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Effects of Scandals on Voter Turnout in Canada

by Terrance Kutney

Although there has been much research done regarding the effects of political scandals on the voting share won by a political party, little research has been done on the effect of political scandals on voter turnout. This is especially true in the context of Canadian politics. This work analyzes the effect of the Canadian sponsorship scandal on voter turnout, primarily using the 2004 and 2006 iterations of the Canadian Election Study. It finds a positive relationship between anger about the sponsorship scandal and the probability of voting. Closer analysis of the 2004 election shows that voters who were angry about the sponsorship scandal increased their political activity leading up to the election and were thus more likely to vote.

Introduction

On 19 May 2013, Nigel Wright resigned his position as chief of staff to the Canadian Prime Minister, having been implicated in what is now known as the Canadian Senate Expenses Scandal. The year before, the auditor general of Canada found that Conservative Party Senator Mike Duffy had violated Senate expense claim rules, and the prime minister's office had intervened in an attempt to limit fallout. This entailed cutting a deal with Senator Duffy, who was required to reimburse \$90,000 in claimed expenses. Further inflaming the public, news sources later revealed that Chief of Staff Nigel Wright had cut Duffy a \$90,000 check to cover expenses on the deal that Wright helped to arrange. Critics alleged that Wright violated criminal law and was guilty of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust. Certainly, the Wright-Duffy affair served to compound negative public perceptions of governmental corruption and further damage trust in Parliament.

The Canadian Senate Expenses Scandal is only one of a string of scandals affecting Canadian politics. In Toronto, Mayor Rob Ford was captured on video smoking

crack cocaine and stands accused of being an alcoholic who has driven while under the influence. In 2004, in an episode known as the Sponsorship Scandal, broad corruption was uncovered in a federal government program in Quebec, which involved millions of dollars that were awarded without a proper bidding process and sometimes without any work required. The sponsorship scandal is widely thought to have resulted in the historic defeat of the Liberal Party of Canada in 2006, which was replaced by a Conservative government for the first time since 1993. This election also marked a reversal in an eighteen-year downward trend in election turnout. This information suggests that scandals, rather than marking the demise of democracy, might actually invigorate democratic participation in Western countries, such as Canada, by increasing election turnout.

This work examines the effect of political scandals on election turnout within a Canadian context. To test this effect, this study presents a possible explanation for election turnout and applies the proposed explanation to data from two Canadian elections. Specifically, it considers the theory that a political scandal galvanizes the voter base and leads to greater turnout as voters attempt to replace wayward politicians. Thus, it is hypothesized that the sponsorship scandal in 2004 increased voter turnout in subsequent Canadian elections by angering voters into political activity. This theory may seem counterintuitive, as there is a strong tendency to believe that political scandals will lead to a disappointed electorate that sees little point in voting. This article shows, however, that the anger-response theory, as applied to Canada, provides a reasonable explanation for increased election turnout. The elections examined here have been largely ignored by academic studies and provide convincing support for this theory.

To examine the hypothesis that political scandal leads to greater election turnout, this work will analyze relevant literature, examine the theoretical basis of the hypothesis presented, review the historical context of the Sponsorship Scandal, and then discuss the methodology of the statistical tests performed. Through analyzing relevant literature, it is apparent that experts on election turnout have not definitively determined the causes of election turnout nor the effect of political scandals on election turnout. This section also provides a foundational understanding of the causal relationship that exists between the sponsorship scandal and increased voter turnout in subsequent elections. The section that outlines the historical background of the sponsorship scandal provides a brief overview of the scandal and establishes valuable context for the statistical tests performed. The methodology section explains three ways in which the effects of the sponsorship scandal on election turnout are examined.

This work highlights general trends in Canadian election turnout, uses statistical tests to determine individual voting behavior in two Canadian elections, and demonstrates through data analysis the causal relationship described in the hypothesis. It concludes that the general trends in Canadian election turnout partially support the hypothesis that the sponsorship scandal increased election turnout. This finding is further substantiated by a test of individual voting behavior

using election surveys from the 2004 and 2006 elections. A test of the causal relationship further supports the hypothesis that the sponsorship scandal mobilized voters and increased voter turnout.

