

8-14-2022

“Analysing the Gap” If and What is Causing the Gap in Voter Turn Out Between National and Local Elections

Max Rubin
Western University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/lgp-mrps>



Part of the [Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rubin, Max, "“Analysing the Gap” If and What is Causing the Gap in Voter Turn Out Between National and Local Elections" (2022). *MPA Major Research Papers*. 239.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/lgp-mrps/239>

This Major Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Local Government Program at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in MPA Major Research Papers by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

“Analysing the Gap”

If and What is Causing the Gap in Voter Turn Out Between National and Local Elections

Subject keywords: Elections, Turnout, Election Factors

Geographical Keywords: Toronto, Windsor, Oakville, Mississauga, Haldimand, Norfolk,
Stratford, Perth-Wellington

MRP Research Report

Submitted to

The Local Government Program
Department of Political Science
The University of Western Ontario

Max B. Rubin
August 2022

Analysing the Gap - Introduction

Table of Contents

Overview	3
Defining Turnout	5
Dependent Variable: 2011 and 2015 Federal Elections	10
Turnout Indicators	11
Size of Municipality/History of Amalgamation	11
Percentage of Home voters, Percentage of Immigration	12
Closeness of the result/Competitiveness of the Race, Government Structure, Incumbency	13
Research Design	15
Data Analysis Plan	17
Riding Profiles	18
Beach-East York	21
Windsor West	22
Oakville.....	24
Haldimand-Norfolk.....	26
Perth-Wellington.....	28
Data Analysis.....	28
A New Indicator?.....	35
Conclusions	36
Works Cited.....	39

Overview

Local governments touch citizens' lives every day. They build and repair the roads we drive on. They pick up our garbage and recycling that we place on our curbs. They build and maintain green space and ensure water comes from our taps. Each day a citizen in a municipality relies on a feature of their local government works.

In contrast, our federal government is remote. They deal with national issues such as the environment, defence, and fisheries. They work on global, not local, agreements and relationships with other national governments. Yes, they set out income tax and regulations, but for the average citizen, their decisions and actions do not impact their everyday life. For example, they do not clear the trash away, and they do not cut the grass.

Despite local government having more direct impacts on everyday citizens' lives, turnout for national elections is significantly higher than local elections. Why is it that when it comes to the ballot box, citizens, in more significant numbers, vote for governments more remote from their daily lives? **Why does the gap exist?** Further, is the turnout gap consistent across regions? Do we see a similar gap in urban communities, as we do rural or suburban? Does the size of the municipality matter? Does the turnout gap have to do with the issues in the municipality? The number of candidates? The structure of the council? The voting system? Voting hours and advance poll availability? What role does the make-up of the community have to play in creating this turnout gap? Is there a difference between areas with high newcomer rates versus established communities? Perhaps it is not just the make-up of the electorate that changes participation in it that would establish the size of the gap. This study

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

will review these various factors and their impact on voter turnout. This study will further discuss how Local government may benefit from these findings to understand and possibly address voter turnout gap.

After defining the term “turnout,” this paper will use compare municipal election turnout in six different federal ridings in Ontario. Municipal elections held across Ontario in 2010 and 2014 will be compared to turnout in national elections in 2011 and 2015. This comparison will be determining the turnout gap. This analysis will seek to understand why there is a difference in the municipal election turnout versus other areas compared to their federal turnout by using these points of analysis:

- Size of Municipality/History of Amalgamation
- Percentage of Homeowners
- Percentage of Immigration
- Closeness of the result/Competitiveness of the Race
- Government Structure (at large versus constituency member)
- Incumbency (is one of the candidates running for re-election)
- Voting Options (in person, telephone, online voting)
- Number of Voting Days

While this research looks to understand if and why there is a gap in our national versus local elections, one can ask why does it matter? Why is understanding and possibly closing the gap significant for local government officials?

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

The simple answer: elections matter. Low voter turnout in municipal elections is re-electing incumbents that do not always represent the change demographics of the community (Grenier, 2011). For example, despite the population of Toronto being a minority-majority, the council is predominantly male-dominated, with only a handful of members of colour. That is, the council does not reflect the diversity of the community it represents. In contrast, federally it is possible that higher turnout, aided by a party apparatus, is including more diversity in elected candidates.

While this lack of representation may be a social issue and academic argument, the reality is that individuals' backgrounds and experiences shape their decision-making. Suppose a council does not reflect the citizenry of the municipality. In that case, there is a likelihood that the decisions made by the same body will not reflect the interests of the wider population. Such a divide can create a disconnect between citizens and their council and municipal institutions and, in turn, create distrust in those same institutions by those who feel disenfranchised. This distrust is widely seen today throughout all of our politics. As such, looking at and understanding the voter turnout gap and, in turn, trying to close it could perhaps reverse the tide. By closing the gap and increasing turnout, we could see reforms that could build trust in our municipal systems.

Defining Turnout

Before measuring the difference in turnout, it is important to define how this study will measure turnout. Indeed, there is a myriad of ways to do it. Three main ways to determine turnout are registered electors, eligible voters, and post-election surveys.

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

Elections Canada determines the official turnout for federal elections by dividing the number of votes by the number of registered electors (Elections Canada, Estimation of Voter Turnout by Age Group and Gender at the 2011 Federal General Election 2012 “Elections Canada 2012”). This “official turnout” method is used not just by Elections Canada but often by media and other sources when stating the election turnout on their broadcast, news articles, or websites (Elections Canada, 2012).

This method of calculating turnout only uses electors. Electors are those found on the national register of electors. This registry, created in 1997, is a permanent database of Canadians qualified to vote in federal elections and referendums (Elections Canada, 2012). The information for this registry comes from a variety of sources, including the Canadian Revenue Agency, in which individuals can opt in to the registry; Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada which adds mostly new Canadians who can opt in to the list; provincial and territorial driver’s licenses agencies; provincial permanent voter lists; and self-registration (Elections Canada). It is also notable that while Elections Canada gathers the information from various sources, it also provides the same information back to the provinces, that use it to update their electoral rolls (Elections Canada, 2012). Local governments then use these provincial roles for their elections.

Elections Canada notes that each year, the national registry of electors will change by approximately 14% (Elections Canada, National Register). These changes come in address changes, people reaching 18, new citizens, and deaths. Elections Canada believes that as of November 2020, the national registry covers approximately 96% of the voting population. (Elections Canada, National Register).

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

One alternative, and a method used by Elections Canada when completing their estimation of voter turnout by age group and gender after a federal election, is to consider the number of Canadians over 18 and divide that by the number of votes cast. This calculation is what Elections Canada calls the “adjusted” national turnout (Elections Canada, 2012).

To demonstrate the difference between the “official” and “adjusted” turnout, consider the following: in 2011, the official national turnout was 61.1%, but the adjusted national turnout figure was 58.5%. In 2015, the official national turnout was 68.3%, while the adjusted national turnout was 66.1% (Elections Canada, 2016). Why the difference? In their 2011 post-election studies, which aim to estimate turnout, Elections Canada states that only using registered electors, rather than all eligible electors, will bias the turnout result when broken down by age or making comparisons over time for the following three reasons:

1. Younger voters are less likely to register as electors than older voters; as such, they are not counted in the official methods.
2. The coverage of the national registry changes over time and can be influenced by the input sources. For example, trying to include more individuals by updating the information from one source, such as seniors receiving government benefits through the CRA, may, in turn, reduce overall turnout from that age group as greater efforts were made to capture that population from the past.
3. Many electors are added to the national registry on voting day. As such, non-voters could be under-represented on the registry, making turnout appear higher (Elections Canada, 2012).

