

## **Explaining the Federal-Provincial Turnout Gap in the Canadian Provinces**

Lori Thorlakson

Department of Political Science, University of Alberta – Email address: [lori.thorlakson@ualberta.ca](mailto:lori.thorlakson@ualberta.ca)

**Abstract** Second order election models predict that voter turnout will generally be lower in ‘second order’ subnational elections compared to ‘first order’ federal elections. In Canada, we find that this is not always the case: some provinces have higher turnout rates for provincial elections than federal elections. Using data from seven Canadian provincial elections, this article examines how attitudes such as trust, satisfaction with democracy and interest in politics compare across levels of government in order to explain cross-provincial differences in voter turnout. It finds that while contextual factors matter, interest in provincial politics is one of the strongest predictors of high provincial turnout relative to federal turnout.

**Keywords** Second order elections; federal elections; provincial elections; voter turnout.

**Résumé:** Le modèle des élections de « deuxième niveau » prédit qu’un moindre pourcentage de l’électorat se présentera lors des élections provinciales de « deuxième niveau » que lors de celles fédérales de « premier niveau ». Au Canada ceci n’est pas toujours vrai. Dans certaines provinces, ceux qui votent aux élections provinciales sont plus nombreux qu’aux élections fédérales. En se référant aux données provenant de sept élections provinciales, cet article examine comment les comportements tels que la confiance, le degré de satisfaction de la démocratie et l’intérêt à la politique se comparent afin d’expliquer les différences en taux de participation. L’article constate que l’intérêt à la politique provinciale serait l’indicateur comportemental le plus important pour expliquer un taux de participation provincial plus élevé.

**Mots-clés:** élections de « deuxième niveau; élections fédérales; élections provinciales; taux de participation

## **Theoretical Framework**

Political competition in Canada, as in other federations, occurs at multiple territorial levels. In Canada, this competition has been said to operate in 'separate worlds' at the provincial and federal level (Blake, 1982), a quality that sets Canada apart from other federations where competition at the national and the subnational level tends to be linked in a number of ways, for example, through integrated parties, second-order or barometer voting, consistent partisanship and the existence of similar party systems across electoral arenas.

Research on political competition in multi-level systems has found that federal and subnational electoral arenas often become competitively linked. When linkage is high, the federal level context can shape vote choice in subnational elections through barometer effects, where voters use sub-national elections to express their approval or disapproval of national governing parties, and coattails voting effects. In these cases, political parties typically maintain strong organizational linkages between federal and regional levels of competition and very often the same parties compete at both the federal and subnational levels, with the result that party systems tend to be relatively similar. Multi-level contexts can impede accountability mechanisms, and 'second order' arenas may suffer from lower turnout. In other words, in the minds of voters, subnational politics may be regarded as essentially derivative of federal politics, played out in a lower-stakes setting. Because less is 'at stake', voters may be less likely to vote in provincial elections than federal elections, and may treat their provincial vote as a proxy for federal-level evaluations.

In contrast, when linkage in terms of political life is low, we may find incongruent party systems, split partisanship across levels and weak or absent party organizational linkages. An implication of this, at least theoretically, is that provincial politics in such systems emerges in the voters' minds as an important and distinct arena. In Canada, such forms of party organizational and party system linkage have generally been found to be low when compared to other federations, but this is not uniformly the case across indicators of linkage or across provinces.

This article examines one aspect of voter behaviour in multi-level systems that is often held to be indicative of such linked political competition between the federal and provincial levels: differences in turnout in federal and provincial elections. Canada stands out from other federations because it does not consistently fit the expected pattern of exhibiting lower turnout in provincial elections than federal elections. Does high provincial voter turnout relative to federal turnout correspond to other forms of 'low linkage' across Canadian provinces? How do we explain inter-provincial variations in relative turnout?

As used in this article, the term 'high linkage' refers to multi-level systems where competition is influenced or constrained by competition at another jurisdictional level and where both voters and parties assign hierarchical importance to these jurisdictions. This article uses the term 'low linkage' to refer to a competitive context in which voters and parties operate in these jurisdictions in a more independent manner: here we may find different parties and party systems, an absence of barometer voting and high interest by the electorate in these elections. In general, high linkage

systems are those in which we might reasonably interpret a subnational election result in terms of the message it sends about support for the nationally incumbent party. Low linkage systems are those where we find 'separate worlds' of competition occurring.