Literature Review

Prominent academics have long puzzled over why people choose to vote. According to a rational choice model, the vast majority of people should decide not to vote. This model suggests that a person should only vote when the expected benefit of voting, which is a function of the probability that the vote cast will be decisive, is greater than the cost of voting (generally viewed as the opportunity cost of spending time and effort to become informed and then physically voting). Since the probability of casting a decisive ballot is extremely low, the cost of voting will almost always be greater than the expected benefit. However, people do vote and in large numbers (Blais 2000: 2). In the 2012 U.S. election, less than 55 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots, but this still meant that over 129 million people voted (Woolley and Peters 2013). To resolve this discrepancy, some academics have suggested the rational choice model cannot fully explain voting behavior.

Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen offer an alternative theory based on the concept of mobilization (1993). Central to this concept is the idea of social networks—groups of friends, colleagues, politicians, and interest groups—that exert pressure on individuals to vote. These social networks work through social pressure. People want to be valued, and social networks fulfill that need. Politicians have an incentive to use social networks to mobilize voters in “get out the vote” campaigns (Blais 2000: 13). Various studies and field experiments have found that social pressure, including communication that encourages voting, can have a significant, positive impact on voter turnout (Mann 2010: 388; Amaro de Matos and Barros 2004: 239). Interestingly, too much social pressure can also be a bad thing. Research suggests that politicians who overuse social pressure experience backlash (Matland and Murray 2013). According to one study, a politician who uses social pressure may inadvertently increase voter anger and hostility toward him/herself. Such resentment then increases the probability that people will vote against the candidate (Matland and Murray 2013). This concept of mobilization offers a key insight into the possible causal relationship, tying political scandals to increased election turnout.

Daniel Stockerner and Patricia Calca support this relationship by finding that political scandals cause higher election turnout (2013: 535). Stockerner and Calca argue that a political scandal operates as a mobilizing agent. That is, political scandals anger the public and cause people to vote who would not usually engage in politics. This theory posits that people vote because they hope to “throw out the bums.” This causal logic seems reasonable when applied to a country like Canada, which does not suffer from highly visible endemic corruption. Politicians in Canada are not expected to be corrupt, so political scandals may be unexpected and shocking, thus angering the public.

Other explanations for election turnout include theories that focus on the phenomenon of voter fatigue. Margit Tavits argues that election turnout depends on institutions. Tavits finds that having a direct election for a president has the effect of fatiguing voters, which lowers voter turnout. In fact, she finds that having a direct presidential election lowers voter turnout by 7 percent (2009: 42). In line with Tavits' work, Richard Boyd suggests that increasing the frequency of elections also reduces turnout. According to Boyd, countries with more frequent elections will experience lower voter turnout, as frequent elections fatigue voters (1989: 730). Further expanding on the concept of voter fatigue, Christopher R. Berry and Jacob Gersen argue that the timing of the election plays a crucial role. The authors found that municipal elections that coincided with federal elections had substantially larger voter turnout. Essentially, the authors explain low municipal election turnout using a variation of voter fatigue; they argue that only the most fervent and dedicated voters will vote in municipal elections not held in tandem with federal elections (Berry and Gersen 2010: 37).

Furthermore, Maciej A. Gorecki finds that more competitive elections have greater voter turnout. Studying the multiple rounds of voting that take place during Polish elections for city president, Gorecki found that the political elite increased the intensity of their campaigning during competitive elections, which persuaded the public to vote (2009: 291). Although many academics have focused on voter fatigue, some have also explained voter turnout by drawing on more atypical causal relationships.

Many alternative explanations of voter turnout focus on less conventional causes. Brad Gomez, Thomas Hansford, and George Krause argue that the small things are what count. Through a study of U.S. presidential elections, the authors found that rainy weather decreases election turnout by almost 1 percent per inch of rain. The authors also found that snow can depress election turnout, although only by about 0.5 percent per inch of snowfall (Gomez, Hansford, and Krause 2007: 649). This finding is substantiated by Steve Knack, who also found that inclement weather depressed election turnout (1994: 187). Additionally, Joseph Robbins, Lance Hunter, and Gregg R. Murray look at the effect of terrorism on election turnout, finding that terrorism is positively correlated with election turnout (2013: 495). Robbins, Hunter, and Murray acknowledge that their findings run counter to conventional wisdom. Their analysis is substantiated, however, by the work of Valentina Bali, who found that the Madrid train bombing effectively mobilized segments of Spanish society that were otherwise less likely to participate in elections (2007: 669). Clearly, there are many unconventional explanations of election turnout.

