



The Strategic Counsel

A Report to Elections Canada

Survey of electors following the 40th General Election

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I. Introduction



Introduction

A. Background

Elections Canada is an independent agency, reporting directly to the Parliament of Canada, with responsibility for conducting all federal general elections, by-elections and referendums. Among its broad range of responsibilities as an enforcement body, monitoring organization and delivery agent with respect to federal electoral activity, the agency is also charged with informing citizens about the electoral system and reporting back to Parliament on the administration of elections and referendums.

In carrying out its mandate and mission to provide Canadians with an accessible and modern electoral process, the agency faces significant challenges and opportunities. Canada's vast geographic footprint, ethno-cultural diversity and high rates of inter-provincial mobility pose formidable challenges in ensuring that the more than 23 million registered electors are provided with timely information and a convenient opportunity to cast their votes.

The challenges for Elections Canada have increased considerably over the past few years. With a minority government resulting from the past two general elections, Elections Canada has had to maintain a state of readiness for a general election that could happen at any time, over two electoral cycles. At the same time, the agency has had to implement a number of changes and new programs in an ongoing effort to improve its administration of electoral events and encourage voter turnout and participation. The most significant of these is the requirement for voter identification. New requirements stipulate that to be eligible to vote, citizens must produce proof of identity and proof of their home address.

B. Research Objectives

Following the 40th General Election on October 14th, 2008, Elections Canada undertook a telephone survey of Canadians, both those who voted in the recent federal general election and those who did not. The overall purpose of the research was to provide further input into the evaluation and refinement of Elections Canada's programs and services to the electorate and the development of the Chief Electoral Officer's report to Parliament and build upon the learning from the 2006 results. Of special importance for the survey of the 40th general election was to assess the impact on the electoral process of new voter identification requirements introduced for this election.



In addition, as part of its mandate to ensure access to the electoral process for all Canadians, Elections Canada uses this research to examine the impact of its initiatives on voter participation among Aboriginal, youth electors, and for the first time, visible minorities and immigrants, as a means to identify any issues relating to their participation in the electoral process. Findings from the 39th General Election indicated that the participation of both youth and Aboriginal Canadians was lower than for the public overall. Issues relating to improving the participation of these two groups were explored in the survey of the 40th General Election. In addition, provision was made in the research design to ensure that a large sample of non-voters was also interviewed and that the attitudes and perceptions of this group would be explored and analysis undertaken on the barriers to voting experienced or perceived by non-voters.

More specifically, the survey was designed to:

- Evaluate electors' knowledge and attitudes concerning various aspects of the electoral process;
- Evaluate electors' knowledge of, and attitudes toward, Elections Canada's programs and services specifically;
- Assess impressions of the new identification requirements and their impact on voting behaviour;
- Assess electors' experience of the 40th General Election with respect to registration and polling stations;
- Identify any barriers to voting among non-voters;
- Gain insights into electoral participation among youth, Aboriginal electors and electors from visible minority and immigrant communities; and
- To the extent possible, track changes since the 39th General Election in 2006.

C. Research Methodology

The survey consisted of telephone interviews conducted with a representative sample of 3,348 Canadian electors between October 22 and November 17, 2008. The sample consisted of a representative national sample of 2,500 eligible electors (Canadian citizens 18 years of age or older) and 848 electors oversampled to meet pre-determined quotas of 500 Aboriginal electors, 500 youth aged 18 to 24 and 500 immigrant/visible minorities. Overall, 627 non-voters are included in the sample. The national representative sample can be expected to provide results that are accurate within plus or minus 1.96 percentage points, 95 times out of 100.



The following table sets out the sample size and margin of error for each sub-sample:

SAMPLE DESIGN	Base Sample	Oversampled	Total	Margin of Error
National RDD sample	2500	0	2500	+/- 1.96%
Youth oversample	133	367	500	+/- 4.38%
Aboriginal oversample	99	401	500	+/- 4.38%
Ethnocultural oversample	420	80	500	+/- 4.38%
Voters	2404	0	2404	+/- 2.04%
Non-voters	944	0	944	+/- 3.25%

D. Report Synopsis

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings and tying together the results of each subsequent section. The following sections consist of detailed findings from the survey data. Each section in the detailed findings examines results on the national level followed by breakouts by key regional, demographic and behavioural/attitudinal factors. Further, each section examines the results from the Aboriginal, youth and immigrant/visible minorities oversamples and discusses how the sub-groups differ from each other and from electors overall. At each level of the analysis, where the same or similar questions are asked, the 2008 results are tracked versus the results from the 39th General Election survey in 2006 to examine how opinion, attitudes and behaviour differ two years later.



II. Executive Summary



Executive Summary

A. Overview

The introduction of a new identification process for the 40th General Election presented a new challenge for the smooth running of the election, a challenge that was clearly well met. Results from the survey of voters and non-voters shows that for the vast majority of electors the voting process went very smoothly, and that the new identification process presented virtually no problems at polling stations and does not appear to have acted as a barrier to voting. While the turnout for the 40th General Election, at 59 percent, is the lowest recorded, the evidence from the survey suggests that the election process was not a factor accounting for the low turnout. The continuing fall in turnout appears to be linked to Canadians' views on civic responsibility and to their level of political engagement, rather than the way in which elections are administered.

Administering an election requires a large number of coordinated activities over the course of an election campaign. The various activities and stages of the election process leading up to voting day all seem to have worked well and this suggests that the policies and procedures put in place by Elections Canada facilitated the smooth running of the election. The high levels of satisfaction with the voting experience among voters from all communities provide further evidence of this.

B. Measuring Voting Behaviour

One important feature of this survey was the objective to identify, as accurately as possible, the differences between voters and non-voters across a wide range of measures. In order to do this, it was thought necessary to reduce the gap between reported voting and actual voting behaviour as much as possible. In the 39th General Election survey of 2006, the gap between actual and reported voting was 22 percentage points, but this was achieved through a direct question about voting. In 2008 the question was "Many people don't vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?" In response to this question, 73 percent report having voted. Given the actual voter turnout of 59 percent, this represents a gap of 14 percentage points between actual and self-reported voting behaviour. The advantage of this approach is that the sample size of non-voters is quite large and this allows for greater analysis to be undertaken among non-voters.

C. Registration and Voter Information Card

The various information sources put in place by Elections Canada to inform Canadians of the election, the new identification requirements and location of polling stations, and to ensure they were registered to vote, all appeared to work well. Almost all Canadians report having received a Voter Information Card and in virtually all cases the information on the card was accurate.



D. The Voting Process

While Canadians are aware of various options for casting their ballot, most continue to choose to vote at a polling station on election day. And irrespective of how they chose to exercise their franchise, voters universally report that the voting experience was very easy. While the 40th General Election introduced new voter identification requirements, the new requirements appear to have been a non-issue for almost all voters. Almost all Canadians, voters and non-voters alike, were aware of the new requirements and almost all have a positive attitude toward these requirements. However, while positive, youth and Aboriginal Canadians are slightly less strongly positive than the population overall. The most likely explanation for youth's less than highly positive response is that youth are more mobile than other groups and may have found it somewhat more difficult to provide proof of address. In the case of Aboriginal Canadians, other sources indicate that it is it's just more challenging for them to comply with the new ID requirements, either because they tend to have less ID documents or because the format of addresses is an issue, particularly in the North.

Among those going to the polls, most (83%) report that they brought their Voter Identification Card and virtually all (98%) report having acceptable identification with them. Of the 1,844 respondents from the national survey who report that they went to the polls, just 35 respondents report being initially turned away for lack of appropriate documents. Well over half of this group voted, either because they went home for the appropriate identification, swore an oath as to their identity, or were simply allowed to vote. In total, 8 persons reported they were unable to vote because of a lack of appropriate documentation. (This corresponds to 0.32 percent of the respondents surveyed. If extrapolated to the proportion of the 23 million potential voters who actually voted (59%) then 43,000 or so potential voters could have been turned away because of a lack of appropriate identification). Confirmation for the lack of difficulties with the new requirements, for most voters, is found in the fact that across all groups, nine-in-ten or more report that it was "very" easy to meet the new requirements and almost all of the remainder report that it was "easy".

In almost all cases, voters experienced no problems in finding the polling station and almost all say that the location was convenient for them. In most cases, polling stations appear to have had a steady flow of voters all day with a peak around supper time, but by 5 PM six-in-ten voters had already cast their ballot. The actual process of voting appears to have been trouble free for virtually all voters and 99 percent report being satisfied with the language in which they were served. Moreover, satisfaction with the amount of time voters waited to cast a ballot, with the instructions for casting a ballot, and with the services provided by Elections Canada is also very high (over 95%).

E. Voter Information Services

In terms of information provided about voting and election procedures, the Voting Information Card was easily the most important source for electors. Of increased importance for this election was the role of the media, as more Canadians report having received information from TV, radio and newspapers.



The Elections Canada flyer was also a highly used source with just under half reporting that they saw the flyer. Information concerning the new identification requirements is the most frequently recalled element of the flyer.

A small number (4%) of Canadians report having contacted Elections Canada during the campaign, and those who did so report a high level of service received.

F. Elections Canada Advertising

Overall, there is very high recall of at least one of the channels (TV, radio, newspapers) that Elections Canada used to communicate with citizens regarding election procedures. TV and radio are most readily recalled, with newspapers somewhat less so except among older electors who are well above average in their recall of Elections Canada newspaper advertising.

Canadians recall a variety of messages, but information about all or some aspects of the new identification requirements is most frequently recalled, followed by general Elections Canada information, the date of the election and, a reminder to vote. Recall of the slogan used in the campaign this year “Vote! Shape Your World”, is extremely limited.

G. Elections and Politics

While attitudes toward the electoral process are uniformly positive, views are somewhat more mixed regarding citizenship, voting, elected representatives, political parties and politics in general. Canadians remain committed to the concept of it being a citizen’s civic duty to vote, although a quarter of the population do not appear to be fully committed to this principle. Perhaps more troubling is the finding that fewer Canadians, and especially youth and Aboriginal Canadians, are prepared to agree strongly that low voter turnout weakens democracy.

Two statements tested in the research demonstrate that, despite some scepticism, political parties remain viable vehicles for expressing the needs and wants of Canadians. In particular, three-quarters of electors agree that “the political parties talked about issues that are important to you”, although only a fifth agree “strongly”. Further, a majority of Canadians reject the view that “All federal political parties are similar, there is no choice.” Just over a third embrace this position.

The level of cynicism regarding more abstract political issues remains relatively high. This is reflected by the almost two-thirds who agree with the statement that “In general, elected representatives are not in touch with citizens,” although only a fifth do so “strongly”. Further, almost three-quarters agree that “Political parties are too influenced by people who have a lot of money,” although just under a third do so “strongly”. In all cases it should be noted, however, that the proportion agreeing “totally” is small, and this suggests that these negative views are weakly held by most Canadians and that political cynicism is not deeply entrenched.



Overall, attitudes toward the responsibility to vote, and to a lesser extent the threat to democracy of not voting, are among the single biggest factors among those explored in the survey associated with voting behaviour. Responses to these statements also suggest that they may be one important factor accounting for the lower turnout given that neither is a universally held belief. Analysis of responses to the questions dealing with attitudes toward the political process also suggests that the extent to which parties offer voters clear political choices and discuss issues of importance to electors is not strongly linked to voting behaviour, suggesting the possibility that, while these issues may have some impact on voting behaviour, they are not strongly associated with lower turnouts. By the same token, attitudes toward the more abstract political issues of the influence of wealth on political decisions and politicians being out of touch with the public appear to have even less impact on voting behaviour. Conversely, the level of engagement with the election appears to be a crucial factor influencing voting behaviour. Levels of interest in politics and, to an even greater degree, the extent of following the campaign are highly associated with voting behaviour. The implication here is that these two factors are vitally important in voting behaviour and that in addition to a sense of civic responsibility, it is issues and or candidates that draw the attention of voters.

H. Analysis of Sub-Populations

In order to explore issues relating to voting behaviour among key groups that may face challenges in voting, special oversamples of 500 each of Youth (18-24 years of age), Aboriginal Canadians (250 living on reserves and 250 living off reserve) and members of immigrant and visible minority communities was undertaken. In addition, specific questions were developed and asked these groups and also for seniors and the disabled. A further innovation for this survey was a focus on the potential impact of technology and social media on issues related to voting behaviours.

1. Youth

Youth participation and involvement in the electoral process is somewhat lower than found among the general population. There are a number of background factors that appear associated with youth voting, but one of the most significant appears to be whether these electors live at home with their parents. Those living at home with parents are more likely to report voting than those living away from home, especially if they are non-students. Presumably, the social environment of the home and where parents vote is conducive to younger people being encouraged to vote, although they still do not vote at the same level as their parents' generation. Once away from home, the lack of those supports is in many instances enough to dampen voting behaviour. The implication here is that further efforts will be required to reach youth who are outside the home environment, possibly in places where youth congregate, such as bars or clubs, or through the media youth consume, which is increasingly digital.

Two suggestions made by youth to increase youth participation focus on identifying and discussing issues relevant to youth and engaging students more through schools, by focussing both on the responsibility to vote and on building awareness, engagement and involvement in the political process and political issues. Wider usage of technologies was also suggested.



2. Aboriginal Canadians

In total, 54 percent of Aboriginal Canadians report that they cast a ballot in the 40th General Election. Those who voted tend to be older (above 35 years of age), more affluent, in the labour force, living off reserve and in urban centres. Although there are a variety of suggestions made by Aboriginal Canadians for encouraging their peers to vote, there is no consensus on steps to take. Suggestions focus on the electoral process, such as the use of the internet (for voting), building awareness of the need to vote as well as civic duty, and political factors like making issues relevant to the Aboriginal community and more trustworthy politicians. While awareness among Aboriginal Canadians of the mainstream Elections Canada advertising directed at all citizens is good, there is limited awareness of the advertising focused on their community and limited recall of messages other than an encouragement to vote.

3. Immigrant/Visible Minorities

Overall, as noted throughout this report, the immigrant and visible minority populations surveyed have much in common in attitudes and voting behaviour with Canadian electors overall. However, there are some key differences. Among them is that there are differences in voting behaviour separating those whose first language is English or French from those for whom it is not and those belonging to visible minority and non visible minority groups. Those who report English or French as their mother tongue and those who are non visible minorities are more likely to report voting in the 2008 election. Number of years in Canada is also a significant determinant of voting, with new immigrants being less likely to report voting. It is more than likely that these factors (language and visible minority status) are linked in some way to years in Canada and hence to voting behaviour. Suggestions made for encouraging immigrants and visible minorities to vote include that Elections Canada should focus more on reaching into these communities and should promote the civic responsibility to vote within immigrant communities.

4. The Elderly

While 83 percent of those 65 years of age or older report having voted, it is likely that the strong norms around voting and the duty to vote could lead to some overreporting by age among older Canadians. This suggests that it might be important to explore what could encourage seniors, as well as youth and other groups, to vote. Older Canadians most often suggest enhanced access to transportation to polling stations.

5. Disabled Persons

Suggestions for encouraging more disabled persons to vote focus on making voting more accessible, both in terms of alternatives to current methods of casting a ballot and transportation to polling stations.



I. Technological Focus

The main findings from this analysis is the wide variety of new technologies and social media, Facebook in particular, that have been embraced by all segments of society and the linkage, or lack of it, of some of these technologies to voting behaviour. At the same time, on-line technologies are being used by some across all segments of society, and particularly youth, to discuss politics. Interestingly, among youth, those reporting that they did not vote in 2008 do use on-line technologies to discuss politics. The challenge in these findings for Elections Canada is to explore ways of using these technologies to further engage youth, as well as the population overall, in the electoral process.



III. Registration and Voter Information Card



Registration and Voter Information Card

Elections Canada sends every eligible elector whose name appears on the preliminary list of electors a Voter Information Card. This personalized document contains information regarding where and when they can cast their ballots on election day or at the advance polls. It is an important aspect of the evaluation of the overall election process to ascertain the extent to which Canadians did, in fact, receive these personalized Voter Information Cards prior to the date of the election and whether the information on the cards was accurate with respect to their name and address.

A. Voter Information Card

About nine-in-ten Canadians (89%) confirm receipt of a Voter Information Card addressed to them personally and telling them where to go to vote. This result from the 40th General Election is essentially unchanged from that found following an evaluation of the process and procedures for the 39th General Election. Importantly, and with virtual unanimity, Canadians say that the name on the card they received was correct as was the address.

1. Receipt of Voter Information Card

Almost nine of every ten eligible voters (89%) say they received a Voter Information Card that was addressed to them personally during the campaign period. Of the remainder, ten percent say they did not receive such a card and another one percent were uncertain or simply did not know in response to this question. These results are unchanged from those found following an evaluation of the previous General Election in 2006.

PERCENTAGE WHO RECEIVED A VOTER INFORMATION CARD

	Total 2006	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	3013	2500	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	89	89	69	75	88
No	10	10	30	23	11
DK/NA/Ref	1	1	1	2	1

Q.6 During the campaign, did you receive a voter information card addressed to you personally and telling you where and when to vote?

Base: All respondents



The proportion of those saying they received a Voter Information Card is generally consistent and relatively high across the regions, ranging from 84 percent in Alberta to 91 percent in Quebec. There are no significant differences between voters residing in rural and those residing in urban areas with respect to receipt of the Voter Information Card.

Men (89%) and women (90%) are equally likely to say they received a Voter Information Card. However, some differences are apparent by age, education and occupation:

- Younger voters, aged 18 to 34 years (81%), are somewhat less likely to say they received a Voter Information Card compared to those aged 55 and older (94%);
- Those with high school or less education (86%) are less likely than those with university degrees (94%) to report having received the card;
- Those with lower levels of household income, under \$20,000 (83%), are less likely to say they received a Voter Information Card compared to all other income groups, among which at least 88 percent claim to have received a card; and,
- Across occupational groups, students are the least likely to say they received a Voter Information Card (66%), while those who are retired are the most likely (93%). This finding, not surprisingly, corresponds to the trend across age groups noted above and is likely a function of the greater geographic mobility of students and young Canadians.

Receipt of a personalized Voter Information Card is demonstrably higher among those who say they voted in both of the last two general elections in 2008 and 2006. For those who voted in 2006, 93 percent say they received the card, compared to just 70 percent among those who did not vote that year. In 2008, similar results are apparent with 94 percent of those who voted in the 40th General Election saying they received a Voter Information Card, while among those who did not vote, just 76 percent recall receiving the card. Self-reported voting behaviour shows that among those who report not receiving a Card, only 41 percent report voting, compared with 77 percent who report receiving a Voter Information Card. Clearly receipt of the Card is an important step in encouraging voting. Although it is difficult to ascertain cause and effect, it seems reasonable to assume that receipt of the Voter Information Card is having at least some motivating or reminder effect with respect to getting people out to vote. However it is equally likely that at least some of those who did not vote may be less engaged in the political process and therefore less apt to recall receipt of the Voter Information Card.

Among the youth oversample, defined as those aged 18 to 24 years, just 69 percent indicate they received a Voter Information Card. While sample sizes across the regions are small, acknowledgement of receipt of the card ranges only minimally from 63 percent in Ontario to 72 percent in Atlantic Canada. In keeping with the general pattern of those who did/did not vote, almost eight-in-ten (79%) of youth who voted in 2008 say they received a card compared with just 53 percent of those who did not vote. This finding suggests that continued, or perhaps enhanced, efforts to draw young people's attention to the Voter Information Card, or to ensure they receive their Voter Information Card, may have some beneficial effects on voter turnout within that age group.



This year’s results show a similar finding compared to 2006 among the Aboriginal community of voters in that 75 percent say they received a Voter Information Card, up just slightly from 73 percent in 2006. The rate does vary from a low of 64 percent in Alberta to 83 percent in the Atlantic region. However, regional sample sizes for this sub-population are relatively small so no definitive conclusions should be drawn from these variations.

Interestingly, younger Aboriginal voters, much like youth overall, are the least likely to indicate they received a Voter Information Card. Among those aged 18 to 34 years, 59 percent say they received a card while the proportion jumps to 77 percent among those 35 to 44 years of age and is higher again at 85 percent among Aboriginal Canadians aged 55 and older.

Among the immigrant and visible minority’s community, 88 percent indicate they received a Voter Information Card. This proportion is fairly consistent across the regions. Unlike the general population, just slightly more men (90%) than women (86%) within the immigrant and visible minority’s community say they received a card. The trend by age group is similar to the general trend for the population overall in that younger immigrant and visible minorities voters, aged 18 to 34 years (74%), are less likely to say they received a card compared to those 55 years and older (93%).

2. Accuracy of Voter Information Card

Virtually all those who report receiving a Voter Information Card say that the information regarding name and address was accurate (97% for name; 98% for address) and these numbers are unchanged from the 2006 post-election results.