In comparative federalism research, the norm is generally a model of linked competition. Theories of how political competition occurs in multi-level systems have argued that subnational elections often operate as 'second-order' to national contests (Reif and Schmidt, 1980: 8) and as barometers of voters' assessments of the federally incumbent government (van der Eijk and Franklin, 1996; van der Eijk, Franklin and Marsh, 1996; Anderson and Ward, 1996; Anderson and Wlezien, 1997).

Forms of multi-level linkage can encompass a range of other behaviours. Barometer, second-order, and coattails models of electoral behaviour, which can all be applied to multi-level political competition, predict a scenario where political competition at the national and subnational levels of government becomes linked (Rodden and Wibbels (2011) refer to this as the 'nationalization' of party competition). This linkage, together with the complexity of a multi-level voting environment can blur lines of accountability, making it difficult for voters to punish or reward governments for their performance (Whitten and Powell, 1993; Ebeid and Rodden, 2006; Anderson, 2006; Rodden and Wibbels, 2011) or leading voters to punish subnational voters for federal-level performance (Gélineau and Bélanger, 2005) or vice versa (Gélineau and Remmer, 2006). Linkage can be weakened by split partisanship across levels of government (Blake, 1982; Stewart and Clarke, 1998; Martinez, 1990;

Uslaner, 1990) which in turn can be driven by dissimilar party systems at each level of government. The concept of linkage need not be confined to the level of voter behaviour. Structural forms of linkage can include party organizations that are integrated across levels of government (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 2004: 190) and party systems that are congruent—or similar—across the units of a federation (Thorlakson, 2007).

Cross-nationally, the degree of linkage across federal systems varies. It also varies across the provinces in Canada, as we will discuss below. Linked or nationalized competition has been found to be related to the degree of decentralization. The more decentralized the federation, the weaker these multi-level linkages tend to be (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Léon, 2012; Thorlakson, 2007; Jeffery and Hough, 2009; Schakel, 2011). Strong regional cleavages are associated with weaker linkages, especially when these cleavages are mobilized into regional parties (Schakel, 2011; Jeffery and Hough, 2009) and dissimilar party systems. These parties at the sub-national level, and the voters who support them, have motivation and opportunity to go their own way, less constrained by federal political competition. Finally, some forms of linkage have been found to facilitate others: structural linkage, in the form of party system congruence, can facilitate consistent partisan attachments (Blake, 1982).<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the Canadian provinces provide a unique opportunity for studying the attitudinal correlates of multi-level linkage. Research has singled out Canada for not conforming to the expectations of multi-level linkage theories in terms of voter turnout

(Studler, 2001; Wolinetz and Carty, 2006; Jeffery and Hough, 2009), its high degree of party system incongruence (Thorlakson, 2007), low degree of party system nationalization (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004), and low degree of vertical integration of party organizations (Thorlakson, 2009). However, these findings are not uniformly the case across the Canadian provinces. Party systems generally have exhibited a high degree of congruence in the Atlantic provinces and Ontario, and low congruence in Quebec and the western provinces (Stewart and Carty, 2006). Similarly, integrative linkages between federal and provincial parties tend to be highest in Atlantic Canada, and historically have been weakest in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec (Thorlakson, 2009), although this varies by party.

This provides an opportunity to compare conforming and non-conforming provinces to identify differences in the attitudinal underpinnings of second order behaviour. Factors such as social cleavages, the competitiveness of provincial elections and issues specific to provincial leaders and provincial campaigns may contribute to variations in the outcome, but all provincial elections allow a comparison to the same federal elections.

While partisanship and vote choice have been well-studied as indicators of linkage in Canada, less is known about turnout. This chapter investigates the attitudinal underpinnings of one form of linkage, the turnout effect of 'second order' elections, in order to better explain variation across Canadian provinces and to help us understand the micro-level mechanisms that link contextual factors to the values and beliefs that motivate behaviour.