Little work has been done specifically examining the causes of election turnout in Canada. Descriptions tend to center on the competitiveness of Canadian elections but some address other factors as well. Howard A. Scarrow offers a few explanations, suggesting that inclement weather and competitiveness both play a role (1961: 351). James Endersby, Steven Galatas, and Chapman Rackaway also attribute

Canadian election turnout to competitiveness, finding that the closeness of elections explained turnout in the 1993 and 1997 federal elections (2002). Furthermore, Donley Studlar presents a pattern of Canadian voter turnout in which provincial elections have greater turnout than federal elections. Studlar finds that region, population density, and the amount of time elapsed since the last provincial or federal election have the greatest effects on voter turnout (2001: 299). Michael Martinez and Jeff Gill highlight a particularly troubling trend in Canadian elections: the decline in election turnout. They show that between 1979 and 1998 there was a systemic decline in election turnout but fail to offer specific explanations for this trend (Martinez and Gill 2006). In contrast to the lack of academic studies regarding election turnout in Canada, there has been notable work dealing with the general effects of political corruption on election turnout.

Some research argues that political corruption will increase election turnout by either galvanizing voters to “throw out the bums” or, inversely, to claim benefits from rent-seeking politicians. Stockerner and Calca find that in Portugal, political corruption is positively correlated with election turnout. The authors find that municipalities with high levels of corruption have election turnout several percentage points higher than municipalities with low levels of corruption. The authors suggest that political corruption is a mobilizing agent, because news about corruption angers the public enough to incite them to vote (Stockerner and Calca 2013: 535). Gokhan Karahan, Morris Coats, and William Shugart also find that political corruption increases election turnout, although their explanation of the causal relationship is much more cynical. Karahan, Coats, and Shugart suggest that corrupt politicians are willing to distribute the gains of holding office to voters in return for votes. Therefore, as corrupt politicians gain greater power, they are willing and able to buy more votes. The authors substantiate these claims with a finding in Mississippi’s 1987 county supervisor elections (which took place after an FBI investigation resulted in the conviction of 55 of 410 county supervisors). They determined that Mississippians voted more in corrupt than non-corrupt counties (Karahan, Coats, and Shugart 2006: 87).

Conversely, some academics also argue that political corruption will decrease voter turnout. Using a broad sample of democratic countries, Daniel Stockerner, Bernadette LaMontagne, and Lyle Scruggs find that political corruption is inversely correlated with election turnout (2012: 74). In a study of Mexican voting, James McCann and Jorge Dominguez found that widespread suspicions of fraud and corruption made it less likely that opposition supporters voted, thus depressing election turnout (1998: 483). It is clear that political corruption is related to voter participation, though the nature of this relationship remains controversial.

Sponsorship Scandal

Following the 1995 Referendum on Quebec sovereignty, the governing Liberal Party established a fund to raise Canada’s profile in Quebec. Revelations of corrup-

tion involving this fund later became known as the “federal sponsorship scandal.” The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reports that the sponsorship scandal all started with “rumours and whispers about the fund” (CBC 2006). Although the fund was distributing federal money in Quebec, there were no application forms, and it was unclear how the money was being used. In 2000, initial indications of government corruption came to light as Public Works Minister Alfonso Gagliano faced public criticism for awarding contracts to a company which hired his son as an executive. Two years later, newly appointed Public Works Minister Don Boudria came under fire for failing to find a report on cultural and sporting activities for which the government had paid \$550,000. In time, the report was found. However, the *Globe and Mail* asserted that this report was nearly identical to another report produced by a firm which received \$575,000 in government payment. Eventually, public pressure forced Prime Minister Chretien to ask the auditor general of Canada to investigate.