ACCURACY OF VOTER INFORMATION CARD

	Total 2006	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2551	2265	347	374	438
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Was your name correct on the card you received?</i>					
Yes	97	97	98	97	98
No	2	2	1	2	2
DK/NA/Ref	1	1	1	2	<1
<i>Was your address correct on the card you received?</i>					
Yes	98	97	97	97	99
No	2	2	2	2	1
DK/NA/Ref	-	1	<1	2	<1

Q.7 Was your name correct on the card you received?

Q.8 And was your address correct on the card?

Base: Those who received a Voter Information Card

There are no significant variations in the degree of accuracy on Voter Information Cards by region, gender, age, education or household income. Similarly, accuracy does not seem to have a bearing on whether the individual actually voted. This is not surprising, given that in almost all cases the information cards were deemed to be accurate.



Similar results were found among the Aboriginal community, among which 97 percent report their name was correct as was their address. Again, results among this sub-group do not vary substantially by region or by gender, age, household income or occupation.

Responses regarding the accuracy of name and address on the Voter Information Card are equally consistent among visible minorities and immigrants with 98 percent saying the name on the card was correct and 99 percent saying the address on the card was correct. Findings do not vary significantly by region, gender, age, education or household income.

B. Correcting Voter Card Errors

Just under one-third (30%) of those who found errors in their Voter Information Card did something to correct the inaccuracies.

This represents a decline from just under half of electors who took steps to correct inaccurate information in 2006. However for both years the sample sizes are very small and the differences are within the margin of error.

C. Recollection of Information Contained on the Voter Information Card

Among those who indicate that they received a Voter Information Card, the vast majority recall that the card contained information on where to vote. Somewhat fewer also recall that the card provided information on when to vote, including hours or the time period during which polls were open.

Respondents who say they received a Voter Information Card were asked what information the card provided. Most (75%) recall that the card indicated the location of the polling station where they could vote. Somewhat fewer, but still a significant number (47%), also recall that the card informed them of the hours during which polling stations were open. Fewer still (23%) recall information regarding the new voter ID requirements; including the necessity to show official identification at the polling station. Less than one-in-ten of those who say they received a Voter Information Card recall something about advance polling, the number of the polling station, how to vote or what to do if the information on the card is incorrect.



RECALL OF INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THE VOTER INFORMATION CARD

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2265	347	374	439
	%	%	%	%
Where to vote	75	63	54	71
When to vote/Hours that you can vote/time of voting	47	43	34	49
Voter ID information/Proof of name and address/Cannot be used as ID	23	13	15	23
Advance poll information	12	7	4	11
Poll number/Poll station number	4	3	2	2
My personal information/I am registered	2	3	1	2
How to vote/Bring card/Requirements to vote	5	5	7	7
Reminder to vote	1	2	3	4
What to do if information is incorrect/Number to call for information	3	4	1	2
Other	4	4	5	4
DK/NA/Ref	9	14	16	11

Q.10 From your recollection, what did the Voter Information Card talk about?
 Base: Received a Voter Information Card

When responses of self-reported voters and non-voters are compared, then it is also clear that voters are generally more aware of the details on the card. For example, among the general public 79 percent of voters and only 58 percent of non-voters are able to recall that the card indicated where to vote. The same gap is also apparent for the other groups surveyed, but among youth and Aboriginal Canadians voters, far fewer recall details of the card than among the public overall (70 percent of youth voters and 59 percent of Aboriginal voters are able to recall that information about where to vote was featured on the card).

Somewhat fewer among the youth oversample (13%) and Aboriginal communities (15%) recall that the Voter Information Card contained information regarding the new voter ID requirements. Results among immigrants and visible minorities mirror the general population with about two-in-ten (23%) recalling this requirement from information provided on the Voter Information Card.



D. Confirmation of Registration

Among those who did not receive a Voter Information Card, half reported taking a variety of actions to find out if they were registered to vote.

Those who did not receive a personalized Voter Information Card were queried as to whether they did anything to find out whether they were registered to vote and, if so, what specifically they did. About one-half (51%) did nothing specific. Other responses range from seeking clarification at the polling station or the local Elections Canada office (15%) to calling the 1-800 number provided by Elections Canada (8%). Still fewer consulted the Elections Canada website (4%) or informed a revising agent (4%).

STEPS TAKEN TO FIND OUT IF REGISTERED

	Total 2006*	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	280	235	153	126	61
	%	%	%	%	%
Found out at the polling station/local officer	29	15	20	14	12
Called 1-800 Number Provided by Elections Canada	24	8	8	1	10
Went to/phoned government office/Elections Canada office	10	-	2	-	5
Consulted the Elections Canada Website	9	4	5	1	2
Informed the revising agent who was at my home	-	4	1	3	5
Asked someone (general)	2	4	1	2	2
Got a letter in the mail	-	3	2	1	3
Family member arranged to correct / get info	2	3	7	3	3
Voted before / Got one in previous in previous election	-	2	1	4	-
Was on the voter's card	-	2	-	2	-
Called the telephone number on the voter's card	14	2	2	2	-
Other	8	7	6	10	7
I did nothing specific	68	51	46	61	56
DK/NA/Ref	2	1	4	2	3

2008Q.11 What did you do to find out whether you were registered to vote in this election?
 2006Q.9 Did you do anything to check whether you were registered to vote in this recent election?
 2006Q.10 What specifically did you do?
 Base: Those who did not receive a Voter Information Card
 Note: Due to multiple mentions, responses may exceed 100%. The 2006 column sums to well beyond 100 percent since this column reports the results from Q9 (68%) and Q.10. In 2008, one question was used to capture both pieces of information (Q.11).

Not surprisingly, taking action is strongly linked to voting. Among those voting in 2008, 17 percent report that they did nothing, compared with 74 percent among those who report not voting.



Results are similar among the youth oversample and immigrant and visible minorities, for whom 46 percent and 56 percent respectively did not do anything to follow up. A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal Canadians indicate they did nothing to follow up (61%) as compared to the general population and other subgroups.¹

E. Interest in Internet Registration

About six electors in ten indicate an interest in on-line registration or making corrections to voter information on-line.

Although voter registration on-line is not currently available for federal elections, a majority (58%) say they would be likely to access an Elections Canada web-site to register or make corrections to their voter information if they could do so. Interest levels in on-line registration are stable compared to 2006 (61%). Four-in-ten electors say they would be “very likely” to use such a system in future elections, while another 18 percent would be “somewhat likely.” Just over one-third (35%) say they would be either “not likely at all” (23%) or “not very likely” (12%) to register on-line or make corrections via an Elections Canada web-site.

LIKELIHOOD OF REGISTERING OR MAKING CORRECTIONS TO VOTER INFORMATION ON-LINE

	Total 2006	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	3013	2500	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%	%
NET Likely	61	58	69	45	58
Very likely	41	40	44	25	43
Somewhat likely	20	18	25	19	15
Not very likely	9	12	17	15	13
Not at all likely	24	23	12	33	23
NET Not likely	33	35	29	48	36
Depends	1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Do not have access/Do not use Internet	4	6	<1	6	6
DK/NA/Ref	1	<1	<1	1	1

2008Q.12 If you could register or make corrections to your voter information on-line on the Elections Canada Web site, would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely or not at all likely to do so?

2006Q.14 For future elections, if you could use the Internet to register or make corrections to your voter information with Elections Canada, would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely or not at all likely to do so?

Base: All respondents

¹ The base of those who indicate they did something to verify their eligibility to vote (n=235) is too small to permit statistically reliable analysis by subgroups. This is also true for the youth oversample (n=153).



The likelihood of using the internet to register or correct information varies across the regions, from 49 percent in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (combined), 54 percent in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, to 61 percent in B.C. and 62 percent in Ontario. Not surprisingly, given patterns of internet usage, interest in using an on-line tool is higher in urban (62%) than it is in rural (46%) areas of Canada.

Variations are also evident across other sub-groups of the population. Men (61%) are somewhat more likely than women (55%) to indicate interest in using the internet to register or correct voter information. And, again not surprisingly, interest declines with age, from 72 percent of those aged 18 to 34 years expressing some likelihood of using the internet to 40 percent among those aged 55 years or older. As in 2006, interest in on-line voter registration increases with the level of educational attainment and with household income.

Among the youth oversample, 69 percent indicate a likelihood and 44 percent say they would be “very likely” to use the internet to register or make corrections to voter information. Interest is highest in Quebec (75%) and, in keeping with patterns for the general population, interest is also just slightly higher among youth residing in urban (70%) versus rural (64%) parts of the country. Among this group, more women (74%) than men (65%) express some likelihood of registering on-line or making corrections via an Elections Canada web-site.

Aboriginal Canadians (45%) are substantially less likely, compared to the general population, to indicate an interest in using an on-line tool to register or correct voter information. About equal numbers (48%) say they would not be likely to do so. Indeed, fully one-third (33%) of Aboriginal Canadians say they would not be likely at all to use the internet. However, interest among the Aboriginal group is higher for those aged 18 to 34 years (55%) as compared to those aged 55 years or older (33%). Similarly, in keeping with patterns found for the general population of Canadians overall, interest among Aboriginal people in using an on-line tool increases with the level of education and generally with household income as well, particularly for those with a household income of \$40,000 or more.

Interest in registering on-line among those who identified themselves as an immigrant or a visible minority (58%) is no different from the general population of Canadians. In keeping with patterns found in the general population, within this sub-sample of immigrants and visible minorities, men (66%) are significantly more likely than women (52%) to say they would be likely to register or correct information on-line. Interest also declines with age, but is positively correlated to educational attainment and household income.

It is also noteworthy that non-voters among the public, youth and Aboriginal Canadians (55%, 64%, and 41%, respectively), report that they would be likely to use the internet to register to vote if this service were available. This suggests that on-line registration might to some extent facilitate greater involvement in the voting process by making it easier to register to vote, for those who are currently less engaged.



IV. Voter Turnout



Voter Turnout

A. National Overview

While awareness of the 40th General Election on October 14th is extremely high (99%), voter turnout was the lowest it has been in generations. However, a somewhat different way of asking the voter turnout question appears to have yielded a response in self-reported voting behaviour that is closer to the actual turnout.

Voter turnout for Canadian federal elections continues to be in decline and dropped to 58.8 percent in 2008, despite the slight increase to 64.7 percent observed in 2006.

It should be noted that self-reported voting behaviour is typically higher than the actual turnout and this fact can create analytical problems in trying to determine the factors influencing voting behaviour. In the 2008 survey, the question was designed to set respondents at ease about reporting non-voting behaviour. The wording of the question used in 2008 is as follows: “Many people don’t vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?” In response to this question a total of 73 percent report voting, which is 14 percentage points above the turnout of 59 percent. By contrast, in 2006, in response to a question which asked “Did you vote in this election?”, a total of 87 percent reported voting, which represents a gap of 22 percentage points above the turnout of nearly 65 percent. The narrowing of the gap between actual and reported voting behaviour could be a function of a number of factors. One is the change in question wording, a second is that as turnout drops any stigma associated with not voting is eroding. The implication of this second factor is that this would lead to fewer people reporting having voted when in fact they did not. In addition to the above factors, there may also be other as yet undefined factors at work.

INCIDENCE OF SELF-REPORTED VOTING IN THE 39TH and 40TH GENERAL ELECTION

	All Canadians		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
n=	2011	2500	678	500	642	500	500
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	87	73	70	63	64	54	71
No	13	26	30	37	36	46	28
DK/NA/Ref	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	-	<1

Q.3 Many people don't vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?

Base: All respondents, youth oversample, Aboriginal oversample, visible minorities oversample

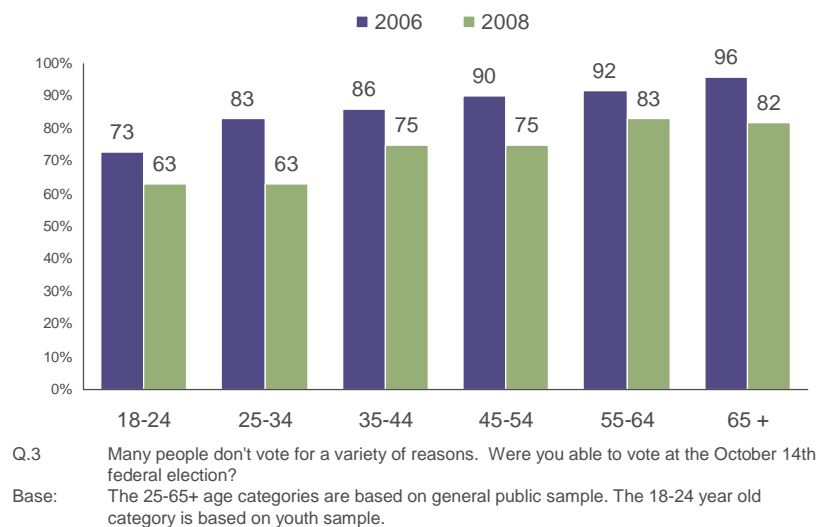
B. Turnout by Region and Major Demographics

Not unexpectedly, self reported voting behaviour varies across a number of key background factors. This includes region, age, education, and previous self reported voting behaviour.

Self-reported voting incidence varies greatly among the Canadian regions. Notably, a higher incidence of reported voting is found among electors in Quebec (77%), British Columbia (75%), and Ontario (75%) as compared to electors in the Prairies (65%) and the Atlantic Provinces (60%). Alberta falls in the middle at 70 percent.

Along with these regional differences, and consistent with previous surveys, age is a key indicator of voting incidence. Specifically, older Canadians are more likely than younger Canadians to report having voted.

VOTING BEHAVIOUR BY AGE – GENERAL POPULATION



However, gender is also an indicator of voting incidence. Men (77%) are more likely than women (70%) to report having voted.

Life status measures, such as education, occupation, and household income, are also key indicators of self-reported voting behaviour. Canadian electors with a university degree are more likely to indicate having voted than are those with college diplomas and those with high school diplomas or less (80% vs. 72% and 69% respectively). Canadians in the work force, either self-employed or working full or part time, also are more likely than students to indicate having voted (73% vs. 72% and 63% respectively). Notably, retired Canadians are much more likely to indicate having voted (84%); this is not surprising given the link between age and self-reported voting behaviour.



Being previously engaged in the voting process is also a key indicator of voting behaviour. Canadians who report they voted in 2006 (81%) are much more likely to report that they voted in 2008 than are those who say that they did not vote in 2006 (35%). The implication here is that a significant proportion of 2008 non-voters may well be long-term disengaged from the political electoral process. In fact, a quarter (26%) of the public report not voting in both the 2006 and 2008 elections.

C. Aboriginal Canadians Review

As in 2006, Aboriginal Canadians report a lower level of voting than the population overall (54% to 73%). This is especially low among those under 35 years of age (37%).

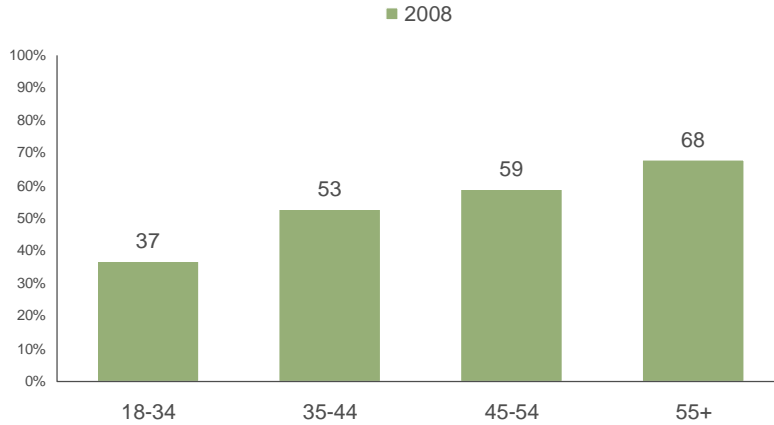
As was the case in 2006, Aboriginal Canadians are much less likely than other Canadians to indicate having voted in the 2008 election. (It is also noteworthy that 7% of Aboriginal Canadians report not being aware of the election as opposed to only 1% in the rest of the population.) About half of Aboriginal Canadians (54%) surveyed indicate they voted in 2008 vs. 64 percent in 2006, for a 10 point drop in self-reported voting. The 10 percentage point decline reflects the lower turnout in 2008 and likely the effects of the change in wording of the vote question in the survey. As noted, this wording change was designed to make it easier for citizens to report that they did not vote and to thereby reduce the level of false positive responses. The 10 point gap in Aboriginal voting between the self-reported figures in 2006 and 2008 is smaller than the 14 point gap found among electors overall and suggests that norms around admitting non-voting (and voting behaviour generally) in federal elections may be weaker for Aboriginal Canadians.

Given that the self-reported Aboriginal voter proportion (54%) is below the actual national turnout figure (59%), the implication is that the actual Aboriginal turnout figure could be below 50 percent, if we assume that a proportion of those reporting voting are false positives (i.e. those who reported voting but did not).

Much like with other Canadians, age and self-reported voting behaviour among Aboriginal Canadians is strongly linked. In fact, among those under 35 years of age it is especially low (37%).



VOTING BEHAVIOUR BY AGE – ABORIGINAL CANADIAN OVERSAMPLE



Q.3 Many people don't vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?

Base: Aboriginal Canadian oversample (n=500). Note that the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups have been collapsed due to the small 18-24 sample size (n=53), as has the 55-64 and 65+ age groups.

Education is also a good indicator of voting behaviour among Aboriginal Canadians. Specifically, likelihood of voting increases with level of education completed.

A greater discussion about Aboriginal Canadians can be found starting at page 76.

D. Youth Review

A decrease in self-reported voting behaviour among Canadians in general compared to 2006 is also evident among young Canadians (aged 18-24), but to a much weaker degree.

Less than two-thirds of Canadian youth (63%) indicate that they voted in the 40th Federal General Election, compared to 70% for the 39th Federal General Election, a gap of just 7 percentage points. As in the case of Aboriginal voters, this may suggest that norms about voting are less strong among youth. Some confirmation is found in responses to questions concerning the duty to vote, which suggest that youth may be less likely to over-report voting behaviour.

As in 2006, young men (66%) remain slightly more likely to indicate having voted than young women (60%).

A greater discussion about youth can be found on page 82.

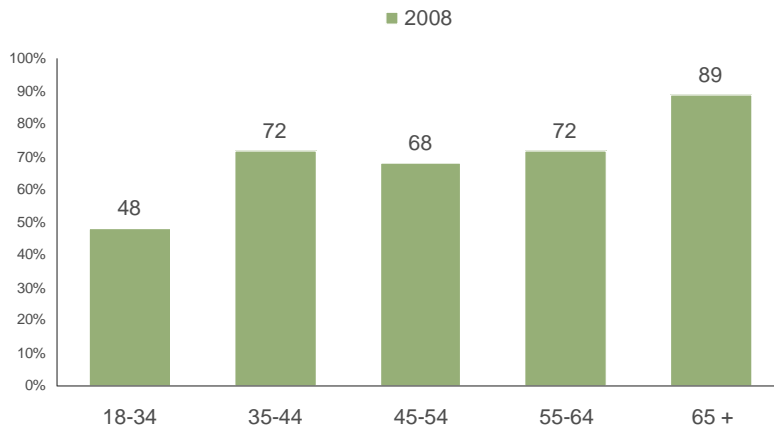


E. Immigrant / Visible Minorities Review

Self-reported voting behaviour among immigrants and visible minorities is much like that of other Canadians. Seventy-one percent of immigrants and visible minorities indicate that they voted in the 40th Federal General Election.

Much like Aboriginal Canadians and other Canadians, age is a key indicator of voting behaviour for immigrants and visible minorities. There is also some evidence that men are more likely than women to report voting (74% to 69%).

**VOTING BEHAVIOUR BY AGE – IMMIGRANT / VISIBLE MINORITIES
OVERSAMPLE**



Q.3 Many people don't vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?
 Base: Visible minority / immigrant oversample (n=500)
 Note that the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups have been collapsed due to the small 18-24 sample sizes.

Further analysis of factors associated with voting behaviour by the sub populations is found in the sections devoted to these populations later in this report.



F. Reasons for Voting

Reasons of citizenship and responsibility, rather than partisanship, appear to be the main factors voters give for casting a ballot.

As was the case for the 39th Federal General Election, most electors cite non-political reasons for voting in the 40th General Election suggesting that most are voting for reasons other than a political agenda. In fact, the majority of electors (64%) say they voted because they felt it was their duty, right, privilege or responsibility to do so. This is up considerably from 2006 when just under half (44%) said so. Other non-political reasons electors give for voting include habit (10%), to voice their opinion or have a say (8%), because they are concerned about the country (3%), because they feel that you must vote to have the right to complain (3%), and because they simply wanted to vote (1%).