In linked systems, 'second order' subnational (or supranational) elections typically exhibit a pattern of lower turnout compared to 'first order' national elections. This is assumed to arise from the perception by voters that less is at stake in these elections, and, following this, that voters have less interest in these elections motivating them to vote (Reif and Schmidt, 1980: 8). The second order effect is expected to be more pronounced in more centralized federations and weakest in decentralized federations like Canada (Jeffery and Hough, 2009).<sup>2</sup> That 'less is at stake' in subnational elections is often assumed because provincial or state governments control smaller budgets and smaller policy ranges than their federal counterparts. While these objective measures of fiscal decentralization or jurisdictional assignment play an important role in shaping the perceived 'importance' of a level of government, translating this institutional environment into voter behaviour depends upon voters' perceptions of the second order arena. These perceptions, the attitudinal foundations of linkage, are rarely empirically verified.

When voting behaviour does not conform to linkage theories, we would expect that, first, voters would perceive the impact and importance of the provincial level of government to be relatively high compared to the perceived impact and importance of the federal government.

A perception that the subnational level is important does not necessarily imply that a voter is interested and engaged in provincial level politics. We would expect voters to generally have a higher degree of interest in provincial politics relative to federal politics in provinces where elections do not exhibit second order voting patterns. This is

likely to be positively associated with voters' perception of importance and impact but nevertheless is conceptually distinct. Assessing voters' interest more directly captures whether voters are likely to pay attention and be politically engaged with subnational politics. Finally, political engagement at the subnational level is also likely to be affected by voters' sense of satisfaction with the performance of democracy at the subnational level. It is also plausible that the decision to vote more often in provincial elections than federal elections is fuelled by a more negative form of interest in and identification with province—a sense of grievance that the province is treated worse than other provinces by the federal government.

Apart from factors that are related to linkage arguments, voter turnout in provincial elections relative to federal elections can also be affected by a number of factors that have been shown to affect turnout generally. These include the competitiveness or closeness of the race (Blais, 2000; Franklin, 2004), age (Putnam, 1995; 2000; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995), and education (Lipset, 1960).

## **Methodology**

The Comparative Provincial Election Project (CPEP) dataset provides a unique opportunity to address multilevel linkage because it provides questions on trust, efficacy and impact directed toward both the provincial and federal governments. This allows us to assess the impact of the relative difference in attitudes toward provincial and federal levels of government. The CPEP dataset was created through a series of post-election surveys in eight Canadian provincial elections (Prince

Edward Island, Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta, Quebec and British Columbia) held between October 2011 and May 2013.<sup>3</sup> The dataset comprises 6710 cases. The CPEP data is cross-sectional but not longitudinal.

All attitudinal variables are drawn from identically worded questions in eight provincial CPEP post-election surveys. To measure the perceived impact and importance of the provincial and federal levels of government, the analysis uses two different categorical variables. One is the level of government that voters name as having the most impact on their lives. A second asks voters to name the level of government that best looks after their interests. Both of these variables plausibly tell us about the saliency for voters of the provincial electoral arena. Satisfaction with democracy at both the federal and provincial levels is measured with variables using four-item Likert scales (very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied and not satisfied at all). A categorical variable capturing a sense of provincial grievance is based on a question that asks voters whether they think that the federal government treats their province better, worse or about the same as other provinces. All of these variables are constructed as dummy variables in the regression analysis.

Voters' interest in provincial politics is measured using variables generated from survey questions that ask respondents to rate their interest in provincial or federal politics on a scale of 0 to 10. Interest in provincial politics is measured in relative terms with a constructed categorical variable which is coded 1 if voters report that their interest in provincial politics is greater than their interest in federal politics. Finally, the

analysis controls for two additional variables shown to affect political mobilization: age (Putnam, 1995, 2000; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995) and education (Lipset, 1960).

This chapter uses an aggregate level analysis to assess the relationship between multi-level linkage in political competition and attitudes such as perceived impact of levels of government and voters' interest in them. The aggregate level analysis assesses whether citizens' perceived impact of and interest in provincial government is greater in low linkage than in high linkage provinces.

Canadian provinces are categorized as high or low linkage based upon average difference between federal and provincial turnout scores from 1993 to 2013. The analysis then tests whether aggregate level patterns of attitudes observed in these provinces conform to expectations. Attitudinal indicators include perceptions of which level of government has the greatest impact on the respondent's life, which level of government best looks after the respondent's interests, degree of interest in provincial politics compared to federal politics, satisfaction with democracy at the provincial level compared to satisfaction with democracy at the federal level, and sense of provincial grievance. Independent t-tests are used to test for the significance of differences in attitudinal scores between high and low linkage provinces.

