

# Political-Financial Scandal, Political Disaffection, and the Dynamics of Political Action

by

Nicholas Maxwell Ruderman

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Department of Political Science  
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Nicholas Maxwell Ruderman 2017

ProQuest Number:10605527

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10605527

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

# Political-Financial Scandal, Political Disaffection, and the Dynamics of Political Action

Nicholas Maxwell Ruderman

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Department of Political Science  
University of Toronto

2017

## Abstract

This thesis examines whether and to what extent political-financial scandals shape public attitudes toward the political system and citizens' patterns of participation in political action. The investigation employs a combination of Canada-focused case studies and large-N cross-national analyses. The findings indicate that while political-financial scandals do seem to contribute to an erosion of specific and intermediate forms of political support, they also suggest that scandals do not vitiate public support for broader democratic principles. With respect to the impact of scandals on political participation, the thesis highlights and investigates a puzzle. The Canadian case studies presented here suggest that revelations of political actors' ethical transgressions serve as a catalyst for both traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation in the short and medium-term. Even so, multi-level analyses of cross-national individual and aggregate-level data suggest that persistently high perceptions of corruption in government undermine citizens' intrinsic motivation to vote, and that political-financial scandals might well suppress voter turnout over longer time horizons.

## Acknowledgments

I owe thanks to many friends, colleagues, and mentors for their support in writing this dissertation. First and foremost, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to undertake this research under the supervision of an excellent committee. I first met my supervisor, Neil Nevitte, as a student in his core comparative politics seminar, and went on to act as his research assistant, and later as his co-author on several academic papers. I am very fortunate to have worked with him so closely, and to have written this thesis under his expert supervision. Lawrence LeDuc consistently help to guide the research in productive directions, and Andrew Stark has been a great source of insight and support throughout the research and writing process. I greatly value the time that I have spent in conversation with each of these outstanding scholars, and the insightful feedback they have provided on my work. Many thanks also to my internal and external examiners, Robert Schertzer and Michael Johnston, who provided thoughtful, detailed, and stimulating feedback on the project.

Beyond my committee, I owe thanks to several other faculty members at the University of Toronto. I am particularly grateful to Peter Loewen and Nelson Wiseman for the generous encouragement and support they have provided. Seminars taken with Jacques Bertrand, Donald Forbes, Randall Hansen, Margaret Kohn, and Graham White greatly enhanced my experience in the doctoral programme. I also thank Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Scott Matthews for their early encouragement to undertake doctoral studies in the field, and for the research and teaching opportunities they made available while working on my master's degree at Queen's University.

My fellow graduate students at the University of Toronto were a source of friendship, sage advice, and lively conversations about politics and the discipline. I would especially like to thank Cheryl Auger, Zain Asaf, Heather Bastedo, Sophie Borwein, Stephen Brown-Okruhlik,

Wayne Chu, Yannick Dufresne, Bill Flanik, Jonathan Kent, Evan Rosevear, Will Schatten, Izabela Steflja, Paul Thomas, Deb Thompson, Ethel Tungohan, Cliff van der Linden, and Zhen Zhao. Mary-Alice Bailey, Carolynn Branton, and Louis Tentsos were friendly and helpful point people in the Department of Political Science, and I am grateful for their assistance in navigating the University's policies and processes.

Of course, I could not have written this thesis without my family. I am particularly grateful to my mother Dale Maxwell, father John Ruderman, and brothers Daniel Ruderman and Michael Ruderman. They helped guide me through important moments and challenging decisions, and generally provided much emotional and material support during my time working on this project, and long before. I owe them a great deal, and I cannot thank them enough.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Figures .....	viii
List of Tables .....	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Research Question .....	1
1.2 Analytic Rationale .....	2
1.3 Case Selection, Data, and Methodology .....	4
1.4 The Canadian Experience: An Historical Overview of Canadian Political Scandals .....	7
1.5 Roadmap .....	16
Chapter 2 Theoretical Foundation and Hypotheses .....	17
2.1 Dependent Variable I: Political Support .....	17
2.1.1 Addressing Critiques of Political Support .....	20
2.1.2 Why Care? The Consequences of Political Support .....	22
2.1.3 Explaining Variance in Political Support .....	24
2.2 Dependent Variable II: Political Participation .....	31
2.2.1 Voter Turnout.....	31
2.2.2 Explaining Longitudinal Variance in Turnout .....	34
2.2.3 “Non-Traditional” Participation: The Dynamics of Protest Politics.....	37
2.2 Focal Independent Variable: Political-Financial Scandal.....	41
2.3.1 Defining Political-Financial Scandal .....	41
2.3.2 A Model of Scandal Effects .....	46
Chapter 3 The Mulroney Years.....	57
3.1 Political-Financial Scandal in the Mulroney Years .....	58

3.2	Subsidiary Hypotheses, Analytic Strategy, and Data .....	63
3.3	Canadians' Perceptions of the Ethics and Integrity of Political Leaders, 1988-1993 .....	64
3.4	Multivariate Results .....	68
3.5	Discussion .....	75
Chapter 4 Canadians' Perceptions of Corruption in Cross-National Perspective.....		86
4.1	Data and Methodology.....	87
4.2	Canada in Cross-National Perspective .....	88
4.3	Canadian Attitudes toward Corruption in Focus .....	92
4.4	Do Perceptions of Corruption Contribute to Disaffection and Demobilization? Evidence from 26 Countries .....	98
4.5	Discussion .....	107
Chapter 5 The Sponsorship Scandal .....		127
5.1	The Programme, the Scandal, and the Fallout .....	128
5.2	Data and Methodology.....	131
5.3	Results I: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Support .....	133
5.4	Results II: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Participation .....	137
5.5	Discussion .....	140
Chapter 6 The Senate Expenses Scandal .....		150
6.1	History of the Senate Expenses Scandal .....	152
6.2	Theory and Hypotheses.....	155
6.3	Data and Method .....	157
6.4	Empirical Results .....	158
6.5	Discussion .....	163
Chapter 7 Conclusion.....		174
7.1	Theoretical Contribution .....	176
7.2	Empirical Contribution .....	177

7.3 Policy Implications .....	181
7.4 Directions for Research.....	184
References.....	189



## List of Figures

2.1 Typology of Political Support . . . . .	49
2.2 Satisfaction with the Federal Government, 1994-2009 . . . . .	50
2.3 Levels of Political Participation in Canada, 1981-2011 . . . . .	51
2.4 Materialists and Postmaterialists in Canada, 1981-2006 . . . . .	52
2.5 Rates of Post-Secondary Educational Attainment in Canada, Europe, and the United States, 1960-2006 . . . . .	53
2.6 “The Basic Ingredients of Scandal” . . . . .	54
2.7 “Elements of More Complex Scandals” . . . . .	55
2.8 A Model of Scandal Effects . . . . .	56
3.1 Evaluations of Party Leaders, 1988 & 1993 . . . . .	80
3.2 Political Ethics and Political Participation in Canada . . . . .	81
4.1 Expert and Public Evaluations of Public Sector Corruption . . . . .	115
4.2 Perceptions of Corruption across Different Domains . . . . .	116
4.3 Perceptions of Corruption in Social and Political Institutions, 2004-2007 . . . . .	117
4.4 Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Perceptions of Corruption . . . . .	118
5.1 Canadians' Reactions to the Sponsorship Scandal, 2004-2006 . . . . .	145
6.1 Scandal and Satisfaction with Democracy . . . . .	169

## List of Tables

3.1 Political Ethics and Political Support in Canada, 1988 & 1993 . . . . .	82
3.2 Political Ethics and Political Participation in Canada, 1988 & 1993 . . . . .	84
3.3 Political Ethics and Non-Traditional Political Action in Canada . . . . .	85
4.1 Are Public Officials Corrupt? . . . . .	119
4.2 Stability of Corruption Evaluations, 2004-2006 . . . . .	120
4.3 Independent Effects of Socio-Demographic Variables on Perceptions of Corruption . .	121
4.4 Does Corruption Lead to Disaffection? A Multi-Level Analysis . . . . .	122
4.5 Does Corruption Lead to Withdrawal from Traditional Forms Political Participation? Evidence from 26 Countries . . . . .	123
4.6 Does Corruption Lead to Withdrawal from Non-Traditional Forms Political Participation? Evidence from 26 Countries . . . . .	124
4.1A Expert and Citizen Evaluations of Government Corruption . . . . .	125
4.2A Correlations between Perceptions of Corruption and Political Support . . . . .	126
5.1 The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Support . . . . .	146
5.2 The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Support, 2004-2006 . . . . .	147
5.3 The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Participation, 2004 . . . . .	148
5.4 The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Participation, 2004-2006 . . . . .	149
6.1 The Socio-demographic Predictors of Attitudes toward the Scandal . . . . .	170
6.2 Senate Expenses Scandal and Satisfaction with Democracy . . . . .	171
6.3 Senate Expenses Scandal and Political Participation . . . . .	172
6.4 Partisanship, Interest, and Reactions to the Senate Expenses Scandal . . . . .	173
7.1 Political Scandal, Support, and Participation: An Overview of Results. . . . .	188

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Research Question

Do political scandals shape the ways in which citizens relate to government? Canada's recent federal governments – the Mulroney-Campbell Progressive Conservatives, the Chrétien-Martin Liberals, and the Harper Conservatives – have each been afflicted with high-profile, politically-damaging scandals involving serious alleged financial wrongdoing. Academics have fixated on the partisan dimensions of these affairs. Indeed, the impact of these ethical transgressions on the parties' vote shares and the evaluations of party leaders has been illustrated very amply (Clarke et al. 2009; Gidengil et al. 2012). What is missing, in large measure, are systematic investigations probing the impact of these political-financial scandals on Canadians' broader orientations toward the political system and on their patterns of political behaviour.

The topic is more pressing given that public support for political processes and institutions and voter turnout, the “gold standard” of traditional political participation, have been in decline in Canada, particularly since the late 1980s. Indeed, these two trends have pre-occupied analysts of public opinion and political participation over the past twenty-five years. Both political disaffection and shifting patterns of political participation are well-documented and constitute long-standing empirical puzzles. A wide range of candidate explanations have been examined to account for these changes. The shifts are often attributed to broad-gauged value change (Dalton 2004; Inglehart 1990; Nevitte 1996; 2002), to unsatisfactory government performance (Alesina and Wacziarg 2000; Bastedo et al. 2014; Pharr 2000), and to dwindling stocks of social capital (Putnam 2000; Young 2002). The impact of political scandals has

received little scholarly attention as a potential cause of these two much-discussed trends in Canadian political behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Scandals in consolidated democracies are, often, assumed to be frivolous, media-driven affairs without much ability to sway public attitudes or behaviours beyond vote choice (Thompson 2000). Further, research from other established democracies regarding the impact of scandals on these trends generates directly conflicting expectations about their impact. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact of political-financial scandals on Canadians' levels of political support and on their patterns of political participation.

This chapter will proceed as follows. First, the analytic rationale for the project is specified. The chapter goes on to address issues of case selection and methodology, justifying the focus on Canada, and explaining how the different portions of the analysis – large-N cross-national analysis and intensive Canadian case studies – fit together. Canada's historical experience with political-financial scandal is then outlined. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the cases that form that core of the thesis and a “roadmap” that specifies the dissertation's organizational framework.

## 1.2 Analytic Rationale

What is the rationale for this thesis, and what contribution is it meant to provide? The rationale for the research project can be divided into three main categories: scientific relevance, first and foremost, as well as social importance and timeliness.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Drawing on Rottinghuas (2015) and Thompson (2000), political scandals are conceptualized here as political events arising from credible allegations of legal or ethical wrongdoing on the part of political actors, invoking the public disapprobation of non-participants (see chapter two for an in-depth discussion).

<sup>2</sup> See Firebaugh for a discussion of the importance of these qualities to research in the social sciences (2008, 4-12).

First, the project is scientifically relevant to the extent that it speaks to an ongoing debate in the social sciences. Research regarding the link between political scandals, political support, and political participation is highly unsettled. Studies have arrived at starkly opposing conclusions. Some investigations indicate that scandals are corrosive to political support (Bowler and Karp 2004; Pharr 2000), whereas others indicate the opposite (Miller and Borelli 1991; Norris 2011). The thesis seeks to clarify the relationships between scandals, support, and participation by extending the analysis to a new context (Canada), time period, and data structures (i.e. multi-level and panel data, and original cross-sectional survey data) that have not been heretofore brought to bear on this research question.

Second, the research is socially important to the extent that it bears directly on a salient national problem. Drops in levels of political support, particularly at more “specific” levels, as well as long-term declines in voter participation, are crucially important public policy dilemmas.<sup>3</sup> A better understanding of the short and medium term drivers of these trends, drivers over which political actors and policy-makers might exercise some control, is crucial to a more complete portrait of why these fluctuations in support and participation have been observed.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> David Easton, whose work acts as the conceptual foundation of most contemporary studies of political support, notes that at the most fundamental level, “we can describe support as an attitude by which a person orients himself (sic) to an object either favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively.” (Easton 1975, 436). More precisely, political support “reflects orientations toward the nation-state, its agencies and actors,” and is “a multidimensional phenomenon ranging on a continuum from the most diffuse to the most specific levels” (Norris 2011, 20-24). “Specific” forms of support are generally captured with questions about respondents’ evaluations of political actors collectively, whereas the most “diffuse” forms of support involve orientations to the nation-state (see chapter two for an elaboration).

<sup>4</sup> Norris (2011) argues that where declines in political support have unfolded, context-specific evaluations of the impact of such medium-term forces as political scandals are the most promising route for future research. As she puts it, “The diagnosis suggests that it would probably be most fruitful to investigate short and medium-term explanations of any changes in indicators of system support, abandoning over-simple claims about steadily growing public disenchantment with politics across all established democracies. The most promising hypotheses concern the instrumental performance of governments and public sector institutions rather than propositions that posit glacial, long-term social trends, such as processes of human development and cultural evolution.” (2011, 58).

Further, as discussed in detail in chapter two, these two trends have important social, economic, and political consequences. Drops in political support can lead to lowered levels of “allegiant” and “compliant” behaviours, such as voluntary tax compliance and the willingness to adhere to other state directives (Dalton 2004). And lowered levels of voter turnout lead to representational distortions that might well affect the content of public policy. A more complete understanding of the factors bearing on these problems is therefore important for academics and policy-makers.

The project is also a timely one. Political scandals continue to proliferate in Canadian public life. Naturally, scandal and corruption are age-old endemic political problems, central to the practice, if not the academic study, of politics (Peters and Welch 1980). Indeed, this chapter documents Canada's history with major political-financial scandal, beginning nearly 150 years ago with the infamous Pacific scandal. Recent decades, however, have given rise to what some describe as a “corruption eruption” across western democracies (Ridley and Doig 1995; Miller 2008). Canada’s recent federal governments have confronted serious, politically damaging allegations of financial wrongdoing. The Senate expenses scandal, for example, was a prominent issue in the 42<sup>nd</sup> federal election. This thesis presents original and timely data and analysis regarding the impact of this scandal on Canadians' political attitudes and behaviours.

### 1.3 Case Selection, Data, and Methodology

The following investigation adopts a nested approach, employing a combination of large-N cross-national analysis of aggregate-level and individual-level data, in which Canada is included as one of many cases, and intensive case studies in which Canadian data are the focus.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> The “nested analysis” approach “combines the statistical analysis of a large sample of cases with the in-depth investigation of one or more of the cases contained within the large sample. This would include the study of a nation-state nested within an analysis of 50 nation-states” (Lieberman 2005, 436).

Lieberman draws attention to the “synergistic value to the nested research design: for example, statistical analyses can...provide direction for more focused case studies and comparisons, and be used to provide additional tests of hypotheses generated from small-N research” (2005, 435). Further, combining a highly general approach with more focused case studies helps to offset the limitations regarding the capacity for scientific inference inherent in both styles of analysis. It thus facilitates a “triangulation” of results, drawing on the benefits of large-N analysis, such as tests of the observable implications of theory against a wide range of observations, as well as the benefits of case studies, such as a contextual grounding that mitigates the possibility of sub-optimal measurement or omitted variables.

It is important to note that Lieberman's concept of nested analysis “assumes an interest in *both* the exploration of general relationships and the specific explanations of individual cases and groups of cases. For example, a nested research design implies that scholars will pose questions in forms such as 'What causes social revolutions?,' while simultaneously asking questions such as 'What was the cause of social revolution in France?'" (2005, 436). This thesis aims to contribute to both the general and the specific. It investigates the effects of specific scandals on Canadians' political support and participation, a timely topic, bearing on an important national problem. At the same time, the research design and data structures employed allow for inferences to be drawn about the general relationship between these variables. It is thus a Canadian project, designed in such a way that the findings carry broader significance.

There are compelling practical reasons to focus on Canada, particularly related to the availability of rich, unique, and highly appropriate data with which to test my central hypotheses. This analysis employs a range of Canadian data sources.<sup>6</sup> The Political Support in Canada (PSC)

---

<sup>6</sup> These data sources, their methodology and other technical details, are elaborated upon in greater detail in the methodology sections of each chapter.

datasets from 1988 and 1993 probe both ethical performance and political support, offering early and appropriate evidence regarding my research question at a time of great change in Canadian politics. Léger's Voice of the People (VOP) surveys, collected between 2004 and 2007, are used to examine Canadians' attitudes toward corruption in more fine-grained detail than is possible using available cross-national data sources.

The 2004 version of the Canadian Election Study (CES), as well as the CES Panel from 2004 to 2006, are also extremely useful, and are used extensively in the fifth chapter. The 2004 version of the CES is fortuitously timed. The sponsorship scandal, described by Ian Greene as "one of the worst ethics scandals in Canadian history" (2006, 277), was breaking as this election was called: a significant proportion of the population was still unaware of the scandal when the writ was drawn up.<sup>7</sup> These data, then, are a useful vehicle for exploring whether scandals demonstrably affect people's outlooks on government, and if so in which direction. Further, the panel component of the CES from 2004 and 2006 constitute a rare opportunity to explore longitudinal variation in attitudes about a scandal. Panel data consist of a pool of respondents who are re-interviewed at different points in time. Such data structures allow for more convincing causality tests than are possible using cross-sectional data from a single point in time.

The thesis also employs original data generated in collaboration with Forum Research, analyzed in chapter six. These new data probe new dimensions of Canadians' reactions to a recent financial-political scandal: the Senate expenses scandal, involving Senators Duffy, Wallin,

---

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that parts of the election campaign focused on the scandal, although its scope was not entirely clear in early 2004. Parties did, however, make it a priority during the minority Parliament that followed. By the 2006 election, largely as a result of the Gomery Commission Inquiry (the proceedings of which unfolded between 2004 and 2006), knowledge of the scandal was widespread.



Brazeau and Harb, among others. This study is the first to systematically evaluate the impact of this scandal on Canadians' political orientations.

International Social Survey Project (ISSP) data place Canadian attitudes about political corruption in cross-national perspective, while also offering a broader testing ground for the dissertation's core hypotheses. Those data locate Canada within the universe of cases, establishing what is unique and what is general about Canadians' perceptions of these issues. As Turgeon et al. (2014) point out, such a comparative approach can also help researchers guard against making exaggerated claims about Canada's uniqueness, while at the same time highlighting aspects of Canadian trends that are genuinely distinctive. The thesis thus also contributes to this growing body of literature aiming to connect Canadian political science to international research. As White et al. (2008) point out, Canadian political science was once fairly characterized as insular and idiosyncratic. This project borrows from, tests, and contributes to more general theories and debates about the impact of scandals using Canadian data. It thus connects the Canadian case to broader literature, taking Canadian political science closer to the goal of being both "takers and makers" of general theories about political structures and processes (White et al. 2008).

#### 1.4 The Canadian Experience: An Historical Overview of Canadian Political Scandals

Canada has had no shortage of experience with political-financial scandals. The Pacific scandal involving Canada's first Prime Minister is legendary. But more recently, each of the past three Canadian governments have been plagued with politically-damaging scandals. This sub-section will provide a brief inventory of Canadian political scandals related to financial matters through Canada's history, locating the cases I examine historically. The argument builds on Morton's

insight that “most of our ancestors took political corruption for granted” (2005). Indeed, this section makes the case that an historical perspective on Canadian political-financial scandals highlights their relatively limited electoral impact. What becomes most apparent from the following analysis, however, is that little is known about whether revelations of these elite ethical violations have implications for broader attitudes about politics and democracy, or for people's patterns of political engagement.

Sir John A. Macdonald remains a figure with a contested legacy. Macdonald’s attitudes regarding federalism and, indeed, franchise rights and democracy, put him somewhat at odds with the country Canada has become.<sup>8</sup> Macdonald’s record on political corruption is one of the most widely debated and controversial aspects of his time as Prime Minister. As Michael Bliss notes, “Macdonald’s enemies and most of his supporters knew about the Tories’ fine silk threads of patronage, contracts, and party discipline. Macdonald’s governments rewarded friends and punished opponents. The Prime Minister and his lieutenants blatantly used all forms of patronage to support their power and build their party” (2004, 5). Though patronage was endemic in Canada during Macdonald’s tenure, many of his supporters viewed such behaviour as justified in pursuit of the goal of building a strong national government in a large, highly diverse country (Bliss 2004).<sup>9</sup> Of course, not all have been so charitable about the direction Macdonald set the country. Of Macdonald, Sir Daniel Wilson writes:

A clever, most unscrupulous party leader [who] had developed a system of political corruption that demoralized the country. Its evils will long survive him...nevertheless he had undoubtedly a fascinating power of conciliation, which, superadded to his unscrupulous use of patronage, and systematic bribery in every form, has enabled him to

---

<sup>8</sup> Michael Bliss: “Macdonald was no democrat...Not a single member of the [Quebec] Conference was in favour of universal suffrage” (2004).

<sup>9</sup> Notably, such a defence bears some similarities to mirrored by the reaction of some to the sponsorship scandal. This is essentially a version of the “dirty hands” argument: that if the goal is noble, some private gain stemming from the attainment of those goals is somehow justifiable (Morton 2005).

play off province against province against province and hold his own against every enemy but the invisible last antagonist.<sup>10</sup>

Macdonald's most damaging ethical failure, however, which most profoundly shaped his legacy, was his role in the Pacific scandal. The scandal involved allegations related to bribes accepted by key members of the Conservative government, including John A. Macdonald, in exchange for the tendering of contracts to build the pan-Canadian railroad. Berton (1976) captures the evolution of the scandal. Whereas the scandal started off with explosive headlines and underwhelming evidence, stories later emerged that corroborated initial allegations. As Berton notes, "unlike most newspaper stories, the sting of this one was in its tail." (1976, 17). According to George McMullen's narrative appearing in the *Globe* on July 17, 1872, members of the Conservative government, including John A. Macdonald, had received sums of money from American contractors "with very good knowledge that it was never to be re-paid" (Berton 1976, 17). That edition of the *Globe* also contained a series of highly incriminating telegrams between Sir Hugh Allan (who, with his American backers, were vying for the Railway contract), and Georges Cartier and John A. Macdonald, that further corroborated this version of events. Though contemporaneous survey data are obviously not available, the scandal ultimately resulted in a vote a non-confidence, triggering an election that the Conservatives lost to Alexander Mackenzie and the Liberal Party in 1873 (Gwyn 1965). Bribery, patronage, and other forms of ethically suspect elite behaviour re-emerged under the administrations of many of Macdonald's successors. But perhaps no other scandal achieved the same profile in Canadians' historical consciousness than that involving the country's first Prime Minister.

---

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Bliss (2004).

The 20th century also presented numerous cases of Canadian politicians overstepping ethical lines, though the institutional setting, rules, and public expectations surrounding ethics and accountability in government began to evolve substantially. Many of the institutional changes taking place in the early 20th century were attributable to the Borden administration. The initial push for institutional reform, however, came earlier, with the Tory's 1908 campaign based on their "Halifax Program," aimed at reforming appointments to the civil service and banning corporate political donations (Morton 2005). As Desmond Morton points out, "After three hungry terms in opposition, the Tories devoted the 1908 election campaign to exposing a generous inventory of Laurier-era scandals" (2005, 18). But those allegations did not resonate with the Canadian public: the Liberals lost only three seats in that election, and Laurier's Liberals were returned to power.

Ultimately, Robert Borden's election in 1911 ushered in several significant changes to patronage appointments and the rules surrounding political donations. In particular, Borden made changes related to appointment to the public service on the basis of merit rather than party service (part of a broader set of reforms to the civil service), as well as harsher and more effective provisions regulating bribery and fraud during elections and "through publicity as to expenditure by political organizations" (Bliss 2004, 69).

Apart from the Pacific railway scandal, the Customs Department scandal of 1926 was the only other Canadian political scandal to lead to the fall of a government in Parliament. It is worth noting, however, that in both cases the implicated leaders were returned to power by the electorate in relatively short order (Morton 2005). The Customs Department scandal was explosive, however, leading to a vote of no-confidence in William Lyon Mackenzie King's government (Gwyn 1965). Ultimately, though, it stands as an example of a scandal that

resonated amongst politicians but ultimately did not resonate with the public. In 1926, allegations of bribe-taking and fraud on the part of several officials in the Department of Customs and Excise arose, allegations involving one of King's appointments. King's government relied on the support of the Progressive Party, and the scandal, as well as King's reaction to the revelations, chipped away at that support. A Progressive MP, W.R. Fansher, proposed a motion that combined a censure of the government with a Royal Commission to investigate Department of Customs and Excise more closely. In order to avoid a vote on the motion, King requested a dissolution of Parliament and a general election, which was denied by the Governor General, resulting in the famous King-Byng Affair. Mackenzie King ultimately was vindicated by the public through a general election. Indeed, as Donovan and Winmill note, his resilience in its face had been remarkable (1976, 57). Nonetheless, the scandal was a major and memorable event marring his tenure as Prime Minister.

The Beauharnois scandal, which broke just as R. B. Bennett formed government following the federal election of 1930, proved to be another mark on King's legacy (Donovan and Winmill 1976). The scandal related to payments received by King's Liberals in exchange for government contracts to developers interested in damming the St. Lawrence to generate hydro-electricity (Morton 2005, 19). Questions had been raised by Robert Gardiner in the House of Commons in early 1930 concerning the Beauharnois Light, Heat and Power Corporation, but the Liberal government at the time declined to initiate an inquiry. The report of the special committee formed to investigate the matter tabled their findings in the House of Commons in late July of 1931, and the report removed all doubt that the scandal was a "classic case in political graft" (Donovan and Winmill 1976, 58). The corporation's promoter, R.O. Swezey, was asked by the committee "why his firm had contributed \$600,000 to \$700,000 (about \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000 in today's values) to the Liberal Party in the 1930 election campaign."

His reply, memorable and oft-quoted then as now, was “gratefulness was always regarded as an important factor in dealing with democratic governments” (Bliss 2004, 156). As Morton points out, the Great Depression so marred Bennett’s term and so preoccupied the public that the scandal did not seem to have the lasting impact of the Liberal brand that it might have done otherwise (Morton 2005, 20).

More recent cases, part of the “corruption eruption” beginning in the 1980s (Ridley and Doig 1995), indicate that allegations of ethical impropriety against public office holders remain endemic features of Canada’s democratic politics. In particular, allegations of patronage in government appointments during the Trudeau years were the subject of political conflict in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As Cameron notes (1992), Brian Mulroney’s 1984 campaign was substantially fuelled by railing against those appointments. Indeed, the importance of these appointments to the narrative of the 1984 campaign were highlighted during a memorable and oft-invoked exchange between Brian Mulroney and his Liberal rival John Turner, in which Mulroney asserted, with respect to Turner’s enactment of the patronage appointments, that “you had an option, sir”. It is in this historical context that the thesis examines three cases: political-financial ethics and integrity in the Mulroney-Campbell years, 1984-1993 (chapter three), the sponsorship scandal involving the Liberal governments of Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, 2004-2006 (chapter five), and the Senate expenses scandal, 2012-2016 (chapter six), most closely associated with the Conservative Party of Stephen Harper.

After raising expectations for honest and ethically sound government during the election campaign of 1984, the Brian Mulroney's newly elected Progressive Conservative government adopted many of the same ethically-suspect practices as its predecessors, and fell into an unusual number of widely-publicized conflict of interest scrapes and allegations of financial wrongdoing (Bercuson et al. 1986; Stark 2008). Mulroney left office as one of the least popular prime

ministers in Canada's history, and Kim Campbell's brief pre-election tenure as party leader did little to rehabilitate the party's image (Cameron 1994; Newman 2005). The general public impression of graft and “sleaze” is widely viewed as contributing to the Progressive Conservative party's devastating defeat to Jean Chrétien's Liberals in 1993 (Cameron 1994).

Those parting impressions of the former prime minister were reinforced by the “Airbus affair,” emerging in the period following Mulroney’s exit from politics, which was the subject of media scrutiny from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s.<sup>11</sup> The Affair led to the damning Oliphant Commission Report, released in 2007, which confirmed that the Prime Minister had in fact accepted envelopes of cash from Karlheinz Schreiber, a German businessman. Mulroney claimed that the cash payments were in exchange for consulting work, though he admitted to not reporting the payments on his taxes and destroying all documentation. Notably, however, these revelations emerged after the 1993 election, and the wrongdoing Mulroney conceded occurred when he was no longer prime minister.

The Chrétien/Martin government’s “sponsorship scandal” defined Canadian politics in the mid-2000s, and helped steer the once seemingly-impervious Liberal Party into a series of series of crushing electoral defeats (Gidengil et al. 2012). The sponsorship scandal involved money secretly channelled from government coffers into a national unity programme to “promote the Canadian brand” in Quebec. Much of the government money was allocated without proper oversight or documentation, and made its way into the pockets of the Liberal’s political allies (Gidengil et al. 2012; Mancuso et al. 2006). The Gomery Commission, established by the Martin government to clear the air surrounding the scandal, kept the issue in the media over an

---

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the Airbus Affair, and allegations of ethical impropriety on the part of former Prime Minister Mulroney resulted in a public inquiry, as well as a series of high profile books about corruption during his terms in office (Cameron 1994; Jeffrey 1992; Newman 2005).

extended period.<sup>12</sup> The Inquiry confirmed that there had been significant corruption in the administration of the sponsorship programme, though it found that Martin (Minister of Finance at the time) was unaware of any wrongdoing.

The Harper Conservatives, first elected in 2006 on a platform of enhancing accountability and “restoring” ethics in government, also confronted a range of politically-charged and potentially damaging allegations of political-financial impropriety. The “Senate expenses scandal” features most prominently. Beginning in November 2012, questions began surfacing surrounding Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau’s housing allowances, leading to an Senate Committee investigation. In the following month, the investigation broadened to consider Liberal Senator Mac Harb and Conservative Senator Mike Duffy’s travel expense claims. In early 2013, Senator Pamela Wallin, whose expenses were also under the microscope, left the Conservative caucus. Also in early 2013, Nigel Wright, the Prime Minister’s Chief of Staff, either resigned or was fired (the Harper team has offered both accounts at different moments) in connection with his financing of Mike Duffy’s re-payment of his expense claims to the Senate of Canada. Charges were ultimately laid against Duffy, who was ultimately acquitted of breach of trust and bribery in April, 2016. Further, the scandal snowballed, prompting an investigation into all Senators’ expenses by Auditor-General Michael Ferguson, the results of which were made public in June, 2015. Although the events surrounding this scandal are arguably still unfolding, there are indications that it may have already adversely affected Canadians’ political support. The penultimate chapter of this thesis explores the effects of this scandal in greater depth.

---

<sup>12</sup> The Commission was called in February 2004 and filed its final report on February 1, 2006, resulting in a steady stream of news stories about the sponsorship scandal throughout these two years.



The Liberal government of Justin Trudeau was elected in October of 2015 with ambitious promises about openness and transparency.<sup>13</sup> It has already encountered negative media coverage over what have been deemed “cash for access” fundraisers, though this controversy is a very recent occurrence beyond the scope of this dissertation. Importantly, these ethically dubious fundraisers do not yet approach the level of public disapprobation, criminal charges, and public inquiries associated with the scandals discussed above. Indeed, there is no evidence of any quid-pro-quo, the sums of money involved were relatively modest, and other political parties have engaged in similar fundraising practices in the past (Martin 2016). Even so, the negative media coverage shows the ethics and fundraising practices of public office holders, as well as the extent to which they adhere to their campaign promises, continue to elicit public scrutiny in the post-Harper era.

What lessons emerge from a historical overview of political-financial scandals in Canada? First, it would seem that scandal does not always lead to electoral defeat. Macdonald’s involvement in the Pacific railway scandal cost him the reins of government in 1873, but he was returned to power in 1878. The Customs Department scandal led to the fall of King’s Liberal government, but he was immediately returned to power by Canadians. The electoral impact of poor ethical performance by an incumbent government is undoubtedly a complex matter. Many factors feed into vote choice, and political scandals, if the broader public is aware of them at all, are but one of these. The most salient point, however, is that the long-term extra-electoral attitudinal and behavioural impact of political scandals is relatively unexplored. It is to this research question that the thesis turns in the chapters that follow.

---

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Trudeau’s own “Open and Accountable Government” ethics guidelines, announced in November of 2015, indicate “there should be no preferential access to government, or appearance of preferential access, accorded to individuals or organizations because they have made financial contributions to politicians and political parties,” and that this standard constitutes “an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law.”

## 1.5 Roadmap

The thesis will proceed as follows. The following chapter reviews the relevant literature and specifies the overarching hypotheses guiding the analysis. It also provides a conceptual framework for the analysis of scandal and its impact on the two dependent variables. The focus then turns to examine some of the earliest appropriate data available on the impact of political actors' indiscretions in the area of ethics and integrity on political support and political participation: the PSC data from 1988 and 1993. Canadians' attitudes toward political ethics and corruption in the early 21st century (2003-2007) are probed in greater detail in chapter four, which also analyzes Canadians' general attitudes toward political ethics in comparison to those residing in other countries, developed and less developed. This chapter also presents the results of a large-N cross-national analysis of the core hypotheses specified in chapter two.

During this same period, Canada was rocked by a major political earthquake: the sponsorship scandal, which was re-shaping the country's electoral landscape. Did it also re-shape Canadians' relationship with their political system more broadly? Did it affect their patterns of participation and levels of political support? This is the subject of the fifth chapter, which digs deeply into the effect of this scandal. The thesis then turns to another major political-financial scandal involving credible allegations of unethical and illegal behaviour on the part of political actors: the Senate expenses scandal (2012-2016). Original data are presented and analyzed, and further evidence regarding the dissertation's overarching hypotheses is produced. The thesis concludes with reflections on the implications of the findings. The theoretical and empirical contribution of the study are discussed. The limitations of the thesis are considered, and productive directions for future research are outlined.

## Chapter 2

# Theoretical Foundation and Hypotheses

Before turning to empirical analysis, it is important to examine the theory and research regarding the key variables in the dissertation and to specify the primary hypotheses that animate the investigation on the basis of that literature review. It is to this task that this chapter turns. First, research on political support and political participation is examined and the conceptual framework specified. Critiques are addressed, and the analytic approach defended. The literature on political scandal is then addressed and a model of scandal effects presented.

### 2.1 Dependent Variable I: Political Support

Levels of public support for the political system in established democracies, including Canada, are the subject of a voluminous body of scholarly literature (Hetherington 2005; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Norris 1999, 2011; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Concern about waning levels of political support is rooted in the fundamental consequences these orientations have for state-society relations. Low levels of support for the political process are a more serious matter than dissatisfaction with incumbents. Deficits in trust in specific political actors can, in theory, be resolved by means of elections. Waning and waxing levels of trust in politicians can be understood as a healthy part of the democratic process (Norris 1999; Dalton 2004). But a lack of confidence in the political system more generally reflects a deeper form of political discontent, one that has implications for institutional stability. Representative democracy relies upon the public's confidence that the political process operates for their benefit and with high standards of integrity. The following section will outline conceptual debates in the study of attitudinal political support, its social and political implications, will address criticisms of its analysis, and

will outline the factors most often employed to explain its variance, including the revelation of political scandal.

Debates about political disaffection are sometimes characterized by conceptual “fuzziness” (Dalton 2004; Norris 2011). Trust in governmental institutions is routinely conflated with satisfaction with politics or democracy. Governmental trust is often scaled onto a single dimension with subjective political efficacy and trust in politicians and their professed motives. A range of attitudes and behaviours regarding the political system are sometimes grouped together to create indices of state legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> That analytic approach can be useful for certain purposes. But political disaffection is not a unitary phenomenon. A lack of attention to different levels of political support results in a debate that conflates and blurs analytically useful, theoretically grounded distinctions.

Most empirical studies of public attitudes toward the political system have their conceptual roots in David Easton’s highly influential work on political support (1965; 1975). Easton provides a useful analytic framework for thinking about attitudes toward government. He posits that support for the political system can vary along two axes. The first concerns a distinction between two different varieties of attitudinal support (i.e. diffuse and specific support), and the second concerns the different objects to which political support can be directed (i.e. political actors, the political regime, and the political community). Following Norris (1999; 2011) and Nevitte (2002), *inter alia*, this project adopts a modified version of the basic conceptual framework that Easton (1965; 1975) provides. While employing Easton’s distinctions

---

<sup>1</sup> Gilley, for example, defines legitimacy as follows: “a state is more legitimate the more that it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power.” (2006, 500). He measures state legitimacy with a combination of attitudinal and behavioural indicators, ranging from satisfaction with the workings of democracy to voter turnout (2006). Legitimacy, so operationalized, thus encompasses both the indicators of political support and of traditional political participation considered in this dissertation.

between support for different sorts of political objects, I depart from Easton's distinction between diffuse (i.e. affective) and specific (i.e. evaluative) support types. Instead, the framework employed here conceives of support as existing on a continuum from most specific (i.e. orientations toward politicians collectively) to most diffuse (i.e. support for the national political community) (see Figure 2.1).

[Figure 2.1 about here]

The rationale for this departure from Easton's framework is described in greater detail in the following section of this chapter. In brief, most treatments of the subject of political support have responded to the varied critiques of Easton's dichotomy of diffuse and specific support types by arguing that evaluations of the political system are inherently both affective and evaluative.<sup>2</sup> Survey items inquiring about respondents' attitudes toward various government institutions necessarily tap both respondents' general attitudes based on past accumulated experiences and any associated affect, as well as evaluations of recent performance. As Hetherington puts it, such evaluations represent "a pragmatic running tally..." based on both socialization experiences and more recent performance evaluations (2005). Craig (1993) follows this approach, as does Norris (2011), focusing attention on the objects to which support is directed rather than theoretical distinctions between different support types.

The conceptual framework specified in Figure 2.1 distinguishes support types according to the political objects to which support can be directed. It also includes examples of survey questions used to operationalize these forms of support at different points in the thesis. Easton distinguishes three principal levels of the political support: support for the political community,

---

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the early arguments of Loewenberg (1971) and Rogowski (1983), and subsequent applications of Craig (1993) and Norris (2011).

support for the regime, and support for the political authorities. Support for the political community essentially captures respondents' willingness to work together with co-nationals as a group and to govern collectively, irrespective of levels of support for specific institutional arrangements or political authorities. The diffuse aspect of this form of support is often operationalized using responses to survey questions about national pride and national identity, the willingness to fight for one's country, and whether one considers one's country to be the "best to live in." The second level encompasses support for the political regime. This level itself is divided into three components: regime principles, the norms and procedures of the regime, and political institutions. The final level of support is support for the political authorities, which consists of attitudes towards those who wield political power: political incumbents and candidates for office. These attitudes are undoubtedly interconnected, but there are both empirical and theoretical reasons to draw distinctions between them rather than to combine them into a single indicator of political disaffection (Klingemann 1999). Indeed, as Dalton has pointed out (2004), whereas support for the political community and certain institutions has remained relatively robust, support for the political process and politicians collectively has fallen off dramatically since the 1960s (see also Kanji 2002).

### 2.1.1 Addressing Critiques of Political Support

Research on political support, particularly research distinguishing specific and diffuse support (as per Easton's original typology), has been criticized from several angles. Some focus on issues of cognitive capacity, specifically with respect to specific support. Heavily stylized versions of Converse's famous argument on mass belief systems (1966) have led to what Easton (1975, 440) calls a "folklore" growing out of the American National Election Studies (ANES): that most citizens, even in advanced industrial democracies, do not have the cognitive capacity to connect

policy outputs to political actors and institutions. In this view, citizens also generally lack a stable ideology or set of preferences to guide their evaluations of political outputs.

