

The Electoral Participation of Diverse Canadian Youth in the 2015 Federal Election

A Report Commissioned by Elections Canada

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Note to the Reader

This report was presented at the conference “Youth Political Participation: On the Diverse Roads to Democracy,” June 16–17, 2016, Montreal, Quebec.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

It is generally recognized that younger Canadians vote less than the rest of the population. However, there is evidence that there is some variation within the group of young Canadians and that some youth vote less than others. This report examines the variation in voter turnout among Canadians aged 18 to 34 years old, and investigates the causes of the lower propensity to vote of diverse groups of young Canadians. The report compares: Aboriginal youth to non-Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth to youth who are not members of visible minority groups, youth living in urban areas to youth living in rural areas, youth who are employed to youth who are unemployed and students, and finally youth with disabilities to youth who do not have a disability.

This report uses the National Youth Survey (NYS), a survey conducted by Elections Canada after the federal election of October 19, 2015. The NYS was conducted by Nielsen, online or via cellphone, and surveyed a total of 3,009 Canadians in all provinces and territories. Of these, 2,506 respondents were young Canadians aged 18 to 34, and 503 were aged 35 and older. The youth sample included a nationally representative sample (1,752) and an over-sample of different youth subgroups (754): Aboriginal youth, ethno-cultural youth, youth residing in rural areas, youth with disabilities, and unemployed youth (Nielsen 2016).

Overview of the Results

In this report, we provide evidence of how the diverse groups of youth differ in terms of their socio-demographic background, their social experiences, and their political participation, and how these factors help explain the electoral participation of diverse Canadian youth. In the context of the 2015 federal election, we found that youth living in rural areas and unemployed youth were substantially less likely to vote. Their self-reported voter turnout rates are respectively 68% and 47%, compared to the general turnout rate of 71.1% for youth overall. Our results suggest that electoral participation of youth can be explained by the same factors that explain the participation of older Canadian citizens. And so, the traditional resource model seems to be applicable to youth as well (Blais and Loewen 2011, Gélinau 2013). However, the analyses reveal that different subgroups of youth have varying levels of resources, and that several socio-demographic characteristics, access barriers and political attitudes are more important in explaining the electoral participation of some youth groups than others.

INTRODUCTION

Many Western democracies experience declining trends in electoral participation. In Canada, as in other countries, the decline in turnout tends to be particularly concentrated among young citizens (Blais et al. 2004, Dalton 2007, Blais and Loewen 2011). However, not all youth are “dropping out” of electoral politics at the same rate. Indeed, several studies have found evidence that some youth may be more likely to stay away from the ballot box (Gidengil et al. 2003, Blais et al. 2004). In fact, Gélneau (2013) documented that in the 2011 Canadian general election, Aboriginal youth, youth not born in Canada, youth with lower levels of income and education, and youth living in rural areas voted at lower rates (compared with non-Aboriginal, Canadian-born, more privileged and urban youth).

Whereas in many behavioural studies youth are treated as a monolithic group, this report aims to further investigate the variations in electoral participation among different groups of young Canadians, and to explain why some groups of youth are less likely to participate in elections. Many studies of political behaviour rely on the resource model to explain why citizens participate in elections (Verba and Nie 1972, Verba et al. 1995). In the Civic Voluntarism Model, Verba and colleagues (1995) identify three sets of factors as important determinants of political participation: socio-economic resources (such as education and income), psychological engagement (such as political interest and knowledge), and social resources (such as involvement in organizations). While past studies have found that youth are similar to other citizens in terms of which factors explain their decision to vote (Blais and Loewen 2011, Gélneau 2013), they nonetheless differ in the levels of these resources. Additionally, youth from different backgrounds, who have different life circumstances, may display varying levels of economic, social and political resources. We thus compare the socio-demographic profiles and the different resources available to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal youth, visible minority versus non-minority youth, unemployed youth and students versus employed youth, youth living in urban or rural areas, and youth with a disability versus youth with no disability.

In the first section, we will examine the variation in electoral participation within the groups of young Canadians aged 18 to 34 years old. We present in the second section how the various groups of youth compare in terms of their socio-demographic profile and life circumstances. In the subsequent sections, we then focus on the several important factors of the explanation of electoral participation: access barriers, political resources, political attitudes, political mobilization, and social and political engagement. Finally, in the last section we present a multivariate model that estimates the importance of each factor in explaining the electoral participation of different youth groups in Canada. We conclude our report with a summary of the findings and several policy recommendations.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH SURVEY

The survey used for our analysis is the 2015 National Youth Survey (NYS), conducted by Elections Canada in the follow-up to the October 2015 federal general election. The National Youth Survey is a large representative sample, including an over-sample of Aboriginal youth, ethno-cultural youth, unemployed youth, youth residing in rural areas, and youth with disabilities. In addition, the NYS 2015 covers important details about the motivational and access barriers that Canadian youth encountered in the past federal general election, as well as other important voter predictors, such as political resources, attitudes, mobilization, and engagement. Therefore, the NYS 2015 is an excellent data source to examine the differential impact of access barriers and other traditional predictors for voter turnout among youth subgroups.

A total of 3,009 Canadians were surveyed: 2,506 respondents were Canadians aged 18 to 34 (segmented by region: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia, and Northern Canada), and 503 were aged 35 and older. The NYS 2015 survey employed a mixed mode sampling methodology. A total of 1,503 respondents were randomly selected and completed the survey by cell phone. The remaining 1,506 respondents were selected non-randomly through online panels. To ensure an adequate sample size for the different youth subgroups of interest, an oversample was completed for the five following subgroups: Aboriginal youth (n=264, 15% live on-reserve), ethno-cultural youth (n=718), youth residing in rural areas (n=815), youth with disabilities (n=280), and unemployed youth who are not in school (n=175). More details on the sub-samples and the weighting procedures employed can be found in the survey report provided by Nielsen (2016).

1. LEVELS OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION AMONG DIVERSE GROUPS OF YOUNG CANADIANS

In order to answer the question of why young Canadians are less likely to vote in elections, we look more specifically at different groups of young Canadians and examine how they compare in their electoral participation. Indeed, previous studies have pointed out that the low and declining levels of turnout among young citizens may in fact be due to specific groups of youth participating much less than others (Gidengil et al. 2003, Blais et al. 2004, Gallego 2009, G lineau 2013).

