been highly stable over time. Statistics Canada figures also show that the average household income has been well below the national average in each province since 1971 (ibid., 2005*)*.

By the same token, the distribution and out-migration trend of the younger population has evolved in the same way in these provinces. In Newfoundland, 14.1 percent of its citizens are between 14 and 24 years old and 29.2 percent are between 25 and 44 years. PEI had an almost identical composition in these age categories in 2003 at 14.3 and 27.3 percent respectively. Out-migration is another salient issue in both provinces that has been held responsible for population loss, particularly in Newfoundland where the population declined by 10 percent between 1991 and 2001 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003). Prince Edward Island, in the same period, slightly increased its population by 3 percent but both provinces are well below the national population growth rate of 10 percent during this period. On the surface, socio-economic status indicators do not suggest that Prince Edward Islanders should be voting more often.

The mobilization approach, on the other hand, stresses the importance of recruitment networks for understanding why people participate. In the case of Prince Edward Island, intense partisanship in the context of a two-party system is an enduring motif in the literature on politics in this province (MacKinnon, 1978; Stewart, 1994; Milne 2001). David Milne, for instance, describes the Island population as "highly politicized" and sharply divided along Liberal and Conservative lines. Indeed, there have been only two occasions, in both federal and provincial elections, when voters in PEI elected a candidate that was neither Liberal nor Conservative.[3] According to Milne, one explanation for the high levels of partisanship on the Island is derived from the localized nature of politics and a traditional "boss-follower" system, structured around the delivery of patronage (2001: 128). Another explanation, suggests that party identification

might be a rational choice for Prince Edward Islanders (Scarrow, 1960). The retention of a strong two-party system could reflect an attitude of disinterest among Islanders' in smaller parties that have no chance of forming a national government. This bandwagon force is conceivable, especially applied to Prince Edward Island with its small population and long standing membership in the so-called "have not" group of provinces. Partisanship, accordingly, might be a way of ensuring alignment with the largest federal parties in Ottawa.

Newfoundland's late arrival in the Canadian federation has been linked to its distinctive political culture. A longer history as an independent dominion and British colony is argued to be responsible for a "weakness of the democratic spirit on the island" (Dyck, 1996: 45). Such a weakened 'spirit' for democracy might have been compounded by the fact that Newfoundland experienced two periods of one-party dominance where provincial elections have been likened to leadership reviews. The Smallwood provincial Liberals, as described by Dyck, were the "classic cadre party" that did little to encourage the development of constituency associations or foster a sense of partisanship among the electorate (ibid.: 49). A second, interrelated, view of politics in Newfoundland also cast doubt on the strength of partisan attachment. Valerie Summers (2001), in particular, argues that the spatially dispersed population of the province has impacted the development of partisan identity. Her main proposition is that Newfoundland suffers from a history of internal dualism in which citizens from the rural areas have been largely isolated from the political activity in St. John's wealthy urban core. Independent commodity producers, especially those living in the provincial outports, are simply not integrated in the political life of the province. For these reasons, a disparity in partisanship levels and intensity of affiliation provides the first feasible hypothesis explaining differential electoral rates. Conceivably, *Prince Edward Islanders vote more than Newfoundlanders because of their extensive and intense connections with national political parties* (H1).

But what about the other variables of the mobilization model, such as union membership, religious affiliation, and campaign contact that have been linked with turnout? In terms of unionization, it appears that Newfoundland has a significant advantage over Prince Edward Island. According to 2001 national data, the province ranks second to Quebec in terms of the percentage of population that belong to a union.[4] Interestingly, there was a 13 percent gap between Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, which is historically Canada's least unionized province. In terms of religious affiliation, the similarities between these two provinces are fairly obvious.[5] The population in both provinces is almost equally divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants and thus there is no evidence to suggest that turnout should be affected by this factor.

However, there is support for the thesis that campaign contact plays a role in explaining turnout variation. Rather famously, Shaw (1975: 115) reflected on "the give-and-take of the 'knock 'em down and drag 'em out' elections" on Prince Edward Island. His work describes frequent episodes and stories of election tactics by political parties and candidates designed to lure voters to the polls. In doing so, the practice of 'treating' a voter is presented as a routine policy in Prince Edward Island elections. The folklore of vote-buying on PEI is neatly captured by an analysis of electoral corruption in Dyck's 1991 provincial politics textbook, which concludes that "the role of 'treating' on election day is more pronounced in Nova Scotia than in the more 'moral' provinces from Ontario to the West, although perhaps not quite as widespread as in Prince Edward Island" (126). Such bold assertions, in fact, led Ian Stewart (1994) to examine patterns in the monthly proportions of distilled spirits sold by the Prince Edward Island liquor control commission outlets between 1977 and 1990. His analysis suggests that the

incidence of petty electoral corruption has declined but he does suggest that 'treating' has not entirely disappeared from Island politics (1994: 71).

It should also be emphasized that campaign contact, in any form, is obviously easier on a 224 kilometer long island with extremely small constituency sizes. Newfoundland, on the other hand, is 390,000 square kilometers larger than Prince Edward Island and the population is highly dispersed. If, in addition, we consider the low level of party institutionalization that has characterized politics in Newfoundland then we would expect campaign contact to be less common in that province. There also appears to be some uniqueness in the practice of campaign contact on Prince Edward Island. That presents us with our second working hypothesis. *Campaign contact is more common on Prince Edward Island and those people who are contacted are more likely to vote* (H2).

The other variables of interest are political interest and political information. Does the instrumental mobilization perspective best account for the turnout variation in these provinces? In terms of political interest, there is a patchwork of evidence to suggest that Prince Edward Islanders are exceptionally interested in politics. Indeed, the conventional wisdom is that they view politics largely as a source of entertainment and personal benefits (Dyck, 1986). This recurring theme in some basic textbooks on Canadian provincial politics is almost exclusively grounded on an account by MacKinnon (1978) who described politics as a "grand time" and "great sport" for Prince Edward Islanders. He also suggested that political discussion and political information are, almost by consequence, widespread on Prince Edward Island. To illustrate this folklore perspective further, it is worth recalling how Shaw (1975) characterized political meetings as gatherings for "fun" and "good-natured banter." He also adds that they "occasionally culminated in vicious brawls which brought a sudden close to the meeting and produced bloody noses, black eyes, and broken furniture" (1975: 113).

