

Turning *Up* The Vote: Analyzing 2019 Liberal Party Support at Full Voter Turnout

Introduction

The significance of voter turnout to democracy cannot be understated. Declines in this figure raise questions about the representativeness of government bodies and the integrity of the electoral process (Achen, 2019; Birch, 2010). However, this aggregated parameter does not tell us the full story. Discrepancies in voter turnout are not distributed equally. Age is a particularly salient variable, with young people less likely to vote than their middle-age and older counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2020; Uppal & LaRochelle-Cote, 2012). However, other sociodemographic factors, including education, family status, economic well-being, and immigrant status, are also significant predictors of voter participation (Uppal & LaRochelle-Cote, 2012). Moreover, research shows that these groups have relatively stable voting preferences. For instance, individuals with undergraduate and post-graduate degrees show increasing preferences for leftist parties and policies (Pew Research Center, 2018). Likewise, young and middle-aged voters are more likely to vote for liberal parties than their older counterparts (Pew Research Center, 2018). As such, who votes and in what numbers can significantly impact electoral outcomes.

A surprising number of Canadians do not vote. In the last federal election, there were approximately twenty-seven million eligible voters (Elections Canada, 2020). Only sixty-seven percent of these individuals cast their ballot, leaving over nine million Canadian voices unheard (Elections Canada, 2020). Given the significance of voter turnout to election results and democracy, a question remains about how the most recent election would have been different if everyone who could vote did? This paper will use logistic regression with post-stratification to answer this question. More specifically, given the consequences of the 2019 minority government outcome, it will examine how Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party would have fared if everyone had voted, compared to other parties?

This analysis will involve two data sets; the 2019 Canadian Election Study (CES) and the 2017 General Social Survey (GSS). The methodology section will explain each data set's purpose, the predictor and outcome variables of the logistic regression model, and the process of post-stratification. The following results section will outline the post-stratified model predictions for propensity to vote for Justin Trudeau's Liberals over a competing political party. The paper will then conclude with a discussion of relevant findings, acknowledgement of limitations, future research directions, and larger societal implications.

References

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