Among political reasons given are to support a particular party (12%), to support a particular candidate (5%) and to oppose a particular party (5%).

REASONS FOR VOTING

	Total 2006	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2486	1876	315	269	356
	%	%	%	%	%
Non-Political Reasons					
My duty / right / privilege / responsibility to vote	44	64	62	43	65
Habit – always vote	9	10	5	11	10
To voice my opinion / Have a say	5	8	13	4	8
Concerned about the country	-	3	4	5	5
You can't complain if you don't vote	1	3	3	2	2
I wanted to vote	1	1	2	5	1
Political Reasons					
To support a particular party	11	12	7	12	14
To support a particular candidate	4	5	4	7	6
To oppose a particular party	7	5	5	6	6
Time for change / make a difference	6	4	3	6	4
To oppose a particular candidate	1	1	2	<1	1
DK/NA/Ref	-	1	1	4	<1

Q.5 What is the main reason you voted?
Base: Those who voted in the October 14th General Election

Interestingly, little variation exists between regions, by demographics, although there are some variations among some of the special sub-samples selected for this report (youth, Aboriginal Canadians).



Aboriginal Canadians are less likely than other groups to say they felt it was their duty, right, privilege, or responsibility to vote. Young Canadians are more likely than other groups to say they voted because they wished to voice their opinion yet are less likely to cite force of habit or the desire to support a particular party.

G. Reasons for Not Voting

Non-voters offer a wide variety of reasons for not casting a ballot, but these can be divided into everyday life reasons, negative attitudes related to political factors or factors related to the electoral process. Of these three, everyday life intruding appears to be the principal reason given for not voting.

Using an open ended question approach, Canadian non-voters give a wide range of factors for their voting behaviour or the lack of it. A different approach was used for the 2006 Federal Election and therefore no direct comparisons can be made. In order to aid the analysis, the reasons given by Canadians for not voting have been grouped into three categories:

- Those where an electoral type issue is cited;
- Those where a political type issue is indicated; and,
- Those where a life style/everyday life issue is indicated.

Among the public overall, the single biggest issue identified by non-voters can be grouped into everyday life situations (57%). This is followed by a generally negative attitude toward politics or political parties (36%), and finally for a few non-voters issues related to the electoral process (8%). Everyday life issues include things like holidays or being out of town (16%), being too busy or unexpected things coming up (15%), work or school schedules (11%) or family obligations (3%). Political issues identified include comments related to apathy (14%), cynicism (8%), which collectively represent the single largest group of comments, not knowing who to vote for /dislike of all candidates (9%) or negative attitudes toward political parties or politicians (3%). Finally, the various issues around the electoral process include not having received a Voter Information Card (1%, n=8), not being sure if they were registered (1%, n=8), a lack of proper identification (1%, n=8), a transportation issue in getting to a poll (1%, n=5), and not knowing where the polling station was or that it was too far (1%, n=12).



Much the same pattern of response is given by the three sub groups oversampled, although there are some variations of note.

Among youth, the same proportion (57%) as among adults cites everyday life issues, and much the same reasons are again cited. Interestingly, youth are less likely to refer to political issues (25%) but more likely to refer to electoral issues (16%). Comments regarding the electoral process include not being sure if they were registered (6%, n=11) having no Voter Information Card (3%, n=6), a transportation issue (3%, n=5), or a problem accessing the polling station (2%, n=3).

REASONS GIVEN FOR NON-VOTING

	Total		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
n=	634							
Electoral Issues	50	8	30	16	37	18	14	10
No Voter Information Card	8	1	6	3	5	2	9	7
No ID documents	8	1	3	2	8	4	1	1
Transportation issue	5	1	5	3	4	2	1	1
Problem accessing poll/too far	9	1	3	2	7	3	1	1
Moved / changed address	9	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Wasn't registered / not sure if reg. / regist. Issue	8	1	11	6	7	3	1	1
Didn't know where to vote	3	<1	-	-	4	2		
Political Issues	229	36	47	25	71	35	44	32
Apathy/Lack of interest	88	14	18	10	40	20	14	11
Didn't know who to vote for / dislike all candidates	60	9	12	6	19	9	11	8
Cynicism	52	8	12	6	6	3	8	6
Didn't like parties / platform	22	3	5	3	4	2	10	7
Disagreed with holding election	7	1	-		2	1	1	
Other Issues	362	57	110	57	96	47	79	58
Travelling/holidays	103	16	13	7	25	12	25	18
Too busy / something came up	96	15	33	17	24	12	21	15
Work / school schedule	68	11	26	14	22	11	15	11
Health / illness	38	6	4	2	14	7	6	4
Lack of information	30	5	15	8	2	1	3	2
Family obligations	17	3	4	2	4	2	6	4
Religious beliefs	10	2	2	1	-	-	1	1
Other	11	2	12	7	5	2	2	1
DK/NA	23	4	6	3	14	7	6	4

Q.4 What were the main reasons you did not vote?
Base: Non voters



Among Aboriginal Canadians, the single largest group of comments again focuses on everyday life issues (47%) and in much the same proportion as for the public overall. The only exception is the slightly larger proportion of Aboriginal non-voters who provide a health or illness reason (7%) for not being able to vote. The proportion of Aboriginal voters who cite political type issues as a reason for not voting is also in line with the public overall (35%) and the reasons cited are very similar to the public including cynicism (3%) and apathy and not knowing who to vote for/dislike of all candidates (9%). There is, though, a slightly higher proportion (18%) of Aboriginal non-voters relative to the public who cite reasons related to the electoral process. The reasons cited include: a lack of identification documentation (4%, n=8), not being sure of being registered (3%, n=7), a problem accessing the polling station (3%, n=7) and not having received a Voter Information Card (2%, n=6).

Immigrants and visible minorities most closely resemble the public overall in their reasons given for not voting. In all, 58 percent cite everyday life problems, 32 percent political issues, and just 10 percent issues related to the electoral process.

The large number of non-voters, citing everyday life factors, may however also “hide” some less clearly expressed political dissatisfaction. Many respondents gave responses that indicate that time constraints, or travelling, or work/school schedules got in the way of voting. For many non-voters these in fact may have been the complete answer. However, for others, background factors that are not obvious, including things like apathy or a lack of engagement in the election, may lower motivation enough that busy schedules, etc. become an excuse for not voting.

However, irrespective of this issue, open ended responses make it clear that for only a few non-voters were aspects of the electoral process a barrier. And where a barrier did exist no one factor looms large, documentation issues exist for some in terms of not receiving a Voters Information Card or a lack of appropriate identification, but equally the location of polling stations or a lack of transportation to polling stations are also factors.



V. The Voting Process



The Voting Process

A. Voter Participation

Most voters report casting their ballot on election day at a polling station and also say, in large numbers, that the process was very easy. While advance polling and voting by mail are also available, few availed themselves of these options. In terms of making use of mail as an option, only a minority are aware that this can be done.

1. Method of Voting

Although there are a variety of options for casting a ballot, among the 73 percent of the population who report voting in the 2008 General Election, almost all (87%) did so at a polling station on Election Day; and this proportion is in line with the 2006 election figures. In addition, one-in-ten (11%) report voting at an advance poll and again this is virtually unchanged since 2006. The remaining 2 percent used Special Voting Rules, such as by mail or at an Elections Canada office.

Further analysis shows that none of the over sampled groups is especially likely to use an advance poll² or Special Voting Rules. However, a substantial proportion of those who report belonging to a political party (26%) and, to a lesser extent, those 55 years of age and over (18%) are, as in 2006, the more likely to report the use of an advance poll.

2. Ease of Voting Method

Similar to the results in 2006, virtually all voters (97%) of the October 14th General Election reported finding it easy to vote. However, there is a slight drop to 86 percent, from 90 percent in 2006, in the proportion who report it “very” easy. Possibly, the new requirements for voter identification are a factor in the slight decline. However, if so, then the new process was an issue for very few voters.

There are few, but significant, regional and demographic variations in the reported ease of voting. Just as in 2006, Quebec residents, while overall following the national trend of virtually all finding the voting process to be easy, are somewhat different from the population overall in the intensity of this “easiness”. In all, only 81 percent of Quebec residents among the general public sample and 72 percent among Quebec youth report that it was “very” easy. The only other variation of note is the below average (79%) response for those with annual household incomes of under \$20,000 who report finding it “very” easy to vote.

Youth are also less likely to say that voting was “very” easy (81%). Possibly for some youth it may have been their first time voting and this may account for the slightly smaller number reporting the voting process was “very” easy. No other variations are of note, including Aboriginal Canadians on and off reserve and the immigrant/visible minority populations.



3. Awareness of Voting by Mail

Although less than 1 percent report having voted by mail, a significant minority (35%) report that they were aware of this option. There are, though, considerable variations in reported awareness across the public and the four oversamples. Among the public, males (40%), those 55 years and over (45%), voters (40%) and, not surprisingly, members of political parties (56%) are among the most aware of this option. Females (30%), non-voters (24%), and residents of Alberta (29%) are the least likely to be aware.

Among the oversamples, immigrants and visible minorities (40%) are the most likely to be aware of the mail option, and especially those 55 years of age and over (55%); Aboriginal Canadians are similar to the population overall (33%) while youth (30%) are less likely to be aware.

B. Voter Identification

Awareness of the new proof of identification requirements is very high. Awareness is highest for the proof of identity requirement, with awareness of the proof of address requirement lagging slightly. This awareness is derived from a wide variety of sources, including TV, the Voter Information Card, newspapers and radio, but sources vary by groups, with youth especially likely to report word of mouth. Assessments of the new requirements are also very positive, although slightly less so for the proof of address requirement. Presumably, this is because not all Canadians have a document showing their address, or especially among young adults, there is a high degree of mobility.

1. Awareness of Proof of Identity and Address

The need for voters to provide proof of identity and address were new features of the 40th General Election and therefore of great importance to assess. First, initial awareness of the identity requirement is very high (94%) across all regional and demographic groups. Even among those who did not vote 92 percent report awareness of this requirement among the public. Awareness is slightly lower among those with only a high school education (91%) or whose household income is \$20,000 or less (91%), but is still very high. Regionally, Atlantic (89%) residents are slightly lower in terms of awareness.

Among the various sub populations surveyed, awareness of the identity requirement is uniformly high. The main exception is Aboriginal people among whom awareness, although high, drops to 84 percent overall, 82 percent among those living in rural areas, and 78 percent among non-voters.

² However 15 percent of the visible minority/ immigrant sample do report using an advance poll, while only 4 percent of Aboriginal Canadian voters did so.



Awareness of the proof of address requirement is slightly lower (85%), but still very high. However, unlike proof of identity, awareness of the proof of address requirement shows some variation both regionally and demographically. Regionally, residents of the Atlantic provinces (78%) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (79%), as well as those living in rural areas (80%), are slightly below average in awareness. Similarly, those with annual household incomes of under \$20,000 (77%) and non-voters (79%) are also slightly below average for the electors overall.

Among sub groups surveyed, once again Aboriginal people overall (71%), and especially those living in rural areas (68%), are also somewhat lower in awareness levels of the proof of address requirement. Among non-voting Aboriginal Canadians, 67 percent report prior awareness of the new requirement. The youth and immigrant/visible minorities groups show no real demographic and regional differences, except non-voters among whom 74 percent and 72 percent, respectively, report no prior awareness of the proof of address requirement.

2. Sources of Awareness

The use of a wide variety of media channels to get the message out about the change of requirements was clearly successful in both the levels of awareness noted above and also in terms of the variety of channels to which the public report exposure. These include TV (32%), the Voter Information Card (27%), radio (22%) and newspapers (22%) as the principal sources, but also the Elections Canada brochure and website on the new requirements (14%) and word of mouth (12%).

There is, however, variation in the extent to which reliance was placed on specific channels and this is clearly important from a communications planning point of view. Most notably, those over 45 years of age are the most likely to cite TV (36%), while for those over 55 years of age newspapers (35%) are especially important.

By contrast, those under 35 years of age and the youth sample are the least likely to cite newspapers (8% in both cases) and radio (10% among youth) as a source and the most likely to cite word of mouth (19% for those under 35 years and 32% for youth). In the case of youth, and as noted later in this report, many still live at home and possibly parents played a role in informing them of the new requirements.

Aboriginal Canadians and immigrant/visible minorities Canadians are, on the other hand, fairly similar to the population overall in the sources they used. The exception is the lower than average use among Aboriginal Canadians of newspapers (18%) and the Voter Information Card (16%). Responses from immigrants and visible minorities mirror the public overall, with the exception of slightly lower use of radio (16%) as a source of awareness.

While there are few regional differences, TV (40%), radio (30%) and word of mouth (25%) are especially strongly cited as sources in Atlantic Canada; TV (39%) in Quebec; and radio in Alberta (32%).



SOURCES OF AWARENESS OF NEW IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2401	483	432	471
	%	%	%	%
TV	32	23	34	28
VIC	27	18	16	29
Newspaper	22	8	18	24
Radio	22	10	15	16
Word of Mouth	12	31	15	10
Elections Canada ... / Brochure	14	11	16	17
Already knew/Common sense/Always take ID	6	6	6	7
When voted / Polling station	5	6	3	4
Media / News	1	1	1	1
Other*	3	7	8	6

Q.18 From what sources do you recall hearing about these new requirements?
 Base: Aware voters must present proof of identity and/or address in order to vote
 * Other responses include: school, work, by phone, by mail.

Those among the public reporting that they were non-voters in 2008 also shed some light on this group’s possible lack of engagement with the election. Across almost all information channels, despite being nearly as likely as voters to report being aware of the new requirements, non-voters are consistently less likely to report the major channels cited above as their sources of information. However, they are among the most likely to report word of mouth (18%) as a source. One explanation for this is that they are simply less engaged and not in as much of an information seeking mode as those who report having voted and may, in fact, have overstated their awareness of the new requirements.

3. Attitude Toward the Proof of Identity and Address Requirement

Reactions to the proof of identity and address requirements are highly positive. In all, 94 percent say they have a positive attitude toward the identity requirement, with a large majority (74%) saying that they have a “very” positive attitude. Significantly, only five percent hold a negative attitude. The proof of address requirement is also positively received by 88 percent, although those saying they have a “very” positive attitude are lower at 62 percent. Ten percent hold a negative attitude.



While attitudes concerning the new requirements are very favourable, further demographic and regional analysis does show that the new requirements have not been as well received among some groups as they have been among the population overall. Regionally, Atlantic and Manitoba/Saskatchewan residents are less intensely positive concerning both requirements, and Alberta and B.C. residents to the address requirement. Quebec residents are easily the most strongly positive toward both requirements (78% and 75%, respectively, say they are “very” positive). This may be a result of previous exposure to identification requirements. Quebec has had ID requirements for provincial elections since 1999 and Quebec residents are therefore likely to be more accustomed to some form of ID requirement for voting.

Among sub populations, most notably, Aboriginal Canadians are considerably less positive than other segments in the intensity of their response. While 80 percent and 75 percent of Aboriginal Canadians say they have a positive attitude toward the identity and address requirements, respectively, only half (51%) say they have a “very” positive attitude toward the identity requirement and less than half (42%) say this of the address requirement. Youth are the other group with a less intensely positive response to the address requirement (47% say they are “very” positive). For the identity requirement, they are close to the norm.

The most likely explanation for the less than strongly positive attitude is that specific groups may be more mobile and not have a specific address and/or may be less engaged with mainstream society and not have proof of identity. This may well explain the lower strongly positive response of Aboriginal and young Canadians.

AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD NEW IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2500	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%
IDENTITY				
Aware - Yes	94	95	84	91
NET Positive Attitude	94	97	80	96
Very Positive	74	67	51	82
Somewhat Positive	20	30	29	14
ADDRESS				
Aware - Yes	85	80	71	83
NET Positive Attitude	88	83	75	88
Very Positive	62	47	42	67
Somewhat Positive	26	36	33	21

- Q.16 Did you know, before the election, that voters must present a proof of identity in order to vote at federal elections?
 - Q.17 Did you know, before the election, that voters must present a proof of address in order to vote at federal elections?
 - Q.19 All things considered, what is your attitude towards the idea that electors must prove their IDENTITY when voting at a federal election? Would you say...?
 - Q.20 All things considered, what is your attitude towards the idea that electors must prove their ADDRESS when voting at a federal election? Would you say...?
- Base: All respondents



Some confirmation for this hypothesis is found in the table below. Although the sample sizes are very small, it is highly indicative that the perception that not everyone has an address is a significant objection to the new requirements. This is especially so among youth.

REASONS FOR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEW IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	101	20	47	19
	%	%	%	%
Some people don't have permanent address/shouldn't have to prove address	31	45	30	26
They already knew who I am/everyone knows each other in small communities	11	-	17	-
I should not have to prove who I am to vote	8	-	2	10
If you have ID with name and address why have to prove it again/shouldn't need two pieces of ID to vote	6	5	17	10
Doesn't make any sense/not necessary	5	5	4	10
Canadians that are here long shouldn't have to do it/do that people who are new	5	-	-	10
Should be able to vote anywhere in the country	5	10	-	10
Card already has name and address	4	-	-	10
Didn't bring ID with me/don't have ID	4	-	4	-
Didn't have to prove anything before	3	5	5	-
Other	8	25	15	5
No answer	7	5	8	10
DK/NA/Ref	3	-	-	-

Q.21 What would be the main reason why your attitude is negative?
 Base: Those who responded "very negative" at Q19 or Q20

C. Experience of Voter Identification at the Polls

The new identification requirements appear to have presented few problems for voters. Overwhelmingly, Canadians report that the new identification requirements were easy to meet. In fact, virtually all voters reported bringing along the required identification. Of the 2,500 respondents from the general public interviewed for this survey, just eight people reported being turned away without voting because they did not have the required identification documents.



1. Voter Information Card

Most (83%) of those who report that they went to vote in the 40th General Election also report bringing along their Voter Information Card. However, especially among Aboriginal (53%) and, to a lesser extent young Canadians (70%), this is less often the case. In the case of youth, the main reason many did not bring along their Voter Information Card was because they did not recall receiving one (79% of those youth who voted reported this), which suggests that among those recalling a card, just 9% did not bring along the card. Among Aboriginal voters, a large 34% of voters reporting receiving a Voter Information Card did not bring it with them to the polling station (88% of Aboriginal voters reported receiving the card, but only 54% took it to the polling station). This appears to be especially the case for Aboriginal Canadians living in rural areas, and also presumably on reserves, among whom only 45 percent report taking their Card to the polling station.

2. Required Identification and the Failure to Produce Identification

While some did not bring their Voter Information Card, virtually all (98%) voters report bringing the required identification with them. The exception here is Aboriginal Canadians, among whom slightly fewer (89%) report having brought the appropriate identification.

Of the national sample of 2,500 Canadians interviewed and the 1,844 who report having gone to a polling station, just 35 respondents report being initially turned away because of incorrect, or insufficient, identification. For some it was a complete lack of identifying documents (n= 12), for others no document with their address (n=10), while for others it was no document with a photo (n=5), and for still others the lack of a driver's licence (n=4).³ In fact, the last two cases cited above of incorrect, or insufficient identification, can probably be considered as a misunderstanding of the requirements either by the electors or by the elections staff who turned them away. Neither a photo ID nor a driver's license was a mandatory requirement.

Among those 35 intending voters, the most common response (n=14) was to swear an oath regarding their identity and be vouched for by another elector before being allowed to vote. Others (n=8) reported going home to get the appropriate documentation and coming back to vote. Some appear to have voted without producing the required identification (n=4), while a very few (n=8) went home and did not vote. Overall, this suggests that the new requirements were an inconvenience for a few, but in virtually all cases were not a barrier to voting for those who went to cast a ballot.

Having said this, though, while the 8 electors only represent 0.32 percent of the population, when projected to the proportion of electors who turned out for the 40th General Election (59%), then approximately 43,000 potential electors could have been turned away because of the new identity requirements. When the margin of error is considered; then this would yield a range of 2.28 percent down to zero, which translates into a range for those who could have been turned away of from 310,000 down to zero.

³ Not all responses have been cited in the text. Due to multiple mentions being accepted for this question, the number of responses sum to more than the actual 35 cases.



Among those with acceptable identification, a driver's license (90%) was the proof most commonly used, followed by a health card (18%), and a Canadian passport (4%). Other identification used, but less frequently, includes: the Voter Information Card (3% - despite the fact that it is not an acceptable identification document), a utility bill (3%), a birth certificate (3%), social insurance card (3%), and a citizenship card (3%).