Auditor General Sheila Fraser released reports in 2002 and 2004 that were highly critical of the government, and the government responded by forming a Commission of Inquiry in the lead up to the 2004 election. In 2002, Fraser released a preliminary report accusing the government of breaking “just about every rule in the book.” Fraser then proceeded to ask the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to investigate Groupaction, a firm that had been heavily involved with the sponsorship fund. The RCMP raided Groupaction and began to investigate the Public Works Department. In 2004, Fraser released her second report on the sponsorship fund. This report implicated several senior government officials; Fraser discovered that government officials had shown blatant disregard for rules and had mismanaged millions of dollars in advertising and sponsorship money. The report detailed how the government had paid hundreds of thousands of dollars, through contracts that were never officially assigned, to firms that were not required to do any work. According to the report, the corruption was “such a blatant misuse of funds that it is shocking” (CBC 2004).

Under public pressure, and having already contemplated it, Prime Minister Jean Chretien retired from public office. Chretien’s successor, Paul Martin, promptly fired the former public works minister, Gagliano, from his ambassadorship post. Martin also suspended the heads of three Crown corporations and vowed to resign if any evidence surfaced which linked him personally to the scandal. Perhaps the most significant action Martin took was to ask Justice John Gomery to head an official Commission of Inquiry into the sponsorship program (CBC 2006). The Gomery Commission, as it came to be known, did not begin hearing testimony until after a scheduled federal election in June 2004, which the Liberal Party only narrowly survived (CBC 2008).

The Liberal Party retained a minority government in 2004, although the Gomery Commission’s report triggered another election in 2006. Prior to the sponsorship scandal, the Liberal Party was heavily favored, with many expecting the Liberal Party would retain its majority. But the Liberal Party dropped heavily in the polls in the

lead-up to the election. On Election Day 28 June 2004, the Liberal Party managed to win only enough seats to form a minority government, the first in twenty-five years (CBC 2008). The Liberal Party respite was short-lived; in February 2005, the Gomery Commission issued hundreds of subpoenas and heard testimony throughout the year (CBC 2008). On 1 November 2005, the commission released its first report, absolving Jean Chretien and Paul Martin of personal wrongdoing. However, the report stated that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) did bear some responsibility, because the PMO was responsible for running the sponsorship program. Regardless, the opposition parties demanded that the government resign and call a new election (CBC 2006). Initially, Martin refused to resign, but after the Liberal Party lost the support of the NDP (New Democratic Party of Canada), the opposition parties joined together in a vote of non-confidence in late November 2005. This triggered the election held in 2006 (CBC 2008).

The 2006 federal election, held on 23 January, was a disaster for the Liberal Party. The Liberals managed to win only 103 seats in Parliament while the Conservatives won 124 seats. For the first time in twelve years, the Liberals were unable to win enough seats to form the government, and the Conservatives formed a minority government. This election was followed by the release of the second part of the Gomery Commission's report. The report included a series of recommendations for reforms to increase transparency and accountability in government (O'Neal and Smith 2006).

Methodology

To test the hypothesis that political scandals increase voter turnout, the effect of the sponsorship scandal on voter turnout in the 2004 and 2006 Canadian federal elections is studied. Although a quantitative test on the effect of the sponsorship scandal in subsequent Canadian elections would be preferable, a quantitative test that examined elections generally would have too few observations to have statistical significance. Therefore, this article first looks at general trends in voter turnout in Canada across a series of elections from 1984 to 2011. This information is then complemented by a quantitative analysis of voter turnout, using survey data from the 2004 and 2006 iterations of the Canadian Election Study (Fournier, Cutler, Soroka, and Stolle 2011). Using this dataset, the effect of the sponsorship scandal on individual voting behavior in both the 2004 and 2006 election is tested, followed by a test of key components in the causal relationship between the variables.

Variables

To determine general trends in voter turnout, data from Elections Canada is used. This source is run by the Canadian federal government and includes official turnout for every election since 1867. This analysis focuses on the most recent trends, so only elections from 1984 to 2011 are examined. It should be noted that the 1992 election was the referendum on Quebec sovereignty. Results from Quebec are not included for that year, as Quebec held its own referendum. Furthermore, elec-

tion turnout from the 1993 and 2000 elections were adjusted after the election following maintenance on the National Register of Electors that removed duplicates (caused by electors moving) and electors who were deceased (Elections Canada 2013). These updated numbers are used, as they are the numbers officially used by the Canadian government.