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

For these reasons, Elections Canada, for their study, uses population estimates from Statistics Canada's latest census. First, they calculate the eligible voters by adjusting the information from Statistics Canada to include only citizens, those eligible to vote, who are 18 years old as of polling day. Then, to apply that information to the study, Elections Canada determines who likely cast a ballot on election day based on what demographic group they are in, with older Canadians more likely to cast a ballot (Elections Canada, 2012). From this information, they have a sample election turn out from this information which can determined an estimate of the turnout for each demographic group and riding based on who voted (Elections Canada, 2016). In other words, they took the population of Canada over 18 and eligible to vote (citizens) and, based on a sample of who voted in the election and which age bracket they fell into, created a more accurate representation of turnout.

Capturing the age demographic matters because Elections Canada, from its sample of voters, can determine the total number of eligible voters in each demographic group and adjust turnout for that age group to be more accurate than simply calculating it by registered electors. That is, this method provides insight not only into total turnout, but also into who is voting. Both post-election studies in 2011 and 2015 show that by using the adjusted method, you can better determine the increase or decrease in a specific voting demographic, most importantly young people who are voting for the first-time vs those not voting for the first time (Elections Canada, 2012; Elections Canada, 2016). From this information, Elections Canada can better accurately compare voter turnout over elections and use the information to better target voter information campaigns to increase turnout levels.

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

The final method of collecting turnout is through post-election surveys. Both Elections Canada studies state that using survey-based studies will often overestimate participation. Berent, Krosnick, and Lupia, in their article “Measuring Voters Registration and Turnout in Surveys,” analyze the American National Election Study’s (ANES) effectiveness in turnout validation, i.e., how many people voted in elections (Berent et al., 2016). The authors postulate that survey results of voters will overestimate turnout based on survey bias and respondents lying about voting. Their analysis proved that the accuracy of survey information to determine turnout all depends on how you use the data (Berent et al., 2016). If you use the raw data unchecked from government records, the results from the ANES in 2008-2008 showed survey results with a turnout level of 30% higher than actual turnout. However, that number was reduced to 6% when the results were compared to those with a government record, which confirmed their voting intention (Berent et al., 2016). Combining the survey results with government records, which can sometimes be improperly coded (individuals who voted were coded as not voting or vice versa), creates a more stable picture of turnout, but only for those with a government record. Thought without a government record, new voters, were not as easily verified or captured (Berent et al., 2016).

The researchers stressed that survey results suffer from two sources of survey bias. The first bias comes from comparing surveyed individual responses to government records which could reduce the over-estimation. The second bias comes from a sampling error that respondents in a survey versus non-respondents were more likely to state they voted, creating an overestimation (Berent et al., 2016). These two biases, downward and upward, exemplify the challenge of identifying an accurate measure of turnout from respondents to a survey. In addition, the researchers argue that while self-reports can lead to some people

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

lying about their voting intentions, government records can also have problems such as improperly coding individuals' voting records. As they put it, “[T]he former inflates sample registration rates, and the latter attenuates those rates (Berent et al., 2016).” So, while this research does not fully qualify Elections Canada’s belief that survey results only overestimate voter turnout, it does not dispel the doubt that survey results can predict voter turnout as accurately as other methods, such as the adjusted method.

With this understanding of the three methods of turnout validation, this analysis uses the adjusted turnout method using population data from the 2011 census, specifically the 2011 National Householder Survey, when determining turnout in the federal elections. In addition, where eligible populations are available for local elections, that information will also be used to determine turnout.

Dependent Variable: 2011 and 2015 Federal Elections

The 2011 and 2015 federal elections can both be classified as significant elections. In 2011, not only did the minority conservative government become a majority government, it also saw the collapse of the Liberal Party of Canada vote share and the New Democratic Party of Canada becoming the official opposition for the first time in Canadian History. While this is mostly due to a massive shift in voter preference in Quebec, the Conservative Party of Canada made significant gains in Ontario due to the vote splitting between the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party of Canada (Grenier, 2021).

The 2015 election is what is known as a change election. This election saw the election of a new government. The third-place liberal party won the election leapfrogging over the official

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

opposition new democratic party and ending almost nine years of conservative government (Grenier, 2021).

Elections Canada saw a significant increase in voter participation between the 2011 and 2015 elections. As mentioned above and using what Elections Canada calls the adjusted turnout method, all eligible voters, Canadians over 18 years old, are counted, and turnout between the two elections grew by 7.6% (Elections Canada, 2016). While this swing was not uniform across all the ridings across the country, it will be interesting to see how much turnout grew at the municipal election when a non-incumbent is elected to power for the first time.

Turnout Indicators

These eight indicators were chosen based on a literature review on turnout in municipal elections. Below, I discuss the articles that informed the choices of these indicators

Size of Municipality/History of Amalgamation

Gendźwiłł and Kjaer's "Mind the Gap!" article questions whether the size of the municipality itself will affect the difference between national and local turnout (Gendźwiłł & Kjaer, 2020). The authors postulate that citizens who lived in large urban areas would feel less connected to their local government than in small communities. They believed that the smaller the community, the higher the turnout (Gendźwiłł & Kjaer, 2020).

In their research on the local voter turnout, Allers, Natris, Rienks, and Greefask, if smaller communities will yield higher turnouts, entitling their paper "Is Small Beautiful?" Their research on local elections between 1986 and 2018 in the Netherlands focuses on the concern

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

that amalgamation, making municipalities, has hurt voter turnout (Allers et al., 2021). Like Gendźwiłł and Kjaer, they worry that as communities become larger, voters feel less engaged (Gendźwiłł & Kjaer, 2020). Regarding amalgamation specifically, the worry is that as communities become larger, voters will no longer see their vote as an effective tool to enact change (Allers et al., 2021). The authors wonder if amalgamation can result in some historical communities feeling left out or overwhelmed by a new larger city. Where these historical communities had consensus, it can be lost in a new larger amalgamated community. They can feel as though a new identity is being imposed on them, and they have no ability to change it or the direction of the new larger community (Allers et al., 2021). In addition, the authors point out that the amalgamation process itself, if not successfully done, will leave voters disenchanted and confused as to what the new city will do for them (Allers et al., 2021). Unsurprisingly, their research showed that amalgamation harmed voter turnout vis-à-vis smaller communities untouched by amalgamation or large amounts of growth (Allers et al., 2021).

Percentage of Home voters, Percentage of Immigration

Siemiatycki and Marshall, in "Who Votes in Toronto Municipal Elections?" try to determine who votes in Toronto's local elections (Siemiatycki & Marshall, 2014). Their research over municipal elections in 2003, 2006, and 2010 confirmed that homeowners (homevoters) will outvote non-homeowners in local elections. More interesting, they looked to see how levels of immigration in a community affects voter turnout (Siemiatycki & Marshall, 2014). Their research showed that the larger the immigrant population in an area, the lower the turnout vis-à-vis more established communities. They found that this indicator was more important than socio-economic factors and homeownership (Siemiatycki & Marshall, 2014).

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

Closeness of the result/Competitiveness of the Race, Government Structure, Incumbency
In "Big City, Big Turnout? Electoral Participation in American Cities," Caren reviewed local elections in 38 of America's largest cities over the past 25 years (Caren, 2007). In their research, Caren identified that the closeness of the race and the governance model (ward systems versus large councils) were the most vital indicators of likely voter turnout (Caren, 2007). While Caren also indicated that partisanship and the existence of a city manager were also important factors, neither will be used in this analysis as parties are not officially allowed to participate in municipal elections. Additionally, every municipality in the study has a clerk or CAO.