While a driver's license was the document used most commonly across all demographic and regional groups, there is considerable variation in other documents used. Among Aboriginal Canadians over a quarter (27%) used their Certificate of Indian Status and 12 percent their birth certificate. Among visible minorities/ immigrants a Canadian passport (8%) and Citizenship Card (9%) are cited. Among youth (24%) and those over 55 years of age (24%) a health card was used quite frequently. Of particular interest is the documentation used by low income Canadians (those with household incomes of less than \$20,000 a year); this group are the least likely to cite a driver's license (70%) but are the most likely to report using a utility bill (10%) and among the most likely to use a health card (29%). Finally, while regional variations are limited, the one exception is the high incidence of health cards (35%) used in Quebec.

DOCUMENT PROVIDED AS PROOF OF ID

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	1811	300	238	335
	%	%	%	%
Driver's License	90	86	78	88
Health Card	18	24	15	13
Canadian Passport / Citizenship Card	6	7	1	18*
Utility Bill	3	5	4	5
Voter Information Card**	3	3	2	2
Birth Certificate / Social Insurance Card / Old age security card	5	5	15	4
Credit / Debit Card	1	0	<1	1
Credit Card / Bank Statement	1	2	0	1
Other photo ID (Canadian Forces, Provincial/Territorial ID, Firearm acquisition)	1	1	2	1
Student ID	<1	3	1	0
Certificate of Indian Status	<1	0	27	0
Other	2	5	5	3
None / Don't Know	1	1	2	2

*Certificate of Canadian Citizenship or Citizenship card: 9%

**Note: In fact, a Voter Information Card is not an acceptable identification document. That is, it is not on the list of accepted documents.

Q.26 Which documents did you provide to prove your identity and address?



3. Ease of Meeting New Identification Requirements

The final evidence that the new identification requirements did not constitute a widespread impediment for voting comes from the fact that almost all (97%) electors report finding it easy to meet the new identification requirement; with over eight-in-ten (83%) saying it was “very” easy. However, as might be expected, those groups that report some difficulty in producing appropriate identification are somewhat less likely to be as positive. In particular, Aboriginal Canadians (66%), youth (72%) and those with annual household incomes of less than \$20,000 (71%) are well below the average in reporting that it was “very” easy to meet the new identification requirements.

EASE OF MEETING NEW IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities	HH Income <\$20K
n=	1844	305	265	343	129
	%	%	%	%	%
NET Easy	97	97	89	96	95
Very easy	83	72	66	83	71
Somewhat easy	15	25	23	13	24
Somewhat difficult	2	2	7	2	1
Very difficult	<1	<1	2	<1	2
NET Difficult	2	3	9	2	3
DK/NA/Ref	1	<1	1	2	2

Q.27 Overall, how easy is it to meet the new identification requirements? Would you say that it is...
 Base: Those who voted at polling station or in advance polls, or did not vote because had no documents to prove ID when voting.

D. Inside the Polling Station: The Experience of Voting

Most voters come to the poll from home and do so throughout the day. In fact, by 4:00 PM over half of electors had voted, although the peak hours are between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM.

1. Getting to the Polling Station

As in the 2006 General Election, most voters report having come to the polling station from their home (77%) with a few coming direct from work (17%). The proportion coming from work is slightly higher for Aboriginal Canadians (26%). When those who are employed are isolated, among the total sample of those who voted the proportion coming to the polling station from work is 27 percent. In general, however, going from home to the polling station is the norm for most voters.



Irrespective of where voters begin their journey to the polling station, an overwhelming majority of 96 percent (consistent with the 2006 General Election) say that the location of the station they used was a convenient distance for them. The sole exception here is that slightly fewer (89%), but a still large majority of, Aboriginal electors who report finding the distance convenient. While one possible explanation for this might be that rural Aboriginal electors report greater inconvenience in terms of distance, this in fact is not the case; both rural and urban Aboriginal electors give essentially the same response.

In addition to distance not being a problem, virtually all (98%, the same proportion as in 2006) voters report no problems in finding the polling station. Even among youth, some of whom would be first time voters, there are virtually no reports of difficulty in finding the polling station.

Among the 37 electors reporting difficulty, no common theme emerges from their comments. Difficulties reported include difficulty in finding the address (n=11), that the location had changed from the previous election (n=7), that they went to the wrong place (n=6), and that there was not enough parking (n=5).

2. Time of Voting

Both the 2006 and 2008 General Elections followed a similar pattern of time of voting. Voting occurs regularly throughout the day, and builds up to a peak between the hours of 5:00 and 7:00 PM. This is presumably after supper for many voters. However, when looked at cumulatively, by 4 PM almost half (47%) of 2008 voters had cast a ballot and by just prior to the peak hour of 6 PM to 7 PM over seven-in-ten (71%) had voted.

PATTERN OF HOURLY VOTING ACTIVITY

	Total 2006	Cumulative 2006	Total 2008	Cumulative 2008
n=	2552	2552	1844	1844
	%	%	%	%
Before 8 a.m.	1	1	1	1
8 and 9 a.m.	2	3	3	4
9 and 10 a.m.	7	10	6	10
10 and 11a.m.	8	18	7	17
11 and noon	6	24	6	23
noon and 1p.m.	7	31	5	28
1 and 2 p.m.	7	38	8	36
2 and 3p.m.	7	45	5	41
3 and 4 p.m.	8	53	6	47
4 and 5 p.m.	10	63	11	58
5 and 6 p.m.	12	75	13	71
6 and 7 p.m.	15	90	14	85
7 and 8 p.m.	8	98	10	95
8 and 9 p.m.	3	100	3	98
After 9 p.m.	1	100	1	99
DK/NA/Ref	-	100	2	100

Q.32 Do you remember approximately what time it was when you went to vote?
 Base: Voted at polling station or in advance polls, or did not vote because had no documents to prove ID when voting.
 Note: Due to rounding, totals may exceed 100%



Times of voting also mask some variations; brought about by different voting hours by region and province. The pattern of early voting in B.C. (36% had voted by noon) and little early evening voting (only 12% voted after 6:00 PM) is in large part a function of the polls opening at 7:00 AM and closing at 7:00 PM Pacific time, as opposed to 9:30 AM to 9:30 PM in Eastern time locations. However, the fact that the polls closed at 9:30 PM in Ontario and Quebec does not explain why far more Ontarians voted after 6:00 PM than did Quebec residents (38% versus 27%).

GENERAL POPULATION TIME OF VOTING

	Before noon	Noon to 4 p.m.	4 p.m. - 6 p.m.	6 p.m. on
n=	405	432	426	513
	%	%	%	%
Atlantic	20	28	23	25
<i>Cumulative</i>	20	48	71	96
Quebec	20	27	23	27
<i>Cumulative</i>	20	47	70	97
Ontario	18	22	22	38
<i>Cumulative</i>	18	40	62	100
Manitoba/Sask.	30	28	22	18
<i>Cumulative</i>	30	58	80	98
Alberta/Terr.	22	21	26	26
<i>Cumulative</i>	22	43	69	95
BC	36	21	29	12
<i>Cumulative</i>	36	57	86	98
TOTAL	23	24	24	28
<i>Cumulative</i>	23	47	71	99

Q.32 Do you remember approximately what time it was when you went to vote?
 Base: Voted at polling station or in advance polls, or did not vote because had no documents to prove ID when voting.

Not unexpectedly, those who are employed tend to report the later voting hours. In all, over half (54%) of those employed voted after 5:00 PM, compared with 11 percent of those retired, suggesting that time of voting is very much a function of the opportunity to vote.

E. Assessing the Voting Process

Overall, responses from electors on the voting experience for the 40th General Election indicate that almost all found the experience both convenient and accessible and are satisfied with all aspects of the process.



1. Language

All but one percent of voters (99%) report that they are satisfied with being served in the language they were served in at the polling station; this was English (75%), French (24%) and Aboriginal languages in a few instances. Those served in English or French are equally satisfied with the language in which they were served. All demographic groups are virtually unanimous in reporting being satisfied with the language in which they were served at the polling station.

2. Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Experience

The actual process of voting in the polling station appears to have gone very smoothly for almost all Canadians casting a ballot as part of the 40th General Election. This is apparent from the high level of satisfaction electors report with various aspects of their experience in the polling station.

As in 2006, almost all electors (96%) report that they were satisfied (and 86 percent say “very” satisfied) with the amount of time spent waiting to cast a ballot. Much the same high level of satisfaction is apparent with respect to the instructions received regarding casting a ballot. Finally, almost all electors (98%) report being satisfied (and 87 percent say “very” satisfied) with the services provided by Elections Canada when they voted.

SATISFACTION IN THE POLLING STATION

	Amount of time waiting to vote		Instructions regarding casting a ballot		Services provided by Election Canada
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
n=	2455	1838	2473	1838	1838
	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED	97	96	97	98	98
Very satisfied	87	86	85	88	87
Somewhat satisfied	10	10	12	10	11
Not very satisfied	2	2	1	1	1
Not at all satisfied	1	1	<1	<1	1
DK/Refused	-	1	<1	2	-
Youth					
Very Satisfied	81	75	78	74	76

Q.35. Were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the amount of time you had to wait before voting once you arrived at the [Q13: polling station / Advance polling station / local Elections Canada office] ?

Q. 36. Were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the instructions you received on how to cast your ballot?

Q. 37. Overall, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the services provided by Elections Canada staff when you voted?

Base: Voted at polling station or in advance polls, or did not vote because had no documents to prove ID when voting.



The only exception to the universally high levels of satisfaction recorded across all regional and demographic groups is among the youth sample. While their overall feeling of satisfaction across the three measures is on a par with other groups, the intensity of their satisfaction is somewhat lower. The proportion of youth saying that they were “very” satisfied is about 10 percentage points lower on each of the three measures. This drops their “very” satisfied scores into the mid 70 percent range for each measure. While results from the 2006 General Election indicated that youth were slightly less highly satisfied, this year’s results continue and accelerate the trend. While in 2006, 81 percent of youth reported that they were “very” satisfied with the amount of time waiting to cast a ballot, in 2008, 75 percent report this. Similarly, in 2006, 78 percent of youth said they were “very” satisfied with the instructions they received on casting a ballot, compared to 74 percent in 2008.

3. Ease of Voting

Consistent with the high levels of satisfaction with the voting process, virtually all (99%) voters found the experience an easy one, with 89 percent reporting that it was “very” easy. This is in line with findings from the 2006 General Election. Once again, youth are less likely to report that it was “very” easy to vote. Only 76 percent say this compared with 89 percent among the population overall. This may be a factor of voting being a first time or new experience for many youth. Other demographic and/or regional variations are minimal.

4. Voting On-line

With Statistics Canada reporting home internet penetration approaching seven-in ten in the Canadian population (69%⁴), and this survey reporting home penetration of 81 percent among eligible electors, Canadians’ access to and use of on-line services continues to grow. However, interest in voting on-line appears to have remained stable between the last two federal general elections. In the 2006 Elections Canada survey, 37 percent of Canadians reported that they would be “very” likely to vote on-line on the Elections Canada website if they could, while in 2008 the same proportion is found. Similarly, the proportion saying they would be “somewhat” likely to vote on-line also remained stable (18% in 2006 and 16% in 2008).

Further analysis indicates that attitudes toward on-line voting vary considerably across groups and regionally. Not unexpectedly, youth are among the most interested in voting on-line; with half (50%), up from 44 percent in 2006, reporting that they would be “very” likely to vote on-line as are those from higher income households (\$100,000+) (54% “very” likely). By contrast, those at the other end of the income and age spectrum are the least likely to want to vote on-line. In all, only 25 percent of those with household income of \$20,000 or less and 22 percent of those 55 years of age and above report high levels of interest. Men and women appear equally likely to express interest in voting on-line.

Geographically, as in 2006, those living in urban areas, rather than rural, are much more likely to want to vote on-line (40% versus 26% say they would be “very” likely). Regionally, Quebec residents are the least likely to want to vote on-line (28% say “very” likely), while Ontario residents are among the most likely (42%).



While Aboriginal Canadians, like youth, appear less engaged by the voting process than other Canadians, they are quite similar to other Canadians in their level of interest in internet voting (32% say they would be “very” likely to do so). Finally, there is some evidence that on-line voting might encourage voting among those currently less engaged by the political process. Among those who did not cast a ballot in the 40th General Election, half (50%) report that they would be “very” likely to vote on-line, including 55 percent and 39 percent among youth and Aboriginal non-voters, respectively. The implication here is that an on-line option may be one way of increasing voter turnout, especially among youth, since they have a high level of interest in voting on-line, and to a lesser extent among Aboriginal Canadians.

**LIKELIHOOD OF VOTING ONLINE AT ELECTIONS CANADA
WEB SITE IF OPTION WAS AVAILABLE**

	Total 2006	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities	HH Income <\$20K	HH Income >\$100K
n=	3013	2500	500	500	500	213	504
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NET Likely	55	53	69	46	56	38	70
Very likely	37	37	50	32	41	25	54
Somewhat likely	18	16	19	14	15	13	16
Not very likely	12	15	15	16	15	15	11
Not at all likely	29	26	14	33	21	36	17
NET Not likely	41	41	30	49	36	51	27
Depends	2	2	<1	1	3	2	2
Do not have access/ do not use Internet	3	4	<1	3	4	8	<1
DK/NA/Ref	1	1	<1	1	1	<1	<1

Q.39 If you could vote online on the Elections Canada website, would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely or not at all likely to do so?
Base: All respondents

Of interest is the fact that responses to the on-line voting and on-line registration questions are very similar. In all, 58% among the public overall say they would be likely to make corrections to their Voter Information on-line compared with 53% who say they would be likely to vote on-line if the option were available. Responses for the three oversamples are also very similar. The implication here is that a large number of the public are at least somewhat interested in considering on-line electoral options.

⁴ Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey, 2007



VI. Voter Information Services



Voter Information Services

A. Voter Information Card

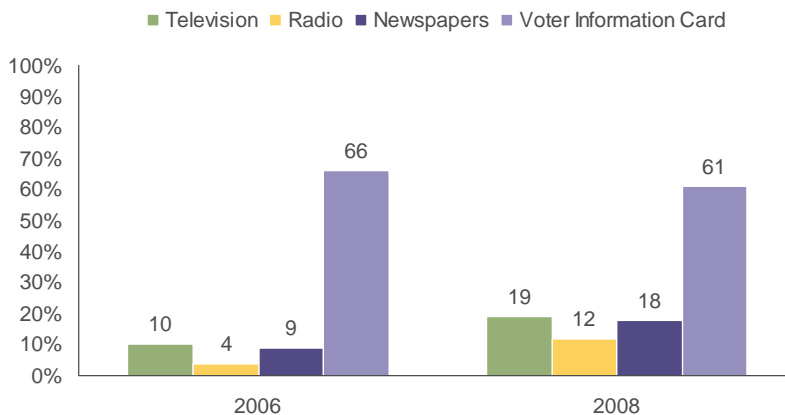
The Voter Information Card was, by a significant margin, the single greatest source of information pertaining to voting procedures for the 40th General Election. This was also the case in 2006, although the Voter Information Card is cited somewhat less frequently for the 40th General Election (61%) than it was for the 39th General Election (66%).

B. Sources of Information

The Voter Information Card remains the most important source of information for Canadians regarding voting procedures. However, the research suggests that media sources also played a somewhat larger role than in other years and this may reflect different information needs stemming from the new identification requirements.

Notably, Canadians are more likely to report having received information from the mass media including television (19% vs. 10% in the 39th General Election), radio (12% vs. 4%) and newspapers (18% vs. 9%).

COMMON SOURCES OF MASS MEDIA VOTING PROCEDURE INFORMATION



Q.40 Where did you get information on voting procedures for this election? By that I mean, when and where to vote and how to prove your identity and address before voting.
Base: All respondents (2006 n=3013; 2008 n=2500)

In addition, a wide range of other non media sources are recalled on an unaided basis, as they were in 2006. These include friends and family (8%) and, new for this election, an Elections Canada brochure/householder (10%).



Demographically, lower income Canadians (\$40,000 household income) are somewhat less likely to cite the Voter Information Card (52%) as the source of their information regarding voting procedures, but do not appear to make greater use of any other source. Other demographic variables show little or no variation in information sources used. Regionally, Alberta residents (52%) are somewhat below average and Quebec residents the most likely (67%) to cite the Voter Information Card.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT VOTING PROCEDURES

	All Canadians		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Voter information card	66	61	46	43	37	34	55
Television	10	19	12	16	13	22	21
Newspapers	9	18	6	7	7	15	16
Friends/family/parents	7	8	21	25	8	13	10
Radio	4	12	4	8	8	11	10
Elections Canada Householder / Brochure	-	10	-	1	-	11	13
Mail (unspecified)	3	2	2	2	4	3	-
Pamphlets / Brochures / Posters	3	4	4	2	6	8	3
Internet/Web site	2	2	3	6	1	1	3
Familiar with voting process/know what to do from previous times	1	3	1	2	2	2	3
Elections Canada All Sources	3	3	3	6	1	3	1
Political parties/candidates	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Telephone (1-800 number)	1	1	2	2	-	-	1
Same place as before/only one place to go	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
Polling station	1	1	<1	2	3	2	1
School/teachers	1	<1	3	3	2	1	<1
Revising agents/enumerators	<1	1	1	1	1	1	<1
Work/co-workers	<1	<1	1	<1	2	1	1
None/did not intend to vote	2	5	7	6	8	7	4
Other	2	2	3	3	7	10	2
DK/NA	2	1	3	2	5	3	2

Among the various sub populations surveyed, and quite consistent with the findings from the 39th General Election, youth (43%) are substantially less likely to have received their information from the Voter Information Card and are far more likely than the typical Canadian to have relied on family, parents and friends (25%) to receive their information about the 40th General Election. Youth are also less likely to have relied upon newspapers and somewhat more likely to mention the internet (6%) as a source of information.

Again similar to 2006, the Voter information Card is cited less often as a source by Aboriginal Canadians (34%) than it is by other Canadians. However, Aboriginal Canadians appeared to have made greater use during the 40th General Election than they did during the 39th of mass media such as television (22% and 13%, respectively) and newspapers (15% and 7%). Immigrants and visible minorities cite virtually the same sources as the public overall.



C. Elections Canada Flyer

In order to provide information on the new identification requirements and other voting procedure information, Elections Canada sent a flyer to all Canadian households. This flyer is recalled by half the population, although many could not recall its contents. However, a significant minority did recall that it contained information about the change in identification requirements. During the course of the election, a few citizens contacted Elections Canada offices and almost all report that they were very satisfied with the service they received.

As noted in the previous section, 11 percent of Canadians recall receiving the brochure/flyer (folded in four) that Elections Canada mailed this year to households and which contained information about how to vote and the new identification requirements. Among those not initially mentioning the flyer, when prompted by asking if they recalled a flyer folded in four from Elections Canada a further quarter (24%) of Canadians recall the flyer. When further prompted with more information about the content of the flyer and a description of some of the visual elements used in the flyer, a further 13 percent among the public are able to recall it. In total, combined unaided and aided recall among Canadians overall is just under half (48%).

There are few demographic variations in overall, combined aided and unaided awareness of the flyer. The exception is those 18 to 34 years of age, among whom awareness is at 38 percent. Regionally, Albertans (42%) are the least likely to recall the flyer. No differences exist between urban and rural residents. The single largest difference in recall, though, is between those who report having voted and those who report that they did not (52% to 37%). As noted earlier, and as will be further reviewed later in the report, this is likely a factor of engagement and interest in the election and politics generally.

Among the sub populations surveyed, youth (38%) are easily the least likely to recall the flyer. But possibly because their recall is so low there are no appreciable differences in recall between youth voters (39%) and non-voters (35%). The recall of the flyer among Aboriginal Canadians (48%) is in line with that of the public overall and awareness is the same in both rural and urban areas. Once again, Aboriginal voters are more aware of the flyer than are Aboriginal non-voters (55% versus 41%). Awareness of the flyer among immigrants and visible minorities (52%) is in line with the population overall and Aboriginal Canadians.



UNAIDED AND AIDED RECALL OF ELECTIONS CANADA FLYER

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2500	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%
Total Recall	48 (43)*	38 (34)*	48 (44)*	52 (47)*
Unaided	11	7	11	13
Aided	37	31	37	40
No Description	24	18	25	28
Description Provided	13	13	12	12
Yes	8	10	8	7
Maybe/Vaguely	5	3	4	5

* bracketed percentage excludes "maybe/vaguely" responses

- Q. 40. Where did you get information on voting procedures for this election? By that I mean, when and where to vote and how to prove your identity and address before voting.
- Q. 41. During the campaign, do you recall receiving by mail a flyer folded in four from Elections Canada?
- Q. 42. This flyer informed you on the different ways to vote and on the accepted proofs of identity. It also showed the top of a person in black with a white X on the head. Does it remind you something?