More recent work on cognitive capacity, however, indicates that citizens do not need full information, or to fully understand the workings of the political system, in order to arrive at rational evaluations of and decisions about democratic outputs (Cutler 2002; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Sniderman et al. 1991). Rather, citizens employ a variety of heuristic cues to navigate the complexity of their political worlds and make reasoned judgements about institutional performance.

Another critique of Easton's framework focuses on the validity of the distinction between diffuse and specific support. Some argue that that distinction is essentially non-falsifiable (Craig 1993; Rogowski 1983). For example, Craig contends that "both orientations (diffuse and specific varieties of support) are defined largely in terms of their hypothesized antecedents and consequences," rendering the framework "virtually untestable" (1993, 8-9). These theorists generally do not question Easton's distinction between different objects to which support can be directed (i.e. political authorities, the political regime (including institutions), and the political community). Indeed, Craig argues that simply focusing on these different sorts of objects is an advisable way to avoid the problems associated with the distinction between diffuse and specific support (1993). Other objections concern problems with measurement. For example, Loewenberg (1971) argues that the division between diffuse and specific support is really based in a difference in motives for supportive behaviour, which are very difficult and perhaps impossible to capture empirically. Diffuse support is motivated by affect, whereas specific support is motivated by an evaluation of immediate institutional outputs. According to Loewenberg, this poses insurmountable problems to the utility of this theoretical distinction.

Others have questioned the particular measures often used to capture the two types of support and their theoretical validity (Rogowski 1983).

The distinction between diffuse and specific support thus seems problematic; Loewenberg's critique (1971) is particularly damning. Regardless of whether or not the dichotomy of specific and diffuse support types is theoretically tenable, in practical terms, distinguishing between the two is simply not possible (see also Rogowski 1983). Following others (e.g. Craig 1993, Nevitte 2002, and Norris 1999; 2011, *inter alia*), the approach adopted here conceives of political support as existing along a continuum ranging from most specific to most diffuse (see Figure 2.1).

### 2.1.2 Why Care? The Consequences of Political Support

Political support carries a number of implications for the character of state-society relations and for the functioning of democratic processes. First, they carry direct implications for the capacity of the state to mobilize resources for its aims, and for its capacity to effectively implement policy. People with high levels of support for the political system are more likely to voluntarily comply with governmental policies (Braithwaite and Levi 1998; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Uslaner 2008). When confidence in the political system declines, citizens become less willing to entrust political authorities with additional tasks and tax dollars. People with lower levels of trust are also less likely to evince such "allegiant" behaviours as expressions of patriotism and voluntary national service (military service) (Easton 1975; Dalton 2004), as well as to voluntarily comply with laws and government directives (e.g. the willingness to serve on a jury).

Political support also carries implications for patterns of political participation. Some argue that those with low levels of trust in political institutions are more likely to engage in elite-challenging political behaviour like protest, boycott and petition, activities that bypass the



traditional and relatively “passive” act of voting at election-time (Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Muller and Jukam 1977; Nevitte 1996). Arguably, the act of voting presumes willingness to entrust a representative to act on one’s behalf: an erosion of public trust is corrosive to that relationship, leading individuals to engage in extra-electoral forms of political engagement.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, high trust has a modest but consistent and relatively robust positive effect on electoral participation: citizens with higher levels of trust in government are more likely to turn out to vote (Dalton 2004). It is important to note, however, that political support and political participation are not one in the same: dips in political participation do not necessarily signify rising political disaffection (Norris 2011, 17). Political participation is complex, and political action is both multi-determined and multi-dimensional. From that vantage point, variations in political participation may not be valid or reliable indicators of dissatisfaction with the political system (Norris et al. 2006; Nevitte and White 2012; Ruderman 2014).

Political support can also affect institutional stability (Dalton 2004). It is intuitive that dissatisfaction with the political system would lead to calls for institutional reform. And Canada has seen many calls for various sorts of institutional change, calls that are mirrored by demands for reform internationally. Demands for electoral reform have been made in both British Columbia and Ontario (Lang 2007; LeDuc et al. 2008). Although both efforts were unsuccessful, the reform option garnered substantial support in both settings, and nearly passed in British Columbia (Carty et al. 2008). Prince Edward Island recently became the first province to endorse a change in its electoral system to MMP (mixed-member proportional) in a non-binding referendum. And the current government of Canada, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, has

---

<sup>3</sup> There is some debate regarding the relationship between voting and elite-challenging forms of political participation (Barnes et al. 1979; Nevitte 1996). The crucial point, however, is that political support is associated with higher levels of voter turnout empirically net other relevant factors (CES 2011; Dalton 2004).

pledged that the 42nd Canadian federal election will be last held under an SMP (single-member plurality) electoral system. Drops in political support have been also linked to electoral volatility, and the emergence of populist “anti-elite” and “anti-system” parties and candidates (Ruderman 2014, 54). Institutional longevity is thus a significant macro-level implication of high levels of political support. For all these reasons, scholars and policy makers alike have long focused on those factors known to bolster or depress levels of political support, irrespective of long-term longitudinal trends.

### 2.1.3 Explaining Variance in Political Support

Support for political actors and processes has been declining in most late industrial states according to most observers (Dalton 2004; Inglehart 1997; Nevitte 1996; Nevitte 2002; Pharr and Putnam 2000). Values change slowly, and the long time-scales involved pose a constant challenge to those interested in the topic (Dalton 2004; Inglehart 1977; 1990). Indeed, the difficulty in detecting slow, incremental changes has sparked debate about whether any such decline is genuine (see Fuchs and Klingemann 1995; Hooghe and Stolle 2005).

Even so, public confidence in governmental institutions does seem to have decreased since the early post-war period. Evidence from the Canadian component of the World Values Surveys (WVS), which has been deployed in four waves between 1981 and 2006, indicates drops in confidence in Parliament in the order of about 6%.<sup>4</sup> CES data collected since the mid-1960s indicate more substantial long-term declines in citizen satisfaction with the political process and

---

<sup>4</sup> This is the drop in the percentage of Canadians indicating they have “a lot” or “some” confidence in Parliament. The argument here is not that there has been a steady secular decline in institutional confidence. Rather, it is that drops in support are of concern, and worthy of examination, when and where they exist.

trust in politicians collectively (Kanji 2002, 81-83). LeDuc and Pammett show evidence of a substantial decline in Canadians' satisfaction with democracy since the early 1990s (2014). Quarterly polling data seem to point to the same conclusion (see Figure 2.2). That said, data concerning levels of public support for the political community in Canada tend to paint a somewhat less pessimistic picture. Attachments to the political community and to certain government institutions (e.g. the judiciary) appear more robust and more stable than more specific forms of political support. What explains these recent trends in attitudes toward the political system? And are they reversible?

[Figure 2.2 about here]

Theories of the decline in political support have been stylized in a variety of ways. Pharr et al. (2000) theorize that three sorts of factors that might affect levels of political support: those based on changes in the type of information available to people (roughly corresponding to my discussion of the media environment), theories based on changes in the criteria used by people to evaluate policy outputs (corresponding to “social-structural theories”), and performance-based theories (mirroring my review of government’s economic and policy performance).<sup>5</sup>

First, some contend that changes in the media environment might have driven down citizens' levels of satisfaction with the political process (Fallows 1996; Owen 1995; Postman 1985).<sup>6</sup> In this view, irrespective of the policy performance and personal behaviour of politicians, the media has tended to emphasize stories that are negative and sensationalistic, and

---

<sup>5</sup> This section presents a review of theories used to explain cross-time variance in trust in government, but a variety of SES variables (i.e. age, gender, and education) are also routinely included in models explaining political trust (see Kornberg and Clarke 1992). The importance of socio-demographic influences on political attitudes was established by the early work of the “Columbia School” (e.g. Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), and has been widely documented in all more recent empirical work on political attitudes (e.g. Abramson 1983; Dalton 2004; Nevitte 1996, *inter alia*).

<sup>6</sup> Nadeau and Giasson (2005) provide an excellent review of this argument in the Canadian context, though they ultimately arrive at a more nuanced view of the impact of news media.

have become more critical of politicians than they once were (Patterson 1993). That increasingly critical journalistic environment has, according to this perspective, led to a decline of trust in government.<sup>7</sup>

Other analysts challenge the “media malaise” perspective on political disaffection (Norris 2000). Instead, Norris advocates a “virtuous circle hypothesis”, suggesting that news media consumption might reinforce political interest and promote political trust and political engagement (2000). In short, she argues that there is surprisingly little convincing evidence that changes in media tone have contributed to political disaffection (see also Nadeau and Giasson 2005). Further, even if one accepts the idea that negative news drives down political support, the Canadian media are not as negative as is often assumed (Bastedo et al. 2014). In their content analysis of news stories from early 2011, Bastedo et al. find that stories about public policy are more positive than negative on balance (2014). These findings encourage a more nuanced perspective what impact the news media might have on political support.

Yet others argue that it is the social-structural changes in western societies, rather than changes in the media environment, that are the source of the decline in political support. First, it has been suggested that a decline in social capital, horizontal social networks and the norms of generalized trust and reciprocity with which they are connected, has spilled over into a decline in trust in government (Putnam 1995; 2000). In this view, factors such as a rise in television consumption and increased urban sprawl in western cities have weakened the bonds that tie citizens to one another socially (e.g. parent-teacher associations, social gatherings, bowling

---

<sup>7</sup> The effects of political scandals are occasionally grouped under the rubric of media effects. Dalton (2004) does not give sustained empirical attention to the impact of scandals on political trust, but he does consider them under that heading. By contrast, Pharr et al. (2000) group them under the heading of governmental performance. I consider them as a separate category of explanation here, since they do not fit neatly into existing typologies. Scandals do, of course, involve the mass media. The tone taken by media outlets may well have some effect on peoples’ views. But scandals also vitally constituted by a combination of public expectations about acceptable conduct and the actual political outputs.

leagues, etc.). This has in turn eroded citizens' attitudinal attachments to the political system, the ultimate collective social enterprise.

Many analysts draw attention to the importance of broader patterns of value change in the decline of political support, spurred on by dramatic economic and educational changes in advanced industrial societies (Dalton 2004; 2006; Inglehart 1977; 1990; 1997; Nevitte 1996; Norris 1999). The rise of “postmaterialist” value priorities, such as an increased emphasis on environmental issues and animal rights, has proved a challenge for governments that have been relatively slow to respond (Dalton 2004). Postmaterialist values have “an anti-authoritarian component” that encourage lower levels of trust in government (Flanagan 1987; Inglehart 1997). As Inglehart puts it, “a major component of the postmodern shift is a turn away from all kinds of authority, because deference to authority has high costs: the individuals’ personal goals must be subordinated to those of a broader entity” (Inglehart 1997, 221).

Lastly, some argue that the unsatisfactory performance of governments, particularly since the 1970s, has contributed to the decline in political support. And the bulk of this literature focuses on governments’ performance on the economy. The broad version of this argument draws attention to the contrast between the post-war period and the past three or four decades with respect to economic conditions and economic inequality. In short, such theorists generally argue that “the first twenty-five years after World War II was a golden era that gave rise to heightened expectations about economic performance that subsequently proved unsustainable” (Lawrence 1997, 113). Others emphasize *policy* output on economic issues, particularly the importance of welfare state spending to political support, arguing that austerity policies might be partially responsible for waning levels of political support in established democracies (Kumlin

2014).<sup>8</sup> Still others argue that particular economic crises, such as the world-wide recession of the 1970s and 1980s, combined with economic globalization, are demonstrably linked to growing doubts about government's ability to effectively manage, and even to influence directly, the direction of economic policy (Alesina and Wacziarg 2000).

Many of these factors are difficult or impossible for politicians to influence meaningfully (Bowler and Karp 2004). But what impact does the ethical comportment of politicians themselves have on trust in government? That question has received much less scholarly attention. Most research on the decline in trust has, somewhat surprisingly, not given sustained attention to the potential impact of political scandals (e.g. Dalton 2004; Nye et al. 1997).<sup>9</sup> Further, no empirical research on the question exists in the Canadian setting. It is nonetheless vital to document the research that does exist on this relationship.

Several studies have investigated the impact of political scandals on attitudes towards government and politics, particularly following the Watergate scandal in the United States (Garrett and Wallace 1976; Sigel and Hoskin 1977; Sniderman et al. 1975). The debate between Miller and Citrin is illustrative. Miller (1974) took the position that the political unrest and discontent emerging in the 1960s and 1970s stemmed from the unsatisfactory policy performance of governments. Citrin, by contrast, argued that the characteristics and behaviour of particular politicians, rather than their policy outputs, was largely to blame (1974).<sup>10</sup> The

---

<sup>8</sup> Kumlin's study finds that "greater generosity in unemployment benefits is associated with higher degrees of satisfaction with democracy" (2014, 193).

<sup>9</sup> But see Pharr and Putnam (2000). Their volume attempts to develop explanations for declining trust that focus on governmental performance beyond just performance on economic issues. Even that volume, however, devotes relatively little attention to the effects of scandal (Della Porta 2000; Pharr 2000).

<sup>10</sup> See Erber and Lau (1990) for a review of that debate.

“corruption eruption” of the early and mid-1990s prompted renewed interest in the attitudinal impact of political scandals (Miller 2008; Ridley and Doig 1995).

Research on the effect of political scandals on orientations to government can be grouped into three broad methodological categories: experimental (Joslyn 2003; Maier 2011; Sniderman et al. 1975), observational (Bowler and Karp 2004; Chanley et al. 2000; Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; Miller and Borelli 1991; Pharr 2000), and qualitative (Langford and Tupper 1993; Ridley and Doig 1995; Thompson 2000; Tiffen 1999). The balance of research across all three categories suggests that political scandals erode support for politicians and for the political system generally, though few studies examine the effects on a broad range of measures of political support. Despite several prominent dissenting voices (Miller and Borelli 1991; Norris 2011), the preponderance of evidence suggests that political scandals discredit the political system broadly; scandals lead to the view that the political system is riddled with unethical behaviour, and as such is unworthy of citizens’ attitudinal support.

An alternative line of research and theorizing, however, rooted in the “functional theory” of political scandals, challenges the idea that scandals are uniformly negative in their consequences for political support (see Maier 2011; Thompson 2000, 235). This line of speculation does not question the proposition that political scandals erode the popularity of implicated politicians and parties. Rather, it suggests that the public shaming of disgraced individuals might promote regard for the political system more broadly (Markovits and Silverstein 1988, 9). The process of “disclosure, denunciation and retribution” that occurs during a scandal is described by Thompson (2000) as one of “collective absolution,” in which societies formal and informal institutions, norms and procedures are reinforced. Political scandals might also be perceived as a demonstration that public office holders are not above the law, and their actions are open to scrutiny and harsh criticism when they violate the public trust. They might

therefore serve to bolster political support by reminding citizens of the virtues of a political system in which those who wield power can be held to public account (Adut 2008, 75). This line of speculation is certainly plausible, though it has little empirical support.

Still others claim that views about the political system are so deeply rooted in people's basic values and early socialization that scandals can only have a negligible impact. Maier's recent experimental study, for example, finds that scandals have no effect on trust in governmental institutions or satisfaction with democracy (Maier 2011). Sigel and Hoskin also find that the Watergate Scandal, undoubtedly one of the most high-profile, consequential scandals in American history, had "little convincing relation to generalized affect" towards government (1977, 111). Similarly, Miller and Borelli (1991) find that political scandals had no substantial impact on Americans' confidence in federal government during the 1980s. And Norris' comparative investigation of two cases also casts doubt on the potential of scandals to erode effect on political support (2011). In the United States, she finds that the amount of scandal coverage had no effect on satisfaction with democracy, though it did affect perceptions of Congress. In the case of the United Kingdom, Norris finds no relationship between democratic satisfaction and scandal coverage at all (2011, 181-185).<sup>11</sup>

In short, there is considerable disagreement concerning the impact of political scandals on political support. As it stands, there is no systematic evidence at all from Canada, and therefore no basis on which to establish which perspective – the "functional theory" or "dysfunctional theory" – holds in this national context. The bulk of existing research, however,

---

<sup>11</sup> In the United Kingdom, Norris notes that there is no indicator of the more diffuse issue of "satisfaction with the way democracy works." Rather, the only available indicator of this sort included in her data asks about "satisfaction with the way that the government is running the country". Even so, Norris finds no relationship between scandal coverage and that variable (2011, 182). Norris' measurement of "scandal coverage", however, casts a net that is arguably too broad, based as it is the tone of media regarding government generally, rather than coverage of ethics.



suggests that political scandals are capable of eroding people's attitudes toward the political system.

Hypothesis 1: *Political-financial scandals erode support for the political system.*

## 2.2 Dependent Variable II: Political Participation

### 2.2.1 Voter Turnout

The other trend to have dominated research on Canadian public opinion and political behaviour over the past generation has been the dramatic shift in Canadians' patterns of participation. Voter turnout has fallen precipitously since the 1980s, coinciding with a rash of political scandals in Canada, while participation in political protest (i.e. taking part in demonstrations, signing petitions, and joining in boycotts) has risen steadily (see Figure 2.3).

[Figure 2.3 about here]

These two types of political participation are fundamentally different in several respects: voting is less flexible, less capable of expressing attitudes on specific issues, and operates through established political institutions directly. Unlike participation in protest, which is relatively demanding with respect to social and economic resources (e.g. time), voting is levelling. The principle of "one person, one vote" is prototypically democratic: citizens obviously cannot vote multiple times in the same election in the way that citizens are capable of taking part in many demonstrations (Verba et al. 1995). And Verba and his colleagues find that: "on every dimension along which we consider participatory acts, voting is *sui generis*. For this reason, it is a mistake to generalise from our extensive knowledge about voting to all forms of participation" (1995, 24). Verba et al. do acknowledge that those who vote are more likely to also engage in other more resource-intensive forms of participation. Nonetheless, the socio-demographic profile of voters is distinct, and voting remains the most commonly employed

political tool in Canadians' participatory repertoires (Painter-Main 2014). Indeed, many regular voters engage in no other political activities.

Those differences notwithstanding, “conventional” and “unconventional” modes of political participation have a fundamental similarity: they both constitute methods of expressing political preferences and attempting to influence public policy. Kaase and Marsh emphasize that point (1979). They note that “repression potential” (people's endorsement of “severe” penalties for protestors who disregard the police, “the government using troops to break strikes,” and so on) is negatively associated with protest potential. That finding is hardly surprising: As Inglehart notes, the constructs are essentially mirror images of one another (1979). Kaase and Marsh note, though, modest positive correlations between protest potential and conventional political participation in all five countries included in their study.<sup>12</sup> Again, notwithstanding the important differences between different types of political participation that are illuminated by the most recent work of Verba et al. (1995), participatory acts and participatory potential of all kinds are positively correlated with one another. Kaase and Marsh summarize that point succinctly: “The basic hypothesis underlying this chapter is that conventional and unconventional political involvement... are not mutually exclusive but rather operate jointly and thereby constitute what we call a political action repertory” (137).<sup>13</sup>

Verba et al.'s civic volunteerism model is likely the most widely-cited theory of individual-level variance in political participation, and emphasizes the role of resources to both

---

<sup>12</sup> Their study includes data from the Netherlands, Britain, the United States, Germany and Austria.

<sup>13</sup> They note that “both protest and conventional political behaviour lie within a similar general sphere of “politics for social change” rather than “politics for social control” (94).

voting and alternative, more demanding, flexible, and issue-directed forms of political participation (1995). Resources are so fundamental to the civic voluntarism model, and indeed to most models of political engagement, because they constitute basic requirements for participation. One cannot volunteer for some political cause if one has no spare time whatever in between jobs and taking care of the family. Similarly, it is impossible to make a political donation when all one's money is devoted to bare necessities. Some degree of discretionary income and/or free time are requirements for participation in political life. Verba et al. emphasize the ways in which access to money and access to time are distinct in their impact on participation. Time, for example, has a fixed upper boundary: "the best endowed of us has only twenty-four hours in a day" (1995, 289). Money, by contrast, can be banked and accumulated over many years and has no such intrinsic limit. And whereas family income is closely related to other socio-economic status (or "SES") indicators like educational attainment, average hours of free time are more evenly distributed across socio-demographic groups. Indeed, Verba et al. find that those without a high school diploma report having more free time than high school and college graduates (1995, 292).

Beyond money and time, civic skills are the final resource emphasized in the civic voluntarism model. Verba et al. (1995) focus on what they consider to be objective measures of such skills, such as the results of a test of vocabulary and educational attainment, rather than on subjective assessments of people's abilities. They find that both schooling and linguistic skills result in higher levels of political participation (and that, not surprisingly, the two are positively correlated with one another) (305). Civic skills are not, Verba et al. demonstrate, randomly distributed across socio-demographic groups. Nonetheless, gender differences in this area are relatively small (except with respect to the attainment of professional degrees). The increase in educational attainment in most established democracies, including Canada, in the period since

the 1960s invites consideration of a much-discussed puzzle: why is that voter turnout has decreased over this same period?

### 2.2.2 Explaining Longitudinal Variance in Turnout

Why has voter turnout declined in Canada, as well as in many other established democracies?

That question has received a great deal of attention from social scientists. Of twenty-two industrialized consolidated democracies identified by Franklin (2004), sixteen experienced declines in turnout since 1945, and only six saw increases in their turnout rates. Between the decades of the 1970s and the 1990s, average voter turnout rates for these industrialized countries fell by an average of 5% (2004, 11). The trend is not, therefore, confined to Canada. The central puzzle of the decline is that it has occurred over a period during which education rates have skyrocketed (see Dalton 1984), and political interest has edged up. When compared with trends in Europe and the United States, Canada's rise in levels of educational attainment has been particularly pronounced (see Figure 2.5).

Blais et al. (2004) demonstrate using CES (Canadian Election Study) data (which encompass the interlude between 1968 and 2000) moderate period effects: the propensity to vote decreased for all demographics living through this period by approximately three percent (221).<sup>14</sup> There is also evidence of life cycle effects; as people age, their propensity to vote tends to increase. Such a finding is unsurprising in light of prior research and, given Canada's aging population, is obviously not capable of explaining turnout decline. However, the most substantial

---

<sup>14</sup> Period effects refer to those factors which affect everyone living through a certain time period, regardless of demographics. These might be induced by some event or historical incident to which everyone in a certain period is exposed, and which affects them all in more or less the same way.

effects on declining turnout are generational: young people today are not voting at the same levels as their counterparts did in the previous generation. When compared to earlier cohorts, it becomes clear that youth today are voting significantly less than youth did thirty years ago (Blais et al. 2004, 221). Given that the bulk of the decline in turnout is occurring among the younger, newly socialized generation, most theorists of voter turnout have attempted to suggest reasons for which young people are disproportionately abstaining from electoral participation. However, Blais et al. also demonstrate period effects, and as such more general explanations for lower turnout (i.e. those not aimed at explaining the differentially low participation of the young) may have some explanatory purchase as well.

Some suggest that broad value changes are responsible for the shift. Indeed, such theories are likely the most commonly invoked explanations for turnout decline in Canada. Blais et al., for example, argue that voting is motivated by a sense of civic duty and note that newer generations of Canadians are less likely to adhere to the notion that voting is an important component of civic duty (2002; 2004). Blais et al. demonstrate that such theories have a great deal of explanatory power, though some suggest that such arguments might be characterized as “tautological” (Bastedo et al. 2014). I do not accept the proposition that the argument itself is circular, but the claim that shifting conceptions of civic duty motivate turnout decline undoubtedly invites valid questions about the underlying process driving the concomitant decline of civic duty and turnout.

An alternative line of theorizing claims that the decline in turnout is the result of lower levels of competitiveness in Canadian elections (Johnston et al. 2007), as well as in other established democracies (Franklin 2004). These theories tend to rely on an alternative, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, understanding of what motivates citizens to vote. The model developed by Franklin (2004) and adapted to the Canadian context by Johnston et al. (2007)

draws on the rational choice theories articulated by Downs (1957) and Riker and Ordeshook (1973), but departs from them as well in important ways.<sup>15</sup> Franklin's model was formed inductively in response to the fact that the Downsian model does not seem to fully account for the apparent effect of electoral competitiveness on turnout (2004, 56). Franklin acknowledges that the model may well reflect a tailoring of theory to data, and needs to be applied more widely and tested against more data to assess its veracity. Franklin's conjecture is that context is extremely important, to an extent that even Riker and Ordeshook did not recognize. The character of the election (i.e. its competitiveness, the nature of certain electoral institutions, party platforms), Franklin suggests, determines aggregate-level fluctuations turnout to a greater extent than the characteristics of voters themselves (2004, 2). A vital part of Franklin's argument is that voting is habitual: those who came of voting age in an era of un-competitiveness, such as was the case in Canada in the 1990s, are therefore likely to vote at lower levels in the future.

A third perspective on disengagement from traditional political participation suggests that negative experiences with government might be responsible for lower levels of voter turnout (Bastedo et al. 2014). Put differently, poor government performance might be motivating disengagement from traditional political participation. Bastedo et al.'s work on turnout draws on a broader literature on "policy feedback" to suggest that deficiencies in government performance, perhaps related to neoliberalism and cutbacks to social spending in the 1980s and

---

<sup>15</sup> The Downsian approach to one's rational calculus of whether or not to vote has often been expressed in the following simple bit of formal modelling, which clarifies his argument somewhat:  $R = (PB) - C$ , where R is one's total utility derived from voting (and therefore one's likelihood to vote), P is the citizen's expectation that his/her vote will be decisive, B is the benefit the voter will receive for his/her preferred candidate winning rather than the less preferred candidate, and C represents any costs associated with voting (see Hill 2006, 21, for a strong elaboration of this model and its evolution; Anderson and Stephenson (2010) also provide a review, with an emphasis on the applicability of the model to Canadian political behaviour). Somewhat paradoxically, the implication of this early application of rational choice theory to political behaviour is that the rational considerations encompassed by B are unlikely to matter at all, owing to the fact that P can always be expected to approach 0.

1990s, might have had a negative impact on levels of political participation (Mettler and Soss 2004). Shore's analysis of 26 European states supports that line of theorizing (2014). Her study shows that state social spending as a percentage of GDP, particularly social spending on working age adults and families, bolsters voter turnout and alternative forms of participation (2014).<sup>16</sup>

Significantly for the purposes of this research project, political scandals feature hardly at all as a potential explanation for declining levels of traditional political participation.<sup>17</sup> But the idea is plausible. Both poor service delivery and political scandal relate to the unsatisfactory performance of public office holders. Naturally, citizens are more likely to have first-hand experience with the former than the latter. Even so, perceptions of government performance might well have an impact. If disappointing government performance regarding service delivery motivates disengagement from traditional forms of political activity, so too might unsatisfactory performance in the area of ethical fidelity.

Hypothesis 2.1: *Political-financial scandals depress voter turnout.*

### 2.2.3 “Non-Traditional” Participation: The Dynamics of Protest Politics

As Figure 2.3 shows, the decline in involvement in political participation via voting has been accompanied by a marked increase in involvement in “non-traditional” forms of political action such as boycotting (part of what Stolle and Micheletti (2009) describe as a trend toward “political consumerism”), signing petitions, and taking part in demonstrations. Several analyses of trends in Canadians’ political action repertoires have drawn attention to the so-called

<sup>16</sup> Note, though, that Muñoz et al.’s case study of Spain finds that cuts to social services can stimulate participation (2014). That finding may be attributable to the shorter time horizon under consideration.

<sup>17</sup> But see Dahlberg and Solevid (2016) and Stockemer et al. (2013).

“mainstreaming” of protest politics (e.g. Gidengil et al. 2004; Howe 2010; Painter-Main 2014). Nonetheless, in a recent analysis, Painter-Main (2014) claims to find some support for what he dubs the “elite-challenging” view: some citizens who feel marginalized employ protest to bypass traditional representative institutions.

The two most commonly invoked explanations for the rise in protest participation relate to cultural change and cognitive mobilization. First, some argue that value change is the primary factor driving citizens toward political protest in greater numbers. Ronald Inglehart’s influential body of work makes the case that socialization in the more economically secure post-war environment has led to shifting value priorities among the populations of western European and North American states (1977; 1990). Inglehart described these values as “postmaterialist.” Materialist value priorities reflect a concern with economic security and order, whereas postmaterialist values relate to “higher order” concerns such as personal expression and freedom of speech (Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Figure 4 presents World Values Survey (WVS) data on the proportion of the Canadian population qualifying as materialist and postmaterialist.<sup>18</sup> The trends documented in Figure 2.4 are striking in both their directional consistency and in their scale. In light of these changes in Canadians’ fundamental value orientations, the idea that this cultural change might motivate changes in political participation is undoubtedly plausible.

[Figure 2.4 about here]

---

<sup>18</sup> Postmaterialism is measured using Inglehart’s original scale (1990). That index is based on responses to the following questions: “Here’s a list of FOUR goals. Which goal is MOST important to you personally? One, fighting crime; two, giving people more say in important government decisions; three, maintaining economic growth; or four, protecting freedom of speech?...And which is SECOND MOST important to you personally?” Those who identify “fighting crime” and “maintaining economic growth” as the two most important goals are considered materialists, whereas those who identify “giving people more say in important government decisions” and “protecting freedom of speech” as the two most important goals are considered postmaterialists.



Drawing on a broader body of research on authority orientations (Eckstein 1966; 1969; Eckstein and Gurr 1975), Nevitte connects the shift toward postmaterialism with a broader set of value changes in Canada (1996). Nevitte's *The Decline of Deference: Canadian Value Change in Cross-National Perspective* makes the case that in all domains of life – the family, the workplace, and the polity – Canadians' values have shifted towards less deferential outlooks. With respect to family life, Canadians were more inclined to identify “independence” as an important value to teach their children in 1990 than a decade earlier, and less inclined to identify “obedience” as important. In the workplace, Canadians became more likely to indicate that “one should follow one's superior's instructions only when one is convinced that they are right.” And in their political participation, Nevitte (1996) documents increases in Canadians' protest participation throughout the 1980s (1981-1990). His study makes the case that the shift toward greater levels of protest participation go hand in hand with and reflect broader cultural changes occurring in Canada and other established democracies (1996).

A second line of theorizing links changing patterns of participation to dramatically increased levels of education in western societies since the 1960s. Russell Dalton's work, in particular, suggests that rising levels of education might drive an increase in ad-hoc and flexible varieties of political participation like boycotting and joining in political demonstrations (1984). He argues that newer generations of political sophisticated but “de-aligned” citizen no longer need to rely on party cues to the same extent than they once did (1984). Instead, these “apartisans” will be more likely to adopt unconventional and flexible methods of engagement that allow for more specific and detailed messages to be conveyed about their political preferences about specific public policy issues. As Figure 2.5 demonstrates, increases in education have been experienced across Europe and North American between 1960 and 2006. The increase in Canada has been especially striking. Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) data indicate that Canada now has one of the highest levels of educational attainment in the world. The trends Dalton identified in his seminal article have thus continued and are particularly noteworthy in Canada. His theory of cognitive mobilization thus seems to be an eminently plausible candidate explanation for rise in protest participation.

[Figure 2.5 about here]

Explanations based on cultural change and cognitive mobilization tend to be the most frequently invoked theories for protest participation. But what impact might political scandals have on the shift toward “non-traditional” forms of political action? Some analysts suggest that political scandals have become increasingly prevalent in established democracies since the 1960s (Adut 2008, 76; Thompson 2000, 108-118). It is plausible, based on prior research, that revelations of political corruption might lead citizens to bypass traditional representative channels and attempt to influence political outcome through “non-traditional” means. A great deal of research has demonstrated that although citizens are voting less, this does not necessarily mean that they are less engaged in the political world (Gidengil et al. 2004). Indeed, whereas voter turnout has declined, political interest has edged up slightly (Nevitte 1996, Kanji 2002). Kanji (2002) and Nevitte (2002) highlight that point, drawing attention to the divergence between internal efficacy on the one hand, and external efficacy (i.e. perceived responsiveness) on the other hand. Whereas internal efficacy has increased marginally, external efficacy has been on the decline. Given that Canadians remain interested in politics and have both the desire and the capacity to express their political preferences, it is plausible that the revelation of ethical wrongdoing on the part of political elites might dampen participation in traditional elite-centered forms of political activity while at the same time stimulating engagement in non-traditional political activities as replacement outlets for political expression.

Hypothesis 2.2: *Political-financial scandals stimulate non-traditional forms of political participation.*

## 2.2 Focal Independent Variable: Political-Financial Scandal

### 2.3.1 Defining Political-Financial Scandal

Scholars interested in the effects of political scandals on social phenomena are often met with a degree of skepticism. Many political scientists either argue or assume implicitly that scandals are inconsequential, both with respect to their empirical, causal impact and on normative grounds. They are frequently seen as “the froth of political life”: often assumed to be inevitable, superficial, and ultimately un-enlightening (Thompson 2000). Scandals provide little insight, in this view, into the larger, more fundamental forces that drive and shape political outcomes. They are, essentially, epiphenomena, lacking both causal efficacy, and any broad importance to peoples’ lives, general well-being, or the expression of their political interests.<sup>19</sup>

This thesis adopts an empirical approach, investigating the observable implications of scandal as public event, as opposed to examining the elite actions underlying its cases from a normative perspective (Adut 2008). I make no arguments about what behaviours warrant public disapprobation, apart from some broad reflections on the implications of the findings in the concluding chapter, nor do I argue that the ethical transgressions of political elites should be more or less prominent features of public debate. Studies adopting this sort of empirical analytic approach have found that political scandals matter because they influence people’s behaviour; because many citizens think and feel that they matter, and adjust other attitudes and behaviours accordingly. Political scandals matter to electoral outcomes because they affect people’s vote

---

<sup>19</sup> Some go further to suggest that an obsession with scandals by media commentators and the public at large is a dangerous distraction from larger, more important issues facing political communities (Davis 2006).

choice according to the best available evidence (Banducci and Karp 1994; Blais et al. 2005; Gidengil et al. 2012). By influencing public opinion, and through the possible direct legal and institutional implications arising from the alleged wrongdoing, such as audits and investigations, resignations, criminal proceedings, and even public inquiries, political scandals also have an impact on the effectiveness of governments and government bodies (Rottinghaus 2015). Whether such scandals *should* matter to people's political attitudes is a very different question.

It should be noted that scandal and corruption are not synonymous.<sup>20</sup> There is a long history of concern about corruption, having been addressed in some of the earliest political philosophy. But the concept has seen a fundamental shift in meaning, such that older excerpts and quotations on the topic can be highly misleading, especially when taken out of context. Johnston discerns a shift from "classical" to more modern, "behaviour-classifying" definitions (1996). Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides understood corruption to refer broadly to moral health of societies in general. Modern theorists, by contrast, typically define corruption as an elite-level phenomenon: as "abuse of public office, powers or resources for private benefit," or something similar (Johnston 1996).<sup>21</sup> Differences sometimes arise in classifications of what constitutes "abuse of office," though, which can vary cross-nationally, and can be based on legal, normative, or public opinion criteria (Mancuso et al. 1998; 2006). There are also those who argue for

---

<sup>20</sup> Kjellberg (1995) emphasizes this point, drawing attention to the fact that the media and particularly political opposition parties have strong incentives to exaggerate issues of ethical misconduct. As he argues, "implications of corruption are a potent political weapon" (340).

<sup>21</sup> Rose-Ackerman, for example, defines corruption as "the misuse of public power for private gain" (1999, 91). Neild (2002) adopts the definition: "the breaking by public persons, for the sake of private financial or political gain, of the rules of conduct in public affairs prevailing in a society in the period under consideration" (213). See Heywood (1997), Nelkin and Levi (1996), and Philp (1997) for further discussions of competing definitions of political corruption. A primary distinction between definition types relates to the difference between those positing a universal corruption construct (e.g. Rose-Ackerman) and those rooted in institutional context (e.g. Neild 2002).

broadening discussions of political corruption to include instances of “sexual deviance,” or personal ethical impropriety on the part of elites, such as alcoholism or drug use (Miller 2008).<sup>22</sup>

Political scandal, too, has been conceptualized in a variety of ways, with definitions ranging from narrow to strikingly expansive (Rottinghaus 2015). Thompson, for example, defines political scandal broadly as a perceived “transgression of certain values, norms, or moral codes” that involves some element of concealment, invoking the public disapproval and denunciation of at least some non-participants (Thompson 2000, 14). Garment also emphasizes transgression by political actors as a key element of political scandal. She adopts an expansive definition that emphasizes the perceived violation of “a set of shared values” (1991, 14). Similarly, Adut’s broad conceptualization of scandal focuses on the issue of violation of moral or ethical boundaries, arguing “...they all have to do with transgression and public reactions to it...”. And in contrast to narrower definitions outlined below, Adut explicitly includes cases of elite incompetence among a scandal’s potential catalysts (2008, 3-13).<sup>23</sup>

Others conceptualize political scandal as a more limited phenomenon. Markovits and Silverstein, for example, define political scandal as public disapprobation related to the pursuit of power through the violation of “due process and procedure”, thus excluding many scandals generally considered to be political, such as certain financial scandals and sex scandals (1988). Kumlin and Esaiasson, drawing on Lowi (1988), maintain that political scandal is nothing more than “corruption revealed” (2012, 264), thus implying that some genuine wrongdoing lies at the

---

<sup>22</sup> Although corruption and scandal are conceptually distinct, the two are related. Given that definition of political-financial scandal specified here requires that the allegations of ethical or legal wrongdoing made are credible, and involve financial impropriety on the part of political actors, we might expect that major political-financial scandals (e.g. the sponsorship scandal) would increase public perceptions of corruption in the political system (see chapters four and five for a confirmation of this conjecture).

<sup>23</sup> Like Johnston (1996) and Thompson (2000), Adut maintains that elite transgressions “...need not to be authenticated...” to occasion scandal (2008, 10).

heart of a scandal. Rottinghaus specifies an effective narrow definition. He requires that “for scandals of a non-sexual nature, an alleged violation of a law or code of ethics is the threshold criterion” (2015, 18). He explicitly excludes, however, “executive branch incompetence, unpopular policy decisions, and negative press” as the basis of genuine scandal, and requires that the allegations of wrongdoing be “verified” in some way (2015, 18). His focus on allegations alone, however, and not on the associated public reaction, risks including as scandals many opposition driven attacks that do not elicit sustained controversy or resonate with the broader public.

This dissertation adopts a relatively narrow conceptualization of political scandal. It nonetheless occupies a middle ground between the broad definitions of Garment (1991) and Thompson (2000), and the narrow definitions of Markovits and Silverstein (1988) and Kumlin and Esaiasson (2012). Building on Rottinghaus (2015) and Thompson (2000), political scandal is defined here as *credible* allegations of legal or ethical wrongdoing on the part of political actors, invoking the public disapprobation of non-participants.<sup>24</sup> Thus political scandals must stem from allegations that are verified and publicized by a source that is generally regarded as credible, such as an independent officer of Parliament, major, reputable media outlets, the police and the Crown prosecutor.

There are several benefits to this definition of political scandal. Crucially, the emphasis on credible allegations of wrongdoing is helpful in narrowing the scope of phenomena considered under this label. The proliferation of often gratingly partisan “alternative media” organizations, blogs, and Web 2.0 (e.g. Twitter) platforms make it more important than ever to

---

<sup>24</sup> The two major cases of political-financial examined in this dissertation involve not just rumours, or accusations from political opponents, but verified, credible allegations of unethical and illegal wrongdoing arising from reports of Auditor-General of Canada, and independent officer of Parliament, and later from the RCMP and Crown Prosecutor.

draw a line between seemingly ubiquitous ethical controversies related to those who hold political power, and genuine cases of political scandal. The dissemination of so-called “fake news” stories generated by political opponents, which is facilitated by these platforms, underscores the point. Many of the broad definitions discussed above do not fully exclude “scandal” based on rumour, gossip, or fringe conspiracy theories. Further, many definitions do not exclude what might be better classified and analyzed as public criticism based on poor policy performance or controversial policy decisions (Rottinghaus 2015). When a concept is cast in a way that is too expansive, it becomes less useful as an analytic tool. Inferences and generalizations become elusive. The definition employed here aims for a middle ground, in which meaningful distinctions are highlighted, yet the term does not become too far removed from its use in other scholarly studies.