Sandra Breux's research in "Turnout in Local Elections: Evidence from Canadian Cities, 2004–2014" echoes Caren's findings that size and competition matter (Breux et al., 2017). In reviewing 300 elections across 100 cities, she made the following three hypotheses as to turnout: (1) size matters: as the city grows, turn out will decrease; (2) competition matters: the more competitive the race, with more candidates, and at least one of them being a woman, will result in a higher turnout (Breux et al., 2017). Incumbency, on the other hand, will depress turnout, especially if they have served multiple terms; and (3) structure matters: longer office terms will result in higher turnout, and ward base systems will have higher turnout rates than large systems (Breux et al., 2017).

Breux's research showed that, contrary to others, there is some evidence, though not consistent, that larger municipalities will often have a larger turnout due to the media covering larger city elections that is equal to national elections. While other authors base this

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

inconsistency on the level of homeownership, with homeowners voting more often than renters due to their sensitivity to property tax issues in larger cities. However, Breux found that, regarding competitiveness, notably a larger pool of women candidates, will drive up turnout, especially if incumbents are not standing (Breux et al., 2017).

Voting Options, Voting Days

While not found in the literature directly, this analysis will also determine if there is a difference in the national and local elections due to voting options and number of voting days. For example, does more accessible options, such as voting by phone or online make a difference? Do more voting days in advance polls and election days mean higher turnout? These numerical indicators, options in voting and voting days, will help demonstrate if there are technical options, not just qualitative points, that result in a higher or lower turnout.

If there is a correlation, these indicators will be the easiest to implement to drive up voter turnout in local elections. These two indicators (voting options and voting days) are well within the municipalities control. That is, they can control how people vote and how many advance poll days are available. In contrast, they cannot control the other indicators considered in this analysis. Municipalities in Ontario are creatures of the province. They cannot change the borders of their council structure. They cannot control immigration, nor can they control homeowner rates. It is for these reasons that the study includes these two factors.

To summarize the literature review, most often, population makeup is more important than the size of the electorate (Siemiatycki & Marshall, 2014). Competitiveness of the election is

Analysing the Gap – Turnout Indicators

key. A lack of incumbents and the presence of a female candidate will likely drive-up turnout (Caren, 2007). Political culture matters: is the municipality newly formed? Does it have historical voting patterns in social norms that engage participation? How much do voters see a connection to local government and see their vote as a vehicle for action and possible change (Gendzwill, 2019, Allers et al., 2021)? Finally, political institutions have an effect. Ward systems will draw a higher turnout than large systems (Caren, 2007). The number of voting days, the voting times, and amount of polling stations will affect turnout. These observations serve as the basis for my hypotheses.

This analysis will seek to understand if and why there is a voter turnout gap between municipal and federal elections within different regions of Ontario. The study will compare turnout over two federal and two municipal elections, with the two sets held within one year. An objective of this study is that this method will help determine if any trend emerges over the 5-year period that helps explain which factors play a larger role in municipal elections. It will be important to keep an open mind about which factors will play a role in turnout. The literature above shows that the expected hypothesis may bear out in some areas but not others. Therefore, it will be important to be open-minded to the possible results and even expect possible conflicting results between the study areas.

Research Design

As stated above, to understand the turnout gap between local and national turnout and its causes that result in varying gaps between municipalities, this study will compare municipal

Analysing the Gap – Research Design

and federal election turnout levels using two examples from three distinct urban, suburban, and rural areas.

The unit of analysis will be at the municipal level. This analysis aims to match ward or municipality borders to federal electoral districts. In the rural analysis, federal riding will likely comprise many municipalities. Therefore, the analysis will look at the municipal election turnouts within one federal electoral district in these areas. The study will then use the eight factors described above to try and determine if any affect the difference between municipal turnouts-à-vis federal turnout.

As Canada has historically seen high federal election turnout in comparison to municipal election turnout, this dependent variable will be effective at showing what is likely the high-water mark of voter turnout in the region. Additionally, federal elector lists are the sources of municipal lists in determining the eligible voter population in any federal electoral area. Using census and national household survey information will help determine the eligible elector pool in each federal riding. This decision will help determine more accurately how much of that eligible voter pool turned out.

To try and determine turnout trends, this study will use multi-case longitudinal research. For example, comparing trends over two municipal and two federal election cycles, one year apart in both instances, will yield better and more accurate results. Also, by using multiple cases, two areas for each area type, the study can identify regional trends or trends common across all three areas of study.

Analysing the Gap – Research Design

The analysis will use both qualitative and quantitative sources. It will be based on data gathered from the central municipal election database and qualitative data from Statistics Canada Census information, specifically census tracts that overlay the chosen electoral study area and information from the 2011 National Householder Survey. Individual surveys are hard to come by in municipal elections, so this study's analysis is based on aggregated data from the census information where local information was not provided. The census data will also inform what factors could have contributed to voter turnout at the municipal level.

While the census data will tell us much about the population voting, this study will also seek information about the municipalities being reviewed, including the number of candidates, incumbents, and council structure. It will also be essential to understand the number of elected offices if the municipalities are single or multi-tiered and their authority regarding their citizens and taxing power. This study will review secondary sources to determine and review what issues were at play in the municipal and federal elections. This information will also show the level of competition in the municipal election, whether at the ward or mayoral level. As demonstrated in the literature, competition can significantly affect turnout.

The three information sources, census data, municipal information, and secondary sources, will contribute to determining what affects municipal turnout vis-à-vis federal election turnout, and if the same factors are present in the different municipalities.

Data Analysis Plan

This study has chosen six federal ridings, and within those riding, local counterparts from which to measure the turn out gap. 2011 census information, specifically, the 2011 National

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

Household Survey, helped identify the eligible voter pool for each riding. The federal election turnout figure will be the **dependent variable** in both the 2011 and 2015 elections.

The **independent variables** that could affect turnout are:

- Size of Municipality/History of Amalgamation
- Percentage of Homeowners
- Percentage of Immigration
- The closeness of the result/Competitiveness of the Race
- Government Structure (at large versus constituency member)
- Incumbency (is one of the candidates running for re-election)
- Voting Options (in person, telephone, online voting)
- Voting Days

The literature review suggested that these independent factors are possible factors that can positively or negatively affect turnout. Therefore, the study will use these factors to analyze the municipal and federal elections to see if they affect one or both election turnout outcomes. In addition, all these factors will be compared over the four election cycles to see if there are differences between federal and municipal elections and the various study areas.

Riding Profiles

This section describes the six federal Ontario ridings that are the subject of the analysis. **Table 1** sets out the census data for each of the six ridings. This data includes the number of eligible voters, which is everyone in the riding that is 18 or older as of the 2011 National Householder Survey. The table also states the percentage of immigrants in the federal riding and how many

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

of the populations are homeowners according to the same 2011 National Householder Survey. Please note that in all instances, the National Householder Survey and Census data information comes from the riding information after the 2012 re-distribution. The ridings chosen did not change in re-distribution, save for the riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, which changed slightly in size, becoming smaller by three thousand eligible voters. Therefore, in this instance, the eligible voting population in 2011 may be slightly underestimated.

The table also outlines the margin of victory in the 2011 and 2015 Federal Elections and the 2010 and 2014 Municipal Elections (Elections Canada, 2011; Elections Canada, 2015). These figures represent the difference between the first and second place contenders based on the total vote cast, not turnout. Except for Toronto, federal and municipal boundaries do not overlap. In these instances, wards that were whole within the federal riding were used as the unit of analysis. In the larger rural riding, mayoral elections for the largest counties and cities were used as the unit of analysis. The table also states the number of voting days, a combination of advance polls and election day voting days where such information could be found.

Below the table are individual descriptions of the federal ridings and the municipal units of analysis. These profiles provide information regarding the other indicators mentioned above, including incumbency, municipal size and history, council structure, and voting options.