1. Recall of Information on the Flyer

While the flyer clearly got across some information, and close to four-in-ten (38%) among the public recall information about new identification requirements, the single largest groups of responses suggest that half (50%) of those recalling the flyer could not recall its contents. Other information gleaned from the flyer by Canadians include that it contained general information about voting (12%), the election date and times polling stations would be open (14%), and a reminder to vote (7%). Not unexpectedly, there are significant differences in what was recalled based on voting behaviour. Among voters 48 percent could recall nothing about the contents of the flyer compared with 58 percent among non-voters. Similarly, among voters 40 percent recalled that the flyer contained information about the new identification requirements, while 29 percent of non-voters recall this information. The implication here is that for many non-voters, non-voting behaviour is not just manifested on voting day, but throughout the campaign in terms of the attention paid to the campaign and information and material provided throughout the campaign.



**RECALL OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE ELECTIONS
CANADA FLYER**

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	1201	189	242	260
	%	%	%	%
Need to bring identification / proof of residence / identity card	38	32	19	38
General information	12	15	16	10
Election / polling date / polling hours	14	10	11	15
Reminder / enticement to vote	7	7	10	10
Option to vote	1	-	1	1
Other	9	11	12	11
Don't know / Nothing	50	52	50	47

* results total more than 100% because multiple mentions were accepted

Q. 43. From your recollection, what did this flyer talk about?

Among the sub populations surveyed, while youth are the least likely to recall the flyer, those that do recall it are nearly as likely as the public overall (32% and 38%, respectively) to recall that the flyer contained information about the new identification requirements. They are also in line with the public in terms of those recalling nothing about the flyer (52%). Aboriginal Canadians are less likely to recall the identification requirements (19%), but do recall a range of other details and are no more likely than others to recall no details of the flyer (50%). Immigrants and visible minorities, in all respects, closely resemble the public overall in their responses.

D. Contact with Elections Canada

A very small number of Canadians (4%) report contacting Elections Canada during the 40th General Election. This represents a small decline from the 39th General Election, during which nearly one-in-ten (8%) reported that they contacted Elections Canada.

Those who contacted Elections Canada report a high level of service from this agency. Nearly eight-in-ten (78%) report having fully received the information and assistance they needed, while one-in-ten (10%) report partially receiving this information. These findings are consistent with the report conducted after the 39th General Election. Further analysis, including regional and demographic variations, is not possible because of the small sample size.



INFORMATION SATISFIED NEEDS

	Total 2006	Total 2008
n=	228	113
	%	%
Yes, fully	79	78
Yes, partially	11	10
No	8	12
DK/NA/Ref	1	-

Q.45 Did you get the information or assistance you needed?

Base: Those who contacted Elections Canada during the campaign



VII. Elections Canada Advertising



Elections Canada Advertising

A. Awareness of Advertising

Almost all Canadians recalled at least one type of Elections Canada advertisement (i.e. TV, radio, newspaper) regarding procedures for the 40th General Election. Television was the most recalled channel, followed by radio and newspapers. Youth and Aboriginal Canadians were especially likely to recall the television advertising.

Elections Canada advertising, especially in light of the new identification requirements and the mandate to encourage electoral participation, was an important part of Elections Canada's communications strategy. As part of the assessment of Elections Canada's role in managing the electoral process, it is therefore important to measure awareness and recall of this advertising.

Overall, there is very high recall of at least one of the channels (TV, radio, newspapers) that Elections Canada used to communicate with citizens regarding election procedures. TV and radio were most readily recalled, and with newspapers somewhat less so, with the exception of older adults who were well above average in their recall of Elections Canada newspaper advertising.

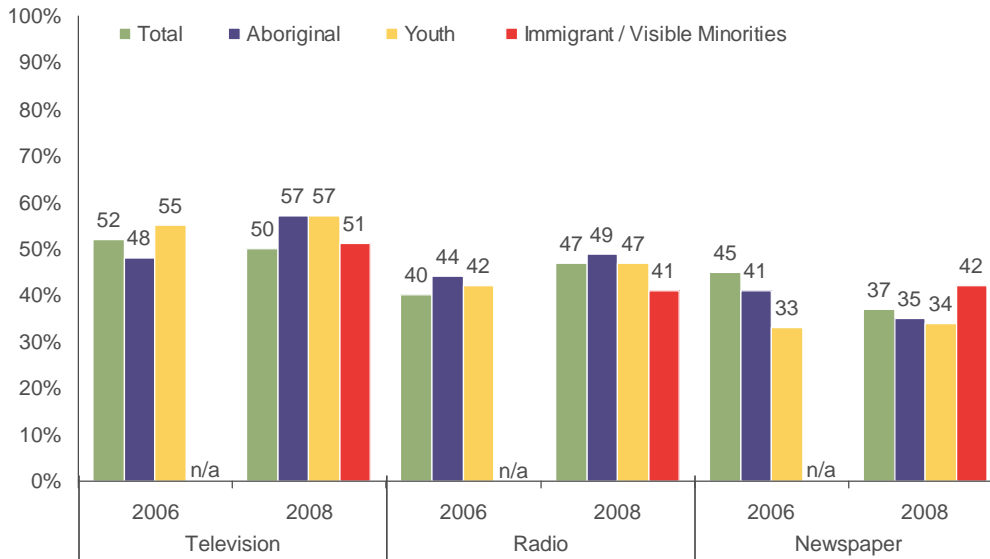
Nearly eight-in-ten (79%) Canadians recall at least one of the Elections Canada advertisements and this is in line with the advertising recall for the 39th general election of 77 percent. As in 2006, television is the advertising medium most often recalled by Canadians overall (50%), followed closely by radio (47%) and lastly newspapers (37%). Compared with 2006, recall of TV advertising is similar (52%), but radio is up by 7 points to 47 percent and recall of newspaper advertising is down by 8 points to 37 percent.

Demographically, the greatest variation in recall of Elections Canada advertising is by age. Recall of newspaper advertising is highest among those 55 years or older (49%) and lowest among 18 to 34 year olds (25%). In contrast, recall of radio is consistent across age groups, except those over 55 years of age (39%).

Regionally, awareness of Elections Canada television advertising is strongest in Ontario (54%), Atlantic Canada (52%) and Quebec (51%). It is weaker in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (47%) and significantly weaker in British Columbia (44%) and Alberta (42%). Likewise awareness of newspaper advertising is strongest in Atlantic Canada (42%), Ontario (38%) and Quebec (38%). Awareness of radio advertising is lowest in Quebec (38%) and British Columbia (44%).



RECALL OF ELECTIONS CANADA ADVERTISEMENTS ABOUT THE ELECTION



Q.46 Do you recall seeing an Elections Canada newspaper advertisement about the election?
 Q.48 Do you recall hearing an Elections Canada radio ad about the election?
 Q.50 Do you recall seeing a television advertising sponsored by Elections Canada?
 Base: All respondents (2008 Total n=2500, 2008 Aboriginal n=500, 2008 Youth n=500, 2008 Immigrant/Visible Minorities n=500)

By sub populations, youth (57%) are more aware of television advertising than the typical Canadian (50%), equally aware of radio advertising (47%), and slightly less aware of newspaper advertising (34%). By gender, young women are more likely than young men to be aware of the TV advertising (60% to 54%).

Aboriginal Canadians are more aware of advertising on television than Canadians overall (57%), but are slightly less aware of newspaper advertisements (35%). Aboriginal men are more likely than Aboriginal women to recall Elections Canada radio and newspaper advertising, by about 6 percentage points in each case. By age, the only significant difference is the much lower level of recall for newspapers (21% to 34% for Aboriginal Canadians overall) by 18 to 34 year olds. Only one significant urban/rural difference is apparent and that is the greater recall of radio in rural (54%) compared with urban (41%) areas.

1. Number of Media Channels Recalled

As noted above, most (79%) Canadians recall at least one media channel of Elections Canada advertising. Further analysis indicates that, just as in 2006, while few (12%) recall all three channels a significant number recall two (32%) or a single (35%) channel. These proportions are roughly in line with those for the 2006 election and suggest that Elections Canada’s strategy of using three media channels works to ensure a high level of recall and that most Canadians will see an advertisement about the election through at least one channel.



Each of the sub populations recalls more or less the same number of channels, although youth and Aboriginal Canadians are somewhat more likely to recall one or two channels than the population overall and when compared with 2006.

AWARENESS OF ANY ELECTIONS CANADA ADVERTISING

	All Canadians		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
n=	3013	2500	678	500	642	500	500
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Saw/heard all three types of ads (television, radio, newspaper)	15	12	11	8	15	11	12
Saw/heard two types of ads	32	32	30	38	30	35	32
Saw/heard only one type of ad	30	35	38	40	27	38	34
Saw no ads	24	22	22	15	28	16	23

Q. 46. Do you recall seeing an Elections Canada newspaper advertisement about the election?
 Q. 48. Do you recall hearing an Elections Canada radio ad about the election?
 Q. 50. Do you recall seeing a television advertising sponsored by Elections Canada?
 Base: All respondents

B. Message Recall

A variety of messages were recalled by Canadians, but the information about all or some aspects of the new identification requirements were most frequently recalled, followed by general Elections Canada information, the date of the election and recall of messages about a reminder to vote. The slogan used in the campaign this year “Vote! Shape Your World” was recalled by very few people.

Irrespective of the source of awareness of Elections Canada messages, much the same information is recalled, although some media appear to have been better at transmitting the information than others. Across all channels, the message concerning the new identification requirements was noticed by many Canadians, although details of the requirements recalled vary. In all, 33 percent of those recalling a newspaper advertisement mentioned some aspect of this message, as did 35 percent recalling radio and 26 percent recalling a TV advertisement. A reminder to vote is also what many recalled (18% for TV, 15% for radio and 8% for newspapers). It is also important to note that a large number of Canadians do not recall any message from the advertisement they saw, read or heard. Specifically, this is the case for 20 percent recalling TV, 21 percent recalling newspapers, and 18 percent recalling radio.



MESSAGE RECALL BY SOURCE

	Newspapers	Radio	Television
n=	969	1133	1269
	%	%	%
Proof of Identity Requirements*	33	35	26
Elections/General Information/Overall info (how/where)	10	6	5
Election date	10	18	12
Reminder to vote	8	15	18
Politicians/Candidates/Parties/Campaign issues	6	6	9
Voter Card/Qualifications/Requirements/Procedures/What to bring	5	-	2
Enticement to vote	4	6	7
Polling stations' opening hours	3	2	-
Advance polling dates	3	3	-
How to get Voters Cards/be on the List/Register	2	-	-
Other	5	7	4
Nothing	20	18	22
DK/NA/Refused	21	18	20

Q.47 From your recollection what did this newspaper ad talk about?

Q.49 From your recollection what did this radio ad talk about?

Q.51 From your recollection what did this television ad talk about?

Base: Those who recall seeing an Elections Canada newspaper ad/ radio ad/ television ad about the election

* Proof of Identity Requirements category includes: Voters need to show an identity card AND a proof of residence / There are new identification measures for the vote / Voters need to show an identity Card / Voters Card / Qualifications / Requirements / Procedures / What to Bring / Voters need to show an identity Card OR a proof of residence / Voters Need to Show Proof of Residence

1. Elections Canada Slogan

Despite an apparent high recollection of Elections Canada advertisements, far fewer people report hearing or seeing the Elections Canada Slogan “Vote! Shape Your World” during the 40th General Election (15%) compared with the slogan “Why not speak up when everyone is listening?” used in the two previous general elections (70% in 2006 and 56% in 2004). A further one-in-ten (9%) is unsure whether they had saw or heard the slogan at all.

Demographically, those 18 to 34 years of age (20%) are the most likely to have heard the Elections Canada slogan. Regionally, there is little difference across the country; Quebecers (18%), and Atlantic Canadians (17%) are the most likely to have heard or seen the slogan. Ontarians (13%) and residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan (13%) are the least likely.

Among the sub populations, youth are the most likely to recall the slogan (24%), while Aboriginal Canadians (13%) and immigrants/visible minorities (13%) are slightly less likely.

Those who heard the slogan are most likely to have heard it on television (60%). Recall of the slogan from radio (11%) newspaper (7%) and posters, billboards and signs (4%), is much lower.



2. Information Desired

Overall, almost all Canadians appear to have received all the voting procedures information that they required. When asked if there was information about the voting process that they did not have and would have been useful, the overwhelming majority (91%) say that there was nothing. Almost all in immigrant and visible minorities groups (89%), Aboriginal Canadians (88%) and young people (88%) are also satisfied and report needing nothing.

To the extent that further information would have been helpful, the most frequent suggestions related to information about the identification requirements (37%), how to get registered to vote (12%) mail voting options (13%), advanced polling dates (8%), and general information about voting procedures (15%).



VIII. Attitudes Toward Elections and Politics



Attitudes Toward Elections and Politics

Hypothesising that apathy and cynicism may be reasons for the steady decline in Canadians' participation in federal elections, the survey explored attitudes towards elections, politics and elected representatives. This was done through a series of agree/disagree statements about elections and politics and questions dealing with political engagement.

A. Commitment to Elections

There is widespread, but far from strong universal, acknowledgement of voting as a civic duty, with a quarter of the electorate not totally agreeing with this proposition. Moreover, there is even less strong agreement that democracy is weakened by a low voter turnout, with only just over half totally accepting this proposition. This suggests that many Canadians do not accept a weakened democracy is a consequence of a low turnout.

As in 2006, almost all (92%) Canadians in 2008 continue to “totally” (75%) or “somewhat” agree (17%) that it is their civic duty to vote. Further, the vast majority (95%) continue to agree that “low voter turnout weakens democracy” (58% “totally” agree; 27% “somewhat” agree). In fact, there is an increase since 2006 in the proportion of people who agree that “low voter turnout weakens democracy” of 15 percentage points. This is likely, however, to be a function of changing the wording of the statement from “Declines in voter turnout weaken Canadian democracy” to “Low voter turnout...”. Presumably, “low voter turnout” is a more charged phrase for Canadians than “Declines in voter turnout.”

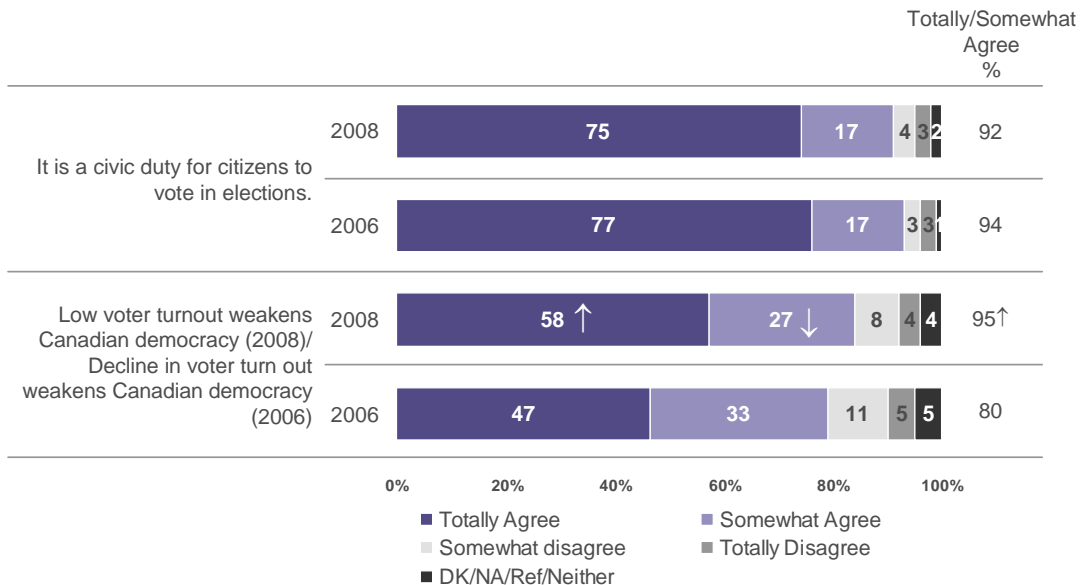
Demographically, variations by age, income and education are all linked to attitudes toward both statements. This is especially the case by age, as 66 percent of those 18-34 years of age compared with 83 percent among those 55 years of age and above “totally” agree voting is a civic duty. Similarly, while just 50 percent of 18-34 years old “totally” agree regarding the effects of low turnout, 66 percent of those 55 years of age and over “totally” agree with this position. The suggestion here is that older Canadians hold far stronger norms regarding voting behaviour than younger cohorts. In terms of education level, 52 percent among those with a high school education or less, compared with 58 percent among the population overall, agree “totally” that low voter turnout weakens democracy. Similarly, those Canadians with household income of less than \$20,000 (48%) are also less likely to be in total agreement. Other demographic and regional differences are minimal.



This strong support of the democratic process is also reflected among the immigrant and visible minorities' communities. In all, 78 percent agree "totally" that it is their civic duty to vote and 63 percent agree "totally" that low voter turn out weakens democracy. However, the level of commitment to the democratic process appears to be lower among the youth and Aboriginal communities than among the general Canadian population. Only about three-in-five for both groups "totally" agree that it is their duty to vote and about two-in-five, for groups, (43% among youth and 44% among Aboriginal Canadians) "totally" agree that low voter turnout weakens Canadian democracy. Aboriginal Canadians above and below middle age show some slightly different attitudes. Aboriginal Canadians over 45 years are somewhat more likely than those below this age to agree "totally" that it is a civic duty to vote (64% to 52%); the same pattern is also apparent for the low turnout statement. The other area of difference among Aboriginal Canadians appears in the urban/rural divide. Urban Aboriginal Canadians appear to be somewhat more in agreement with the two statements than their rural counterparts. On the civic duty statement, 63 percent of those in urban areas agree "totally" compared to 56 percent in rural areas. The same pattern exists for the low turnout statement.

Among youth, males are less likely than females to agree "totally" regarding the civic duty to vote (57% versus 65%) and regarding the affect of low voter turnout (40% to 46%).

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ELECTIONS



Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
 Base: All respondents (2006 n=3013; 2008 n=2500)
 * Question wording changed in 2008



ATTITUDES TOWARDS ELECTIONS – BY SUBGROUP

	All Canadians		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
n=	3013	2500	678	500	642	500	500
% saying <i>Totally Agree...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
It is a civic duty for citizens to vote in elections	73	75	59	61	59	59	78
Decline in voter turn out weakens Canadian democracy (2006) / Low voter turnout weakens Canadian democracy (2008)	43	58	33	43↑	36	44↑	63

Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
 Base: All respondents

B. Attitudes Toward Political Parties and Politicians

Responses to a sense of statements dealing with political parties and politicians suggest that Canadians hold a mixed view of the political process, with a majority believing that during the election the parties addressed their issues and offered voters a choice. However, there is still a sense among Canadians that the parties are too influenced by “people who have a lot of money” and that elected representatives are out of touch with citizens. This suggests that on the substantive electoral type issues of choice and addressing voters’ concerns most believe the political process is delivering. However, it is important to note that while majorities of Canadians believe there is choice and that their issues are being addressed, the level of total agreement is quite low, suggesting that the population has some way to go before being fully convinced. It is on the issues of politicians being in touch and of the role of money and hence political influence that there are still deep rooted concerns. Although the lack of intensity in responses leaves some doubt about how deeply rooted these concerns really are.

In order to deepen understanding about current attitudes towards political parties and politicians and how this might affect voting behaviour, four additional statements were tested:

- The political parties talked about issues that are important to you;
- Political parties are too influenced by people who have a lot of money;
- In general, elected representatives are not in touch with citizens; and,
- All federal political parties are similar; there is no real choice.

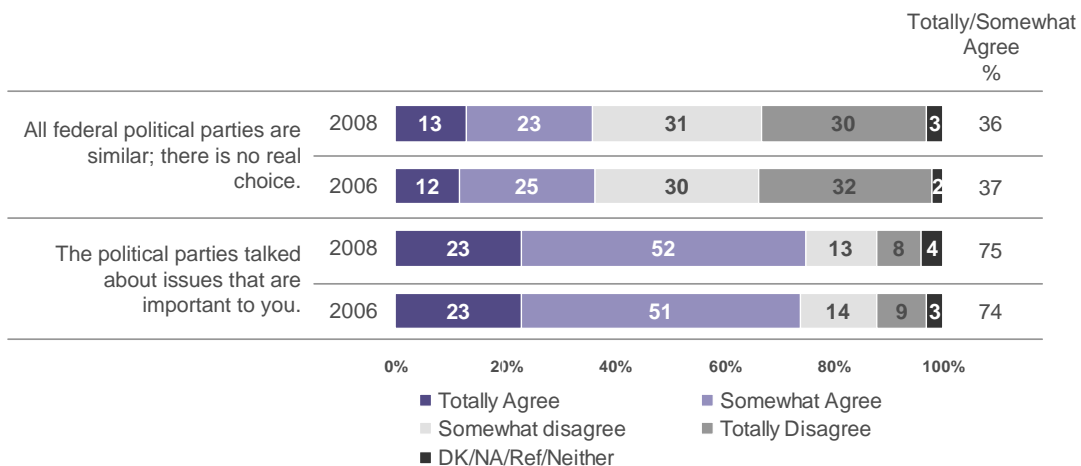


In more detail, three-in-four (75%) Canadians agree that during the election the parties offered voters a choice and did address issues of importance to voters. However, the level of strong agreement that political parties talked about issues that were important to voters is quite weak, with only one-in-four (23%) in “total” agreement. Similarly, 61 percent reject the idea that there is no real choice, but only 30 percent do so strongly.