We start by exploring reported voter turnout among various age subgroups in the 2015 federal election. We know from past evidence that youth vote less than their older counterparts, but it is generally expected that individuals vote at higher rates as they age. This is the life-cycle effect (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Highton and Wolfinger 2001). In October 2015, younger Canadians were indeed less likely to vote than the older Canadians, and as indicated in Table 1, voter turnout tends to increase as Canadians get older. Reported turnoutⁱ among 18- to 19-year-old Canadians is 68.1%. This increases to 70.6% among the 20- to 24-year-olds and to

78.2% among the 25- to 29-year-olds. Voter turnout slightly drops among the 30- to 34-year-olds, to 67.3%. Reported voter turnout is highest among the older age group, as 91.5% of the Canadians 35 years old or older indicated they had voted in the 2015 federal election. In line with Gélinau's findings (2013), we find that the increase in turnout is not linear. However, contrary to the NYS results from the 2011 federal election, we do not see a drop in reported voter turnout among youth aged 20 to 24, but instead we observe one among youth aged 30 to 34 years old (Gélinau 2013). These results show that a substantial turnout age gap remains between the youngest and oldest age groups, with a 23.4 percentage point gap in turnout between the 18- to 19-year-olds and the citizens aged 35 years and older.

Table 1: Self-Reported Voter Turnout among Youth Subgroups for the Federal Election of October 19, 2015

	%	Total sample
Age groups		
18-19	68.1***	260
20-24	70.6***	771
25-29	78.2***	682
30-34	67.3***	741
Young Canadians (18-34)	71.1***	2,454
Older Canadians (35+) •	91.5	503
Living environment		
Youth living in rural areas (with a population <10,000)	68.0*	547
Youth living in urban areas (with a population 10,000+) •	72.8	1,864
Aboriginal status		
Aboriginal youth	70.0	110
Non-Aboriginal youth •	71.5	2,333
Visible minority status		
Visible minority youth	69.6	408
Non-visible-minority youth •	72.8	1,985
Disability status		
Youth with disability	70.6	102
Youth without disability •	71.6	2,340
Occupational status		
Unemployed youth	47.0***	83
Students	73.3	505
Employed youth •	72.3	1,846

Note: For living environment, Aboriginal status, visible minority status, disability status, and occupation status, we consider only Canadian youth aged 18 to 34.

Statistically significant differences: *** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05 (reference category: •).

Table 1 further displays self-reported voter turnout in the 2015 federal election for the 11 youth subgroups we focus on in this report. The results first suggest a

significant turnout gap between youth living in rural areas (i.e. with a population less than 10,000 inhabitants) and youth living in urban areas (i.e. with a population of 10,000 inhabitants or more). Reported voter turnout of youth living in rural areas is 68%, compared with 72.8% for youth living in more urban areas. This turnout gap is consistent with previous findings from the 2011 federal election (Gélineau 2013). Electoral participation among Aboriginal youth (70%) is lower than participation among non-Aboriginal youth (71.5%), and visible minority youth also vote at a lower rate (69.6%) than non-visible-minority youth (72.8%). However, these differences are not statistically significant, and are much smaller than anticipated. Whereas Bilodeau and Turgeon (2015) reported a voter turnout gap of 16 percentage points between visible minority Canadians and other Canadians in the 2011 federal election, we find a 3-percentage-point difference for the 2015 election. Additionally, while Gélineau (2013) found a 20-percentage-point gap in turnout between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth in the context of the 2011 general election, we find only a difference of 1.5 percentage points. The turnout rate of youth without disabilities is only 1 percentage point higher than that of their counterparts with a disability. Consistent with previous research (Jarvis et al. 2005), we observe a substantial turnout gap between unemployed youth (47%) and students (73.3%) and other employed youth (72.3%).

The results reveal that differences in the electoral participation among subgroups of Canadian youth are not as large as expected, and are not systematically consistent with past evidence. This may be potentially explained by the specific context of this general election, and the general increase in turnout. Indeed, the participation in the 2015 general federal election reached 68.3%, the highest level of turnout since the election of 1993.

2. THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF DIVERSE YOUTH

In order to explore the reasons behind the differences in voter turnout, the report first compares the socio-demographic characteristics of different youth subgroups. Socio-demographic variables, such as gender, education, income, occupation, visible minority status, and immigration status, are known to have a significant impact on electoral behaviour (Verba et al. 1995, Gallego 2007, Blais and Loewen 2011). Table 2 presents bivariate relationships linking socio-demographics and subgroups of youth. Socio-demographic characteristics are compared between subgroups of youth, defined by living environment, Aboriginal status, visibly minority status, disability status, and occupational status.

Aboriginal Status

Overall, Aboriginal youth are slightly younger and have a higher residential mobility compared to non-Aboriginal youth. But most notably, Aboriginal youth have significantly lower levels of socio-economic resources than non-Aboriginal youth, as measured by income, education, and occupation. The income gap is fairly large: 71.1% of Aboriginal youth between 18 and 34 years old report a household income

inferior to \$40,000, compared to 44.4% of non-Aboriginal Canadian youth. Aboriginal youth also display lower levels of educational attainment: 33% of them have a high school diploma or less, compared to a proportion of 22.8% of non-Aboriginal youth with similar levels of education. Finally, Aboriginal youth are more likely to be students and to have moved in the past year, and less likely to be employed, compared to non-Aboriginal youth, which may partly explain the income gap.

Visible Minority Status

When we turn to the profile of visible minority youth, we can find that this group has a distinctive socio-demographic profile. They report the highest levels of educational attainment among all youth subgroups, and are much less likely to have a high school diploma or less (18.6%) than non-visible-minority youth (23.2%). However, they report lower levels of household income and are less likely to be employed, compared to non-visible-minority youth, which may be partly explained by experiences of discrimination in the job market. Visible minority youth are generally younger and are less likely to be married and to have children, but they are substantially more likely to be born outside of Canada, compared to non-visible-minority youth.

Occupational Status

As indicated earlier, there are large differences in electoral participation of unemployed youth, students, and employed youth. The lower level of participation of unemployed youth might be partly related to their lower levels of education and household income. Of unemployed youth, 41.2% report having a high school diploma or less, and 61% have a household income inferior to \$40,000. Unemployed youth are also slightly younger, less likely to be born in Canada, and less likely to be married, compared to employed youth.

Although there was no significant turnout gap between students and employed Canadians aged 18 to 34, students present a different socio-demographic profile than employed youth. Canadian students report higher levels of educational attainment, with a greater proportion of them having some university education (53.1%) compared to employed youth (45%). However, they report lower levels of household income (mainly due to the fact that they study and no longer live with their parents) than employed youth. Finally, they are younger, less likely to be born in Canada and to be married and to have children, and they experience greater residential mobility compared to their employed counterparts.