There are some recent data to corroborate the supposition that Prince Edward Islanders are highly interested and informed about elections. Gidengil (2004) et al., find that interest in the 2000 election was highest in Prince Edward Island, rating 6.5 on a scale from zero to ten. What is more, province of residence appears to have a strong impact on where people look for political information. In Prince Edward Island, 47 percent of people indicated that newspapers were their main source of information. This is the only province in Canada where television news is not the dominant source of information on elections.

It stands to reason that people who spend time seeking out and reading about politics in the newspaper are more interested than those who rely on the television. In this vein, the contrast between Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland is particularly striking. Newspapers are the main source of information for only 7 percent of Newfoundlanders, which is 40 percent less than Prince Edward Islanders. As we might expect, Newfoundlanders (80 percent) are the most likely to rely on television for political information whereas Prince Edward Islanders (40 percent) are the least reliant on television. Tellingly, the only province where the newspaper is more popular than the television for political information is Prince Edward Island. This discussion implies the following hypothesis to account for variation in provincial turnout. *On Prince Edward Island higher participation rates are the consequence of higher levels of political interest and information* (H3).

Is there a singular reason why Prince Edward Islanders are voting more than Newfoundlanders? Are the determinants of voting different in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland? From our discussion we would expect that they are. To summarize, this section has developed three promising explanations: 1) party identification, 2) campaign contact, and 3)

political interest and information. Are partisans in Prince Edward Island unusually motivated to go to the polls? Are federal parties performing their mobilization function better in Prince Edward Island? Is politics simply more "fun" for people on Prince Edward Island?

## Data Source and Measurements

The data used to test the foregoing hypotheses are pooled from the 1984 and 1988 Canadian National Election Studies (CNES) and the Canadian Election Studies (CES) in 1993, and 2000.[6] In sum, the sample size for the pooled data set is 18,361. All of the data reported here have been weighted using national and provincial sample weights in order to effectively produce a representative cross-section.

The dependent variable in each model is turnout, coded 1 for respondents who voted and 0 for respondents who did not. Because turnout is a binary dependent variable, logistic regression is used to estimate three stage models for Canada, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland (Aldrich, 1984).[7] The variables figuring in this analysis, together with their coding details, are shown in the Appendix. The key independent variables are party identification, campaign contact, political interest, and political information. Party identification is calculated on a zero to three scale that equals 3 for very strong partisans and 0 for respondents without a partisan identity. Campaign contact is a dichotomous measure that equals 1 for those who were contacted by parties during the campaign and 0 for those who were not. Political interest[8] is an index on a five-point scale made up of two question that asked respondents about their interest in politics and their interest in the campaign. Lastly, political information[9] is an index on a five-point scale that combines two questions about attention to politics in the newspaper and on television.

## Results

Table 1 illustrates the results for the factors that have been shown to affect turnout in Canada. On the whole, the strongest predictor of turnout in this analysis is political interest. As hypothesized by the instrumental mobilization theories, people seem to be voting primarily because they are motivated to do so by their interest in politics (Verba et al., 1995; also see Blais et al., 2002). Ceteris paribus, the odds ratio implies that as a person becomes more politically interested the odds of voting increases by a factor of 2.5. In the same way, the coefficient for political information, the measure of a person's cognitive engagement, is positive and strongly significant. But the size of the coefficient is not as large as some of the other significant factors that improve the propensity to vote.

[Table 1 about here]

In line with the resources theory, I find the effect of free time, high income, and traditional marriage are all positive and statically significant. The strength of the relationship between voting and marriage is particularly striking. Marriage, multiplies the odds of casting a federal ballot by more than 1.5, making it one of the strongest determinants of voting in Canada. Conversely, there is no evidence of a significant relationship between a post-secondary university degree and voting. It does not follow, however, that education is not an important determinant of voting. People who did not complete high school are significantly less likely to vote than those who have. What it does imply is that there is not a linear relationship between education and voting. The path to voting, in this respect, appears to be different from other forms of participation (Verba et al., 1995). Graduating from high school is a key determinant of electoral participation but graduating from university is not.

The resource variables are just as important for what they tell us about who is not voting. Age is the single most significant determinant of non-voting in Canada. The odds of participating for a person under the age of thirty are 64 percent lower than for those aged forty years and over. That said, the relationship between voting and our youngest age cohort is not as dominant as the one found by Blais et al. (2002) in their analysis of the 2000 election study. This suggests that generational effects are an important element of the recent decline in voter turnout (see also Blais et al., 2004). The other negative and statistically significant determinant of voting is income. In a similar vein to the early finding of Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), the results show that that the odds of voting are 44 percent lower for people in the lowest income quartile than for those in the middle income bracket..

On the whole, the least satisfactory explanation of turnout is provided by the variables associated with the mobilization approach. There is no evidence to support the hypothesis that union membership, religious affiliation, or religiosity is related to electoral participation in Canada. While the odds ratio for campaign contact and party identification are positive and statistically significant, their relative strength is considerably weaker than many of the other factors that have been shown to affect turnout. This suggests that the functions preformed by political parties are important but they are not the leading determinants of participation in Canada as a whole.