This thesis focuses on the impact of a string of recent high-profile Canadian financial scandals in the political realm on Canadians’ attitudes toward government and their participation in politics. That approach is consistent with the consensus that different sorts of political scandals have different sorts of effects on public attitudes (e.g. Vivyan et al. 2012).<sup>25</sup> Scandal involving aspects of a political actor’s private life, such as those involving extra-marital affairs, for example, seem to have weaker effects on the public than scandals involving finances.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, for the sake of comparability across cases, this thesis focuses on the impact of scandals that involve credible allegations of financial wrongdoing on the part of political actors. These scandals include those related to allegations of “kick-backs”, bribes, and improper

---

<sup>25</sup> Vivyan et al., for example, emphasize the importance of comparing similar types of misconduct when attempting to generalize about the electoral impact of scandal (2012).

<sup>26</sup> Allen and Birch: “the broader conception of political integrity does not generally extend to such things as politicians’ sex lives or drinking habits. Most individuals tend to draw the familiar distinction between purely private behaviour and public behaviour, and to discount the former.” (2015, 7).

tendering of contracts, as well those based on allegations of direct misappropriation or theft of public funds. Such political scandals entail a direct, or indirect, cost to the public paired with a financial windfall to some or all of the implicated parties.

### 2.3.2 A Model of Scandal Effects

Thompson's landmark *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age* is notable not only for its impressive historical analysis, but also for its development of an influential conceptual framework for the analysis of political scandal (2000). Thompson specifies two core models of scandal (2000, 24). The first, depicted in Figure 2.6, stylizes “the basic ingredients of scandal”: allegations or disclosure of wrongdoing leads to “expressions of disapproval” from the public (Thompson 2000, 24).<sup>27</sup>

[Figure 2.6 about here]

Thompson's model of “more complex scandals” is likely a more accurate depiction of the cross-time internal dynamics of more complex scandals, though it does not apply to such scandals universally. Often, what seems to keep complex and major scandals in the headlines for extended periods is the cycle of denials, counter-allegations, and further revelations and disclosures that emerge following the basic linear process depicted in Figure 2.6.<sup>28</sup> “In these more complex cases, the unfolding of the scandal becomes a cat-and-mouse game in which, with every denial, the stakes grow ever higher, and in which the second-order transgressions may come to assume much greater significance than the original offence.” (Thompson 2000, 24).

<sup>27</sup> Thompson makes clear that public disapprobation “can express differing degrees of reproach, from mild scolding and faint, even teasing disapproval to unrestrained moral outrage...” (2000, 21).

<sup>28</sup> Thompson cites the example of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, which features prominently in his book.



[Figure 2.7 about here]

I build on Thompson's insights to construct an extended model political scandal effects (see Figure 2.8). The box at the top of Figure 2.8 depicts the tripartite division of scandal first employed by King (1986), and later adopted by Dewberry (2015) and Thompson (2000), which divides political scandals into those related primarily to financial matters, those related to the pursuit of political power, and those having to do with the violation of ethical or legal codes regarding sexual relations. Naturally, there is the potential for overlap between these different categories of ethical transgression, and the typology is not exhaustive. Nonetheless, they do seem to capture the large majority of cases of major political scandal (King 1986; Thompson 2000).

Information about the alleged wrongdoing is then transmitted to the public via news media or, less commonly, through peer-to-peer communication in person or on-line through social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Most often, peer-to-peer communication about a scandal is based indirectly on information sourced from major media outlets. This dynamic is depicted with the horizontal arrow. News of the alleged elite misconduct, received by the public, then elicits an attitudinal reaction. This reaction is both affective – as measured by questions about how angry respondents are about a scandal – and evaluative – as measured by questions about the extent of corruption under the government in question, or about whether the media has paid too much attention to the scandal.

Affective and evaluative attitudes are difficult to separate empirically, since beliefs about the seriousness of the scandal are interwoven with the extent of an individual's anger about it. Social-psychological work on motivated political reasoning demonstrates that the causal arrow runs both ways. Clearly, evaluative reactions can inform affective ones, but recent studies have also found that affect reactions can also have an impact on subsequent information gathering and processing (Redlawsk 2002). Consequently, the immediate affective reaction to revelations of

elite ethical violations can ultimately have an impact on people's evaluations of the seriousness of the ethical breach.

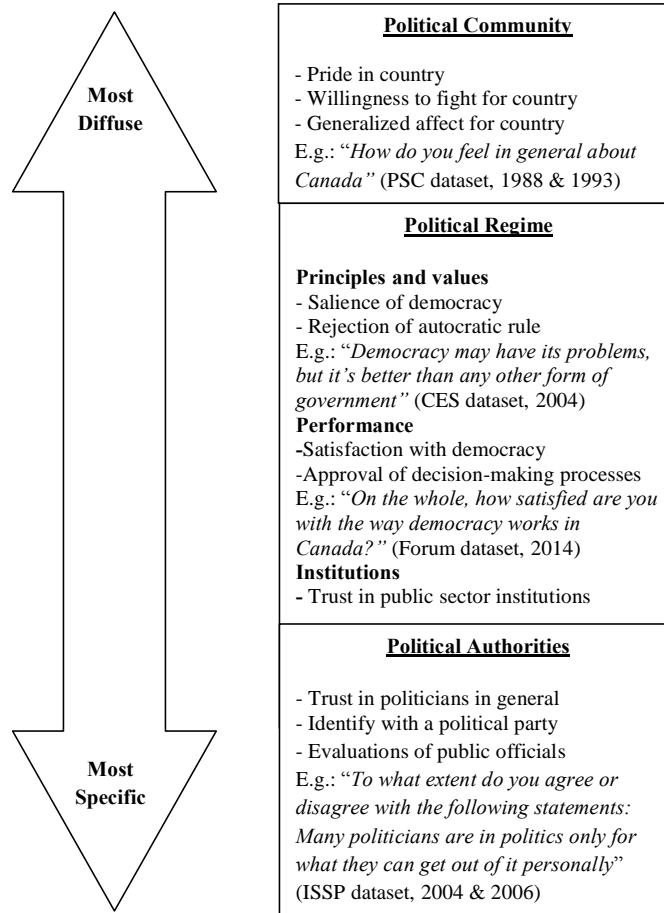
[Figure 2.8 about here]

Lastly, reaction to a scandal is hypothesized to affect levels of political support, as well as an individual's inclination to engage in traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation. Hypothesis 1 is represented with the arrow on lower left hand side of Figure 2.8; scandal is hypothesized to drive down levels of support for the political system. Further, Hypotheses 2.1 and 2.2 posit that scandal undermines traditional political participation and stimulates non-traditional forms of participation respectively. Further, some analysts argue that drops in political support may themselves depress levels of traditional political participation and stimulate non-traditional participation (Norris 2011, 224-225). These indirect effects are depicted with the horizontal arrows at the bottom of Figure 2.8, and tested empirically by entering indicators of political support into political participation regression models in the dissertation's empirical chapters.

This chapter has reviewed the state of the literature on the thesis' dependent variables, developed a conceptual framework for the analysis of its research question, and presented a model of scandals' effects on political support and political participation. It has thus connected the literature on political scandal on the one hand, and the literature on political behaviour on the other hand. The thesis now turns to a series of empirical tests of the observable implications of its core hypotheses regarding political scandals' attitudinal and behavioural effects. The following chapter investigates those implications with data from a period in recent Canadian political history characterized by falling political support and voter turnout, and a rash of political-financial scandals: the 1980s and early 1990s.

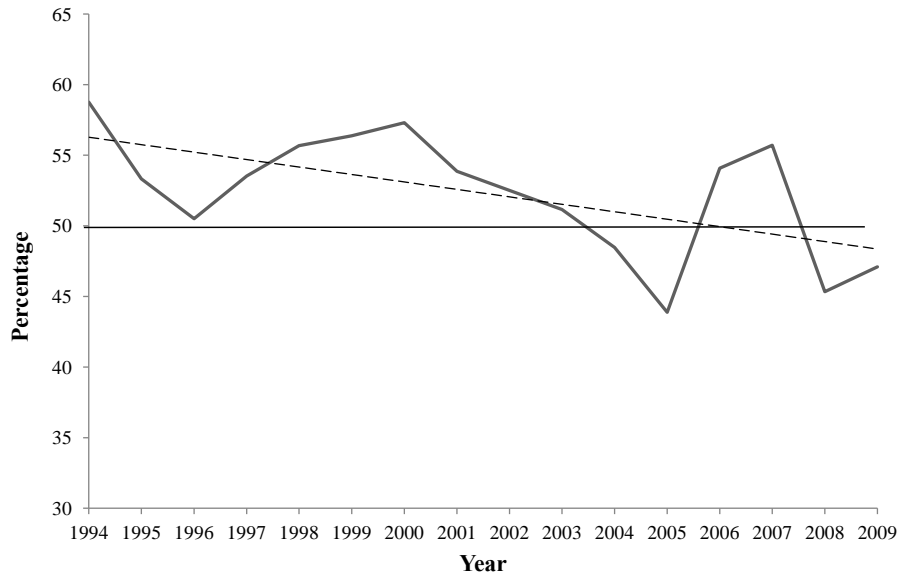
## Figures

**Figure 2.1: Typology of Political Support**



Source: Adapted from Norris (2011).

**Figure 2.2: Satisfaction with the Federal Government, 1994-2009**



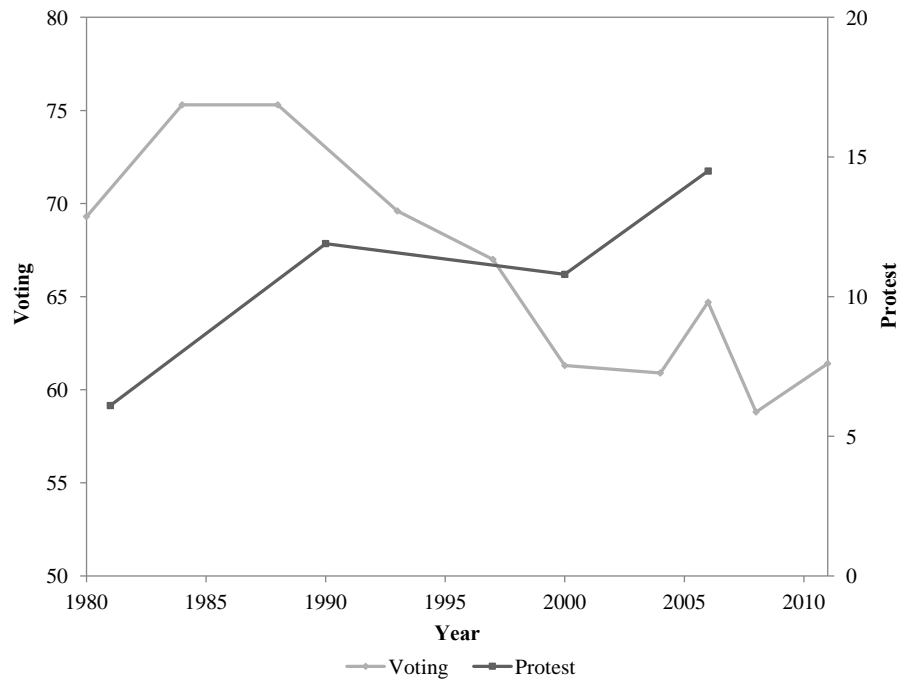
Source: Environics (via CORA).

Notes: (1) The equation of this OLS line:  $y = -0.5278x + 1108.6$ .  $R^2$  is 0.34.

(2) These figures represent the percentage of all survey respondents to indicate that they are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied, averaged by year.

(3) Question wording: “Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the performance of the federal government? Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?”

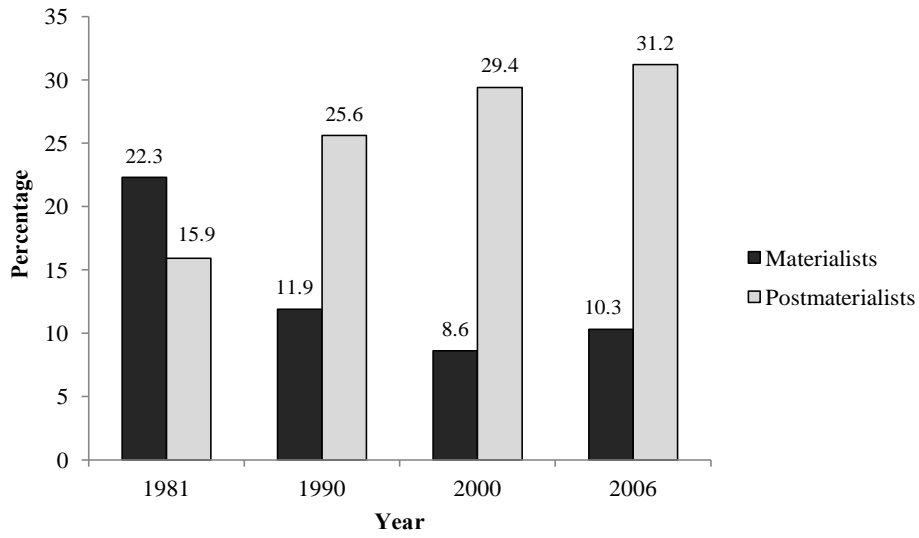
**Figure 2.3: Levels of Political Participation in Canada, 1981-2011**



*Source:* World Values Surveys (Canadian component), 1981-2006, and Elections Canada.

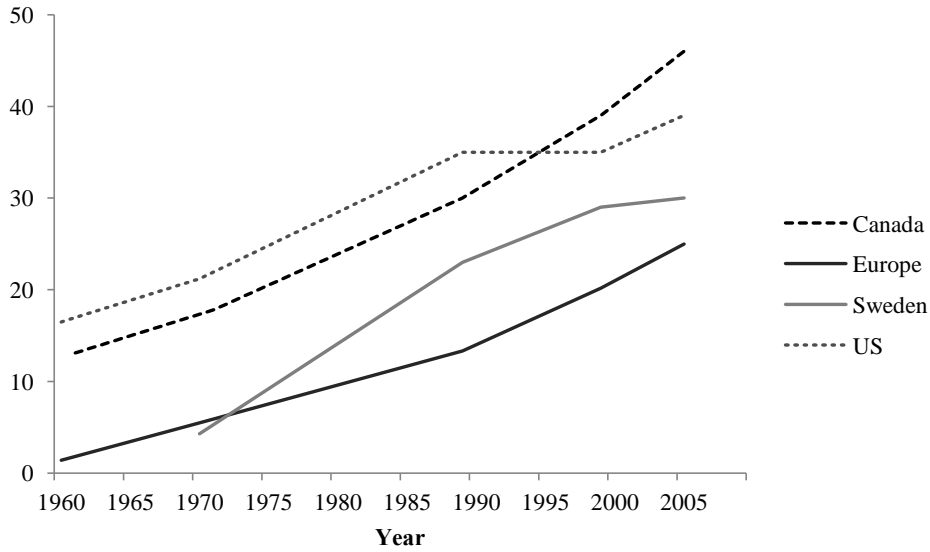
*Note:* Data graphed against the secondary y-axis represent the percentage of the population having done all of the three following activities: signed a petition, joined in a boycott, and took part in a demonstration.

**Figure 2.4: Materialists and Postmaterialists in Canada, 1981-2006**



*Source: World Values Survey (Canadian component), 1981-2006.*

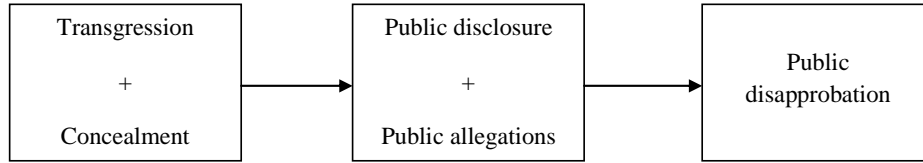
**Figure 2.5: Rates of Post-Secondary Educational Attainment in Canada, Europe, and the United States, 1960-2006**



*Source:* OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) yearbooks, 1960-2006.

*Note:* Data for “Europe” consist of statistics gathered from the following countries: Germany, Spain, France, the UK, Italy, and the Netherlands.

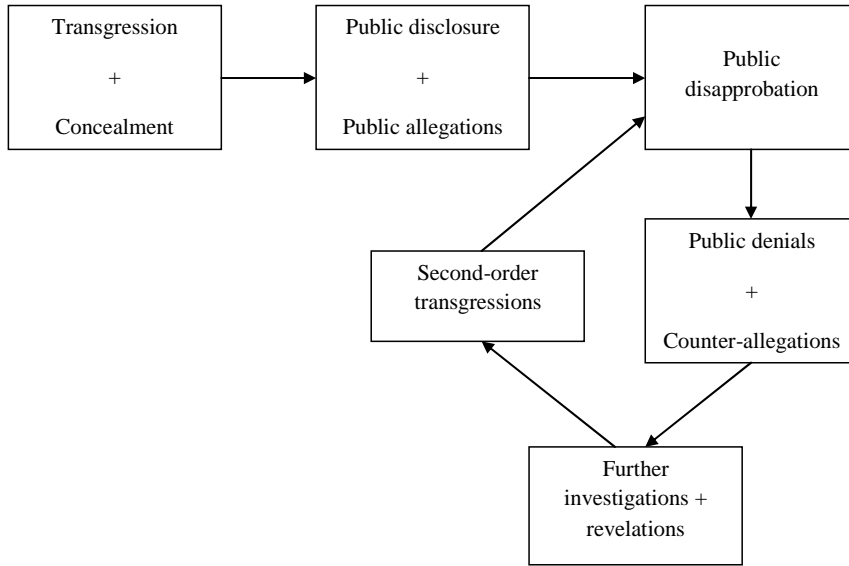
**Figure 2.6: “The Basic Ingredients of Scandal”**



*Source:* Thompson (2000).

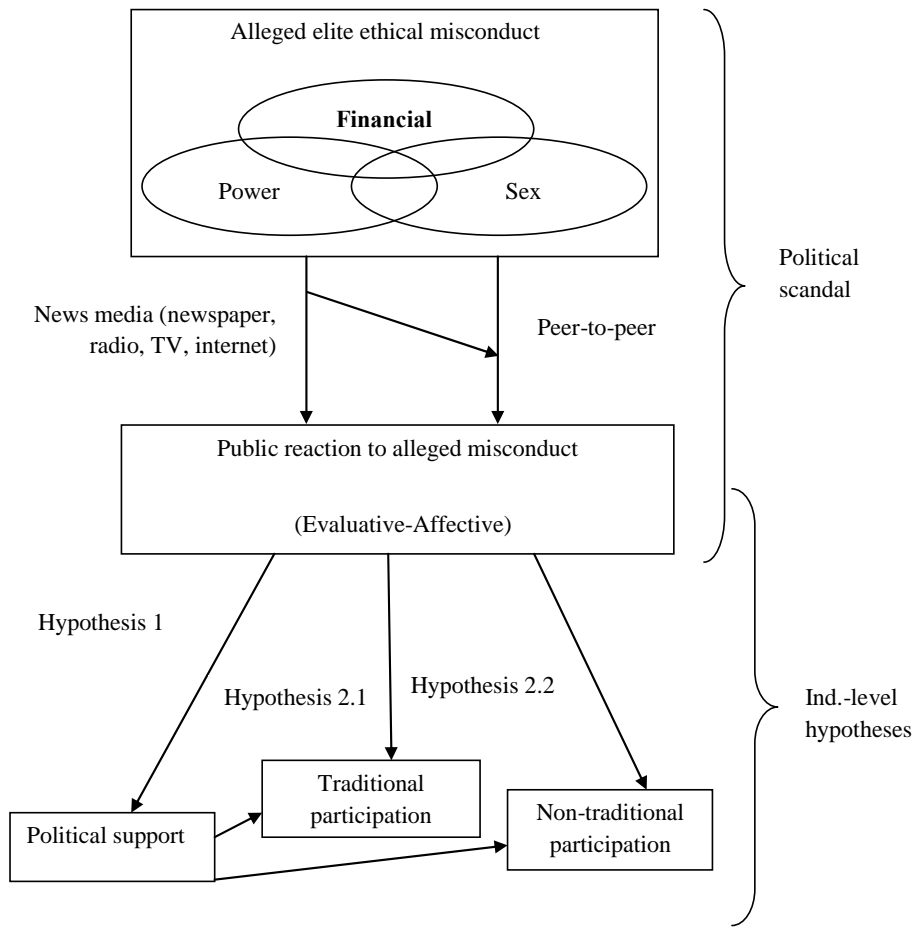


**Figure 2.7: “Elements of More Complex Scandals”**



*Source:* Thompson (2000).

**Figure 2.8: A Model of Scandal Effects**



## Chapter 3 The Mulroney Years

The overview of Canadian political scandals outlined in the introductory chapter provides a broad vantage point on the importance of these events historically, setting the stage for the cases that follow. However, this thesis aims to investigate the impact of political-financial scandal systematically using primary data about Canadians' attitudes. Consequently, it is useful to extend the analysis backward as far as appropriate attitudinal data allow. The place to start, then, is the earliest period of turbulence in financial-political ethics that is also captured by appropriate survey data on political support and political participation: the Progressive Conservative governments of Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell, 1984-1993.

The 1980s and early 1990s was a period of remarkable partisan “de-alignment” and dissatisfaction with traditional political processes and institutions in Canada (Clarke et al. 1996; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Nevitte 1996). Analysts have drawn attention to the sharp drop in voter turnout, which began to accelerate in Canada in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as well as the concomitant rise in “elite challenging” forms of political action (see chapter two). At the same time as these remarkable changes were unfolding, paralleled by similar developments in other advanced industrial states, idiosyncratic patterns of state-society relations were playing out in Canada. Some attributed drops in political support and shifts in political participation to broad social and economic changes unfolding across many western democracies (Brodie and Nevitte 1993; Nevitte 1996). Others have fixed on institutional variables, particularly the development of judicial review following the passage of the Constitutional Act of 1982, as the motors of these changes (Cairns 1993). What has not been explored in the Canadian context is the extent to which the political-financial ethical controversies that were so prominent in federal politics

during the 1980s and early 1990s contributed to these trends, which also have roots in this tumultuous period. It is to that task that this chapter turns.

After fleshing out the nature of the ethical issues confronted by the Progressive Conservatives, the chapter's key subsidiary hypotheses and analytic strategy are presented. The investigation then turns to explore systematic individual-level data to test its hypotheses, and concludes with a discussion of the empirical contribution and broader significance of the statistical analyses.

### 3.1 Political-Financial Scandal in the Mulroney Years

Allegations of financial-political wrongdoing beset Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government surprisingly "early and often". The Airbus affair, though perhaps the most memorable scandal, did not come to light until after Brian Mulroney had left the Prime Minister's Office. Any inventory of the varied ethically-tinged charges levelled against the Progressive Conservatives by other politicians, the media, and the general public should begin by drawing attention to how early in the tenure of the government the troubles began.

A series of controversies related to conflict of interest and favouritism, in the form of awarding lucrative contracts and government positions to partisan allies, friends and family members, emerged from 1985 onward, the cumulative effect of which was to brand the government as unprincipled in the area of political-financial ethics. Stark points out that this spate of conflict of interest related issues, which had previously been fairly rare in Canada, might well be the result of the number of (marginally successful) business people Conservative parties

tend to bring into government (Stark 2008, 331).<sup>1</sup> These cases of conflict of interest, combined with a series of scandals related to improper expenses claimed by members of Mulroney's cabinet and accusations that the Mulroneys had used the publically-subsidized PC Canada fund to support their extravagant lifestyle (Cameron 1994, 396), led to the perception of "sleaze" that beset the Progressive Conservative party by the early 1990s.

Railing against patronage was a key aspect of Mulroney's victory over John Turner's Liberals in 1984. A memorable debate moment, perhaps the most memorable of any Canadian political debate, was Mulroney's calling out of Turner's enactment of Trudeau's last minute patronage appointments. Though Mulroney's intent might have been primarily to "score political points", it struck a chord with Canadians. It put the doling out of public funds, contracts and jobs to political allies in the spotlight in an unprecedented way, and genuinely raised public expectations on the issue (Chudos et al. 1988, 103-104). As some have pointed out, there were clear indications that patronage would not be done away with altogether should Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives form government (Bercuson et al. 1986). As Bercuson et al. point out, "his line to party workers was that he would appoint Grits and New Democrats, 'but not until there isn't a single breathing Tory left'" (Bercuson et al. 1986, 63; Chudos et al. 1988, 103).

Even so, public disapprobation regarding alleged patronage appointments was a prominent theme early in the Mulroney years. "When the Conservatives took over in 1984, there were something like 3,500 positions that could be filled at the discretion of the Cabinet –

---

<sup>1</sup> "...Conservative governments are prone to conflicts involving private interests because, being Conservative and not Liberal, they draw a disproportionate number of businesspeople into public life. But – being governments and not businesses – they attract, at the margin, businesspeople who have not been all that successful in business; otherwise they would stay in business. Those individuals can tend, at the margin, to see a career in the public sector as a way of helping them succeed in business to a degree that eluded them in the private sector. And that, perhaps, is why relatively more of them get into conflict-of-interest scrapes" (331).

governor-in-council appointments – and 10,000 spots that could be filled by the ministers. The range covered prestigious jobs such as the Senate or heads of certain crown corporations and agencies, down to the wharfingers, the keepers of the local dock” (Bercuson et al. 1986, 62).

Though the PC government's appointments in 1984 tended to be cautious, their pace and the appearance of partisanship intensified as the years wore on in their first term. As Bercuson et al. put it, “...the Tories were in too much of a hurry. They tried to cram into one year what the Grits had done in twenty.” (1986, 68). After initial cautiousness about displacing Liberal appointees, “...the Tories moved ruthlessly and asked for mass resignations, such as that of the entire board of directors of Air Canada. Naturally, Conservatives replaced them. This followed the similar move when the entire board of Via Rail was shown the door except for the President, Pierre Franche.” (1986, 69).

Frank Moores, former Premier of Newfoundland and close friend of the Mulroney family, was among those appointed to the board at this time. Moores was forced to resign in the summer of 1985 after it became known that he had improperly lobbied on behalf of a European firm attempting to sell jets to Air Canada, and that he had acted as a consultant to two of Air Canada’s competitors, Nordair Inc. and Wardair Ltd. (Bercuson et al. 1986, 69; Hoy 1987, 339-340).

Further revelations surrounding Moores’ conduct were uncovered following a *Fifth Estate* investigation and T.V. programme airing in March of 1995, when the Airbus scandal broke (Cashore 2010; Kaplan 1998), but even at the time these questionable appointments caused political damage. “Unanimously, the press began to howl about pork-barrelling and called the appointments the creation of an 'instant Senate.' The opposition referred to the appointees as 'hacks, flacks, and bagmen.' The identification of many of the new appointees with the prime minister set him up as the target for the assaults from all sides” (Bercuson et al. 1986, 69).

The Sinclair Stevens affair was another high-profile conflict of interest case to afflict the Tories during their first term (Cameron 1994, 163-167). In 1987, following his resignation from cabinet, a special commission of inquiry headed by Justice William Parker found that Stevens had violated conflict of interest guidelines. Prime Minister Mulroney refused to sign his nomination papers in the 1988 federal election, though a federal court later ruled the findings of the Parker Commission null and void (CBC News 2004).

Notwithstanding these issues with patronage, Bercuson et al. report that “senior Conservatives felt that their reputation for special treatment and nepotism was far more damaging in the long term than their patronage appointments.” (1986, 71). Following a series of missteps related to the awarding of advertising contracts in 1985, it became known that the law firms of John Crosbie’s two sons had received legal work from the Department of Justice, Crosbie’s portfolio, causing a stir in the House of Commons and media. Soon thereafter, it became clear that the Prime Minister’s friend Sam Wakim received \$200, 000 of government legal work at his Toronto firm (Bercuson et al. 1986, 75).

Apart from issues of conflict of interest, patronage and nepotism related to allegedly unfair apportion of government work and contracts to friends, family and political allies, other accusations related to the improper use of public money emerged as Mulroney’s time in office wore on. Perhaps most prominent was the case of environment minister Suzanne Blais-Grenier, who journalist Chris Young revealed had spent \$64,000 on two trips to Europe, “...much of it zipping around the continent in chauffeur-driven limousines and going on a trip, even though the conference she was going for had been cancelled.” (Hoy 1987, 328). Reactions from Mulroney and the Deputy Prime Minister fuelled the fire, accusing those raising the expenses issue of anti-French sentiment (Hoy 1987, 329). Blais-Grenier soon after resigned from Cabinet, ostensibly over policy disagreements surrounding the government’s decision to allow the acquisition of

certain Gulf Canada assets by another firm (Hoy 1987, 330). On top of this, unfolding during the same period, Conservative Quebec MP Michel Gravel “was charged with fifty counts of influence peddling and abuse of public trust. Court documents allege that the east-end Montreal MP had obtained several thousand dollars in cash or benefits from government contractors.” (Hoy 1987, 335).

The Mulroneys’ own expensive tastes and lifestyle hardly helped public perceptions. During this period Canadians became accustomed to news stories about Prime Minister Mulroney’s hundreds of Gucci Loafers and his wife Mila’s weekend shopping sprees in New York. Compounding the perception problem was the accusation that the Mulroneys could not themselves afford this degree of largesse on the basis of their incomes prior to entering politics, and even that the PC Canada fund had been used to supplement some of these extravagances (Cameron 1994). Unlike Pierre Trudeau, who inherited family money, the implication that the Mulroneys’ lavish lifestyle was made possible through the improper use of his public office was widely circulated.

Lastly, and perhaps most damningly, there were hints of what would later turn into the high-profile Airbus affair as early as the late 1980s. For example, Claire Hoy writes in 1987 “one of the more mysterious links in the Mulroney network is that between the former Newfoundland premier Frank Moores, Austrian-born multi-millionaire Walter Wolf, and two charter members of Mulroney’s old boys’ club, Michel Cogger and Fred Doucet. Like weeds, the names keep popping up, either individually or in connection with the names of other Mulroney confidants” (Hoy 1987, 338). Though this had not yet developed into the full-blown scandal it became in the mid-1990s, after Mulroney left office, rumours about kick-backs and financial wrongdoing with respect to the awarding of contracts were rampant in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Cameron 1994).



## 3.2 Subsidiary Hypotheses, Analytic Strategy, and Data

To what extent did public evaluations of the ethics of incumbent political leaders in this period of ethical turbulence, documented in the previous section, contribute to the broader trends in support and participation outlined in chapter two? The core hypotheses specified in the foregoing chapter can be tested via three elaborated, subsidiary hypotheses that align with the data available from this period.

*Hypothesis 3.1: The perception of dishonesty and a lack of ethics on the part of the incumbent prime minister decreases support for politicians collectively, for the political regime, and for the national community.*

*Hypothesis 3.2a: The perception of dishonesty and a lack of ethics on the part of the incumbent prime minister decreases involvement in traditional, state-centered forms of political participation.*

*Hypothesis 3.2b: The perception of dishonesty and a lack of ethics on the part of the incumbent prime minister increases involvement in non-traditional forms of political action.*

The analysis might best be considered a plausibility probe. It is the broadest test of my central hypotheses that is also rooted in a specific Canadian historical case. The test is not of the effects of a particular scandal. It is, nonetheless, a test of the broad observable implications of the theory developed in the foregoing chapter. If it is the case that political scandals, or credible allegations of ethical or legal wrongdoing evoking public disapprobation, erode political support and traditional participation, we would expect to see Hypotheses 3.1 and 3.2a confirmed. The analytic approach adopted here is therefore an entrée: an overview of the assortment of alleged political-financial ethical violations that characterized the Mulroney years, and an empirical assessment of whether or not they had an impact on public opinion and political behaviour according to the best available data from the period.

The data relied upon to test these hypotheses come from the Political Support in Canada (PSC) surveys fielded in 1988 and 1993. The PSC data are well-suited to evaluating Hypotheses 3.1, 3.2a, and 3.2b because they probe a broad range of attitudes toward the political system, as well as public evaluations of the ethics of political leaders.<sup>2</sup> Because the PSC data reflect responses recorded prior to the federal elections of 1988 and 1993, evaluations of the ethical integrity of “incumbent” Prime Ministers – Brian Mulroney in 1988 and Kim Campbell in 1993 – reflect public perceptions of the ethical integrity of those who wield power.<sup>3</sup> The following analysis explores whether negative perceptions of their ethics and honesty erode broader forms of support and participation.

### 3.3 Canadians’ Perceptions of the Ethics and Integrity of Political Leaders, 1988-1993

How widespread was the perception of corruption among Canada’s political leaders following two terms of Progressive Conservative government? Were perceptions of corruption confined to the PC incumbents? Or were they generalized across all party leaders? Figure 3.1 presents Canadians’ mean evaluations of the leaders of the major political parties in 1988 and 1993. Data reflect public attitudes toward their performance on “honesty and ethics”, and their general performance, during the period under consideration.<sup>4</sup>

[Figure 3.1 about here]

<sup>2</sup> The data are somewhat less well-suited to the analysis of non-traditional political action, though data on that subject are available from 1988. The PSC data were collected via telephone from a stratified national random sample of Canadians (N = 1,946), with oversampling in smaller provinces. See appendix for question wordings.

<sup>3</sup> Prime Ministers do not technically run as “incumbents”. They do, however, wield certain power through so-called “caretaker conventions”.

<sup>4</sup> Standard deviations are included above the bars to capture the degree to which the public is polarized in their attitudes.

The first point to be made is that Canadians clearly do distinguish between the different party leaders with respect to their performance. Statistically significant and substantively large differences emerge across evaluations of party leaders both with respect to general performance and ethical performance more particularly.

Data from 1988 indicate that NDP leader Ed Broadbent scored highest of any major party leader in that election year with respect to “honesty and ethics”, and by a fairly substantial margin: Canadians assigned him a mean evaluation of nearly 6.5 on a 1 to 10 scale. Conversely, John Turner scored lowest on ethical performance and overall job performance. It is possible that Turner’s past enactment of the Trudeau patronage appointments prior to the 1984 campaign, coupled with the memorable debate moment discussed in the introduction, had a lasting impact on Turner’s public image on this dimension.

Perhaps most notable, however, are public perceptions regarding the performance of the incumbent Prime Minister. The responses examined here were collected prior to the 1988 and 1993 elections, respectively. Consequently, people’s attitudes toward the political leader who has wielded power in years past and currently wields it, albeit via so-called “caretaker conventions”, are of particular interest. And since Kim Campbell was appointed Prime Minister only months before the federal election of 1993, Brian Mulroney’s evaluations in 1988 are especially revealing.

Brian Mulroney’s performance evaluations are notable in that he is the only leader in Figure 3.1 to garner a mean evaluation on ethics and honesty that is lower than his overall performance evaluation. In short, Canadians felt that ethics and honesty was Mulroney’s weak spot in the 1988 contest. That said, his scores on both dimensions were middling relative to his two competitors. Perceptions of dishonesty and a lack of ethical propriety in 1988, it seems, were

not confined to the PC incumbent. They also afflicted other party leaders having held power federally (i.e. John Turner).

The political landscape changed by the time of the 1993 election. Brian Mulroney vacated the leadership of the party four months prior to the campaign, allowing Kim Campbell, a well-regarded British Columbia MP and former Minister of Justice, to accede to the leadership of the party and thus the role of Prime Minister in June of 1993. The Reform party also emerged as a major political force in the early 1990s, and consequently public evaluations of Reform leader Preston Manning are assessed in 1993. And Audrey McLaughlin replaced Ed Broadbent as NDP leader in 1989, and thus public perceptions of her performance are probed in 1993. Results are presented on the right panel of Figure 3.1.

Campbell's campaign, coming off a period of high dissatisfaction with the performance of the federal government during the late 1980s and early 1990s, proved error-prone (Cameron 1994). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to evaluate the full range of reasons for the failure of the 1993 PC campaign.<sup>5</sup> The crucial point is that the brief interlude afforded to Campbell as leader, a few summer months, proved insufficient for her to rehabilitate the party's image.

The bruising campaign, featuring several high-profile missteps, likely contributed to her very poor overall performance evaluation: barely four on a scale of one to ten. Although Campbell's score on ethical performance is somewhat higher than on general performance, she is nonetheless tied for last, with Reform leader Preston Manning, among the leaders of major parties on the "honesty and ethics" dimension. It is important to note, however, that there is also

---

<sup>5</sup> A series of attack ads against the insurgent Liberal leader Jean Chrétien, one of which appeared to mock his facial paralysis, are often cited as turning points in the campaign, as are several of Campbell's extemporaneous remarks on the campaign trail that were widely reported as telling "gaffes" in the news media (Cameron 1994). Whether or not the campaign cost the Tories at the margins, the PCs were heading into 1993, the fifth year of their second term, with dire polling numbers and a constitutionally-mandated election looming.

the greatest degree of public disagreement with respect to the honesty and ethics of the two leaders of the right. Some saw Campbell and Manning as very ethical and honest whereas many others believed the opposite. Though virtually tied with the NDP leader on ethical performance, Jean Chrétien dominated the category of general job performance, scoring over six on the one to ten scale, and also generated the greatest degree of consensus on this point among Canadians.<sup>6</sup>

At first glance, the most striking aspect of Figure 3.1 from a contemporary perspective might be how positive public evaluations of the honesty and integrity of Canadian political leaders were in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In every case except one, the leaders' evaluations on ethics and honesty are *better* than their overall performance scores. Put differently, leaders in this period were slightly but consistently more likely to be seen as under-performers than as dishonest and unethical. Because the one-to-ten performance scale lacks substantive reference points for respondents, there are two possible interpretations of the consistency of these gaps: either political leaders in this period were seen as relatively ethical, or they were seen as relatively incompetent. The latter seems more likely, though naturally the explanations are not mutually exclusive.

The exception here is also instructive: Brian Mulroney's performance evaluations from 1988, whose ethical performance scores are lower than his overall performance scores. Unlike Kim Campbell in 1993, Brian Mulroney had wielded power for four years at the head of a majority government in 1988. Therefore, Mulroney is both the only undisputed incumbent leader in Figure 3.1 and the only leader to have a lower evaluation for honesty and ethics than his or her overall performance evaluation. Power might well corrupt, at least in the eyes of the public. The

---

<sup>6</sup> As revealed by the relatively modest standard deviation of 0.19.

hard trade-offs involved in governance – the straddling of regional, linguistic, and cultural cleavages in a large and diverse country, the striking of deals between clashing interests, and managing expectations related to campaign promises in light of shifting circumstances – would, at the very least, seem to create challenges for leaders interested in maintaining an image of total consistency, integrity, and honesty. If fostering a public perception of honesty and ethics is all that interests a party leader, she or he might do better to remain in opposition.

### 3.4 Multivariate Results

Does dissatisfaction with incumbents' ethical performance have an independent negative effect on political support or participation? Hypothesis 3.1 concerns the drivers of different forms of political support. This hypothesis is subjected to two tests, 1988 and 1993, on three dependent variables: politicians collectively (most specific), regime support, and support for the national community (most diffuse).<sup>7</sup> In all cases the dependent variables are interval-level thermometer scores, and consequently OLS regression is used.<sup>8</sup>

The 1988 test is primary, where the 1993 test sets a higher bar. In the former case, the focal independent variable is Brian Mulroney's performance evaluations. Overall evaluations of Brian Mulroney's performance are also entered into the 1988 models in order to control for the possible impact of general evaluations being channelled through the ethical performance indicator. Including both makes it possible to isolate the independent impact of perceived performance with respect to ethics and honesty in particular.

---

<sup>7</sup> See the appendix for question wording and coding of variables.

<sup>8</sup> Cell entries represent un-standardized OLS coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

As noted in the prior section, Kim Campbell's status as an incumbent Prime Minister is somewhat questionable, given her relatively recent appointment to that position after a long period of government under Brian Mulroney's leadership. Given that the subsidiary hypotheses elaborated for the purposes of this chapter specify that dissatisfaction with incumbents' ethical performance should exert an independent negative effect on political support, it follows that ethics evaluations of Kim Campbell, who might not be considered an incumbent in the fullest sense, would be a somewhat weaker predictor of support.