Living Environment

Table 2 compares the socio-demographic profiles of youth living in rural or small town communities (i.e. with a population less than 10,000 inhabitants) with youth living in more urban areas. Rural youth are generally younger, more likely to have children, and more likely to be born in Canada than urban youth. But most notably, youth living in rural areas, on the whole, have significantly lower levels of educational attainment (only 37% have some university education) and lower levels

of income (49.4% have a household income inferior to \$40,000), compared to youth living in urban areas.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Different Youth Subgroups

	Aboriginal status		Visible minority status		Occupational status			Living environment		Disability status	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aborig. •	Visible minority	Non-vis.-min. •	Unemployed	Student	Employed •	Rural	Urban •	With a disability	No disab. •
Household income (% less than \$40,000)	71.1***	44.4	51.8**	43.9	61.0***	77.9***	36.3	49.4*	43.7	74.4***	44.4
Married (%)	26.9	35.6	23.1***	38.1	19.8***	12.5***	42.2	38.0	34.5	20.0**	35.9
Children (%)	25.7	22.0	15.6***	23.2	17.6	5.5***	27.1	28.4***	20.5	11.4**	22.6
Residential mobility (% moved in past year)	57.0**	42.2	38.7	43.4	43.9	51.4***	40.5	42.6	42.6	43.7	42.9
Not born in Canada (%)	5.5*	12.4	36.8***	6.5	18.6*	15.2**	10.8	5.9***	13.7	6.6	12.4
Gender: male (%)	42.3	51.0	44.3**	52.0	55.8	49.3	50.7	42.4***	53.2	45.3	50.8
Age (mean)	25.1*	26.1	25.0***	26.3	26.0*	22.3***	27.08	25.4***	26.3	24.9	26.1
Education (% highest degree)											
High school or less	33.0*	22.8	18.6*	23.2	41.2***	24.6	22.1	26.8*	40.8	21.2	23.4
Post-secondary	23.9	30.7	23.8	31.3	28.7	22.2***	32.8	36.2**	28.7	33.6	30.2
University	43.1	46.5	55.9	44.6	26.7***	53.1**	45.0	37.0***	49.4	45.1	46.4
Occupational status											
Unemployed (%)	3.6	3.4	2.9	3.4	-	-	-	2.3	3.7	9.5***	3.2
Student (%)	38.2***	20.5	33.3***	18.8	-	-	-	22.3	20.9	37.1***	20.6
Employed (%)	58.2***	76.1	64.1***	77.8	-	-	-	75.3	75.4	53.3***	76.2
Minimum n	97	2141	357	1837	64	452	1817	492	1715	90	2145

Note: Canadian youth aged 18 to 34.

Statistically significant differences: *** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05 (reference category: •)

Disability Status

Finally, Table 2 compares the socio-demographic characteristics of youth who have a disability (or disabilities) and of youth with no disability. Youth with disabilities are generally less likely to be married and have children, and they count relatively more students and unemployed youth, compared to the 18- to- 34-year-olds without disabilities. While there are no differences in educational attainment between the two groups, youth with disabilities are much more likely to report lower levels of income (74.4% have a household income inferior to \$40,000).

We note that the different youth groups present quite distinctive socio-demographic profiles and have different life circumstances. However, we found that Aboriginal, visible minority, rural, unemployed youth, students, and youth with disabilities all displayed comparatively lower levels of income. And in general, these groups displayed a comparative disadvantage, either in education or employment (or both). The generally lower levels of socio-economic resources of these youth groups would tend to explain why they are less likely to vote in elections (Verba et al. 1995). Students tend to be an exception here. Previous studies suggest that students turn out at relatively high rates compared to other youth (Gélineau 2013). Certain socio-demographic variables might also have a different meaning for students. For instance, students did not finish their education; hence, education levels do not always mirror the education levels they will ultimately obtain. Also, residential mobility might not have the same meaning for students. If students are not living with their parents, it is very likely that they lived at their location for a brief period of time. Additionally, family income tends to carry a different meaning for students, depending on whether they live with their parents or not (Niemi and Hanmer 2010). We will test the meaning of the socio-demographic characteristics for voter turnout of the different youth subgroups in the last section, in the multivariate model.

3. ACCESS BARRIERS AMONG DIVERSE YOUTH

The report now presents how different youth subgroups experience barriers to participation, which may render the act of voting more difficult for them and ultimately limit their participation in the federal election. We focus more specifically on individuals' levels of knowledge about how to vote in federal elections, the ease of finding information about how to vote, and the ease with which a ballot can be cast. First, to assess youth's knowledge about the electoral process, we examine whether youth know about the various ways to vote in a federal election (in addition to voting in-person at the polling station on election day)ⁱⁱ and know about the need to prove their identity and address when voting.ⁱⁱⁱ Secondly, we assess the ease with which youth could find information about where, when and how to vote.^{iv} The final set of variables assesses the ease with which a ballot could be cast. Therefore, we examine whether young respondents received a voter information card in the mail; whether they used Elections Canada's online voter registration service to check, update or complete their voter registration; and how easy it was (or would have been) for them to get to the voting location, identify their address,

and return the mail-in ballot (in case youth voted by mail).^v Table 3 presents bivariate relationships and displays access barriers, resources, and political attitudes for the various subgroups of youth.

The first section of Table 3 presents the access barriers and levels of knowledge about the electoral process for the 11 youth subgroups. We first note that Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, unemployed youth, students, and youth with disabilities generally have lower levels of knowledge about the electoral process, compared respectively with non-Aboriginal, non-visible-minority, and employed youth, and youth with no disability. In addition, Aboriginal youth were less likely to have received a voter information card from Elections Canada compared with other Canadian youth. Only 66.9% of Aboriginal youth indicated having received a voter information card, compared with 77.1% of non-Aboriginal Canadian youth. Although differences were not statistically significant within groups defined by visible minority status, occupational status, living environment, and disability status, we note that visible minority, rural, unemployed youth, students, and youth with disabilities were also comparatively less likely to have received a voter information card.^{vi}

When looking at use of Elections Canada's online registration platform, we see that students were more likely to have used it compared with employed youth (and with other youth groups). In fact, 34.6% of the students reported having used the online platform. This may be explained by students' higher rate of Internet use and online activities (DiMaggio et al. 2004). Alternatively, youth living in rural areas were less likely to have used the online platform (less than 24.5% reported using it) compared with youth living in urban areas (29.2%). While the Internet penetration is continuously progressing in Canada, problems of Internet connection might still explain lower use of the online registration system in rural areas.

Finally, unemployed youth, students, and youth with disabilities proved to experience more difficulty voting than employed youth and youth with no disability. Additional analyses revealed that youth with disabilities anticipated or experienced more difficulties proving their identity and address compared with youth with no disability. Students anticipated or experienced more difficulties finding their voting location and proving their identity and address. In addition, Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, unemployed youth,^{vii} and students experienced more difficulty finding information about where, when, and how to vote (compared with non-Aboriginal, non-visible-minority, and employed youth).