[Table 2 about here]

What about Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland? How do their determinants compare with these findings and, most importantly, with each other? Table 2 and 3 presents a comparison of the regression results for these two provinces. The first thing that stands out is the reduction of statistically significant variables. This is not unexpected, considering the low number of cases from each province that are available, even with a pooled data set. Nonetheless, the results are able to illustrate the most important determinants of voter participation in these provinces. For Prince Edward Island, there are several points to underscore about the results. First, the factors drawn from the instrumental mobilization approach appear to be very weak predictors of electoral participation in Prince Edward Island. None of the three variables reaches a minimum level of statistical significance. What is more, in the case of political information and issue engagement the odds ratio is below 1, which is, in effect, contrary to what our theoretical discussion predicted. Meanwhile, the coefficient for political interest is above 1 but we cannot say with 90 percent confidence that it is related to turnout.

Second, with these differences in mind, there are several similarities between the Prince Edward data and the overall Canadian data. All else held constant, the odds of voting are 88 percent lower for a Prince Edward Islander under 30 years old than for those forty and over. Interestingly, the odds decrease by almost the equivalent percent for a Prince Edward Islanders between 30 and 39 years. The other significant comparison between PEI and the full Canadian model is the effect of marriage on turnout. Among other things, getting married multiplies increases the odds of voting for a Prince Edward Islander by a factor of 3.25.

[Table 3 about here]

Third, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between partisanship and turnout on Prince Edward Island. Holding everything else constant, a one unit increase in partisan attachment multiplies the odds of voting by 2.3. This is a noticeable dissimilarity between Prince Edward Islanders and Newfoundlanders. In Newfoundland, the party identification odds ratio is above 1 and statistically significant but the relationship with turnout

does not appear to be as strong as the one found on Prince Edward. Partisanship only has about half the effect on turnout in Newfoundland as it does in Prince Edward Island. By contrast, political interest appears to be a leading determinant of turnout on Newfoundland. Becoming more interested in politics in that province multiplies a person's odds of voting by 2.5. It follows that the instrumental mobilization approach is more useful for explaining participation in Newfoundland than in Prince Edward Island.

There are three more points to stress about the Newfoundland data. First, what is particularly intriguing about the results is the absence of a statistically significant relationship between age and turnout. In fact, the odds ratio for the second age cohort in Newfoundland is about 1. Second, the strongest determinant of voting in this province may be high income. The odds that a Newfoundlander will vote are almost three times greater if they belong to the highest income bracket rather than the middle income bracket. Finally, as in Prince Edward Island, there is no evidence of a relationship between campaign contact and electoral participation. The cognitive mobilizing functions of parties do not appear to have a significant impact on the likelihood of voting in these provinces.

## Discussion

These findings carry important implications for the three main hypotheses. The least satisfactory explanation for the turnout puzzle is the one that relies on campaign contact. There is little evidence to support the hypothesis (H2) that campaign contact on Prince Edward Island is responsible for the variation in turnout.[10] The odds ratios are above 1 in both cases but neither province reaches the minimum confidence level. Practically speaking, slightly more people on average were contacted on Prince Edward Island but there is no evidence of relationship between contact and turnout in either stage of the model. At least in federal elections, this finding fits in with the proposition that election campaign 'treating' has all but disappeared (Stewart, 1994). It is also suggests that the "knock 'em down and drag 'em out" election campaign tradition can be firmly relegated to the folklore of Prince Edward Island's electoral past. At the very least, the ex-Premier Walter Shaw foreshowed this scenario accurately when he explained how "the older generation sorrowfully shake their heads and pour scorn on the decadence of political life with its present 'milk and water' tactics" (1975: 115). Campaign contact does not seem to be responsible for the variation in turnout between Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

In line with H1, party identification appears to be a stronger determinant of electoral participation on Prince Edward Island than on Newfoundland. But can we accept the full hypothesis that Prince Edward Islanders vote more than Newfoundlanders because of their extensive and intense connections with national parties? The answer is yes and no. There is little evidence in the tabulation data to support the argument that there are more partisans on Prince Edward Island. But there is reason to believe that the intensity of partisanship is greater and, evidently, more closely related to electoral participation in that province.

On one hand, there is little empirical evidence in this study that Prince Edward Island has a greater proportion of partisans. Only 12 percent of Newfoundlanders do not identify with a federal party. This is 8 percent lower than both the Prince Edward Island and the Canadian rate of 20 percent. Similarly, Newfoundland (28 percent) also has a significantly higher proportion of very strong partisans than Prince Edward Island. In fact, only 15 percent of partisans on Prince Edward Island report feeling very strongly attached to a federal party. This is 4 percent below the national average and 13 percent behind Newfoundland. In that understanding, the

component of the first hypothesis (H1) that links higher voter turnout on Prince Edward Island with the proportion of party identifiers must be rejected.

On the other hand, however, the hypothesis linking partisan intensity with turnout is corroborated by the data. Party identification appears to be a more critical determinant of participation on Prince Edward Island than it is on Newfoundland. Conceivably, the causal mechanism underlying this outcome is related to the research by Clarke et al. (1991, 1996) who on flexible party identification in Canada. In practical terms, a population that is two-thirds "flexible" partisans suggests that a typical voter is weakly committed, preferring different parties in different elections. One of the key causes of flexible partisanship may be the nature of the federal system. The sub-national environment in most provinces consists of parties that either do not cooperate with their national counterpart or do not exist at the national level. Therefore, voters often develop two different identifications that involve parties with very little in common. In doing so, Clarke et al. contend that the split-identifiers tend to be flexible partisans. Most importantly, the authors also imply that people in provinces with the most inconsistency between levels are the least likely to develop any form of party identification (1996: 61).

In this vein, it stands to reason that voters on PEI are among the least affected by this 'split-identifier' syndrome. As discussed earlier, Prince Edward Island has maintained a strong two-party provincial system that mirrors the traditional landscape of federal politics (Stewart, 1986). The Liberal and Conservative parties have always dominated both provincial and federal elections on Prince Edward Island. There have only been two instances in provincial history in which a seat at either level has been won by a candidate from another party. Moreover, cooperation between federal and provincial parties appears to be an established norm in this province (Milne, 2001). Provincial campaigns, in fact, have been contested on the issue of partisan alignment with the federal government. As Stewart (1986: 133) explains,

> [I]n almost any given election, the provincial wing of the federal government party (usually, but not always, the Liberals) has provided the voters with (1) an historical analysis of the benefits that have been derived from partisan alignment; (2) an understanding of federal-provincial relations which emphasizes partisan alignment; (3) a discussion of the partisan complexion of the federal government; and (4) a voting strategy designed to maximize future benefits to the Island.