Table 1: NHS Data/Election Results

	Beaches-East York ¹	Windsor West ²	Oakville ³	Mississauga Cooksville ⁴ East--	Haldimand-Norfolk ⁵	Perth-Wellington ⁶
Eligible Voters	75,330	83,475	85,590	81,355	81,900	75,155
Percentage of Homeowners	58%	62%	80%	62%	82%	77%
Percentage of Immigrants	33%	30%	31%	59%	10%	8%
2011 Federal Margin of Victory ⁷	11%	23%	21%	1.5%	26%	33%
2015 Federal Margin of Victory ⁷	19%	39%	13%	19%	7.5%	5%
2010 Municipal Margin of Victory ⁷	52%/40%	.1%/30%/5%	39%/1%	60%	7%/32%	58%
2014 Municipal Margin of Victory ⁷	43%/47%	11%/6%/3%	66%/3%	66%	27%/13%	71%
Number of Fed Voting Days 2011	4	4	4	4	4	4
Number of Fed Voting Days 2015	5	5	5	5	5	5
Number of Local Voting Days 2010	9	6	11	3	N/A	N/A
Number of Local Voting Days 2014	7	6	13	7	N/A	N/A

¹Ward 31 and 32 in the City of Toronto ((City of Toronto, 2022)

²Ward 2, 3, 10 in the City of Windsor ((City of Windsor, 2010; City of Windsor 2014)

³Ward 2 and 3 in the Town of Oakville (Town of Oakville)

⁴Ward 3 in the City of Mississauga (City of Mississauga, 2010; City of Mississauga, 2014)

⁵Mayoral Race for the Country of Haldimand and County of Norfolk (Ohbadmin, 2010; Norfolk County 2014; Wikipedia as no official source was available)

⁶Mayoral Race for the City of Stratford (City of Stratford, 2010; City of Stratford, 2014)

⁷This figure is the difference in vote between the first and second place candidate, not overall voting total.

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

Beach-East York

The riding of Beaches-East York is in the east end of Toronto. It is the furthest eastern riding of the city before entering Scarborough. The riding itself used to be part of the city of East York, one of the six municipalities that formed the amalgamated City of Toronto in 1997. Before the City of Toronto changed its ward boundaries in 2018, the federal riding of Beaches-East York was represented by two city councilors in Ward 31 and Ward 32. The two wards together full represent the single federal riding.

Table 2: Turnout for Ward 31

Ward 31	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	37,665	75,330	37,665	75,330
Turnout	47%	65%	54%	74%
% of Homeowners	55%	55%	55%	55%
% of Immigration	33%	33%	33%	33%
Closeness	52%	11%	43%	19%
Incumbent	Yes/Won	Yes/Lost	Yes/Won	Yes/Lost
Voting Days	9	4	7	5

¹This number is 50% of the total eligible voter population

Table 3 Turnout for Ward 32

Ward 32	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	37,665	75,330	37,665	75,330
Turnout	62%	65%	69%	74%
% of Homeowners	61%	55%	61%	55%
% of Immigration	33%	33%	33%	33%
Closeness	40%	11%	47%	19%
Incumbent	Yes/Lost	Yes/Lost	Yes/Won	Yes/Lost
Voting Days	9	4	7	5

¹This number is 50% of the total eligible voter population of 75,330

Table 2 and Table 3 above give an overview of six of the eight indicators for each municipal ward. As for the remaining two, Toronto is a ward-based system, electing one member, on a first past the post system, to be their councillor. This is the same method for electing a member of parliament. As for voting options, it was done in person or by proxy. Limited electronic voting was allowed for disabled individuals in the 2014 election.

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

For turnout, the total eligible voting population was divided between the two wards. However, combining the two wards, the total turnout in 2010 was 54%, and in 2014 it was 62%. Both these figures and the individual ward figures fell below the federal turnout levels of 65% and 75% for the federal riding.

Windsor West

A majority of the city of Windsor, the federal riding of Windsor West covers the western half of the City of Windsor, including the two border crossings with the United States and the downtown of the city. The City of Windsor itself neighbours two other small municipalities and is the sole single-tier municipality within the region of Essex. However, it should be noted that the City of Windsor never amalgamated with its neighbours Tecumseh or LaSalle.

Table 4: Turnout for Ward 2

Ward 2	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	15,155	83,475	15,210	83,475
Turnout	34%	48%	28%	58%
% of Homeowners	62%	62%	62%	62%
% of Immigration	30%	30%	30%	30%
Closeness	.1%	23%	11%	39%
Incumbent	Yes/Won	Yes/Won	No	Yes/Won
Voting Days	6	4	6	5

¹Due to the size of the ward within the federal riding, registered voters were used to determine turnout

Table 5: Turnout for Ward 3

Ward 3	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	15112	83,475	15756	83,475
Turnout	34%	48%	28%	58%
% of Homeowners	62%	62%	62%	62%
% of Immigration	30%	30%	30%	30%
Closeness	30%	30%	6%	39%
Incumbent	Yes/Won	Yes/Won	No	Yes/Won
Voting Days	6	4	6	5

¹Due to the size of the ward within the federal riding, registered voters were used to determine turnout

Table 6: Turnout for Ward 10

Ward 10	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	25,158	83,475	13868	83,475
Turnout	34%	48%	43%	58%
% of Homeowners	62%	62%	62%	62%
% of Immigration	30%	30%	30%	30%
Closeness	5%	23%	3%	39%
Incumbent	No	Yes/Won	Yes/Lost	Yes/Won
Voting Days	6	4	6	5

¹Due to the size of the ward within the federal riding, registered voters were used to determine turnout

Tables 4, 5, and 6 give an overview of Wards 2, 3, and 10. These wards were chosen as all of them lie within the federal riding. As it will be seen with the remaining ridings, unfortunately, there are no specific census tracts or census areas for these specific wards. Therefore, for turnout, only registered voters are used. Even using registered voters, which often inflates the turnout figures, a significant difference is observed between the federal and municipal turnout in all three wards, with wards 2 and 3 having the lowest turnouts, 34% and 28%, in 2010 and 2014 municipal elections compared to 48% and 58% in the 2011 and 2015 federal elections. It should also be noted that even in a change election, in which a new councillor was elected in 2014 in both wards 2 and 3, turnout decreased from 2010.

The exception is ward 10, which had a turnover in 2010 and 2014. Ward 10 was the only ward not to return an incumbent running for re-election (Fantoni , 2014). The incumbent in question was the subject of financial impropriety, which may have increased turnout. Though even with an increased turnout, there is a difference of over 10%, with a turnout level of 34% and 43% in the 2010 and 2014 municipal elections, respectively versus 48% and 58% in the 2011 and 2015 federal elections, respectively.

As for structure, the city of Windsor split its multi-member wards in 2010 to form ten new wards of the existing five. The new ward boundaries were used for this study. Finally, it should be noted that voters in Windsor voted by paper ballot at the advance poll and election day, as was the case in the federal elections.

Oakville

The City of Oakville is a suburb of Toronto, located in the Halton Region, southwest of Toronto along Lake Ontario. Oakville’s council is a ward-based system. Voters cast their ballots in person. The Oakville federal riding was split into two ridings, in 2015, with the northern half of the city part of the new riding with north Burlington, its southwestern neighbour community. While provincial politicians have discussed possible amalgamation, Oakville remains a lower-tier municipality within the region of Halton (Town of Oakville, 2019). As a result, Oakville is considered part of the GTA.