## **Findings**

While the case of Canada has been shown in the past to not conform to the second order election expectation of lower subnational voter participation rates compared to those in federal elections, this is not a uniform pattern

across the Canadian provinces (see Wolinetz and Carty, 2006). To identify high and low linkage provinces (that is, those that conform to the expectations of second order behaviour and those that do not), We compare average provincial and federal voter turnout rates for a 20-year period, 1993-2013 (see Table 1).

While the second order election thesis would predict that subnational elections, with less 'at stake', would exhibit lower turnout than federal elections, the opposite is true for most Canadian provinces. For this time period, only British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario exhibit federal voter turnout that is higher on average than provincial voter turnout, as expected by the second order model of multi-level political competition.

Independent t-tests confirm that the difference in provincial and federal turnout rates is statistically significant only in Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). For the elections held during that time period, the mean turnout in provincial elections in Alberta and Ontario was significantly lower than the mean turnout for federal elections in those provinces. In Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island (PEI) and NL, turnout rates in provincial elections were higher than those for federal elections in those provinces, and t-tests tell us that this difference is not due to chance.

On the basis of relative voter turnout, only Alberta and Ontario exhibit classic 'second order' behaviour that we would expect from a context of 'high linkage' political competition. In these provinces, federal voter turnout is on average higher than provincial voter turnout. In contrast, Saskatchewan, PEI and NL do not conform to the voter turnout expectations of second order

voting. In these cases, voter turnout patterns do not serve as a form of high linkage competition. Instead, the pattern of consistently higher turnout for provincial elections is behaviour we

might expect from contexts of low political linkage. British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec neither reliably conform to the expectations of second order voting nor reliably disprove these.

**Table 1: Average voter turnout and standard deviation in Canadian federal and provincial elections, 1993-2013**

Province	Federal election turnout		Provincial election turnout		Difference fed-prov turnout	Party and party system linkage
	average turnout	standard deviation	average turnout	standard deviation		
NL	53.4	3.4	69.7	8.7	<b>-16.3</b>	high
PE	72.1	1.5	82.5	3.1	<b>-10.4</b>	high
QC	66.2	5.9	72.3	7.7	-6.1	low
SK	63.3	3.5	68.8	4.2	<b>-5.5</b>	low
NB	67.4	3.5	71.2	3.3	-3.8	high
NS	63.6	2.7	66.2	3.4	-2.6	high
MB	61.2	4.0	60.8	6.5	0.4	high
BC	63.4	2.5	62.4	8.0	1.0	low
ON	62.8	3.6	55.7	5.1	<b>7.1</b>	high
AB	59.0	3.8	51.2	6.5	<b>7.8</b>	low

Source: Elections Canada, provincial elections agencies. Statistically significant differences in federal and provincial turnout means indicated by bold text.

Before moving on to the analysis of attitudinal correlates of second order voting behaviour, it is worth noting the extent to which patterns of high and low linkage in terms of second order voting behaviour correspond to patterns of structural indicators of linkage (party system congruence and party organizational linkage). Of the two provinces that exhibit classic ‘second order’ voter turnout patterns, Ontario also has the high-linkage features of a party system that is broadly congruent with that of the federal party system. In Alberta, we find ‘high linkage’ second order voting patterns coupled with structural indicators of low linkage: this includes its highly dissimilar party system, characterized by its one party dominance, as well as its party

organizational truncation with federal parties. Indeed, it is likely that Alberta’s long tradition of one-party dominance has played an important role in its provincial voter participation rates (see Siaroff and Wesley, this edition). Among the provinces classified as low linkage, only in Saskatchewan is this reinforced by structural incongruence. Ontario, therefore, may serve as an ideal-typical case of a high-linkage province, and Saskatchewan fits the ideal-typical case of a low-linkage province.

Finally, it is worth noting that with the exception of New Brunswick, turnout is more volatile in provincial elections than federal elections. This holds true when federal turnout rates are measured by province, as they are here, as well as when aggregated at the national level.