[Table 3.1 about here]

The statistical analyses presented in Table 3.1 indicate that evaluations of Brian Mulroney's ethical performance are a consistent predictor of political support across all levels from most specific to most diffuse. Evaluations of his ethical probity are also some of the most substantively important in the three 1988 models. A comparison of the effect of Mulroney's ethics evaluations across the three dependent variables suggests that the perception of unethical conduct on the part of the incumbent Prime Minister has a larger negative effect for more specific forms of support (i.e. support for politicians collectively and for the government of Canada) than for support for the national community (i.e. affect toward Canada).

As if to underscore the distinctiveness of the structure of attitudes toward the national community relative to other forms of political support, the results from 1993 indicate that a belief in the honesty and integrity of Kim Campbell was associated with more negative views about Canada. More broadly, few significant results emerge from the 1993 analysis relative to the focal independent variable. This is less surprising, perhaps, because Campbell did not have a substantial record of government as Prime Minister.

The alternative hypotheses discussed in chapter two also receive some support. Generalized trust is a consistent predictor of higher levels of support. Those who believe others

in society can be relied on to treat them fairly are also more likely to hold positive view of politicians, the political regime, and the nation-state. The other hypothesis to receive strong and consistent confirmation with respect to its impact on all support types is economic pessimism, an indicator linked to public perceptions of the incumbent government's economic performance. In both 1988 and 1993, those who felt that the economy was getting worse were less likely to express support for all three aspects of the political system.

A standard set of individual-level socio-demographic control variables are entered into the model that are commonly linked to political support and participation: age, education, sex, income, and mother tongue. Age has been consistently linked to levels of political support, with most studies finding that younger citizens express lower levels of support than their older counterparts (Newton and Norris 2000; Nevitte 1996), though some recent analyses show that these age differences may have softened in recent years (see chapter five, Ruderman 2014).<sup>9</sup>

Those with higher levels of socio-economic status (SES), as measured by levels of household income and educational attainment, are also generally more positive about the political system than the less affluent and less educated (Anderson and Guillory 1997; LeDuc and Pammett 2014). And while most studies find little evidence of substantial gender differences in political support (Kornberg and Clarke 1992), women's continued underrepresentation in the political system, combined with persistent gender gaps in other political attitudes (Gidengil et al. 2013), raise the possibility of male/female differences, and thus a variable representing whether

---

<sup>9</sup> Those findings signal the possibility that the positive relationship between age and support as observed in the 1990s might have been at least partially the result of disaffected *generations*, socialized between the 1945 and the 1970s, rather than purely the results of life-cycle (e.g. Inglehart and Welzel 2005). If this is indeed the case, there is no reason to believe that the process will continue indefinitely, with each generation exhibiting higher levels of disaffection than the one preceding it. Thus, as the baby boomers and "generation X" enter old age and become the reference point against which "millennials" are compared, one might well expect to see a softening of the relationship between age and support.



or not the respondent is a women is also included in the models. Lastly, francophone, but notably not Anglophones living in Quebec, tend to have lower levels of political support than the Canadian population at large (Nadeau 2002).

The effects of age and SES on political participation are quite well-established: older citizens are more engaged than the young in nearly all forms of political action (Blais et al. 2002; 2004; Gidengil et al. 2004), and consistent with Verba et al.'s resource mobilization model (1995), and higher levels of SES result in higher levels of traditional and non-traditional participation.<sup>10</sup> As Gidengil et al. note, the “mainstreaming of protest politics is actually widening the participation gap. In Canada, as in other advanced industrial democracies, the affluent and highly educated are the most likely to sign petitions, join in boycotts, and attend lawful demonstrations, just as they are more likely to vote, to become members of political parties, and to join interest groups” (2004, 142).

These socio-demographic variables are included in the models in this chapter, and in the models of support and participation in the other chapters of the thesis (or proxies, based on data availability), as controls to mitigate omitted variable bias.<sup>11</sup> Few strong relationships emerge between these “SES” variables and the three dependent variables in Table 3.1. An exception is the francophone variable, which is negatively associated with affect for the government of Canada and Canada generally. That finding is consistent with prior studies, which indicate that Francophones express lower levels of political support than the population at large (LeDuc and Pammett 2014; Nadeau 2002). The antipathy among Francophones toward Canadian political

---

<sup>10</sup> See discussion in chapter two.

<sup>11</sup> The impact of socio-demographics on political support and participation is a topic that has been amply addressed by other analysts. If the objective were to establish their full effects systematically the socio-demographic variables a different approach would be assumed. The effects of these variables on support and participation might be channelled through temporally antecedent social-psychological variables in the model (Miller and Shanks 1996).

institutions in this dataset is particularly unsurprising given the recent failure of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords, and the subsequent surge in support for Quebec sovereignty (McRoberts 1997).

What do the data reveal about Hypothesis 3.2a? Does the perception that incumbent political leaders are unethical “turn people off” traditional forms of political action? The logic of this test is the same as was applied to Hypothesis 3.1, and is consistent with the strategy outlined in Section 3.2. The two tests, 1988 and 1993, are conducted on four dependent variables representing different forms of traditional political participation: voter turnout, attempting to convince others to vote, attending political meetings, and working or volunteering on a political campaign. The first two columns of Table 3.2, voter turnout results, represent the outcome of a binomial logistic regression,<sup>12</sup> whereas all other models are estimated with ordinal logistic regressions.<sup>13</sup> Cell entries represent the estimated change in the predicted probability of participating in the given political activity associated with a minimum to maximum change in each independent variable, holding all other variables in the model at their mean values.

[Table 3.2 about here]

When the impact of the focal independent variable, ethical evaluations of the “incumbent” Prime Minister, on various forms of traditional political participation is considered, a much more mixed picture emerges than was the case regarding Hypothesis 3.1. It would seem that perceived ethical performance is only a significant predictor of somewhat more demanding forms of political action (i.e. convincing friends to vote and working for, or volunteering on, a political campaign), and then only in 1993. Positive public impressions of quasi-incumbent Prime Minister Kim Campbell’s ethics are actually a statistically significant predictor of *lower*

---

<sup>12</sup> This method of estimation is employed since turnout is a binary variable.

<sup>13</sup> See appendix for coding.

levels of these forms of traditional political activity. That is to say, far from discouraging traditional political participation at election time, perceptions of ethical impropriety on the part of the incumbent Prime Minister seems to have acted as a catalyst for those forms of political activity in 1993.

[Figure 3.2 about here]

Figure 3.2 illustrates the impact of Campbell's perceived performance with respect to "honesty and ethics" on the probability of convincing others to vote and on working or volunteering on a political campaign. For each question, respondents are asked to indicate whether they do the activity "*often, sometimes, seldom or never*" in federal politics.<sup>14</sup> Predicted probabilities are generated for each of these response categories across the range of the focal independent variable (i.e. incumbent ethics evaluations) and graphed in Figure 3.2.

Graphing predicted probabilities across the range of a focal independent variable is a useful way to illustrate marginal effects. Figure 3.2 highlights the fact that, early in the 1990s, relatively few Canadians tried to convince their friends to vote in a certain way, or worked for a political party or candidate. Across the full range of evaluations of Kim Campbell's ethics, the models predict a very low probability of ever having engaged in these activities. Even so, going from a fully negative evaluation of the incumbent Prime Minister's ethics to a fully positive one is associated with a clear increase in the probability of having tried to convince friends "*to vote in a certain way*" and the probability of having worked for a political party or candidate, holding other variables in the model at their mean values.

---

<sup>14</sup> "Thinking about federal politics, could you tell me if you do the following things often, sometimes, seldom or never: try to convince friends to vote the same as you" and "...spend time working for a political party or candidate."

The data provide surprisingly little support for the alternative hypotheses. Certainly, political interest is a significant and substantively large positive predictor of all participation types. But the effect of perceptions of government economic performance on participation is weak and inconsistent. The same applies to generalized social trust. As noted in the second chapter, system support indicators, namely support for politicians and regime support, are included in the models (see Figure 2.8). The results, however, are weak. Regime support has no effect on any form of traditional political participation in 1988 or 1993. And support for politicians also lacks a robust and consistent effect. Moreover, socio-demographic controls also produce few consistent statistically significant findings.

Is the effect of perceived corruption on the part of the incumbent similar with respect to non-traditional political participation: participation in petitions, boycott and political rallies? Questions about non-traditional political participation were not asked in 1993, so it is only possible to analyze data from the 1988 round. In this case, the findings are unambiguous: there is no effect of either perceived performance on ethics, or performance in general, on the inclination to participate in non-traditional political action in 1988.

[Table 3.3 about here]

Tests of alternative hypotheses, however, do yield some intriguing findings. Those with high levels of political interest were substantially more likely to engage in boycotts and to attend political rallies, as they were more likely to engage in the full range of traditional political activities in 1988 and 1993. The one form of participation, both traditional and non-traditional, that is *not* related strongly and significantly to political interest is having signed petitions. Further, whereas generalized trust had little independent effect on any form of traditional political action in 1988 or 1993, those with high levels of generalized trust were slightly *more* likely to have signed petitions and engaged in boycotts than their less trusting counterparts.

Participation in rallies, however, is unrelated to generalized trust of others in society. Economic perceptions and system support are also not significant predictors of participation in non-traditional political action.

Socio-demographic variables have a larger impact on non-traditional political participation than on either involvement in traditional political activity or on political support. The two socio-demographic variables with consistent effects on all three varieties of non-traditional political action are age and education. The younger and better educated are more likely to engage in petition, boycotts, and rallies. Of all three non-traditional political activities considered, it is boycotting that is most closely tied to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Those who are young, better educated, wealthy, male, and francophone are all more likely to boycott products for political reasons. And each of these socio-demographic traits has an independent positive effect.

The finding that high SES, as indicated by high levels of education and income, has a positive effect on a variety of participation types is consistent with the resource mobilization hypothesis outlined in the second chapter. But why would boycotting, or “political consumerism”, be the form of political action most closely linked to one’s socio-economic standing? It may be that wealthier respondents are simply more able to pay more for certain goods for political reasons. For them, boycotting is feasible as a form of political expression, whereas that might not be the case for those with lower incomes. That reasoning is certainly consistent with the resource mobilization perspective on political action (Verba et al. 1995).

### 3.5 Discussion

Canada’s sharp drop in voter turnout rates and increase in protest behaviour, as well as dissatisfaction with the political process, seem to have accelerated in the late 1980s and early

1990s. The period between 1984 and 1993 also happens to have been characterized by an unusual number of political-financial scandals. This chapter began with an historical perspective by evaluating the alleged ethical violations of the federal government during this period. It proceeded to tease out what effects these controversies might plausibly have had on public opinion and political behaviour.

Negative outlooks on the ethical performance of incumbents predict more negative attitudes about the political system, though the effects on attitudes toward the national community are somewhat weaker and less consistent. The strongest effects appear to be limited to more specific forms of political support: satisfaction with the way democracy works and evaluations of politicians collectively. Hypothesis 3.1 was thus largely confirmed. Evidence regarding Hypothesis 3.2a is more mixed. Specifically, it seems that the perception of dishonesty and unethical behaviour on the part of political “incumbents” can catalyze participation even in traditional political activities such as working for a political party, contrary to Hypothesis 3.2a. Those effects, however, are smaller and less consistent than those of a perceived lack of ethics on levels of political support.

What explains the relatively weak and inconsistent impact of corruption perceptions on both traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation? Here, we might speculate that two different, equally plausible, mutually opposing motivations for participating – the desire to change the status quo versus the de-motivating effect of the perception of corruption – operate simultaneously and thus essentially cancel one another out. Of course, another possible interpretation of this non-finding is that both theories are wrong, and that perceptions of corruption simply do not contribute to people’s decision as to whether or not to participate politically. Neither interpretation can be ruled out entirely; data from this period cannot resolve this question definitively.

Are the findings of this chapter robust to larger scale tests? Large-N comparative analysis can shed further light on how public perceptions of elite-level ethical wrongdoing influence levels of political support and patterns of political participation by increasing breadth of observations (King et al. 1994, Ch. 6; Lieberman 2005). The following chapter tests the observable implications of the dissertation's core hypotheses from a broader vantage point, with an expansive array of individual and aggregate-level cross-national data. Further, it drills down into Canadians' attitudes toward political corruption in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and situates those attitudes cross-nationally, setting the stage for the two final empirical chapters.

## Coding of Variables

### Political support in Canada dataset (1988 & 1993)

#### *Socio-demographic*

Age: “What was your exact age on your last birthday?” (in years)

Education: “What is the highest grade or level of education you reached?” (four points, 0-1)  
 PUBLIC/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES 1-8; IN QUEBEC GRADES 1-6)  
 SECONDARY HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-13; IN QUEBEC GRADES 7-11)  
 TECHNICAL/SENIOR COLLEGE (ABOVE GRADES 12 CR 13; IN QUEBEC CEGEP)  
 UNIVERSITY

Income: “And one final question. Into which of the following groups does the APPROXIMATE annual income of Your family fall—that is, the income or earnings, before taxes, of all family members who LIVE in your household added together? Just stop me when I get to your group” (seven points, 0-1)

Under \$20, 000

\$20, 000 to \$30, 000

\$30, 000 to \$40, 000

\$40, 000 to \$50, 000

\$50,000 to \$60, 000

\$60,000 to \$70, 000

\$70, 000 and over

Francophone: “What language did you first learn as a child that you still speak or understand?” (French = 1, all others =0)

#### *Social-psychological*

Political support – politicians (1-100): “How do you feel in general about members of Parliament in Ottawa?”

Political support – regime (1-100): “How do you feel about the government of Canada?”

Political support – national community (1-100): “How do you feel in general about Canada?”

General and ethics evaluations: “Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being VERY BAD and 10 being VERY GOOD, how would you rate (Mr. Mulroney's) OVERALL PERFORMANCE as prime minister?... And how would you rate (Mr. Mulroney's) HONESTY and ETHICS?”

“Now (Liberal) leader, (John Turner). How would you rate his OVERALL PERFORMANCE on the 1 to 10 scale?... And how would you rate (Mr. Turner's) HONESTY and ETHICS?”

Economic pessimism: “Do you think that the Canadian economy will get better, worse, or stay about the same over the next year or so?” (0-1, three point scale)

Better

Worse

Stay about the same/better in some ways, worse in others



Generalized trust (0-1 item): *“Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?”*

Can be trusted

Can't be too careful

Political interest (0-1 item, four points): *“Now, I would like to ask you some questions about the recent federal election...Were you very interested, fairly interested, slightly interested, or not at all interested?”*

### **Behavioural variables**

Vote (0-1): *“Did you vote in this year's federal election?”*

Convince friends (0-1, four points): *“During the FEDERAL election campaign did you do the following things often, sometimes, seldom, or never? Try To Convince Friends To Vote The Same As You”*

Attend meetings (0-1, four points): *“During the FEDERAL election campaign did you do the following things often, sometimes, seldom, or never? Attend A Political Meeting Or Rally”*

Work for party (0-1, four points): *“During the FEDERAL election campaign did you do the following things often, sometimes, seldom, or never?” Spend time working for a political party or candidate”*

Petition (0-1): *“I am going to read you a list of things that some people do to make their feelings known. As I read each one, tell me if you approve or disapprove: sign a petition. Do you think that this is an effective way to make your views known? Have you ever done this yourself?”*

Yes

No

Boycott (0-1): *“I am going to read you a list of things that some people do to make their feelings known. As I read each one, tell me if you approve or disapprove: Join a boycott, that is, refuse to buy a particular product or shop at a particular store, things like that. Do you think that this is an effective way to make your views known? Have you ever done this yourself?”*

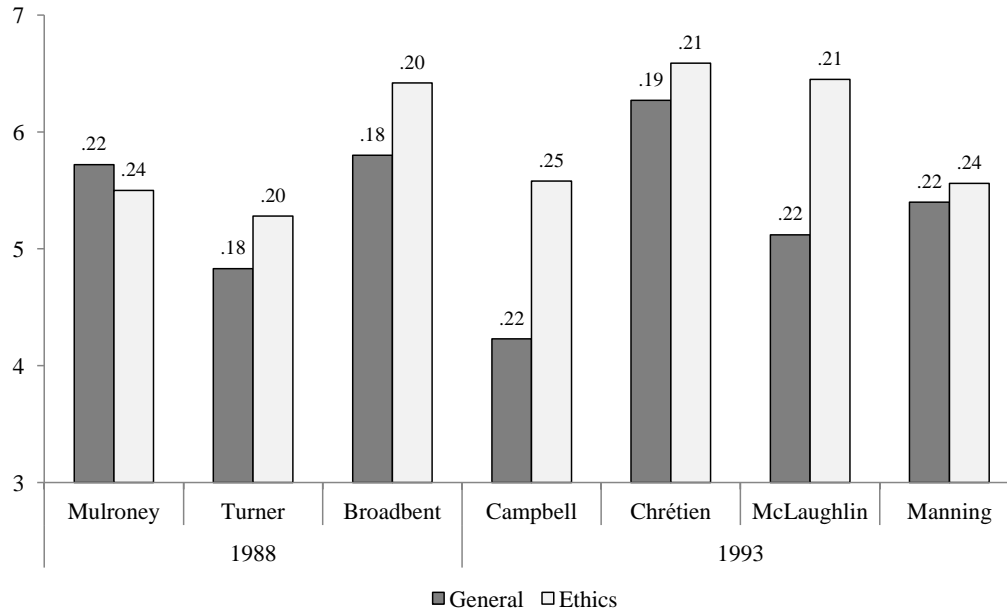
Yes

No

Rally/protest (0-1): *“I am going to read you a list of things that some people do to make their feelings known. As I read each one, tell me if you approve or disapprove: Take part in a sit-in demonstration in a public or private building. Do you think that this is an effective way to make your views known? Have you ever done this yourself?”*

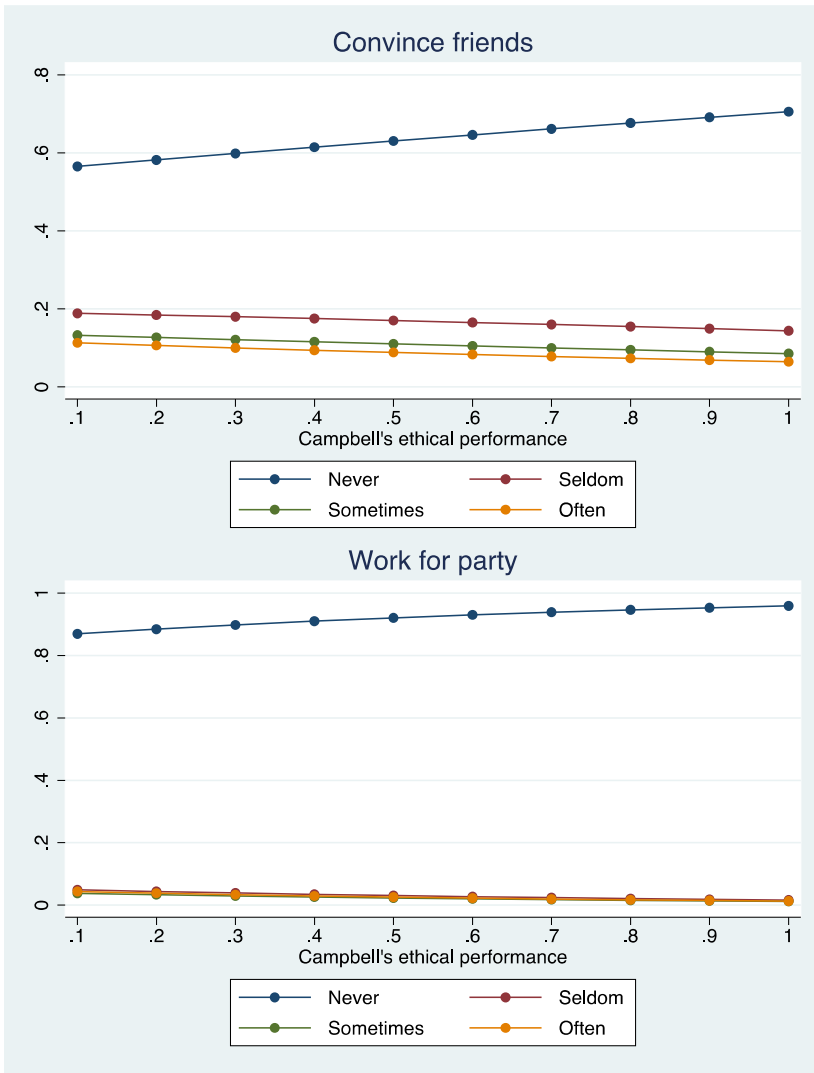
## Figures and Tables

**Figure 3.1: Evaluations of Party Leaders, 1988 & 1993**



*Source:* Political Support in Canada datasets, 1988 & 1993.  
*Note:* (1) Scale runs from 1 (“very bad”) to 10 (“very good”).  
 (2) Standard deviations are noted above bars.  
 N = 1,129-1,239, depending on the question/wave.  
 (3) See appendix for question wordings.

**Figure 3.2: Political Ethics and Political Participation in Canada**



Source: Political Support in Canada datasets, 1993.

**Table 3.1: Political Ethics and Political Support in Canada**

	Support: politicians		Support: regime		Support: nat. comm.	
	1988	1993	1988	1993	1988	1993
<b>Key IVs</b>						
Mulroney ethics perform.	0.170*** (-0.032)	--	0.180*** (-0.034)	--	0.093** (-0.033)	--
Mulroney perform. (gen.)	0.168*** (-0.036)	--	0.412*** (-0.038)	--	0.005 (-0.037)	--
Campbell ethics perform.	--	0.012 (-0.029)	--	0.032 (-0.032)	--	-0.050* (-0.025)
Campbell perform. (gen.)	--	0.110** (-0.031)	--	0.116** (-0.035)	--	0.107*** (-0.027)
Econ. pessimism	-0.028* (-0.013)	-0.114*** (-0.016)	-0.052*** (-0.014)	-0.132*** (-0.018)	-0.034* (-0.013)	-0.074*** (-0.014)
Generalized trust	0.0179* (-0.008)	0.151*** (-0.033)	0.006 (-0.009)	0.140*** (-0.036)	0.018* (-0.009)	0.391*** (-0.029)
Political interest	0.043** (-0.013)	0.002 (-0.018)	-0.014 (-0.014)	0.018 (-0.020)	0.021 (-0.014)	-0.014 (-0.016)
PC party ID	0.000 (-0.009)	0.005 (-0.013)	0.038*** (-0.010)	0.000 (-0.015)	-0.031** (-0.009)	0.013 (-0.012)
<b>Socio-dem. controls</b>						
Age	0.000** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)
Education	0.051** (-0.015)	0.051* (-0.02)	0.004 (-0.016)	0.016 (-0.022)	0.012 (-0.016)	0.011 (-0.018)
Sex (female)	0.016* (-0.008)	0.023* (-0.011)	0.009 (-0.008)	0.031* (-0.012)	0.015 (-0.008)	0.022* (-0.009)
Income	-0.023 (-0.015)	-0.023 (-0.020)	0.013 (-0.016)	-0.034 (-0.022)	-0.016 (-0.015)	-0.017 (-0.017)

Francophone	-0.007 (-0.010)	0.002 (-0.014)	-0.023* (-0.010)	-0.032* (-0.015)	-0.129*** (-0.010)	-0.171*** (-0.012)
Constant	0.336	0.322***	0.274***	0.407***	0.765***	0.478***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.263	0.090	0.501	0.095	0.159	0.335
N	1,159	1,182	1,195	1,180	1,201	1,239

*Source:* Political Support in Canada datasets, 1988 & 1993.

*Method:* OLS regression. Coefficients are presented with standard errors in parentheses.

*Note:* \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 3.2: Political Ethics and Political Participation in Canada, 1988 & 1993**

	Vote		Conv. friends		Meetings		Work	
	1988	1993	1988	1993	1988	1993	1988	1993
<b>Key IVs</b>								
Mulroney ethics perform.	0.000	--	0.021	--	0.062	--	0.012	--
Mulroney perform. (gen.)	-0.011	--	-0.143*	--	-0.104*	--	0.069	--
Campbell ethics perform.	--	0.006	--	-0.070*	--	0.032	--	-0.044*
Campbell perform. (gen.)	--	0.011	--	0.003	--	0.030	--	0.023
Econ. pessimism	0.004	-0.002	0.022	0.032	0.041*	0.031	0.002	0.007
Generalized trust	0.012	0.084	0.016	0.103*	0.007	0.030	0.004	0.024
Political interest	0.083***	0.070**	0.145***	0.218***	0.161***	0.175***	0.081***	0.110***
PC party ID	0.014	-0.036	0.034*	0.014	0.005	0.000	0.006	0.006
System support: politicians	0.133*	0.009	0.078	0.076	0.017	0.075*	0.043	0.032
System support: regime	-0.068	0.023	0.000	0.043	0.010	0.047	0.027	0.015
<b>Socio-dem. controls</b>								
Age	0.038	0.150***	-0.008	0.019	0.030	0.090	0.019	0.114*
Education	0.036	0.057	0.042	0.040	0.029	0.025	0.005	0.001
Sex (female)	0.005	-0.005	-0.053***	0.030	0.007	0.011	0.016	0.001
Income	0.033	0.032	0.044	0.044	0.004	0.048*	0.016	0.029
Francophone	0.030*	0.028	0.022	0.067***	0.004	0.009	0.019	0.054***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.087	0.096	0.038	0.056	0.056	0.060	0.049	0.099
N	1,149	1,130	1,151	1,129	1,152	1,131	1,152	1,130

*Source:* Political Support in Canada datasets, 1988 & 1993.

*Method:* Binary (for DV=turnout) and ordinal (for the other three models) logistic regression. Cell entries represent the effect of a minimum to maximum change in each independent variable on the dependent variable, holding all other variables in the model at their mean values.

*Note:* \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 3.3: Political Ethics and Non-Traditional Political Action in Canada**

	Petition	Boycott	Rally
<b>Key IVs</b>			
Mulroney ethics perform.	-0.036	-0.073	0.003
Mulroney perform. (gen.)	-0.116	-0.115	-0.134
Econ. pessimism	-0.025	0.077	-0.051
Generalized trust	0.069*	0.087**	0.031
Political interest	0.049	0.168**	0.224***
PC party ID	-0.018	-0.078*	-0.049
System support: politicians	-0.054	0.099	0.107
System support: regime	0.017	-0.196	-0.249
<b>Socio-dem. controls</b>			
Age	-0.251***	-0.176*	-0.290***
Education	0.328***	0.181**	0.182***
Sex (female)	0.002	0.089**	-0.010
Income	0.032	0.230***	0.034
Francophone	-0.031	0.111**	0.226***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.079	0.091	0.114
N	1,145	1,149	1,151

*Source:* Political Support in Canada dataset, 1988.

*Method:* Binary logistic regression. Cell entries represent the effect of a minimum to maximum change in each independent variable on the dependent variable, holding all other variables in the model at their mean values.

*Note:* (1) \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

(2) Questions about non-traditional participation were not asked in 1993.

## Chapter 4

# Canadians' Perceptions of Corruption in Cross-National Perspective

Are Canadians' views of ethics and integrity in government similar to those of citizens of other states? Having probed backward historically as far as appropriate data allow, the analysis now turn to situate the Canadian case cross-nationally, establishing an attitudinal benchmark that calibrates the Canadian case studies in the two following chapters. How do Canada's perceived levels of corruption compare with those publics in other countries at various stages of socio-economic development and democratic consolidation? Are these perceptions relatively stable? And do citizens' perceptions of the extent of corruption in government correspond to those of "experts", engaged in explicitly comparative assessments?

The analysis then considers Canadians' perceptions of corruption in their social and political institutions in greater depth. What spheres of life in Canada are most affected by corruption? Do Canadians perceive both government and private enterprise as equally beset by corruption, or do they believe that politics is particularly corrupt? Which social and political institutions are thought to be most afflicted, and to how great an extent? Are these perceptions concentrated in certain socio-economic strata, or are they evenly distributed throughout the population? Following this overview of Canadians perceptions of corruption, the chapter turns to a series of cross-national tests of the central question: Do perceptions of high levels of corruption have consequences for people's levels of political support and for their patterns of participation in political life?



## 4.1 Data and Methodology

To explore these questions, the investigation relies on other bodies of data. Two data sources are particularly useful: The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) datasets from 2004 and 2006, and Léger Marketing's Voice of the People (VOP) survey datasets from 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Aggregate level data, including Freedom House and Transparency International index scores, and Gross National Income per capita (GNI/capita) data obtained from the World Bank Data Catalogue provide context for the survey data. By its very nature, corruption is difficult to measure and compare across countries "objectively." As Norris contends, however, expert ratings (such as those conducted by Transparency International) essentially provide the closest thing social scientists have to objective measures of the extent of corruption in different countries ([www.electoralintegrityproject.com](http://www.electoralintegrityproject.com)). The use of these data allows for comparisons to be drawn between how publics evaluate the extent of corruption in their own countries and how teams of expert observers evaluate the extent of corruption in these countries.<sup>1</sup>

The ISSP, a major collaborative cross-national research project, collects comparable survey data across a range of developed and less developed countries on a variety of subjects. The 2004 and 2006 ISSP surveys, focused on "Citizenship" and "the Role of Government" respectively, are particularly relevant here because they include questions about perceptions of corruption in government, levels of political support and levels of political participation.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Transparency International country ratings are based on evaluations conducted by a number of reputable, "independent (international) institutions specialising in governance and business climate analysis" (e.g. Economist Intelligence Unit, World Bank (Country Policy and Institutional Assessment project), Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide, etc.). Only countries that are included in a minimum of three of Transparency International's data sources are included in their annual reports.

<sup>2</sup> The sampling procedures used vary somewhat from country to country, but generally consist of random samples of the population over the age of 18. Though the data from most of the countries was collected via face-to-face interview, a portion of the Canadian ISSP data from 2004 was collected via self-completed mail-in questionnaire (N=1211).

The timing of the ISSP survey waves employed here also makes it possible to establish a cross-national, attitudinal benchmark against which to evaluate the cases examined in the later chapters of the dissertation. The use of these ISSP data also allows for a consideration of contextual influences on public attitudes, in particular the impact of economic and institutional influences. Perhaps most importantly, it places Canada into a broad comparative context with 25 other countries. It roots Canada within the broader universe of cases, preventing one from erroneously inferring that Canada is somehow uniquely beset by perceptions of public sector corruption.<sup>3</sup>

The other individual-level data included in the analysis, the VOP Surveys fielded by Léger Marketing between 2004 and 2007, are useful for a different reason.<sup>4</sup> They make it possible to unpack Canadians attitudes toward corruption in greater depth. Unlike the ISSP, these surveys contain a variety of questions about the extent of corruption. These data provide valuable insight into Canadians' attitudes over the years particularly relevant to establishing the context for the chapters that follow. Léger Marketing employed a modified probability sample of the (non-institutionalized) Canadian population, age 18 and above.<sup>5</sup>

## 4.2 Canada in Cross-National Perspective

How do Canada's levels of perceived corruption compare to those of other countries? Some analysts contend that perceived levels of government corruption in Canada are disproportionate to the extent of government corruption, reflecting a basic distrust between the governed and

---

<sup>3</sup> Turgeon et al. note that preventing researchers from making exaggerated claims about Canada's uniqueness constitutes one of the major advantages of adopting a comparative approach to the study of Canadian politics (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Data were collected by telephone interview in English and French (N approximately 1000 per wave).

<sup>5</sup> The sample is regionally representative and weighted "according to age, gender, region, and language spoken."

government in the country (Atkinson 2011). Is this the case? Are Canadians' more pessimistic about corruption in their public institutions than citizens of other established democracies?

[Table 4.1 about here]

When Canadians were asked “*about how many public officials in Canada are involved in corruption?*” during the first few months of 2004<sup>6</sup>, 18.7% indicated that they thought that “quite a lot” or “almost all” of Canada’s public officials were involved. As Figure 4.1 shows, this a lower figure than that found in the United States, where more than one in four respondents indicated that they thought that quite a lot of public officials were involved in corruption. It is also a lower figure than that found in a number of European countries including Ireland, Spain and Portugal. Still, Canada’s level of perceived public sector corruption in 2004 was substantially higher than those found in most Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and Australia. Canada’s levels of perceived corruption thus qualify as middling among established democracies.

When compared with Soviet successor states, however, some of which are considered by international organizations like Freedom House to be “not free,” lacking in political and social rights (e.g. Russia), Canada’s levels of perceived corruption seem quite low. The same holds when they are compared to countries in the less developed world, such as the Philippines (57.2%), Venezuela (72.2%), and South Africa (46.2%).

Are those findings stable? Table 4.2 reports ISSP data from the same question asked two years later. The results presented in Table 4.2 present a picture of both stability and change. It

---

<sup>6</sup> Canadian ISSP data were collected between Jan. 29th and March 31st of 2004.

seems clear that some changes did unfold in citizens' perceptions of the extent of public sector corruption over this interlude. These changes, arguably, might reflect somewhat idiosyncratic aspects of domestic politics in these countries. For example, Canada's sponsorship scandal, brought into vivid relief by the Gomery Commission Inquiry, kept public sector corruption in the spotlight for this entire two-year period; it left no doubt that there had been at least some corruption taking place on the part of public officials (Blais et al. 2010; chapter five). The proportion of Canadians indicating that they thought that "quite a lot" or "almost all" public officials were involved in corruption increased by eight percentage points between 2004 and 2006.

[Table 4.2 about here]

These fluctuations notwithstanding, Table 4.2 also demonstrates a degree of continuity. Certainly, some publics evaluated the extent of corruption among public officials in their countries as far better (e.g. Poland), as well as far worse (e.g. the Philippines) in 2006 than in 2004. But when the rank order of perceptions of corruption is considered, the story here is one of relative stability. Notice, for example, that the same countries whose populations rated their systems as "cleaner" than did Canada's in 2004 – namely the Scandinavian countries, Australia and New Zealand – continued to rate their countries as "cleaner" in 2006. Similarly, those that received poorer scores from their populations in 2004 than did Canada – e.g. Soviet successor states, the Philippines, South Africa and Venezuela – all continued to receive poorer evaluations in 2006.

How do the evaluations of publics compare to those of "experts" – academics and other analysts working for the Economist Intelligence Unit, the World Bank, and other reputable international institutions with a comparative starting point, tasked with measuring and assessing the extent of corruption across different countries in what is ostensibly a more objective and

scientific fashion? Atkinson (2011) makes the case that Canadians' corruption evaluations reflect a basic mistrust between people and their government more than it does the objective frequency of corruption in the public service and bureaucracy. If this conjecture is correct, one would expect that a non-linear relationship between public and more objective expert evaluations of the extent of corruption across more developed and less developed countries. One would expect that the populations of countries like Canada would be substantially more harsh in their evaluations of the extent of corruption than experts (i.e. that there would be less correspondence between objective and subjective assessments), and citizens of less developed countries would report corruption evaluations that more closely correspond to those of experts. Is this the case?

[Figure 4.1 about here]

The evidence presented in Figure 4.1 is not consistent with that expectation. Rather, there is a clear congruence between Transparency International scores – scores based on the “expert” assessments – and those of the populations of the corresponding countries.<sup>7</sup> The dispersion of points is remarkably linear, resulting in an OLS line with an  $R^2$  of 0.83.<sup>8</sup> The implication is clear: those living in countries deemed by Transparency International's expert analysts (academics and business leaders) to have higher levels of public sector corruption (e.g. Poland, the Philippines) tend to *also* believe that their governments have a bigger problem with corruption. Those living in countries deemed by experts to be less beset by corruption also mirror those expert opinions. In effect, these public and expert assessments lead to the conclusion that Canadians are not

---

<sup>7</sup> Dahlberg and Solevid also note a strong correlation between expert and public evaluations of corruption in government using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) dataset (2016).

deluded with respect to the levels of corruption among public officials in the country. The evaluations of both groups align quite closely.

Canadians are slightly more critical of their country than the experts surveyed by Transparency International (see Appendix). Table 4A contains Transparency International rankings, which assign a higher score to countries that are considered to be “cleaner” (i.e. to have lower levels of corruption). The countries have been ordered from lowest to highest score, and the ranking (shown in columns one and three) is compared with rankings arising from the ISSP data (see Table 4.2). The differences between the public opinion rankings and the Transparency International Rankings are shown in columns two and four. A positive score indicates that citizens are more sanguine about the level of corruption in their country than are experts, whereas a negative score indicates the opposite. As can be seen both from this Table and Figure 4.1, expert and public evaluations align relatively closely with one another. Thus at the aggregate level, there is a close correspondence between the perception of political corruption on the part of citizens of a country and the perception of corruption on the part of experts ranking countries comparatively.

### 4.3 Canadian Attitudes toward Corruption in Focus

The ISSP offers an invaluable window in cross-national differences in the perception of corruption. It also allows for the formulation and testing of more generalizable theories about the impact of corruption on political support and political participation while taking contextual variables into account. That approach is pursued in the final substantive section in this chapter.

---

<sup>8</sup> The equation for this OLS line is  $y = 7.7681x + 10.327$ .

But first, the contours of Canadians' attitudes toward corruption at the outset of the 21st century must be examined in greater detail. Which spheres of life, and which social and political institutions, do Canadians feel are most affected by corruption? And do all Canadians feel the same way about the scope and scale of corruption?

[Figure 4.2 about here]

Figure 4.2 presents data that provide some preliminary answers to these questions during the interlude between 2004 and 2006. The figure presents the percentage of Canadians indicating that Canadian family, business, and politics are affected either moderately or a great deal by corruption. In 2004, 2005, and 2006, Canadians' felt that politics is most affected by corruption of these three domains, and family life as being least affected by corruption. The stability of these attitudes is striking. The data presented in Figure 4.2 are cross-sectional data: they represent the results of different random samples of Canadians drawn in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Across this entire period, Canadians considered politics to be more affected by corruption than either business or family life. The one exception to this trend is 2004, when Canadian public perceptions about levels of corruption in politics and business were statistically indistinguishable.

Though useful, the results presented in Figure 4.2 do not provide us with the fine-grained detail needed to understand Canadians perceptions of corruption in their government fully. It is clear from Figure 4.2 that Canadians feel that politics is the most corrupt domain of life in the country generally. But which political institutions in particular do Canadians feel are most tainted by corruption? Figure 4.3 addresses this question with VOP data collected in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of one to five, the extent to which

each of the institutions listed on the x-axis was affected by corruption.<sup>9</sup> Several findings are noteworthy.

First, across this entire interlude (2004-2007), the two institutions rated as being most affected by corruption are the two most unambiguously political ones: Parliament and political parties. That finding is consistent with the data reported in Figure 4.2. Political parties, it would seem, are seen as most corrupt, and Parliament comes a close second. The media and legal system are perceived to be somewhat less affected by corruption. The institutions that Canadians considered least corrupt were the military, police, and education systems. But how much public consensus is there on these perspectives? The standard deviations reported speak to that point directly.

[Figure 4.3 about here]

As Figure 4.3 shows, Canadians are most divided about the extent of corruption in the legal system. Some feel that the system is very clean; others perceive very high levels of corruption. By contrast, there is substantial consensus with respect to views about political parties. Not only do Canadians on average feel that political parties are the institutions most affected by corruption (as indicated by the average mean value of 3.8 on a 1 to 5 scale over the years 2004 through 2007), there are also few dissenters from this common view.

It is also possible that attitudes toward corruption vary systematically according to the socio-economic status of respondents. Skepticism about political actors and disengagement from political activities is typically concentrated among those with lower levels of education and

---

<sup>9</sup> The standard deviations, representing the average variance around the mean values, are also included above the bars. The average standard deviation is also included in square parentheses to allow for easier comparison across the different social and political institutions listed.



income (Gidengil and Bastedo 2014). Women have substantially more critical views about both the extent of corruption, and about the acceptability of hypothetical ethically suspect elite behaviours according to several studies (Malec 1993; Mancuso et al. 1998; 2006). Mancuso et al. suggest that women may be less willing to excuse public officials' unethical behaviour because of women's historical (and indeed, ongoing) underrepresentation in political institutions (52). Further, they speculate that "the competitive, antagonistic, self-oriented nature of politics, which lurks beneath most ethical issues, is essentially male and thus alien to women" (1998, 52). In addition to gender, Mancuso et al. also find that both age and region of residence influence Canadians' perceptions of corruption.