To determine the effect of the sponsorship scandal on individual voting behavior during the 2004 and 2006 federal elections, data is taken from the Canadian Election Study that was run during both years. These two Canadian election surveys are cross-sectional surveys, meaning new respondents were selected for both years. However, about half of the 2006 survey sample also participated in the 2004 Canadian Election Survey. Respondents to the survey were interviewed exclusively by phone. The respondents were selected randomly from a directory of phone numbers generated by the Canadian Election Survey to represent all possible phone numbers in Canada. Once a household was identified, the interviewer asked for the number of adults in the household. If there was more than one adult in the household, the adult with the closest birthday was selected. As the Canadian Election Survey is intended to represent all eligible Canadian voters, only Canadian citizens eighteen years of age or older were eligible to participate in the survey. Furthermore, the sample was weighted by household size and province to ensure the results were representative of the population of Canada (Fournier, Cutler, Soroka, and Stolle 2011).

The Canadian Election Study had three components: a Campaign-Period Survey (CPS), a Post-Election Survey (PES), and a Mail-Back Survey (MBS). The 2004 election survey consisted of all three of these portions; however, the 2006 Canadian Election Study consisted of only the first two components, meaning that the MBS portion of the survey was excluded. The CPS was conducted during the official campaign period of the election. In the 2004 election, the campaign period lasted the thirty-six days leading up to 28 June 2004. In the 2006 election, the campaign period was 30 November 2005, until the election on 22 January 2006 (a period of fifty-four days). The PES survey started a week after the 2004 election and a day after the 2006 election. The MBS survey commenced one week after the PES survey had started, and responses were accepted until the end of November of that year. Responses to each of the portions of the survey vary, with the CPS portion of the survey receiving the highest response rate. Below is a summary of the number of completed interviews for each portion of the survey:

	CPS	PES	MBS
2004	4,323	3,138	1,674
2006	4,058	1,684	—

From the Canadian Election Study Documentation

To determine individual voting behavior during the 2004 and 2006 federal elections, questions from the CPS portion of the Canadian Election Survey are the primary source, but some responses are drawn from the PES and MBS portions of the Canadian Election Survey. In the following sections, the dependent, independent, and control variables are described. These are the variables used to test the general hypothesis that the sponsorship scandal mobilized voters during the 2004 and 2006 election. Following this section, the method for testing the causal relationship (as described in the hypothesis) is also outlined.

Dependent Variable

For both the 2004 and 2006 Canadian Election Survey, respondents were asked in English or French the question, “Did YOU vote in the election?” Respondents were given the option of answering “yes,” “no,” or “do not know” (Fournier, Cutler, Soroka, and Stolle 2011). Out of all of the respondents to the PES surveys for both years, only five people refused to answer. It is possible that some respondents lied about voting in the election or forgot if they had voted or not.

Independent Variables

Data is taken from the 2004 and 2006 iterations of the Canadian Election Survey to measure attitudes toward the sponsorship scandal. During the campaign period (in the CPS portion of the survey), the Canadian Election Survey asked respondents the question “Does [the sponsorship scandal] make you very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry, or not angry at all?” These responses were recoded in ascending order so that “not angry at all” was coded as a 0, and “very angry” was coded as a 3. The interviewer also coded for respondents that did not know anything about the scandal or did not know how they felt about the scandal. Those respondents were omitted in this analysis (Fournier, Cutler, Soroka, and Stolle 2011). Ideally, respondents that did not know about the scandal would be coded as being “not angry at all.” However, since those respondents could not be separated from people that responded by saying they did not know how they felt about the scandal, it was necessary to omit them. Across both surveys, a total of 458 respondents were omitted.