Oakville is known for being a bellwether riding. It is electing government members more often than not in its electoral history. In 2011 it re-elected a conservative MP to be part of the new majority government. During the change election in 2015, it elected a Liberal MP to be part of the new Liberal government. Municipally, this analysis focuses on ward two and ward 3, which are entirely within the Oakville riding in both 2011 and 2015.

Table 7: Turnout for Ward 2

Ward 2	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	14,039	85,590	14,039	85,590
Turnout	43%	68%	30%	76%
% of Homeowners	80%	80%	80%	80%
% of Immigration	31%	31%	31%	31%
Closeness	39%	11%	66%	19%
Incumbent	No	Yes/Win	Yes/Won	Yes/Lost
Voting Days	13	4	11	5

¹ Due to the size of the ward within the federal riding, registered voters were used to determine turnout

Table 8: Turnout for Ward 3

Ward 3	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	18,559	85,590	18,559	85,590
Turnout	42%	68%	34%	76%
% of Homeowners	80%	80%	80%	80%
% of Immigration	31%	31%	31%	31%
Closeness	1%	11%	3%	19%
Incumbent	Yes/Win	Yes/Win	No	Yes/Lost
Voting Days	13	4	11	5

¹Due to the size of the ward within the federal riding, registered voters were used to determine turnout. Additionally, 2014 registered voter information could not be found, and 2010 information was used in that year.

Reviewing tables 7 and 8, we see municipal turnout rates far below those of the federal elections. In 2010, there were similar turnout rates in wards 2 and 3 of 43% and 42%, respectively. That is over 20% lower than the federal turnout rate of 68%. In 2014 we see another low municipal turnout of 30% and 34%, respectively, while the following year saw 76% of residents voting in the federal election. Despite the low turnout, it is interesting to see that in ward 3, an increase in turnout in 2010 versus 2014 correlated to a much closer race in 2010 versus 2014.

Mississauga East—Cooksville

Located in the west part of the City of Mississauga and bordering the City of Toronto, Mississauga-East Cooksville is one of the many suburban ridings of the 905 that encircle the City of Toronto. The City of Mississauga, known today, was created through amalgamation in 1968. Composed of 11 single-member wards elected by paper ballot in person, this analysis focuses on Ward 3, one of the many wards in the federal riding but the only one entirely in it. Conveniently, the city produced census information for each ward providing this study with a

more accurate picture of turnout. It should be noted that of all the ridings being studied to understand the turnout gap, Mississauga East—Cooksville has the largest immigration population, almost double of any other riding in this analysis.

Table 9: Turnout for Ward 3

Ward 3	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	41,135	81,355	41,135	81,355
Turnout	32%	58%	34%	64%
% of Homeowners	62%	59%	62%	59%
% of Immigration	55%	59%	55%	59%
Closeness	60%	1.5%	66%	19%
Incumbent	No	No	Yes/Win	Yes/Lost
Voting Days	N/A	4	12	5

¹ Turnout information is based on the 2011 NHS information for this ward

Interestingly, longtime incumbents stepped down between the 2010 and 2011 elections. While the incumbent was re-elected municipally, the 2015 federal election saw a rematch against the 2011 candidates. This time, the liberal candidate was successful as part of the change election that year. However, despite no incumbents in 2010 and 2011, there was a large gap of 26% in the turnout rate, which may be since the municipal candidate won with 60% of the vote. The same repeated itself in 2014 and 2015. Even though municipal turnout grew, since the City of Mississauga was electing a new mayor after long-time incumbent Hazel McCallion stepped down, the gap grew to 30%.

Haldimand-Norfolk

The federal riding of Haldimand-Norfolk is located in southwestern Ontario, southwest of the city of Hamilton. It comprises two counties which form its name, Haldimand and Norfolk. The federal riding has the second lowest number of immigrants and the highest number of homeowners. It is a primarily rural and farming community. The two counties were merged into one regional municipality in 1973 and remained connected until 2001, when they

returned to being separate local governments (Government of Ontario; Fraser Institute). Both councils operate on a ward basis. Unfortunately, due to the municipality's size, information such as advance polls could not be located, nor could information about the ways in which voters voted in these two sets of election periods.

Table 10: Turnout for Election of Haldimand Mayor

Haldimand Mayor	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	33,760	81,900	33,760	81,900
Turnout	46%	62%	39%	69%
% of Homeowners	85%	82%	85%	82%
% of Immigration	8%	10%	8%	10%
Closeness	8%	26%	27%	7.5%
Incumbent	Yes/Lost	Yes/Won	Yes/Won	Yes/Won
Voting Days	N/A	4	N/A	5

¹ Turnout information is based on the 2011 NHS information for this county

Table 11: Turnout for Election of Norfolk Mayor

Norfolk Mayor	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	48,135	81,900	48,135	81,900
Turnout	35%	62%	41%	69%
% of Homeowners	86%	82%	86%	82%
% of Immigration	12%	10%	12%	10%
Closeness	32%	26%	13%	7.5%
Incumbent	Yes/Won	Yes/Won	Yes/Lost	Yes/Won
Voting Days	N/A	4	N/A	5

¹ Turnout information is based on the 2011 NHS information for this county

For this study, I considered the mayoral races of each county to determine turnout vis-à-vis the national elections. In Haldimand, we saw a new mayor elected in 2010, likely increasing turnout to 46%, which is still 16% below the 2011 federal turnout of 62%. Although, in 2014, local turnout dropped, 2015 saw a higher national vote that pushed the gap to 30%. The same is true in Norfolk county. With an incumbent running and winning in 2010, we saw lower turnout, creating a gap of 27%. In 2014, with an incumbent losing, turnout increased. However, the same was true federally. Even with a non-incumbent winning, the gap between the local and national election gap grew to 28%.

Perth-Wellington

The federal riding of Perth-Wellington is in southwestern Ontario. Northeast of the city of London includes the city of Stratford and St. Mary. The federal riding has the lowest number of immigrants of the areas studied. With one of the closest elections in 2015, the riding elected a conservative member in both 2011 and 2015, though the incumbent in 2011 did not run again in 2015. Likely, the competitive nature of the 2015 election, with a margin of victory of 5%, caused the growth in turnout in 2015 compared to 2011.

Table 12: Turnout for Election of Stratford Mayor

Stratford Mayor	2010	2011	2014	2015
Eligible Voters ¹	23,300	76,115	23,300	76,115
Turnout	42%	61%	45%	68%
% of Homeowners	68%	77%	68%	77%
% of Immigration	11%	8%	11%	8%
Closeness	58%	33%	45%	5%
Incumbent	Yes/Won	Yes/Yes	Yes/Won	No
Voting Days	N/A	4	N/A	5

¹ Turnout information is based on the 2011 NHS information for this county

The City of Stratford, the largest city in Perth-Wellington, was used for the local analysis. While the city has a ward structure and in-person voting, the mayoral election was used to compare turnout. In both elections, the incumbent won, though his margin and turnout increased. However, even with the increase in turnout, the local turnout was 19% less in 2010 compared to 2011 and 23% less in 2014 compared to 2015.

Data Analysis

It is now time to see if there is a discernible pattern or indicator that would result in a smaller gap between the national and local turnout. Below are the six federal ridings described above: Beaches-East York, Windsor West, Oakville, Mississauga-East Cooksville, Haldimand-Norfolk, Perth-Wellington, and their corresponding local area. Despite their geography, urban,

suburban, and rural, every electoral riding, in theory, should be the same size. At the time of redistribution in 2012, between the 2011 and 2015 federal elections, the electoral quotation (the approximate size of each riding) was 111,166 people (Elections Canada, 2021, Representation). Having federal ridings of similar size means that there should not be an extensive range of eligible voters between the six ridings. In this study, the gap was no more than 10,000 eligible voters, with the smallest in Perth-Wellington, 75,115, to the largest in Oakville, 85,590. The remaining four riding were in between that range of 10,000 voters.