Table 3: Access Barriers, Political Attitudes, and Motivational Factors among Different Youth Groups

	Aboriginal status		Visible minority		Occupational status			Living environment		Disability status	
	Aboriginal	Non-Aborig. •	Vis. min.	Non-vis.-min. •	Unemployed	Student	Employed•	Rural	Urban •	With a disability	No disab. •
Access barriers											
Knowledge: how to vote (mean, 0-3)	0.5**	0.7	0.5***	0.74	0.4**	0.71	0.7	0.6***	0.7	0.7	0.7
Knowledge: proofs of identity, online voting (mean, 0-3)	2.4*	2.5	2.4**	2.5	2.3	2.4*	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.3**	2.5
Received voter information card (%)	66.9**	77.1	73.9	78.1	67.8	74.4	77.8	75.9	77.0	69.7	77.0
Used online registration (%)	33.7	27.7	31.1	27.6	20.2	34.6***	26.4	24.5*	29.2	34.4	27.6
Ease of voting (mean, 2-8)	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.0**	7.1***	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.0**	7.4
Ease to find information about where, when and how to vote (mean, 3-12)	9.8*	10.3	10.1*	10.3	10.0	10.0***	10.4	10.2	10.3	9.9	10.3
<i>Minimum N</i>	103	2313	401	1961	74	499	1784	522	1803	93	2266
Resources and attitudes											
Interest: politics (mean, 1-4)	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.8**	3.0*	3.1	2.9***	3.1	2.9	3.0
Interest: election (mean, 1-4)	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.0***	3.3	3.4	3.3**	3.4	3.4	3.4
Political knowledge (mean, 0-5)	2.4***	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.3***	2.9	2.9	2.6***	3.0	2.7	2.9
Ease to find information about candidates and political parties (mean, 1-4)	3.2	3.1	3.0**	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1
Belief about political competence (mean, 1-4)	2.4*	2.7	2.4***	2.7	2.4*	2.5**	2.7	2.5***	2.7	2.6	2.6
Satisfaction with democracy (mean, 1-4)	2.6**	2.8	2.9***	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.6*	2.8
Perception of political responsiveness (mean, 1-4)	2.3**	2.5	2.4*	2.5	2.3*	2.5	2.5	2.4**	2.5	2.3*	2.5
Voting is a civic duty (%)	46.6	51.3	48.7	52.1	33.1**	53.9	51.1	49.3	51.7	47.2	51.3
<i>Minimum N</i>	75	1708	302	1452	73	491	1716	387	1760	62	1725

Note: Canadian youth aged 18 to 34.

Statistically significant differences: *** p<.001 ; ** p<.01 ; * p<.05 (reference category: •)

In sum, Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, unemployed youth, students, youth living in rural areas, and youth with disabilities generally experience more barriers to participation than the majority groups. Firstly, all these subgroups presented lower levels of knowledge about the electoral process. In addition, Aboriginal youth were less likely to have received a voter information card, and youth living in rural areas were less likely to have used online registration. Finally, unemployed youth, students, and youth with disabilities encountered or experienced more difficulties finding the voting location or proving their identity and address. These barriers contribute to explaining lower levels of turnout, and we will test for their influence in the multivariate model explaining electoral participation (in the last section).

4. POLITICAL RESOURCES AND ATTITUDES

The report now presents how the different subgroups of Canadian youth compare in terms of their political resources and attitudes. It is recognized in the literature that individuals who have more knowledge about politics, who are more politically interested, who have more belief in their political competence and politicians' responsiveness, and who think that voting is a duty are more likely to vote in elections (Verba et al. 1995, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Blais 2000, Dalton 2007). Thus, we will focus on youth's interest in politics, in general and more specifically in the last federal election; the sense that voting is a civic duty; levels of satisfaction with Canadian democracy; and the feeling of political competence.^{viii} The feeling of political competence refers to youth's belief that they can understand politics and that they have the capabilities to participate in politics and influence current affairs. Youth's perception of political responsiveness refers to young people's belief that politicians and parties are responsive to their interests and political acts. We examine young respondents' levels of general knowledge about politics.^{ix} Finally, we also look at how difficult it was for young Canadians to find information about political parties and candidates. The second section of Table 3 compares the political resources and attitudes across subgroups of young Canadians.

First, we note that Aboriginal youth are not less interested by politics or the federal election, but they have lower levels of political knowledge, compared to non-Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal youth tend to feel less politically competent than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, and they also tend to be less positive in their assessment of political institutions. They are, in fact, less satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada and they are less likely to believe that government cares about what they think. These results tend to show that Aboriginal youth are not completely removed from politics, but as other studies have highlighted before, Aboriginal youth present some disengagement vis-à-vis Canadian institutions (Harell et al. 2009).

Visible minority youth are as interested and knowledgeable about politics, but they believe that they are less politically competent and have less positive perceptions of political responsiveness, compared to non-visible-minority youth. However, they are more satisfied with the way that Canadian democracy works. These contrasting attitudes may reflect dynamics related to immigration, political socialization in other national contexts, and processes of political integration in Canada. Visible

minority youth also tend to find it harder to find information about political parties and candidates.

When we turn to the comparison of youth based on occupational status, the results highlight a contrast between unemployed and employed youth, while there are only few differences between students and employed youth. Overall, unemployed youth are less interested in politics in general, and they were less interested in the past federal election, and fewer unemployed youth believe that voting is a civic duty. The gap is substantial, as only 33.1% of unemployed youth believe that voting is a civic duty, compared to 51.1% of employed youth. Unemployed Canadians aged 18 to 34 also feel less politically competent and think that politicians are less responsive to their political demands, compared to employed youth. They also have substantially lower levels of political knowledge. Contrary to our expectations, students seem to be slightly less interested in politics, feel less politically competent, and report less ease in finding political information than employed youth.

The results in the second section of Table 3 reveal various substantial differences in the political attitudes and psychological engagement of youth living in rural or more urban areas. Youth aged 18 to 34 years who live in rural areas report lower levels of political interest, lower levels of interest in the 2015 federal election, and lower levels of political knowledge, compared to urban youth. As other youth subgroups, they feel less politically competent and are less inclined to believe that politicians are responsive to their demands, compared to youth who lives in more urban areas.

Youth with disabilities present fewer differences in political attitudes and resources, when compared to youth with no disability. Results from Table 3 suggest that respondents with a disability can be distinguished only in terms of their lower levels of satisfaction with democracy and of perception of political responsiveness. Canadian youth with disabilities are overall less satisfied with Canadian democracy, and they believe that politicians and policy-makers are less responsive towards their demands and political acts, compared to Canadian youth without disabilities.