Demographically, those with somewhat lower levels of income and education are again somewhat more likely to be sceptical about the choices available and that the parties are talking about issues of importance to them. However, age differences are minimal. Regionally, Atlantic (45%) and Quebec (44%) residents are the most likely to agree that the parties offered no real choice, while Quebec (64%) residents were the least likely to agree that the parties addressed issues of concern to them. The suggestion from these responses is that Quebec has higher concentrations of electors who are dissatisfied with the parties and their platforms.

Aboriginal Canadians attitudes toward political parties and the issues addressed appear unchanged over 2006, and are not too dissimilar to the public overall. In all, 44 percent agree (compared with 36 percent nationally) and 14 percent do so “totally” that there is no real choice. In terms of issues of concern being addressed by the parties, 67 percent agree (compared with 75 percent nationally) and 21 percent do so “totally”. Demographically, Aboriginal people aged 18 to 34 years are the most likely to believe the parties offered real choices, but are also the most likely to believe that issues of importance to them were not addressed. Urban/rural differences are also apparent, with Aboriginal people living in rural areas (47%) being much more likely than those in urban areas (38%) to believe the parties offered no real choice. Although the sample sizes are small, there is also some evidence that the most affluent and highly educated Aboriginal Canadians are the least satisfied with the choices available and issues addressed.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICS





ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICS

	All Canadians		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
n=	3013	2500	678	500	642	500	500
% saying <i>Totally Agree...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All federal political parties are similar; there is no real choice.	12	13	7	9	15	14	16
The political parties talked about issues that are important to you	23	23	21	22	19	21	26

Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
 Base: All respondents

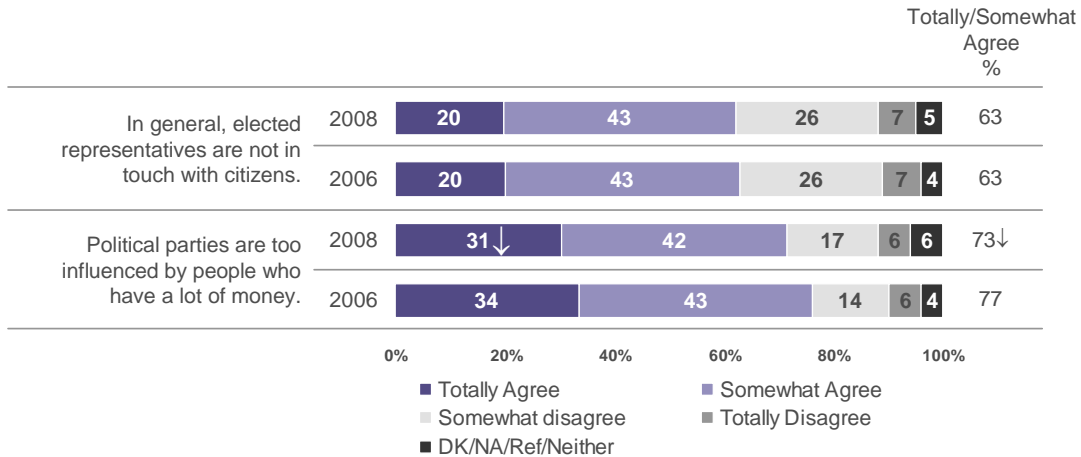
The views of youth on these two issues suggest that most of them are relatively satisfied with the choice of parties and the issues put before them. Only 29 percent (below the national average of 36 percent) agree there is no real choice, while a significant 76 percent (compared with 75 percent nationally) agree that issues of importance to them were discussed.

The two other issues show the public in a somewhat more cynical mindset. There is fairly strong agreement with the view that parties are too influenced by people with a lot of money, with 73 percent agreeing with this view and 31 percent doing so “totally”. This is down slightly from 77 percent in 2006. However, this issue plays to a broad and popular theme that people with a lot of money generally have more influence, a theme that is not unique to the political domain. The high level of agreement with the view that elected representatives are out of touch with citizens is potentially more troubling. In all, close to two-thirds of respondents agree with this view, although only 20 percent do so “totally”. This statement addresses the role of individuals and suggests that party leaders and or MPs are out of touch, but is contradicted, to some extent, by the strong agreement that the parties did address issues of concern.

Variations on these two statements by regional and demographic factors are limited. By region, only Atlantic residents are above average in agreeing that politicians are out of touch (69 percent compared with 63 percent nationally). Demographically, more educated and higher income Canadians are less likely to agree that people with money have more influence and that politicians are out of touch. There are also few differences by age.



ATTITUDES TOWARDS POLITICS



ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICS

	All Canadians		Youth		Aboriginal		Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2008
n=	3013	2500	678	500	642	500	500
% saying <i>Totally Agree...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In general, elected representatives are not in touch with citizens.	20	20	14	14	32	24↓	24
Political parties are too influenced by people who have a lot of money.	34	31	27	24	45	38↓	31

Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
 Base: All respondents

Views of the sub populations on these two issues offer some quite significant variations and changes. Among youth, 18 to 24 year olds are below the national average in believing politicians are out of touch. They are in fact the least likely to agree that politicians are out of touch. Only just over half (53%) agree (compared with 62 percent nationally) with this view, but just 14 percent do so “totally”. There is a significant divide by gender; among males 50 percent agree with this view compared with 57 percent of females. Youth are closer to the national consensus on the question of the influence of money. In total, 68 percent agree with this view and this is in line with the national view. These responses suggest that youth do not have an especially negative view of politics and politicians and in some ways are more positive compared to the balance of the population. This suggests that their attitudes on these questions cannot account for their lower level of reported voting behaviour noted earlier.



Among the Aboriginal communities, the level of scepticism on the issues of politicians being out of touch with people and of the influence of money has dropped since 2006, and Aboriginal Canadian views are now close to those of the population overall on these issues. In all, the same proportion as nationally (62%) agrees politicians are out of touch. Similarly, Aboriginal Canadians are just slightly more likely than Canadians overall to agree (75% compared to 72%) that political parties are too influenced by people with a lot of money. Urban/rural differences on these issues are minimal.

The level of agreement among the immigrant and visible minorities' communities on these two issues is not very different from the general population.

C. Voting Behaviour and Attitudes Toward Politics

In order to investigate the extent to which attitudes toward voting, politics and political engagement explored in the preceding section of the report might be linked to political participation, this section examines the relationship between the two.

Overall, attitudes toward the responsibility to vote, and to a lesser extent the threat to democracy of not voting, are among the single biggest attitudinal factors, among those explored in the survey, associated with voting behaviour. The issues of parties offering voters clear political choices and discussing issues of importance to electors are not as strongly linked to voting behaviour as values related to the duty to vote.

Similarly, attitudes toward the issues of the influence of wealth on political decisions and politicians being out of touch with the public also do not appear to be strongly linked to voting behaviour. On the other hand, the level of engagement with the election appears to be strongly associated with voting behaviour; as expressed by the level of interest in politics and, to an even greater degree, the extent of following the campaign. The implication here is that the level of engagement with the election and sense of the civic duty to vote are more strongly associated with voting behaviour than are the attitudes toward politicians and parties measured in the survey. This suggests that a focus on getting Canadians to pay attention to elections and the issues is an important part of increasing the turnout.



1. Civic Issues

Differences between voters and non-voters across the two civic statements explored (civic duty to vote and low turnout weakens democracy) shows that responses are strongly associated with voting or not voting. For national responses, the agreement gap on both items is large. On the civic duty statement it is a difference of 33 percentage points in the level of total agreement and for the turnout statement it is a gap of 22 percentage points in the level of total agreement. A similar gap is apparent across all oversamples, suggesting that the same processes are at work. The implication here is that attitudes to civic responsibility are strongly associated with voting behaviour, as they were in 2006. This, however, does not mean that holding these attitudes increases voting, since it is possible that voting or not voting helps shaping attitudes toward civic duty. It is also possible that other unmeasured factors are at work explaining the relationship between attitudes toward civic duty and voting behaviour. However, this finding does suggest that it will be important to continue to explore this relationship.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ELECTIONS AND POLITICS

	Total 2006			Total 2008			Youth			Aboriginal			Immigrant/ Visible Minorities		
	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap
n=	2078	379		1833	667		315	185		269	231		356	144	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>It is a civic duty for citizens to vote in elections.</i>															
Net Totally/Somewhat AGREE	96	71	(25)	97	78	(19)	97	77	(20)	91	72	(19)	96	82	(14)
Totally agree	81	46	(35)	84	51	(33)	76	36	(40)	74	41	(33)	84	64	(20)
<i>Low voter turnout weakens Canadian democracy.</i>															
Net Totally/Somewhat AGREE	88	73	(15)	89	76	(13)	87	71	(16)	83	70	(13)	89	79	(10)
Totally agree	62	40	(22)	64	42	(22)	52	28	(24)	53	34	(19)	68	50	(18)

Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
Base: Total Sample

2. Issues of Political Attitudes

The two statements that can be seen as dealing with issues addressed during the campaign by the various parties dealt with the extent to which the parties are perceived to have offered no real choice in terms of platform and to have talked about issues of importance to voters. As noted above, in both cases most Canadians believe they were offered choice and that their concerns were addressed. However, responses to these statements by voters and non-voters do show some significant differences between the two groups.

Among the public overall, the differences between voters and non-voters on issues of concern being addressed is quite small relative to the gap for the civic type attitudes (4 percentage points between levels of total agreement). Although there is a gap in the level of agreement with the statement overall this suggests that there is some association with voting behaviour, but it is not especially strong when compared with the civic duty statement.



The statement dealing with “the parties offering no real choice” shows a bigger gap between voters and non-voters (12 percentage points for those in total agreement). Much the same pattern is also apparent for the sub populations.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ELECTIONS AND POLITICS

	Total 2006			Total 2008			Youth			Aboriginal			Immigrant/ Visible Minorities		
	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap
n=	2078	379		1833	667		315	185		269	231		356	144	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>All federal political parties are similar; there is no real choice.</i>															
Net Totally/Somewhat AGREE	35	44	(9)	31	51	(20)	23	38	(15)	40	49	(9)	31	47	(16)
Totally agree	12	21	(9)	10	22	(12)	4	17	(13)	12	17	(5)	13	24	(11)
<i>The political parties talked about issues that are important to you.</i>															
Net Totally/Somewhat AGREE	77	67	(10)	79	65	(14)	81	69	(12)	75	57	(18)	78	67	(11)
Totally agree	24	20	(4)	24	20	(4)	24	18	(6)	25	16	(9)	26	24	(2)

Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
Base: Total Sample

The statements dealing with politicians being out of touch and political parties being too influenced by people with a lot of money show fewer variations in level of agreement by voting behaviour. That is, self-reported voters and non-voters hold fairly similar attitudes on these two issues. The only sub population that shows any real differences is youth, but even here the differences are not large, and may account for some of the variation in terms of the voting behaviour of youth, but not a lot.



ATTITUDES TOWARDS ELECTIONS AND POLITICS

	Total 2006			Total 2008			Youth			Aboriginal			Immigrant/ Visible Minorities		
	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap
n=	2078	379		1833	667		315	185		269	231		356	144	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>In general, elected representatives are not in touch with citizens.</i>															
Net Totally/Somewhat AGREE	62	63	(1)	60	68	(8)	49	61	(12)	64	60	(4)	60	66	(6)
Totally agree	19	24	(5)	17	28	(11)	11	20	(9)	23	26	(3)	21	31	(10)
<i>Political parties are too influenced by people who have a lot of money.</i>															
Net Totally/Somewhat AGREE	73	74	(1)	72	73	(1)	67	70	(3)	76	73	(3)	67	66	(1)
Totally agree	30	38	(8)	28	39	(11)	19	33	(14)	36	41	(5)	30	35	(5)

Q.55 Do you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:
Base: Total Sample

The conclusion from the analysis of the various statements dealing with civic duty and political attitudes is that civic attitudes are strongly associated with voting behaviour, although causality cannot be assumed or demonstrated. However, the political attitudes are not as strongly associated with voting behaviour and this suggests, based on the few measures used here, that attitudes related to political estrangement and alienation are not associated strongly with voting behaviour.

D. Level of Interest in Politics and Following the Campaign

One of the key factors associated with voting behaviours is potentially the level of engagement of citizens with an election. In the case of the 40th General Election, and using the level of interest in politics as an indicator of engagement, a drop in the reported level of interest in politics and the extent to which Canadians followed the campaign is observed since 2006.

1. Interest in Politics

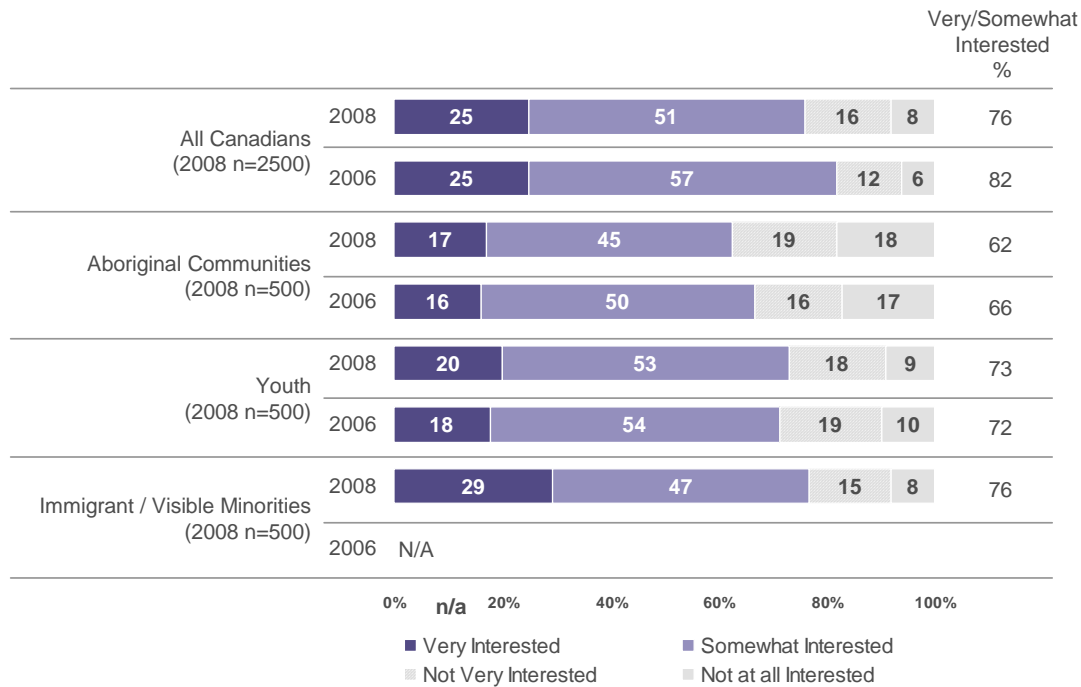
Those saying that they are very/somewhat interested in politics have dropped from 82 percent to 76 percent in 2008. However, the proportion of Canadians saying that they are “very” interested in politics has remained stable (25%). It is just the overall level of interest that has dropped, suggesting that those with a strong interest remain strongly interested and engaged, but some of those who expressed moderate interest in 2006 have now become disengaged.

Across both years, the level of interest among the Aboriginal communities and youth is lower than it is among the general Canadian population. In all, only 17 percent of the Aboriginal population and 20 percent of youth report that they are “very” interested in politics, but levels of overall interest are quite high (62 percent and 73 percent, respectively).



The level of interest in politics reported among the immigrant/visible minorities' population is not very different from that found among the general Canadian population.

INTEREST IN POLITICS



Q.56 In general, would you say you are very interested in politics, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?
 Base: All respondents

Higher interest levels are reported among men (81% compared to 71% for women, and 32% and 19% for “very” interested, respectively) and those with higher levels of education (34% are “very” interested among the university educated) and to a lesser extent income (those with income below \$20,000 express lower levels of high interest, 18%). Interest also increases with age (23% “very” interested among those 18-34 years old compared with 32% among those 55 years of age and over). By region, expressed interest is strongest in British Columbia (82%) and Ontario (79%).

Among the Aboriginal community, electors who are between 18 and 44 show lower level of interest in politics than those who are 45 and above. Some variation also exists between urban and rural environments. Urban Aboriginal residents are slightly more likely to be interested overall in politics (67 percent compared to 59 percent among rural residents), but there are a small group of rural Aboriginal residents who have a very strong interest (19% to 14% for urban residents).



INTEREST IN POLITICS – ABORIGINAL OVERSAMPLE BY AGE

	All Aboriginal	Aged 18-34 years	Aged 35-44 years	Aged 45-54 years	Aged 55+ years
n=	500	143	117	98	142
	%	%	%	%	%
Very/Somewhat Interested	62	58	55	63	72
Very Interested	17	15	15	19	20
Somewhat Interested	45	43	40	44	52

Q.56 In general, would you say you are very interested in politics, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?
Base: Aboriginal

2. Attention Paid to the Election Campaign

Another indicator of engagement is how closely the 40th General Election campaign was followed by electors. Fewer Canadians (69%) report that they followed the election campaign closely in 2008 (21 percent report following “very” closely, 48 percent say “somewhat” closely) as compared to 2006 (77 percent, with 27 percent reporting following “very” closely, 50 percent saying “somewhat” closely). This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that reduced political engagement is one of the factors accounting for declining turnouts in federal elections.

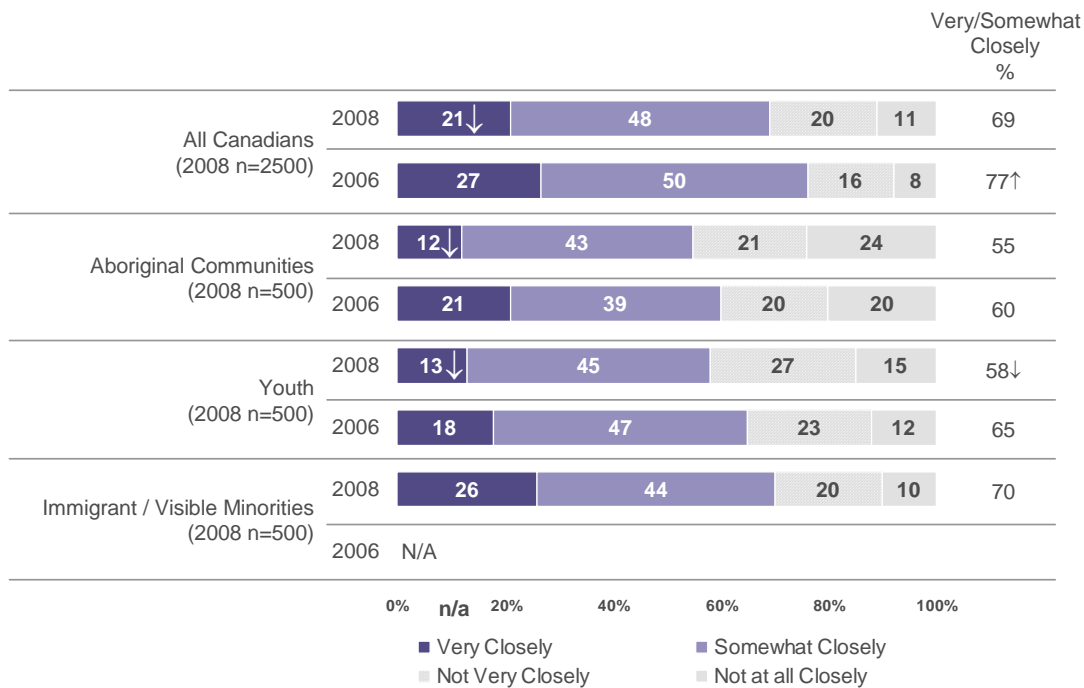
Further analysis shows significant demographic and regional differences in how closely the campaign was followed. Men (75%) are more likely than women (63%) to report following the election campaign, as are those with higher levels of education (79% among the university educated) and household income of \$80,000 or more. Middle-aged and older Canadians (75 percent among those aged 45 years and above) also report following the election campaign at least “somewhat” closely.