The consistency across levels and this motif of encouragement for federal alignment by provincial parties leads us to expect that there are more partisans on Prince Edward Island.

By contrast, it also stands to reason that there are fewer "intense" partisans on Newfoundland based on its provincial political tradition. The most fundamental difference between these provinces is the presence of sustained conflict in federal/provincial relations. What is interesting for these purposes is that conflict between Newfoundland and Ottawa has regularly transcended partisan boundaries (Summers, 2001; Dyck, 1996). Neither of the provincial wings of the federal parties has hesitated to openly confront their counterpart in Ottawa. As Summers explains, this behaviour dates back to the first Liberal government of Premier Smallwood that conflicted with Ottawa throughout the 1950s and 1960s. A variety of labour disputes, in that instance, placed Smallwood at odds with both Prime Minister Diefenbaker and eventually with Liberal Prime Minister Pearson. It is also worth noting that Smallwood severed his relationship with the federal Liberals altogether in 1975 when he formed the Liberal Reform party and won 13 percent of the popular vote.

Similarly, former Conservative Premier Peckford has been described as an "ardent provincialist" who regularly challenged the federal Conservative government during the 1980s

over fisheries quotas and the regulation of offshore resources from Newfoundland (see Bannister, 2003). Perhaps, the most telling piece of evidence that illustrates the tense relationship between Newfoundland and Ottawa is the 2003 provincial *Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada* (Government of Newfoundland, 2003). The report itself was commissioned by the provincial Liberal government of Roger Grimes and demonstrates a prolonged frustration with the federal wing of the party. In brief, the report stresses that "Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not believe that the province has yet found its full place in Canada" (*ibid*: 143). With all this in mind, it is conceivable that federal party identification is weaker for Newfoundlanders than Prince Edward Islanders.

What about the final hypothesis (H3) that explains the higher participation rates on Prince Edward Island in terms of political interest and information? In this case, the reverse scenario from our partisanship finding appears to be true. The relationship between turnout and political interest is positive and statistically significant on Newfoundland. As a Newfoundlander becomes more interested in politics their odds of voting improve by a factor of 2.5. Although the odds ratio for political information does not reach the first level of significance it is worth noting that its magnitude is much larger than on Prince Edward Island. In fact, for PEI specifically, it is not clear for this data that either political interest or political information is related to turnout.

Yet, the absence of a relationship between political information and turnout on Prince Edward might be explained by the fact that most Prince Edward Islanders feel highly informed about politics. On the one to four scale of political awareness, 45 percent of respondents from PEI scored 3.5 or above compared with only 24 percent of Newfoundlanders. As hypothesized, political awareness is higher on Prince Edward Island and the fact that most residents are highly informed could explain the absence of a significant relationship with turnout. Nevertheless, the strength of the relationship between political interest and turnout on Newfoundland was not anticipated from the theoretical discussion. The hypothesis (H3) is therefore modestly validated.

## Implications

The results indicate that party identification has an independent effect on turnout for Prince Edward Islanders. They also indicate that political interest has an independent effect on turnout for Newfoundlanders. What we still do not know is *how much* they affect turnout? To address this question, I estimate the predicted probability of voting according to party identification and political interest for both a Prince Edward Islander and a Newfoundlander when all other dichotomous variables are kept at their lowest value and all indices kept at their mean. Figure 1 and 2 display the results. These simulations illustrate how the turnout gap can be narrowed between these two provinces. Clearly, as Newfoundlanders become more politically interested in federal politics, their probability of voting improves dramatically. All else constant, the probability of voting for a highly interested Newfoundlander is almost the same as a Prince Edward Islander under the same conditions. On the other hand, strong partisanship with low political interest does very little to ameliorate the turnout dilemma on Newfoundland.

[Figure 1 and Figure 2 about here]

More generally, the findings in this analysis carry implications for the literature on turnout in Canada, as well as the theories of electoral participation. First, this analysis has attempted to specify a potential set of causal mechanisms to explain why party identification is a stronger determinant of turnout in Canada's most participatory province. Turnout, I have argued, could be related to the presence of cooperation between the provincial and federal wings of their

political parties. Being a partisan on Prince Edward Island has not been a very difficult task. There has never been an ab initio need to specify a provincial or federal preference during a regular political conversation. There is also a history of provincial campaigns that stressed the benefits of partisan alignment. It stands to reason that voters develop a stronger identity if they feel confident that their 'party' could work together on both the provincial and federal level.

In contrast, we need only to consider how difficult things are for a Newfoundland partisan. A history of "regular and repeated conflict" is how Roger Grimes once described the provincial government's relationship with Ottawa when asked to justify the Royal Commission in 2003. What he forgot to mention is that the conflict has not only been between governments but also between parties. This fact is probably easier to forget for politicians than it is for voters. It makes sense that party identification may be a weaker determinant of turnout on Newfoundland because it is particularly hard to have any idea what it means to be Liberal or a Conservative on that province.

This is one implication for the mobilization theories and their application in Canada. We know that an inculcated 'heightened awareness' improves the likelihood of voting but it is much less clear what the mechanisms are that explain how an individual develops and processes this awareness. In Canada, this case study suggests that federal political parties need to take the relationship with their provincial wing seriously. As should be apparent, this is more easily said than done in some provinces. But the implications for turnout might be worth it, especially considering that the recent political party financing legislation (C-24) equates public money with the number of ballots cast. It is now squarely in the interest of political parties to foster higher levels of electoral participation. This paper suggests that cooperation with their provincial wing is one significant way in which they can proceed to do so.