The second section of Table 3 suggests that the youth subgroups that we focus on for this report display somewhat similar patterns of political resources and political attitudes. Firstly, all youth subgroups (except youth with disabilities) express lower levels of political competence, compared to other Canadian youth: they are more likely to feel politics is too complicated for them to fully understand what is going on. Secondly, they all present less positive attitudes towards Canadian institutions. They are generally less satisfied with Canadian democracy and they are less likely to believe that parties and government respond to their needs and issues important to them. Thirdly, while all youth subgroups are generally less inclined to see voting as a civic duty, only unemployed youth are significantly less likely to see voting as a duty. In terms of political resources, all youth subgroups show similarly lower levels of political knowledge, but most specifically Aboriginal youth, the unemployed, and youth living in rural areas. Alternatively, only unemployed and rural youth (and students, to a certain extent) display lower levels of interest. As these resource and attitudinal factors are known to be core factors in the explanation of electoral participation, we will further test for their importance in the multivariate model.

5. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

The National Youth Survey allows us to examine the importance of mobilization for electoral behaviour. The literature has shown that “being asked” to participate may prove to be an important factor in the decision to be politically involved (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, Verba et al. 1995). Citizens may be encouraged to vote by members of their personal networks and by political parties. Studies have found that being contacted by political parties and candidates may be a powerful way to get out the vote (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992). However, there is evidence that social mobilization varies across social groups and that political parties do not reach out to all groups of citizens equally (Gray and Caul 2000). In this section, we consider if and how often youth were mobilized to vote by their broader social network, teachers, news media, and social and community organizations.^x We also consider campaign efforts by political parties before the 2015 federal election.^{xi}

Table 4 presents the rates of social and political mobilization experienced by the different youth subgroups in the context of the 2015 federal election.^{xii} The results reveal that Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, and students were substantially more encouraged to vote by their personal networks and organizations, than non-Aboriginal and non-visible minority youth, unemployed and employed youth. And if we further take into account the mobilization of group-specific organizations (i.e. Aboriginal organizations for Aboriginal youth, cultural or ethnic groups for visible minority youth, student organizations for students, and organizations representing people with disabilities for youth with disabilities), the gaps in mobilization become even larger between the youth subgroups (and remain statistically significant). This indicates that group-specific organizations play a role in the mobilization of their young members, but that they are not the only ones to encourage youth to vote.

The results do not reveal substantial differences in the campaign efforts by political parties for the different youth groups. However, fewer students reported having been contacted by a political party (25.1% of students), compared to employed youth (30.9% reported being contacted). Similarly, youth living in a rural area were also less likely to have been contacted by a political party in the last federal election. Of youth living in a rural area, 25.1% indicated that a politician or a political party had contacted them during the campaign, compared to 31.1% of youth living in more urban areas.

The results show that different groups of Canadian youth experience diverse patterns of mobilization during elections. First, organizations and social networks appear to be important sources of mobilization for Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, and students, which confirms prior findings about the importance of Aboriginal organizations and student associations in getting out the youth vote (Harell et al. 2009, Abacus 2016). However, it would appear that unemployed youth are much less likely to be encouraged to vote, which may be in part explained by the fact they are not integrated in a work environment or an institution of education. Finally, youth did not report high contact rates with political parties and candidates (i.e. in all subgroups, not more than 31.1% of youth reported being contacted by a party), and youth who were unemployed and those who live in rural areas were much less likely to be contacted.

Table 4: Mobilization and Party Contact for the Different Youth Subgroups

		Mobilization (mean 0-7)	Party contact (%)	Minimum sample size
Aboriginal status	Aboriginal	3.6**	29.1	109
	Non-Aboriginal •	3.0	29.6	2342
Visible minority status	Visible minority	3.4***	31.3	498
	Non-vis.-min. •	3.0	29.8	1990
Occupational status	Unemployed	2.5*	29.3	81
	Student	3.5***	25.1*	516
	Employed •	3.0	30.9	1846
Living environment	Rural	3.0	25.1*	547
	Urban •	3.1	31.1	1873
Disability status	With disability	3.4	30.7	104
	No disability •	3.1	29.3	2346

Note: Canadian youth aged 18 to 34.

Statistically significant differences: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (reference category: •)

It is generally recognized that political parties focus their mobilization efforts on habitual voters, who are not the young citizens. In fact, we find that Canadians aged 18 to 34 years old were much less likely to be contacted by parties (29.5%) than Canadians aged 35 or more (59%), and this 30-percentage-point difference is statistically significant. However, the results showed that certain subgroups are even less likely to be encouraged to vote by political parties.

6. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

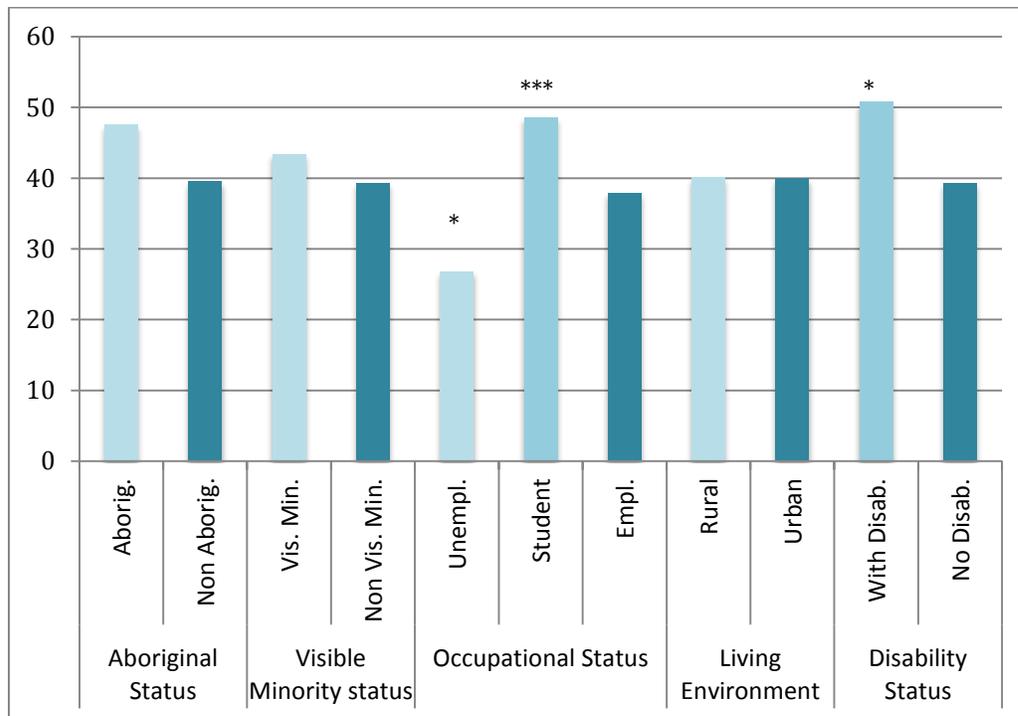
The literature provides evidence that citizens' interactions with their social and political environment can affect their willingness to be politically active. Firstly, involvement in community associations and social groups helps citizens develop civic skills and a feeling of community, and may facilitate political action (Putnam 2000). Secondly, citizens' involvement in a variety of political actions may increase their likelihood of participating in the elections as well (Verba et al. 1995). Finally, citizens' use of social programs and interactions with governmental offices represent meaningful political experiences, which can affect citizens' willingness to vote (Soss 1999, Mettler and Stonecash 2008, Sharp 2009). In this section, we focus on social engagement, political participation, and contacts with the government. Social engagement is measured by asking respondents if they had volunteered for any organizations in the past year.^{xiii} Political participation is measured by the level of involvement in 14 acts of political participation.^{xiv} And finally, respondents were

asked if they had contacted or visited a government office in the past year (such as a Service Canada office or a provincial government office).^{xv}