The impact of region on political attitudes is complex and the subject of an extensive body of research. Simeon and Elkins (1980) memorably described the provinces as "small worlds" in their landmark study, possessed of their own unique, idiosyncratic political dynamics. The precise sources of regional differences in Canada remain a matter of debate, with some emphasizing the impact of provincial political institutions and the "province building" efforts of provincial political elites, and others drawing attention to historical, geographic, and economic factors (see Wiseman 2007). These disagreements notwithstanding, there is an accumulated body of research that illustrates enduring regional differences in Canadians' political attitudes (Cochrane and Perrella 2012; Gibbins 1982; Dufresne and Ruderman 2016; Wiseman 2007).

[Figure 4.4 about here]

Figure 4.4 explores the possibility that perceptions of corruption are concentrated disproportionately in particular socio-economic strata and particular regions of Canada. Figure 4.4 summarizes data using an index of perceptions of corruption in representative political

institutions: Parliament and political parties.<sup>10</sup> Values to the right of the y-axis represent groups that have means that are higher than average. Those to the left of the y-axis represent groups that have means that are lower than average. Groups that exhibit statistically significant differences from the means of the remaining groups are shown in bold.

The most striking findings concern income and education. Those with low levels of formal education are substantially more likely to perceive Parliament and political parties as corrupt than are those with higher levels of formal education. Those earning over \$100,000 annually are less likely to perceive corruption in representative political institutions than their lower income counterparts. Those findings are consistent with other recent analyses (Gidengil and Bastedo 2014). Consistent with the findings of Mancuso et al. (1998; 2006), women perceive higher levels of corruption in government than do men. And Quebeckers are more inclined to consider Parliament and political parties to be affected by corruption than those living elsewhere.

Which of these socio-demographic variables have independent effects on corruption perceptions? Do women perceive higher levels of corruption in government than men because they generally have lower levels of income? Do the less educated perceive higher levels of corruption because they too typically earn less than those with higher levels of educational attainment? Or do gender, income, and educational attainment matter independently of one another?

[Table 4.3 about here]

As it happens, only two factors have statistically significant independent effects on perceptions of corruption: education and region. When other socio-demographic variables are

---

<sup>10</sup> The alpha for this scale is 0.82. The mean value on the 1 to 5 scale is 3.67, which coincides with the y-axis in Figure 4.4.

held constant, education continues to exert a powerful and statistically significant impact on the likelihood of expressing the belief that Canada's representative political institutions are corrupt. Those with higher levels of education are less likely to think that Parliament and political parties are heavily affected by corruption. And Quebec residents are significantly more likely to think that political institutions are corrupt.

What explains socio-demographic variations in perceptions of corruption? Mancuso et al. specify that education "did not play a consistent or significant role" in perceptions of corruption in their study (2006, 56), so this finding does represent something of a break from prior Canadian research. It remains somewhat unclear what mechanism might account for this effect, though the most likely explanation would seem to be based on socio-economic standing and a feeling of "voice" and inclusion in the political process. As Allen and Birch point out, a number of studies indicate that "socio-economic status indicators" are linked to the perception of corruption: higher levels of SES tend to result in lower levels of perceived corruption (2015, 30), though their own study does not examine socio-demographics. Certainly, low levels of formal education are linked to more negative attitudes toward the political system (LeDuc and Pammett 2014). It might be that those with lower levels of education tend to feel like political "outsiders" and thus regard the political system as more corrupt than their more highly educated counterparts. Alternatively, it might be that those with higher levels of education are more aware of the cross-national evidence presented in this chapter, and less prone to exaggerating the extent of Canada's problem with political corruption.

Regional differences in Canada, as measured here and in most other studies, tend to correspond to jurisdictional differences. Consequently, we might well expect that differences in corruption perceptions could reflect differences in the behaviour of past and current provincial governments, even when respondents are asked about federal politics. Mancuso et al. also find

that residents of Quebec tend to perceive higher levels of corruption than residents of other parts of the country, and that they are also less tolerant of various hypothetical forms of elite ethical misconduct involving MPs. They argue that this experience has led citizens to adopt more critical attitudes toward corruption in government.

A traditional view associates the Maritimes and Quebec with problems like questionable electoral practices (vote-buying), reliance on patronage, and over-powerful political machines like those of Duplessis and Smallwood...The more critical attitudes in those regions may be due to progressive zeal and a reaction to the deficiencies of the bad old days (Mancuso et al. 2006, 56 & 206).

#### 4.4 Do Perceptions of Corruption Contribute to Disaffection and Demobilization? Evidence from 26 Countries

The preceding sections have placed Canada's levels of perceived corruption in cross-national perspective and have explored the internal dynamics of Canadians' attitudes toward corruption in more fine-grained detail. The analysis now turns to address the central question: does political corruption erode citizens' support for the political system, and does it lead to disengagement?<sup>11</sup> As was established by the first section of this chapter, Canada's dynamics, though "middling" among established democracies, are somewhat different from those of other countries. Though Canada's levels of corruption according to both experts and the public at large are lower than those of many other states, Canada's public is slightly more critical than expert observers at Transparency International. As before, however, the place to begin is with the cross-national

---

<sup>11</sup> As in chapter three, the test here is not of the effects of a specific scandal, but rather of the observable implications of the theory of political-financial scandal effects outlined in the second chapter. Such scandals involve credible allegations of financial wrongdoing on the part of political actors. If it is true that revelations of those ethical transgressions depress support and traditional forms of political participation, we might expect to see that perceptions of corruption in government do so as well.

context. This section returns to the comparative ISSP data from 26 countries to explore the impact of corruption on political support and political participation.

First, the balance of research findings seem to show that revelations of political corruption can erode support not only for the implicated parties and political actors, but for political actors more generally (Bowler and Karp 2004; Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; Pharr 2000).<sup>12</sup>

*Hypothesis 4.1: Political corruption erodes support for political actors, the political regime, and the national community.*

When it comes to political participation, however, there is less consensus. First, a considerable body of influential research confirms that the recent decline in voter turnout is driven not primarily by instrumental, short-term factors such as the competitiveness of electoral contests, or by institutional changes, but rather by underlying value shifts related to people's notions of civic duty (Blais et al. 2004). In this view, citizens socialized in more recent times tend to adhere less to the notion that one's civic duty includes an obligation to vote (Blais et al. 2002; Blais et al. 2004). The argument is often depicted as being that the young have a less of a sense of civic duty. Rather, the evidence would seem to indicate that the young have an essentially different, arguably thinner, conception of civic duty. Further, Putnam has demonstrated that social and political trust, which he argues are on the decline in the United States (2000) and a number of other developed countries (Pharr and Putnam 2000), is also associated with levels of political engagement and government responsiveness. Given that these socio-cultural trends are likely the primary motor of turnout decline, it is plausible that political

---

<sup>12</sup> Although dissenting views, and those presenting a more nuanced picture of the effects, do exist (e.g. Norris 2011), the balance of evidence would suggest that corruption can drive down more general forms of political support.

corruption might depress traditional forms of political participation. Because traditional political acts like voting, contacting politicians, and volunteering on political campaigns seem to be rooted to some degree in socio-cultural factors – on feelings of trust, goodwill and obligation between citizens and between citizens and political authorities – it makes sense that revelations of ethical impropriety on the part of those public officials would erode traditional forms of political engagement.

*Hypothesis 4.2a: Political corruption erodes participation in traditional forms of political participation.*

It is also plausible, on the basis of prior research, that political corruption might lead citizens to bypass traditional representative channels and attempt to influence political outcome through such direct action strategies as signing petitions or attending protests. Canadian citizens may vote less than they once did, but this does not necessarily mean that they are less engaged in the political world (e.g. Howe 2010; Gidengil and Bastedo 2014; Gidengil et al. 2004; Nevitte 1996). Indeed, while voter turnout has declined, political interest has actually increased in younger cohorts (Nevitte 1996; 2002; Kanji 2002). Kanji (2002) shows that as internal efficacy (belief in one's own political competence) has edged up slightly, external efficacy (or perceived government responsiveness) has declined. In short, there are important differences in what motivates people to engage in one political activity versus another: different forms of participation exhibit different long-term trends (see chapter two) and are associated with distinct socio-demographic profiles.<sup>13</sup> Although political corruption might dampen traditional forms of

---

<sup>13</sup> Although this had been noted since the very earliest quantitative studies of protest (Barnes et al. 1979), see Painter-Main (2014) for a recent confirmation of this finding in the Canadian setting.

participation, it is plausible that it might simultaneously encourage engagement in non-traditional political activities as replacement outlets for political expression. More particularly, if people become soured on one outlet for political expression, they might express their political preferences through non-traditional, non-governmental outlets instead.

Hypothesis 4.2b: *Political corruption stimulates non-traditional forms of political participation.*

The ISSP data, encompassing the 26 countries included in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, can be used to test these hypotheses. The 2004 wave of the ISSP is useful because it contains a range of questions measuring political support and traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation. Its timing is also propitious for this project, providing a benchmark for the case study of the sponsorship scandal in the following chapter. What do these data reveal about the impact of political corruption on political support and political participation?

First, there is the possibility that perceptions of political corruption drive down levels of political support. I use indicators to measure levels of political support at each of the three levels: support for political actors, the regime (its norms, processes and institutions), and the national community. People's evaluations of the proposition that "*most politicians are in politics only for what they can get out of it personally*" are used to measure support for political actors generally. Satisfaction with the way democracy works, the most commonly employed intermediate-level indicator of support, taps attitudes toward the regime. And the extent of respondents' agreement with the proposition that "a good citizen...be willing to serve in the military at a time of need" is used to capture support for the national community.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Despite some critiques (and choices surrounding instrumentation in survey research are naturally always subject to critiques), each of these indicators is commonly used to tap these support types (See Dalton 2004's summary).

Predicting attitudes with other attitudes is a potentially treacherous endeavour when the goal is establishing a causal relationship: there is a potential for reverse causation, “feedback” or “endogeneity,” in that time order is usually uncertain. Do harsh judgements about political corruption flow from dissatisfaction the political process? Or do perceptions of corruption promote dissatisfaction? Here, the question about the extent of corruption amongst public officials is positioned as the key independent variable.<sup>15</sup>

It is possible, indeed probable, that those who hold lesser attitudinal attachments to the political system would be more likely to perceive high levels of corruption in their countries because of their more cynical attitudes toward the political system. The endogeneity problem associated with predicting attitudes with other attitudes is tested through more direct means in the later chapters of this thesis (i.e. through the use of a variable representing awareness of a recent scandal, and the use of panel data to clarify time order). In this multi-level, cross-national large-N test of Hypothesis 4.1, however, it is first important to establish that perceptions of corruption are distinct from the three varieties of political support under evaluation here. The inter-relationships between dependent and independent variables need to be assessed: to what extent do these indicators vary independently of one another?

Consider the results of the correlation matrix reported in Table 4.2A. Note, first, that the correlations between the independent and dependent variables are relatively modest. The exception, perhaps, is the correlation between corruption perceptions and support for

---

<sup>15</sup> “*How widespread do you think corruption is in the public service in (COUNTRY)?*” The key independent variable is positioned in such a way as to capture the impact of corruption on political support – and as a consequence, endogeneity arises as a potential issue affecting the estimated causal relationship between corruption and political support.



politicians.<sup>16</sup> In effect, some people consider the public service in their countries to be highly corrupt, but nonetheless still maintain strong attitudinal attachments to the political system. Consequently, there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that corruption perceptions are distinct from political support.

[Table 4.4 about here]

Table 4.4 presents the results of three multi-level, multivariate models. The independent variable of interest is corruption perceptions. Significantly, these models also include several other variables with documented connections to political support. Political interest has been consistently shown to have a strong relationship with attitudes toward the political system; those with higher levels of interest are more inclined to express system support than those with lower levels of interest (Howe 2010; Norris 2011). Further, Putnam suggests that a major reason for Americans' disengagement from political life is declining social capital, defined as both interpersonal networks as well as "the norms of trust and reciprocity" that are presumed to arise from them (1993; 2000).<sup>17</sup> One widely employed indicator of social capital is the standard question: "*Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people*". That indicator is included in these multivariate models as well.

In addition to that selection of social-psychological variables, indicators of the socio-demographic variables discussed in section 4.3, with some modifications based on the data availability of the ISSP, are entered. The most notable difference concerns the lack of indicators of region of residence. In lieu of that place of residence indicator, and in the context of a dataset

---

<sup>16</sup> This relationship, though relatively strong, is not strong enough to indicate that these two are measuring the same thing according to conventional standards.

<sup>17</sup> Uslaner (2000) underlines the importance of trust, though he calls into question its causal relationship with involvement in voluntary associations.

comprising a diverse array of developed and less developed countries, an indicator based on whether or not the respondent lives in an urban area is included.<sup>18</sup> Lastly, two aggregate level variables are introduced to control for differences in context that exist across the cases considered. The models control for the level of freedoms accorded to citizens of different countries – as well as the economic context – the level of economic development of the country. These variables are operationalized with indicators of GNI/capita and Freedom House scores of social and political rights. The resulting clustering of standard errors is corrected through the use of a multi-level framework.<sup>19</sup>

Is there any evidence that corruption perceptions have an impact on levels of political support after the effect of these social-psychological, socio-demographic, and aggregate-level contextual variables are controlled? It turns out that perceptions of corruption do have statistically significant and substantively large effects on all three varieties of political support examined here. Moreover, in all cases, the effect is negative: those who perceive higher levels of corruption are systematically less likely than others to express support for politicians, the political regime, and for the national community. That effect is robust to the inclusion of a variety of controls. Notably, however, the perception of corruption has its largest effect on specific forms of support, namely support for politicians and regime support. That finding is consistent with the Canadian analyses from 1988 and 1993 presented in the foregoing chapter (see Table 3.1).

---

<sup>18</sup> These socio-demographic variables are intended as controls, and are not meant to be interpreted directly.

<sup>19</sup> It is plausible, indeed likely, that the effects work differently in different countries. This is part of the rationale for focusing on Canada in more detail in this dissertation. This analysis, however, has the strength of setting the stage and establishing context in advanced of the more fine-grained analyses that follow. The inclusion of these contextual variables in a multi-level regression framework, rather than using dummy variables for country, has the added advantage of allowing me to establish whether certain aspects of the Canadian institutional setting influence my dependent variables, something that is not possible with data only from Canada.

The first two models are fairly consistent with respect to the effects of a range of independent variables, whereas the model probing peoples' levels of support for the national community produces somewhat different results. With respect to generalized trust, as well as the political and economic contextual variables, patterns of support for the national community exhibit different dynamics from support for politicians and the regime. That finding is consistent with the conjecture that support for the national community is different from the other forms of support. Perhaps the indicator, though commonly used to measure diffuse support for the national community, is really capturing something closer to militarism, or perhaps nationalism. This is, however, the only indicator available on the ISSP. It also has the added benefit of having been used in prior studies of political support (e.g. Klingemann 1999), thus allowing for comparison with earlier findings.

An equally important question to explore is: does corruption have an impact on patterns of political participation? Recall the hypothesis is that political corruption undermines involvement in traditional forms of political engagement. Table 4.5 presents the results of four multi-level, multivariate models estimating the impact of corruption evaluations on four different dependent variables, each of which captures different forms of traditional political action. The key independent variable is corruption perceptions, measured with the question "*How widespread do you think corruption is in the public service in (COUNTRY)?*" As before, the test also takes into account a series of social-psychological variables with demonstrated relationships with political participation. Two of those variables – social capital and political interest – have been used to explain both political disaffection and political demobilization, and thus are both included in these models (Howe 2010; Putnam 2000). Political disaffection itself – cynicism about politicians and dissatisfaction with democracy – is also an oft-invoked explanation for declining voter turnout. As it stands, however, research on that hypothesis has generally

challenged the widely-held idea that disaffection is a major driver of turnout decline (Gidengil et al. 2004; Nevitte and White 2012; Norris et al. 2006; Ruderman 2014). As in the models presented in Table 4.4, a complement of socio-demographic and contextual aggregate-level variables are also included in the models.

[Table 4.5 about here]

The ISSP surveys do not record whether respondents voted in the most recent federal election, but they do provide a measure of whether citizens consider it to be their duty to vote in elections (see appendix for question wording). As it happens, perceived corruption among public officials is a statistically significant predictor of being less likely to consider voting a civic duty. Those who perceive high levels of corruption are less likely than others to view voting as obligatory. That finding holds even after all of the social-psychological, socio-demographic and contextual variables are held constant.

What about the impact of perceptions of corruption on survey respondents' involvement in three varieties of relatively demanding traditional political activity: contacting or attempting to contact a public official, being a member of a political party, and donating to a political party or fundraising for a political cause? The results of these analyses are markedly different. Unlike beliefs about voting as a civic duty, the only one of these more demanding forms of traditional political participation predicted by corruption perceptions is attempting to contact a public official, and that relationship works in the opposite direction. Those who perceive higher levels of corruption among the public service are more likely than others to contact or attempt to contact a politician or public official. That finding is consistent with the analysis presented in chapter three (see Table 3.2), and stands in direct contrast to Hypothesis 4.2a. It supports a somewhat more nuanced understanding of the role of corruption on engagement in traditional political activity. Perceptions of public sector corruption erode the idea that voting is a civic

duty, but those same perceptions also seem to stimulate some forms of traditional political participation.

[Table 4.6 about here]

Does corruption stimulate extra-electoral forms of political engagement as hypothesized? Or do perceptions of corruption lead citizens to tune out of politics altogether? In Table 4.6, data are presented from the estimation of four multi-level regression models. The dependent variables of interest are four different forms of extra-electoral, “elite-challenging” forms of political participation. First, I assess the impact of perceptions of public sector corruption, as well as the other predictors of political participation discussed, above on the likelihood of having signed a petition. In keeping with Hypothesis 4.2b, the perception of a high degree of corruption among public officials does seem to predict whether a citizen has signed a petition. That form of “non-traditional” political action, however, is the only one under examination here that is related to corruption perceptions. The perception of public sector corruption is not a significant predictor of more demanding forms of elite-challenging behaviour such as joining in a boycott or buying products for ethical reasons, or of joining in a rally or demonstration.

## 4.5 Discussion

This chapter has presented a number of findings regarding Canadians’ perceptions of political corruption. First, Canadians’ levels of perceived corruption tend to be substantially lower than those of publics in non-democracies and transitional democracies, and lower than those of some other consolidated democracies (e.g. the United States). However, citizens’ perceptions of the level of corruption in Canada are, in the aggregate, substantially higher than several comparable established democracies (e.g. Australia and New Zealand). And citizens’ evaluations of the scale

of corruption in the public service turn out to be fairly consistent with those of experts. In short, the idea that Canada's high levels of perceived corruption are idiosyncratic, reflecting an exceptional distrust between the public and government (Atkinson 2011), does not seem to be supported by the evidence analyzed here.

Second, Canadians tend to believe that the political domain is more riddled with corruption than the business environment or the family life. More particularly, it is political parties that bear the brunt of public corruption perceptions. Not only are political parties evaluated most harshly, there is also the greatest degree of consensus about the extent of corruption in these institutions. Parliament is a close second, while such other social and political institutions such as "the legal system," "media," and "the police" and "the military" lagging further behind.

Perceptions of corruption are shaped by socio-demographic characteristics. A number of such characteristics, including income, education, and gender, are significantly related to perceptions of the scale of corruption. However, it turns out that only two socio-demographic variables have a statistically significant independent impact in Canada when all socio-demographic variables are held constant: living outside of Quebec and educational attainment, both of which are associated with lower corruption perceptions. Whereas studies have demonstrated that residents of Quebec perceive higher levels of government corruption than their counterparts in the "ROC" (Mancuso et al. 1998; 2006), the effects of education have been found to be inconsistent and insignificant in those analyses. Further research is required to substantiate these findings, but if the effect of education is robust, it is likely the result of less educated Canadians feeling more alienated from the political system, and adopted a range of more negative beliefs about its performance (Bastedo et al. 2014; LeDuc and Pammett 2014).

The chapter has also explored the core research questions and hypotheses animating this study with a large-N cross-national methodology and data from 26 countries including Canada: whether corruption drives down levels of political support and traditional political participation, and whether it can motivate extra-electoral forms of political action. The findings are less straightforward than was hypothesized. The perception of public sector corruption undermines support for politicians, evaluations of the workings of democracy, and support for the national community (i.e. the willingness to fight for one's country). The magnitude of this effect, however, is largest for satisfaction with democracy and support for politicians collectively. Support for the national community is somewhat less strongly related to perceptions of public sector corruption, a finding consistent with the results presented in chapter three. Further, contextual variables, such as GNI per capita and measures of social and political rights, have unique effects on support for the national community: Living in a country with more social and political rights increases levels of support, whereas living in a country with a high GNI/capita, net political rights, lowers it.

The impact of corruption on traditional political participation is somewhat mixed. The perception of corruption among public officials is associated with a decrease in adherence to the notion that voting is a citizen's duty, but it seems to stimulate citizens' efforts to contact public officials. That finding implies that the act of voting is fundamentally different in its socio-demographic, attitudinal and contextual determinants from all other political acts, an idea highlighted by other studies (Verba et al. 1995).<sup>20</sup> When non-traditional forms of political engagement are considered, there is some evidence that the perception of corruption can stimulate engagement.

---

<sup>20</sup> See the chapter two for an elaboration of this idea.

The investigation now proceeds to test its core hypotheses via an analysis of two major political-financial scandals: the sponsorship scandal and the Senate expenses scandal. Beyond its substantive findings regarding the dissertation's hypotheses, this chapter has set the stage for these two final two empirical analyses. Over the period during which the data examined in this chapter were collected, the sponsorship scandal dominated Canadian politics. As noted in Figure 4.2, the percentage of Canadians' indicating that they felt that "quite a lot" or "almost all" public officials were engaged in corruption increased by 8% between 2004 and 2006.<sup>21</sup> And the percentage of Canadians believing that "a lot" of corruption had unfolded under the Chrétien government also increased substantially. The following chapter examines more directly whether and to what extent this major political-financial scandal had an impact on levels of system support and patterns of political participation.

---

<sup>21</sup> Note too that the 2004 data were collected *after* the onset of the scandal.



## Coding of Variables

### ISSP

#### *Socio-demographic*

Age: in years.

Educational attainment (six point scale, 0-1):

No formal qualification

Lowest formal qualification

Above lowest qualification

Higher secondary completed

Above higher secondary level/other education

University degree completed

Gender (0/1):

Female= high value.

Urban (subjective self-assessment):

Urban/a big city = 1 Other = 0

#### *Social psychological*

Perception of corruption (five point scale, 0-1):

*“How widespread do you think corruption is in the public service in (COUNTRY)?”*

Hardly anyone is involved

A small number of people are involved

A moderate number of people are involved

A lot of people are involved

Almost everyone is involved

Can't choose (coded as missing)

Generalized trust (four point scale, 0-1):

*“Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful dealing with people?”*

People can almost always be trusted

People can usually be trusted

You usually can't be too careful in dealing with people

You almost always can't be too careful in dealing with people

Can't choose (coded missing)

Political interest (four point scale, 0-1):

*“How interested would you say you are personally are in politics?”*

Very interested

Fairly interested

Not very interested

Not at all interested

Can't choose (coded as missing)

Support (politicians) (five point scale, 0-1):

*"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Many politicians are in politics only for what they can get out of it personally"*

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Can't choose (coded as missing)

Support (regime performance) (11 point scale, 0-1):

*"On the whole, on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very poorly and 10 is very well: How well does democracy work in (COUNTRY) today?"*

Support (national community) (seven point scale, 0-1):

*"There are different opinions as to what it takes to be a good citizen. As far as you are concerned personally on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all important and 7 is very important, how important is it: To be willing to serve in the military at a time of need?"*

Voting as a duty (seven point scale, 0-1):

*"There are different opinions as to what it takes to be a good citizen. As far as you are concerned personally on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all important and 7 is very important, how important is it: Always to vote in elections?"*

Party membership (0/1):

*"People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups or associations. For each type of group, please indicate whether you: belong and actively participate, belong but don't actively participate (1), used to belong but do not anymore, or have never belonged (0): A political party"*

Contact/attempt contact public official (0/1):

*"Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past (1), whether you have not done it but might do it, or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it (0): Contacted, or attempted to contact, a politician or a civil servant to express your views."*

Donate/fundraise (0/1):

*"Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past (1), whether you have not done it but might do it, or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it (0): Donate money or raised funds for a social or political activity."*

Petition (0/1):

*“Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past (1), whether you have not done it but might do it, or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it (0): Signed a petition.”*

Boycott (0/1):

*“Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past (1), whether you have not done it but might do it, or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it (0): Boycotted, or deliberately bought, certain products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons.”*

Demonstration (0/1):

*“Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past (1), whether you have not done it but might do it, or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it (0): Took part in a demonstration.”*

Rally (0/1):

*“Here are some different forms of political and social action that people can take. Please indicate, for each one, whether you have done any of these things in the past year, whether you have done it in the more distant past (1), whether you have not done it but might do it, or have not done it and would never, under any circumstances, do it (0): Attended a political meeting or rally.”*

### **Voice of the People (Léger)**

#### ***Socio-demographic***

Age (four point scale, 0-1):

*“Can you tell me in which age group you are? Is it between...?”*

Under 30 years old

30-50 years old

51-65 years old

Over 65 years old

I prefer not to answer (coded as missing)

Education (six point scale, 0-1):

*“What is the last year of schooling that you have completed? Is it..”.*

High school or below

University, technical training, certificate (CEP), accreditation (ASP) or proficiency diploma (DEP)

University certificates and diploma

University Bachelor

University Masters

University Doctorate (PhD)

I prefer not to answer (coded as missing)

Gender (0/1):  
Female= high value.

Income (six point scale, 0-1):

*“Among the following categories, which one best reflects your total INCOME, before taxes, of all the members of your household in 2006? Is it..”.*

\$19 999 and less

between \$20 000 and \$39 999

between \$40 000 and \$59 999

between \$60 000 and \$79 999

between \$80 000 and \$99 999 or

\$100 000 or more

I prefer not to answer (coded as missing)

Region (four dummy variables):

*“In which province or territory do you live?”*

Atlantic = New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and PEI.

Ontario.

Quebec.

West = Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.

### ***Social psychological***

Perceptions of corruption (five point scales, 0-1):

*“To what extent do you perceive the following categories in this country to be affected by corruption? Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 meaning not at all corrupt, 5 meaning extremely corrupt). Of course you can use in-between scores as well.”*

Education system

Legal system

Police

Political parties

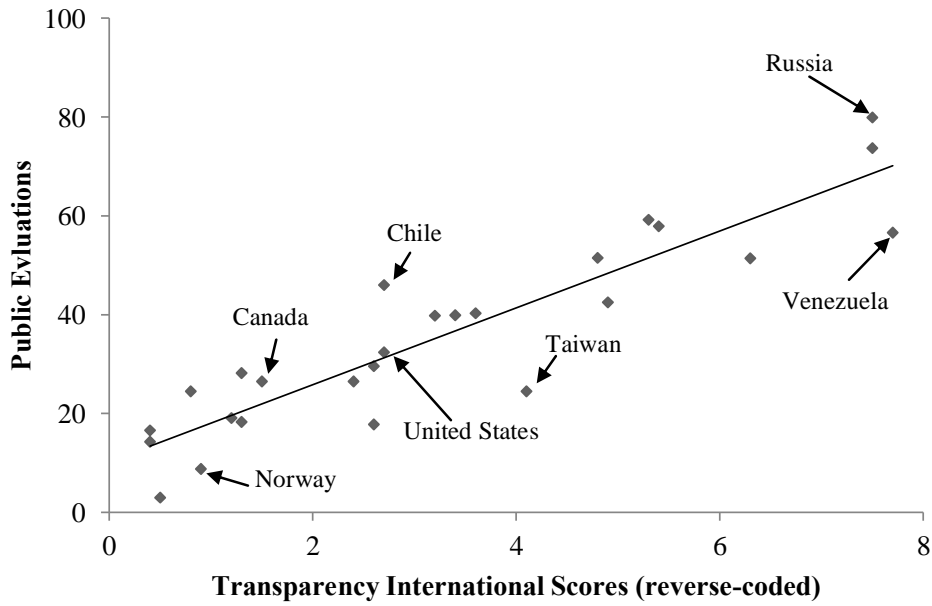
Parliament

Media

The military

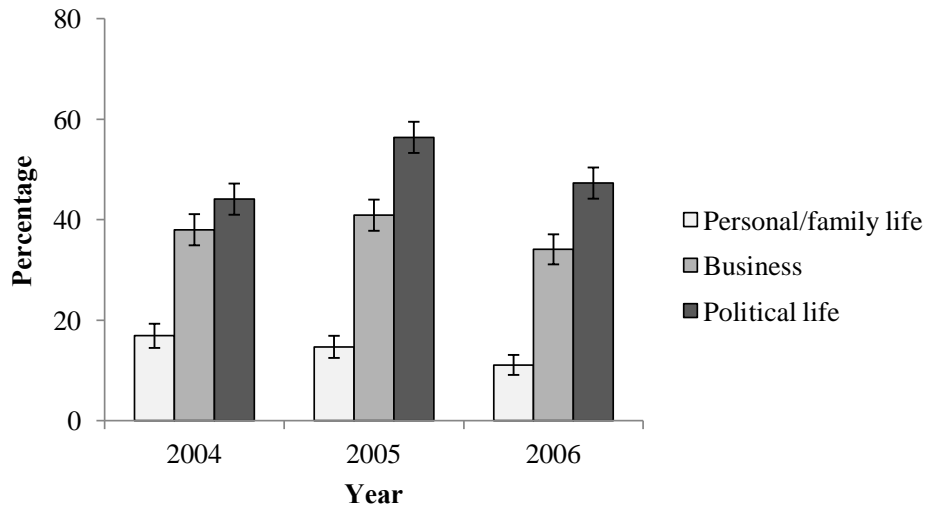
## Figures and Tables

**Figure 4.1: Expert and Public Evaluations of Public Sector Corruption**



Source: ISSP (2006) and Transparency International (2006).

**Figure 4.2: Perceptions of Corruption across Different Domains**

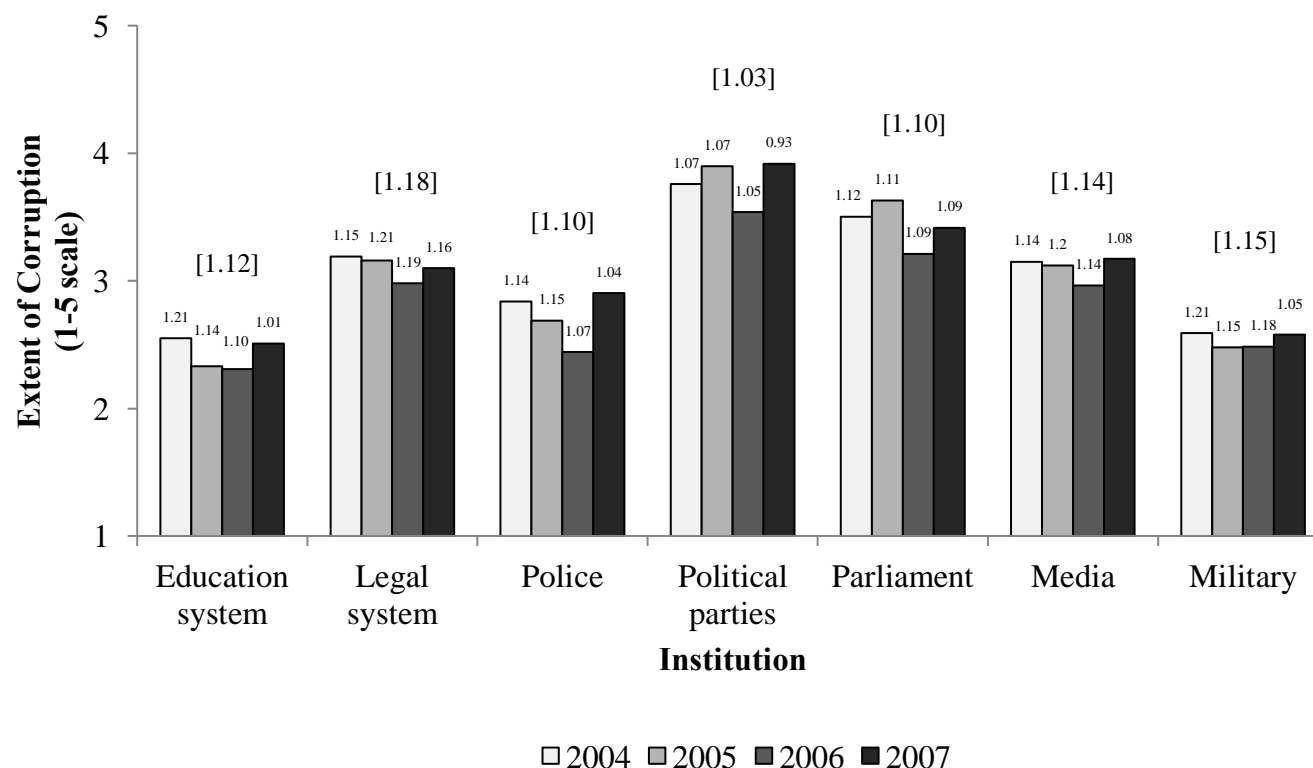


Source: Léger Voice of the People Surveys, 2004, 2005 & 2006.

Note: (1) Figures indicating that they feel that corruption affects the spheres of life listed on the x-axis to a “moderate extent” or “large extent”.

(2) Question wording: “Some people believe that corruption affects different spheres of life in this country. In your view, does corruption affect... NOT AT ALL, TO A SMALL EXTENT, TO A MODERATE EXTENT or TO A LARGE EXTENT?” (N (2004) = 955, N (2005) = 923, N (2006) = 1,000).

**Figure 4.3: Perceptions of Corruption in Social and Political Institutions, 2004-2007**

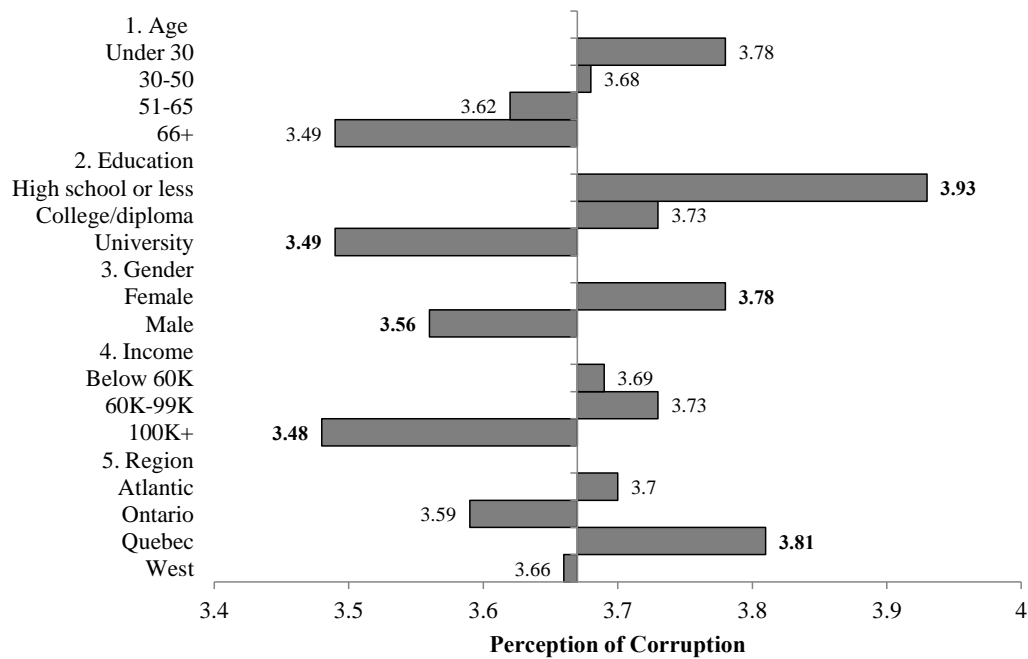


Source: Léger Voice of the People Surveys, 2004-2007.

Note: (1) Standard deviations are presented above the bars.

(2) Question wording: “To what extent do you perceive the following categories in this country to be affected by corruption? Please answer on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 meaning not at all corrupt, 5 meaning extremely corrupt). Of course you can use in-between scores as well: Education system, Legal system, Police, Political parties, Parliament, Media, The military” (N = 923-1,000, depending on wave/question).

**Figure 4.4: Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Perceptions of Corruption**



Source: Léger Voice of the People Survey (Canada, 2007).

Notes: (1) The y-axis intersects the x-axis at 3.67: the mean value for perception of the extent of corruption in representative institutions (Parliament and political parties).

(2) Values in bold represent statistically significant differences from the other categories (N= 820).



**Table 4.1: Are Public Officials Corrupt?**

Country	%	Country	%
Poland	79.7	United States	27.7
Venezuela	72.2	Ireland	25.2
Russia	64.3	Spain	24.5
Philippines	57.2	France	23.3
Latvia	50.2	Canada	18.7
Chile	49.7	Sweden	17.7
South Korea	47.1	Australia	14.2
Slovenia	47.0	Norway	11.9
South Africa	46.2	Netherlands	11.2
Portugal	44.0	Switzerland	10.1
Hungary	40.8	New Zealand	9.7
Japan	39.8	Finland	7.6
Taiwan	33.3	Denmark	6.2

Source: International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 2004.

N= Range from 1,000 (Latvia) to 2,481 (Spain).

Question wording: "And in your opinion, about how many public officials in [Country] are involved in corruption?" Proportions indicate the percentage of the population indicating "quite a lot" or "almost all" public officials are involved."

**Table 4.2: Stability of Corruption Evaluations, 2004-2006**

Country	% (2006)	$\delta$	Country	% (2006)	$\delta$
Russia	79.9	15.6	France	29.6	6.3
Philippines	73.7	16.5	Netherlands	28.2	17.0
Latvia	59.2	9.0	Canada	26.5	7.8
South Africa	57.9	11.7	Japan	26.5	-13.3
Venezuela	56.6	-15.6	Taiwan	24.5	-8.8
Hungary	51.5	10.7	Sweden	24.5	6.8
Poland	51.4	-28.3	Norway	19.1	7.2
Chile	46.0	-3.7	Australia	18.3	4.1
South Korea	42.5	-4.6	Ireland	17.8	-7.4
Slovenia	40.3	-6.7	Finland	16.6	9.0
Portugal	39.9	-4.1	New Zealand	14.3	4.6
Spain	39.8	15.3	Switzerland	8.8	-1.3
United States	32.4	4.7	Denmark	3.0	-3.2

Source: International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 2004 and 2006.

N= Range from 933 (Canada) and 2,781 (Australia).

Question wording: "And in your opinion, about how many public officials in [Country] are involved in corruption?"

Proportions indicate the percentage of the population indicating "quite a lot" or "almost all" public officials are involved.

**Table 4.3: Independent Effects of Socio-Demographic Variables on Perceptions of Corruption**

Independent variables	Coefficient (S.E.)
Age	-0.038 (-0.031)
Education	-0.107*** (-0.030)
Female	0.024 (-0.016)
Income	0.021 (-0.027)
<i>Region</i>	
Atlantic	0.025 (-0.034)
West	0.015 (-0.020)
Quebec	0.072*** (-0.020)
Constant	0.737*** (-0.029)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.039
N	820

Source: Léger Voice of the People Survey (Canada, 2007).

Note: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 4.4: Does Corruption Lead to Disaffection? A Multi-Level Analysis**

Independent variables	Support type		
	Politicians	Democracy	National community
<b>Individual</b>			
<i>Social-psychological</i>			
Corruption	-0.261*** (-0.006)	-1.172*** (-0.054)	-0.100*** (-0.009)
Generalized trust	0.116*** (-0.006)	0.130** (-0.053)	-0.024** (-0.008)
Political interest	0.058*** (-0.005)	0.357*** (-0.046)	0.086*** (-0.007)
<i>Socio-demographic</i>			
Age	-0.000*** (0.000)	0.005*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)
Education	0.062*** (-0.005)	-0.271*** (-0.048)	-0.094*** (-0.007)
Female	0.017*** (-0.002)	-0.044+ (-0.024)	-0.070*** (-0.004)
Urban	-0.003 (-0.003)	-0.130*** (-0.028)	-0.020*** (-0.004)
<b>Contextual</b>			
GNI/capita	0.052+ (-0.029)	-0.172 (-0.232)	-0.100* (-0.051)
Social/political freedoms [Higher value=less free]	-0.011 (-0.014)	-0.043 (-0.112)	0.047* (-0.024)
Constant	0.627*** (-0.030)	1.538 (-0.239)	0.591 (-0.052)
N (individuals)	31,075	30,714	27,460
N (countries)	26	26	25

Source: International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 2004.