The summary table (Table 13) has turnout levels ranked in order of largest to smallest federal riding by eligible voter population. The table then ranks the local sample area's eligible voting population from largest to smallest.

Table 13: Turnout Summary

Riding Name/# of Eligible Voter	2011	2010	Difference	2015	2014	Difference
Oakville (Ward 3)	68%	42%	26%	76%	34%	42%
Oakville (Ward 2)	68%	43%	25%	76%	30%	46%
Windsor West (Ward 3)	48%	34%	14%	58%	28%	30%
Windsor West (Ward 2)	48%	34%	14%	58%	28%	30%
Windsor West (Ward 10)	48%	34%	14%	58%	43%	15%
Haldimand-Norfolk (Norfolk)	62%	35%	27%	69%	41%	28%
Haldimand-Norfolk (Haldimand)	62%	46%	16%	69%	39%	30%
Mississauga-East Cooksville	55%	32%	23%	64%	34%	30%
Beaches-East York (ward 31)	65%	47%	18%	74%	54%	20%
Beaches-East York (Ward 32)	65%	62%	3%	74%	69%	5%
Perth-Wellington	61%	42%	19%	68%	45%	28%

Overall, one sees that Toronto's Ward 32 (Beaches-East York) has the lowest gap in local and federal turnout, while the mayoral election in Norfolk and the federal election turnout in the federal riding of Haldimand-Norfolk had the largest gap between 2010 and 2011. Oakville Ward 2's 2014 local election had the largest gap from its federal turnout in 2015 (46%).

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

The literature discussed above consistently stated that as municipalities grew, turnout would decrease. Gendźwiłł and Kjaer state that urban voters would feel disconnected from the local government. Allers, Natris, Rienks, and Greefask state that localities that were amalgamated would also face depressed turnout. Breaux, studying Canadian elections, also believed that as a municipality grew, turnout would decrease. Paradoxically, however, she pointed out that turnout may in fact be higher in larger municipalities due to media coverage of the election race.

Whilst the authors may have been correct in their own research in confirming some of their assumptions, it is interesting to see through turnout figures, that Ward 32 (which was amalgamated into the city of Toronto) had the smallest gap between local and federal turnout, only 3% and 5% between the two sets of elections in 2010/2011 and 2014/2015, respectively. In addition to being the closest turnout, the riding also posts the second highest federal turnout in both 2011 and 2015. Locally, it was the highest level of turnout in both sets of local elections.

Beaches-East York, a community in the east end of Toronto posted the highest turnout levels municipally, and second highest turnout nationally. This despite the fact that Beaches-East York is part of a larger urban municipality, which was amalgamated in 1997. It posted high turnout levels in both local and national elections. That said, the federal riding had the second least number of eligible electors which could be a factor in the high turnout. The fact that the Beaches community in Toronto is also well established, along with East York, could also drive a sense of connection between voters and the local government and its importance in their lives. Therefore, while its urban nature would suggest a lower turnout (according to the

literature discussed above), the fact that it has a smaller pool of electors, is a community within a larger community of Toronto, and as Breaux points out, has access to a local media market, could be the reasons why Beaches-East York had the highest level of turnout.

The other factors studied, and confirmed in the literature, seemed not to have contributed to Beaches-East York's high turnout. Rather, it appears the literature is flipped on its head in this study. Out of all the areas studied, Beaches-East York had the lowest percentage of homeowners, which should have resulted in a lower local turnout. While 33% of the population identifies as an immigrant, this figure middles amongst the other federal areas studied, which again should have meant a lower turnout in comparison to the other ridings. The victory margin was not close, despite the high turnout. One indicator did successfully predict a higher turnout, in both 2011 and 2015 incumbent were defeated federally, and in 2010 locally. Only in the local election in 2014 did the incumbent win. Though in that year, and despite incumbency, turnout rose for other reasons that will be expanded upon below.

It also appears that in-person voting did nothing to impact turnout. As for the number of voting days, Beaches East York did have the second highest number of voting days (where the information was available) which could have contributed to the high turnout.

In contrast is the federal riding of Oakville, and the two local wards chosen for the study that are within the federal riding. Reading the literature, one could have assumed that Oakville, a suburban riding, one that was not part of an amalgamated city, would have a smaller gap in turnout, or even a higher turnout level than other areas in the study. Interestingly, while Oakville had the highest federal turnout figures in 2011 (68%) and 2015 (76%), their local

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

turnout had the second highest gap between 2010 and 2011, and highest gap in 2014 and 2015. What is also interesting about Oakville's number is that this gap existed, despite the fact that the local turnout overall was higher than most of the other local areas, even with turnout dropping by 8% in Ward 3 and 13% in ward 2 in 2014 from 2010 levels. It is almost paradoxical that their high turnout levels would result in such a high gap between the two sets of elections.

All the factors that should (according to the literature) boost Oakville's turnout levels in both the national and local election are present. It has a high level of homeownership of all the study areas, a third of the population, like Beaches-East York, is immigrants, albeit middling amongst the other factors. What is the most surprising is that the closeness of the result was less than 5% in ward 3 in both 2010 (3%) and 2014 (1%). Though even this assumption can be challenged that in Ward 2, where the closeness of the race was 39% in comparison to 1% in Ward 3, the turnout level was identical, with Ward 2 actually having a higher turnout of 43% compared to 42%.

As for incumbency, both Wards face change elections at both levels, in Ward 2 with no incumbent running, and Ward 3 in 2014 with no incumbent running. Federally, 2015 was a change election. While a non-incumbent winning in 2015 drove federal turnout up 6%, the lack of an incumbent seems to have had mixed results locally, with turnout increasing in 2010 with no incumbent in Ward 2, but a drop in turnout with no incumbent in 2014 in Ward 3. It seems the type of voting system, or government structure had a difference in turnout, and even with the highest number of voting days, Oakville continues to have a large turnout gap.

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

Mississauga-East Cooksville, another suburban riding, like Oakville, confounds some of the factors that should predict high turnout, yet results in a wide turnout gap. In fact, its turnout gap grew between the two sets of election, from 23% to 30%. Though this was likely, in part, due to an increase in federal turnout from 44% to 64%. In the same period, local turnout remained the same. What is interesting however, is that local turnout was the lowest of almost all the study areas, despite the fact that the Ward 3, within the federal riding, has both high levels of homeownership (62% locally, 59% nationally) and immigration (55% locally, 59% nationally). With local indicators more favourable than national indicators in the riding, one could predict a smaller gap, or a heightened level of interest within the Ward, which covers one of the amalgamated communities that forms the city of Mississauga. However, it is likely due to the fact that the local race was won by 60% and 66% versus the national race that was won by 1.5% and 19%, respectively, depressed turnout locally, and increased turnout nationally. Even with more voting days locally, the federal turnout surpassed the local turnout significantly.

In addition to Oakville and Mississauga East-Cooksville, the Mayoral election in Norfolk in 2010 resulted in the largest voter turnout gap locally and nationally in 2010. Like the two suburban ridings, this is surprising due to the ridings structure, including high homeownership and non-incumbents winning elections. While the federal riding of Haldimand-Norfolk has 82% homeownership across the riding, Norfolk has the highest level of homeownership of 86%. The highest of all the study areas. With such a high level of homeownership, once again, based on the literature, a high turnout would be expected locally. Homeowners are more sensitive to local decisions, which affect property value and property taxes. This high level of ownership in theory should overcome and downturn turnout due to very low levels of

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

immigration. However, even with high homeownership, turnout in 2010 was 27% less than the federal turnout.