Figure 1 presents the rate of volunteering among the different youth subgroups, and reveals only three significant differences in volunteering. First, unemployed youth were substantially less likely to volunteer than employed youth (with rate of volunteering of 26.8% compared to 37.9% among employed youth), whereas students were much more likely to volunteer (with a volunteering rate of 48.6%). The level of political participation was also significantly lower among unemployed youth (with an average of 2.4 political actions in the past 12 months), compared to employed youth (with an average of 3.8 political actions). Secondly, we note in Figure 1 that youth with disabilities are substantially more likely to volunteer (50.8%) compared to youth with no disability (39.3%). Similarly, they are more engaged politically, performing on average 4.5 political actions, compared to youth with no disability (with an average of 3.7 actions).

In terms of contact with governmental offices, only rural youth proved to be substantially less likely to contact or visit a governmental office (43.5%), compared to urban youth (48.9%). In sum, the results show that there are only few differences between subgroups in terms of volunteering, political participation and contacts with governmental offices.

Figure 1: Rate of Volunteering among Different Youth Subgroups



Note: Canadian youth aged 18 to 34. Statistical significance of the difference:
 *** p<.001; ** p<.01; * p<.05 (reference category: in dark blue).

7. EXPLAINING ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION OF DIVERSE YOUTH: A MULTIVARIATE MODEL

After reviewing the different individual characteristics and factors that are known to affect voter turnout, and looking at differences in these factors across the subgroups of Canadian youth, we now assess how these factors impact the electoral participation of the different youth groups. We thus include these factors in one multivariate model of voter turnout, and estimate the effect of socio-demographic factors, access barriers, political resources and attitudes, social and political mobilization, and social and political engagement on the probability of youth voting in the 2015 federal election, holding all other variables constant.^{xvi} We estimate five separate models, differentiating respondents by: Aboriginal status (model 1, with non-Aboriginal youth as the reference category), visible minority status (model 2, with non-visible minority youth as the reference category), occupational status (model 3, with employed youth as the reference category), living environment (model 4, with urban youth as the reference category), and disability status (model 5, where youth with no disability is the reference category). As the dependent variable, voter turnout, is dichotomous, we use logistic regressions. The effect of each factor is presented as an odds ratio (O.R.), expressing the likelihood that a respondent will vote, compared to the reference group.^{xvii}

Table 5 presents the five multivariate models for the different youth groups. When explaining turnout of the different youth subgroups, we will first focus on the

similarities between the different groups. In a second step we will discuss differential effects of various turnout predictors for each subgroup.

Our initial bivariate relationship could not reveal significant differences in turnout for Aboriginal youth versus non-Aboriginal youth, for visible minority youth versus non-visible minority youth, and for youth with disabilities versus youth with no disabilities. The results remain after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, access barriers, motivation, mobilization and engagement. For occupational status, the differences in turnout remain the same after controlling for the different factors. Employed youth are 3.3 times more likely to vote, compared to unemployed youth.^{xviii} Finally, after taking socio-demographics characteristics, access barriers, motivation, mobilization, and engagement into account, turnout differences between youth living in rural and more urban areas is no longer statistically significant. This means that turnout differences between youth living in rural and urban areas can be explained through differences in their socio-demographic profiles and differences in political resources, attitudes, and access barriers.

The results of models 1 to 5 suggest that, of all the socio-demographic variables, education is the only relevant factor. As expected, education is systematically and positively related to turnout for all youth groups. Unlike most socio-demographic characteristics, access barriers are all important factors in the explanation of youth's voter turnout. Knowledge about how to vote, and knowledge about the necessity to prove one's identity and address when voting, substantially boost turnout among all youth groups. Additionally, receiving a voter information card from Elections Canada makes youth on average 3.8 times more likely to vote compared to youth who did not receive a voter information card. Respondents who used Elections Canada's online registration platform were also twice as likely to vote, compared to those who did not use the online platform. The results also suggest a consistently strong positive relationship of respondents' perceived ease of voting and turnout. As for political attitudes, we find a consistently strong positive relationship between interest in the federal election and turnout for all youth subgroups. Moreover, general interest in politics does not seem to matter for turnout, when controlling for other access barriers and political attitudes. More telling is respondents' belief about whether voting is a civic duty. Youth who believe that voting is a civic duty are on average 5 times more likely to turn out, compared to youth who believe that voting is a choice. Another systematic positive predictor of turnout is youth's belief about the responsiveness of politicians and policy makers. Youth's self-reported political competency does not seem to have an effect on turnout.

When we look at the variables capturing political mobilization, we find that, contrary to general expectations, being mobilized to vote and being contacted by a political party exert no significant impact on turnout when controlling for other turnout predictors, such as access barriers, political resources, and attitudes.

Finally, the results suggest a positive relationship between political engagement and turnout. Being more politically engaged increases youth's likelihood to vote. Volunteering and contacts with governmental offices are not significant factors in the explanation of youth's turnout when controlling for other predictors.

In order to examine whether the predictors have a differential impact for the separate youth groups, we tested the interaction effects between the predictors and the different youth categorizations (i.e. Aboriginal status, visible minority status, occupational status, living environment, and disability status). These additional analyses revealed significant differences between the youth subgroups. The results of the interaction effects will be discussed in the text.

When examining differential effects for turnout between visible minorities and non-visible-minority youth, we find that knowledge about how to vote has a stronger positive effect (O.R.=2.4, $p=0.002$) on non-visible-minority youth compared to visible minorities. This does not mean that this factor is not important for visible minorities; the results indicate mainly that this is of greater importance for non-visible-minority youth when predicting turnout. Other interaction analyses also reveal several differential effects along the lines of occupational status. First, we find that marital status is an important explanatory variable for turnout among unemployed youth. Married unemployed youth are 9.5 times more likely to vote compared to employed youth. For employed youth, the belief that voting is a civic duty is of greater importance. Employed youth who believe that voting is a civic duty are 5.7 times more likely to vote, compared to unemployed youth. The interaction effects also reveal some differential effects for the student population. More specifically, students who moved during the past year are 2.3 more likely to vote, compared to employed youth who also moved in the past year. In other words, residential mobility seems to be more detrimental for voter turnout among employed youth, compared to students. When focusing on youth's living environment, the results suggest one striking difference. Female youth living in rural areas are 2.5 times more likely to vote than their male counterparts, compared to urban female youth vis-à-vis urban male youth. Gender seems to be a significant predictor only for youth living in rural areas.