Method: Multi-level linear regression (HLM) estimated with maximum-likelihood. Note that this group of countries includes both democracies and non-democracies.

Note: +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 4.5: Does Corruption Contribute to Withdrawal from Traditional Forms Political Participation? Evidence from 26 Countries**

Independent variables	Participation type			
	Vote-duty	Party member	(Attempt) contact	Donate
<b>Individual</b>				
<i>Social-psychological</i>				
Corruption	-0.053*** (-0.006)	0.003 (-0.007)	0.025* (-0.010)	0.008 (-0.011)
Generalized trust	0.010+ (-0.006)	0.020** (-0.007)	0.032*** (-0.009)	0.117*** (-0.011)
Distrust of politicians	-0.049*** (-0.005)	-0.035*** (-0.006)	-0.025** (-0.008)	-0.082*** (-0.010)
Dissatisfaction with democracy	-0.006*** (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	0.002* (-0.001)	0.000 (-0.001)
Political interest	0.181*** (-0.005)	0.206*** (-0.006)	0.271*** (-0.008)	0.225*** (-0.009)
<i>Socio-demographic</i>				
Age	0.002*** (0.000)	0.001*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Education	-0.011* (-0.005)	0.014* (-0.006)	0.161*** (-0.008)	0.212*** (-0.010)
Female	0.031*** (-0.002)	-0.011*** (-0.003)	-0.032*** (-0.004)	0.037*** (-0.005)
Urban	-0.010** (-0.003)	-0.021*** (-0.003)	-0.035*** (-0.004)	0.009+ (-0.005)
<b>Contextual</b>				
Social/political freedoms [Higher value=less free]	0.000 (-0.013)	-0.018 (-0.019)	-0.031 (-0.020)	-0.056* (-0.026)
GNI/capita	0.004 (-0.028)	0.009 (-0.041)	0.045 (-0.041)	0.180*** (-0.053)
Constant	0.618*** (-0.029)	-0.069 (-0.042)	-0.118** (-0.043)	0.009 (-0.055)
N (individuals)	29,871	27,721	29,550	29,574
N (countries)	26	25	26	26

Source: International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 2004.

Method: Multi-level linear regression (HLM) estimated with maximum-likelihood.

Note: +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 4.6: Does Corruption Lead to Withdrawal from Non-Traditional Forms Political Participation? Evidence from 26 Countries**

Independent variables	Participation type			
	Petition	Boycott	Demonstration	Rally
<b>Individual</b>				
<i>Social-psychological</i>				
Corruption	0.031** (-0.011)	-0.003 (-0.011)	-0.005 (-0.011)	0.015 (-0.011)
Generalized trust	0.103*** (-0.010)	0.125*** (-0.010)	0.080*** (-0.010)	0.063*** (-0.011)
Distrust of politicians	-0.012 (-0.009)	-0.038*** (-0.009)	-0.006 (-0.009)	-0.049*** (-0.01)
Dissatisfaction with democracy	0.005*** (-0.001)	0.005*** (-0.001)	0.003** (-0.001)	-0.002+ (-0.001)
Political interest	0.198*** (-0.009)	0.205*** (-0.009)	0.241*** (-0.008)	0.373*** (-0.009)
<i>Socio-demographic</i>				
Age	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)
Education	0.234*** (-0.009)	0.253*** (-0.009)	0.193*** (-0.009)	0.147*** (-0.009)
Female	0.039*** (-0.004)	0.047*** (-0.004)	-0.017*** (-0.004)	-0.053*** (-0.004)
Urban	0.009+ (-0.005)	0.018*** (-0.005)	0.039*** (-0.005)	-0.023*** (-0.005)
<b>Contextual</b>				
GNI/capita	0.253** (-0.085)	0.221*** (-0.059)	0.031 (-0.058)	-0.048 (-0.046)
Social/political freedoms [Higher value=less free]	-0.095 (-0.041)	-0.054+ (-0.029)	-0.012 (-0.028)	-0.035 (-0.022)
Constant	0.240** (-0.085)	-0.002 (-0.061)	0.000 (-0.059)	-0.059 (-0.048)
N (individuals)	29,553	28,981	29,601	29,541
N (countries)	26	26	26	26

Source: International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 2004.

Method: Multi-level linear regression (HLM) estimated with maximum-likelihood.

Note: +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

## Appendix

**Table 4.1A: Expert and Citizen Evaluations of Government Corruption**

Country	Cit. Eval.	- Exp. Eval. *	Country	Cit. Eval.	- Exp. Eval. *
Venezuela	2.3	4	United States	7.3	-1
Russia	2.5	-1	France	7.4	-1
Philippines	2.5	-1	Ireland	7.4	6
Poland	3.7	-3	Japan	7.6	0
South Africa	4.6	-1	Canada	8.5	-2
Latvia	4.7	-3	Netherlands	8.7	-4
South Korea	5.1	2	Australia	8.7	1
Hungary	5.2	-2	Norway	8.8	-1
Taiwan	5.9	9	Sweden	9.2	-3
Slovenia	6.4	0	Finland	9.6	0
Portugal	6.6	0	New Zealand	9.6	0
Spain	6.8	0	Switzerland	9.1	0
Chile	7.3	-5	Denmark	9.5	0

*Source:* International Social Survey Program (ISSP), 2004.

*Note:* (1) Countries are listed from highest to lowest perceived levels of corruption (lower Transparency International scores indicate higher levels of corruption).

\* A positive score indicates that citizens are more sanguine about the level of corruption in their country than are experts. A negative score indicates that the population is more pessimistic than experts.

**Table 4.2A: Correlations between Perceptions of Corruption and Political Support**

	Corruption	Support: politicians	Support: regime	Support: community
Corruption	1	--	--	--
Support: politicians	-0.379	1	--	--
Support: regime	-0.144	0.132	1	--
Support: community	0.030	-0.007	0.074	1

*Source:* ISSP, 2004.

*Note:* Cell entries are correlation coefficients (Pearson's  $r$ ).



## Chapter 5 The Sponsorship Scandal

The sponsorship scandal has been described as “one of the worst ethics scandals in Canadian history” (Greene 2006, 277). Catalyzed by the scathing Auditor General’s report of November 2003 (a report tabled in February 2004), the scandal played out in the press over the following two years. This scandal, which involved the misappropriation of large sums of public money, has all the hallmarks of a major political-financial scandal. Did the scandal affect levels of political support or patterns of political participation?

The 2004 Canadian Election Studies (CES) provide unique and timely data for investigating those questions. With these data, it is possible to conduct a cross-sectional test that exploits variation in respondents’ awareness of the scandal. Probing the impact of awareness, rather than attitudinal reaction to a scandal, addresses the endogeneity problem that afflicts conventional cross-sectional analyses aimed at establishing causality. And the panel component of those data, which spans 2004-2006, present the opportunity for a second longitudinal test of the impact of the scandal on Canadians’ attitudes and behaviours. Together, these two analytic strategies provide a convincing testing ground for isolating the impact of political scandals on people’s views about the political system and their participatory proclivities.

The investigation proceeds in four sections. The first section provides an overview of the sponsorship scandal, including a time-line of key events and an assessment of its institutional legacy. The second section outlines the data and analytic strategy, and that is followed by the presentation of the core findings. The conclusions spell out the broader implications of the core findings.

## 5.1 The Programme, the Scandal, and the Fallout

The sponsorship scandal concerned revelations surrounding the administration of a federal programme designed to “promote the Canadian brand” in Quebec. The programme was intended “to increase the visibility of Canada in Quebec”, and highlight the contribution of federal programmes to the province in the context of a 1995 referendum for political independence (Blais et al. 2010, 3). Reports of irregularities in the administration of the sponsorship programme surfaced between 2000 and 2002. The November 2003 report by Auditor General Sheila Fraser, Canada’s independent fiscal watchdog, sparked a full-blown political scandal.<sup>1</sup> Fraser’s report found that millions of dollars were distributed through the programme without proper documentation and oversight.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, many of those improper contracts were tendered to long-time supporters of the governing Liberal Party (Blais et al. 2005).

Following the tabling of the Auditor General’s report, in his first Parliamentary session as Prime Minister in February 2004, Paul Martin launched the Gomery Commission, a public inquiry into the administration of the sponsorship programme.<sup>3</sup> The inquiry kept the story in the headlines over the course of its proceedings, which unfolded between September 2004 and February 2006. The Commission released two reports, the first of which exonerated Martin from

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that the November 2003 report of the Auditor General was tabled in early February of 2004 due to the prorogation of the House of Commons by the Liberal government in early November. The Prime Minister at the time, Jean Chrétien, resigned in the interregnum, on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2003, at which point the Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, appointed Paul Martin as Prime Minister.

<sup>2</sup> From the introduction to chapter three of the Auditor General’s November 2003 report: “Some sponsorship funds were transferred to Crown corporations using unusual methods that appear designed to provide significant commissions to communications agencies, while hiding the source of funds and the true nature of the transactions. Documentation was very poor and there was little evidence of analysis to support the expenditure of more than \$250 million. Over \$ 100 million of that was paid to communications agencies as production fees and commissions.” (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Formally the “Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities.”

any direct responsibility.<sup>4</sup> That report, released on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, was nonetheless a damning indictment of the Liberals' management of the programme.<sup>5</sup> The proceedings of the Gomery Commission "left no doubt that there had been corruption" in the administration of the programme (Blais et al. 2010, 5), and many Canadians felt that Martin should have known about the corruption, or felt that he did know and did nothing to stop it (Gidengil et al. 2012). It thus qualifies as a particularly high-profile financial-political scandal.

The substantial effects of the scandal on the Liberal Party base and citizens' vote choices both in 2004 and 2006 are amply documented elsewhere (Clarke et al. 2009; Gidengil et al. 2012). Some consider the scandal to be one of the most consequential Canadian political events of the first decade of the twenty first century (Gidengil et al. 2012, 94). Others speculate that the sponsorship scandal was a watershed moment in the evolution of Canadians' attitudes toward elite-level political misconduct (Mancuso et al. 2006). The scandal has been linked to the politicization of the federal government's communications strategy in Canada (Kozolanka 2006), and its institutional implications have also been well-documented by other studies (Atkinson and Fulton 2013; Free and Radcliffe 2009).

How did Canadians react to the scandal in general terms? The CES included questions that tap respondents' reactions to the scandal both in 2004 and 2006. Note that the 2004 data were collected during the 38<sup>th</sup> federal election campaign. That campaign unfolded in June of 2004, several months after the explosive Auditor General's report, but prior to commencement of

---

<sup>4</sup> The second report, released February 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, focused on proposals for institutional reform.

<sup>5</sup> The first report, for example, found "the existence of a 'culture of entitlement' among political officials and bureaucrats involved with the Sponsorship Program, including the receipt of monetary and non-monetary benefits," "gross overcharging by communications agencies for hours worked and goods and services provided," and "a complex web of financial transactions among Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), Crown Corporations and communications agencies, involving kickbacks and illegal contributions to a political party in the context of the Sponsorship Program" (Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities, "Who Is Responsible? Phase 1 Report," 2005, 5).

the proceedings of the Gomery Commission.<sup>6</sup> The CES data from 2006 were also collected during the campaign period, in January 2006. The respondents included in the 2006 sample had absorbed almost two years of incriminating revelations about political corruption in the administration of the sponsorship programme. Even so, the persistence of citizens' irritation about the affair is remarkable. 82.9 per cent of Canadians said that they were either "angry" or "very angry" over revelations surrounding the sponsorship programme in 2004. Two years later, 84.2 per cent of Canadians were still "angry" or "very angry" about the scandal (see Figure 5.1).<sup>7</sup> Corruption is quintessentially a valence issue: virtually no one would be expected to endorse such behaviour (Clarke et al. 2009). Still, the scale and durability of citizen anger about the sponsorship scandal is striking.

[Figure 5.1 about here]

The proportion of Canadians believing that there was corruption under Jean Chrétien's leadership also increased significantly between 2004 and 2006, reflecting, perhaps, the fact that the scathing report of the Gomery Commission Inquiry, released in late 2005 (shortly before the 2006 election campaign, opportunistically forced by the opposition through a vote of no confidence), confirmed that this had indeed been this case.

Whereas both anger over the scandal and perceptions of corruption under Jean Chrétien worsened marginally between 2004 and 2006, public perceptions of the role played by Paul Martin in the scandal and his competence with respect to rooting out corruption improved substantially over this interlude. Canadians' were generally much more satisfied with Martin's

---

<sup>6</sup> The Commission would not hear its first witness until September of 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Notably, that change is within the margin of error of the survey, so one cannot infer that any change in the population at large occurred.

handing of the scandal in 2006 than they were in 2004. The percentage of respondents who felt that Paul Martin mishandled the scandal dropped from 68.2% in 2004 to 49.1% in 2006.

Similarly, the percentage of respondents indicating that they thought that Martin would prevent another similar scandal from occurring jumped from 44.7% in 2004 to 57.2% in 2006.

These data are telling, and are an essential starting point for investigating the impact of the sponsorship scandal on Canadians' levels of political support and their modes of political participation. They cannot, however, establish on their own what impact the scandal had on these political attitudes and behaviours. The following section specifies a methodology to investigate the central hypothesis regarding these relationships.

## 5.2 Data and Methodology

The analysis proceeds in two steps. The first exploits a conveniently timed round of the CES from 2004.<sup>8</sup> Recall that the sponsorship scandal broke shortly before that election was called. Even so, a substantial proportion of Canadians were still unaware of the scandal when the writ was dropped.<sup>9</sup> The analysis begins by evaluating whether variations in respondents' awareness of the scandal had an impact on democratic satisfaction after political knowledge, political interest, and other rival explanations, are taken into account. "Awareness" of the scandal and "knowledge", or correct information, are not exactly the same thing.<sup>10</sup> Because interest in, and

---

<sup>8</sup> Data for both 2004 and 2006 were collected by the CES team of principle investigators and the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University by way of a campaign period survey (cps), post-election survey (pes), and as a mail-back (mbs) component (2004 only). Data collection for the cps and pes were facilitated by modified RDD (random digit dialing) procedures by telephone, and completed by way of CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing).

<sup>9</sup> 7.7 per cent of the sample responded "don't know" when asked about their reaction to the sponsorship scandal (see Appendix for details).

<sup>10</sup> Although they are conceptually interwoven and empirically linked. The measures of scandal awareness and general political knowledge are correlated (Pearson's  $r=0.23$ ).

knowledge about, politics and democracy have a significant impact on evaluations of democratic performance (Norris 2011), there are strong reasons to believe that absent controls for general political knowledge and interest, the scandal awareness variable alone would likely capture the effects of these other variables.<sup>11</sup>

The analysis then imports data from the 2006 CES, data that were collected during the period following release of the Gomery Commission's first report. Fortunately, the 2004 and 2006 CES contain a panel component: the respondents interviewed in 2004 were re-interviewed in 2006. The analysis exploits these panel data to clarify the link between reactions to the scandal and satisfaction with democracy. By 2006, knowledge of the scandal was widespread, so tests that examine variation in scandal awareness are less useful. CES data from 2006 alone cannot establish definitively if public anger about the scandal drove citizens to be less positive about the political system. After all, it is entirely possible that people who feel negatively about politics and democracy will react more negatively than others to evidence of political corruption. The panel data, however, do help to isolate which factors drove individual-level changes in levels of democratic satisfaction between 2004 and 2006, and in so doing provide a more solid foundation for claims about the scandal's effects.

These analytic approaches to measuring the impact of the sponsorship scandal on attitudes toward democracy operate in quite different ways. The first test estimates the impact of general awareness of the scandal on people's attitudes toward government at a fixed point in time. The second test estimates the impact of an increasingly negative perception of the scandal

---

<sup>11</sup> Those who were unaware of the scandal in 2004 are likely different from the rest of the sample: they tend to have lower levels of interest in and knowledge about politics. Consequently, models control for differences in political interest and knowledge to help account for this.

between 2004 and 2006 on attitudes toward democracy. During that interlude, the Gomery Commission Inquiry removed all doubt that there had been corruption in the administration of the sponsorship programme, and so it is not so surprising that some respondents would be angrier in 2006 than they were in 2004.

### 5.3 Results I: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Support

Did the sponsorship scandal shape Canadians' attitudes toward the political system? The results presented in Table 5.1 shed some light on that question.<sup>12</sup> That table includes the results of three multivariate analyses on three sets of dependent variables: support for politicians collectively, support for the political regime, and support for the national community. The models are estimated using ordinal logistic regression. The crucial independent variable in this initial test is scandal awareness, while measures of broader political knowledge and interest are also included to mitigate any concerns regarding differences between those who are aware of the scandal and those who are not. Also included in the models are a set of alternative explanations of variance in political support discussed in the introduction, namely value change (measured a scale based on Inglehart's work (1990)), a scale of news media exposure,<sup>13</sup> and a prospective economic item

---

<sup>12</sup> Note that the results presented in this section have been adapted and published (Ruderman and Nevitte 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Media effects are notoriously difficult to establish definitively with cross-sectional data. Nonetheless, prior studies have included indicators of media consumption in order to assess whether or not exposure to this content is associated with lowered levels of political support (Dalton 2004; Pétry 2014). The theory is that rising levels of dissatisfaction are stoked by the news media that highlights dysfunction and partisan games rather than evidence of cooperation (Bastedo et al. 2011; Fallows 1996; Patterson 1993). As Norris (2000) points out, that trend has been identified in some the very early studies of the social impact of news (Lang and Lang 1966), though some suggest that the media focus on personalities and dysfunction has intensified in recent years.

used to measure anxiety about Canada's economic standing.<sup>14</sup> A selection of standard socio-demographic controls is also included.<sup>15</sup>

[Table 5.1 about here]

The results indicate that scandal awareness does in fact impact satisfaction with democracy, but does not influence either people's affective attachments to politicians collectively or their propensity to identify democracy as the best possible system of government. The results indicate that scandal awareness and general political knowledge are both significant predictors of levels of satisfaction with the political system. By contrast, neither general political knowledge nor scandal awareness has any statistically significant impact at all on support for democratic principles. And as predicted, general political knowledge and scandal awareness impact satisfaction with democracy in opposite directions. Knowledge about the political system generally indicates a willingness to immerse oneself in information about the country's political affairs (Norris 2011). Those with high levels of political knowledge exhibit higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works once other relevant factors are taken into account (see Table 5.1). By contrast, awareness of a scandal increases the chances of expressing dissatisfaction with democratic performance. Political interest has no statistically significant effect on satisfaction with democracy, though it does predict higher levels of support for politicians and for democratic principles (albeit at the  $p < 0.1$  level).

The relationship between scandal awareness and satisfaction with democracy is robust to the inclusion of a relatively large set of independent variables. The impact of value change is

---

<sup>14</sup> See chapter two for the rationale behind these alternative hypotheses.

<sup>15</sup> Table 3.1 presents the results as odds ratios, because logistic regression coefficients are not directly interpretable. Predicted probabilities are, perhaps, more intuitive, and so average marginal effects are also included in the second column for each model. Here, the values of the other covariates are set at their means.



tested using a scale of postmaterial value priorities (Inglehart 1990).<sup>16</sup> The impact of the economy is measured with a prospective sociotropic question about whether respondents think that the economy will improve, deteriorate, or stay the same over the coming year, resulting in a three-point item on a zero to one scale. Lastly, the impact of news media exposure is measured with a battery of questions regarding how often respondents consume news media content in a variety of forms. Although the array of rival hypotheses examined here is not exhaustive, it does capture the most prominent alternative explanations.<sup>17</sup>

The data provide some empirical support for the value change and economic outlooks explanations. Both holding postmaterialist values and expressing a negative outlook on Canada's economy are significant predictors of harsher evaluations of the workings of democracy and of politicians collectively. At the same time, neither has any statistically significant impact on support for democratic principles.

Party identification is also entered into both models. Generally, people who support incumbents, as well as parties that have just recently won an election, tend to be more satisfied with the way that democracy works than those who support losing candidates (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Blais and G lineau 2007). And indeed, in this case, affective attachment to the incumbent party has a strong positive impact on support for politicians and satisfaction with the way democracy works. But the data also show that identification with the incumbent party has a much weaker impact on the importance citizens assign to living in a democracy ( $p < 0.1$ ).

[Table 5.2 about here]

---

<sup>16</sup> Materialists, those giving priority to both fighting crime and economic growth, are assigned a zero. Those supporting both postmaterialist objectives (giving people greater say and protecting freedom of speech) are assigned a one.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the generalized trust indicator included in the models in chapter four is not available in the 2006 iteration of the CES, and is thus excluded from the statistical models presented in this chapter.

The 2004-2006 CES panel component makes it possible to probe the dynamic factors driving attitudinal change between 2004 and 2006.<sup>18</sup> Relying on a simple test of the impact of reactions to the scandal with data from a single point in time, as do Clarke et al. (2009) and Gidengil et al. (2012), clearly introduces a concern about time order: Do low levels of satisfaction with democracy encourage people to react more harshly to evidence of corruption? Or is it the other way around? A fixed effects time series model both addresses this concern about endogeneity and controls for omitted variable bias more effectively than do either cross-sectional or random effects models.<sup>19</sup> This approach isolates changes that occur within individual respondents across time rather than between individuals at a given point. This approach automatically eliminates from consideration time-invariant socio-demographic or psychological characteristics. That analytic strategy provides a robust foundation for claims about how negative reactions to the scandal are related to satisfaction with democracy.

Responses to the question “*Now some questions about the Sponsorship Scandal. Does it make you very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry or not angry at all?*” provide a measure of the impact of the scandal. Table 5.2 presents the results of a fixed effects time series multivariate

---

<sup>18</sup> The only dependent variable from Table 5.1 that is possible to model with these panel data is satisfaction with democracy. The question regarding support for democracy was not included in the 2006 iteration of the CES.

<sup>19</sup> A fixed effects model is used here for several reasons. First, the results of a Hausman test indicate that heterogeneity bias exists in the random effects estimator (less technically, that the within and between unit effects in the model are not the same), and as such a fixed effects model is the preferred choice, since its estimates remain unbiased (Allison 2009). The fixed effects estimator has the further advantage of controlling for omitted variable bias by eliminating any time-invariant individual level factors (whether they are measured or not) as possible explanations for change in the dependent variable, since these factors are the same for individuals across time. Since we only include these characteristics as controls, and do not need to model them specifically, the fixed-effects model is the most effective way to control out their impact (as well as the impact of any other unobserved individual-level heterogeneity). The fixed effects model does have the downside of making it more difficult to achieve statistically significant results, however. In estimating only within-unit variance, degrees of freedom and efficiency are reduced. The fixed effects estimator is comprised of two steps. First, data are “de-meanned” or “mean corrected” in what is usually referred to as the “within transformation.” Those de-meanded data are then estimated using OLS regression (Allison 2009; Gujarati and Porter 2009).

model, which includes data from two points in time: 2004 and 2006. The results reinforce the findings of the cross-sectional test with respect to the impact of the scandal. But they also introduce significant nuances. Specifically, the estimated impact of the scandal in the fixed effects model is much larger. The increasingly negative reaction to the scandal between 2004 and 2006 turns out to be a very strong predictor of a corresponding rise in democratic dissatisfaction. That finding is significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level. Simple awareness of the scandal at a single point in time is a relatively weaker predictor of attitudes toward democracy. Further, becoming a Liberal party identifier is associated with a statistically significant increase in democratic satisfaction between 2004 and 2006. The only other variable to achieve statistical significance in the time series analysis is economic pessimism. It would seem that worsening evaluations of the economy are also a relatively robust predictor of worsening evaluations of the political system.

If the goal is to estimate the impact of the scandal on aggregate public attitudes, it might well be that the unconventional cross-sectional test presented in Table 5.1 paints a more accurate picture of the overall effect size. A strong reaction to the scandal is indeed a powerful predictor of democratic dissatisfaction. But then not everyone who heard about the scandal was maximally upset about it. What the time series model demonstrates more clearly than prior analyses is that negative reactions to a scandal can have a substantial corrosive impact on individuals' evaluations of democracy.

## 5.4 Results II: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Participation

Did the scandal also have an impact on traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation? The two indicators of traditional political participation are a variable representing

whether or not a respondent voted in the 2004 federal election,<sup>20</sup> and a variable that represents whether or not the respondent has contacted an MP. Indicators of non-traditional participation consist of items probing whether or not respondents have ever signed petitions, joined in boycotts, or participated in lawful demonstrations.<sup>21</sup> All of these variables are dichotomous, and as a result binary logistic regression is the method of estimation. As in Section 5.3, both odds ratios and marginal effects on predicted probabilities are presented.

The analytic strategy here is also essentially the same as in the foregoing section. Scandal awareness is the focal independent variable, while political knowledge and interest are also included. Further, a set of prominent alternative explanations for variance in political participation are entered into the models. As in the foregoing chapters, affect toward politicians collectively as well as satisfaction with democracy are included in these models. This is both because analysts routinely attribute falling traditional political participation to dissatisfaction with the political system (see introduction), and because such a test helps to clarify the relationship between the two dependent variables examined.

[Table 5.3 about here]

The most striking finding concerns the impact of scandal awareness on whether or not the respondent cast a ballot in 2004. Contrary to the Hypothesis 2.1 presented in chapter two, those who were aware of the scandal were substantially more likely to have voted in the election than those who were not. That finding holds even after controlling for the impact of broader forms of political knowledge and interest. Conversely, Hypothesis 2.2 – that scandals motivate extra-

---

<sup>20</sup> This question was asked in the post-election component of the 2004 CES.

<sup>21</sup> Note that the indicators of non-traditional participation were only included on the mail-back component of the CES, which results in the lower N for these analyses.

electoral forms of engagement that bypass traditional state-centered channels – receives no support from these analyses. Those more demanding forms of participation seem largely unaffected by awareness of a major political scandal.

Some of the rival explanations for variance in participation also receive empirical support. One of the most intriguing secondary findings concerns the role of satisfaction with democracy. Expressing satisfaction with the way democracy works increases in the probability of having voted, but decreases the probability of having contacted one's MP. Further, dissatisfaction is a statistically significant predictor of all three non-traditional political activities. Dissatisfaction with democratic performance makes respondents more likely to sign petitions, engage in protests and join in boycotts. That finding reinforces Verba et al.'s claim that voting is essentially *sui generis*, “a unique political act” that follows a fundamentally different logic from more instrumental forms of political action (1995). Given the catalyzing impact of dissatisfaction, forms of political participation other than voting seem to be motivated, at least in part, by a desire to change the status quo in particular ways. Voting, which is associated with satisfaction with democracy, is driven by quite different forces and considerations.

[Table 5.4 about here]

The analysis now turns to a time series test of the impact of these variables on political participation.<sup>22</sup> Again, time invariant variables (i.e. those variables which vary between respondents but not across time such as gender or whether or not a respondent is an immigrant) are excluded, as in any fixed effects regression specification, because this time series test only

---

<sup>22</sup> Note that the mail-back component of the CES was not fielded in 2006, and thus none of the indicators of non-traditional participation are available for a time series test. The question regarding whether or not respondents have contacted an MP was also not fielded in 2006.

models change across time in the dependent variable as a function of change across time in all of the covariates in the model. The findings presented in Table 5.4 cast some doubt on the idea that scandals are a major driver of turnout. Fixed effects models, as opposed random effects models, do sacrifice degrees of freedom for unbiasedness. This can make it difficult to achieve statistically significant results, particularly when only two waves of a survey are available. Even so, the findings clearly do not support the conjecture that increasing anger over the scandal increased citizens' likelihood of voting across this two-year window. The only variable to achieve statistical significance is satisfaction with democracy. Those who were more satisfied in 2006 than they were in 2004 were more likely to vote in 2006 than in 2004, net other factors.

## 5.5 Discussion

This chapter constitutes the first comprehensive evaluation of the broad attitudinal and behavioural impact of the sponsorship scandal, which Gidengil et al. speculate may be “...the most significant political event of the first decade of the twenty-first century in Canada” (2012, 94). Beyond this narrow contribution to the study of recent Canadian political history, the chapter also contributes to the broader debate surrounding the impact of scandals in the comparative literature through the use of a two-pronged analytic strategy based on an awareness variable and the use of panel data. The pairing of this unusual cross-sectional test with a time series model helps create a firmer foundation with which to contribute to the broader debate surrounding the impact of political scandals on people's political attitudes and behaviours.

More particularly, the data demonstrate that the scandal did depress levels of satisfaction with democracy, contrary to several recent studies (Maier 2011; Norris 2011). The scandal's effect, however, does not seem to extend to support for democratic principles, or even to undermine the public's affective orientation to politicians collectively. This may be because other

politicians, particularly from the Conservative Party and NDP, but also other Liberals, were among those most agitated about the revelations of corruption, and most eager to get to the bottom of things. The impact of the scandal on patterns of political engagement were, perhaps, less intuitive. It seems that the awareness of the scandal may well have motivated angry voters to “throw the rascals out”, though that finding is not confirmed by a time series test. More generally, the scandal's impact on patterns of participation was, it would seem, quite modest. But contrary to the widely-circulated idea that scandals are turning people off politics altogether (McParland 2014), the evidence presented in this chapter suggests that although scandals may lead to some level of dissatisfaction with democracy, they may also spur on participation in politics.

The findings presented in this chapter are particularly compelling due to the data structures employed. But are the findings presented here consistent with evidence from a more recent major political-financial scandal? The investigation now turns to an analysis of the Senate expenses scandal, 2012-2016. Consistent with the conceptualization of political scandal developed in chapter two, this scandal involved credible allegations of illegal and unethical wrongdoing on the part of public office holders. Indeed, the allegations in this case were corroborated by the Auditor-General, the RCMP, and the Crown Prosecutor. Further, like the sponsorship scandal, the allegations at the heart of the Senate expenses scandal involve allegations of misappropriation of public funds for private benefit. What were the scandal's broader attitudinal and behavioral implications, and do they reinforce or cast doubt on the findings of the foregoing analysis?

## Coding of Variables

### Canadian Election Studies, 2004 and 2006

#### *Socio-demographic variables*

Age: in years.

Education: Trichotomous variable (zero= high school or below, 0.5= some college, one=university).

Francophone: “*What is the first language you learned and still understand?*” Those responding French are assigned a one; all others are assigned a zero.

Gender: Women are assigned one; men are assigned zero.

New Canadians: Those born outside of Canada are assigned one; those born in Canada are assigned zero.

#### *Social-psychological variables*

Satisfaction with democracy (1-4):

“*On the whole are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not satisfied at all with the way democracy works in Canada?*”

Support for democracy (1-3):

“*Democracy may have problems, but it’s better than any other form of government.*”

Respondents who “*disagree*” or “*strongly disagree*” are assigned one, those who replied “*agree*” are assigned two, those who replied “*strongly agree*” are assigned a three.

Scandal awareness (0-1):

“*Now some questions about the Sponsorship Scandal. Does it make you very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry or not angry at all?*” Those who responded “*don’t know*” are assigned a zero, and those who responded directly to this question are assigned a one.

Scandal reaction (four point scale, 0-1):

“*Now some questions about the Sponsorship Scandal. Does it make you very angry, somewhat angry, not very angry or not angry at all?*”

Postmaterialism (four point scale, 0-1):

“*Here’s a list of FOUR goals. Which goal is MOST important to you personally? One, fighting crime; two, giving people more say in important government decisions; three, maintaining economic growth; or four, protecting freedom of speech?...And which is SECOND MOST important to you personally?*” Those who select both “*giving people more say in government decisions*” and “*protecting freedom of speech*” (in either order) are coded as postmaterialists (one). Those who select “*fighting crime*” and “*maintaining economic growth*” (in either order) are coded as materialists (zero). Those who select a combination of materialist and postmaterialist goals are assigned middle values. Specifically, those selecting a postmaterialist



goal as being most important and a materialist goal as being second most important are coded 0.66, and those who select a materialist goal as being most important and a postmaterialist goal as being second most important are coded 0.33.

News media exposure (0-1):

*“How much attention have you paid to news about the Federal election on (TV, Internet, Newspaper, Radio) over the last few days: Using a scale from zero to ten, where zero means no attention at all and ten means a great deal of attention?”* An additive index (zero to one) is created based on these four items (Alpha 2004=0.65, Alpha 2006=0.63).

Economic pessimism (0-1):

*“Do you think that a year from now you will be BETTER off financially WORSE off, or about the same as now?”* This question is used to create a three point item (zero to one).

Political knowledge (0-1):

A simple three-item additive index based on whether respondents could correctly identify their premier, the British Prime Minister and the name of the female cabinet minister who ran against Martin (Sheila Copps). Alpha=0.62. In 2006, the questions were altered somewhat so a three-item scale was used, based on whether respondents could correctly identify their premier, the British Prime Minister, and a female federal cabinet minister. Alpha= 0.56.

Political interest (0-10):

*“Using the same scale (from 0 to 10), how interested are you in politics generally? Zero means no interest at all and ten means extremely interested”* (a zero to ten item).

Liberal party identification (0-1):

*“Do you generally think of yourself as being a LITTLE closer to one of the federal parties than to the others?”* If yes, *“Which party is that?”* Those responding “Yes” and “Liberals” or “Grits” are assigned a one. All others are assigned a zero.

### ***Political participation***

Voted (0-1):

*“Did you vote in the election?”* (Item based on the CES post-election survey)

Contact (0-1):

*“Have you ever contacted a Member of Parliament?”*

Petition (0-1):

*“Here is a list of political actions that people can take. For each action, please put a circle in the appropriate column to indicate if you have actually done it, if you might do it, or if you would never do it under any circumstances. Sign a petition.”* Those who have are assigned a one, others are assigned a zero.

Boycott (0-1):

*“Here is a list of political actions that people can take. For each action, please put a circle in the appropriate column to indicate if you have actually done it, if you might do it, or if you would*

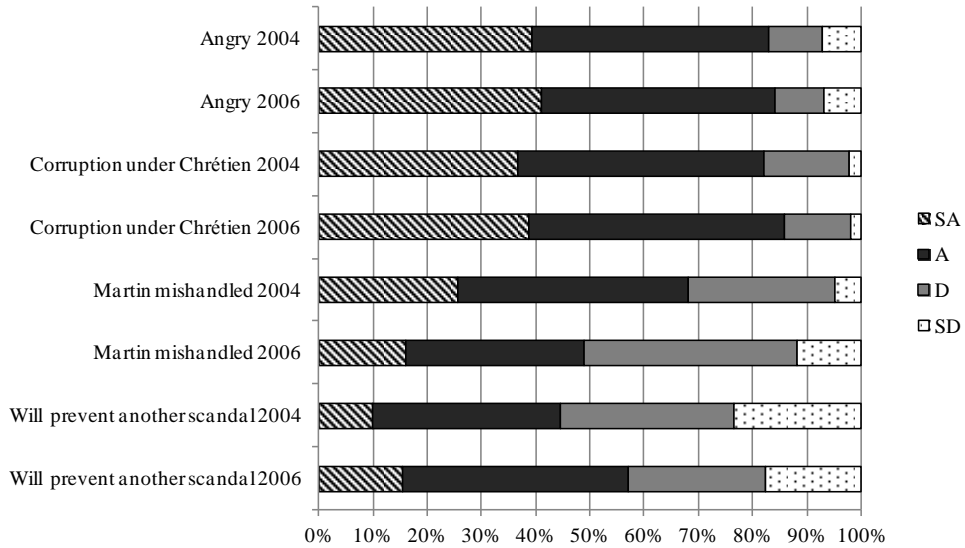
*never do it under any circumstances. Join in a boycott.”* Those who have are assigned a one, others are assigned a zero.

Protest (0-1):

*“Here is a list of political actions that people can take. For each action, please put a circle in the appropriate column to indicate if you have actually done it, if you might do it, or if you would never do it under any circumstances. Attend a lawful demonstration.”* Those who have are assigned a one, others are assigned a zero.

Figures and Tables

Figure 5.1: Canadians' Reactions to the Sponsorship Scandal, 2004-2006



Source: Canadian Election Studies, 2004 & 2006.

Note: A and SA indicate “agree” and “strongly agree”, whereas D and SD indicate “disagree” and “strongly disagree” respectively.

**Table 5.1: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Support**

	Support for politicians		Satisfaction with democracy		Support for democratic principles	
	O.R.	Marg.	O.R.	Marg.	O.R.	Marg.
<i>Key IVs</i>						
Scandal awareness	1.18	0.01	0.67*	-0.05*	1.62	0.08
Political interest	1.20***	0.01***	1.01	0.00	1.05+	0.01+
Political knowledge	1.30*	0.02*	1.48**	0.05**	1.31	0.05
Postmaterialism	0.68**	-0.03**	0.67***	-0.05***	1.01	0.00
News media exposure	2.00**	0.06***	1.15	0.02	1.97+	0.11+
Economic pessimism	0.43***	-0.08***	0.42***	-0.11***	0.77	-0.04
<i>Party ID</i>						
Liberal (incumbent)	1.89***	0.06***	2.61***	0.11***	1.25+	0.04+
<i>Socio-dem. controls</i>						
Age	0.98***	-0.00***	0.99***	-0.00***	1.02***	0.00***
Education	1.44***	0.03***	1.30**	0.03**	2.01***	0.12***
Female	1.35***	0.02***	1.07	0.01	0.89	-0.02
Francophone	1.13	0.01	0.76**	-0.03**	1.03	0.00
New Canadian	1.08	0.00	1.05	0.01	0.82	-0.03
Constant 1	-0.38		-2.77		-0.79	
Constant 2	1.89		-1.11		2.32	
Constant 3	4.21		1.61		--	
N	2,643		2,671		1,347	
McFadden's R <sup>2</sup>	0.076		0.042		0.044	
ML (Cox-Snell) R <sup>2</sup>	0.166		0.096		0.073	

*Source:* Canadian Election Study, 2004.

*Method:* Ordinal logistic regression. Odds ratios and marginal effects are presented.

*Note:* (1) Significance levels determined with robust standard errors.

(2) +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 5.2: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Support, 2004-2006**

Independent variables	Coef. (S.E.)
Scandal reaction	-0.271** -0.087
Political interest	-0.003 -0.011
Political knowledge	-0.068 -0.078
Economic pessimism	-0.123* -0.061
News media exposure	-0.163 -0.061
Postmaterialism	-0.017 -0.065
Liberal Party ID	0.139* -0.063
Constant	2.964***
N	1,250 (x2)
R <sup>2</sup> (within)	0.017

*Source:* Canadian Election Studies, 2004 & 2006.

*Method:* Fixed effects regression. Panel respondents only.

*Note:* Dependent variable in satisfaction with democracy.

*Note:* \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 5.3: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Participation, 2004**

	"Tradit."				"Non-tradit."					
	Voted		Contact		Petition		Boycott		Protest	
	O.R.	Marg.	O.R.	Marg.	O.R.	Marg.	O.R.	Marg.	O.R.	Marg.
<i>Key IVs</i>										
Scandal awareness	1.92**	0.05**	1.46	0.08	1.12	0.01	1.01	0.00	0.64	-0.07
Pol. knowledge	3.24***	0.08***	1.67***	0.11***	1.59*	0.06*	1.81**	0.12**	1.20	0.03
Pol. interest	1.22***	0.01***	1.20***	0.03***	1.08**	0.01**	1.11***	0.02***	1.14***	0.02***
Postmat.	1.25	0.01	1.13	0.02	1.18	0.02	2.45***	0.18***	2.77***	0.16***
Supp.: politicians	1.16+	0.01+	0.93	-0.01	1.10	0.01	0.99	0.00	1.10	0.01
Satis. w dem.	1.25**	0.01**	0.75***	-0.05***	0.64***	-0.05***	0.72***	-0.06***	0.95	0.00
<i>Socio-dem. controls</i>										
Age	1.03***	0.00***	1.01***	0.00***	0.98*	-0.01*	0.99*	-0.00*	0.99+	-0.00+
Education	1.38+	0.02+	2.24***	0.17***	2.59***	0.12***	1.72**	0.11**	2.65***	0.16***
Female	1.40**	0.02**	0.97	-0.01	1.31+	0.03+	1.15	0.03	1.04	0.00
Francophone	1.09	0.01	0.46***	-0.16***	0.71+	-0.04+	1.29+	0.05+	0.80	-0.03
New Canadian	0.58**	-0.04**	0.58***	-0.11***	0.48***	-0.09***	1.00	0.00	1.52*	0.06*
N	2,810		2,809		1,503		1,350		1,328	
McFadden's R <sup>2</sup>	0.193		0.119		0.072		0.072		0.090	
ML (Cox-Snell) R <sup>2</sup>	0.139		0.141		0.065		0.085		0.094	

Source: Canadian Election Study, 2004.