Among youth and Aboriginal communities, the proportion who report that they followed the campaign is lower than for the general population. As well, fewer among youth and Aboriginal Canadians report following the election campaign “closely” in 2008 as compared to 2006. Once again, this trend seems to indicate declining involvement in election campaigns among these groups. Among youth, males (66%) are far more likely than females (51%) to report following the election campaign and much the same pattern is repeated by gender among Aboriginal Canadians (64% versus 49%). Among Aboriginal Canadians, however, age differences in following the election show fewer differences. Among those under 45 years of age 50 percent report having followed the election “somewhat” closely compared with 61 percent for those 45 years and older.



Among the immigrant/visible minorities communities the proportion of people who report following the election campaign “very” closely is slightly greater than that found among the general population, although a smaller proportion report following the campaign “somewhat” closely. As seen earlier, overall the visible minority/immigrant communities are more similar to the general Canadian population in terms of their attitudes towards elections and involvement with the elections process, as compared to the youth and Aboriginal subgroups.

LEVEL OF INTEREST WITH ELECTION CAMPAIGN



Q.57 Would you say you followed the October 14th election campaign very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, or not at all closely?
 Base: All respondents

E. Voting Behaviour and Level of Interest

Both interest in politics and extent of following the 40th General Election are strongly linked to voting behaviour, with the extent to which the election was followed being the stronger predictor of voting behaviour. In terms of the level of interest in politics, a 28 percentage point gap in interest exists between voters and non-voters, and this is repeated across most of the sub populations. Clearly there is a strong association between interest and voting, although many who express interest still did not vote.



Similarly, and to an even greater degree, those who report following the 2008 federal campaign are even more likely to report voting. The gap here is 38 percentage points. Much the same gap is also apparent across the various sub groups. The implication, and not especially surprising, is that the level of interest in following the 2008 campaign is very strongly linked to voting. However, it is also important to note that a substantial number of those who indicate that they followed the campaign did not vote. Clearly there are a variety of other factors at work in determining voting behaviour, including views on the political parties and their candidates and as well the factors identified in the open ended question asking why non-voters did not cast a ballot; namely, the demands of everyday life impeding even the best intentions.

INTEREST IN THE POLITICS AND THE ELECTIONS

	Total 2006			Total 2008			Youth			Aboriginal			Immigrant/ Visible Minorities		
	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap	Vote	No Vote	Gap
n=	2078	379		1833	667		315	185		269	231		356	144	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>In general, would you say you are very interested in politics, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?</i>															
Net Very/Somewhat Interested	82	51	(31)	84	56	(28)	80	58	(22)	76	47	(29)	80	67	(13)
Very interested	27	15	(12)	28	17	(11)	23	14	(9)	21	12	(9)	32	21	(11)
<i>Would you say you followed the October 14th election campaign very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, or not at all closely?</i>															
Net Very/Somewhat Closely	74	42	(32)	79	41	(38)	72	35	(37)	74	33	(43)	79	47	(32)
Very Closely	23	9	(14)	25	8	(17)	18	4	(14)	19	5	(14)	32	11	(21)

Q.56 In general, would you say you are very interested in politics, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?

Q.57 Would you say you followed the October 14th election campaign very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, or not at all closely?

Base: All respondents



IX. Aboriginal Focus



Aboriginal Focus

As seen earlier, Aboriginal Canadians are less likely to report voting in federal elections. This section focuses on profiling the Aboriginal voters vs. non-voters, the issue of proximity of the polling stations, identifying steps that can be taken to encourage Aboriginal electors to vote, and examining the effectiveness of the advertising run by Elections Canada in terms of its reach and message communication.

In total, 54 percent of Aboriginal Canadians report voting in 2008. Those who voted tend to be older (above 35 years of age), more affluent, in the labour force, living in urban centres and off reserve. Although there were a variety of suggestions for encouraging Aboriginal Canadians to vote, there is no consensus on steps to take. Suggestions focused on both the electoral process, such as the use of the internet, building awareness of the need to vote and on civic duty, and political factors like making issues relevant to the Aboriginal community and more trustworthy politicians. While Aboriginal Canadians were quite aware of the mainstream Elections Canada advertising directed at all citizens, there is limited awareness of the advertising focused on their community and limited recall of messages, other than an encouragement to vote.

A. Aboriginal Voter Profile

Aboriginal voters are more likely than Aboriginal non-voters to have the following characteristics:

- Older (less likely to be younger than 35 years);
- Income \$40K+;
- Working full time;
- Métis or Inuit;
- Living off a reserve; and,
- Urban.

Similar to 2006, Aboriginal non-voters are more likely to report being First Nations with the primary residence located on a reserve.

There are also some significant differences regionally, with Aboriginal residents of Quebec (55%) and Alberta (53%) being the most likely to report not voting. Also playing a significant role in Aboriginal Canadian voting behaviour is the fact that 65 percent of those living in an urban area and 63 percent of those living off reserve report voting in 2008, compared with 54 percent and 45 percent respectively living in rural areas or on a reserve. While the urban and off reserve percentages are clearly lower than the population overall, they are only 10 percentage points lower suggesting that urban and off reserve aboriginal Canadians are somewhat more integrated into the political process.



ABORIGINAL PROFILE

	Aboriginal		All Canadians	
	2008 Voter	2008 Non-Voter	2008 Voter	2008 Non-Voter
n=	269	231	1833	667
	%	%	%	%
Gender				
Male	42	42	51	41
Female	58	58	49	59
Age				
18-34 years	20	39	23	41
35-54 years	45	41	41	37
55+ years	36	20	36	22
Métis	24	14	n/a	n/a
Innu	10	8	n/a	n/a
First Nations	66	78	n/a	n/a
Status Indian	55	68	n/a	n/a
Primary Residence located on a reserve	42	59	n/a	n/a
Polling station on the reserve	33	41	n/a	n/a
Household Income				
Under \$20K	17	26	7	12
20 to under \$40K	22	33	16	19
\$40K to under \$60K	23	13	17	16
\$60K to under \$80K	12	9	13	13
\$80K to under \$100K	7	5	11	10
\$100K+	10	4	23	17
Don't Know/Refused	9	10	14	13
Employment Status				
Working full time	51	42	48	48
Working part time	10	12	10	12
Self-employed	7	4	8	8
Unemployed/looking	5	12	3	5
Student/Retired	19	15	26	18
Internet Access at Home	71	64	82	79
Facebook Profile	37	31	30	42

B. Polling Stations on Reserves

One potential barrier for on-reserve Aboriginal voters is the presence or absence of a polling station on the reserve. And, in fact, 21 percent of on-reserve Aboriginal Canadians report that there was no polling station on their reserve. However this did not appear to have an appreciable impact on voting behaviours. In all, 49 percent of those reporting an on-reserve polling station say that they voted, compared with 41 percent who report voting where no on-reserve polling station was available.



C. Best Ways to Encourage Aboriginal Electors to Vote

The survey asked Aboriginal electors for their suggestions on what should be done to encourage Aboriginal people to vote. Overall, while one third of Aboriginal Canadians did not have a suggestion, there is little consensus around what could be done. Suggestions can be divided into two broad groups: those that deal with improving the electoral process and those dealing with improving the political process. Suggestions regarding electoral improvements include better use of technology (such as the internet) to reach Aboriginal people, more communications and education about the election and the process, a greater focus on stressing the “civic duty” or responsibility aspect of voting and a focus in schools on getting students involved and engaging their attention during an election. There is no difference between Aboriginal voters and non-voters in suggestions made.

ENCOURAGING ABORIGINAL CANADIANS TO VOTE

	Aboriginal Canadians 2008
n=	500
	%
Make it mandatory / penalty for not voting / Loss of citizenship / Fine them	12
Reach them via internet / MSN / Facebook	11
Inform them / More advertising / More awareness / Stress how important it is	9
Honest politicians / Keep promises / Tell truth	9
Discuss issues relevant to them / Get them interested	6
Civic Pride / Duty / Tell them it's their duty	4
Better education / Education in schools / Get them involved at school level	4
Better leaders / better candidates / sensible people to run / Variety of candidates	4
More money for seniors / increased pension / take better care of seniors	3
Other*	10
Nothing	1
No answer	29
DK/NA/Ref	12

Q.65 What, if anything, should be done to encourage Aboriginal people to vote in federal elections?

Base: Aboriginals

Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%

* “Other” comprises all responses totalling less than 3%

D. Awareness of Aboriginal Voter Advertising

One in five (19%) Aboriginal electors recall having seen or heard the Elections Canada advertisements specifically encouraging Aboriginal electors to vote, and this is similar to the level of 2006 recall.



There are no significant demographic or regional differences in awareness across gender, age, household income, education, region or reported voting status. Similarly, Aboriginal voters and non-voters are equally likely to recall the advertisements (voters 20%, non-voters 17%), as are urban and rural Aboriginal Canadians (17% and 20%, respectively). While not strictly comparable, the proportion reporting awareness of Aboriginal advertising is lower than both the general public’s recall of Elections Canada advertising and Aboriginal Canadians’ recall of general newspaper, radio and TV advertising by Elections Canada as reviewed in an earlier section of this report. This suggests the GRP’s⁵ for the Aboriginal-focused advertising may not have been sufficient to permit for Aboriginal Canadians to recall those specifically directed at their community.

AWARENESS OF ABORIGINAL FOCUSED ADVERTISING

	Aboriginal Canadians 2006	Aboriginal Canadians 2008
n=	641	500
	%	%
Yes	22	19
No	75	78
DK/NA/Ref	3	3

Q.66 During the election, did you see or hear Elections Canada ads specifically encouraging Aboriginal electors to vote?
Base: Aboriginals

E. Where Ads Seen or Heard

A variety of sources are cited by those recalling advertising directed specifically at Aboriginal Canadians: half (51%) of those who are aware of the advertising report seeing it on television; over one-in-five (23%) report hearing it over the radio; and 17 percent report seeing it in newspapers. Some of the other media/channels mentioned are brochures (4%), posters/billboards (4%), at the post office (2%) and at the band office (2%).

F. Message Recall of the Ads

While no one message stood out, the messages most recalled are a reminder/enticement to vote, information on candidates or campaign issues, and general election information. A substantial 42 percent could recall nothing from the advertisements, suggesting that even among those recalling it many simply paid very little attention to the advertising.

⁵ GRP’s or Gross Rating Points is the total of all ratings obtained by a specific media vehicle and represents the frequency as well as the percentage of the target audience that has been reached by the advertising. (e.g. Frequency of advertising × % reach = total GRP’s.



MESSAGE RECALL OF ADVERTISEMENTS

	Aboriginal Canadians 2008
n=	500
	%
Reminder to vote	17
Enticement to vote	14
Politicians/Candidates/Parties/Campaign Issues	14
Elections/General Information/Overall info (how, where)	6
Election Date	2
Polling Stations Opening Hours	2
Other	11
No info/Didn't read	1
Nothing	25
DK/NA/Ref	16

Q.68 From your recollection, what did these ads talk about?

Base: Aboriginal Canadians

Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%



X. Youth Focus



Youth Focus

The youth oversample consisted of those at least 18 years of age on Election Day (October 14, 2008) and up to 24 years of age. In terms of employment status, 54 percent report that they are working and a further 37% that they are a student. However, when asked directly if they are a student a further 22 percent reported that they are, bringing the total who report that they are a student to 59 percent. It is possible that a portion of the additional students study part time or are employed and in response to the employment status question think of themselves as employed more than as a student.

The majority (59%) of youth report that at the time of the election they continued to live at home with either or both parents and among those who define their employment status as a student, 69 percent lived at home. This is the same as the two thirds (67%) who report being students who lived at home at the time of the election. Even among those who reported working, half (53%) report that they lived at home, although fewer of those working live at home than compared with students. While a portion of students, if they live away from home, live on campus, the survey failed to identify any respondents in this situation. This highlights the difficulty of surveying students living on campus where there may be a general university number and with extensions for individual student rooms.

Finally in terms of background factors one-in five students report that they are an active member of a Student Association. Unfortunately this proportion is too small for any further meaningful analysis..

A. Voting behaviour

As seen earlier, youth participation and involvement in the electoral process is lower than found among the general population, with 63 percent compared with 73 percent among the public overall reporting that they voted in the 2008 Federal General Election. There are a number of background factors that appear to be associated with voting. The most important appears to be living at home. In all, 70 percent of those living with a parent or parents report voting compared with 53 percent among those not living with their parents (a difference of 17 percentage points). Presumably, the social environment of the home where parents may vote is conducive to younger people being encouraged to vote, even though they do not vote at the level of their parents' generation. The fact that a majority of youth live at home indicates that a large number are in an environment that is more conducive to voting than not voting. Once away from home, the lack of those supports is in many instances enough to dampen voting behaviour. The implication here is that further efforts will be required to reach youth who are outside the home environment. Such outreach could be directed to places where youth congregate, such as bars or clubs, and through the communication channels youth are likely to use, including digital media.



B. Students and Non Students

While living at home compared to not at home is significantly correlated with voting behaviour, being a student also appears to be linked to voting behaviour, but on closer examination this is not the case.

Using the broader question (Are you currently a student?) 62 percent of students report voting compared with 55 percent of non-students. The difference is more dramatic when the narrower definition using the employment status question is used. In this instance, 71% of students reported voting, compared with 59% of non students, and compared with 62% among those who reported working. However when living at home is used as a control variable, then, in fact, it is living at home that explains the difference, in student/non student voting behaviour, and not being a student. Both students and non-students living at home are more likely to report voting in 2008 than students and non-students living away from home. It only seems that students are more likely to vote, because somewhat more of them live at home than non-students and those living at home are more likely to vote. This confirms the fundamental issue of finding new ways of reaching out to youth living outside the family home.

Students, relative to non-students, are also somewhat more likely to report an interest in politics (76% versus 70%) and to have followed the 2008 election at least somewhat closely (62% versus 55%). As noted earlier in this report, both these factors are quite strongly associated with voting, but do not appear to translate into greater likelihood among students. Once again, this reinforces the need to focus on new ways of reaching youth.

VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS / NON-STUDENTS AND LIVING WITH PARENTS STATUS

	Students		Non-students	
	Living at home	Not at home	Living at home	Not at home
n=	199	97	95	109
	%	%	%	%
Yes	71	56	67	51
No/not aware of election	29	44	33	49

Q.3 Many people don't vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?

Base: Youth oversample

C. Best Ways to Encourage Youth to Vote

The survey included questions to help understand what could be done to encourage youth voting. Two suggestions in particular focus on identifying and discussing issues relevant to youth and engaging students more through schools, both in terms of a focus on the responsibility to vote and on building awareness, engagement and involvement in the political process and political issues.



There is no absence of suggestions for encouraging youth to vote, both from youth and the public overall, and a good deal of agreement regarding the activities proposed. As in the case of Aboriginal Canadians, these can be divided into suggestions regarding the electoral process and the political process. The suggestions from both youth and adults include getting student engaged by discussing issues relevant to them as well as providing more information and advertising on the importance of voting, better education and by meeting with them through forums or elections in school. There were also suggestions regarding the use of technology both to engage and reach youth through social media and on-line voting.

ENCOURAGING YOUTH TO VOTE

	Youth		All Canadians	
	2006	2008	2006	2008
n=	500	500	3013	2500
	%	%	%	%
Discuss issues relevant to them/Get them interested	23	15	19	16
Inform them/More advertising/More awareness/Stress how important it is	9	15	9	16
Better education/Education in schools/Get involved at school level	26	5	26	15
Meet with them/Hold forums/Elections in school/Campaign on campuses	2	10	2	10
Better leaders/Better candidates/Sensible people to run/Variety of candidates /More Honest Politicians	4	12	4	9
Reach them via Internet/MSN/Facebook	-	9	-	3
Online voting/Allow Internet vote	2	3	2	4
Make it mandatory/Penalty for not voting/Loss of citizenship	2	5	2	3
Civic pride/Duty/Tell them it is their duty	-	4	-	3
Parents need to be involved/Education at home	-	-	2	3
Other	17	11	9	11
Nothing	1	2	1	2
No Answer	-	26	-	26
DK/NA/Ref	21	5	21	5

Q.74 What, if anything, should be done to encourage youth to vote in federal elections?

Base: All respondents

Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%

D. Youth Voter Profile

Profiling youth voters versus non-voters shows differences that are similar to those found among the general Canadian population. The young voters are more likely to be:

- Male; and
- Living at home;



- Household income of more than \$20,000.

Non-voters are more likely to be:

- Female;
- Living away from home.

Regionally, Quebec youth (69%) are the most likely to report voting, while those living in Ontario (56%) and Atlantic Canada (56%) are the least likely.

YOUTH VOTER PROFILE

	Youth		All Canadians	
	2008 Voter	2008 Non-Voter	2008 Voter	2008 Non-Voter
n=	315	185	1833	667
	%	%	%	%
Gender				
Male	50	44	51	41
Female	50	56	49	59
Living with parents at the time of election	65	48	n/a	n/a
Student	62	55	n/a	n/a
Active member of student association	20	17	n/a	n/a
Household Income				
Under \$20K	10	18	7	12
\$20 to under \$40K	20	16	16	19
\$40K to under \$60K	15	15	17	16
\$60K to under \$80K	12	15	13	13
\$80K to under \$100K	9	8	11	10
\$100K+	14	12	23	17
Don't Know/Refused	21	18	14	13
Internet Access at Home	97	90	82	79
Facebook Profile	73	73	30	42



XI. Elders Focus



Elders Focus (Those Aged 65+ Years)

In all, 84 percent of those 55 years to 64 years of age and 83 percent of those 65 years of age or older report having voted. Nonetheless, similarly to the study of any other specific group of electors, it is important to understand what potential barriers might be encountered by the elder population and what could be done to facilitate voting. In order to do this, the survey asked those 65 years of age and older what would help older people to vote. In response to this question, access to transportation to polling stations was one of the key suggestions.

While seniors make a variety of suggestions, providing transportation to the polling station is easily the most common response. This is followed by the general suggestion of making it easier to vote, although in many instances no explicit remedies were suggested. Additional suggestions include setting up polling booths in homes for seniors and greater focus on advertising and information about the election.

HELPING OLDER PEOPLE VOTE

	Elderly Canadians 2008
n=	537
	%
Provide transportation	37
Improve electoral system/Make it easier to vote/Not have elections so often	14
Inform them/More advertising/More awareness/Stress how important it is	6
Discuss issues relevant to them/Get them interested	4
Meet with them/Hold forums	3
Visit seniors at home/old age homes/Go where they are	3
More money for seniors/Increased pension/Take better care of seniors	3
Honest politicians/Keep promises/Tell the truth	2
Civic pride/Duty/Tell them it's their duty	2
Have voting stations closer to home/Have them vote from home/Vote from old age homes	2
Better leaders/Better candidates/Sensible people to run/Variety of candidates	2
Other*	13
Nothing	6
No answer	21
DK/NA/Ref	5

Q.75 What, if anything, should be done to help older people to vote in federal elections?

Base: Born in 1943 or before

Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%

* "Other" comprises all responses totalling less than 2%



XII. Ethnocultural Focus



Ethnocultural Focus

Canada has one of the highest per capita rates of immigration in the world and is home to a wide variety of immigrant groups, including an increasingly large number of visible minorities. Ensuring that immigrants take part in the political process is obviously an important role of Elections Canada. Overall, as noted throughout this report, the immigrant and visible minorities population surveyed have much in common in attitude and voting behaviour with the population overall. However, there are some key differences. Chief among these are that there are differences in voting behaviour separating those whose first language is English or French (the Official languages) from those whose first language is not English (a heritage language) and in terms of visible minority status and the length of time living in Canada.

In terms of language first spoken, those who report English or French as their mother tongue are more likely to report voting in the 2008 election than are those for whom a heritage language is the first language spoken. This appears, though, to some extent, to be an effect of length of time in Canada. Those whose mother tongue is English or French are likely to have lived in Canada for longer periods of time and the longer a person lives in Canada the more likely they are to report voting in 2008. There is certainly evidence that more recent immigrants are less likely to vote. Presumably, more recent immigrants are busy establishing themselves and may not yet be fully engaged with Canadian institutions and processes. Suggestions made for encouraging immigrants and visible minorities to vote include having Elections Canada focus more on reaching into these communities and on promoting the civic responsibility to vote within immigrant communities.

A. First Language

While, as expected, English and French are the dominant first languages reported by Canadians, 13 percent of Canadians report another first language. Among the immigrant/visible minorities sample, not surprisingly, over half (52%) report a non-Charter first language.