A second implication to carry from this analysis has to do with the path to voting. This study finds that political interest is a key determinant of turnout in Canada. In the case of Newfoundland, particularly, political interest can be expected to play an important role in determining future turnout rates. Are Newfoundlanders simply less interested in politics than other Canadians? The answer is no. If we consider sub-national turnout rates it is probably more accurate to suggest that their interest waxes and then wanes from provincial to federal politics. In fact, turnout in Newfoundland provincial elections has been significantly higher than federal turnout since 1945. The gap between Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland at the provincial level has been much less pronounced. Newfoundland's provincial turnout has never been below 70 percent and it is worth noting that their most recent turnout result (72 percent) is more than 13 percent higher than Ontario's most recent. The prescription for the turnout malaise is clearly focused on the federal level.

## Conclusion

It is said that politics without participation is self-contradictory and democracy without participation is absurd. But it is not absurd to suggest that democracy in Canada is less democratic than it could be. To put it in perspective, it is worth pointing out that in the 2000 election only about 24 percent of eligible voters chose the party that formed a majority government. Even by Canadian standards, this is a remarkably low level of endorsement for a governing party. From the remaining 75 percent, we know that only approximately 35 percent supported another party with their vote. Yet, we have no idea about what the preferences of the other 41 percent are? All we know is that a disproportionate amount of the unknown preferences are in provinces such as Ontario, Alberta, and Newfoundland.

This essay has examined the issue of low turnout in Canada with provincial differences as the focus. It began by asking a simple question: why do people vote? The literature discussed has suggested that there are three alternative approaches for explaining turnout: resources, mobilization, and instrumental mobilization. We know that the decision to participate can hinge on time, money, education, and civic skills. But we also know that voting may be a function of pressure from social networks and a person's psychological involvement with politics.

The fact that Prince Edward Islanders have proved to be much more likely to vote than Newfoundlanders presented an opportunity to test these theories in Canada. The paper has shown that mobilization and instrumental mobilization provide the best explanation for the gap in turnout between these provinces. In particular, party identification appears to be a stronger determinant of voting on Prince Edward Island. Political interest and information, on the other hand, are more correlated with turnout on Newfoundland. This result is reasonable given that significantly more Prince Edward Islanders feel highly informed about politics. In other words, it is the lack of variation in political information that appears to account for the non-significant relationship with turnout on Prince Edward Island. Ostensibly, this also helps to understand the turnout puzzle because if a cognitive engagement fosters an affective engagement with politics then it is logical that Prince Edward Islanders vote more.

In terms of party identification, the foregoing analysis carries an important implication for the literature on turnout. The strength of correlation between partisanship and voting on Prince Edward Island suggests that parties in that province, as a cue-giving device, have a big impact on turnout. The essay has argued that this may be a consequence of the longstanding presence of cooperation between parties at the federal and provincial level. The implication for the turnout literature is that the neglect of bipartisan cooperation across orders of government in a federal system may jeopardize a person's psychological attachment with a party and, in due course, electoral participation. In the end, this research has provided a preliminary step toward understanding provincial differences in voting behaviour and shows the fecundity of intra-country research designs for understanding the determinants of participation more generally.

**Table 1: The Determinants of Turnout in Canada 1984-2000 (Logistic Estimates with Odds Ratios)**

| Variables | Odds Ratio (SE) | Odds Ratio (SE) | Odds Ratio (SE) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year of Election | | | |
| CNES 1984 | 1.38 (.11)*** | 1.15 (.10) | 1.39 (.14)*** |
| CNES 1988 | 2.22 (.20)*** | 2.27 (.22)*** | 2.73 (.29)*** |
| CES 1993 | 2.00 (.16)*** | 2.01 (.17)*** | 2.32 (.22)*** |
| Demographics | | | |
| Atlantic | 1.19 (.13) | 1.19 (.14) | 1.26 (.15)* |
| West | .90 (.06) | .90 (.07) | .88 (.07)* |
| Quebec | 1.25 (.09)*** | 1.48 (.13)*** | 1.70 (.16)*** |
| Female | 1.02 (.06) | 1.02 (.06) | 1.24 (.08)*** |
| Resources | | | |
| Age 18 to 29 years | .29 (.02)*** | .33 (.03)*** | .44 (.04)*** |
| Age 30 to 39 years | .52 (.04)*** | .54 (.05)*** | .62 (.06)*** |
| Traditional marriage | 1.54 (.10)*** | 1.5 (.07)*** | 1.54 (.11)*** |
| Has children under 18 years | .87 (.06)** | .89 (.06)* | .93 (.07) |
| Did not complete high school | .57 (.04)*** | .55 (.04)*** | .64 (.05)*** |
| University graduate | 1.43 (.13)*** | 1.45 (.14)*** | 1.11 (.11) |
| Lowest household income | .62 (.05)*** | .65 (.05)*** | .66 (.06)*** |
| Highest household income | 1.37 (.10)*** | 1.29 (.10)*** | 1.24 (.10)*** |
| Retired | 1.75 (.22)*** | 1.69 (.23)*** | 1.48 (.21)*** |
| Mobilization | | | |
| Union household | | 1.09 (.07) | 1.09 (.07) |
| Non-Christian | | .92 (.08) | .91 (.09) |
| Catholic | | 89 (.07)* | .92 (.07) |
| Religiosity | | 1.08 (.04)** | 1.04 (.04) |
| Party identification | | 1.60 (.05)*** | 1.38 (.05)*** |
| Campaign contact | | 1.52 (.12)*** | 1.34 (.11)*** |
| Instrumental Mobilization | | | |
| Political information | | | 1.26 (.05)*** |
| Political interest | | | 2.39 (.16)*** |
| No issue | | | .71 (.06)*** |
| **Pseudo $R^2$** | .093 | .124 | .175 |
| **Log Likelihood** | -4101.45 | -3667.68 | -3408.26 |
| **N** | 11309 | 10659 | 10506 |

* p < .10 ; ** p < .05 ; *** p < .01

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors are in parentheses.