Method: Binary logistic regression. Odds ratios and marginal effects are presented.

Note: (1) Significance levels determined with robust standard errors.

(2) +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 5.4: The Sponsorship Scandal and Political Participation, 2004-2006**

Independent variables	Coef. (S.E.)
Scandal anger	0.000
Political knowledge	-0.001
Political interest	0.004
Support for politicians	--
Satisfaction with democracy	0.018*
Postmaterialism	0.005
Constant	0.851***
N	1,396 (x2)
R <sup>2</sup> (within)	0.004

*Source:* Canadian Election Studies, 2004 and 2006.

*Method:* Fixed effects regression. Panel respondents only.

*Note:* (1) Dependent variable is whether or not the respondent has voted in the most recent federal election (2004 and 2006, respectively).

(2) \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

(3) Support for politicians has been omitted due to high collinearity.

## Chapter 6 The Senate Expenses Scandal

“Duffy exonerated” read the headlines on Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016. After a months-long trial that straddled the 42<sup>nd</sup> Canadian federal election, Judge Charles Vaillancourt found Duffy not guilty of all thirty-one counts of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust that had been levelled against him. And though he implied no criminal wrongdoing on the part of the PMO, Judge Vaillancourt also excoriated the Harper PMO in his lengthy decision for pushing Duffy in the directions that they did (i.e. to pay back expenses which he believed to be legitimate and to accept approximately \$90,000 for Harper’s independently wealthy chief of staff to do so). It was Senator Duffy’s allegedly improper and unethical expense claims to the Senate of Canada, ultimately resulting in the laying of criminal charges by the RCMP, that sparked the Senate expenses scandal.

The ensuing investigation by Auditor General Michael Ferguson revealed a number of senators whose past expense claims had been questionable. These senators were offered a process by which to repay the Senate, and by which to seek a reduction in the sums required of them if they so choose. All sitting senators with expenses identified as improper have now repaid the sums in question. Currently a small number of retired senators have refused to reimburse the Senate, and the Senate leadership has indicated that it intends to file civil suits against them to recover the outstanding sums of money. Naturally, if police and prosecutors felt it was appropriate, the RCMP could have charged any or all the other implicated senators at any point prior to or during the Mike Duffy trial, and thus further charges at this point seem unlikely.

The not guilty verdict in this case clearly does not mean that no wrongdoing, or that no financial-political scandal, occurred. Although Judge Vaillancourt accepted Duffy’s testimony as credible in his decision, the verdict indicates that evidence was insufficient to demonstrate criminal wrongdoing beyond a reasonable doubt. The standards of political journalists and the



public at large for the ethical comportment of parliamentarians is naturally more exacting than those of a criminal court. Citizens are justified in expecting a higher level of ethical integrity, unselfishness, and civic-mindedness from their political representatives than what is strictly required by the law, including and perhaps especially from parliamentarians who cannot be removed from office by way of elections. It would behoove members of a chamber with relatively little democratic legitimacy and public regard to behave in such a way as to inspire the highest possible level of public confidence. When expectations for ethical financial-political conduct are violated by political actors, particularly by Canadian senators, it makes a good deal of sense that citizens would be angry.

But did the scandal, which played out over the course of several years, go beyond generating anger to affect Canadians' underlying attitudes toward the political system or their patterns of political participation? Was it seen by Canadians as a Conservative party scandal, a Liberal party scandal, or a Senate scandal? The two foregoing chapters provide somewhat less interesting platforms for exploring the impact of partisanship on scandal reactions. Ethics violations in the Mulroney years were shouldered by the Progressive Conservative party alone, and PC party identification is associated with more charitable views toward their ethical performance. The sponsorship scandal, however, was a scandal associated entirely with the Liberal party of Canada, but the partisan responses indicate similar incumbency effects: Liberal partisans tended to discount its importance more than others (Blais et al. 2010; Gidengil et al. 2012), though the impact of the scandal on support and participation crossed party lines. The partisan dimensions of the public's reaction to the Senate expenses scandal potentially provide a more informative platform for investigating the impact of partisanship because senators from different parties – both the Conservative party and the Liberal party – were implicated.

Consequently, in addition to testing the impact of the scandal on political support and political

participation, this chapter will also explore two subsidiary hypotheses regarding the impact of Conservative partisanship on the public reaction to the scandal.

## 6.1 History of the Senate Expenses Scandal

The Senate expenses scandal, as noted above, has not entirely been laid to rest. Senator Duffy has been acquitted of all criminal charges and has resumed his duties as a senator, but charges remain against suspended Senator Patrick Brazeau for allegedly improper housing expenses billed to the Senate of Canada. The RCMP and the Crown view these breaches as acts of criminal wrongdoing.<sup>1</sup> It is nonetheless important to provide an account of how the scandal unfolded to date. As such, this section provides an overview of the evolution of the scandal based on my own observations at the time (I was fortunate to be teaching a course of political ethics in Canada when the final Auditor General's report was released), journalistic reports (primarily CBC news), and the reports of the Auditor General.

The earliest hints, if not the opening salvo, of the Senate expenses scandal occurred in June of 2012 with an Auditor General's report. That report raised red flags about claims for travel and living expenses filed by senators, specifically raising concerns that claims being made were not, in the Auditor General's view, adequately documented (Canadian Press 2015). The report sparked an interest among journalists in the claims being made by senators and the extent to which they might be considered acceptable by most Canadians. Interest was particularly piqued by questionable expenses claimed by some of Prime Minister Harper's "star" appointees, who already had a high public profile prior to appointment to the Senate. In the months following the release of the report, scrutiny fixed on Senator Mike Duffy, and the amount of time

---

<sup>1</sup> The RCMP announced on July 13, 2016, following Duffy's acquittal, that the charges against Brazeau have been withdrawn.

he spent at his declared “primary residence” in PEI. As most journalists working in Ottawa knew first hand, Duffy’s primary residence was in Ottawa, and had been for many years.

As a result of these revelations, the Senate hired Deloitte, an external auditing firm, to investigate the expense claims of Conservative Senators Duffy and Brazeau, as well as Liberal Senator Mac Harb. The audit, released on May 9, 2013, confirmed problematic expense claim documentation in all three cases. Harb and Brazeau were ordered to repay \$51,000 and \$48,000 respectively, though Deloitte did not go further to indicate that this was the result of intention wrongdoing on the part of the senators (Canadian Press 2015; Payton 2015).

Prior to the release of the Deloitte audit, in early 2013, Duffy claimed confusion about the rules and announced his intention to repay the questionable housing expenses, which he did in March of 2013. Also in early 2013, however, throughout January and February of 2013, Duffy now claims to have negotiated with and been pressured by the Harper PMO to repay the expenses to the Senate of Canada using funds provided by the Prime Minister’s Chief of Staff, Nigel Wright.<sup>2</sup> Senator Duffy was and is steadfast that he opposed the idea of repayment, because it implied wrongdoing on his part. Nonetheless, as he put it in his 2013 speech to the Senate: “On February 21st, after all of the threats and intimidation, I reluctantly agreed to go along with this dirty scheme” (Hansard, cited in Canadian Press 2015).

Duffy’s repayment to the Senate of Canada, of course, was not the end of the scandal. Indeed, it was, in a way, the beginning. As revelations surfaced surrounding the source of the approximately \$90,000 used by Duffy to repay his dubious expenses, scrutiny shifted to Nigel Wright, and the PMO generally. Nigel Wright resigned his post in May of 2013, when Harper claims to have first learned of the repayment plan. While Senator Mac Harb resigned, the new

---

<sup>2</sup> Duffy now claims, both in a speech to the Senate in the fall of 2013 and in Court in 2015, that this was the case.

government leader in the Senate, Claude Carignan, introduced motions in the Senate to suspend Senators Duffy, Wallin, and Brazeau, stripping them of pay, benefits, and access to Senate resources (Canadian Press 2015). It was at this point, in the fall of 2013, that Duffy gave his explosive speeches in the Senate (referenced above). The Senate voted in November of that year to suspend the Senators for the remainder of the parliamentary session (Canadian Press 2015).

The Auditor General, having been invited to review senators' expenses in greater depth, then began a detailed investigation into the expenses of all senators. Media reports, which were later substantiated, indicated that about a dozen Liberal and Conservative senators had made questionable expenses that might result in criminal charges. On the heels of these leaks, in January of 2014, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau ejected all 32 senators from the Liberal caucus, unilaterally dissolving the official opposition in the Senate of Canada. Trudeau also pledged to appoint only independent senators through an open arm's length process should he become Prime Minister.

This innovative move did much to distance the Liberals from the fallout of the scandal, it would seem, but senators from both parties were nonetheless implicated. It is the fact that the senators implicated are from different parties that makes this scandal somewhat different from those considered in the two previous chapters. The scandal seems to be mostly associated with the governing Conservative party of Stephen Harper. After all, Mike Duffy, the figure at the centre of the scandal, was a Conservative appointee, sat as a Conservative (prior to his being ejected from caucus), and the Prime Minister's own chief of staff provided the funds for the repayment of Duffy's questionable expenses. However, many of the other senators either caught up in the initial stages of the scandal (namely Senator Mac Harb), or identified by the Auditor General's report from June of 2015, were Liberals. Liberal leader Justin Trudeau ejected all Liberal senators from the Liberal caucus prior to the bomb-shell report, but it is still the case that

several senators having made improper expense claims as determined by the Auditor General were appointed as Liberals and continue to sit, not as Liberal senators, but as “Senate Liberals.” It thus makes sense to ask to what extent the scandal was seen differently by Liberals and Conservatives.

## 6.2 Theory and Hypotheses

The primary hypotheses tested in this chapter are consistent with those presented in the introduction.

*Hypothesis 6.1: The Senate expenses scandal drove down public satisfaction with the way democracy works.*

*Hypothesis 6.2: The Senate expenses scandal drove down levels of voter turnout.*<sup>3</sup>

To supplement these hypotheses, this chapter also explores in greater depth the relationship between partisanship, political sophistication, and the public reaction to a scandal. There are different ways of thinking about the impact of partisanship on reactions to a scandal. Traditionally partisanship has been thought of as a “perceptual screen” that serves to determine what is received and what is ignored when information about a scandal is encountered (Converse et al. 1960). Counter-attitudinal information, information casting one’s preferred candidate or party in a negative light, will tend to be ignored whereas positive news about one’s preference will be seized upon. That view was elaborated by John Zaller, whose RAS model predicts that partisans with higher levels of political knowledge and interest are more likely still to align their views with those of the party elite (1992). Gerber and Green’s study of the subject confirms this basic framework, arguing that as new information is encountered people tend to update their

---

<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, due to limitations of data availability, Hypothesis 2.2 – regarding the impact of the scandal on non-traditional forms of political activity – cannot be tested using these data.

opinions in a directionally consistent manner: Even those who like a candidate will revise their evaluations downward if negative information comes to light (1999).

An alternative line of theorizing rooted in social psychology, and in the concept of motivated political reasoning, has become increasingly prominent in political science over the past two decades. Drawing on earlier theories of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957), social psychologists began exploring more systematically the mechanisms underlying the drive for cognitive consistency and the human tendency to discount information casting one's favoured political candidate or party in a negative light. As Redlawsk puts it, this body of work tends to emphasize the range of "...unconscious biases designed to support prior preferences, rather than to rationally update them" (2002, 1022).

The most straightforward prediction generated from the theory of motivated political reasoning is that partisan preference will affect people's reaction to information casting their preferred party in a negative light. In this instance, the expectation is that Conservative party preference will reduce the salience of, and negative affective reaction to, the Senate expenses scandal.

*Hypothesis 6.3: Conservative supporters are more likely to discount the importance of the Senate expenses scandal than are others.*

Further, the literature on motivated reasoning suggests that political sophistication plays a critical role in the relation between partisan affiliation and opinion change (Taber and Lodge 2006). Matthews (2013), for example, finds that political knowledge plays a substantial role in bolstering support among partisans for their party and dampening support for opposition party policy, because knowledgeable voters possess greater repository of political knowledge to draw on, and presumably also a greater intellectual capacity to develop counter-arguments to recognize and process counter-attitudinal information. In the case of the Senate expenses scandal, the implication is that Conservative supporters who are also politically sophisticated are

more likely to think that the scandal is being given disproportionate attention because they are more likely to be aware of other issues the media might cover and more capable of finding fault with the arguments made about the scandal in the media. Thus, whereas Conservative sophisticates and un-sophisticates might well be equally committed to the party, Conservatives sophisticates have the “cognitive ammunition” to attack counter-attitudinal news stories such as those regarding the Senate expenses scandal more effectively than Conservatives who lack political sophistication.

*Hypothesis 6.4: Conservative supporters who are politically sophisticated are more likely to discount the importance of the Senate expenses scandal than Conservative supporters who are not politically sophisticated.*

### 6.3 Data and Method

These hypotheses are explored with data collected by Forum Research on December 10th and December 11<sup>th</sup> of 2014.<sup>4</sup> Residents of all provinces are included (N=1,658) and results are nationally weighted. The data are publically available via the public data archive of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto. A limited number of other questions on unrelated matters (e.g. attitudes toward e-cigarettes) were included in the survey, collected with “interactive voice recognition” (IVR) via telephone.<sup>5</sup>

The strengths of the data used in this chapter spring from the fact that questions included are tailored to explore different dimensions of the scandal. First, the survey asks whether

---

<sup>4</sup> I was permitted to include a limited number of questions on aspects of the scandal, tailored to aspects of the scandal I find particularly interesting (specifically the salience and the perception of media coverage, discussed on the following page. Forum staff had the final edit of question wordings and response options, however, and questions on the scandal were altered somewhat without my input prior to inclusion in the survey instrument.

<sup>5</sup> Estimated sampling error is +/- 2.41%.

respondents are aware of the scandal and this question acts as a screen for the follow up questions on respondents' views about the scandal. Notably, the survey probes a dimension of the public reaction to scandal that other studies have not: public perceptions of the extent of media attention. Did Canadians believe that the media in general paid “*too much*” attention to the Senate expenses scandal? An additional benefit of asking this question is that it provides an anchor for Canadians feelings about the importance of the scandal. It effectively measures individuals' perceptions of the salience of the scandal in a more convincing way than simply asking respondents about “*how important*” they feel the scandal is, because there is a real-world reference point (albeit a broad and general one) that serves to calibrate these evaluations. Those who believe that the media paid “*too much*” attention to the scandal can be considered to attach lower levels of salience to the scandal than those who do not; those who feel that the media paid “*too little*” attention to the scandal can be considered to attach higher levels of salience to the scandal.

Two additional questions regarding the Senate expenses scandal were also posed. One question, used to assess the affective reaction to the scandal, asks “*Are you angry or not angry about the Senate expenses scandal?*” Lastly, evaluations of Stephen Harper's performance with respect to the affair is assessed with the question “*Do you agree or disagree Prime Minister Harper has done a good job dealing with the Senate expenses scandal?*”

## 6.4 Empirical Results

Before delving into the tests of the central hypotheses, it's worth asking, as in chapters two and three, whether attitudes toward the scandal were stratified by the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Because these are new data, no such analysis has been undertaken.



Further, it's important to go a step further to ask whether any of these characteristics have independent effects on public attitudes. Table 6.1 presents the results of this analysis.

The first four columns (labelled "Bivar. Results") presents the results of a series of bivariate regressions. These four equations regress each independent variable listed on the left-hand side onto each of the four dependent variables listed along the top of the table. Of interest is only whether the predictor is significant and, if so, in what direction the effect occurs. Predictors that are not statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level are marked "n.s.". The last four columns reflect the results of four multiple regression analyses into which all independent variables listed on the left-hand side are entered simultaneously.

Several key findings stand out. First, awareness is much better predicted by these models than any of the attitudinal reaction items. Notice that whereas the awareness model predicts about 13% of variance on this item, the  $R^2$  statistics for the other three models indicate substantially less predictive power. The models indicate that older, better educated, and wealthier respondents were more likely to be aware of the scandal. Men were also more likely than women to indicate that they were aware of the scandal. Those residing in Quebec were less likely to indicate awareness. It is important to note, however, that this variable measures something fundamentally different from the other items. The socio-demographic predictors of awareness of the Senate expenses scandal are consistent with the predictors of other types of political knowledge and awareness in Canada (Gidengil et al. 2004).

[Table 6.1 about here]

Turning to the three items reflecting public reactions to the scandal, the effects of age and education produce the most noteworthy results. Those under 35 years of age are significantly less likely to consider the scandal salient than those in other age groups. The effects of education are somewhat more nuanced. Higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of anger

over the scandal. However, those with post-secondary degrees are also more likely to consider the affair salient (i.e. less likely to think the media is paying too much attention to it), and more likely to rate Stephen Harper's handling of the scandal as poor. Women are less likely than men to profess awareness of the scandal, but are, if aware, more likely than men to be angry about it, and more likely to consider it salient and newsworthy.

The non-findings in Table 6.1 are also informative. Income, as it happens, had no independent effect on reactions to the scandal. More edifying, however, are the non-effects of region. There are two regional differences indicated in Table 6.1: those residing in Quebec were less likely to profess awareness, and those residing in the Atlantic provinces were slightly more likely to consider the affair salient, perhaps due to the fact that Duffy was born and spent his early life in PEI, and ostensibly represented the Maritimes in the Senate. As discussed in the foregoing chapters, a great deal of research suggests that regional differences in Canada are substantial, even immense, and argues that modernization and advancements in communications technology and transportation have done little to bridge these regional-cultural chasms (Simeon and Elkins 1974; Wiseman 2007). One might expect large regional differences in attitudes, though it seems that few exist with respect to Canadians' reactions to this scandal.

Turning now to Hypothesis 6.1, is it the case that the scandal eroded Canadians' system support? The question has not yet been asked of this scandal. In order to measure system support, the question: "*On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada?*" is employed. Table 6.2 presents three tests of Hypothesis 6.1. Since the system support variable is ordinal, ordinal logistic models are used and odds ratios presented. The first model includes scandal awareness as the focal independent variable, and this variable fails to achieve statistical significance. Those who indicated that they were aware of the scandal were no more likely to express dissatisfaction with democracy than those who were unaware.

[Table 6.2 about here]

It is important to note, however, that there is reason to believe that the “awareness” test presented here, while appropriate in chapter four, might not be in this analysis. Specifically, the Forum Senate expenses dataset was collected in the late fall of 2014: about two years after the initial revelations surfaced. This casts doubt on whether or not respondents were genuinely unaware of the scandal, or perhaps were simply uncomfortable answering detailed questions about it. Consequently, two further independent variables are employed: anger over the scandal, and a scale of reaction to the scandal based on all three items ( $\alpha = 0.52$ ). Both variables are statistically significant predictors of lower levels of satisfaction with democracy. Notably, the broad scandal reaction variable (based on anger, salience, and assigning Harper blame) is a much stronger predictor of negative attitudes than anger alone.

[Figure 6.1 about here]

Figure 6.1 maps the predicted probabilities for each outcome category across the range of the scandal reaction scale. This type of a breakdown can be revealing when digging deeper into the relationship between an interval level independent variable, such as results from the creation of a scale or index, and an ordinal outcome variable. And indeed, Figure 6.1 points to some nuances concerning the relationship between negative attitudinal reaction to the Senate expenses scandal and satisfaction with the way democracy works. The scandal clearly had the largest impact on the predicted probability of approving strongly of the way democracy works. Going from a fully positive reaction to the scandal to a fully negative one is associated with a massive drop in the likelihood of approving strongly of the way democracy works: from a predicted probability of almost 0.6 to a predicted probability of nearly zero!

Also noteworthy is a curvilinear relationship which is entirely obscured when only the tables are examined. Approving “*somewhat*” of the way democracy works in Canada, which one

might consider a generally positive, civic orientation to a democracy that, like any, is perpetually a work in progress, is actually *positively* related dissatisfaction with the scandal, to a point. Once respondents reach a 0.4 on the scandal reaction scale, more negative reactions to the scandal are associated with more negative attitudes toward the way democracy works.

Did the Senate expenses scandal turn Canadians off political participation and engagement, or did it mobilize angry voters? Again, this is the first time the question has been asked and there an opportunity on the basis of this dataset to conduct an original test. Here, however, there is little effect. Knowing about the scandal acts as a strong positive predictor of voter turnout, but there is little evidence that specific affective or evaluative reactions to the scandal had any impact whatsoever on people's propensity to cast a ballot.

[Table 6.3 about here]

The investigation now turns to two subsidiary hypotheses regarding the impact of partisanship and sophistication on reactions to the scandal. The impact of socio-demographic characteristics on these reactions has already been considered, but how does partisanship play into a scandal in which there is some ambiguity regarding the assignment of partisan blame? Do Canadians' reactions to the high-profile Senate expenses scandal confirm or cast doubt on the predictions generated from the theory of motivated political reasoning discussed in Section 5.2?

Table 6.4 presents the results of nine ordinal logistic regressions on three dependent variables: the salience of the scandal,<sup>6</sup> anger over the scandal, and whether respondents feel that then Prime Minister Harper mishandled the scandal. Odds ratios are presented. These items can thus all be considered "negative reactions" to the scandal.

---

<sup>6</sup> Measured by reverse-coded responses to a question about whether the media has paid too much attention to the scandal.

Key independent variables for the test of Hypothesis 6.3 are included in the first bloc. Standard socio-demographic controls are then introduced to test for robustness. Finally, an interaction term between Conservative party support and political interest is included in the final stage of the three models to test Hypothesis 6.4.

[Table 6.4 about here]

First, with respect to Hypothesis 6.3, the data in Table 6.4 largely confirm that partisanship mattered with respect to the way in which the scandal was perceived. This is particularly true with respect to explaining variance in opinion about whether Harper mishandled the affair.

Second, with respect to Hypothesis 6.4, the analyses in Table 6.4 provide relatively strong support for the theory of motivated political reasoning. For each of the three dependent variables considered, the interaction term between Conservative party support and political interest is substantively large and highly significant. That is to say, Conservative supporters who were also politically interested were more likely to discount the scandal along all three dimensions of scandal reaction considered, namely salience, anger, and evaluations of Harper's performance on the matter. That finding is consistent with an account of motivated political reasoning in which partisans' repository of knowledge and capacity for generating counterarguments shapes reactions to scandals casting favoured candidates or parties in a negative light (Matthews 2013).

## 6.5 Discussion

The Senate expenses scandal was a recurrent irritant for much of Stephen Harper's Conservative majority government. Harper had been a longstanding critic of the Senate as a Reform party MP.

And as Conservative party leader, he campaigned on a promise to introduce an elected, rather

than appointed, Senate. The Supreme Court’s ruling that elections of any sort, even technically non-binding ones, would require a constitutional amendment threw cold water on Harper’s plans for reform. For years, Harper had refused to appoint senators at all, reversing course later in the minority years when he saw legislation languishing in the Upper House. It is perhaps fitting that the chamber that gave Harper so much pause and consternation initially, a file that he took such pains not to fumble, may ultimately have been a factor in his government’s undoing.

The analyses presented here represent the first quantitative assessment of the impact of this still unfolding scandal on public opinion and political behaviour. Generally, Canadians were angry about the scandal in late 2014 (88.5 percent indicated that they were angry, though the response options offered for these questions was not ideal, skewed as they were toward “negative” response options).<sup>7</sup> Many fewer Canadians, though still a majority (56.8 percent) felt that Harper did a bad job handling the scandal. And a slim majority (52.4 percent) actually felt that the media was paying too much attention to the scandal. Consequently, the public reaction to the scandal appears mixed. Though Canadians were angry, a substantial minority (39.8 percent) felt that Harper handled the scandal well, and an outright majority felt that media coverage was too preoccupied with it.

Further, the analyses indicate that age and education matter with respect to the public reaction to a scandal. Younger citizens, it would seem, are more inclined to discount the importance of the scandal than are older Canadians. And those with higher levels of education tend to be less angry about the affair, but harsher than their less educated counterparts in their

---

<sup>7</sup> I requested response options on this item identical to those offered on the CES regarding the sponsorship scandal to facilitate valid comparisons. The response options implemented by Forum Research on this one item, however, are skewed toward an “angry” response: there are more negative than positive choices, so a random response pattern will return an “angry” mean score.

evaluation of Harper's performance regarding the affair and more likely to see the scandal as salient.

With respect to the key hypotheses, the analyses indicate that the scandal seems to have contributed to dissatisfaction with the way democracy works. The effects on voter turnout, however, were positive, contrary to Hypothesis 2.1. Two of three tests regarding the impact on turnout, however, failed to achieve statistical significance. Thus, on balance, the data analyzed in this chapter indicate that the impact of the Senate expenses scandal on political participation was negligible.

Lastly, the chapter explored the impact of partisanship and political information on the reaction to a political scandal in which the partisan implications are not entirely clear. Relatively few investigations of motivated political reasoning have been undertaken in the Canadian context. Matthews (2013) identifies his and Blais et al.'s paper on Canadians' reactions to the sponsorship scandal (2011) as the only two such studies. But these two studies arrive at opposing conclusions. Whereas Blais et al. find that little evidence of motivated political reasoning, Matthews' study provides evidence of motivated reasoning in Canadians' reactions to what he deems "attacks" on their favoured parties' policies (2013).

The diverging results are likely the results of the different observable implications of the theory of motivated political reasoning being tested by these different studies. Blais et al. evaluate the impact of partisanship and political sophistication on knowledge of *objective facts* related to a political scandal (i.e. that the Gomery Inquiry cleared Paul Martin of any wrongdoing), thus setting a higher bar than almost all other studies of the topic (2011). That study finds that both Conservative and Liberal partisan sophisticates were equally aware of the Gomery Inquiry's findings. Matthews, by contrast, evaluates the impact of partisanship and political sophistication on support for party policy in the face of negative statements about those

policies, and finds evidence of motivated political reasoning in public reactions (2013). In contrast to both approaches, this chapter evaluates the impact of partisanship and political sophistication on the public reaction to a political scandal. The analyses presented here, though certainly not conclusive, are consistent with the expectations generated from the theory of motivated political reasoning.



## Coding of Variables

### Forum Senate expenses dataset (2014)

#### *Socio-demographic*

Age: “*How old are you?*” (six points, 0-1)

Under 25

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

65 and over

Education: “*What is the highest level of education you have completed?*” (four points, 0-1)

Secondary school or less

Some college or university

Completed college or university

Post-graduate studies

Income: “*What is your annual household income before taxes?*” (seven points, 0-1)

Less than \$20, 000

\$20, 000 to \$40, 000

\$40, 000 to 60, 000

\$60, 000 to \$80, 000

\$80,000 to \$100, 000

\$100,000 to \$250, 000

\$250, 000 and over

#### *Social-psychological*

Satisfaction with democracy: “*On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada?*” (four point, 1-4)

Approve strongly

Approve somewhat

Disapprove somewhat

Disapprove strongly

Voter turnout: “*Did you vote in the last federal election in May 2011?*” (0-1)

Yes

No

Scandal awareness: “*Are you aware of the Senate expenses scandal involving Senator Duffy and Senator Wallin, among others?*” (0-1)

Yes

No

Scandal anger: “*Are you angry or not angry about the senate expenses scandal?*” (1-5)

Extremely angry  
 Very angry  
 Somewhat angry  
 Not very angry  
 Not at all angry  
 Don't know

Harper mishandled: *“Do you agree or disagree Prime Minister Harper has done a good job dealing with the senate expenses scandal?”* (1-4)

Agree strongly  
 Agree  
 Disagree  
 Disagree strongly

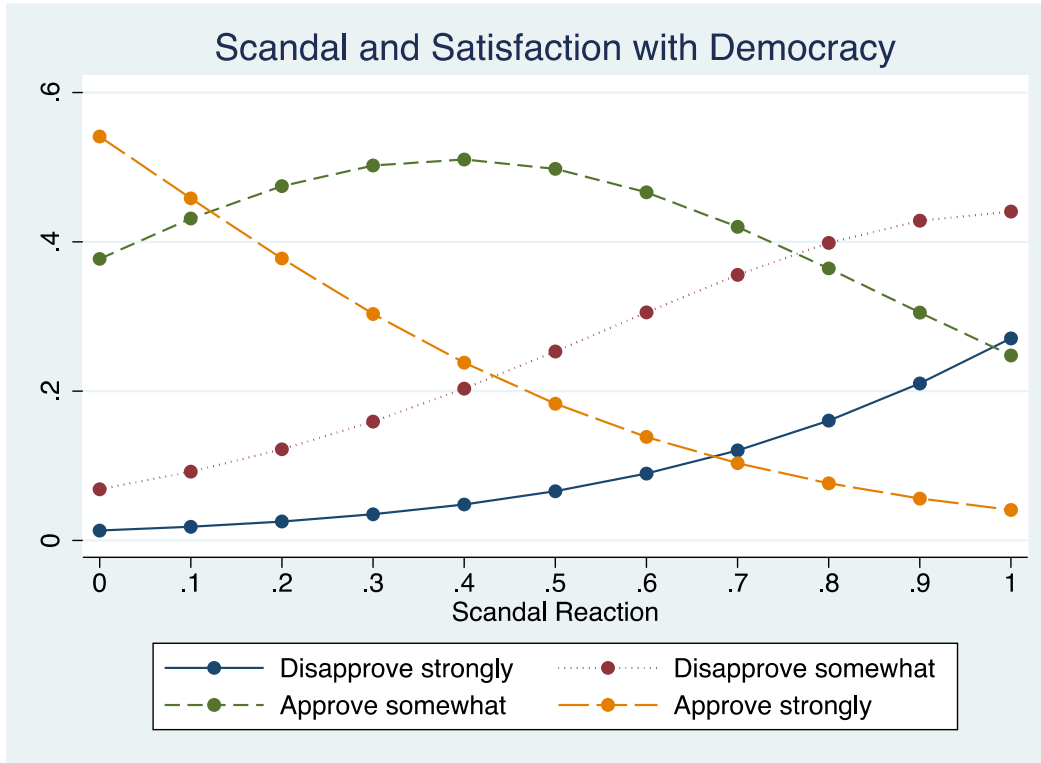
Political interest: *“How interested are you in politics generally? Use a scale from 0 to 9, where 0 means not at all interested and 9 means very interested”* (0-1)

Conservative vote intention: *“If the federal election were held today, which party are you most likely to vote for?”* (0-1)

Conservative  
 Liberal  
 New Democratic  
 Green  
 Bloc Quebecois

Figures and Tables

Figure 6.1: Scandal and Satisfaction with Democracy



Source: Forum Senate expenses dataset, 2014.

Method: Ordinal logistic regression. Values are predicted probabilities, generated from Model III, Table 6.2, holding other variables in the model at mean values.

**Table 6.1: The Socio-demographic Predictors of Attitudes toward the Scandal**

	Bivar. results				Multivar. results			
	Aware	Anger	Harper mis.	Saliency	Aware	Anger	Harper mis.	Saliency
Age	+***	n.s.	n.s.	-*	+***	n.s.	n.s.	-*
Education	+***	-***	+***	+***	+***	-*	+***	+**
Female	-***	+**	n.s.	n.s.	-***	+**	n.s.	+*
Income	+***	-**	n.s.	+*	+***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Region								
Atlantic	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	+*	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	+*
Ontario	+***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	--	--	--	--
Quebec	-***	+*	-**	n.s.	-***	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
West	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
R <sup>2</sup>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.127	0.021	0.026	0.026
N	1,203-1,361	1,203-1,361	1,203-1,361	1,203-1,361	1,469	1,203	1,131	1,143

*Source:* Forum Senate expenses dataset, 2014.

*Method:* Ordinal logistic regression.

*Note:* \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 6.2: Senate Expenses Scandal and Satisfaction with Democracy**

	I.	II.	III.
<i>Social-psychological</i>			
Aware	-0.967	--	--
Anger	--	-0.404***	--
Reaction	--	--	-0.036***
Con. vote	3.368***	3.439***	1.812***
Pol. Interest	1.077	1.047	1.315
<i>Socio-demographic</i>			
Age	1.435*	1.666**	1.968**
Education	0.734	0.673*	0.851
Female	1.055	1.090	1.142
Income	1.597*	1.591*	1.635*
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.037	0.051	0.087
N	1,433	1,190	1,057

*Source:* Forum Senate expenses dataset, 2014.

*Method:* Ordinal logistic regression.

*Note:* (1) Cells contain odds ratios.

(2) \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Table 6.3: Senate Expenses Scandal and Political Participation**

	IV.	V.	VI.
<i>Social-psychological</i>			
Awareness	1.734*	--	--
Anger	--	0.710	--
Reaction	--	--	0.835
Pol. interest	2.593**	2.842*	2.590*
Satis. w. democ.	1.156	1.311*	1.316
Con. vote	1.174	1.024	0.953
<i>Socio-demographic</i>			
Age	7.834***	8.784***	8.251***
Education	2.207**	2.054	2.202
Female	1.347	1.189	1.264
Income	7.270***	6.551***	6.497***
Constant	0.155***	0.275*	0.264
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.166	0.130	0.124
N	1,433	1,190	1,057

*Source:* Forum Senate expenses dataset, 2014.

*Method:* Binary logistic regression.

*Note:* (1) Cells contain odds ratios.

(2) \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 6.4: Partisanship, Interest, and Reactions to the Senate Expenses Scandal**

	VII.	Salience VIII.	IX.	X.	Anger XI.	XII.	XIII.	Harper mis. XIV.	XV.
<i>Key IVs</i>									
Con.	0.298***	0.278***	1.821	0.545***	0.547***	2.273	0.149***	0.146***	0.997
Lib.	1.254	1.117	1.053	1.194	1.250	1.206	1.810***	1.798***	1.717***
NDP	1.207	1.096	1.035	1.003	1.045	1.018	1.734**	1.698**	1.635**
Pol. interest	2.916***	2.844***	5.105***	0.959	1.234	1.912*	1.650*	1.269	2.435**
<i>Socio-dem. variables</i>									
Age		0.679*	0.684*		1.218	1.231		0.960	0.959***
Education		1.402	1.380		0.622**	0.592**		2.180***	2.040
Female		1.247*	1.242		1.241*	1.238		0.847	0.844
Income		1.427	1.484		0.800	0.826		0.932	0.993
<i>Interaction</i>									
Con*Interest			0.083***			0.151***			0.078***
N	1,294	1,143	1,143	1,361	1,203	1,203	1,278	1,131	1,131
McFadden's R <sup>2</sup>	0.047	0.053	0.060	0.011	0.018	0.021	0.110	0.117	0.124
ML (Cox-Snell) R <sup>2</sup>	0.116	0.131	0.146	0.030	0.047	0.056	0.257	0.271	0.284
McKel. & Zav. R <sup>2</sup>	0.117	0.132	0.149	0.031	0.049	0.060	0.261	0.276	0.291

Source: Forum Senate expenses dataset, 2014.

Method: Ordinal logistic regression. Cell entries are odds ratios.

Note: (1) "Salience" and "Harper Mishandled" DVs run from 1-4.

(2) "Anger" runs from 1-5. All IVs have been re-scaled from 0-1.

(3) \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

A common view is that political scandals are of little consequence, apart from the cut and thrust of electoral competition. They are often seen as inevitable and largely benign aspects of the democratic process, amounting to little more than “the froth of political life” (Thompson 2000). The evidence considered here suggests otherwise. Beyond the impact on public support for implicated parties (Clarke et al. 2009; Gidengil et al. 2012; Vivyan et al. 2012), the direct legal and institutional implications that often accompany political scandals, such as criminal prosecutions, resignations, and public inquiries, can impede effective governance, as can the concomitant loss of political capital (Rottinghaus 2015).

Substantial disagreement exists as to whether political scandals have an impact on the way in which citizens relate to government. Intuitively, it makes good sense that political scandals would decrease political support, and forms of political participation that are channelled through traditional political actors. Studies of the issue, however, have come to opposing conclusions. Some have outlined a “functional theory” of political scandals, in which scandals remind citizens of the merits of a system in which the powerful can be held to account for unethical behaviour (Maier 2011; Thompson 2000). Others provide evidence of what Thompson dubs a “no consequence” theory (2000), and find that political scandals have relatively little impact on public orientations to the political system (Miller and Borelli 1991; Norris 2011). And yet others find that scandals do erode levels of political support (Bowler and Karp 2004; Chanley et al. 2000; Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; Pharr 2000).

Much of this scholarly disagreement arises from a combination of conceptual and methodological limitations. The overly broad conceptualization of scandal in some studies leads



to problems with measurement that affect empirical results. For example, Norris' longitudinal study essentially equates scandal with negative media coverage (2011). The measurement of "scandal coverage" in her longitudinal analyses is based on the valence, or positive-negative tone, of news media content about incumbent governments in the United Kingdom, and Congress in the United States (2011, 183-185). Further, artificial experimental conditions in other investigations, such as Maier's study (2011), invite questions about external validity.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis brings new evidence to bear on the debate surrounding the attitudinal and behavioural impact of political scandals. The starting point connects the literature on political scandal and political behaviour more systematically than have other studies of the issue. It develops a more detailed and somewhat more narrow conceptualization of political scandal that excludes mere negative news. The project proceeds to test the observable implications of its model of scandal effects against original cross-sectional and panel data from a different context, Canada, that has experienced both major political-financial scandals and drops in political support and participation over the past few decades. Further, the implications of the model are tested against large-N cross-national aggregate and individual-level data. The combination of these methods provides a strong empirical foundation from which to draw inferences about the individual-level effects of political scandals.

---

<sup>1</sup> Participants in Maier's experiment were given a pre-test. Following a long lag period, they were then randomly assigned to groups. Those in the treatment group were exposed to a fictitious news story about the recent developments in a real-world German political-financial scandal. All were given a post-test that assessed their levels of political support (2011, 288-289). Any results generated from this design might thus be attributed to a simple priming effect, a problem common to experimental studies of this research question.

## 7.1 Theoretical Contribution

The thesis' theoretical contribution lies primarily in connecting two bodies of literature that are usually considered in isolation: the literature on political scandal on the one hand, and the literature on declining political support and shifting political participation on the other hand. Relatively few studies in the literature on the drivers of political support examine political scandals in a sustained way (e.g. Dalton 2004; Kornberg and Clarke 1992; Nevitte 2002; Nye et al. 1997). And studies of political scandal typically consider it as a *dependent* variable, focusing on origins, regulation, and internal dynamics (Adut 2008; Dewberry 2015; Garment 1991; Thompson 2000). The relatively small number of studies that do connect these two subjects by examining the impact of political scandals on levels of support or participation typically adopt a cursory definition of scandal, or specify no explicit theory of scandal (e.g. Chanley et al. 2000; Kumlin and Esaiasson 2012; Norris 2011). This thesis puts these bodies of literature into conversation with one another more systematically. Indeed, to my knowledge, it is the first book-length study to develop and test empirically a model of political scandals' attitudinal and behavioural effects.

The thesis also develops a more precise and narrowly focused conceptualization of political scandal than those employed by other studies. Building on Rottinghaus (2015) and Thompson (2000), scandals are conceptualized as arising from credible allegations of unethical or illegal wrongdoing that evoke the public disapprobation of non-participants. In effect, political scandals must stem from allegations that are verified and publicized by a source that is widely regarded as credible, such as an independent officer of Parliament, the police, or reputable media outlets. The proliferation of highly partisan "alternative media" outlets, blogs, and social media platforms has facilitated the rise of "fake news" stories about political opponents. Such stories,

backed by media outlets lacking credibility, are increasingly contributing to short-lived controversies about the ethics of political actors. It is thus more important than ever to distinguish between those seemingly ubiquitous allegations and genuine cases of political scandal. Further, in contrast to other influential work, the operational definition excludes negative news about poor policy performance. The model of scandal developed here highlights meaningful distinctions, allowing for more effective generalizations to be drawn, and clarifying the findings of other studies.