FIRST LANGUAGE

	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities 2008	All Canadians 2008
n=	500	2500
	%	%
English	44	64
French	4	23
Slavic/Romanian/Ukrainian/Eastern European	7	2
German	5	1
Tamil/Urdu/Gujarati/East Asian/South Asian	4	1
Mandarin	4	1
Cantonese	4	1
Italian	2	1
Portuguese	2	1
Arabic	2	1
Polish	3	1
Spanish	3	1
Other European	4	1
Other Middle Eastern languages	2	1
Others	10	3
DK/NA/Ref	<1	-

Q.76 What is the first language that you learned and that you still understand?
Base: All respondents

However, when voting behaviour is explored among the immigrant/visible minorities' population by language spoken first, then it is clear that, at least in terms of self-reported voting, those whose first language is one of the Official Languages are far more likely to report voting than those with another first language (79% versus 65%). There are likely a number of factors at work here. More recent immigrants are more likely to not speak English or French, to still be establishing themselves and be less integrated and therefore less interested in voting. Some would also have come from countries with different voting traditions that may also represent a barrier. On this first point, when a control for length of time in Canada is added, then little difference exists between mother tongue and voting in 2008, for those in Canada 35 years or more. A difference in voting behaviour however persists by language for those in the country less than 35 years. However, on this latter point the sample sizes are too small for any definitive conclusions.



LANGUAGE FIRST SPOKEN AND REPORTED VOTING BEHAVIOUR – IMMIGRANT / VISIBLE MINORITIES SAMPLE

	General population	Immigrant/ Visible minorities	Language – English/ French	Language – Other
n=	2500	500	210	281
	%	%	%	%
Yes	73	73	79	65
No	27	29	21	35

Q.3 Many people don't vote for a variety of reasons. Were you able to vote at the October 14th federal election?
 Base: All respondents

B. Length of Time in Canada

In addition to first language being a factor associated with voting behaviour, number of years spent in Canada is also a significant determinant of voting. Among those in Canada for 14 years or less, only 54 percent report voting in 2008, compared with 65 percent among those in Canada for 15 years to just under 30 years and 81 percent among those in Canada for 30 years or more. There are likely a variety of explanations for this relationship. Most obvious is that it likely takes time for immigrants to become established in Canada and to become engaged in the political process. At the same time, it is likely that years in Canada is mixed with other factors, such as age. Those in Canada for a few years are likely to be younger and younger persons are also less likely to vote. Those who have been in Canada for a large number of years are also likely to be older and, as noted earlier in this report, older Canadians are more likely to believe it is a civic duty to vote.

VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND NUMBER OF YEARS IN CANADA - IMMIGRANT / VISIBLE MINORITIES

	Total 2008	Numbers of Years in Canada		
		14 Years or less	15-29 Years	30 Years or more
n=	443	90	111	234
	%	%	%	%
Voted	71	54	65	81
Did not vote	29	46	35	19



C. Visible Minority Status

A further factor potentially associated with voting in the 2008 election is visible minority status. In all, 64% of those who are visible minorities (that is, the ethnic or cultural background they gave identified them as being part of a visible minority group) report voting, compared with 79% among those with a non-visible minority background. Once again, however, it appears that length of time in Canada may play a factor in this relationship, but it is not the whole answer. Among those visible minorities living in Canada 15 years or more relative to non-visible minorities, 67% report voting in 2008 compared with 82% of non-visible minorities. However, among both visible and non-visible minorities in Canada for a shorter period of time, both groups are less likely to report voting relative to those with more time in Canada. One further confounding factor is age. Those in Canada for longer periods of time may also be older and older people are also more likely to vote. However, a larger sample size will be required to explore this issue in more detail.

D. Best Ways to Encourage Immigrant/Visible Minorities to Vote

To further capture the perspective of the immigrant/visible minorities' communities, the survey asked this group what should be done to encourage people from their community to vote.

Consistent with other sub groups surveyed, a significant number of immigrants and visible minorities mention changes to the electoral as well as the political process. In terms of electoral process change, a focus on advertising that has a cultural focus or is in different languages is cited, as well as discussing minority issues, engaging with them and promoting civic duty and the importance of voting. In addition, and as other groups note, engaging students at school is also thought to be important in encouraging immigrant communities to vote.



ENCOURAGING ETHNO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY TO VOTE

	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities 2008
n=	241
	%
Awareness/Promotions/Cultural-based ads/Different language media	16
Equality/Discuss minority issues/Engage with them/Visit them/Talk to them	12
Civic Duty/Importance of Voting	10
Facilitation/Encouragement/Incentives	8
Translators/Language barriers	7
Education public/Schools/Forums/Community Centres	6
Campaigns/Cultural Issues/Parties Stand for/Explain Ideas	6
Candidates must live up to promises/Lack of accountability	3
Candidates and representatives from minority groups	4
Accessibility/Locations (e.g., Vote from home, internet, mail, phone)	2
Nothing to be done/Everything okay	6
DK/NA/Ref	33

Q.77 What, if anything, should be done to encourage people from your ethno-cultural community to vote in federal elections?

Base: Immigrant / Visible minorities

Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%



XIII. Persons with Disabilities



Persons with Disabilities

A total of 6 percent of the general public report some form of disability. These disabilities vary from a fifth reporting a mobility disability, to eight percent reporting a hearing disability, and a variety of other forms of disability. Despite having a disability, 66 percent of this population reports having voted in the 40th General Election. While this is somewhat lower than for the general population (73%), it does suggest that having a disability is not necessarily a major barrier to voting. Suggestions for encouraging disabled persons to vote focus on making voting more accessible, both in terms of alternatives to current methods of casting a ballot and transportation to polling stations.

COMMONLY REPORTED DISABILITIES

	Disabled Persons 2008
n=	176
	%
Mobility	21
Deaf or hard of hearing	8
Arthritis	7
Co-ordination or dexterity	6
Blind or visual impairment	5
Learning disability	5
Heart problems/stroke	4
Back problems	4
Have to use a walker/Difficulty walking	4
Mental disability/illness	3
Cancer	3
Amputation	3
Fibromyalgia	3
Other*	32
DK/NA/Ref	6

Q.79 Please specify your disability or disabilities?
 Base: Persons who reported a disability in Q78.
 Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%
 * "Other" comprises all responses totalling less than 3%

A. Best Ways to Encourage Disabled Persons to Vote

Given that mobility is the main hurdle faced by this group, improved accessibility either through providing transportation or different voting locations is most often suggested as the way to encourage disabled persons to vote. Voting from home through the phone, internet or mail, and transportation to polling booths are other suggestions given.



ENCOURAGING/HELPING DISABLED PEOPLE TO VOTE

	Disabled Persons 2008
n=	176
	%
Accessibility/Locations (e.g., Vote from home, internet, mail, phone)	27
Transportation/mobility	26
Facilitation/Encouragement/Incentives	13
Equality/Discuss minority issues/Engage with them/Visit them/Talk to them	3
Awareness/Promotions	2
Campaigns/Culture-based ads/Different language media	2
Nothing to be done/All okay	8
Other*	8
No answer	25
DK/NA/Ref	3

Q.80 What, if anything, should be done to help people with similar disabilities to vote in federal elections?

Base: Persons who reported a disability in Q78.

Note: Due to multiple mentions, proportions may exceed 100%

* "Other" comprises all responses totalling less than 2%



XIV. Summary of Suggestions from Sub-Groups



Summary of Suggestions from Sub-Groups

A. Summary of Suggestions From Sub-Groups

The suggestions for encouraging greater participation in voting are rich and varied. The table below summarizes them.

ENCOURAGING CANADIAN SUB-GROUPS TO VOTE – SUMMARY

	Youth	Elderly (65+ years)	Aboriginal	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities	Disabled
n=	500	537	500	500	176
	%	%	%	%	%
Communication directed towards improving awareness (advertising)	15	6	9	16 (cultural based ads)	2
Discuss Issues that are relevant	15	4	6	12	3
Provide transportation	-	37	-	-	26
Improving accessibility (Vote from home, internet, mail, phone)	3	-	-	2	27
Improving electoral system / Make it easier to vote / Not have elections so often	-	14	-	-	-
Meet with them/Hold forums	10	3	-	-	-
Reach them via Internet/MSN/Facebook	9	-	11	-	-
Better candidates/Honest candidates	12	2	9	3	-
Facilitation/Encouragement/Incentives	-	-	-	8	13
Make it mandatory/Penalty for not voting/Loss of citizenship	5	-	12	-	-
Civic pride/duty/Tell them it is their duty	4	2	4	10	-
Education in school/Get involved at the school level	5	-	4	6	-
Translator/Language Barriers	-	-	-	7	-

As noted throughout the analysis of this issue, a number of electoral process themes dominate. Building greater awareness of the need to vote and where and how to vote was frequently cited and in some ways this suggests a desire to “motivate” voters through enhanced communications. An enhanced role in schools also figures prominently and, for the elderly and disabled, transportation to the polling station. Finally, there are also suggestions for technological solutions and, especially for the young, on-line voting.



XV. Community Involvement



Community Involvement

Community involvement has long been seen as a social good (and most Canadians report some form of community engagement) and as one that is to be encouraged. And there are good reasons for this in terms of the benefits on voter participation. The links between community engagement as a volunteer and political engagement as a voter, while not overwhelmingly strong, they are clear as demonstrated in this section.

Canadians report reasonably high rates of community involvement, with a sizeable proportion (22%) claiming that they volunteer for community groups or not for profit organizations “often” and the plurality (42%) suggesting that they “sometimes” volunteer. In all, 35 percent report that they “never” volunteer. Those most likely to volunteer are Canadians over the age of 55 (28%). Those least likely to volunteer are the youngest age cohort. Similarly, the spirit of regular (“often”) volunteerism is not nearly as strong among respondents from the youth over-sample (16%), although large numbers (66%) of youth do report that they volunteer. Those with higher levels of education also tend to be more active volunteers than those with lower education levels.

VOLUNTEERISM / COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal Canadians	Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
n=	2500	500	442	548
	%	%	%	%
Yes	65	66	70	61
Often	22	16	25	23
Sometimes	42	50	45	38
Never	35	32	29	38

INCIDENCE OF COMMUNITY GROUP VOLUNTEERISM BY AGE

	Total 2008	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
n=	2500	500	442	548	820
	%	%	%	%	%
Often	22	16	22	21	28
Sometime	42	51	45	46	35
Never	35	33	33	33	37

2008Q.81 Do you often, sometime or never volunteer for community groups or not-for-profit organizations?
 2006Q.85 Have you ever worked as a volunteer for a community group or a not-for-profit organization?
 Base: Youth over-sample and All respondents



Aboriginal Canadians are also frequent volunteers for community activity with 70 percent reporting some volunteer activity and a quarter reporting that they volunteer “often”.

Regionally, residents of Atlantic Canada (76%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (77%) are the most likely to report volunteer activity. Quebec (50%) residents report the lowest level of voluntary activity.

While they are frequent volunteers, and consistent with the 39th General Election findings, Canadians are not particularly inclined to be members of a federal political party (6%). Consistent with findings regarding general volunteerism, those over the age of 55 are the most likely to hold federal party membership (11%). Quebecers (4%) are the least likely to be members of a federal political party.

The relationship between voluntarism and voting behaviour is somewhat strong, with those who volunteer often (79%) or sometimes (76%) being more likely to report that they voted in the 2008 election than non volunteers (67%). This same pattern holds across all sub populations, except for youth where there is no relationship between voluntarism and voting behaviour.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR

	All Canadians			Youth			Aboriginal			Immigrant/ Visible Minorities		
	Often	Some -times	Never	Often	Some -times	Never	Often	Some -times	Never	Often	Some -times	Never
n=	542	1081	869	79	250	164	125	227	146	116	191	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, voted in 2008 election	79	76	67	59	69	57	64	56	43	82	69	67

Q.81. Do you often, sometime or never volunteer for community groups or not-for-profit organizations?
Base: All respondents

Political party members are much more likely to report voting in 2008, and 90 percent report doing so.



XVI. Technological Profile



Technological Profile

A. Use of Technology

The rapid acceptance of new technologies and especially social media has meant that a large array of new communication tools have become increasingly available to reach certain groups, and especially youth, in new and more direct ways. Further, as noted in earlier sections of this report, key segments of the population are not (or no longer) embracing traditional media such as newspapers. In order to keep pace with these new developments, as a new initiative for Elections Canada, this survey reviews Canadians’ use of new communications technologies and its possible impact on voting.

One of the key finding from this analysis is the wide variety of new technologies and social media, Facebook in particular, embraced by all segments of society. At the same time, on-line technologies are being used by some across all segments of society, and particularly youth, among other things to discuss politics. What is especially encouraging is that among youth, those reporting that they did not vote in 2008 are using on-line technologies to discuss politics. The challenge in these findings is to explore ways of using these technologies to engage youth, and the population overall, in the electoral process.

The technology that makes much of the new social media possible is the internet, and four-in-five Canadians (81%) report having access to the internet at home. Younger Canadians are more likely to have home access to the internet than are older Canadians and this pattern is also common for much of the use of social media. Moreover, wealthier Canadians are more likely to have access to the internet from home.

INTERNET ACCESS AT HOME

	Total 2008	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
n=	2500	691	442	548	820
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	81	92	90	88	62
No	19	8	11	12	37
Unsure	<1	-	-	-	-
DK/NA/Ref	<1	-	-	-	1

Q.58 Do you have access to the Internet at home?
Base: All respondents



When use of new technology is looked at across the population overall, and the sub populations surveyed, then it is clear that there are significant variations by group. The internet is especially strongly embraced by youth (95%). Across other technologies, it is clear that among the general public, Facebook is quite heavily used with a third (34%) saying they have a Facebook profile. Myspace (5%) and blogs (3%) are far less prevalent among the public but instant messaging services (32%) are quite heavily used by Canadians. Wireless communication via cell phones (70%) is widespread, but not the Blackberry (10%), although one-in-ten is not a small number.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFILE

	Total 2008	Youth	Aboriginal			Immigrant/ Visible Minorities
			Total	Urban	Rural	
n=	2500	500	500	172	315	500
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Internet at home	81	95	68	76	64	81
Profile on Facebook	34	73	34	41	31	25
Profile on MySpace	5	12	8	8	8	5
A Blog	3	7	7	7	8	4
A Cell phone	70	77	61	67	57	68
A Blackberry	10	8	6	8	5	10
An instant messaging service such as MSN messenger or ICQ	32	77	43	38	45	31
Ever discuss politics on-line						
Yes	12	27	11	-	1	17
Often	2	5	2	1	2	3
Sometimes	10	22	9	8	11	14
Never	88	73	89	90	87	83

- Q. 58 Do you have access to the Internet at home?
- Q. 59. Do you have any of the following?
- Q. 60. Do you use instant messaging such as MSN Messenger or ICQ?
- Q. 61. Do you ever discuss politics on-line?
- Base: All respondents

Across the various subgroups, youth lead the way in the adoption of most technologies, with very high use of Facebook (73%) reported, but use of Myspace (12%) is at best a distant second as is blogging (7%) among youth. Instant messaging (77%) though is heavily subscribed to by youth. Cell phone (77%) use is also high for this group.



For Aboriginal Canadians, while reported home internet usage (68%) is somewhat below the national figure it is still a large majority. One issue in analysing these results for Aboriginal Canadians is that use of technology varies between urban and rural residents. Among urban Aboriginal Canadians, 76 percent report home internet use compared with 64 percent for those in rural areas. However, Facebook (34%) usage is comparable to that of other Canadians and higher among Aboriginal urban residents (41%). The use of Myspace (8%) and blogging (7%), while low, are above average compared with Canadians overall and equally used by Aboriginal urban and rural residents. Cell phone use is also quite high (61%) and especially among urban residents (67%), as is the use of instant messaging services (43%). This service is used more among those living in rural (45%) rather than urban (38%) areas.

B. On-line Discussion of Politics

While on-line technologies are widely used, politics is not an everyday topic of discussion on-line for most Canadians, although one-in-eight (12%) do report discussing politics on-line at least sometimes. Frequent political discussion on-line however, is limited to just 2 percent of the population. Like many other aspects of new technologies, on-line discussion of politics is a generational phenomenon, with those under 35 years of age being far more likely to report on-line political discussions than older Canadians (18% to 9%). At the same time, those who are members of a political party (22%) also make use of the internet for on-line political discussions.

DISCUSS POLITICS ON LINE

	n=	Canadian Population			
		Total 2008	18-34	35+	Political party member
		%	%	%	%
Yes (Often/Sometimes)		12	18	9	22
No		88	82	91	77

Q. 61. Do you ever discuss politics on line?
Base: All respondents

The generational aspect of on-line political discussions is readily apparent among youth. In all, over a quarter of youth (27%) report at least sometimes discussing politics on-line, with 5 percent saying they do so often. This phenomenon is not just restricted to youth who report voting in the 2008 General Election. Even among those who did not vote, 19 percent report discussing politics on-line at least sometimes. The implication here is that opportunities exist to explore the use of new media to engage youth in the electoral process.

Among Aboriginal Canadians, use of the internet to discuss politics (11%) is in line with the figures for the population overall, while usage by immigrants and visible minorities is slightly higher (17%).



C. Technology Usage and Voting

The growth in the use of the internet, wireless technologies and a wide variety of social media is having a profound impact on the economic and social life of Canadians. Given this transformation, an obvious issue is the impact this might have on turnout. It is apparent, based on responses to the two questions explored and reviewed earlier in this report, that there is quite strong interest in on-line registration and voting, but it is far from clear if the use of such technologies will lead to enhanced levels of voting. One way of exploring this issue is to examine the relationship between the use of technologies and voting behaviour.

When this issue is explored it is clear that no simple relationship between the use of technology and voting exists. First, among the public overall, those with internet access at home are marginally more likely to report voting than those with no internet access (74% versus 71%). While this difference is statistically significant, it is small. Significant differences, however, are found when the use of Facebook and Myspace are examined. In both cases, those not using these media are more likely to report voting in the 2008 General Election. Among Facebook users, 67% report voting compared with 77% for non users; the same pattern is apparent for Myspace. However, further analysis shows that this pattern is an artefact of age; social media users are younger and younger people are less likely to vote. Further evidence for the lack of a relationship between technological usage and voting is found on the issue of discussing politics on line. While about 12 percent of the public with home internet access report discussing politics on line at least sometimes, this group is no more likely to report voting in the 2008 election than those do not discuss politics on line.

Among youth, as might be expected, technological and social media use is very high. However, there is a limited relationship between this usage and voting in the 2008 General Election. Engagement with social media (Facebook or Myspace) shows no relationship between use and voting behaviour. The only finding of significance is that, unlike the public overall, youth who report discussing politics on line at least occasionally are more likely to report voting in the 2008 General Election (74% versus 59%) relative to those who do not discuss politics.

In contrast to the limited relationship between technology use and turnout among youth, a fairly consistent relationship between turnout and technology use is apparent among Aboriginal Canadians. Those with home internet access, relative to those without, are more likely to report voting in 2008 (57% versus 48%). The same pattern is apparent for those with a profile on Facebook (58 to 51%) and with a cellphone (60% to 44%), but not an instant messaging service (46% to 59%). Finally, there is no relationship between discussing politics on line and turnout among this group.

D. Socio-Demographic Overview of Surveyed Population

The table below provides a reference overview of the characteristics of the general public and the other populations sampled for the survey of electors and non electors to the 40th General Election.



Socio-demographic variables		n	%	Margin of error (%)
Gender	Men	1405	42	+/- 2.61
	Women	1943	58	+/- 2.22
Age group	18–24 (young electors)	555	17	+/- 4.16
	25–34	424	13	+/- 4.76
	35–44	548	16	+/- 4.19
	45–54	638	19	+/- 3.88
	55–64	577	17	+/- 4.08
	65 and over	606	18	+/- 3.98
Youth	Students	314	9	+/- 5.53
	Living with parent(s)	323	10	+/- 5.45
First language	English	2039	61	+/- 2.17
	French	763	23	+/- 3.55
	Other	541	16	+/- 4.21
Country of birth	Canada	2852	86	+/- 1.84
	Other	485	14	+/- 4.45
Immigrant / visible minority	Immigrated before 1970	179	5	+/- 7.32
	Immigrated in 1970 or later	229	9	+/- 6.48
	Visible minority	92	3	+/- 10.22
Education level	Elementary/High school/None	1306	40	+/- 2.71
	Technical/College/CEGEP	836	25	+/- 3.39
	University	1166	35	+/- 2.87
Household income	Less than \$20,000	351	12	+/- 5.23
	\$20,000–\$39,999	627	22	+/- 3.91
	\$40,000–\$59,999	553	19	+/- 4.17
	\$60,000–\$79,999	421	15	+/- 4.78
	\$80,000–\$99,999	312	11	+/- 5.55
	\$100,000 and over	598	21	+/- 4.01
Rural/urban	Rural	813	75	+/- 3.44
	Urban	2468	25	+/- 1.97
Aboriginal	First Nation : On reserve	253	8	+/- 6.16
	First Nation : Off reserve	109	3	+/- 9.58
	Métis	104	3	+/- 9.61
	Inuit	49	2	+/- 14.00
Special Needs	Persons with Disabilities	230	7	+/- 6.46
Total sample		3348	100	+/- 1.69