Control Variables

Attempts are made to control for other factors that could explain variation in voting behavior. Control variables for demographics include age, gender, and education. The Canadian Election Study data includes the year of birth. This allows the age of each of the respondents at the time of the 2004 and 2006 federal elections to be easily calculated. The Canadian Election Study data also included the gender of the respondent. Education was controlled for using the question “What is the highest level of education that you have completed?” This question was asked during the CPS survey, so all of the respondents to both the 2004 and 2006 Canadian Election Study survey were asked. There were eleven possible answers to this question. No school-

ing through completed elementary school was coded as 1–3, some secondary/high school through completed high school was coded as 4–5, some technical education, community college, CEGEP, or college classique through a professional or doctoral degree was coded as 6–11 (Fournier, Cutler, Soroka, and Stolle 2011). All respondents who refused to respond to this question or who answered “do not know” were omitted.

Region and partisanship were also controlled, using data from the Canadian Election Study. Respondents were coded for region depending on the Canadian province in which they resided. Respondents were also asked how they felt about each of the major political parties in Canada. This question was asked during the CPS survey. Interviewers were instructed to emphasize that the question was about the respective federal parties as opposed to the provincial or local version of the party. The question used in this analysis was about the federal Liberal Party and looked like this: “How do you feel about the FEDERAL Liberal party.” Interviewers were then instructed to ask the respondents to rate the federal Liberal Party on a 100 point scale, with a 0 being coded as “really dislike” and a 100 being coded as “really like.” Respondents that refused to answer or answered that they did not know any of the parties were coded as 50.

To test the causal relationship between the sponsorship scandal and voter turnout, data was taken from the MBS portion of the Canadian Election Study. Unfortunately, the MBS survey was not conducted during the 2006 election. As such, the causal relationship described in the hypothesis can be tested only for the 2004 election. It is hypothesized that the sponsorship scandal angered voters who then became increasingly politically active. These galvanized voters then voted in greater numbers in an effort to “throw out the bums.” To test this hypothesis, the relationship between the sponsorship scandal and political activity and the relationship between political activity and voting are both examined. Political activity is operationalized by using the question, “During the most recent election how often did you talk to other people to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate?” Respondents were given four possible answers: “Frequently,” “Occasionally,” “Rarely,” and “Never.” These responses were recoded in ascending order with “Never” coded as a “0” and “Frequently” coded as a “3.” This question was also used to test the relationship between political activity and voting, with voting being measured as previously discussed (Fournier, Cutler, Soroka, and Stolle 2011).

Test Results

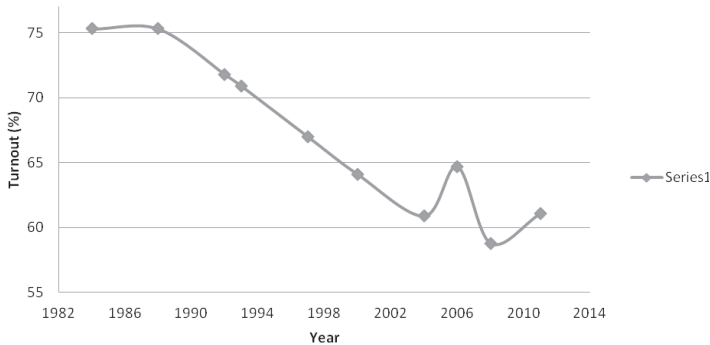
Canadian election turnout from 1984 to 2011 was used to look at general trends in election turnout surrounding the 2004 and 2006 federal elections. Then a series of statistical tests were run to determine the effect of the sponsorship scandal on individual voting behavior during those respective elections.

The general trends in election turnout suggest that the sponsorship scandal played a role in increasing election turnout. Graph 1a demonstrates that from 1984 to 2004, election turnout was steadily declining. Martinez and Gill also noticed

this decline in election turnout, although they failed to offer an explanation for this decline (2006). Interestingly, the 2006 election saw a major spike in election turnout. This is especially significant given that the increase in election turnout was counter to an eighteen-year trend of declining election turnout. This spike in election turnout may be attributable to the sponsorship scandal, as the 2006 election was triggered by the opposition, using the sponsorship scandal as justification. Graph 2a illustrates this spike in election turnout. Perhaps election turnout in 2004 was not as heavily influenced by the sponsorship scandal as the official Gomery Commission report had not yet been published. In fact, voters waiting for the official inquiry into the sponsorship scandal to conclude before drawing conclusions would not have been ready to punish politicians at the polls until the 2006 election, as the official investigation concluded between the two elections in 2005.