**Table 2: The Determinants of Turnout on Prince Edward Island 1984-2000 (Logistic Estimates with Odds Ratios)**

| Variables | Odds Ratio (SE) | Odds Ratio (SE) | Odds Ratio (SE) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year of Election | | | |
| CNES 1984 | .57 (.77) | .33 (.51) | .40 (.67) |
| CNES 1988 | 1.24 (1.58) | .91 (1.36) | 1.28 (1.99) |
| CES 1993 | 1.81 (2.87) | .95 (1.72) | 1.76 (3.40) |
| Demographics | | | |
| Female | .70 (.38) | .83 (.51) | 1.21 (.84) |
| Resources | | | |
| Age 18 to 29 years | .31 (.23) | .25 (.21)* | .12 (.84)** |
| Age 30 to 39 years | .28 (.22) | .29 (.26) | .13 (.13)** |
| Traditional marriage | 4.42 (2.60)** | 4.52 (3.04)** | 3.64 (2.60)* |
| Has children under 18 years | .60 (.37) | .69 (.47) | 1.08 (.80) |
| Did not complete high school | .63 (.38) | .56 (.39) | .65 (.50) |
| University graduate | .33 (.27) | .30 (.28) | .33 (.32) |
| Lowest household income | .40 (.28) | .33 (.25) | .43 (.36) |
| Highest household income | 2.62 (2.04) | 2.30 (2.05) | 2.86 (2.79) |
| Retired | 2.79 (4.03) | 1.84 (2.84) | 1.76 (3.21) |
| Mobilization | | | |
| Union household | | 1.02 (.71) | 1.20 (.89) |
| Non-Christian | | 2.67 (2.05) | 1.27 (2.44) |
| Catholic | | .65 (.45) | .74 (.53) |
| Religiosity | | 1.32 (.60) | .86 (.43) |
| Party identification | | 1.73 (.66) | 2.31 (.86)** |
| Campaign contact | | 2.67 (2.12) | 1.56 (1.37) |
| Instrumental Mobilization | | | |
| Political information | | | .97 (.53) |
| Political interest | | | 2.00 (1.62) |
| No issue | | | 2.40 (2.95) |
| **Pseudo $R^2$** | .192 | .245 | .266 |
| **Log Likelihood** | -51.44 | -43.66 | -40.40 |
| **N** | 207 | 186 | 184 |

* $p < .10$ ; ** $p < .05$ ; *** $p < .01$

Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors are in parentheses.

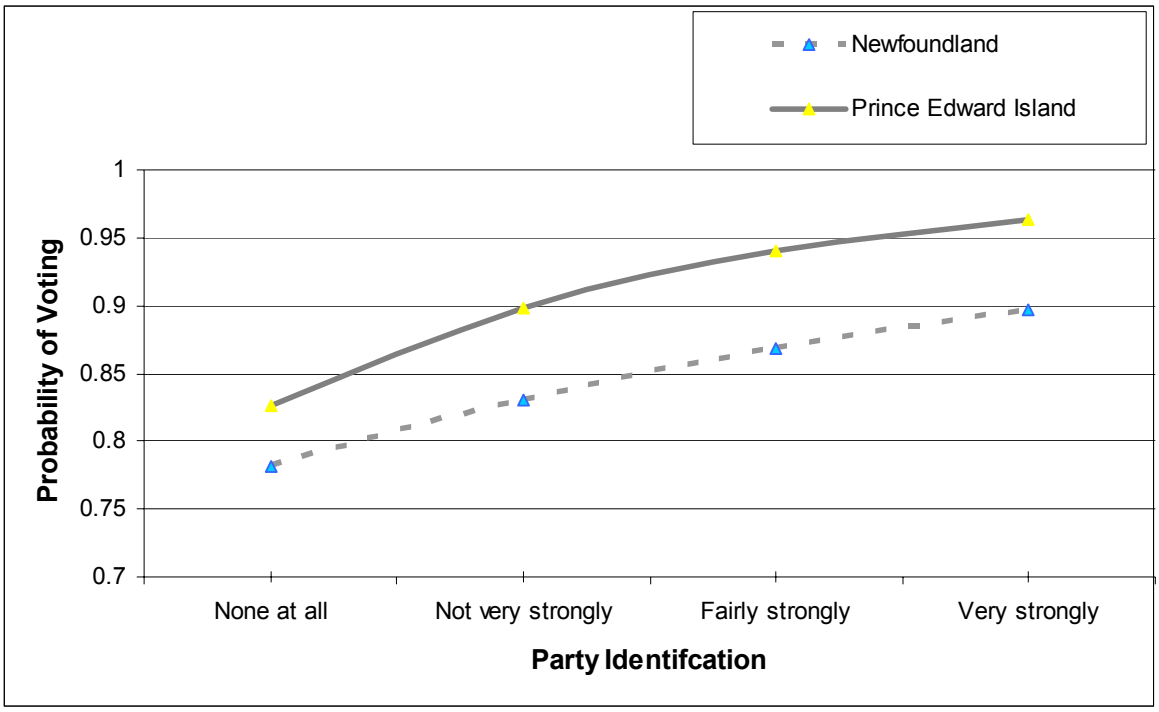
**Table 3: The Determinants of Turnout on Newfoundland 1984-2000 (Logistic Estimates with Odds Ratios)**