This suggests that the competitive context and campaign effects may have stronger mobilizational influence at the provincial than federal level. Do the high linkage and low linkage provinces differ in the attitudes that we find? We next assess five different attitudinal measures: the perceived impact of the federal and provincial levels of government, the perceived efficacy of the government (which level of government best looks after your interests), relative interest in provincial and federal politics, satisfaction with provincial and federal government and a sense of provincial grievance. Independent t tests are used to compare the scores of provinces in the high linkage and low linkage groups and assess the significance of these group differences. We find that the provinces with lower provincial turnout relative to federal turnout, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, (those with second order voting patterns) are those that have the lowest aggregate scores of perceived impact of the provincial government (Table 2). With exception of Prince Edward Island, which has a high level of perceived impact of the federal government, these provinces that are 'high linkage in terms of their voter turnout patterns have the highest assessments of federal impact.

The findings are similar when we assess respondents' perceptions of the level of government that best looks after their interests (Table 2). Again, the high linkage provinces had the lowest percentage agreeing that the provincial government best looked after their interests, and, again, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, respondents in these provinces were more likely to name the federal government as best looking after their interests.

As predicted, higher degrees of interest in provincial politics relative to

federal politics can explain high provincial election turnout relative to federal turnout (Table 2). The provinces classified as low linkage (and so not conforming to second order expectations) also exhibit the highest degree of interest in provincial politics relative to federal politics.

Canadians generally report greater satisfaction with provincial democracy than federal democracy (Table 3). In the low linkage provinces, voters tend to be more satisfied with provincial than federal democracy.

Independent t-tests confirm that there is a significant difference between the high linkage and low linkage groups of provinces in terms of aggregate scores for provincial impact, difference in interest in provincial politics compared to interest in and federal politics, and those who identify the provincial government as best looking after their interests.<sup>4</sup> Rates of satisfaction with provincial compared to federal democracy and provincial grievance are not significantly different between the two groups. We find the clearest attitudinal difference between the high and low linkage groups in terms of the proportion of people who have a greater interest in provincial politics than federal politics.

We find distinct sets of political attitudes in provinces where provincial voter turnout tends to be higher than federal voter turnout. Voters in provinces where turnout tends to be higher for provincial than federal elections generally report higher degrees of interest in provincial politics, and tend to view the provincial, rather than federal government, as having the most impact over their lives and best looking after their interests. In provinces where satisfaction with provincial democracy most outstrips satisfaction with federal



democracy, we also find high levels of provincial turnout. Turnout in provincial elections can therefore tell us something important about the state of provincial democracy and how well provincial governments connect to their citizens.

The standard 'second order' model of higher federal than subnational voter turnout suggests a form of linked political competition between two levels where the subnational level is assumed to be less important than the federal level. Other elements of the second order model hold that when voters do participate in subnational elections, they link the two levels of competition by using the subnational vote to (typically) punish a federally incumbent party. Canada presents an interesting challenge to this widely accepted way of viewing multi-level voting behaviour. We find several provinces with higher provincial than federal voter turnout, challenging a core assumption of the second order model of linked behaviour: if this turnout pattern means that voters regard the provincial arena to be a more important site of competition than the federal arena, is it difficult to then argue that provincial level vote choice is derivative of voter assessments at the federal level. It opens the possibility for voting behaviour at the provincial level that is relatively uncoupled from that at the federal level.

Interestingly, relative turnout in provincial and federal elections is not reliably predicted by whether similar parties or party systems are in place at both federal and provincial levels. In other words, federal-provincial turnout differences do not correspond very consistently with party and party system indicators of linkage. Only in Ontario (high linkage) and in Saskatchewan (low linkage) do both turnout and structural party and party system indicators of

linkage correspond. Otherwise, having a markedly different party system at the provincial level, or parties with no federal counterpart, is no guarantee that voters will be interested in provincial government or believe it to have greater impact, and, ultimately, does not necessarily translate into a tendency toward higher turnout in provincial elections.

What is clear from the survey data is that interest in provincial politics relative to federal politics is one of the strongest attitudinal dimensions of difference between the provinces with high provincial turnout relative to federal turnout. This turns out to be more consistent than measures of impact.

The Canadian case might present the study of comparative federalism with an interesting challenge to the second order thesis. In Canada, the federal and provincial levels of competition may be linked through vertical party organizational ties or through similar party systems. This does not necessarily correspond to consistently lower provincial level voter turnout. Instead, relative turnout appears to operate separately from these forms of linked political competition, driven by high levels of voter interest in provincial politics, a sense that the provincial level of government has the greatest impact on their life and that the provincial government best looks after their interests. These are the attitudinal foundations of multi-level political competition that fosters strong voter orientations toward provincial politics. It does not occur uniformly across the country and it is not always reflected by the structures of political competition, such as party system similarity.