Our results suggest that electoral participation of youth can be explained by the same factors that explain the participation of older Canadian citizens. Education, access barriers, political attitudes, and political engagement operate in the same way for youth as with older citizens. So the traditional resource model seems to be applicable to youth as well (Blais and Loewen 2011, Gélinau 2013). The results nonetheless suggest some differences with the traditional turnout models with regard to the socio-demographic characteristics. Only youth's education level was important when predicting turnout. Age, gender, immigration status, marital status, residential mobility, and having children proved to be of little importance when predicting youth's probability to turnout. This might be due to the fact that certain variables show less variation for youth, compared to the general population, such as marital status and the number of children. Alternatively, other socio-demographic characteristics, such as residential mobility, might have a different meaning for youth. Youth generally tend to be more mobile and are less likely to be homeowners compared to older citizens, which may account for the limited explanatory power of this factor.

Table 5: Results of Five Logistic Regressions Explaining Electoral Participation in the 2015 Federal Election among Diverse Youth Groups (odds ratios and standard errors)

Youth subgroups	Voting in the federal election (0-1)									
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	O.R.	S.E.	O.R.	S.E.	O.R.	S.E.	O.R.	S.E.	O.R.	S.E.
Aboriginal youth	1.9	.40								
Visible minority youth			0.8	.23						
Unemployed youth					0.3**	.39				
Students					0.9	.22				
Youth living in rural areas							0.7	.18		
Youth with disabilities									1.6	.43
Socio-demographics										
Education	1.2**	.05	1.2**	.06	1.2**	.05	1.2**	.05	1.2**	.05
Married	1.1	.20	1.0	.21	1.0	.21	1.1	.21	1.0	.20
Children	0.7	.23	0.8	.23	0.7	.23	0.7	.24	0.7	.23
Residential mobility	0.9	.16	0.9	.16	0.9	.16	0.9	.16	0.9	.16
Immigration status	1.0	.26	0.9	.28	1.0	.26	1.0	.26	1.0	.26
Gender (male)	0.9	.17	0.9	.17	0.9	.17	0.9	.17	0.9	.17
Age	1.0	.02	1.0	.02	1.0	.02	1.0	.02	1.0	.02
Access barriers										
Knowledge about how to vote	1.4**	.12	1.4*	.12	1.4**	.12	1.4**	.12	1.4**	.12
Knowledge about proofs of address and identity	1.5**	.13	1.5**	.13	1.5**	.13	1.5**	.13	1.5**	.13
Used online registration	2.1***	.21	2.1***	.21	2.2***	.21	2.1**	.21	2.2***	.21
Received voter information card	3.8***	.18	3.8***	.18	3.7***	.18	3.8***	.18	3.7***	.18
Ease of voting	2.1***	.07	2.0***	.07	2.0***	.07	2.0***	.08	2.1***	.07
Political resources and attitudes										
Interest in politics	0.9	.13	0.9	.13	0.9	.13	0.9	.13	0.9	.13
Interest in election	3.4***	.14	3.5***	.14	3.5***	.14	3.3***	.14	3.3***	.14
Voting is a civic duty	5.0***	.17	5.2***	.17	5.1***	.17	5.1***	.17	5.1	.17
Satisfaction with democracy	0.9	.10	0.9	.11	0.9	.11	0.9	.11	0.9	.11
Feeling of political competence	0.9	.08	0.9	.09	0.9	.08	0.9	.08	0.9	.08
Perception of responsiveness	1.5***	.09	1.5***	.09	1.5***	.09	1.5***	.09	1.5***	.09
Political knowledge	1.0	.07	1.0	.07	1.0	.07	1.0	.07	1.0	.07
Mobilization										
Mobilized to vote	0.9	.05	0.9	.05	0.9	.05	1.0	.05	1.0	.05
Contacted by a party	1.2	.18	1.2	.18	1.2	.18	1.2	.18	1.2	.18
Engagement										
Volunteering	1.1	.18	1.1	.18	1.2	.18	1.2	.18	1.1	.18
Political engagement	1.1**	.04	1.1**	.04	1.1**	.04	1.1**	.04	1.1**	.04
Contact with government	0.9	.16	0.8	.16	0.9	.16	0.8	.16	0.9	.16
Constant	0***	.97	0***	.96	0***	.98	0***	.97	0***	1.0
Pseudo R-square	0.572		0.570		0.578		0.571	.18	0.570	
Number of observations	1,845		1,825		1,842		1,821		1,840	

Note: The dependent variable with regard to voting behaviour in the 2015 federal elections is measured as a dichotomy where 1=yes, and 0=no. Significance levels: *** p<.001 - ** p<.01 - * p<.05

Despite the generally limited predictive power of the socio-demographic variables for youth, our analyses suggest some differential effects for certain youth subgroups. Being married is an important factor to explain turnout among unemployed youth. Gender is important only when explaining voter turnout among youth living in rural areas, with women voting at a higher rate than men. Residential mobility, on the other hand, turns out to be more detrimental for turnout of employed youth compared to the student population. The results also suggest a differential effect of an access barrier for visible minorities and non-visible-minorities, where knowledge about how to vote is more important for non-visible-minorities when predicting turnout. Finally, for employed youth, the belief that voting is a civic duty is more important, compared to unemployed youth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this report was to move beyond the general examination of youth's electoral participation and to look at more specific dynamics among diverse groups of Canadian youth. As Gélinau concluded in his report (2013), Canadian youth are far from being homogeneous. In this report, we provide evidence of how the diverse groups of Canadian youth differ in terms of their socio-demographic background, their social experiences, and their political participation, and how these factors help explain the electoral participation of diverse Canadian youth.

While youth generally participate in elections at lower rates than other Canadians (Blais et al. 2004, Blais and Loewen 2011), some youth may be particularly less likely to vote. In the context of the 2015 federal election, we found that youth living in rural areas and unemployed youth were substantially less likely to vote (with voter turnout rates of 68% and 47%). This leads us to conclude that these groups of youth may require particular attention and more targeted policies. Contrary to our expectations, Aboriginal youth did not vote at much lower rates than other Canadian youth (with a turnout rate of 70%). This may be due to the particular characteristic of the 2015 election, where turnout in Aboriginal communities proved to be much higher than in previous elections. Alternatively, this may be explained by the fact that Aboriginal youth living off-reserves were over-represented in the survey's sample of Aboriginal youth.