| Variables | Odds Ratio (SE) | Odds Ratio (SE) | Odds Ratio (SE) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Year of Election | | | |
| CNES 1984 | .56 (.31) | .53 (.32) | .65 (.45) |
| CNES 1988 | 1.10 (.64) | 1.10 (.69) | 1.35 (.93) |
| CES 1993 | 1.41 (.88) | 1.38 (.92) | .65 (1.28) |
| Demographics | | | |
| Female | .65 (.20) | .60 (.20) | .81 (.30) |
| Resources | | | |
| Age 18 to 29 years | .38 (.17)** | .45 (.22) | .59 (.30) |
| Age 30 to 39 years | .97 (.44) | 1.23 (.62) | 1.31 (.67) |
| Traditional marriage | .83 (.31) | .80 (.33) | .70 (.31) |
| Has children under 18 years | .88 (.32) | .79 (.31) | .88 (.37) |
| Did not complete high school | .68 (.24) | .63 (.24) | .73 (.29) |
| University graduate | .78 (.49) | .82 (.58) | .69 (.50) |
| Lowest household income | .82 (.32) | .74 (.31) | .74 (.33) |
| Highest household income | 2.69 (1.19)** | 2.74 (1.34)* | 2.83 (1.45)** |
| Retired | 2.39 (1.80) | 4.04 (3.83) | 3.51 (3.46) |
| Mobilization | | | |
| Union household | | .96 (.34) | .74 (.28) |
| Non-Christian | | .46 (.43) | .39 (.38) |
| Catholic | | 1.58 (.57) | 1.71 (.66) |
| Religiosity | | 1.15 (.24) | 1.10 (.24) |
| Party identification | | 1.58 (.28)** | 1.40 (.27)* |
| Campaign contact | | 1.90 (.87) | 1.57 (.75) |
| Instrumental Mobilization | | | |
| Political information | | | 1.41 (.35) |
| Political interest | | | 2.51 (.98)** |
| No issue | | | .92 (.39) |
| **Pseudo $R^2$** | .087 | .148 | .203 |
| **Log Likelihood** | -133.48 | -118.51 | -109.50 |
| **N** | 296 | 280 | 276 |

* p < .10 ; ** p < .05 ; *** p < .01

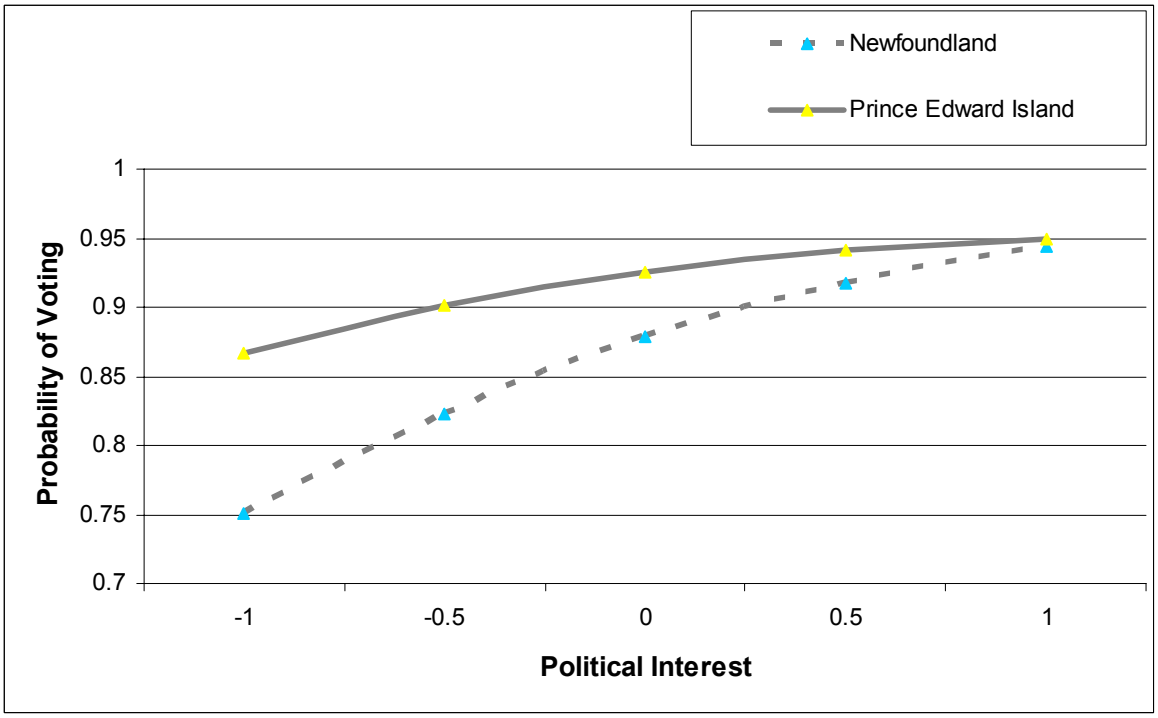
Cell entries are odds ratios and standard errors are in parentheses.

**Figure 1: Simulation of Voting by Party Identification**




Probability estimated using CLARIFY (King, Tomz, Wittenberg, 2000). NB: The simulation sets all dummy variables figuring in the logistic regression analyses to 0 and all other indices (religiosity, political interest, and political awareness) at their mean.

**Figure 2: Simulation of Voting by Political Interest**




Probability estimated using CLARIFY (King, Tomz, Wittenberg, 2000). NB: The simulation sets all dummy variables figuring in the logistic regression analyses to 0 and all other indices (religiosity, party identification, and political awareness) at their mean.

**Appendix: Description of Variables**

*Dependent variables*

**Turnout**: Question wording differs slightly in each election study. Generally, respondents were asked: Did you vote in the election? The variable takes the value of 1 if the respondent voted and 0 otherwise.

- in 1984 respondents were asked: "Now, thinking about this year's federal election, we find that a lot of people weren't able to vote because they were sick, or didn't have time, or had some other reasons for not voting. How about you? Did you vote this time, or did something happen to keep you away from voting?"

- in 1988 respondents were asked: "We find that in every election, a lot of people don't vote because they are sick, don't have time, or for some other reason. How about you? Did you vote in this election?"

- in 1993 respondents were asked: "Did you vote in this election?"