However, while the gap remains high, the two local elections within the federal riding do provide some level of confirmation that incumbency/change elections will drive turnout. In Haldimand in 2010, and Norfolk in 2014, change elections, where incumbents were defeated, in close elections with margins of victory under 10%, resulted in an increase in voter turnout from the other local elections where incumbents were returned to office.

Looking to the other ridings, notably Windsor West and Perth-Wellington, there is some level of consistency with what the literature predicted based on the indicators.

In Windsor West, we see consistency across all three Wards when it comes to the gap between local and federal turnout in 2010 and 2011 of 14%. While Ward 2 and Ward 3 saw consistency in the gap of 30%, Ward 10 saw a smaller gap of 15% between the local and federal turnouts in 2014 and 2015. With a significant level of homeownership, and a third of the population immigrants, it was not surprising (based on the literature) to see a similar turnout between the two sets of elections, as was the case in Beaches-East York. As for the difference in 2014 locally, it appears a non-incumbent winning in Ward 10 was the reason for an increase in turnout, compared to Ward 2 and Ward 3. In Ward 10 specifically, the incumbents' misgiving and poor conduct was local news, creating more media coverage over the race that could have likely contributed to the increased turnout. Additionally, and with the exception of Ward 2, close races in Ward 3 and 10 resulted in higher turnout levels in 2010 in Ward 3, and 2014 in Ward 10. As for number of voting days, they were above the

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

federal number of voting days, though it seemed to have no effect, along with voting system and council structure.

Finally, the riding of Perth-Wellington, like Mississauga East-Cooksville above, its turnout gap grew between 2010/2011 (19%) and 2014/2015 (28%) due to the increase in federal turnout. In fact, their local turnout levels were amongst the highest in the study, after Beaches-East York, Oakville, and Haldimand and Norfolk. The increase in turnout in 2015, which caused the turnout gap, can be traced back to no incumbent and a close election result. In comparison to the other elections, incumbents were always re-elected, and their results were never close. In fact, the closest election aside from 2015 was in 2011, with a margin of 33%. As for other indicators, high levels of homeownership likely increased turnout, though low levels of immigration did not have a negative effect, as was the case in Haldimand and Norfolk. Unfortunately, no information was available on the number of voting days.

A New Indicator?

Reviewing all six areas shows that while some indicators would result in turnout, such as homeownership, other indicators such as incumbency and close races were inconsistent in providing insight into turnout. For example, Beaches-East York, which had the lowest gap and highest local turnout rate, also had elections that were not close, had an incumbent re-elected, and had middling immigration and homeownership levels that would suggest a lower turnout. In contrast, the riding of Windsor West, and in particular Ward 2 and 3, show that despite no incumbent and close results, turnout was quite low, which could have been due to low levels of homeownership and middling levels of immigration. There was no one indicator, save for possibly where there is a change election – though even that was not

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

consistent --that could predict the gap or the turnout, likely due to the geography or history of the different ridings and localities.

However, and by happenstance, in reviewing the result, there could be one other indicator, which I referred to above that could be more reliable in providing an explanation for turnout or the gap between local and national turnout. This could be closeness of the local mayor or head of council race. We see this in Toronto, with 2010 and 2014 being a hot contested mayor's race, with a new mayor elected in both elections. We see this in Oakville when a new mayor was elected in 2010. The same is true in Mississauga, with a new mayor elected in 2014. We also see this factor play out, as stated above, in Haldimand in 2010, and Norfolk in 2014. This indicator cannot be used to predict any impact in Perth-Wellington as the incumbent won in both elections. The only outlier to this factor is Windsor, in which a new mayor was elected in 2014, though it seems to have had no impact in turnout, where it dropped from 2010, save for Ward 10, which as described above, was a unique situation.

However, it appears, consistently across each of the six areas, that a new mayor being elected, especially when it is hotly contested, as was the case in Toronto and Oakville, will result in higher turnout.

Conclusions

In each example, national elections outperform local elections. While there are indicators that can help predict levels of turnout, it appears that locally, there is truly not one indicator over another that can determine the size of the gap between national and local turnout. In reviewing all the results, it would appear, unsurprisingly, that a lack of an incumbent and a

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

close election will result in higher turnout. Beliefs around homeownership and immigration, which may have had an outsized impact as to who will vote, seem to have less of an effect on predicting turnout.

It could also be the case, especially in local elections, with lower levels of turnout, that candidates are more focused on getting their voters out to win, rather than attracting new voters, or converting another candidates' voters to vote for them, something we see in federal elections, likely due to partisan politics. With lower turnout, the desire to convert exiting voters of one candidate into your camp is not as necessary to win when you can go out and attract your own voters, possibly new voters, to your pool. After all, when turnout is below 50%, the pool of non-voters is larger than voters, meaning conversion is not necessary.

It could also be the case, that believed indicators, such as homeownership, are no longer playing a role in driving up turnout. Due to promises of low taxation or homeowners not as dependant on city services when they can obtain them privately, means people are not as invested in local elections. As homeowners are likely the same population getting older, issues such as health care and long term care are trumping issues of snow clearing and waste removal. Perhaps the indicator of homeownership is more an indicator of a certain generation and segment of the population whose view, as they are, are shifting away from local to federal issues means a depressed local turnout. It could also be the case, as with long standing incumbents whose positions are well known on the issues, homeowners do not feel the need to vote as they are aware that an incumbent losing an election is rare in the local content.

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

As long as the gap continues, and as long as local turnout remains low, the ability for non-incumbents to build a voter block will remain challenging. As we see federally, the biggest indicator of voting, is past participation. Without an increase, the changes of new voices at the table to represent changing demographics in communities such as Toronto will remain a challenge. In turn, and as stated below, new voters will not be drawn into the process as they do not see themselves in the institutions to which they are electing councillors, furthering the gap between the voter and their local politician. If the indicators are not the solution to increasing turnout, and to stop the disillusionment with the effectiveness of local town and city halls, other efforts to encourage candidates who bring new perspectives to the table may be the key to increasing turnout, rather than increasing the presence of other indicators within a local community.

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

Works Cited

- Allers, M., de Natris, J., Rienks, H., & de Greef, T. (2021). Is small beautiful? transitional and structural effects of municipal amalgamation on voter turnout in local and national elections. *Electoral Studies*, 70, 102284.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102284>
- Berent, M. K., Krosnick, J. A., & Lupia, A. (2016). Measuring voter registration and turnout in surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(3), 597–621.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfw021>
- Bolichowski, J. (2010, October 8). Voting brisk at Windsor's first advance poll. Retrieved August 6, 2022, from <https://windsorstar.com/news/voting-brisk-at-windsors-first-advance-poll>
- Breux, S., Couture, J., & Koop, R. (2017). Turnout in local elections: Evidence from Canadian cities, 2004–2014. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 699–722.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s000842391700018x>
- Elections Canada, (n.d.). Report on the 42nd General Election of October 19, 2015. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/sta_2015&document=p2&lang=e
- Caren, N. (2007). Big City, big turnout? electoral participation in American cities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 29(1), 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2007.00321.x>
- City of Mississauga. (2010, October 28). Official Results of City of Mississauga Election 2010. Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.mississauga.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2021/11/15101852/2010-Municipal-Election-Official-Results.pdf>
- City of Mississauga. (2014, October 27). Mississauga Municipal Election 2014 Results . Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.mississauga.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2021/11/15101856/2014-Municipal-Election-Official-Results.pdf>
- City of Mississauga. (n.d.). *Draft census ward 3 profile - app1.mississauga.ca*. 2011 Census Results Ward 3 Profile. Retrieved August 17, 2022, from http://app1.mississauga.ca/research_catalogue/L_9_2011_Census_Ward_3_Profile.pdf
- City of Oakville. (2014, October 27). *2014 Election Summary with Percentages*. 2014 election summary with percentages. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://elections.oakville.ca/2014-summary-with-percentages.html>