The analysis of individual voting behavior suggests the sponsorship scandal caused election turnout to increase in the 2004 election. During the 2004 general election, voters' attitudes about the sponsorship scandal had a statistically significant effect on election turnout, as illustrated in Table 1a. A one-unit increase in how angry voters felt about the sponsorship scandal (for example, going from "not angry at all" to "not very angry" or from "somewhat angry" to "very angry") increased the

Graph 1a: Canadian Federal Election Turnout 1984–2011



Graph 2a: Canadian Federal Election Turnout 1997–2011

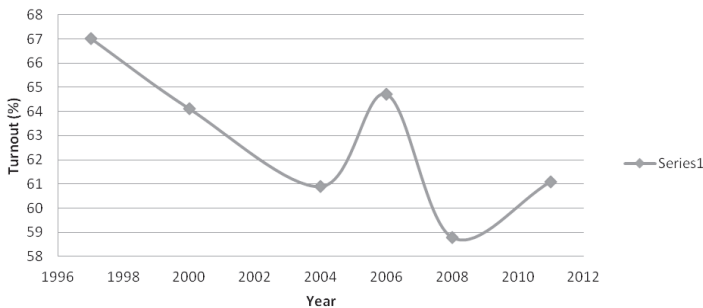


Table 1a: 2004 Canadian Election Survey

	(1)	(2)
Regressor:		
Sponsorship Scandal	-0.0239*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.005)
Gender(Male)	—	0.005 (0.013)
Age	—	0.003*** (0.000)
Education	—	0.017*** (0.003)
British Columbia	—	—
Alberta	—	0.015 (0.027)
Saskatchewan	—	0.017 (0.032)
Manitoba	—	-0.016 (0.033)
Ontario	—	0.018 (0.021)
Quebec	—	-0.019 (0.022)
New Brunswick	—	0.001 (0.041)
Nova Scotia	—	0.033 (0.044)
PEI	—	-0.024 (0.040)
Newfoundland	—	-0.088** 0.038
Political Affiliation	—	0.000 (0.000)
Regression summary statistics:		
N	3004	1904
Pseudo	0.033	0.114

Note: The dependent variable is whether the respondent voted or not. Vote is coded with a 0 for “did not vote” and a 1 for “voted.” The results are reported at the 90 percent*, 95 percent** and 99 percent*** significance levels. This is a normal linear regression.

probability of voting by 1.5 percent. Although this effect is small in absolute numbers, compared to other statistically significant factors that affect voting, the sponsorship

Table 1b: 2006 Canadian Election Survey

	(1)	(2)
Regressor:		
Sponsorship Scandal	0.022*** (0.005)	0.016*** (0.005)
Gender(Male)	—	0.015 (0.012)
Age	—	0.002*** (0.000)
Education	—	0.000 (0.000)
British Columbia	—	—
Alberta	—	-0.020 (0.027)
Saskatchewan	—	-0.005 (0.035)
Manitoba	—	-0.062** (0.030)
Ontario	—	-0.018 (0.021)
Quebec	—	-0.029 (0.022)
New Brunswick	—	0.031 (0.050)
Nova Scotia	—	-0.043 (0.035)
PEI	—	-0.042 (0.038)
Newfoundland	—	-0.080** 0.036
Political Affiliation	—	0.000 (0.000)
Regression summary statistics:		
N	1673	1639
Pseudo	0.017	0.095

Note: The dependent variable is whether the respondent voted or not. Vote is coded with a 0 for “did not vote” and a 1 for “voted.” The results are reported at the 90 percent*, 95 percent** and 99 percent*** significance levels. This is a normal linear regression.

scandal has reasonably strong substantive significance. An increase in education, for instance, only increases the probability of voting by 1.7 percent. Likewise, a decade

in age only increases the probability of voting by 3 percent. Accordingly, it seems that attitudes toward the sponsorship scandal were positively correlated with voting probability. These results support the hypothesis that the sponsorship scandal mobilizes voters.