**Table 2: Attitudes toward levels of government: perceived responsiveness, impact and interest by level of government**

Province	Level of government that best looks after interests					Level of government with greatest impact on life					Greater interest in provincial than federal government	
	Fed	Prov	Mun	Not sure	n	Fed	Prov	Mun	Not sure	n		n
NL	14.1	59.2	7.7	18.0	133	8.0	48.7	11.0	30.8	133	36.7	107
QC	10.1	68.2	9.4	11.9	1551	10.6	48.1	6.8	34.3	1551	44.6	1599
SK	16.6	56.6	6.6	19.1	262	7.2	46.3	5.8	39.0	262	22.2	207
PE	25.9	54.3	4.7	13.9	39	18.5	38.5	7.7	33.7	39	31.5	27
MB	22.6	39.8	16.4	21.2	277	21.7	30.0	8.8	36.6	277	14.2	241
<b>AB</b>	16.9	48.7	18.5	14.8	708	14.6	26.0	17.7	40.3	708	14.7	697
<b>ON</b>	21.4	42.5	19.4	16.7	2730	23.6	25.4	12.7	36.9	2730	6.9	2583
BC	20.1	47.5	13.9	17.5	873	10.9	21.9	22.8	44.4	873	16.5	873

Source: Elections Canada, provincial elections agencies. High linkage provinces are depicted in bold text. Respondents were asked the following questions: ‘In general, which government looks after your interests better, the federal government, the provincial government, the municipal government or is there not much difference?’ and ‘Which government has more impact on your life?’

**Table 3: Satisfaction with federal and provincial democracy, rank ordered from greatest to least difference between provincial and federal satisfaction, and sense of provincial grievance: percent responding that the federal government treats their province worse than other provinces**

	Satisfaction with federal democracy	Satisfaction with provincial democracy		Difference (prov – fed satisfaction)	% reporting grievance	
	% very or fairly satisfied	% very or fairly satisfied	n			n
NL	59.7	75.6	107	15.9	68.8	27
QC	50.7	64.8	1599	14.1	54.6	107
SK	71.5	80.9	207	9.4	39.4	1599
MB	66.7	73.0	241	6.3	28.9	207
ON	60.2	66.1	2559	5.9	32.6	241
BC	47.5	52.7	873	5.2	43.6	2583
AB	66.0	69.1	697	3.1	41.4	873

High linkage provinces depicted in bold text. Columns present percentage responding that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with democracy at that level of government and percentage reporting a sense of provincial grievance.

### Works Cited

Anderson, Cameron. 2006. Economic Voting and Multilevel Governance: A Comparative Individual-Level Analysis. *American Journal of Political Science* 50:449-63.

Anderson, Christopher and Daniel Ward. 1996. Barometer Elections in Comparative Perspective. *Electoral Studies* 15(4):447-460.

Anderson, Christopher and Christopher Wlezien. 1997. The Economics of Politics in Comparative Perspective Revisited: An Introduction. *Political Behavior* 19(1):1-5.

Blais, Andre. 2000. *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Blake, Donald. 1982. The Consistency of Inconsistency: Party Identification in Federal and Provincial Politics. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 15(4):691-710.

Chhibber, Pradeep and Ken Kollman. 2004. *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India and the United States*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ebeid, Michael and Jonathan Rodden. 2006. Economic Geography and Economic Voting: Evidence from the U.S. States. *British Journal of Political Science* 36:527-47.

van der Eijk, Cees and Mark Franklin. 1996. *Choosing Europe? The European electorate and national politics in the face of union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

van der Eijk, Cees, Mark Franklin and Michael Marsh. 1996. What Voters Teach Us About Europe-wide Elections. What Europe-wide Elections Teach Us About Voters. *Electoral Studies* 15(2):149-166.