This report showed that formal education is an important resource for political participation and a strong predictor of voting for all groups. However, this report also provided evidence that Aboriginal, rural, and unemployed youth all tend to have lower levels of education. This reveals that a lack of educational resources place these three youth groups at a disadvantage in electoral participation, compared to other groups of youth who are more educated. Thus, a recommendation would be to promote educational policies and programs that aim to increase educational attainment among Aboriginal youth, unemployed youth, and youth living in rural areas. Educational programs may prove to be particularly

important for groups of youth who experience economic hardship, discrimination, and other social difficulties (Pacheco and Plutzer 2008).

Different types of knowledge about the electoral process proved to be important predictors of the electoral participation for all youth subgroups. However, we found that all the subgroups of youth we focused on in this report tend to have lower levels of knowledge about how to vote. Thus one recommendation would be to address information campaigns and voter education programs more specifically to these groups: Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, unemployed youth, students, youth living in rural areas, and youth with disabilities.

Political attitudes proved to be important factors in the explanation of voter turnout for all groups of youth. The evidence from the multivariate analyses pointed out that levels of interest in the election, the sense of civic duty to vote, and perceptions of political responsiveness increased substantively and significantly the likelihood of voting of all youth. This report further identified which groups of youth tended to have lower levels of motivation and more negative perceptions about politics. Evidence showed that Aboriginal, visible minority, unemployed, and rural youth, as well as youth with disabilities, had less positive perceptions about politicians and institutions' responsiveness. While it may prove to be difficult to effectively change youth's perceptions about politicians and institutions, voter education campaigns could educate youth in terms of how the federal government and the policies adopted at the federal level impact their lives (e.g. social programs, employment programs, and unemployment insurance), in order to increase the relevance of the federal election and youth's interest in the election.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ Self-reported levels of turnout are usually higher than actual turnout rates, due to people's tendency to over-report their electoral participation. This tendency is partly explained by social desirability and memory issues (Belli et al. 2001).

ⁱⁱ Measured on a scale from 0 to 3, where zero means no correct answers and 3 means three correct answers.

ⁱⁱⁱ Measured on a scale from 0 to 3, where zero means no correct answer and 3 means three correct answers.

^{iv} Results for three questions were combined. All respondents were asked, thinking about the last election, how difficult or easy it was to find information on how (a) to register to vote, (b) to find out when to vote, and (c) to find out about the different ways to vote, using a 4-point Likert scale (1=very difficult, 2=somewhat difficult, 3=somewhat easy, 4=very easy). The results were combined in a sum scale ranging from 3 to 12. Respondents who did not look for information are not included in the analysis for this variable.

^v Results for seven questions were combined in a measure of "ease of voting." Four questions asked respondents *who voted* in the last federal election how difficult or easy it was to get to their voting location (if needed), to prove their identity and address, and finally to complete and return their mail-in ballot (if respondent voted by mail). The three remaining questions asked respondents *who did not vote* if they had voted, how difficult or easy it would have been to get to their voting location, to prove their identity and address, and to access the polling station. All seven questions used a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'very difficult' to 4 'very easy.' The results were combined in a sum scale ranging from 2 to 8.

^{vi} The relatively small size of some subgroup samples may potentially explain why some of the differences fall short of statistical significance ($p > .05$.)

^{vii} The difference between employed and unemployed youth is as large as the difference between students and employed youth, but does not reach levels of statistical significance. This may be explained by the smaller size of the sample of unemployed youth.

^{viii} Respondents' interest in politics in general and in the federal election more specifically was measured by a simple self-assessment, allowing respondents to indicate whether they are very or quite interested, or whether they are not very or not at all interested in the last federal election and in Canadian politics. Answers were coded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'not at all interested' to 4 'very interested.'

Respondents' sense of civic duty was measured by asking respondents if for them personally voting is first and foremost a choice or a duty, coded as a dummy-variable where 1=voting as a civic duty and 0=voting as a choice.

Satisfaction with Canadian democracy was measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'very dissatisfied' to 4 'very satisfied' by asking respondents "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada?"

Internal political efficacy was measured through the statement "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that someone like me can't really understand what's going on," for which respondents had to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed, measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'strongly agree' to 4 'strongly disagree.' Higher values indicate higher levels of political efficacy. External political efficacy was measured through the item "I do not think government cares much about what people like me think," also measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'strongly agree' to 4 'strongly disagree.'

^{ix} Respondents' level of political knowledge was measured with five questions measuring respondents' knowledge about how government and elections work. Q1: Which party won the most seats in the federal election held on October 19th? Q2: Which level of government has primary responsibility for education? Q3: Which level of government has primary responsibility for employment insurance? Q4: What is the name of the premier of your province/territory? Q5: What job or political office does David Cameron hold? Knowledge was measured with a sum scale of the five items, ranging from 0 to 5.

^x A sum scale is created by adding up by the number of different groups who mobilized the respondent to vote, with a minimum value of 0 and a maximum value of 7. We took into account whether respondents were contacted by their family, friends or peers, spouse or partner, teacher or professor, the news media, politicians a party or a candidate, or a community/environmental or social organization.

^{xi} The variable contacted by a political party or candidate is coded as a dummy-variable where 0=no, 1=yes. "Don't know" and "don't remember" answers were coded as 0.

^{xii} The levels of statistical significance are based on the bivariate relationships linking social mobilization or party contact and subgroups of youth.

^{xiii} The variable volunteering is coded as dummy-variable where 0=no and 1=yes.

^{xiv} The variable political participation is a sum scale (range 0-14) of all a broad spectrum of acts of political participation: wrote a letter or e-mail to a newspaper; left a comment on a blog, discussion group, or online article; attended a community meeting about a local issue; contacted a politician to express your views on an issue;

participated in a demonstration or protest march; signed a petition; raised or donated money for a cause; bought or boycotted products for political, environmental or ethical reasons; wore a t-shirt, bracelet, or a badge for a cause; searched for information online about politics or public issues; used social media to share political information or content; watched a leaders' debate during the election; displayed a sign for a party or a candidate during the election; participated in an event organized by a party or a candidate during the election; or attended an information session on how to register and vote in the election.

^{xv} The variable for contact with the government is coded as a dummy-variable where 0=no and 1=yes.

^{xvi} We excluded income due to its high number of missing values. This does not change the final results, as income proved to be no significant predictor when controlling for other socio-demographic characteristics, such as level of education.

^{xvii} Odds ratios vary from 0 (respondent will never vote) to infinity (respondent is certain to vote). An odds ratio of 1 indicates that both groups have the same likelihood of voting. An odds ratio smaller than 1 indicates a negative relationship with voting: the group under examination is less likely to vote compared with the reference category. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates a positive relationship with voting: the group under examination is more likely to vote compared with the reference group.

^{xviii} To determine the effect on the odds of an event *not* occurring, we need to take the inverse of the effect on the odds of the event occurring. For example, employed youth are 3.3 (=1/0.3) times more likely to vote compared with unemployed youth.