The analysis of individual voting behavior during the 2006 federal election also suggests that the sponsorship scandal mobilized voters, leading to greater election turnout. During the 2006 election, a one-unit increase in how angry voters felt about the election increased the probability of voting by 1.6 percent. In comparison, a one decade difference in age only increased the probability of voting by 2 percent. Interestingly, in 2006, education did not have a statistically significant effect on voting. As shown in Table 1b, these results suggest that the sponsorship scandal mobilized voters.

The test of the causal relationship suggests the sponsorship scandal did in fact mobilize voters during the 2004 federal election in Canada. Table 2a contains the results of a test of the relationship between attitudes about the sponsorship scandal and political activity. The first test returned a statistically significant result that indicates a positive relationship between the sponsorship scandal and political activity, meaning that the more angry voters were, the more politically active they became. When run without control variables, the test indicated that a one-unit increase in anger

Table 2a: 2004 Canadian Election Survey

	(1)	(2)
Regressor:		
Sponsorship Scandal	1.175*** (0.026)	0.076** (0.034)
Gender(Male)	—	0.163*** (0.051)
Age	—	0.005*** (0.001)
Education	—	0.063*** (0.012)
Province	—	0.003** (0.001)
Political Affiliation	—	0.003 (0.001)
Regression summary statistics:		
N	1583	1583
	0.000	0.032
Robust Standard Errors	Yes	Yes

Notes: Regression. The dependent variable is political activity coded in ascending order from "never" politically active to "frequently" politically active. The results are reported at the 90 percent, * 95 percent, ** and 99 percent*** significance levels. This is a normal linear regression.

about the sponsorship scandal is associated with a corresponding increase in political activity. Adding control variables does not drop the result out of statistical significance, but does lower the substantive significance of the result—a one-unit increase in anger is now associated with only a small increase in political activity. Regardless, the results support the causal relationship hypothesis, indicating a positive relationship between anger about the sponsorship scandal and political activity.

The relationship between political activity and voting behavior was tested next. The results of this test are reported in Table 2b. These results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between political activity and voting. In fact, as political activity increases by one unit, the probability of voting increases by about 4.5 percent. A person that is very politically active is thus 18 percent more likely to vote than someone who is not at all politically active. As both parts of the test of the causal relationship gave statistically significant positive results, it is concluded that the tests of the causal relationship support the hypothesis that the sponsorship scandal mobilized voters during the 2004 Canadian federal election.

Conclusion

Results of the statistical analysis indicate the sponsorship scandal mobilized voters, since anger about the sponsorship scandal is positively correlated with increased voter turnout. The results confirm that political scandals in Canada have an overall

Table 2b: 2004 Canadian Election Survey

	(1)	(2)
Regressor:		
Political Activity	0.050*** (0.007)	0.045*** (0.007)
Gender(Male)	—	-0.013 (0.013)
Age	—	0.002*** (0.000)
Education	—	0.014*** (0.003)
Province	—	0.000 (0.000)
Political Affiliation	—	0.000*** (0.000)
Regression summary statistics:		
N	1583	1583
Pseudo	0.055	0.122

Notes: Probit. The dependent variable is whether the respondent voted or not. Vote is coded with a 0 for “did not vote” and a 1 for “voted.” The results are reported at the 90 percent,* 95 percent, ** and 99 percent*** significance levels. This is a probit model.

positive effect on voter turnout. Common sense may dictate that political scandals have a detrimental effect on democracy. Many Eastern European countries have experienced endemic corruption and political scandals, which have lowered citizens' expectations for democracy. Recently in Egypt, the inefficiencies and imperfections of politicians led to the reinstallation of a military dictatorship, a dictatorship tolerated and even supported by Egyptian liberals. However, in a country such as Canada, with a long history of democracy, scandals may have an overall positive effect. According to the tests performed in this analysis, anger over the sponsorship scandal contributed to the reversal of a decade-long trend of decreasing voter turnout. In effect, the sponsorship scandal served to reinvigorate the electorate. It may be that a succession of serious political scandals could weaken and erode democracy. But in a rich, Western country such as Canada, the occasional political scandal—such as the ongoing Canadian Senate Expenses Scandal—may infuse much needed energy into the system. Indeed, the Canadian Senate Expenses Scandal may be just what the doctor ordered.

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