- in 1997 half of the sample were asked: "In a democracy citizens have the right to vote. They also have the right not to. And some people who intend to vote end up not voting for one reason or another. What about you, did you vote in the election or not?" The other half were asked: "Did you vote in the election?"

- in 2000 respondents were asked: "Did you vote in this election?"

*Independent variables*

Demographics:

**Gender** is a dummy variable that equals 1 for women, 0 for men.

**Age 18 to 29 years** has a value of 1 if the respondent is between 18 and 29 years old and 0 otherwise.

**Age 30 to 39 years** has a value of 1 if the respondent is between 30 and 39 years old and 0 otherwise.

**Traditional marriage** is a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 if the respondent is in a traditional marriage and 0 otherwise.

**Atlantic, West, Quebec** are dummy variables that indicate respondents' region of residence. Atlantic includes Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. West includes British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

**Area of residence** has a value of 1 if the respondent's community size is less than 10,000 (Rural) and 0 otherwise.[11]

Resources

**Did not complete high school** has a value of 1 when the highest level of education completed is less than high school and 0 otherwise.

**University graduate** has a value of 1 when the highest level of education completed is university graduation or more and 0 otherwise.

**Retired** has the value of 1 is the respondent is retired and 0 otherwise.

**Lowest household income quartile** has the value of 1 if the respondent's family income is within the lowest quartile of the survey and 0 otherwise.

**Highest household income quartile** has the value of 1 if the respondent's family income is within the highest quartile of the survey and 0 otherwise.

Mobilization

**Union household:** has a value of 1 when the respondent or any members of the respondent's immediate family belong to a union and 0 otherwise.

**Non-Christian** has a value of 1 when the respondent's religion is not Christian and 0 otherwise.

**Catholic** has a value of 1 when the respondent's religion is Catholic and 0 otherwise.

**Religiosity** is a 0 to 3 scale where respondents are asked to assess their religiosity.[12] On the scale 0 means 'no religion' 1 'not very religious' 2 'fairly religious' 3 'very religious'.

**Party identification** is a 0 to 3 scale where respondents are asked, do you usually think of yourself as a Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Reform/Alliance, Bloc, other, or none of these. The variable takes the value of 0 when the respondent does not identify with a party 1 'not very strong identifier' 2 'fairly strong identifier and 3 'very strong identifier'.

**Campaign contact** has a value of 1 if the respondent was contacted in any way (in-person, pamphlet, telephone) prior to the election by at least one of the political parties and 0 otherwise.

Instrumental Mobilization

**Political information** is an index made up of two questions: **(Cronbach's alpha=.609**)
- one question about the attention paid to politics in the newspaper.[13] (the respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 if they read about politics in the papers never, seldom, sometimes, often.),
- one question about the attention paid to politics on television. (the respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 if they read about politics in the papers never, seldom, sometimes, often.),
The index is the sum of all scores divided by 2.

**Political interest** is an index made up of two questions: **(Cronbach's alpha=.683)**
- one question about the level of attention paid to politics in general from day to day, when there isn't an election campaign going on.[14] (the respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of -1 to 1 if they follow politics not at all/not very closely, fairly closely, very closely),
- one question about level of attention paid to the respective election campaign. (the respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of -1 to 1 if they are following the campaign not at all/not very closely, fairly closely, very closely),
The index is the sum of all scores divided by 2.

**No issue** has a value of 1 when the respondent cannot identify an important issue in the election campaign and 0 otherwise.

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## Endnotes

[1] The franchise rules have changed dramatically throughout Canada's history. Exclusions based on property were phased out by 1900 and exclusion based gender was eliminated in 1920. The voting age was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen in 1970. The earlier statistics should are mentioned with these changes in mind, particularly pre-1920 turnout figures.

[2] Canada measures turnout based on registered voters not the number of eligible voters as in the United States.

[3] In 1919 J.A. Dewar was elected as an independent Member of Parliament and in 1996 NDP leader Herb Dickinson was elected to the provincial legislature.

[4] Government of Newfoundland, "Union Coverage Rates and Trends," Newfoundland: Ministry of Labour. Available on-line at http://www.gov.nf.ca/labour/Labour/unionization_rates.asp.

[5] What may be less obvious is the historical link between religious denomination and provincial legislature representation. In Newfoundland until 1975 representation in the national assembly was based on religious denomination. Until the abolition of the dual member ridings in 1997 the convention in Prince Edward Island was for a party to nominate one Roman Catholic and one Protestant candidate (Dyck, 1996: 42, 96).

[6] CES 1997 is not included because campaign contact information from that year is unavailable.

[7] There is no a priori reason to assume logistic distribution. However, probit in STATA does not accept the necessary weights for this analysis. The results using probit and logit without weights does not significantly differ.

[8] Cronbach's alpha for the index is .683

[9] Cronbach's alpha for the index is .609

[10] The frequency distributions are 28 percent contacted in Canada, 23 percent contacted on Newfoundland, and 30 percent contacted on Prince Edward Island. There is some evidence of higher contact but no evidence of a statistically significant relationship on Prince Edward Island.

[11] Area of residence is unavailable in 1988 so it does not figure in the final analysis. In all preliminary models (excluding respondents from CNES 1988) for this project a rural residency of 10,000 or under did not achieve the minimum level of significance.

[12] In the CNES 1988 religiosity is based on place of worship attendance (n12) where 0 means 'never' 1 'a few times a year 2 'once or more a month' 3 'at least weekly'.

[13] For CES 1993 and CES 2000 these measures are based on the number of days in a week that a respondent reads about politics in the newspaper and watches the news on television. The answers are recoded on a scale of 1 to 4 where 0=never, 1 thru 2=seldom, 3 thru 6=sometimes, 4=often.

[14] This question is not included in the 1993 CES so I have used an alternative measure (cpsb4) which asks respondents how informed they are about the important issues in the campaign, which requires a comparative attention to politics in general. The answer is coded on a scale of -1 to 1 if they are not at all/not very informed, fairly informed, very informed.