## 7.2 Empirical Contribution

The empirical contribution of the project is rooted in testing the observable implications of the model of scandal effects specified in the second chapter, against new data structures (specifically panel data and original cross-sectional data), from a new time period, and new context (Canada). The project also combines these intensive studies of the Canadian case with a cross-national analysis. The use of large-N cross-national analysis both increases leverage, by increasing the number of observations against which the observable implications of my model are tested (King et al. 1994), and allows for a triangulation of results: a comparison with and validation of the findings of the Canadian case-studies. The work is thus designed to contribute both to the specific empirical literature on Canadian political ethics, and to the broader debate surrounding the attitudinal and behavioural impact of political scandals.

The core empirical findings regarding this ongoing debate are summarized in Table 7.1, which distinguishes between voting and all other acts of political participation. The hypotheses specified in chapter two predicted different effects of political scandal on “traditional” and “non-traditional” forms of political participation, though the empirical findings of the thesis tend to

underscore the uniqueness of voting relative to all other forms of political action (see also Verba et al. 1995).

It is not necessary to repeat the details of those results, but the empirical findings suggest a tentative modification to theory surrounding scandal effects: the importance of distinguishing between short-term and long-term impact. Specifically, the thesis' hypothesis tests indicate that the short-term effects of the revelation of ethical wrongdoing on the part of political actors on the one hand, and long-term effects of persistently high perceptions of corruption on the other hand, might well be different. Thus, Table 7.1 distinguishes short to medium term effects from possible long term effects.

Hypothesis 1 posited that political-financial scandals drive down support for the political system, including its key actors, regime institutions and principles, and support for the national community. Each of the substantive chapters produced evidence supporting Hypothesis 1, either in whole or in part. In all analyses, the revelation of corruption or the perception of corruption on the part of office holders either drove down system support, or, less commonly, had no statistically significant impact. In no case is there evidence that the relationship works in the opposite direction: that information about corruption, the perception of corruption, or expert evaluations of corruption have a “functional” effect, boosting levels of public confidence. In short, the original analyses presented here produced substantial evidence in support of Hypothesis 1 in the form of consistent statistically significant and substantively strong findings, and turned up no evidence favoring the alternative hypothesis.

However, the impact of political-financial scandal on political support turns out to be somewhat more complex than hypothesized. Specifically, there are some diverging findings regarding the impact of scandal on different types of support. Chapters three and four

demonstrate that more specific forms of political support are most affected by the perception of corruption. Specifically, support for the political regime is the most affected by the revelation of corruption. Chapter five, by contrast, shows that only satisfaction with democracy, likely the most commonly employed intermediate indicator of system support, was affected. On balance, scandals do seem to drive down levels of political support, and this effect tends to be greater for more specific forms of support (support for politicians and, most consistently and strongly, satisfaction with democracy) than it is for more diffuse forms of support (support for democratic principles and support for the national community).

The findings regarding Hypothesis 2.1 are decidedly more mixed. The cross-national evidence suggests that the perception of corruption among public officials is indeed associated with lowered levels of adherence to the idea that voting is a citizen's civic duty. Those same analyses, however, also indicate that perceived corruption is associated with an increased probability of contacting or attempting to contact a public official.

Chapter three provides only weak evidence contradicting expectations: perceived corruption on the part of the "incumbent" prime minister was associated with an increased probability of having worked or volunteered for a political party or candidate and an increased probability of having tried to convince one's friends to vote in a certain way. Evidence from chapters five and six also suggest that awareness of a scandal might increase the probability of turning out to vote. Both of those analyses, however, examine data from specific points in time in a particular national context: Canada in 2004 and 2014 respectively. The cross-national analyses presented in chapter four include data from 26 countries at various levels of democratic consolidation and socio-economic development. The patterns observed there clearly suggest that perceived corruption in the public sector, which varies markedly between countries in the

sample, as shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, is a strong and statistically significant predictor of decreased adherence to the notion that voting is a duty. Though not definitive, these results suggest that although perceived corruption can catalyze traditional forms of political participation in the short-term, over longer time horizons, elevated perceptions of corruption tend to erode citizens' intrinsic motivation to vote.

[Table 7.1 about here]

The evidence presented here offers some support for Hypothesis 2.2. It should be acknowledged that several chapters provide no support for this hypothesis, nor any support for the alternative hypothesis. In chapter three, for example, no statistically significant relationships are observed between the perception of a lack of ethics and dishonesty on the part of the “incumbent” Prime Minister and participation in non-traditional political acts. The time series test in chapter five also failed to produce any statistically significant results. Further, no tests of this hypothesis were possible with PSC data in 1993 or Forum data in 2014. Having said this, there was some moderate support for this hypothesis produced by chapter four: it seems that the perception of corrupt might well stimulate some forms of non-traditional forms of political action in some contexts. More work remains to be done to identify under which conditions revelations of corruption spur on extra-electoral political action.

What explains the relatively modest impact of the revelation of political corruption on political action? There are at least two possibilities. First, it might be that two mutually opposing processes are operating simultaneously on different citizens, largely cancelling out one another's effects: the desire to change the status quo (or to “kick the rascals out”, so to speak), and the demotivating effect of perceived corruption, which was the basis for Hypothesis 2.1. Alternatively,

it might that people's views about the extent of political corruption are unconnected to their decision to participate politically.

### 7.3 Policy Implications

What are the broader policy implications of the preceding analysis? The extent of socio-economic stratification in people's reaction to revelations of elite ethical impropriety, a topic considered in this thesis, has policy relevance. Substantial and significant group-to-group differences in these perceptions might signal a problem with social cohesion or inclusiveness. The one socio-demographic group that consistently shows higher levels of perceived corruption than the population at large is less educated Canadians. Those whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma or less were shown to perceive higher levels of corruption according to the evidence presented in chapter four and chapter six. Prior studies of Canadians' attitudes toward corruption have not found significant or consistent education effects, so this finding represents something of a departure from the established literature (Mancuso et al. 2006, 56). It might well be that less educated people tend to see themselves as political "outsiders," and thus are more likely to adopt a range of negative beliefs about government and its performance. Note also that those with lower SES are more likely to believe in "conspiracy theories" regarding sinister, clandestine government action (Stempel et al. 2007).<sup>2</sup> These sorts of beliefs are somewhat similar to the belief in rampant, uncontrolled government corruption, particularly in light of the fact that experts routinely rank Canada's government as relatively "clean".

Further, there is some evidence of regional effects: residents of Quebec are more likely to perceive higher levels of corruption than those in the ROC. That finding is consistent with

---

<sup>2</sup> But see Goertzel (1994), who does not find consistent effects of SES beyond employment insecurity.

studies of attitudes toward corruption in Canada, and might relate to a reaction to Quebec's historical experience with political corruption at the provincial and municipal levels on the part of residents of the province.<sup>3</sup> The Forum Senate expenses dataset (2014), however, shows much more muted regional variations; indeed, no consistent statistically significant effects emerge. The most striking finding with respect to socio-demographic gaps in perceptions surrounding political corruption is, perhaps, how relatively insubstantial and inconsistent they are.

Does the preliminary exploration of partisanship, political interest, and motivated political reasoning in chapter six have implications for policy? One broad implication, discussed by Redlawsk (2002), is that motivated political reasoning might be driving down levels of “correct voting” (a deeply problematic concept essentially reducible to the idea of voting in line with one's genuine policy preferences). More relevant to policy, perhaps, is the implication that efforts to increase political interest by think tanks and government might have the counter-intuitive effect of increasing levels of partisan polarization. The evidence presented here suggests that, unsurprisingly, partisans are more likely than non-partisans to react strongly against information casting their preferred candidate or party in an unflattering light. But it also suggests that those who are partisan and politically interested are even more likely to react in a “knee-jerk” partisan way to news about a scandal involving their favoured party. This psychological mechanism, it would seem, is basically immutable, and there is no obvious policy “solution”. It reflects a human trait that underlies age-old processes of group cohesion. But it is a constant that should be factored in to efforts in re-engage Canadians in the political process.

---

<sup>3</sup> See Mancuso et al. (2006) for a discussion of this interpretation. Despite claims that Quebec is Canada's “the most corrupt province” (Patriquin 2010), such an assertion is difficult to substantiate empirically. As discussed in chapter two, corruption that is not disclosed will not result in scandal; contrary to Patriquin's argument, more major scandals do not necessarily signify more corruption.



Do the findings imply that the media need to stop focusing as much on political scandals? Do they imply a lesser role for independent officers of Parliament like the Auditor General, since these officers seem to consistently uncover ethical violations such as those involved in both the sponsorship and Senate expenses scandals? Some might infer from the findings regarding Hypothesis 1 that relaxing oversight of politicians in the areas of political-financial ethics would help boost public confidence in the political system and is thus an advisable course of action. In my view, it is neither possible nor desirable to stop the media from covering negative news, including negative news about the ethical comportment of public office holders (see also Soroka 2014). As Soroka points out, the tendency to privilege negative information over positive information is an innate human trait, rooted in an evolved risk aversion, which is unlikely to change soon (2014). Further, the media tend to cover negative news disproportionately in all domains, not just politics; the maxim “if it bleeds, it leads” holds in empirical analyses of news content (Soroka 2014). Regarding the role of independent officers of Parliament, it is important to have watchdogs to draw attention to genuine cases of political-financial corruption. The public interest suffers when political actors are permitted to pilfer public funds, thus consolidating their power base, without oversight by media and independent officers of Parliament.

A distinction can be drawn, however, between genuine cases of political-financial corruption, in which public funds are stolen, or misappropriated for private benefit, and cases of “scandal” which are not based on credible allegations of illegal or unethical wrongdoing. Marland labels those phenomena as “pseudo-scandals”, which he describes as media and opposition-driven affairs that, perhaps unsurprisingly, often happen to crop up on “slow news days” (2016, 96-98). Rather than being underpinned by any genuinely unethical or illegal misconduct, pseudo-scandals fix on “controversial issues such as an off-colour remark or a

choice of clothing regarded as outrageous and deserving of mockery” (Marland 2016, 97).<sup>4</sup>

These sorts of controversies clearly do serve the public interest, and naturally should be avoided by the media and independent officers of Parliament. “Watchdogs”, on guard for genuine cases of unethical and illegal behaviour, are not the same as “attack dogs”, determined to dig up and run with any negative story about public office holders, even when the facts are quite unclear and/or disputed fundamentally by disinterested observers (Fallows 1996; Tanner 1998).

## 7.4 Directions for Research

This project goes some distance toward documenting the relationship between political scandals and political action. In some cases, it seems that scandals can act as a catalyst for political participation. On the other hand, there is some evidence that perceived corruption might, at a certain point, undermine the sense of obligation to the community which fosters voter turnout. That said, future research could probe this relationship further by investigating the impact of context. Do certain types of social or economic conditions create the framework within which a particular scandal might spark participation? And at what point does the accumulated weight of scandals begin to depress the sense that voting is a civic duty?

An under-explored area concerns the role of political scandals in non-democracies, and in transitions from autocracy. This thesis highlights the potential for political scandals to undermine

---

<sup>4</sup> Marland gives the well-known example of “Wafergate”, in which then Prime Minister Stephen Harper was accused of taking but not eating a wafer from a funeral service for former Governor General Romeo LeBlanc. As Marland describes, “grainy video” was played and re-played of the Prime Minister accepting the wafer and either holding it by his side or possibly slipping it in his pocket. Several witnesses later confirmed that they had seen Harper consume the wafer a few moments after accepting it, and as Marland notes, following a front-page apology by a New Brunswick newspaper (which had published false information about the story that several other media outlets re-distributed), “the media quickly moved on” (2016, 98).

public support for the political system. In democracies, this is usually thought of as negative.<sup>5</sup> However, this same mechanism can be used to undermine support for an autocratic regime. As Adut points out, political scandal is not incompatible with autocracy, though scandals involving revelations related to office holders are rarer in such systems: “Political scandal is possible to the extent that the publicity of a transgression has political effects, especially those that undermine legitimacy or prestige. Whether the public that the transgression is communicated to has democratic controls over the exercise of power is irrelevant.” (2008, 75). The use of scandal in non-democracies also carries dangers, however. In the absence of well-entrenched social and political rights and a strong rule of law, the public anger and opprobrium unleashed in these “feeding frenzies” can certainly be unsettling. Opportunists can take advantage of the chaos. “The French Jacobins routinely resorted to scandal during the Terror... Purges in all regimes consist of a sequence of scandals in which conspiracies of all sorts supposedly engineered by treacherous elites are ‘uncovered’ by their competitors.” (Adut: 2008, 75). The comparative historical study of scandals in non-democracies, exploring both their potential and their dark side, remains fertile territory for further research.

The changing role of media in political scandals also merits further analysis. The quarter century of Canadian political history encompassed by this dissertation, 1984 to 2015, saw a remarkable transition in political communication. The rise of the 24-hour news cycle in the 1980s marked a massive shift, as did the rise of the internet in the mid to late-1990s, followed by the emergence of social media (or “Web 2.0”). How did these shifts in communications technology affect the way in which news about a political scandal is received? As already noted,

---

<sup>5</sup> Although some degree of skepticism about political authorities is arguably healthy in a democratic polity (Hardin 2000; Ruderman 2014).

Marland makes the case that the ultra-competitive modern online news environment coupled with a 24-hour news cycle has led to the rise of “pseudo-scandal” (2016). But this claim is largely unsupported by evidence. Analysis of political text from Twitter (and possibly Facebook, though data access here is more challenging), using techniques such as network analysis, could provide a window in the dynamics by which news about a scandal is received and redistributed. An institutional analysis of how these market pressures have affected decision-making and gatekeeping regarding scandal coverage in major newsrooms is another possible direction for investigation.

Lastly, the relationship between leadership strategies and the public perception of ethical integrity is yet another potentially informative avenue for research. Clearly, political scandals can pose direct, and sometimes insurmountable, challenges to effective leadership (Rottinghaus 2015). What is less explored in the academic literature, however, are the strategies by which public office holders can cultivate an image of ethical integrity in the face of challenges by media and opposition, and in the face of what Adut describes as “the dramaturgical paradox of the public sphere” (2008, 289). As discussed in chapter three, the challenges involved in governance, such as striking deals between clashing interests and keeping campaign promises in the face of shifting circumstances, can exact a toll on the public perception of honesty and integrity. But beyond the effects of those sorts of factors, a deeper challenge to leadership remains. As Adut puts it: “being in public at once compels us to uphold high standards and makes it impossible for us to prove definitively the purity of our motives, even when we are sure that they are pure” (2008, 289). Courage, as Adut points out, is the one moral virtue that is not consistent with this characterization, that can “elude doubt the moment (it is) displayed in public.” The ways in which leaders might cultivate and maintain an image of ethical integrity in

the face of these sorts of intrinsic challenges to their public perception could be better understood through experimental and focus group approaches.

This dissertation has presented a set of analyses regarding a foundational research question in the empirical study of political ethics, but one about which substantial disagreement persists: what is the impact of political scandals on political support and political participation? Each empirical chapter has adopted a unique vantage point on that question. The results indicate that political scandals cannot be cast monolithically as salutary or pernicious for democratic politics.

On the one hand, political scandals do pose some risk to citizens' orientations to government. Scandals depress levels of political support, especially specific and intermediate-level system support. There are also indications that voter turnout may be negatively affected if the perception of corruption that accompanies political scandals becomes generalized and persists. The clear implication is that politicians would be well-advised to adhere to public expectations regarding their ethical comportment.

On the other hand, political scandals pose less of a threat to diffuse forms of support. They do not vitiate support for democratic principles or support for the national community. Further, evidence regarding their impact on political participation is mixed, and the short-term effects are positive. Consequently, claims that political scandals are destroying all manner of public confidence in the political system and suppressing political engagement need to be taken with a large grain of salt. But equally, those who dismiss scandals as mere "partisan jousting," with no broader implications for public attitudes toward the political system, are quite mistaken. The truth lies somewhere in between.

## Figures and Tables

**Table 7.1: Political Scandal, Support, and Participation: An Overview of Results**

	Short to Medium-Term Effect ( $< 2$ yrs.)	Potential Long-Term Effect
Political Support	Negative	Negative
Voting	Positive	Negative
Other Forms of Participation	Positive	Positive

*Note:* Results presented here represent the common statistically significant finding generated by the hypothesis tests throughout the thesis. “Negative” indicates that the revelation of elite wrongdoing erodes the dependent variable on the left. “Positive” indicates that the revelation of elite wrongdoing augments the dependent variable on the left.

## References

- Adut, Ari. 2008. *On Scandal: Moral Disturbances in Society, Politics, and Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Alesina, Alberto, and Romain Wacziarg. 2000. "The Economics of Civic Trust." In *Disaffected Democracies*, edited by Susan Pharr and Robert Putnam. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Allen, Nicholas and Sarah Birch. 2015. *Ethics and Integrity in British Politics: How Citizens Judge their Politicians' Conduct and Why it Matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allison, Paul. 2009. *Fixed Effects Regression Models*. London: Sage Publications.
- Anderson, Cameron D. and Laura B. Stephenson. 2010. "The Puzzle of Elections and Voting in Canada." In *Voting Behaviour in Canada*, edited by Cameron Anderson and Laura Stephenson. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Anderson, Christopher, and Christine Guillory. 1997. "Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems." *American Political Science Review* 91 (1): 66-81.
- Atkinson, Michael. 2011. "Discrepancies in Perceptions of Corruption, or Why is Canada so Corrupt?" *Political Science Quarterly* 126 (3): 445-464.
- Atkinson, Michael, and Gerald Bierling. 2005. "Politicians, the Public, and Political Ethics: Worlds Apart." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38 (4): 1003-1128.
- Atkinson, Michael, and Murray Fulton. 2013. "Understanding Public Sector Ethics: Beyond Agency Theory in Canadas Sponsorship Scandal." *International Public Management Journal* 16 (3): 386-412.
- Barnes, Samuel, Max Kaase, and Klaus Allerbeck. 1979. *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

- Bastedo, Heather, Wayne Chu, and Jane Hilderman. 2014. "Outsiders: Agency and the Non-Engaged." In *Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up: Perceptions and Performance* edited by Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Bastedo, Heather, Wayne Chu, and Jane Hilderman. 2011. "Occupiers and Legislators: A Snapshot of Political Media Coverage." *Occupiers and Legislators: A Snapshot of Political Media Coverage*.
- Bercuson, David, J.L. Granatstein, and W.R. Young. 1986. *Sacred Trust? Brian Mulroney and the Conservative Party in Power*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd..
- Berton, Pierre. 1976. "The Pacific Railway Scandal." In *Political Corruption in Canada: Cases, Causes, Cures*, edited by Gibbons and Rowat. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Blais, André, and Francois G lineau. 2007. "Winning, Losing and Satisfaction with Democracy." *Political Studies* 55: 425-41.
- Blais, Andr , Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, and Richard Nadeau. 2004. "Where Does Turnout Decline Come From?" *European Journal of Political Research* 43: 221-236.
- Blais, Andr , Elisabeth Gidengil, Neil Nevitte, and Richard Nadeau. 2002. *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Blais, Andr , Elisabeth Gidengil, Patrick Fournier, Neil Nevitte, Joanna Everitt, and Jiyeon Kim. 2010. "Political Judgments, Perceptions of Facts, and Partisan Effects." *Electoral Studies* 29: 1-12.
- Blais, Andr , Joanna Everitt, Patrick Fournier, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Neil Nevitte. 2005. "The Political Psychology of Voters' Reactions to a Corruption Scandal." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association. Washington, D.C..
- Bliss, Michael. 2004. *Right Honourable Men*. Toronto: HarperPerennial Canada.
- Bowler, Shaun, and Jeffrey Karp. 2004. "Politicians, Scandals, and Trust in Government." *Political Behavior* 26: 271-287.



- Brady, Henry, and David Collier, eds. 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Braithwaite, Valerie and Margaret Levi, eds. 1998. *Trust and Governance*. Washington DC: Russell Sage.
- Brodie, Ian and Neil Nevitte. 1993. "Evaluating the Citizens' Constitution Theory" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 26 (2): 235-259.
- Cairns, Alan. 1993. "A Defence of the Citizens' Constitution Theory: A Response to Ian Brodie and Neil Nevitte" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 26 (2): 261-267.
- Cameron, Stevie. 1994. *On the Take: Crime, Corruption and Greed in the Mulroney Years*. Toronto: Seal Books.
- Canadian Press, The. "Mike Duffy trial: Chronology of the Senate expense scandal saga." *Mike Duffy trial: Chronology of the Senate expense scandal saga*.  
[<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mike-duffy-trial-chronology-of-the-senate-expense-scandal-saga-1.3022241>], Accessed June, 2015.
- Carty, Kenneth R., André Blais, and Patrick Fournier. 2008. "When Citizens Choose to Reform SMP: The British Columbia Citizens` Assembly on Electoral Reform." In *The Politics of Electoral Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cashore, Harvey. 2010. *The Truth Shows Up: A Reporter's Fifteen-Year Odyssey Tracking Down the Truth about Mulroney, Schreiber and the Airbus Scandal*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.
- Chanley, Virginia, Thomas Rudolph, and Wendy Rahn. 2000. "The origins and consequences of public trust in government: a time series analysis." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64: 239-256.
- Chudos, Robert, Rae Murphy, and Eric Hamovitch. 1988. *Selling Out: Four Years of the Mulroney Government*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company.
- Citrin, Jack. 1974. "Comment: the political relevance of trust in government." *American Political Science Review* 68: 973-988.

- Clarke, Harold, Alan Kornberg, and Thomas Scotto. 2009. *Making Political Choices*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Clarke, Harold, Jane Jenson, Lawrence LeDuc, and Jon Pammett. 1996. *Absent Mandate: Canadian Electoral Politics in an Era of Restructuring 3rd Ed.* Gage.
- Craig, Stephen. 1993. *The Malevolent Leaders*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Cross, William. 2010. *Auditing Canadian Democracy*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Cochrane, Christopher and Andrea Perrella. 2012. "Regions, Regionalism, and Regional Difference in Canada" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 45 (4): 829-853.
- Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities. 2005. "Who Is Responsible? Phase 1 Report" [<http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-02-10/www.gomery.ca/en/phase1report/default.htm>].
- Cutler, Fred. 2002. "The Simplest Shortcut of them all: Sociodemographic Characteristics and Electoral Choice." *Journal of Politics* 64 (2): 466-490.
- Dahlberg, Stefan and Maria Solevid. 2016. "Does Corruption Suppress Voter Turnout?" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties* 26 (4): 489-510.
- Dalton, Russell. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1984. "Cognitive Mobilization and Partisan Dealignment in Advanced Industrial Democracies" *Journal of Politics* 46: 264-284.
- Davis, Lanny. 2006. *Scandal: How Gotcha Politics is Destroying America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dewberry, David R. 2015. *The American Political Scandal: Free Speech, Public Discourse, and Democracy*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

- Donovan, S.J., and R.B. Winmill. 1976. "The Beauharnois Power Scandal." In *Political Corruption in Canada: Cases, Causes, Cures*, edited by Gibbons and Rowat. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy." *The Journal of Political Economy* 65: 135-150.
- Dufresne, Yannick and Nick Ruderman. 2016. "Explaining Regional Variation in Support for Official Bilingualism in Canada" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Calgary AB.
- Easton, David. 1975. "A Reassessment of the Concept of Political Support." *British Journal of Political Science* 9: 435-457.
- . 1965. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: Wiley.
- Erber, Ralph, and Richard R. Lau. 1990. "Political Cynicism Revisited: An Information-Processing Reconciliation of Policy-based and Incumbency-based Interpretations of Changes in Trust in Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 34: 236-253.
- Fallows, James. 1996. *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine Democracy*. New York: Pantheon.
- Firebaugh, Glenn. 2007. *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Festinger, Leon. 1957. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. Evanston IL: Row & Peterson.
- Flanagan, Scott. 1987. "Controversy: Value Change in Industrial Societies." *American Political Science Review* 81: 1303-1319.
- Free, Clinton, and Vaughn Radcliffe. 2009. "Accountability in Crisis: The Sponsorship Scandal and the Office of the Comptroller General in Canada." *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. 2: 189-208.
- Fuchs, Dieter, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds.. 1995. *Citizens and the State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Garment, Suzanne. 1991. *Scandal: The Crisis of Mistrust in American Politics*. New York: Random House.
- Gibbins, Roger. 1982. *Regionalism: Territorial Politics in Canada and the United States*. Toronto: Butterworths.
- Gibbons, Kenneth M., and Donald C. Rowat, eds. 1976. *Political Corruption in Canada: Cases, Causes and Cures*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth, and Heather Bastedo. 2014. "Introduction." In *Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up: Perceptions and Performance*, edited by Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth, Joanna Everitt, André Blais, Patrick Fournier, and Neil Nevitte. 2013. "Explaining the modern gender gap." In *Mind the Gap: Canadian Perspectives on Gender and Politics*, edited by Roberta Lexier and Tamara Small. Halifax: Fernwood Press.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth, Neil Nevitte, André Blais, Joanna Everitt, and Patrick Fournier. 2012. *Dominance and Decline: Making Sense of Recent Canadian Elections*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth, Andre Blais, Neil Nevitte, and Richard Nadeau. 2004. *Citizens*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Gilley, Bruce. 2006. "The Meaning and Measure of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries" *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (3): 499-525.
- Goertzel, Ted. 1994. "Belief in Conspiracy Theories" *Political Psychology* 15 (4): 731-742.
- Greene, Ian. 2006. "The Chrétien Ethics Legacy." In *The Chrétien Legacy*, edited by Lois Harder and Steve Patten. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Gujarati, Damodar, and Dawn Porter. 2009. *Basic Econometrics (5th Edition)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Gwyn, Richard. 1965. *The Shape of Scandal: A Study of Government in Crisis*. Clarke, Irwin.

- Hetherington, Marc. 2005. *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Heywood, Paul. 1997. "Political Corruption: Problems and Perspectives." *Political Studies* XLV (3): 417-435.
- Hill, David. 2006. *Voter Turnout: An Institutional Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Howe, Paul. 2010. *Citizens Adrift: The Democratic Disengagement of Young Canadians*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Hoy, Claire. 1987. *Friends in High Places: Politics and Patronage in the Mulroney Government*. Toronto: Key Porter Books Ltd..
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1997. "Postmaterial Values and the Erosion of Institutional Authority." In *Why People Don't Trust Government*, edited by Joseph Nye, Philip Zelikow and David King. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 1990. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1977. *The Silent Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jeffrey, Brooke. 1992. *Breaking Faith*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.
- Johnston, Michael. 1996. "The Search for Definitions: The Vitality of Politics and the Issue of Corruption." *International Social Science Journal* 149 (September): 321-335.
- Johnston, Richard, J. Scott Matthews and Amanda Bittner. 2007. "Alienation, Indifference, Competitiveness, and Turnout: Evidence from Canada, 1988-2004." *Electoral Studies* 26 (4): 735-745.
- Kanji, Mebs. 2002. "Political Discontent, Human Capital, and Representative Governance in Canada." In *Value Change and Governance in Canada*, edited by Neil Nevitte. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Kaplan, William. 1998. *Presumed Guilty: Brian Mulroney, the Airbus Affair, and the Government of Canada*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

- King, Anthony. 1986. "Sex, Money, and Power." In *Politics in Britain and the United States: Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Hodder-Williams and Caesar. Durham: Duke University Press.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Klingemann, Hans-Dieter. 1999. "Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis." In *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, edited by Pippa Norris. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kjellberg, Francesco. 1995. "Conflict of interest, corruption, or (simply) scandals? The Oslo Case 1989-1991." *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 22: 339-360.
- Kornberg, Allan, and Harold D. Clarke. 1992. *Citizens and Community: Political Support in a Representative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kozolanka, Kristen. 2006. "The Sponsorship Scandal as Communication: The Rise of Political and Strategic Communications in the Federal Government." *Canadian Journal of Communications* 31: 343-366.
- Kumlin, Staffan. 2014. "Policy Feedback in Political Context: Unemployment Benefits, Election Campaigns, and Democratic Satisfaction." In *How Welfare States Shape the Democratic Public*, edited by Staffan Kumlin and Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffan. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- Kumlin, Staffan, and Peter Esaiasson. 2012. "Scandal Fatigue? Scandal Elections and Satisfaction with Democracy in Western Europe, 1977-2007." *British Journal of Political Science* 42 (2): 263-282.
- Kunda, Ziva. 1990. "The Case for Motivated Political Reasoning." *Psychological Bulletin* 108 (3): 480-498.
- Lang, Amy. 2007. "But Is It for Real? The British Columbia Citizens` Assembly as a Model of State-Sponsored Citizen Empowerment." *Politics and Society* 35 (1): 35-70.

- Lang, Kurt, and Gladys Lang. 1966. "The Mass Media and Voting." In *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, 2nd edition*, edited by Bernard Barelson and Morris Janowitz. New York: Free Press.
- Lawrence, Robert. 1997. "Is it Really the Economy, Stupid?" In *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Bernard Barelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1948. *The People's Choice: How the Voter makes up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- LeDuc, Lawrence, Heather Basedo, and Catherine Banquero. 2008. "The Quiet Referendum: Why Electoral Reform Failed in Ontario." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Vancouver BC.
- LeDuc, Lawrence, and Jon Pammett. 2014. "Attitudes toward Democratic Norms and Practices: Canada in Comparative Perspective." In *Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up*, edited by Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Lenard, Patti Tamara, and Richard Simeon. 2012. "Introduction." In *Imperfect Democracies: The Democratic Deficit in Canada and the United States*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael, and Mary Stegmaier. 2000. "Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 183-219.
- Lieberman, Evan. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Methods Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99 (3): 435-452.
- Lodge, Milton, and Charles Taber. 2000. "Three Steps toward a Theory of Motivated Political Reasoning." In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality*, edited by Arthur Lupia, Mathew McCubbins and Samuel Popkin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Loewenberg, Gerhard. 1971. "The Influence of Parliamentary Behaviour on Regime Stability." *Comparative Politics* 3: 177-200.

- Lowi, Theodore. 1988. "Foreword" in *The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal Democracies*, edited by A. Markovits and M. Silverstein. London: Holmes & Meier.
- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections." *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76.
- Lupia, Arthur, and Matthew McCubbins. 1998. *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What they Need to Know?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Maier, Jurgen. 2011. "The Impact of Political Scandals on Political Support: An Experimental Test of Two Theories." *International Political Science Review* 32 (3): 283-302.
- Malec, Kathryn. 1993. "Public Attitudes towards Corruption: Twenty-Five Years of Research." In *Ethics and Public Administration*, edited by H.G. Frederickson, 13-27. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Mancuso, Maureen, Michael Atkinson, André Blais, Ian Greene, and Neil Nevitte. 1998; 2006. *A Question of Ethics: Canadians Speak Out*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Markovits, Andrei, and Mark Silverstein. 1988. "Introduction." In *The Politics of Scandal: Power and Process in Liberal Democracies*, edited by Andrei Markovits and Mark Silverstein. London: Holmes and Meier.
- Marland, Alex. 2016. *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Martin, Lawrence. 2016. "Trudeau's Blunders are Dulling his Shine" *The Globe and Mail* November 30th.
- Matthews, J. Scott. 2013. "When Partisans are Attacked: Motivated Reasoning and the New Party System." In *Parties, Elections, and the Future of Canadian Politics*, edited by Amanda Bittner and Royce Koop. UBC Press.
- McParland, Kelly. 2014. "The Reason for Low Voter Turnout is Obvious: Just Look at the Politicians" *National Post*, April 16<sup>th</sup>.



- Mettler, Suzanne and Joe Soss. 2004. "The Consequences of Public Policy for Democratic Citizenship: Bridging Policy Studies and Mass Politics" *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (1): 55-73.
- Miller, Arthur. 1974. "Political issues and trust in government: 1964-1970." *American Political Science Review* 68: 951-972.
- Miller, Arthur, and Stephen Borelli. 1991. "Confidence in Government during the 1980s." *American Politics Quarterly* 19 (2): 147-173.
- Miller, Ruth. 2008. *The Erotics of Corruption: Law, Scandal and Political Perversion*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Miller, Warren, and J. Merrill Shanks. 1996. *The New American Voter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Morton, Desmond. 2005. "Reflecting on Gomery: Political Scandals and the Canadian Memory." *Policy Options*, June.
- Muller, Edward N. and Thomas O. Jukam. 1977. "On the Meaning of Political Support" *American Political Science Review* 71: 1561-1595.
- Muñoz, Jordi, Eva Anduiza, and Guillem Rico. 2014. "Empowering Cuts? Austerity Policies and Political Involvement in Spain." In *How Welfare States Shape the Democratic Public*, edited by Staffan Kumlin and Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffan. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- Nadeau, Richard. 2002. "Satisfaction with Democracy: The Canadian Paradox." In *Value Change and Governance in Canada*, edited by Neil Nevitte. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Nadeau, Richard, and Thierry Giasson. 2005. "Canada's Democratic Malaise: Are the Media to Blame?" In *Strengthening Canadian Democracy*, edited by Howe, Johnston and Blais. Montreal: The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

- Neild, Robert. 2002. *Public Corruption: The Dark Side of Social Evolution*. London: Anthem Press.
- Nelken, David, and Michael Levi. 1996. "The Corruption of Politics and the Politics of Corruption: An Overview." *Journal of Law and Society* 23 (1): 1-17.
- Nevitte, Neil, ed. 2002. *Value Change and Governance in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 1996. *The Decline of Deference: Canadian Value Change in Cross-National Perspective*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Nevitte, Neil, and Stephen White. 2012. "Citizen Expectations and Democratic Performance: The Sources and Consequences of Democratic Deficits from the Bottom Up." In *Imperfect Democracies: The Democratic Deficit in Canada and the United States*, edited by Patti Tamara Lenard and Richard Simeon. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Newman, Peter. 2005. *The Secret Mulroney Tapes*. Toronto: Random House.
- Newton, Kenneth and Pippa Norris. 2000. "Confidence in Public Institutions: Faith, Culture, or Performance?" In *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Democracies?*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Robert Putnam. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Norris, Pippa. 2011. *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2002. *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2000. *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- , ed. 1999. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Norris, Pippa, Stefaan Walgrave, and Peter Van Aelst. 2006. "Does Protest Signify Disaffection? Demonstrators in a Postindustrial Democracy." In *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions, and Politics*, edited by Torcal and Montero. New York: Routledge.
- Nye, Joseph S., Philip Zelikow, and David C. King, eds. 1997. *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Office of the Auditor General of Canada. 2003. "2003 November Report of the Auditor General of Canada" [[http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200311\\_e\\_1126.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200311_e_1126.html)].
- Owen, Diana. 1995. "Who's Talking? Who's Listening? The New Politics of Radio and Television Talk Shows." In *Broken Contract: Changing Relationships Between Citizens and Their Government*, edited by Stephen Craig. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Painter-Main, Michael. 2014. "Repertoire-Building or Elite-Challenging? Understanding Political Engagement in Canada." In *Canadian Democracy From the Ground Up*, edited by Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Patriquin, Martin. 2010. "Quebec: The Most Corrupt Province" *Maclean's* [<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/the-most-corrupt-province/>], September 24th.
- Patterson, Thomas. 1993. *Out of Order*. New York: Knopf.
- Payton, Laura. 2015. "Mike Duffy trial: Links to key documents." *CBC News* [<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mike-duffy-trial-links-to-key-documents-1.3022300>].
- Pétry, François. 2014. "A Tale of Two Perspectives: Election Promises and Government Actions in Canada." In *Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up: Perceptions and Performance*, edited by Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Pharr, Susan. 2000. "Officials' Misconduct and Public Distrust: Japan and the Trilateral Democracies." In *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?*, edited by Susan Pharr and Robert Putnam. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Peters, John, and Susan Welch. 1980. "Political Corruption in America: A Search for Definitions and a Theory. Or If Political Corruption is in the Mainstream of American Politics, Why Is It Not in the Mainstream of American Politics Research?" *American Political Science Review* 72: 974-984.
- Pharr, Susan, and Robert Putnam, eds. 2000. *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Postman, Neil. 1985. *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Tuning In Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27 (4): 664-683.
- . 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Redlawsk, David. 2002. "Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making." *The Journal of Politics* 64 (4): 1021-1044.
- Ridley, F. F., and Alan Doig. 1995. *Sleaze: Politicians, Private Interests and Public Reactions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Riker, William, and Peter Ordeshook. 1973. *An Introduction to Positive Political Theory*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Rogowski, Ronald. 1983. "Political Support for Regimes: A Theoretical Inventory and Critique." In *Political Support in Canada: The Crisis Years*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rottinghaus, Brandon. 2015. *The Institutional Effects of Executive Scandals*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose-Ackerman, Susan. 1999. *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ruderman, Nick and Neil Nevitte. 2015. "Assessing the Impact of Political Scandal and Attitudes toward Democracy: Evidence from Canada's Sponsorship Scandal." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 885-904.
- Ruderman, Nick. 2014. "Canadians` Evaluations of MPs: Performance Matters." In *Canadian Democracy from the Ground Up*, edited by Elisabeth Gidengil and Heather Bastedo, 41-61. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Scharpf, Fritz. 2000. "Interdependence and Democratic Legitimation." In *Disaffected Democracies: What`s Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Shore, Jennifer. 2014. "How Welfare States Shape Participatory Patterns." In *How Welfare States Shape the Democratic Public*, edited by Staffan Kumlin and Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffan. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- Sigel, Roberta S., and Marilyn Brookes Hoskin. 1977. "Affect for government and its relation to policy output among adolescents." *American Journal of Political Science* 21: 111-134.
- Simeon, Richard, and David Elkins. 1980. *Small Worlds: Provinces and Parties in Canadian Political Life*. Toronto: Methuan Publications.
- Sniderman, Paul M., Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock. 1991. *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sniderman, Paul M., W.R. Neuman, Jack Citrin, Herbert McClosky, and J.M. Shanks. 1975. "Stability of Support for the Political System: The Initial Impact of Watergate." *American Politics Quarterly* 3: 437-457.
- Soroka, Stuart. 2014. *Negativity in Democratic Politics: Causes and Consequences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stark, Andrew. 2008. "Conflict of Interest in Canada." In *Conflict of Interest in Public Life: Cross-National Perspectives*, edited by Trost and Gash. Cambridge University Press.

- Stempel, Carl, Thomas Hargrove, and Guido H. Stempel. 2007. "Media Use, Social Structure, and Belief in 9/11 Conspiracy Theories" *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 84(2): 353-372.
- Stockemer, Daniel, Bernadette LaMontagne, and Lyle Scruggs. 2013. "Bribes and Ballots: The Impact of Corruption on Voter Turnout." *International Political Science Review* 34 (1): 74-90.
- Stolle, Dietlind, and Marc Hooghe. 2005. "Inaccurate, Exceptional, One-Sided or Irrelevant? The Debate About the Alleged Decline of Social Capital and Civic Engagement in Western Societies." *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (1): 149-167.
- Tanner, Stephen. 1998. "Watch Dog or Attack Dog? The Media, Politics and Ethics." In *Ethics and Political Practice: Perspectives on Legislative Ethics*. edited by Noel Preston, Charles J. G. Sampford, and Carol-Anne Bois. Leichhardt, N.S.W.: Federation Press.
- Tiffen, Rodney. 1999. *Scandals: Media, Politics, and Corruption in Contemporary Australia*. Sidney: UNSW Press.
- Thompson, John B. 2000. *Political Scandals: Power and Visibility in the Media Age*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Turgeon, Luc, Martin Papillion, Jennifer Wallner, and Stephen White, eds. 2014. *Comparing Canada: Methods and Perspectives on Canadian Politics*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Uslaner, Eric. 2002. *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Scholzman, and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Volunteerism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vivyan, Nick, Markus Wagner and Jessica Tarlov. 2012. "Representative misconduct, voter perceptions and accountability: Evidence from the 2009 House of Commons expenses scandal." *Electoral Studies* 31: 750-763.
- White, Linda, Richard Simeon, Robert Vipond, and Jennifer Wallner, eds. 2008. *The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Wiseman, Nelson. 2007. *In Search of Canadian Political Culture*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.