Filippov, Mikhail, Peter Ordeshook and Olga Shvetsova. 2004. *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Franklin, Mark. 2004. *Voter turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gélineau, François and Éric Bélanger. 2005. Electoral Accountability in a Federal System: National and Provincial Economic Voting in Canada. *Publius*, 35(3): 407-24.
- Gélineau, François and Karen Remmer. 2006. Political Decentralization and Electoral Accountability: The Argentine Experience, 1983-2001. *British Journal of Political Science*, 36(1):133-57.
- Jeffery, Charlie and Dan Hough. 2009. Understanding Post-Devolution Elections in Scotland and Wales in Comparative Perspective. *Party Politics* 15(2):219-240.
- León, Sandra. 2012. How does decentralization affect electoral competition of state-wide parties? Evidence from Spain. *Party Politics* online first, 26 February 2012.
- Lipset, S.M. 1960. *Political Man: the social bases of politics*. New York: Doubleday.
- Martinez, Michael. 1990. Partisan Reinforcement in Context and Cognition: Canadian Federal Partisanship, 1974-7. *American Journal of Political Science* 34(3):322-45.
- Powell, G.B. and Whitten, G.D. 1993. A cross-national analysis of economic voting: taking account of political context. *American Journal of Political Science* 37(2): 391-414.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. Tuning in, Tuning Out; The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *PS: Politics and Political Science* 28: 664-683.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Reif K and H Schmidt. 1980. Nine Second-Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results, *European Journal of Political Research* 8(1):3-45.
- Rodden, Jonathan and Erik Wibbels. 2011. Dual accountability and the nationalization of party competition: Evidence from four federations. *Party Politics* 17(5):629-653.
- Schakel, Arjan. 2011. Congruence Between Regional and National Elections. *Comparative Political Studies*. Online First, published 18 October 2011.
- Stewart, David, and R. Kenneth Carty. 2006. Many Political Worlds? Provincial Parties and Party Systems. In *Provinces: Canadian Provincial Politics*, edited by C. Dunn. 2nd Ed. Peterborough: Broadview.
- Stewart, Marianne and Clarke, Harold. 1998. The Dynamics of Party Identification in Federal Systems: The Canadian Case. *American Journal of Political Science* 42(1):97-116.
- Studler, D.T. 2001. Canadian Exceptionalism: Explaining Differences over Time in Provincial and Federal Voter Turnout. *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 34(2):299-319.
- Thorlakson, Lori. 2007. An institutional explanation of party system congruence: Evidence from six federations. *European Journal of Political Research* 46(1), 69-95.
- Thorlakson, Lori. 2009. Patterns of party integration, influence and autonomy in seven federations. *Party Politics* 15(2):157-178.
- Uslaner, Eric. 1990. Splitting Image: Partisan Affiliations in Canada's 'Two Political Worlds'. *American Journal of Political Science* 34(4):961-81.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Schlozman and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wolinetz, Steven and Ken Carty. 2006. Disconnected competition in Canada. In

*Devolution and electoral politics*, edited by  
Dan Hough and Charlie Jeffery.  
Manchester: Manchester University Press.

---

provincial democracy relative to satisfaction with federal democracy,  $t = .700$ , two-tailed significance = .534, 3 degrees of freedom. For provincial grievance,  $t = 1.111$ , two-tailed significance = .348, 3 degrees of freedom.

---

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Dissimilarity between federal and provincial party systems can be a structural impediment to the formation and maintenance of consistent partisan identifications at the federal and provincial levels (Blake, 1982). Logically, dissimilar party systems and parties could also impede barometer voting. (In fact Jeffery and Hough (1999) exclude the case of Canada from their comparison of barometer voting because party system dissimilarity makes it difficult to assess). Schakel (2011) finds that low turnout is associated with party system congruence (a structural indicator of high linkage). Partisan relations between levels of government have been found to be an important factor in the development of linkage (Rodden and Wibbels, 2011:19). It is argued that parties that are vertically integrated across levels of government encourage voters, as well as party members, to forge an allegiance with the party as a whole, rather than only with one particular level of the organization (Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova, 2004:190).

<sup>2</sup> Decentralization has been found to affect other forms of linkage, too, for example by weakening national coattails effects in voting (Léon, 2012) and impeding the development of nationalized party systems (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are excluded from the analysis. CPEP data was not available for these provinces at the time of writing.

<sup>4</sup> For the percentage expressing higher interest in politics at the provincial level than at other levels,  $t=3.119$ , two-tailed significance = 0.053 with 3 degrees of freedom. The difference between high and low linkage provinces for those naming the provincial government as having the highest impact on their life,  $t=4.269$ , two-tailed significance = 0.024, 3 degrees of freedom. For the percentage responding that the provincial government best looks after their interests,  $t = 4.707$ , two-tailed significance = .018, 3 degrees of freedom. For satisfaction with