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

- City of Stratford. (2010, October 25). *CITY OF STRATFORD 2010 MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS - certified*. CITY OF STRATFORD MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS - certified. Retrieved August 5, 2022, from https://www.stratford.ca/en/resources/2010_Election_Results_Certified.pdf
- City of Stratford. (2014, October 27). CITY OF STRATFORD OFFICIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS 2014. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/Election-2022/Election-Results-2014-Official.pdf>
- City of Toronto. (2013, June 18). *Final report - 2014 Election Advance Vote and Voting Hours By-law*. Final Report - 2014 Election Advance Vote and Voting Hours By-law. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-59903.pdf>
- City of Toronto. (2022, August 22). General election results. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/elections/election-results-reports/election-results/general-election-results/>
- City of Windsor. (2010, November 26). CITY OF WINDSOR 2010 MUNICIPAL ELECTION STATEMENT OF RESULTS (REVISED *). Retrieved August 9, 2022, from <https://www.citywindsor.ca/cityhall/Municipal-Election/Documents/Official%20City%20of%20Windsor%202010%20Municipal%20Election%20Results%20Post%20Recount.pdf>
- City of Windsor. (2014, October 27). Official Results City of Windsor October 27, 2014 Municipal Election 2014. Retrieved August 7, 2022, from <https://www.citywindsor.ca/cityhall/Municipal-Election/Documents/2014-Election-Results.pdf>
- City of Windsor. (n.d.). *Election Results*. Election results. Retrieved August 15, 2022, from <https://www.citywindsor.ca/cityhall/Municipal-Election/Pages/Election-Results.aspx>
- Clay, C. (2014, October 15). *Advance poll turnout lower this election than last*. Mississauga.com. Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.mississauga.com/news-story/4915178-advance-poll-turnout-lower-this-election-than-last/>
- Community profile*. Haldimand County. (n.d.). Retrieved August 15, 2022, from <https://www.haldimandcounty.ca/community-profile/>
- Elections Canada. (2012). Representation in the House of Commons of Canada. Representation in the House of Commons of Canada - Redistribution Federal Electoral Districts. Retrieved August 29, 2022, from <https://redcoupage-federal-redistribution.ca/content.asp?section=info&dir=his%2Frep&document=p1&lang=e>

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

- Elections Canada. (2012, April). Estimation of Voter Turnout by Age Group and Gender at the 2011 Federal General Election. Retrieved July 2, 2022, from https://www.elections.ca/res/rec/part/estim/estimation40_e.pdf
- Election's Canada. (2016, October). Estimation of Voter Turnout by Age Group and Gender at the 2015 General Election . Retrieved August 1, 2022, from https://www.elections.ca/res/rec/part/estim/estimation40_e.pdf
- Elections Canada. (n.d.). Description of the National Register of Electors. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from <https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=reg%2Fdes&document=index&lang=e>
- Elections Canada, (n.d.). Report on the 42nd General Election of October 19, 2015. Retrieved August 28, 2022, from https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rep/off/sta_2015&document=p2&lang=e
- Elections Canada. (n.d.). OFFICIAL VOTING RESULTS FORTY-FIRST GENERAL ELECTION 2011. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from <https://www.elections.ca/scripts/ovr2011/default.html>
- Elections Canada. (n.d.). Official Voting Results FORTY-SECOND GENERAL ELECTION. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from <https://www.elections.ca/res/rep/off/ovr2015app/home.html#1814>
- Fantoni , B. (2014, October 27). *Ward 10: Borrelli Unseats Maghnieh | windsor star*. Ward 10: Borrelli unseats Maghnieh. Retrieved August 5, 2022, from <https://windsorstar.com/news/ward-10-borrelli-unseats-maghnieh/>
- Gendzwill, A. (2019). Local autonomy and national–local turnout gap: Higher Stakes, higher turnout? *Regional & Federal Studies*, 31(4), 519–539. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2019.1706496>
- Gendźwiłł, A., & Kjaer, U. (2020). Mind the gap, please! pinpointing the influence of municipal size on local electoral participation. *Local Government Studies*, 47(1), 11–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2020.1777107>
- Government of Canada, S. C. (2018, May 24). *NHS Profile, 2011*. National Household Survey (NHS) Profile, 2011. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Gregory, M. (2014, September 30). *Oakville Advance Polls Open Oct. 6-17*. InsideHalton.com. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/4887601-oakville-advance-polls-open-oct-6-17/>

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

- Grenier, É. (2011, October 17). *Does lower voter turnout always favour incumbents?* The Globe and Mail. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/does-lower-voter-turnout-always-favour-incumbents/article557978/>
- Grenier, É. (2021, May 2). *Analysis | A Harper Dynasty and the end of the liberals? how the 2011 election didn't change everything | CBC news*. CBCnews. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/grenier-2011-election-anniversary-1.6007145>
- Haldimand County. (2014, October 27). Haldimand County 2014 Election Results. Retrieved August 14, 2022, from <https://www.haldimandcounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2014-election-results-by-voting-location.pdf>
- Mississauga Archives. (n.d.). *Amalgamation of Clarkson, Lakeview, Cooksville, Erindale, Sheridan, Dixie, Meadowvale Village and Malton to form the Town of Mississauga. 1968 – amalgamation to form the town of Mississauga*. Retrieved August 15, 2022, from http://www5.mississauga.ca//library/SRC/MM1968_Amalgamation.html
- Municipal amalgamation in Ontario - Fraser Institute*. Municipal amalgamation in Ontario. (n.d.). Retrieved August 15, 2022, from <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/municipal-amalgamation-in-ontario-exec-sum-drupal.pdf>
- Norfolk County. (2014, October 27). Norfolk County Official Statement of Results 2014 Election. Retrieved August 15, 2022, from <https://www.norfolkcounty.ca/download/government/2014%20Oct%2027%20Official%20Statement%20of%20Results.pdf>
- Oakville Beaver. (2010, October 22). *High turnout at advance polls*. InsideHalton.com. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2983308-high-turnout-at-advance-polls/>
- Ohbadmin. (2010, October 25). Ontario Election Watch (2010). Retrieved August 14, 2022, from https://www.ohba.ca/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/recent-news/OHBA_Election_Watch_-_2010-07_Oct26_.pdf
- Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk*. The Changing Shape of Ontario: Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk. (n.d.). Retrieved August 20, 2022, from <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/maps/counties/rm-haldimand-norfolk.aspx>
- Schmidt, D. (2014, October 17). Fewer windsor voters heading to advance polls. Retrieved August 13, 2022, from <https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/fewer-windsor-voters-heading-to-advance-polls/>

Analysing the Gap – Works Cited

Siemiatycki, M., & Marshall, S. (2014). *Who votes in Toronto municipal elections?* - *maytree.com*. Who votes in Toronto municipal elections? . Retrieved December 2, 2021, from https://maytree.com/wp-content/uploads/Who_Votes-final.pdf

Town of Oakville set to maintain identity. Town of Oakville. (2019, October 25). Retrieved August 6, 2022, from <https://www.oakville.ca/townhall/mnr-19oct25.html>

Town of Oakville. (n.d.). Past Elections. Past elections. Retrieved August 2, 2022, from <https://elections.oakville.ca/past-elections.html> Wikimedia Foundation. (2022, August 22). *2010 Ontario municipal elections*. Wikipedia. Retrieved August 19, 2022, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Ontario_municipal_elections#Haldimand_County